**Social Networking In 2012**

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**The Benefits Of Socializing On The Internet**

Social networking is one the fastest growing sectors on the Internet. Over half a billion people are part of one social network or another. Social sites provide a free and powerful way to share with millions of users your expertise, services and business. One of the strongest aspects of social networking is the ability to share videos, images and links with like-minded people all over the world.

Personal profiles are the backbone of social networking sites. Profiles give you the opportunity to provide tons of information about your business, education, affiliations, expertise and websites. Profiles are one of the best traffic driving tools that have come around in a ling time. They rank very highly in all of the major search engines, thereby creating a large presence on the Internet. Users share pictures with their friends of seminars they have attended, projects and products they have created and invite their connections to events either live or over the web. Features such as direct email, status updates and joining groups keep your friends informed on every part of your business.

You can learn and teach others, build celebrity status and create a huge network of potential clients and customers. Professions such as public speakers, life coaches, web designers and network trainers are making the biggest impact with social networking. Contacts that you make on a site can find virtually everything they need to know about you and your business in one or two clicks without ever leaving your profile. Let’s go over the major players in social networking that you need to be a part of.

**Facebook**

Facebook has grown greatly over the last 2 years to become the 10th most visited site on the Internet with 57 million views a month. That's a lot of traffic. There are over 11,000 applications available to Facebook users to help network and keep in touch with family, friends and prospects. But how can you use Facebook to grow your business?

Profiles: Make sure your profile is comprehensive with all the important information about you and your business plainly there for all to see. Include all of your website URL's in your profile, and not just to your home page. List your blogs, video sites and other social network profiles that you have. Upload videos to your profile of you speaking at events, videos of your products or anything that your friends may find interesting. Be sure to include in your profile your education, your affiliations, awards and accreditations. Profiles serve the purpose of building credibility and trust in you and your expertise to the people who view them. Building trust and credibility are very important to turning visitors into sales. If they don't know you or trust you, they won't buy. So put yourself out there!

Keep your prospects informed: Facebook has the ability to easily send emails to your friends and create events to invite them to. Creating an event is easy and you can pick and choose whomever to invite. Events can be anything from live events, webinars, teleclasses and product launches. The event template can hold tons of information including clickable links to sign up pages, entire sales letters and a picture. Your friends can RSVP the event with "attending", "maybe attending" or "not attending" so you can get an idea of how many people are interested. This is a very powerful tool to keep all of your friends informed of anything major in your business.

Groups: Creating a group on Facebook is quick and simple. Use groups to really promote your business, products, mentor programs or any way you make money on the Internet. You can use the discussion board to keep your members informed and they can join the conversation and leave comments or post topics. This is a great way to start a Q & A and make yourself the expert. You can put clickable links in the group profile to anywhere on the web including: Sales letters, opt-in pages, websites, video hosting sites, blogs, affiliate programs and even your eBay store. Groups are not just for your friends. Anyone can search Facebook for keywords such as "Relationship advice", "Article marketing", "Leadership skills" etc. and find your group and join it. Now they have access to your websites, info and expertise without even having to be your friend. A group is a great place to have your customers leave testimonials about your business so you can convince others to buy from you.

Fan Pages: Fan pages look very much like your personal profile but are designed to promote your business, band or celebrity. Upload logos of your company and leave links in the “info” section to all important resources. Instead of friends you collect “fans.” While your personal profile limits the amount of friends you can have to 5000, your fan page can have an unlimited amount of friends. Big corporations and even politicians are using fan pages to get the word out.

Applications: Facebook can show your Twitter feed automatically on your profile and feed the updates to all of your friends in real time. Wordpress - where your blogs show up on your profile. eBay - automatically lists items and lets all your friends on Facebook know. Tagging - You can tag your friends in videos and pictures and they will get a notification that you have done so. This can help create views for your videos and promote your business.

**Squidoo**

Squidoo is a very powerful, yet easy to make, one page website profile of you or your business. It is the brainchild of ex-Google insider Seth Godin, the author of “The Purple Cow,” and tons of marketing articles and training. He created the network to be search engine friendly based on what he learned from working at Google. The pages are called “lenses” for the fact that they are created to focus on a particular niche or keyword of your business. It is specifically designed to hold content rich information such as articles, videos, images and HTML code. You can use hypertext links to drive traffic to sign up pages, your websites and even affiliate products. Squidoo uses “modules” that you fill with information and then move around however you want to create a certain look. It is considered a social site because the opportunity to join groups and make fans is an important part of the success of the lens.

Google loves Squidoo because of the often updated, content rich articles and information that it can provide. With the proper use of the tags feature you can use specific keywords and phrases to help give your lens good search engine positioning. There is no limit to the number of lenses you can create with some lens owners having 100 or more promoting their products, books, mentor programs and anything under the sun. The more refined the niche, the better the lens will perform.

You can connect your Squidoo account with your Twitter so every time you update your lens, an automatic tweet will be sent to your followers. You can also send a SquidCast to the fans of your lenses letting them know that you have updated your page, joined a group or to just stay in touch. Networking with other lensmasters couldn’t be easier. Each lens has a comment box that is heavily utilized by the members where they leave kudos and clickable links to their lenses. Joining a group based on niche content can give you exposure to thousands of prospects. At the time of this writing, there are over 750,000 lenses and growing everyday.

**Twitter**

Twitter.com has taken off the past two years to be one the most fun, effective and most talked about social networking tools in a long time. But don't let the simplicity fool you. Tweeting can send very powerful links to your followers and direct them to websites, video pages, landing pages, blog posts and other resources to show off your sites and businesses.

You can do more than just point followers to websites. Some businesses are using Twitter to engage customers and provide service. You can create relationships with followers in real time, similar to IM but on a more massive scale. By using the Twitter search function, you can hear news on just about anything the moment it happens sometimes even faster than it would appear on web news outlets.

Barack Obama used Twitter creatively to engage potential voters by listening to their issues and building a huge following. Some analysts believe it helped him win the election. What can it really do for your business? Here are some tips to make your tweets more effective: Let followers know about your new blog posts to increase traffic to the blog. Send them links to your videos on YouTube to get a burst of views. A lot of views on a new video can help get it better search positioning on the YouTube search engine.

Have a real dialog with your followers to build trust and credibility for your business.

Build a relationship with certain followers that you want to joint venture with. Get to know more about them and their businesses.

Tweet out "words of wisdom" or advice to keep followers

interested in your tweets and put a link at the end to "get more information"

Offer free gifts (ebooks, teleclasses, ecourses) with a link to an opt-in page for your newsletter. Tweet to them the benefits of your newsletter or program and build your database.

Mix your tweets up with things about your business and things about your personal life. This creates a "personal" feel to your Internet marketing and closes the “trust gap”

Retweet (RT) other people's posts to help create friendships. They will retweet your posts to their followers as a courtesy. This can build up networking opportunities in short order.

Use TweetLater.com to write your tweets in the morning and schedule them to launch over the rest of the day. From TweetLater you can also use the search function, send a thank you message automatically to new followers with a link to your site or opt-in, automatically shorten long URL's to save space and check the "@replies" feature to see if anyone has been talking about you.

Finding friends on Twitter is easy. The way to get followers is to follow someone else first and they will follow you, to return the favor. But you don't want to follow just anyone; you want to find targeted followers for your business or services.

The easiest way to get targeted followers is to use the Twitter search functions. At the top right hand corner of your home page you will find a link named "Find People". Click on this link. The page that you come to gives you an option to download addresses from your database or type in someone’s name. It can also work with keywords.

• public speaking • authors • life coach • jewelry artist

• karate teacher • or anything relating to your business

The search function, located to the right of your profile, will give you all the people on Twitter that have those keywords in their profile as an interest, profession or have sent a tweet out with those keywords in them. If your business is "seminar training" you would want to have people following you that would be interested in speaking in one form or another such as speakers, coaches, trainers, authors, NSA members etc.

All you have to do is click on "follow" on the right hand side of each profile in the search. Many of them will in turn follow you. You can build targeted followers very quickly with this technique. To find followers in a particular area or city, type ‘location:cityname’ into the search box to find where people are from. This is a great idea for local businesses like restaurants, chiropractors or real estate agents that want to localize their target market. These businesses can offer links to printable coupons or other forms of advertising that can be redeemed locally.

**YouTube**

Youtube is one of the most popular and highly trafficked Internet sites ever. Alexa ranks it as the 4th largest website in terms of traffic just behind Google, Yahoo and Facebook. It consumes as much bandwidth as the entire Internet in the year 2000 and generates almost $1,000,000 a day in bandwidth costs. There are over 20 hours of video uploaded every minute and the site hosts nearly 1 billion videos to date. This is a marketers dream. Youtube is considered a social networking site for fact that getting subscribers and making friends is the key to marketing success. Networking with other users, leaving comments on user channels, uploading video responses and emailing users are effective ways to gain viewership.

The search engines love videos. Google’s Universal Search specifically looks for videos to include in their results to give the searcher a choice of media for their needs. The combination of keywords in your titles and tags and gaining subscribers for your channel can create a marketing powerhouse to show off your products, make entertaining presentations, produce customer testimonials and exploit your expertise.

A great way to piggyback off of the high views on other videos is to leave a video or written response on that channel, leaving your URL in the comment box. Viewers love to read the comments and the activity that takes place there is lively. You can use the Youtube search engine to look for channels and users that would be interested in your subjects.

Youtube has released a free stats tool for your videos called YouTube Insight. This great new and easy to use tool tracks important stats for each of your videos. Information includes:

Which videos are being watched the most. Age group of viewers. Countries in which your videos are viewed. Male vs. Female demographics. Percentages of videos watched based on the whole. and many more interesting facts.

This information is important to you because you need to know if your hard work is reaching the targeted viewers you had intended. Every business has targeted marketing and this tool will show you if you are reaching those goals. If a certain video with specifically chosen keywords are getting more targeted views than others, you will know what new videos to create for additional leverage.

As you know by now, I have really been pushing video production heavily for quick search engine positioning results. Video marketing has been the big results winner and I have heard many great testimonials to how fast the strategy is working.

YouTube Insight is a great tool to have for your video strategies. It's free and there is no download or sign up. You can access it from your YouTube account.

• Select "account" • Select "My Videos"

• Select "YouTube Insight" from the bottom left of page • Page loads automatically

**LinkedIn**

LinkedIn is a business oriented social networking site that has 43 million members in over 170 different industries. Registered users can maintain a list of contacts they know and trust in business called Connections. You can invite anyone to be a connection whether they are a member of the site or not. Your network is built up by being able to request friendships from the connections of your connections, called an Introduction. These requests made through a mutual, trusted contact helps keep your friend’s list from being spammed and is intended to build trust among the service's users. This system is called "gated access."

You can call up a list of potential contacts by using the LinkedIn search engine. The results are based on information published on a member's profile. It can be used to find jobs, people and business opportunities. Employers can list jobs and search for potential candidates. In fact, 60% of companies on a recent poll have used LinkedIn to search for employees. If you're a job seeker, you can review the profiles of hiring managers and discover which of their existing contacts can introduce you to them. LinkedIn "Answers" allows users to ask questions for the community to answer. This is a great way to learn more about an industry, network with like-minded business owners and show off your expertise by answering questions. LinkedIn Groups allow users to create new business relationships by joining alumni, industry or professional groups. Most groups are of broad interest, while others narrow down to specifics. The groups are searchable, so find the ones most relevant to you.

Like the other social networking sites, you can add third party applications. The Wordpress and Typepad applications allow members to display recent blog posts on their profiles. The Amazon Reading List shows members which books you are currently reading. The LinkedIn profile is much simpler in comparison to a Facebook profile. It contains mainly professional affiliation information, links to a website, current and past employment info and awards and professional designations. All this information is searchable and is used to establish connections based on mutual interests.

One of the more powerful features of LinkedIn is the DirectAds form of sponsored advertising. Ads narrowly target users based on the keywords in their profiles and the interests they search for. Creating a presence on LinkedIn is a good idea especially if your service is part of a larger industry including doctors, lawyers, speakers, real estate, high-tech or any major industry. LinkedIn profiles rank high in the search engines for your name or the name of your business.

**Social Bookmarking**

Social bookmarking with websites like Digg.com, Reddit.com, StumbleUpon.com and Delicious.com can help drive traffic to your websites. These are sites with a very high Google page rank with millions of members and views per week. These are considered social networking sites, but are structured a little differently than Facebook or Squidoo.

Bookmarking is the same concept as adding a “favorite” URL to your computer. But social bookmarking is unique in that it lets you share you favorite sites with the world via your profile. Anyone can visit your profile and click on all the sites that you have selected, generating unique visits to that site. The sites can be yours or anyone else’s. Let's take a look at how we begin:

After signing up with Digg, Reddit, StumbleUpon or Delicious you can submit the URL of any page of your site or someone else’s that needs additional traffic. When prompted, paste the URL of the page into the "Submit URL" form, add a title of the page and a short description. After posting, the information will be visible as a "teaser" headline with a clickable active link that searchers can click on to read more information.

Unlike a blog or article directory, instead of the visitor just reading the information you have posted, they have to click out on your URL to get the rest of the story. This system gives you an active backlink to your page from a high page-ranked site and also gives you an additional unique visitor to your page. Once the visitor is in your website, you have the chance to direct them to wherever you want them to go.

Unlike other social sites, social bookmarking networks are governed by a "community" of users...real people rating and recommending the sites you favorite to others. Because of the fresh material added daily, the search engines give these sites high positioning and you can get a large number of views in a short period of time. Any of the users can make friends with you. Building up friends is the key to successful bookmarking and this is where the social part comes in. Any new information you post will send an alert to those users that you have posted new material. To make the biggest impact and to stay out of trouble for spamming, only submit your own sites about one third of the time.

And don't just submit your index page. Post URL's to any page that needs traffic including:

Your blog postings and sites Sub pages within your main site Pages to your article sites Video pages such as YouTube and Revver.com One page sales letters Affiliate sales pages Side door and landing pages And of course, your friend’s sites and any webpage that your customers or friends will find interesting.

Consider this strategy for getting valuable backlinks to your site that Google loves:

Social bookmarking users are alerted to new content through "feeds" based on the users interests. Users can leave comments or vote the site up or down to increase popularity. Vote for your friend’s submissions and they’ll vote for you back. This is a great way to get a large number of views to a certain page of your site or someone else’s. Bookmarking users rarely buy anything or click on ads, but they love to paste links to interesting content into their blogs so that they can share the content with their readers. These are very valuable incoming links to your site pages that Google considers natural. But there is one catch...you need to know what content bookmarking users find most interesting. These include:

Top ten lists Funny pictures or videos Short articles with very "sensational" titles And content related to current events (politics, gaming, economy, news) If you think that your "sales training" website isn't very entertaining, consider this example:

A shoelace manufacturing company submitted a "Top 10 Weirdest Ways To Tie Your Shoes" short article with pictures. Over the course of three days bookmarking users visited the site nearly 8000 times and provided 300 backlinks from user's blogs. The traffic quickly died by the end of the week, but the backlinks remained. This shoelace website is now #1 on Google for the keywords "shoelace" and "shoe lace".

Be creative and find content of a similar nature that you can use for your business. Write catchy titles that make the content edgy or humorous. Or look for content that is political or newsworthy and make it relevant to your business. Even if you only get 5 backlinks to your site, they will be more valuable than link trading or begging a site to link to you. And each time you refine this strategy and submit, the links could build and build. One of these posts could catch on and you may be the one who gets 300 links for 10 minutes worth of work.

**Niche Social Networking**

A niche social network is one that concentrates on a specific industry, topic or interest. Beyond the big social sites such as Facebook, MySpace and LinkedIn there are thousands of small networks dedicated to bringing together people of like mind to share their stories and expertise. The idea behind a niche network is that users don’t have to search far and wide to find friends to network with. If you are an amateur photographer for instance, joining a social network for amateur and professional photographers can give you quick and easy access to advice, resources, job placement, education materials and making friends that love the same things you do.

As far as business is concerned, this is an easy way to find targeted prospects for your products and services, people to joint venture with and even offer your coaching and mentor programs. Let’s say you sell primarily Christian products. Making friends, creating groups and advertising on a Christian social site such as Faithlight.com will refine your targeted efforts and lead to better conversions. Facebook may be the most popular networking site in the world, but keeping your marketing efforts from being diluted or becoming lost can be a task. Niche social networking provides a ready-made audience. Most of these smaller sites have the sophistication of the larger ones with group creation, image sharing, video uploading and profile creation. These smaller networks can come and go quickly, so you want to see how long they have been around before investing too much time. Important things to look for include:

Steady membership growth Usability (how easy it is to work with the features) Length of time the site has been around Search engine friendly (does the site have a good presence in the search engines) Automation (connecting the site with your Twitter, Facebook, etc)

There are hundreds of topics to choose from when considering joining a niche social network. Take a look at your current marketing efforts. Where are you spending your time networking? Find which group of people are most receptive to your efforts and refine your target further by locating a dedicated social networking group. Google “(fill in the blank) social networking sites” and there will be long list of potential places to market your services.

Some popular sites include:

Care2.com - green living DeviantArt.com - art community Geni.com - families and genealogy LifeKnot.com - hobbies MeetTheBoss.com - finance industry Muxlim.com - Muslim interests MyChurch.com - Christian churches Quarterlife.com - actors, musicians and artists SocialVibe.com - charities and non profits WiserEarth.com - environmental and social justice WriterFace.com - for authors and writers

Additional Networks

There are a number of social networks that you may want to create a profile on. The ones listed here are not fly-by-night sites but ones with longevity, a steadily growing membership and easy feature usability. Be sure not to just jump on the latest bandwagon that pops up. You could waste your time on a site that may no longer be there at the end of the month.

**Friendster.com** – very similar to Facebook. You can build comprehensive profiles with videos and images, provide clickable links to your websites and join a variety of groups to network with. 90,000,000 members and growing.

**Bebo.com** – a site great for uploading and sharing videos and links. Very popular with the 16 - 24 crowd. There are plenty of third party applications to interact with users. 40,000,000 members and growing.

**MySpace.com** - Still one of the most popular sites in terms of numbers, but has fallen slightly out of favor with serious marketers due to the popularity and usability of Facebook and Twitter. Profiles are comprehensive and rank high in the search engine results for your name or business, especially if that keyword is part of the domain name. 263,000,000 members and steady.

**Netlog.com** – Very popular in Europe, this site is very similar to Facebook in it’s features and usability. Lots of groups and easy picture sharing provides plenty of networking opportunities. This is one of first social networks ever created and the model Facebook used for their site setup. 50,000,000 members and steady.

**Automation**

A big factor in implementing your social networking strategies is the seemingly overwhelming time it takes for getting it all done. Here are a few time saving tips to get the most from social networking in as little as 60 - 90 minutes a week.

The most time consuming part of social networking is setting up your profiles, but it is the most important part to do right. Your profile is where visitors from all over the web can read your bio, your expertise, your affiliations and click out on links to find your websites and more info. Your profile should include:

• a full bio • pictures of you • videos (if you have any, and you should) • education and affiliation info • clickable links out to ALL of your websites

After you set up profiles, it only takes a few minutes a day to add targeted people as friends. On Facebook this can be done by joining a group with similar interests as the business your promoting and asking the members to be friends. With Twitter, you can use the search function to find people with similar interests as you.

Here is how to automatically update your networks without logging in everyday:

From your EzineArticles account, go to "Author Bio." From there you can enter in your log in info for Twitter, LinkedIn, MySpace, Facebook and your Wordpress blog. Now, everytime you publish an article, all these sites will tell all your friends about it!

Ping.fm is a great site where you can write one status update and it will automatically send the update to your Twitter, Facebook, Myspace, Wordpress and dozens of other social sites. A status update is a great way to send your friends valuable links to all of your sites that you want them to see.

For your Facebook account, you can search for third party Wordpress or Blogger applications. This way when you post a new blog entry, it will automatically show up on your Facebook profile and all your friends will be notified.

TweetLater.com is a way you can publish all of your tweets at one time and schedule their release in the future. This way you don't have to keep going to your Twitter account all day long.

After setting up automatic features in your social networks, you rarely have to log in to these accounts unless you want to send your friends an event or email about something BIG going on in your business.

Spending 20 minutes on Monday pre scheduling your Tweets, another 20 minutes on Monday answering friend requests on Facebook and another 20 minutes adding pictures or sending an email to all your friends will keep your prospects informed of your activities with you going insane. Of course the more time you spend, the better it can work for you, but 60 minutes a week can make a big impact while your busy with other activities.

Let’s talk about buttons, widgets and badges. These are the graphics you see all the time on people's websites saying "Digg This", "Follow me on Twitter" and "Join Me On Facebook."

Where do people get these widgets? How can they help your online business?

On most social networks, social bookmarking sites, microblogging sites like Twitter, and even article directories you can find a link that will say "Tools” “Widgets” or “Badges." On these pages the website provides the codes that you simply copy and paste into your website or blog. They will give you a number of options on what kind of graphics or button styles to choose from. These are direct links to your particular accounts that your friends and followers can visit in one click. They can show your tweets, Facebook friends and updates and even your published articles on Ezinearticles.com in real time. As your social sites are updated, they refresh automatically. And they are not complicated to install. It is simply a code to copy and paste that the site provides for you.

If you want to get really fancy, you can create a graphic in Photoshop with your company logo, and embed a link to your profile in the image. Find a kid with Photoshop skills to help you. This can increase brand awareness, especially with Facebook fan pages or YouTube channels.

**How can this help your business?**

These widgets and buttons help drive traffic to your accounts. Your visitors can stay updated on all of your tweets, articles and videos in one glance. The Digg.com button helps you get valuable "diggs" on submitted websites.

Your friends may not even be aware that you have an account at a particular service and now they can network with you further by clicking straight out to your profile and becoming friends. You can build up Twitter followers with your "follow me" button without having to search and follow other people first. These buttons are meant to make your social networking easier.

**Information on Creating a Blog**

Great Internet Marketing – Tom Antion –

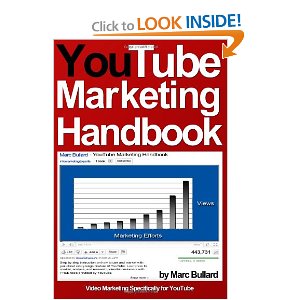
[Click HERE for Word Press creation training info](http://www.kickstartcart.com/app/?af=1454116&u=http://www.greatinternetmarketing.com/wordpressecourse/)

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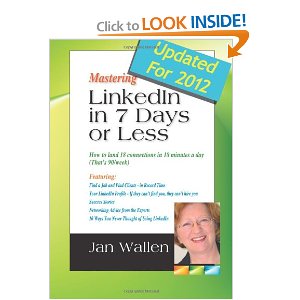
**Instruction Books for Training:**



“YouTube Marketing Handbook” by Marc Bullard

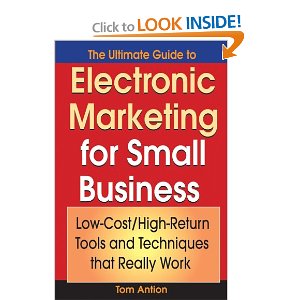
[Click here for the author’s website](http://www.kickstartcart.com/app/?af=1455004)

[Click here to see the book on Amazon](http://www.amazon.com/YouTube-Marketing-Handbook-Marc-Bullard/dp/1463711530/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1336104608&sr=1-1?_encoding=UTF8&tag=sayostll-20)

“Mastering LinkedIn In 7 Days Or Less” by Jan Wallen

[Click here for the author’s website](http://www.easywebautomation.com/app/?af=1455246)

[Click here to see the book on Amazon](http://www.amazon.com/Mastering-Linkedin-In-Days-Less/dp/0982296908/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1336103988&sr=1-1?_encoding=UTF8&tag=sayostll-20)



“The Ultimate Guide To Electronic Marketing For Small Business: Low-Cost/High Return Tools And Techniques That Really Work” by Tom Antion

[Click here to see the book on Amazon](http://www.amazon.com/Ultimate-Guide-Electronic-Marketing-Business/dp/047171870X/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1336104978&sr=1-1?_encoding=UTF8&tag=sayostll-20)