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An increasing amount of small businesses today are tapping into the tremendous advantages of Social Media Marketing; but many of them are not.

This could be a serious mistake because social media usage amongst consumers is at an all-time high.

Not only are they using it to stay in touch with friends and family, but they're using it to connect with businesses that have the products and services they want and need; this includes local businesses.

Social media offers a variety of features and tools that can help your business connect easily and more effectively with local consumers.

As you know, relationship-building has always been a successful marketing strategy; and there's no better way to implement this strategy than with social media.

Socializing with your potential customers and existing customers is one way to help them get to know your business; it's also a way to build trust with them. Ultimately, many of these social business relationships result in increased sales and revenue.

Here are some reasons social media is so effective for small businesses today:

- It allows you to listen, react and build faster than ever before
- It strengthens your relationships with existing customers
- It decreases conversion time because your audience already feels like they know you
- You can highlight your products and services in a "non-salesy" way
- It easily generates new leads and referrals to your business
- The search engines love social media, so it can increase your page rank and drive more traffic to your website
- It's an easy way to create buzz around your brand

If you haven't started to use social media yet, you probably have some unanswered questions and are wondering what all the hype is about. You also may not be aware of the type of tools and features these social platforms have that can really help your bottom line.

Here's some information about six of the top social media sites and how they can grow your business:

10 Ways Facebook Can Grow Your Local Business

Facebook is currently the largest social networking site in the world. What started off as a platform for college students to connect with each other has gone on to become the leading way for anyone of all ages to engage in an array of activities.

A new business era has also started, thanks to Facebook. Now more than ever, companies and brands have a convenient and effective way to reach masses of individuals, regardless of location.

In addition, Facebook has several unique features catered specifically towards businesses, which allows them to expand and grow. Local businesses, in particular, can benefit greatly from Facebook as there has never been a more cost-effective and easy way to grow their business and connect to potential local customers who would have otherwise been unreachable.

Here's how:

1. ***Ability to Create More Content:*** In today's world, content is one of the best ways you can reach new customers. Taking out local ads can be expensive, but with Facebook, you can write as much as you like about your business for absolutely no money at all.

With content, you also have the ability to engage with others on a more personal level. For example, if you create an engaging, valuable post about your company, be certain to ask questions to your followers in order to boost participation rates.

Be sure to answer questions and engage back once the conversation starts. Statistics show that people who feel that companies are more personable are twice as likely to become customers.

2. ***A Billion Users and Growing***: Currently, Facebook has slightly over a billion users, worldwide. This is solid proof that most of your local consumers are probably spending a lot of time on Facebook.

Therefore, it is one the best sites to interact with your existing customers as well as potential customers.

Although you can also do this on your company's official site, millions of people may never even know your site exists, much less visit it. With Facebook, however, you have the opportunity to reach these people, as well as send more traffic to your website.

3. ***The Graph Search***: In 2013, Facebook introduced a new feature, Graph Search, which allows users to search for companies, businesses, news, sports, concerts, and more.

A good majority of Facebook users use Graph Search to find local businesses, whether it be for dining options, repairs, products, and much more. It's the perfect opportunity to place your company directly into a search feature that the masses on Facebook are using.

4. ***Photos and Videos***: People are visual creatures. Photos and videos are ideal for helping your audience get to know you and company better. Best of all, there is no limit to the amount of photos and videos you can use on Facebook.

Consider taking pictures of your customer service team, your products, and anything else that allows people a glimpse into your company and what you have to offer. Also consider video tutorials and/or customer testimonial videos.

5. **Professional Business Pages:** Facebook is well-known for its personal pages where people can play games, share pictures, and engage.

However, another popular feature is Facebook's professional business pages, which allows you to add in-depth details about your company while still engaging with your customers just as you would on a personal page.

The difference, however, is that your business page isn't cluttered with personal activities and gives your company a professional appearance.

6. **Contests and Freebies:** Who doesn't like winning contests and trying out free samples? An excellent way to grow your local business via Facebook is to offer a running contest for a free product or service that your business provides.

For example, consider running a two-week contest to get as many followers as you can. New followers have a chance to win a product a service just by clicking "Like" on your page. Furthermore, you can take it further by giving the first 50 people who follow your page a free sample as well.

7. **Visit Other Pages:** Keep in mind that there are millions of businesses on Facebook. A good way to make your own business stand out is to converse and leave comments on other pages. For example, consider "Liking" companies that are similar to yours, and leaving relevant comments on certain posts. This will help bring attention to your own page, and in turn, attract more people.
8. **SEO Improvement:** Google, along with the other search engine giants, are now indexing Facebook pages into search engine results. However, to keep your page relevant and in the search engines, you'll need to update your page regularly. This is a great way to attract those who use search engines to seek out local businesses.

9. **Facebook Advertisements:** For a nominal fee, you can create Facebook advertisements. Facebook advertisements work by allowing you to choose your own target demographics as well as certain keywords. Your ads will then be placed on Facebook for target users to see.

Facebook advertisements have been shown to increase you pages "Likes," bring in more frequent followers, and in turn, attract more business to your company. Facebook ads typically include your ad's headline, a photo, description, and a way to click through to your page or business website.

Facebook will never charge you anything beyond your budget, and you'll be provided the opportunity to set your own "Facebook Budget" before getting started.

10. **Promoted Posts:** For a flat fee, you can promote a single post, which will have priority in your followers' news feeds. This works best if you're hosting an upcoming event or marketing a new product or service, and want to put prominence on a its post.

Some may wonder what the difference is since your followers can see your posts anyway. However, Facebook news feeds have the tendency to get cluttered, resulting in your updates getting lost in an array of other posts.

A promoted post will ensure that your post gets top priority. Although promoted posts don't target specific groups and lack the additional options that advertisements offer, it's definitely a good way to grow your business when you have something extremely important to share, such as a new product, new service, or an in-person event.

10 Reasons Twitter Can Grow Your Local Business

Millions of local businesses owner have taken to social networking in order market, advertise, and attract new customers. Twitter is an ideal platform for busy business owners and managers as it specializes in short “tweets” that allows you to get your point across in 140 characters or less.

In addition to its convenience of quick and short messages, Twitter offers unique ways in which you can grow your local business that other social networking sites don’t offer.

Here are some of them:

1. **Customer Interaction:** Customer interaction is by far the most important action you can take to build an audience, attract new followers, and get more attention on your local business.

Twitter allows you to send out “tweets” in real-time that can reach all your followers all at once. In addition, customers and/or potential customers can easily tweet back or send you direct messages.

Again, customer interaction is the single most important thing you can do online to grow your company and attract new customers. Not only does it help you to gain loyal customers, but it also shows that you’re available when people have questions, comments, or concerns.

Unlike traditional ways of submitting questions and complaints via email or phone, customers can receive a response in real-time, right away, which helps them to gain confidence in your company.

Furthermore, feel free to engage in your customers’ tweets even if it’s not about your business. This will help you establish that “personal connection” with them.

2. **Marketing Tools:** Twitter’s web marketing tools allow you to create customized Twitter buttons for your website. With Twitter Ads, you can promote both your account and chose tweets to send to a target audience of your choice.

With Twitter's self-service ad platform, local business owners are offered affordable ad services while getting full-service advertisement usage.

In fact, you can set your own budget, and you'll only be charged when someone follows your promoted tweets. Organic tweets are not included and are never charged, and there is no monthly fee. For more information, simply click on your Settings tab on your Twitter homepage.

3. **Company News Updates:** Twitter offers a quick and affordable (free) way for you to alert your followers to any company news updates, such as promotions, new business hours, new services products, or anything relevant news updates you'd like to share.

With a quick tweet, your followers can be provided any company news and/or updates you want to share. Updates and company news give followers a reason to actively engage with you, which may lead to more business.

4. **Going Viral:** One of the more prominent advantages of Twitter is the ability of certain tweets to go "viral," meaning that one or many of your tweets has the potential to reach millions across the globe, and more importantly, reach consumers right in your local area.
5. **Contests and Coupons:** Many companies have had success in gaining new followers, therefore gaining new customers, by holding "Twitter Contests." Contests can range from offering a free service to the 50th newest follower or holding a drawing for a free product to a random follower. In addition, Twitter is an easy way to allow all followers to know, in real-time, about company specials and coupons.
6. **Following Relevant Companies and People:** By following similar companies such as your own, not only can you gain secrets into their marketing tips, but you can also expose yourself to others who may potentially turn into new customers.

Take time to reply the other businesses and share any information that can help your company. Also, consider following active followers of relevant companies who may interested in your services as well.

7. **Bring More Traffic to Your Website:** In addition to placing Twitter buttons on your website's homepage, you can also drive more traffic to your site by utilizing Twitter's bio section to include your business website address and other details.

It is recommended that some of your tweets actually send followers to your company website for additional information.

To stay on top of branding, it is ideal to create a Twitter username that is the exact same as your company name – if that's not possible, be sure it's very close.

Additionally, a customized background will help your Twitter page look more professional, as well as help with branding.

8. **Twitter Lists:** Twitter lists are user-created lists that allow you to engage and keep track of certain people and businesses. This not only allows you to organize your network, but it also allows you to organize your current customers, future customers, and business partners.

In addition, Twitter Lists provides you a way to monitor competitors in your industry unbeknownst to anyone, via a private list. Moreover, if you're having a company event or sale, tweeting, while effective, may not reach all of customers if they aren't checking Twitter when you make the announcements.

While you can definitely tweet the event as many times as you like, a Twitter list allows people to connect and interact before the event, as well as get reminders.

9. **Your Biography:** As aforementioned, Twitter allows users to create a biography in order to give more details about yourself and your

company. Be sure to optimize your biography in a way that reflects what your company does and what you offer.

Several Twitter users become new customers by simply reading Twitter biographies. Keep in mind, however, that Twitter operates on short, concise information, so you only have a limited amount of characters to create your biography.

Make it count by choosing the most pertinent information you want people to see.

10. ***Tweet Helpful Local Content***: In addition to tweeting relevant company information, consider tweeting helpful local content, such as upcoming weather and other things that locals may be interested in.

Most Internet users, including Twitter users, search for geographic-specific information on a regular basis. By tweeting hyper-local information, you're opening up to an even wider local market.

Using the information listed in this report, your local business has a successful chance in reaching a high volume of people that otherwise would have never known about your company.

As a result, your business can ultimately generate new leads and customers via Twitter, but keep in mind that customer interaction is the key. The more often you interact with people, the better chance you have that they will check out your tweets, your company website, and your services.

Twitter is an extremely powerful tool for companies, and with dedication, time, and effort, your local business will blossom.

10 Ways LinkedIn Can Grow Your Local Business

LinkedIn is a social networking site aimed primarily at professionals who seek like-minded individuals, business, and customers to connect with. Since its launch in May of 2003, LinkedIn has expanded its online presence and established itself as a leading primary business networking site.

Though its current membership of 225 million users in 200 countries is still dwarfed by that of Facebook, the site attracts an important sector of web users that contribute their efforts to the global economy. LinkedIn's mission statement is simple: to connect the world's professionals and help them improve their productivity and enhance their success.

In this age of global interconnectivity and ecommerce, local business owners and managers need to be aware of the benefits social networks provide. In business, establishing one's presence and earning professional credibility are essential keys to success.

As recently as 30 years ago, establishing a reputation in professional circles was complicated. Networking depended greatly on face-to-face meetings, business travel, and long-distance phone calls. Although some of these steps are still necessary in starting professional relationships, LinkedIn makes it easy to connect to others and help grow businesses.

1. **Recommendations:** In business, as well as in other aspects of your life, credibility is what makes or breaks your reputation. You can train for years to learn every aspect of your chosen career, but if you don't have a set of good recommendations, you may find it harder to get new customers or clients.

LinkedIn recommendations, especially those from people who know your skills and products, will raise your professional credibility immensely. This, in turn, will help you attract more followers on LinkedIn and be noticed by new clients or customers.

2. **Using LinkedIn Groups:** LinkedIn Groups are an excellent way to connect with peers in your career field and establish solid connections with potential clients and/or customers. For example, if you are a certified public accountant or financial advisor, a LinkedIn Group for financial professionals is a good way to start connecting.

LinkedIn has over a million specialized groups on the site. Many of these groups are well-administered and have active members who share ideas and give helpful advice.

Share your ideas and experiences with other group members that may help them and you'll find that your business connections will expand with time.

3. **Make Connections:** To be successful on LinkedIn, you'll need to make connections, and once you make connections, the potential for your business to grow significantly increases.

The best way to begin is to see if someone you already know is a LinkedIn member. If you find a friend, ex-classmate, or ex-colleague, send out an invite.

Once you have made several initial connections, ask them if you can contact other LinkedIn members from their contact lists to expand your network.

Check out people who are in the same business as you and connect with them as well. They may be willing to share their experiences and know-how with you. In turn, you may have insights and innovations that may help them improve productivity and generate success.

4. **Company Profile Pages:** It's important to make sure your company profile page on LinkedIn is as detailed and as professional as possible.

Be sure to use a high quality company photo and to fill in as many details about your company as you can. The more detailed information you provide about your company and services, the more chances you'll have of generating more business from the profile.

Although it seems like a given that everyone will complete their profile details, LinkedIn has extensive options for profiles that many users neglect. Be certain to utilize every feature on your profile page.

5. **Advertisements:** LinkedIn's advertising options give you a chance to reach a specific audience via job titles, company names, and more. Businesses can set their own budget, and you'll only be charged when someone clicks on your ad.

Your budget can be as small or as large as you like, as it's up to you how much you want to spend.

6. **Account Upgrades:** LinkedIn's free account is a powerful tool for local companies, and millions have success by using the basic account alone.

However, if you need increased visibility, advanced search features, and the ability to contact people outside of your network, consider upgrading to a premium account.

7. **Recommend Others-** In addition to being recommended, recommending other trustworthy people and companies not only heightens your exposure, but it will also increase your chances of more people and businesses recommending you as well.

As previously mentioned, LinkedIn recommendations are a powerful way to let others know that your company is stable and reliable.

8. **Connect Your LinkedIn Account with Other Social Networks:** LinkedIn allows you to connect other social network accounts to your LinkedIn account, which in turn can help to expose your business even more.

For example, if you have a Twitter account, one of your "tweets" may lead people to your LinkedIn page, or one of your Facebook posts might interest someone enough to connect with you on LinkedIn.

9. **Answer Questions Relevant to Your Industry:** Located under the "More" section in your navigation bar is a section called "Answers." This is an area in which professionals can answer questions relevant to their business. Take time to browse through questions in your area of expertise, and if you find a question you are knowledgeable about, feel free to provide an answer.

Answering questions will increase your presence will at the same time helping you establish credibility for your company. Keep in mind, however, that it's better to provide a helpful answer without advertising your company.

If your answers are helpful enough, relevant people will be interested in your business without you having to pitch it in your answer.

10. **Pictures and Videos:** LinkedIn recently announced that members can now add more pictures and use videos to promote their services, company, talents, and more.

It's important to take advantage of this option as most people are visual and make purchasing decisions based off quality content as well as photos and videos.

There are a variety of ways in which you can utilize photos and videos on LinkedIn in order to attract more business. For example, customer testimonial, how-to, and product demonstration videos can give potential customers a direct glimpse into your business.

High-quality products and services photos allow people see exactly what you offer, which is powerful when it comes to converting them into paying customers or clients.

10 Ways Google+ Can Grow Your Local Business

Although Google Plus (also known as Google+) is a social media site in which users can play games, chat, share photos, listen to music together, and more, it has become much more important in the eyes of business owners.

Google+ is now one of the leading ways in which businesses can connect and engage with customers, promote services, hold business meetings, and market to a wider audience.

As Google+ continues to unfold more and more features for its business users, such as local listings and verified content, now is the time for companies and/or brands to take advantage of all that it has to offer.

Never before has a social networking site been able to cater and provide so much to local business owners at no expense at all the way Google+ does.

Here's why:

1. **100 Million Users and Growing:** Google+ is relatively new to social networking, establishing itself only in 2011, whereas sites such as Facebook and Twitter had already been around for several years.

However, unlike other social networking sites, Google+ gained over 25 million users within a month of its launch, making it the fastest growing social networking site in the history of time.

Currently, there are a little over 100 million users on Google+, and this number is expected to grow. Combined with business-friendly features, Google+ makes it relatively simple for local companies to reach out to masses of people who they otherwise may not have been able to reach.

2. **Communities:** Google+ Communities give you the perfect opportunity to personally engage with like-minded businesses and individuals. You can create your own community for your business and invite your followers, and you can also join other communities which will give your business added exposure.

You'll be able to post videos, photos, and documents, as well as send out as many community invitations as you choose.

3. **Local Listings:** Once you join Google+, you'll have the opportunity to list your business in Google Places for Business. You'll also be able to provide pertinent details regarding your business, such as services offered, hours of operation, and directions.

Additionally, people are able to leave reviews of your company for others to see. A simple verification process ensures that your business is legitimately yours, thus providing more credibility to your customers and potential customers.

4. **Customer Service/Interaction:** One of the most beneficial ways in which Google+ allows your local business to grow is the ease of

customer service and interaction. You can easily reply to customer requests and concerns via your circles, your communities, and more.

Keep in mind that along with responding to questions, it's always a good idea to actively engage in comments, including showing interest in your followers, on a regular basis. The more often you engage with your audience, the better chances of gaining new customers and retaining current ones.

5. **Google Hangouts:** Hangouts differ from communities in that you'll have the option to host a live video session with whoever you invite to "hang out." Hangouts help businesses grow by providing an alternate means to hold employee meetings, presentations, workshops, share pertinent documents, and more. You'll also be provided the opportunity to save your Hangouts for reference by saving each one to YouTube.
6. **360° Tours with Google+ Business Photos:** With Google+ Business Photos, people can view photos of your business via a 360° interactive tour. This provides you the perfect opportunity to allow potential customers a detailed glimpse inside your company.

Viewers can virtually explore, walk around, and interact with your business while sitting comfortably at home or on their smartphones. In addition to appearing on Google+, these photos appear in Google search, Google+ Local, and Google Maps.

You can also embed images on other social media sites as well as your business website.

7. **Google Circles:** With Google Circles, you can easily add your followers into different groups, known as circles, which allows you to target specific people for your business.

For example, you may want to announce a business event, which wouldn't be relevant to your customers, but is important for your employees to know about.

Likewise, you can target your customers and potential customers only, should you decide to run a special or announce an upcoming contest. This way, your followers aren't bogged down with irrelevant information which will keep them from "muting" your future posts.

8. **Google Ripples:** A relatively new Google+ feature, but one that's caught on quickly is Ripples. Google+ Ripples is an interactive tool that allows you to see how a certain post has "rippled" by providing data on your shared posts.

For example, Google+ Ripples shows you who shared your post, how it was shared, and the statistics for each shared post, such as how many shares, demographics, and more. This in turn provides you with information on who finds your posts interesting and relevant, which may equal new business for you.

9. **Verify Ownership of Your Content:** Once you link your company website, blog, or any other site you own to your Google+ profile, you'll automatically be verified as the authentic owner of the content you provide.

This helps prevent acts of plagiarism and copywriting. This also helps your business by letting people know that you are the true owner of your content, thus boosting your company's credibility.

Additionally, your Google+ photo will appear next to each of your content pieces in Google search results, which will help to boost you and your company's visibility.

10. **Google Maps:** This option mainly applies to business owners who are located in a rural area and/or small town, as Google Business Photos are only available in large cities.

However, Google Maps, when combined with Google+, can provide you with a competitive alternative. When people click on the map icon located in the lower-right hand corner of the map view on your page,

they'll be taken to a local map, which provides a 360° exterior view of rural, small, and outlying towns.

10 Ways YouTube Can Grow Your Local Business

YouTube averages close to four billion views per day worldwide, making it the most watched video site in the history of time via the Internet. As a result, businesses all over the globe have taken to YouTube in order to promote their services.

In fact, at least 70% of businesses use videos to market and gain exposure, according to a 2013 Content Marketing Benchmarks report. Furthermore, videos have shown to be five times more productive in reaching new customers than content alone. A whopping 90% of customers will make their purchasing decisions after viewing a video online.

Backed by Google, the Internet's most popular search engine, YouTube offers an array of ways in which you can grow your local business. All it takes is a bit of consistency, effort, and time.

Here's why:

1. ***Visuals Bring in More Customers:*** Although content plays an extremely important role when marketing your local business, especially online.

People are visual, and many buying decisions, as aforementioned, are made based on seeing a high-quality advertisement with photos or videos that detail the products and/or services offered.

With the sheer number of users on YouTube, there is a wide market of local consumers who could potentially view your videos; consumers who may have otherwise never known about your business.

2. ***Tutorials and Customer Testimonials:*** Good company videos are the ones that not only let others know how to use your products or what you offer, but also testimonials from other real customers.

Depending upon your industry, consider providing in-depth videos showcasing your products and/or services. For example, a carpet cleaning business would benefit by providing videos that show the actual process, the end results, and the types of services provided. In addition, consider offering a discount to satisfied customers in order to provide you with video testimonials that you can use on your channel.

As far as tutorials, simply create and upload an array of videos that tap into the pains and/or desires your target audience is most likely to have. Give them ways to reach their intended goal – all for free.

In the end, more and more customers could decide to choose your business when they're ready to purchase your type of product or service – all because you were able to provide them with valuable information.

From beauty salons to dog walking services, YouTube has been beneficial to a plethora of local business owners.

Tutorials and customer testimonials both will help you convert more visitors into paying customers over time.

3. Playlists: Once you've uploaded a set of videos, you can create a playlist so that viewers can see your videos back to back, instead of searching for each one.

This helps tremendously when promoting your services, especially if you have a tutorial broken up into different videos. Viewers will be more apt to continue watching your videos, which may result in more business.

4. Feedback, Questions, and Comments: YouTube allows users to comment, question, and provide feedback on your videos. It's extremely important to take the time to respond back to your viewers as it establishes a good connection and lets them feel as if you're reliable.

Too often, many comments and suggestions go ignored, which leads to users going elsewhere. Actively engaging with viewers is one of the easiest, yet most important ways, you can build relationships and trust.

5. **Video Social Network:** Remember that although YouTube is a video site, it's also a social networking site; and with its growing numbers, it rivals the giants such as Facebook and Twitter.

Take advantage of the additional features YouTube offers such as groups, subscriptions, and actively engaging on others' channels. You'll also want to link your YouTube to other social networking sites in order to increase your exposure.

6. **YouTube Ads:** Google Adwords for Video allows you to strategically place video ads, catered towards targeted users. You'll be able to customize your own ads, and won't be charged until someone chooses to view your ad.

7. **Customized Channel:** Be certain to customize your YouTube in way that professionally reflects your brand and/or your business.

For example, use your company logo as your photo while choosing a customized background, such as your company colors. The more professional your channel looks, the more apt users are to trust you.

Not only that, but a customized channel will also boost your brand awareness, which is vital.

8. **SEO and Keywords:** YouTube allows you to place keywords throughout your descriptions and even in your videos. This is a powerful SEO marketing tool and will lead targeted local viewers to your videos; especially those who are looking for relevant information.

9. **Sneak Peaks:** If you have a new product or services in the works, a high-quality "sneak peak" video is an easy way to garner excitement while providing information on what consumers can expect. Sneak

peak videos should only be a few minutes long or less, just as long as they provoke a sense of anticipation.

10. **Regular Production:** Unfortunately, attention spans tend to be short in the online world. Along with uploading quality videos, it's important to do this regularly.

People are fickle, and if they see no movement on your channel, they may move on to another company. Be certain to upload high-quality useful videos as often as possible. If you don't have anything to upload, then be sure to stay actively engaged until you do.

For example, comment on other company videos and reply to other users who have commented. However, you'll need to find a production schedule that's right for you and stick to it.

Over the past several years, millions of people have found an array of businesses by simply watching YouTube videos. Regardless of what your business is or how big or small, online videos have proven to be a successful marketing method for many companies.

Small businesses typically don't have the budget for high-profile advertising, which is why social networking sites such as YouTube are extremely beneficial. Best of all, aside from optional advertising that works well with small business budgets, using YouTube is free for everyone.

10 Reasons Pinterest Can Grow Your Local Business

Created as a way to share virtual pins via a social media site, Pinterest has exploded in population since its 2012 inception. With over 70 million users and growing, Pinterest is currently one of the top 5 most active and popular social media platforms on the Internet. There has never been a better time for local businesses to learn about Pinterest and how it can help grow businesses.

Here's how:

1. ***Pinterest Offers Business Accounts:*** Although it looks similar to a personal account, Pinterest business accounts offer educational tools for businesses, as well as unique features that aren't available for personal pages. You'll be able to list your full business name instead of only your first and last name.

Your business will have an official company page, verified by Pinterest staff members. This not only proves your credibility to future customers, but also eliminates others from creating false accounts under your company name.

2. ***Analytics and Trending Tools:*** Pinterest offers its own analytics tool that allows you to keep track of how many users have pinned your photos.

"Repinly" is a powerful tool that Pinterest offers which allows you to stay on top of what's hot and currently trending in your industry.

A host of other business tools are also available, such as WordPress plugins, gadgets, badges, and more.

3. ***High Traffic:*** As aforementioned, Pinterest is one of the fastest growing social media sites ever, with over 70 million current members. These numbers are expected to grow.

Millions of these users visit business websites after seeing a pin they like. Pinterest drives triple the amount of traffic to third-party websites when compared to giants such as Google Plus.

4. ***Links Back to Your Site:*** Once you pin from an outside source, each pin will lead back to the original website, giving you the perfect opportunity to bring potential customers to your business website.

When you pin internally, you can place links back to your business website via a description box under each pin.

5. **Sharing via Other Social Media Platforms:** Pinterest allows you to share your pins with other popular social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter.

Pins can be set up to be automatically shared each time you pin something, which ultimately exposes your products and services to more people.

People who view your pins on other social media sites have the option to repost and/or share your pins with their own followers and friends.

6. **Study Buyer Behavior and Relevant Companies:** Pinterest provides an excellent tool for local business owners to understand how their target customers shop and spend.

By viewing pins of your current customers and others who pin industry-relevant products, you'll be able to gauge their shopping habits.

You can also track what's trending in your industry and how other relevant businesses are faring on Pinterest by following their boards.

7. **Video Galleries and Featured Blog Posts:** Local businesses aren't limited to photos only. Videos provide an additional way to expose your business via tutorials, customer testimonials, and more.

Business accounts can create high-quality visuals to go along with their blog posts, and then highlight a featured post. Videos can be featured as well in the same manner as blog posts.

8. **Create as Many Boards as You Want:** Adding a variety of creative pins to different boards lets users easily browse through your different categories with ease.

Organized boards with high-quality photos and videos attract potential customers twice as much as uncategorized items.

9. ***Pin it to Win it Contests, Sweepstakes, and Freebies:*** With the Pinterest Pin it to Win it Contests, you can hold regular contests, drawing in more paying customers.

Customers can pin an image to your boards, and the person with the most creative pins can win a product of your choosing. Random winners can be chosen via a sweepstakes method.

You can get creative as you want. Consider providing free samples and/or coupons to people who pin your products.

10. ***Humanize Your Business:*** People are more likely to trust, and therefore buy from, companies that show their human side. Pinterest is one the best sites to utilize in order to show your creative and personal side.

Make pins that express company's beliefs in customer service, dignity, and more, and be certain to re-pin other photos and/or videos that express your company's mottos.

Consider creating personal boards for staff members or employees so that others can get a sense of their personal style and interests. Creating a board solely for customers will make them feel at ease and appreciated. Pinning photos and visual testimonials of satisfied customer will build credibility and trust.

Important Points to Remember:

- Like other social networking platforms, Pinterest is all about engaging and customer interaction. If someone pins your photo or video, take the time out to check out their other pins and leave appropriate comments.
- Pinterest prohibits self-promotion, so it's important to remember to be creative without pushing for sales. It's perfectly fine to feature your products, videos, or blog posts, but just remember to do so in a subtle way. For instance, if you own a beauty salon, consider pinning

different hair styles, hair care visual tips, and shampoo products you carry. The pins will speak for themselves.

- Although self-promotion isn't a part of Pinterest, there is nothing wrong with listing the price of one of your products on your pins. When you do so, your pin will also be listed in the gift section of Pinterest, which will help to bring in even more customers.
- Keep in mind that Pinterest is all about creativity. Don't use low-quality, blurry images that don't truly showcase what your business has to offer. It may be tempting to pin as much as you can to get your name out there, but make sure to take the time to only pin photos that represents your company in the best way. In other words, be creative yet look at each pin from the customer's point of view.

Thank you for reading our report and hopefully, you have a better idea about some of the ways Social Media can grow your local business.

If you would like to discuss using Social Media to market your business in particular, contact us at (626) 382-8403. We will help you determine your specific needs and a detailed action plan to ensure you get started on the right foot.

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