



Social Media for Lead Generation

The Act-On Center of Excellence

Helping you be a better marketer

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Course Introduction

According to Forrester's newest B2B Social Technographics® numbers, fully 100% of business decision-makers use social media for work purposes.

- 98% of business decision-makers are Spectators (they read blogs, watch videos, or listen to podcasts)
- 79% are Joiners (they maintain a profile on social networking sites)
- 75% are Critics (they comment on blogs and post ratings and reviews)

— all in the context of their business activities.¹ It's critical to understand how you can use social media and content to help attract and engage these buyers as they research their options and evaluate purchasing your product or service.

What's inside the course

This course is designed to help marketers generate leads via social media. The course consists of nine sections. If you are interested in a particular topic, you can consume each section on a standalone basis. Each section in the course contains: essential best practices; an illustration of those best practices; and a detailed, step-by-step how-to.

Who should take this course

Marketers who are responsible for generating leads and/or managing their company's social media efforts will find value in the course.

How to use the course

Social Media for Lead Generation focuses on how to use social media to support your lead generation efforts. The course serves as a blueprint for marketers who want to know the specific steps required to create lead gen campaigns that are promoted via social media. As such, you should take the course once and then refer back to it when using social media for lead generation.

This course was jointly created by **Act-On** and **TOPO**. Learn more at www.topohq.com

¹[Zachary Reiss-Davis](http://bit.ly/1dF8PTT), Forrester blog, July 17, 2013 <http://bit.ly/1dF8PTT>

Part 2

Social Media Lead Generation Fundamentals

Part 2 Social Media Lead Generation Fundamentals

The Essentials

Over the last several years, social media has emerged as an effective tool for generating leads. Two-thirds of online adults use social networking, and almost half use it daily.² Your prospective customers are using it to discover new offerings and educate themselves through the buying journey. This makes social media a vital channel to engage with your target audience across, with the end result being greater amplification of your message and more qualified leads generated.

Understanding the buyer

It's critical to understand how your buyer uses social media. You need to know what social platforms they use, how they use them, and what behaviors they exhibit, in order to determine your best social media mix.

Content as the foundation of your lead generation efforts

Buyers are much more likely to engage with you on social media when you offer them compelling content. Types of content formats that work well include blog posts, white papers, webinars, infographics, slide presentations, and videos. Any type of content with the ability to inform or entertain can be used; the common denominator is providing value to your customer. The content you share should be helpful, relevant, and engaging. For some products and services, comical and playful content is effective. If you choose to gate content behind a form on a landing page, it will give you an opportunity to gather contact information and generate a lead when someone accesses it.

The different social channels

There are many social media sites you can use to support your lead gen programs. Facebook, Twitter, Google+, and LinkedIn receive a lot of attention and deservedly so; they're the big four of social, with massive memberships ranging from LinkedIn's 225 million members to Twitters' 500 million and Facebook's 1.1 billion. Despite a late start, Google+ has rocketed to second place in total users, with over a half-billion.³ When starting out, you should focus on one or more of these networks. Which channels you choose to pursue first will depend on your industry, your product or service offering, and where your customers/prospects have matriculated online.

As you gain experience and grow your content database, expand your efforts to other social sites that appeal to your buyers. Look in particular for brand-agnostic community sites and forums where your buyers spend time. You should use every channel that is relevant to your buyers, but make sure that you have the bandwidth to execute well in any and all channels in which you decide to have a presence. You'll have far more impact going deep than going wide.

²Pew Internet & American Life Project September 2012, http://www.pewinternet.org/~media/Files/Presentations/2012/Sept/FoxMed2Panel_PDF.pdf

³Mashable.com, December 2012. <http://mashable.com/2012/12/06/google-plus-500-million-members/>

Part 2 Social Media Lead Generation Fundamentals

Who to build your networks around

Numbers of followers and fans, by themselves, aren't necessarily the only thing you're after. Ideally, every connection you make would somehow be linked to your goals and objectives in business, both now and in the future. Keep these firmly in mind as you create your social strategies and execute them.

BAA

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Your name:

Your email:

@

What's on your mind?

Your social publishing can bring prospects to your forms in one click.

Part 2 Social Media Lead Generation Fundamentals

How to: 11 Steps to Social Media Lead Generation

1. Understand your buyer and how they use social media

Make sure that you know how your target buyer is using social media. Understand where they spend time, how they use different social platforms, and the key behaviors that they exhibit when using social media. The same buyer may behave differently on Facebook than on Twitter; be aware of channel-specific actions.

2. Develop content and offers that are appropriate for social

Offering compelling content or vertical specific content makes it more likely that your potential buyer will engage with you. Develop content such as blog posts, white papers, infographics, memes, graphics, and webinars that the buyer will find helpful (and perhaps fun) as they spend time on social sites.

3. Create a plan to promote your content via various social channels

Identify the sites where your target buyers spend time. Usually the major social networking sites (Facebook, Twitter, Google+, and LinkedIn) are likely, but do the research to make sure. Among B2B decision-makers, 81% use topic-specific communities and forums for personal and professional reasons,⁴ so you may want to include prime ones in your social media mix. A casual survey among your existing customers can point out the best places to begin. Whichever channels you choose, develop a plan for each that specifies how you will use it to attract buyers and promote content, as well as a posting schedule to know what content is shared across the various channels and at what time of the day. There are best times to post on social media channels to attract the highest number of impressions, so you will want to stage posts accordingly.

4. Use Facebook for lead generation

Among online adults, 67% say they use Facebook.⁵ With over one billion members, Facebook gives you the opportunity to engage a massive audience. Of these, 751 million use Facebook mobile, and 80% of those mobile users check their phones early each morning.⁶ Effective lead generation on Facebook depends on sharing content that is engaging and useful to your target buyer and renders visually well on mobile devices. Even though it has a consumer focus, there's a significant opportunity to engage B2B buyers on Facebook by using images and sharing links to blog posts, white papers, webinars, etc. Check out Facebook Insights to know the best times to

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⁵Pew Internet & American Life Project, August 2013, <http://pewinternet.org/Commentary/2012/March/Pew-Internet-Social-Networking-full-detail.aspx>

⁶Visual.ly "Best Times to Post on Social Media" 2013 visual.ly/best-times-post-social-media

Part 2 Social Media Lead Generation Fundamentals

address your audience. Facebook offers self-service advertising options. Put a little extra leverage behind your white paper or webinar offer by boosting the post or running a sponsored ad that targets a specific audience or interest segment. This will help to extend the reach of the social promotion and increase the number of active registrants.

5. Use Twitter for lead generation

Twitter has [140 million monthly active users](#).⁷ It's a highly effective platform for targeting groups of B2B buyers. High quality content here will attract followers and generate clicks, and if people like it enough to retweet or favorite, your reach can be amplified quickly.

Short tweets are more likely to receive engagement than tweets over 100 characters, and don't hesitate to ask for retweets on specific posts; posts are then far more likely to be retweeted.

When issuing tweets organically, without promoting through the advertising feature, it is best to include two hashtags on each tweet for best results. This helps to increase the reach of tweets and places the tweet into larger related conversations happening on Twitter.

Twitter also offers self-service advertising options that allow marketers to promote tweets in search and timeline, and target based on interests, keywords, followers, and demographics. When promoting a tweet, it is best to include only one call to action, like the URL. If you use @handles or hashtags in your promoted posts, you will be charged for any click on the post. As a marketer, the objective is to drive the buyer to complete the action of registering, completing a form, etc. If you have more than one hyperlinked option in the post, you are giving the prospect too many options. If they click on the hashtag or @handle in the post, you are driving them away from your main call to action.

6. Use LinkedIn for lead generation

LinkedIn is the social network most used for pure business purposes.⁸ With over 225 million members, the network provides extensive reach and offers unique ways to target and engage a professional audience. Among B2B decision-makers, 81% use LinkedIn, with 26% using it primarily for business and 48% using it for both personal and business purposes. For B2B marketers, LinkedIn has proven to be the most successful channel for customer acquisition.

Based on a recent infographic by Wishpond,⁹ LinkedIn is 277% more effective at generating relevant leads than Facebook or Twitter, and 77% of B2B marketers say that they have acquired a customer through LinkedIn. It is important to note that LinkedIn is most often used right before and right after work hours. Tuesday and Thursday typically receive the most social media traffic from businesspeople, and posts during work hours receive less traffic. Remember this when building out a social posting schedule.

⁷Mashable.com, December 2012, <http://mashable.com/2012/12/06/google-plus-500-million-members/>

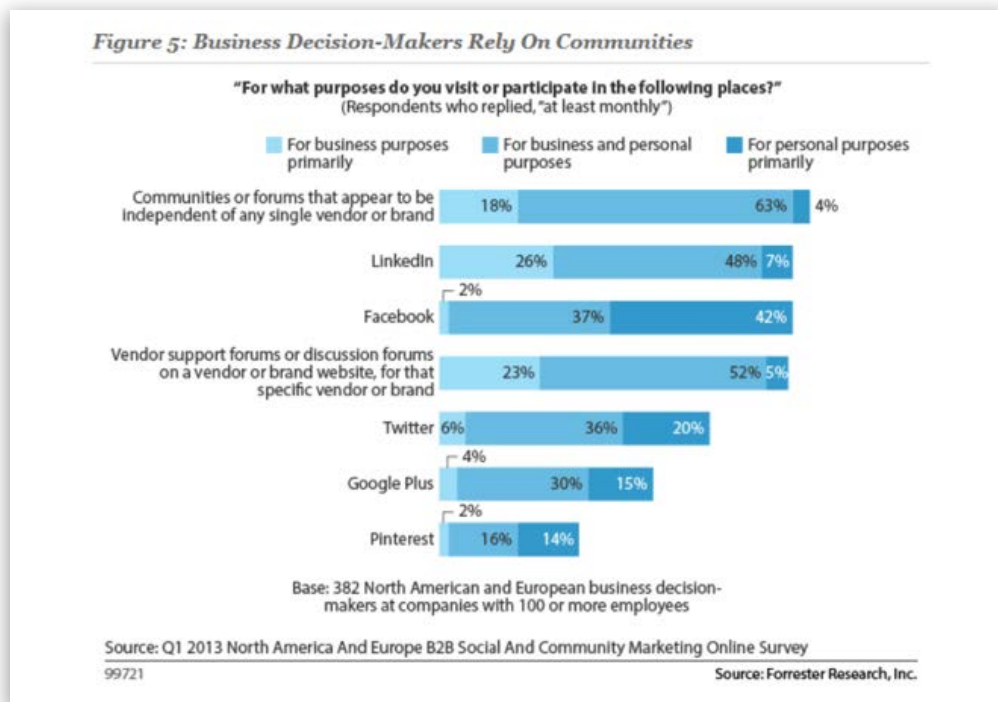
⁸Hootsuite, July 2013, <http://blog.hootsuite.com/social-network-for-work/>

⁹Wishpon, August 2013, <http://blog.wishpond.com/post/58707385021/infographic-linkedin-by-the-numbers-22-amazing>

Part 2 Social Media Lead Generation Fundamentals

7. Use Google+ for lead generation

The most organic way to use Google+ to generate leads is by posting compelling content updates that include links back to your website. Google+ is a great content distribution platform. Google+ plays an important role in authorship and online visibility and is pivotal to the amplification of a company's content. Be sure to use only quality content, so people have a reason to engage with your materials. Test the timing and frequency of posting to see what works the best. Google recommends tagging other Google+ users in your updates to [achieve personalization](#): Just add a + sign in front of the name of the person you want to tag, and select the right user profile. This helps your update appear in search results on Google+, giving your content more reach.



8. Use independent forums for lead generation

Forrester research shows that independent communities and forums get more traffic from B2B decision-makers than branded social networks. Of those surveyed, 85% visited these forums, and a large majority of them for both personal and work purposes.

9. The mobile connection

Of mobile phone owners, 40% have a social network on their phone; 28 percent access it daily.¹⁰ Keep this in mind as you plan your campaigns.

¹⁰Pew Internet & American Life Project, September 2012, http://www.pewinternet.org/~media/Files/Presentations/2012/Sept/FoxMed2Panel_PDF.pdf

Part 2 Social Media Lead Generation Fundamentals

10. Use technology to power your social media lead generation

Social media marketing is really fast-paced and can be challenging to keep up with. There are technology solutions and tools that you can use to do more with less, particularly when it comes to automating the sharing of content and measuring the impact of your efforts. Some marketing automation systems integrate social tools, allowing you to do all your social marketing from one platform.

11. Generating buyer interest through pictures and image sharing

Instagram: Today's prospective customers are visual; they want to see what you're talking about. Instagram is a great supplement to the other social channels where you share more text-heavy content. On Instagram, you are not only sharing photos with your audience, you're giving them a glimpse into what your businesses is doing. It gives your audience a backstage pass to the culture of your company, and it fosters community.

Some businesses, particularly those in the B2C hospitality, fashion, and restaurant industries find Instagram and Pinterest to be of cardinal importance to their social lead generation strategy. These two social channels help to connect brands with buyers through aesthetically appealing photos. Pictures speak for themselves and help to sell a brand's products; this makes the saying "pictures are worth a thousand words" very true.

On Instagram, you can share photos of staff members, company sponsorships, tradeshow booth presence, corporate events, and products. Highlight and show off your products, and use hashtags to make the photos more searchable. The goal is to get Instagram followers over to your website to become paying customers. If you offer a tangible product, then Instagram is a great platform for showcasing products to your followers. You can also synch your Instagram feed with other popular social networks, like Twitter and Facebook, so that you can save time with social sharing.

Pinterest is a pinboard-style social networking platform where users share their favorite pictures, videos, and online discussions to themed boards, as well as to their own personal "likes" pages. The site is gaining a lot of traction: 25% of Fortune Global 100 companies have Pinterest accounts, and Pinterest is now the third most popular social network in the United States in terms of traffic. 69% of online consumers who visit Pinterest have found an item they've purchased or wanted to purchase.¹¹ Currently, Pinterest is retaining and engaging users as much as 2-3x as efficiently as Twitter was at a similar time in its history.

When you create your company's Pinterest account, completely fill out your company's profile (with the company name, description, logo, location, and website), link the Pinterest account to your other corporate social media accounts, and verify your account. Once you have completed these basic actions, find relevant users and boards to follow, create pinboards that represent your company, and begin repinning, as well as liking relevant pins from other users.

¹¹Wishpond, June 2013 <http://blog.wishpond.com/post/53528065932/infographic-why-pinterest-is-good-for-business>

Part 3

Understanding the Social Buyer

Part 3 Understanding the Social Buyer

The Essentials

Today's buyer is increasingly social, using networking and sharing sites for both personal and professional reasons. For many buyers, social media has become a way to discover content that helps them make better decisions at work, including what products and services to buy.

Social media consumption

According to the Pew Internet & American Life's May 2013 report, 85% of adults (18+) use the Internet. Of those, 91% use search engines, and 78% look for information about products or services to buy. An August 2013 study showed that 72% of online adults visit social networking sites.¹² As a marketer, you need to target buyers where they are – in this case, on social media.

Understanding social behavior across channels

Not all buyers behave the same way when it comes to social media. That's why it's important to do a bit of research to make sure you understand your buyer's key social behaviors. For example, people turn to Facebook to check up on their friends, to Twitter for breaking news, and to LinkedIn for industry news. Whatever the example, make sure that you account for your target buyer's specific behavior when developing your social media lead generation campaigns.

The importance of content

When visiting a social media site, buyers in B2B markets are typically looking for decision-making information, although they could be at any stage of the buyer's journey when they encounter you. Make sure that you attract and engage them with useful content such as blog posts, white papers, videos, infographics, and webinars. Simply posting on Facebook and tweeting on Twitter won't be sufficient.

¹²Pew Internet & American Life Project, <http://pewinternet.org/Commentary/2012/March/Pew-Internet-Social-Networking-full-detail.aspx>

Part 3 Understanding the Social Buyer

How to:

6 Steps to Understanding the Social Buyer

1. Identify your target buyer

The first step in understanding your buyer and how they use social media is to simply identify who your target buyer is. Targeting a specific buyer will allow you to market and sell more effectively. In many B2B markets, it's useful to define your buyer based on their role in the organization, industry, and company size.

2. Research the buyer

Once you have a target buyer in mind, validate your hypothesis with a small research study. While demographics such as industry and title are useful, it's more important to understand the psychology and behavior of the buyer. Focus on collecting qualitative, as opposed to quantitative, information from a small number of your own existing customers or prospects who are smart, forthcoming buyers. Try to understand what makes them tick, why they would buy your product, and how they will buy your product. Don't over-analyze; spend just a few weeks on research.

3. Create a buyer persona

A buyer persona is a representation of your target buyer. It's usually a single page (or less) that captures key facts about who the buyer is, what kinds of decisions they make, what they worry about, what their responsibilities are, their psychological makeup, and the journey that they take when purchasing a product in your market. Include how the buyer uses social media in their personal and professional lives when developing personas.

4. Understand the buying experience

The "buying experience" is what a person experiences when they purchase a product or service. It includes the steps they take on their way to a purchasing decision, everything that they experience at each step, and how they feel about it. This includes the content they consume and the interactions they have, including on social media networks and platforms.

5. Determine how social your buyer is

As part of your research, ask how your buyer uses social media in both a personal and professional context. Ask about which sites they visit, how frequently they visit, how much time they tend to spend on each site, and what they typically do on each site.

6. Map content to the buying experience

Develop a plan that maps content to the buying experience. Social tends to be most effective early in the cycle, when you're looking for awareness, and post-sale, when you're encouraging advocacy. Early in the cycle you want to attract buyers, so focus on customer-centered brand awareness. This is a time to be playful, if your brand lends itself to that, but also to display thought leadership, positioning your brand as trustworthy and respected.

Part 4

Social Content Offers

Part 4 Social Content Offers

The Essentials

Your social media messages will often contain links, which could go to your blog or elsewhere. For lead generation, you'll want to link to landing pages with forms. This lets you capture a lead's contact information in return for something – usually content of some kind, which could be anything from a white paper to a video to a game.

This content is called the “offer.” Your offer must be sufficiently valuable to the prospect to get them to share vital contact and qualifying information with you. You could use email or other means to drive traffic to this same landing page.

Understand what the buyer wants

The most effect way to create a high-converting offer is to spend some time researching what your target buyer wants. Conduct a quick research project to determine what topics buyers are most interested in and what forms of content they value most.

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Content that converts

Newsletters, white papers, eBooks, infographics, and webinars are the most common types of offers used to generate leads via social media. Whatever you offer the buyer, make sure it's valuable enough to get a visitor to your landing page to share their contact information with you.

The importance of landing pages

By gating the content behind a landing page, you can turn an unknown social media visitor into an identifiable lead that you can then market and sell to. A landing page may ask for something as simple as an email address or something more complex, such as number of employees, industry, purchase plans, and so on. Regardless of the information that's collected, a good offer can get visitors to the page to share information at a high rate.

Part 4 Social Content Offers

The Big Picture



The landing page features the Act-On logo at the top. Below it, the title 'The Ultimate Guide to Marketing Automation' is displayed in a large, bold font. A sub-headline explains that users will learn how top marketers use automation to generate leads and increase revenue in a 60-page eBook. The page is divided into two main sections: a benefits list on the left and a registration form on the right. The benefits list includes three points with green checkmarks: instant access to a 50-page eBook, 30 best practices for targeting buyers, and a statistic about 43% higher revenue growth. The registration form, titled 'Get your FREE eBook now', contains four input fields: 'First and Last Name', 'Company Name', 'Work Email Address', and 'Phone Number'. At the bottom of the form is a prominent orange button labeled 'GET YOUR COPY NOW'.

act-on

The Ultimate Guide to Marketing Automation

You'll learn how the world's best marketers are using marketing automation to generate more qualified leads and increase revenue in this 60 page eBook from Act-On.

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1. This content offer is shared via various social channels such as Facebook, Twitter, Google+, or LinkedIn.
2. When a prospect clicks on the link, they arrive at this landing page.
3. The landing page offers them a valuable piece of content in the form of a 60 page eBook.
4. It is protected behind a form where prospects must share their contact information in order to access it.
5. The offer and landing page are designed in such a way to drive the highest conversions possible.

Part 4 Social Content Offers

How to:

6 Steps to Social Content Offers

1. Test offers to see what works on social

You may find that infographics work well on Twitter, where people think in 140 characters and Like images, while white papers do better on LinkedIn, where the focus is on business. Your videos may do better on Facebook than on YouTube.

2. Develop a content plan

The content you use for social media will often be content you use in other places as well. Make sure that your content plan includes all your distribution methods. Plan content you can slice into many pieces and use in many places, formatted to suit each channel. Keep a content calendar that shows how all your social and content marketing efforts are working together.

3. Create your content offers

The most common types of lead generation content are newsletters, white papers, and webinars. A great way to start is to create a white paper and webinar on the same topic; this way you can leverage the same research and much of the creation over two offers.

4. Make your content natively social

There are ways to create content that is natively social. For example, when writing your white paper, quote thought leaders and experts who are active on Twitter and LinkedIn. When you promote your white paper in your blog, use “Tweet now” buttons with the quotes. As you post on social media, make sure to mention that these thought leaders are quoted in your content, or post the quote and link to your paper. This will often result in that person sharing your offer with their social networks.

5. Develop your landing pages

The content that you develop to support your social marketing should sit behind a landing page, whether you gate it with a form or not. If you don't gate it, you can encourage people to share the content as a brand-building exercise. For lead generation, you do want to gate so that you can collect contact information. A strong content offering and copy that effectively describes that offer are the two most important tools to drive high conversions. Good design is always nice, but it's not as important.

6. Track and optimize your content's performance

Once you've begun promoting your content on your social channels, track performance. While there are different metrics that can tell you about the performance, the most important one is the conversion rate – the percentage of social media visitors to a landing page that complete the form.

Part 5

Using Facebook for Lead Generation

Part 5 Using Facebook for Lead Generation

The Essentials

Facebook is the world's largest social network. It has well over one billion members; over 700 million are active daily.¹³ While 42% of B2B decision-makers say they use Facebook exclusively for personal reasons, 37% say they use it for both personal and professional reasons, and 2% say they use it exclusively for business,¹⁴ the opportunity is there for B2B marketers to use it for lead generation.

How Facebook works for lead generation

Effective lead generation on Facebook depends on content that is engaging and useful. It's a good place for images, videos, and interactive games. On Facebook, people share videos 12 times more than links and text posts combined, and people "like" photos twice as often as text updates.

You can also use other specialized features, such as Facebook ads. The goal is to target specific audiences and draw them to the brand page to engage with the content or offer.

Set up a company Facebook page

Company pages are easy to set up. Focus on writing a compelling, concise description of your business and using an engaging cover photo.

Post content regularly

It's important to post content regularly. If someone comes to your Facebook page and sees that it hasn't been updated in a month, it's as though you've invited people to your home – but you're not there when they knock on the door. Build trust with your audience by posting on a dependable schedule.

What you post shows up in your timeline and will often show up in the newsfeeds of people who have liked your page.



¹²Facebook Newsroom, key facts. <http://newsroom.fb.com/Key-Facts> Retrieved October 19, 2013

¹³Forrester blog post by Zachary Reiss-Davis, "In Business Everybody Uses Social Media for Work; The Question Is How." July 17, 2013, retrieved October 19, 2013. http://blogs.forrester.com/zachary_reiss_davis/13-07-17-in_business_everybody_uses_social_media_for_work_the_question_is_how

Part 5 Using Facebook for Lead Generation

Generating likes for your page

People who “like” your page will see the updates you post. Start by inviting friends, customers, and employees to like your page. This is the most effective way to develop a core set of followers. You can then ask these people to promote your page and content. As you do this, you will start to see a network effect as more people share your Facebook posts. Then specify the information you need to capture via the form and use that as the foundation for your form design efforts. Finally, track and optimize form conversion rates over time.

The Big Picture



1. The Facebook Page is a company's homepage on Facebook. It should represent the brand, be social and fun, and funnel traffic to lead generation landing pages.
2. The page's cover photo is very social and engaging. It drives visitors to a dedicated landing page designed to generate leads.
3. There are also secondary lead generation offers such as a survey included on the page.
4. The page is a place for employees, customers, and influencers to like the company. In this case, the company has attracted close to 6,000 likes.

Part 5 Using Facebook for Lead Generation

How to:

8 Steps to Use Facebook for Lead Generation

1. Develop a plan for Facebook

Create a short plan that provides information on how you'll use Facebook to support your lead generation efforts. The plan should include information about your objectives, target audience, Facebook page, content, promoted posts, and Facebook Ads. It should also specify the frequency and times at which you'll promote and share various pieces of content on Facebook.

2. Use other Facebook pages and ads for inspiration

One of the best ways to jumpstart your lead generation efforts on Facebook is to learn from other marketers. It's easy to find other Facebook pages, offers, promoted posts, and ads that you can use for inspiration. Try to find examples from your industry, as they will be most relevant.

3. Create your Facebook Page

Your Facebook Page serves a similar purpose to your website home page. It consists of a number of different elements such as your cover photo, your logo, and the description of your business. Make sure that each of these is representative of how you want your target customers to perceive your company. When you create your page, seed it with two to three posts that will appear in your timeline.

4. Invite people to like your page

You should invite people like friends, customers, and employees to like your page. Building a community around your page ensures that people will see the content that you share on Facebook. There are a number of different ways to do this, but when you're just starting out the most effective way is to invite your current Facebook connections to like your page. You can do this by clicking on the "build audience" tab in the admin panel of your page.

5. Create content, and post it regularly

Remember four things when creating engaging content. First, use content and offers that engage prospective buyers and customers in a fun and social way. Second, keep posts short – shorter posts receive more likes, comments, and shares. Third, use visual elements such as photos, videos, and infographics as visual posts to create more engagement with your fans. Last, post regularly. Once a week is a minimum; daily is better. Several times a day is best.

Part 5 Using Facebook for Lead Generation

How to:

8 Steps to Use Facebook for Lead Generation—Continued

6. Test Facebook Ads

Facebook Ads allow you to pay to promote either your page or a specific piece of content. Facebook's self-service advertising system is really easy to use and offers some very effective targeting options. Just remember to test the effectiveness of these ads before allocating a lot of budget to them.

7. Promote your posts

You can pay to use Facebook Promoted Posts to make sure your content is seen by all of your fans and their friends. Make sure that you use this feature only for select posts that are important to your business and engaging to your audience. Don't promote sub-par content, and don't promote too often.

8. Measure the performance of your page

Facebook provides a free tool to analyze the performance of your page. You can find it in the lower right corner of your page's admin console. Facebook Insights will tell you about your page's overall performance and provide [anonymized demographic data](#). Pay particular attention to how specific posts perform, and use that data as a guide to creating future posts. Note that your page must have garnered at least 30 likes for you to gain access to Insights.

Part 6

Using Twitter for Lead Generation

Part 6 Twitter for Lead Generation

The Essentials

Twitter has over 500 million users¹⁵; with 200 million of them sending over 400 million tweets daily (nearly 60% of those through mobile devices).¹⁶ It's a lightweight, high velocity platform sometimes described as "the SMS of the Internet."

How Twitter works for lead generation

On Twitter, people talk about what they care about and what's happening around them – right now. It's perhaps the most immediate of media. This creates context in which you can connect your message to what's most meaningful to your customers in real time. Engaging with real-time tweets can influence conversations in a way that can help build your business.



Attracting followers on Twitter

You want to attract prospective customers, but gaining influencers and thought leaders as followers is valuable too. Do a little research to find out where your industry peers and potential customers congregate, and show up there. Follow the most influential tweeters. Have a strategy for engagement, and be prepared to move quickly with valuable content. When someone follows you, follow back. Be interactive.

Tweeting and engaging

Yes, you are restricted to 140 characters, including spaces, but that can be a surprisingly large canvas for good ideas. You can extend your canvas by linking to content such as videos, blog posts, and landing

pages with offers, such as a webinar registration form. Tweets that include a link to content are 86% more likely to be retweeted.

It's also important to use Twitter to retweet, reply to, and favorite other people's tweets. This is a great way to get other people to promote your content for you and become part of your market's community.

¹⁵<http://www.statisticbrain.com/twitter-statistics/> Retrieved October 19, 2013

¹⁶Twitter heads for stock market debut by filing for IPO, by Heidi Moore, The Guardian http://www.theguardian.com/technology/2013/sep/12/twitter-ipo-stock-market-launch?CMP=EMCNEWEML661912&et_cid=48826&et_rid=7107573&Linkid=http%3a%2f%2fwww.theguardian.com%2ftechnology%2f2013%2fsep%2f12%2ftwitter-ipo-stock-market-launch Retrieved October 19, 2013

Part 6 Twitter for Lead Generation

Keep an eye out for your own customer complaints, and make sure they are responded to quickly. And it should go without saying, but the rules for business are different than for individuals. Don't gossip. Don't disparage anyone, especially not a competitor. Don't use profanity, or sexual innuendoes, or any kind of racist or sexist language.

Competitive intelligence

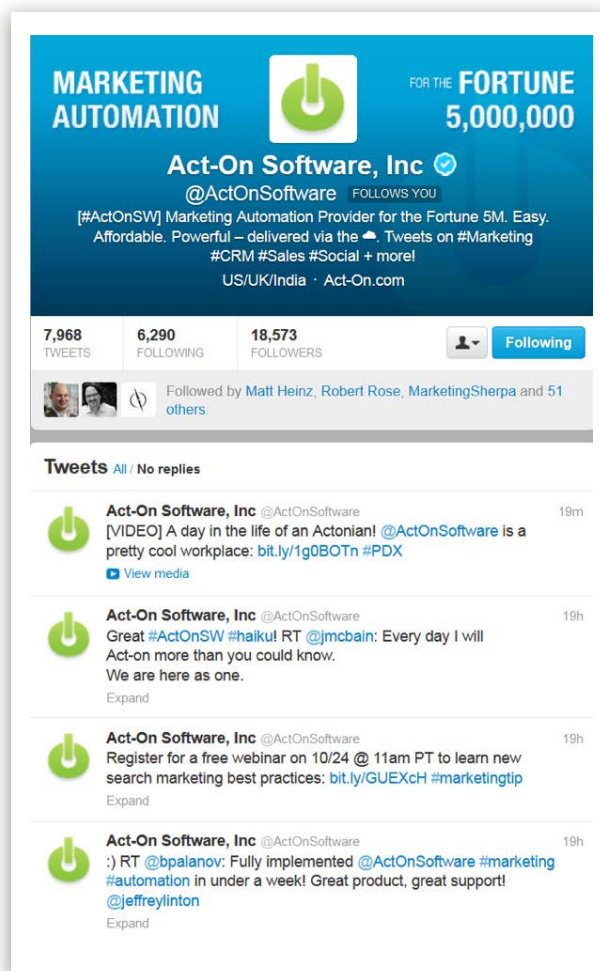
Monitor your competitors on Twitter to gain insight into their strategy and trends. Watch their customer service issues as well, as dissatisfied customers might be a lead generation opportunity.

Leverage “FOMO”

Research shows that people on Twitter feel anxious about the persistent messaging and fear they'll miss out on something if they don't continue to pay attention and stay engaged. Thus, appealing to this group with a message amounting to “Email is the one way you know you won't miss out on things from us” could prove quite successful.

The Big Picture

1. The profile page articulates what it does for its customers in clear and concise terms.
2. The company has acquired over 18,000 followers. This takes time, but it's possible by tweeting high-quality content regularly and participating in the community.
3. The company's tweets link to high-quality content that is representative of the company and engages prospective customers. Each tweet has a specific purpose:
 - The first tweet was created to be fun and support recruiting efforts.
 - The second tweet is part of a creative campaign, just for fun.
 - The third tweet is a lead generation effort, using webinar registration as the tactic.
 - The fourth tweet is a retweeted testimonial.



Part 6 Twitter for Lead Generation

How to:

11 Steps to Using Twitter for Lead Generation

1. Develop a plan for Twitter

To paraphrase Jack Dorsey, cofounder of Twitter, “Commerce isn’t about money; it’s about conversation.” Keep that thought in mind as you develop a plan to guide your marketing efforts on Twitter. The plan should focus on how you will use Twitter to engage your target buyers on a frequent basis. Specify your target audience, how you will attract followers, the content you’ll share, and how frequently you will tweet. As you develop your plan, remember that high-quality content and frequent updates are critical to being successful on Twitter.

2. Learn from other companies that are already using Twitter

There are a number of companies, and B2B companies in particular, that successfully use Twitter to engage their buyers. Look for companies in your market that are using Twitter to frequently promote high-quality content. Spend a week or two learning how these companies use Twitter as an effective tool to engage buyers. Watch your competitors and assess their strength and weaknesses.

3. Build your Twitter profile

Write a concise, customer-centric description of your business. Make sure that you link to your website in this description as well. Use a compelling profile picture and a background image that represents your business. Finally, you are what you tweet, so your timeline is the most important part of your profile page. Make sure that what you tweet is relevant and engaging.

4. Start attracting followers

Start with three simple tactics. First, follow people who you think may be interested in your product or service, including influencers, thought leaders, and experts in your market. When you follow someone on Twitter, they will often follow you back. Second, follow people who you already know via offline connections, such as existing customers, partners, and employees. Third, retweet and reply to people who you think should follow you. By engaging them socially, you will likely acquire new followers.

5. Make content the foundation of your tweets

Make sure that the majority of your tweets link to high-quality content, whether it’s blog posts, white papers, webinars, or videos. Tweets that include links to content see higher levels of engagement in the form of click-throughs and retweets.

Part 6 Twitter for Lead Generation

How to:

11 Steps to Using Twitter for Lead Generation—Continued

6. Tweet regularly – very regularly

Twitter is a high-velocity social network; many of your target customers are being bombarded daily with a huge number of tweets. That's why you need to make sure that you are tweeting regularly. Twitter suggests brands tweet 5X a day; breakfast, lunch, dinner, and two snacks. If you do not have the bandwidth, start by tweeting twice a day – once first thing in the morning and then again in the middle of the day. Afterwards, start increasing your tweet frequency, so that your target audience will be more likely to see at least one or more of your tweets

7. Participate in the community

Often, there's a pre-existing community of your target buyers and influencers on Twitter. You should make an effort to participate in this community by following, retweeting, favoriting, and replying to members of this community.

8. Use hashtags for specific marketing applications

A hashtag is a kind of social keyword; it's a word or phrase prepended with a pound sign (#likethis). Hashtags are a great tool for marketers on Twitter. Make sure you use them for specific marketing campaigns that you run. For example, when hosting a webinar, you should create a hashtag and ask webinar attendees to tweet about the webinar using that hashtag. This creates a single stream of tweets about your event, enabling participants to have a conversation with other attendees, and for you as a brand to measure the success, activity, and overall impact associated with the webinar.

9. Consider a Tweepchat

Tweepchats are virtual meetings held on Twitter; they can be a draw for people with similar interests. They're generally held at a fixed day and time, often repeating over a week or month, and they're identified by a hashtag. Since Twitter fosters brand awareness and can help your organization expand its reach and exposure, hosting Tweepchats is an opportunity to help you develop an audience, gain new clients, win new customers, and greatly increase your social media visibility.

Want to see what's already available before you jump in? Visit gnosisarts.com to see a list of Tweepchats by day of the week (default view), alphabetically, or by subject.

Part 6 Twitter for Lead Generation

How to:

11 Steps to Using Twitter for Lead Generation—Continued

10. Promoted accounts, tweets, and trends

Twitter offers paid advertising by way of three types of promotions. You can target specific users based on criteria such as keywords, interests, and geography. It can be a cost effective way to gain new followers and attract target buyers to specific lead generation offers you can promote:

- **Accounts.** This helps build an active community of advocates and influencers for your business.
- **Tweets.** These are regular tweets that will be promoted to both current and potential followers you target.
- **Trends.** Trends are popular topics happening right now on Twitter. Because these Trends are placed prominently next to a user's timeline, they get mass exposure and give you broad reach.

11. Measure the performance of your page

There are a number of tools such as TweetReach and Topsy that you can use to track the performance of your social marketing efforts on Twitter. For promoted accounts and tweets, Twitter also offers a rich analytics tool.

Part 7

Using LinkedIn for Lead Generation

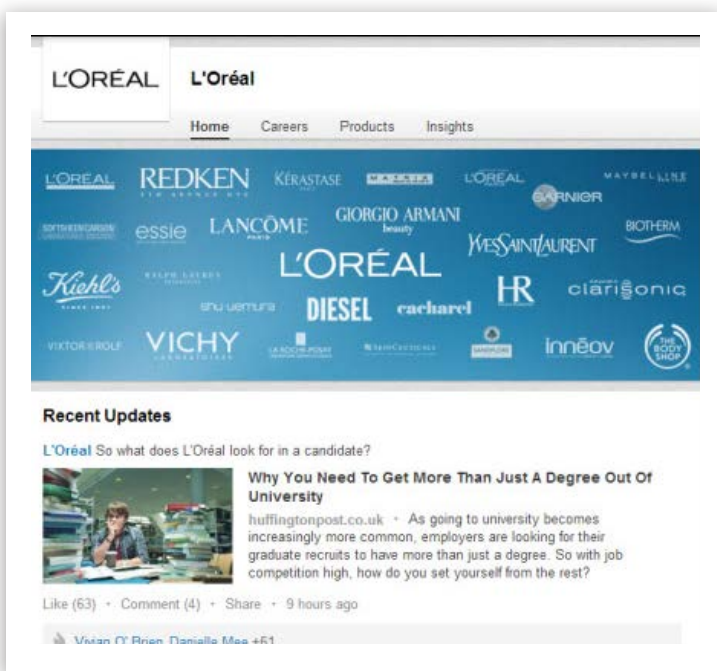
Part 7 Using LinkedIn for Lead Generation

The Essentials

LinkedIn has grown from what was originally almost an online resume service to a collection of very targeted communities. It has over 225 million members. According to a Forrester report,¹⁷ 81% of B2B decision-makers use LinkedIn, with 26% using it primarily for business and 48% using it for both personal and business purposes. Of LinkedIn users, 40% participate in vendor-affiliated groups, nearly double the 22% that participate in non-brand affiliated groups.¹⁸

How LinkedIn supports lead generation

There are three critical pieces to successful marketing on LinkedIn. First, make sure you create a high-quality company page. Second, make content the foundation of your social efforts. Third, participate on LinkedIn on a daily basis.



First, build a company page

A company page is the hub for anyone on LinkedIn to learn about your business, brand, products and services, and job opportunities. You can post content with offers, for lead generation; you can invite people to events; you can post company updates; and you can broaden your reach through likes, shares, and comments.

There are a few requirements to meet. You need a distinct domain (e.g., yourcompany.com) and a company email, your position should be listed in the Experience section on your own LinkedIn profile, and your personal profile strength needs to be rated as Intermediate or All Star (this is ranked based on the content you contribute). Note that a domain can be used to build only one company page.

¹⁷Forrester Research, How B2B Marketers Use Social Now, May 2013, <http://www.forrester.com/How+B2B+Marketers+Use+Social+Now/quickscan/-/E-RES94263>

¹⁸Forrester blog post by Zachary Reiss-Davis, "In Business Everybody Uses Social Media for Work; The Question Is How." July 17, 2013, retrieved October 19, 2013. http://blogs.forrester.com/zachary_reiss_davis/13-07-17-in_business_everybody_uses_social_media_for_work_the_question_is_how

Part 7 Using LinkedIn for Lead Generation

Content as the foundation of your efforts

The average LinkedIn member values high-quality content that helps them do their job better. That gives you an excellent opportunity to use content to target and engage prospective buyers. Sharing content should be the foundation of your social activities on LinkedIn, and it's a great way to drive people back to landing pages on your website.

Attracting followers and engaging the community

The success of your marketing efforts on LinkedIn hinges on your ability to attract followers. Every connection needs to be linked to your goals and objectives in business both now and in the future. High-quality content will go a long way in this effort. Make sure that your employees are following your company, and encourage your customers to do so. Invite them to share your content with their connections to get the farthest reach possible.

LinkedIn groups

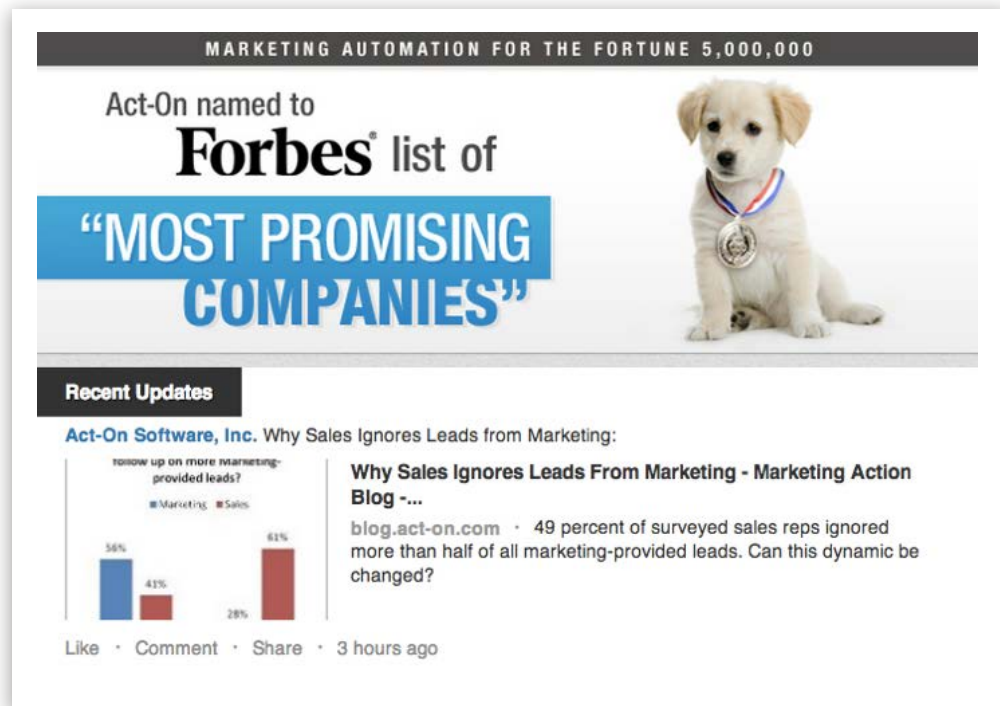
People on LinkedIn join targeted groups that focus on specific topics, and they join more that are hosted by brands than those that are not. Hosting a group is an excellent way to share thought leadership and position your company in your niche. Encourage your employees to join a range of groups and participate in discussions.

What not to do on LinkedIn

Don't spam your connections and LinkedIn groups with blatant sales messages or articles. Stick to things that provide true value, and stay away from anything that makes it look like you're posting strictly to get attention.

Part 7 Using LinkedIn for Lead Generation

The Big Picture



1. The company page is the hub of your LinkedIn marketing efforts. It's your home page on LinkedIn.
2. The main image on your LinkedIn page should succinctly state what your company does and be visually engaging.
3. The Recent Updates section allows you to share relevant content and offers with your followers.
4. You can and should link to lead generation offers when sharing updates.
5. The products section of your LinkedIn company page is also important. Make sure you note your most important products here.

Part 7 Using LinkedIn for Lead Generation

How to:

8 Steps to Using LinkedIn for Lead Generation

1. Develop your LinkedIn plan

A simple plan can help make your lead generation efforts on LinkedIn much more effective. Your plan should consist of three primary parts:

1. Detail how you will create your company page.
2. Detail how you will produce and share content on LinkedIn.
3. Understand how you will attract followers.

2. Learn from the competition

There's a lot to learn from companies that are already successfully using LinkedIn for their lead generation efforts. Pick a handful of competitors to see how they are using LinkedIn and use this analysis as inspiration for your own efforts.

3. Create your LinkedIn company page

Your company page is the cornerstone of your presence on LinkedIn. Be sure to create a keyword-rich description of your business so that people can find you via LinkedIn search, use an engaging cover image on the page, and update your page frequently (ideally, daily) so that your content shows up in your followers' update feeds.

4. Attract followers

Start by asking employees, customers, and partners to follow your page. Encourage these people to share your page and status updates with their connections so you reach as many people in your target market as possible. You can also attract followers by including a LinkedIn follow button on your website and in your blog posts and emails.

5. Use content to engage buyers

The LinkedIn community is hungry for content that will help them do better professionally. Make sure you regularly share content such as blog posts, white papers, and webinars. Do this regularly so that your followers think of you as a destination and source for high-value content.

6. Participate in the community

Several of LinkedIn's community features allow you to engage your target buyers. For example, you can participate in LinkedIn Groups and share high-value content, or be helpful by answering questions or making suggestions. You can also engage people through LinkedIn's social features such as commenting and liking.

Part 7 Using LinkedIn for Lead Generation

How to:

8 Steps to Using LinkedIn for Lead Generation—Continued

7. Use LinkedIn ads

LinkedIn ads allow you to promote your company and content to a very specific professional audience. You can target an audience based on industry, job function, job title, and seniority. These ads can be text-only, text plus image, or video. They show up on the pages that LinkedIn members spend the most time on, such as profiles and home pages.

8. Use LinkedIn analytics

LinkedIn offers a lightweight analytics tool that you can use to measure your LinkedIn marketing efforts. The tool is available via your LinkedIn company page and provides visibility into metrics such as reach and engagement.

Part 8

Using Google+ for Lead Generation

Part 8 Using Google+ for Lead Generation

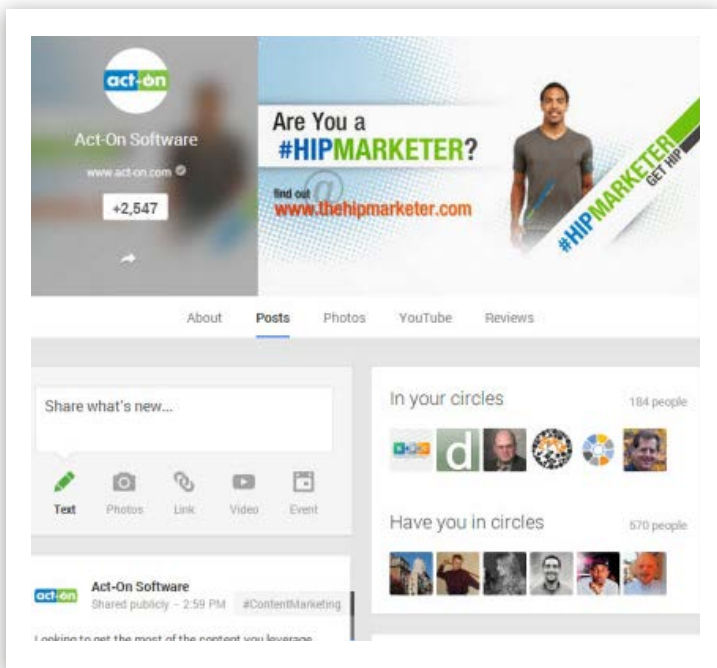
The Essentials

People are still on the fence about whether or not to incorporate Google+ into their social media marketing strategy. A lot of that vacillating has to do with being overwhelmed with where to start and how it works. According to a Global Web Index study, Google+ has 359 million monthly active users. This makes the social network the second largest of all the social platforms.

Make sure you have a plan in mind for the platform. What is it that you want to achieve? Create a strategy and measure the effectiveness. The Google+ dashboard provides analytics to assist in this effort.

Why use Google+?

Google+ is a worthwhile tool because the activity directly affects SEO. A recent Google algorithm update referenced the importance of all social network activity as a factor in determining a company's Google search ranking. Google treats your Google+ content like another website page. When it comes to SEO and social media, Google+ content takes precedent to content on any other social platform.



Posting Best Practices:

- Remember to delete the link in the copy.
- Add relevant hashtags.
- Always post with a comment or question to elicit greater response.
- When people do engage further with your post, make sure you engage back.
- Do not share the same piece of content in both a community and with your circles. It is important to note that what you post in communities will show up on your Google+ company profile page.

Create a complete profile

The more information you provide, the more transparent your business appears. Make sure to fill out all the contact information, hours, address, etc. of your business.

The description section is a good place to use keywords, describe the products and/or services your business offers, and highlight your value proposition.

Google+ gives you a lot of space for a cover picture, so capitalize on it. Showcase company initiatives, milestones, or campaigns through appealing cover photos.

Part 8 Using Google+ for Lead Generation

See what's happening

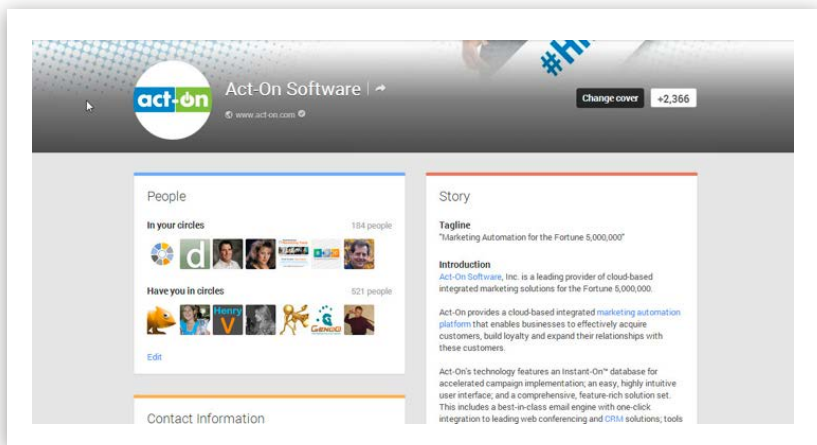
When Google+ updated its platform, they put user accessibility and content sharing at the forefront. Find industry experts to follow and add them to your circles.

- **Get acclimated** to the ways in which you can share and review content and familiarize yourself with the way the platform is mapped out.
- **Segment circles.** Put customers you are following in one circle. Put partners in another. Add industry influencers in another and put media/analysts in yet another. Categorize them how they best map back to the way the company breaks out its ecosystem.
- **Join Google+ communities.** In addition to the circle feature, there are communities dedicated to very specific interests on Google+. Browse through them and join those that seem a good fit. A worthwhile community to join is one with a lot of followers, frequently shared content, and active engagement on the posts.

The Big Picture

The first five steps to getting started on Google+

1. Visit the Create a Business page on [Google+](#) and select the right category for your business
2. Set up a Google+ page that matches your branding (pay special attention to posting a relevant cover photo and accurate information in the “About” section)
3. Verify your website link on your Google+ page by following the instructions here: <https://support.google.com/plus/answer/1713826>
4. Link your Google+ account to your Google Places for Business dashboard
5. Start following relevant users and segmenting them into descriptive circles (for example, customers, evangelists, and employees)



Part 8 Using Google+ for Lead Generation

How to:

6 Ways to Generate More Leads with Google+

1. Put together a plan.

As you set to making a G+ profile for your business, devise a plan for content generation that's shaped around your existing objectives for brand awareness and outreach. Think about the kinds of content you wish to share (white papers, webinars, eBooks, etc.), the times of day you'll be sharing that content, and the people or places you want that content to reach (specific industries, companies, individuals, parts of the world). The more structured you can be at the start, the easier a time you'll have of finding an audience for yourself and landing the leads you need.

2. Speak to more than just your product.

The surest way to attract new customers is to address a broadly felt need or pain point – to offer guidance instead of hawking a product. So, consider the kinds of questions and concerns your customer base faces, and tailor your content to speak to those.

Make yourself not just a vendor in a particular space, but a thought leader too, a resource your customers can rely on.

Think, too, about the sorts of content that resonates most with your audience (i.e. what they respond to best – white papers over webinars, presentations over white papers, etc.).



One of many articles we feature each week from outside sources.

3. Tailor your offerings to specific “circles.”

If you're looking to really engage the people who visit your G+ page, you can't simply share all your content at once. You have to be strategic in what you offer if you want your messages heard by the right parties. G+'s circles feature can help you do just that, as it allows you to group followers in specific circles and share to those circles media of your choosing.



Source: Business2Community.com

Part 8 Using Google+ for Lead Generation

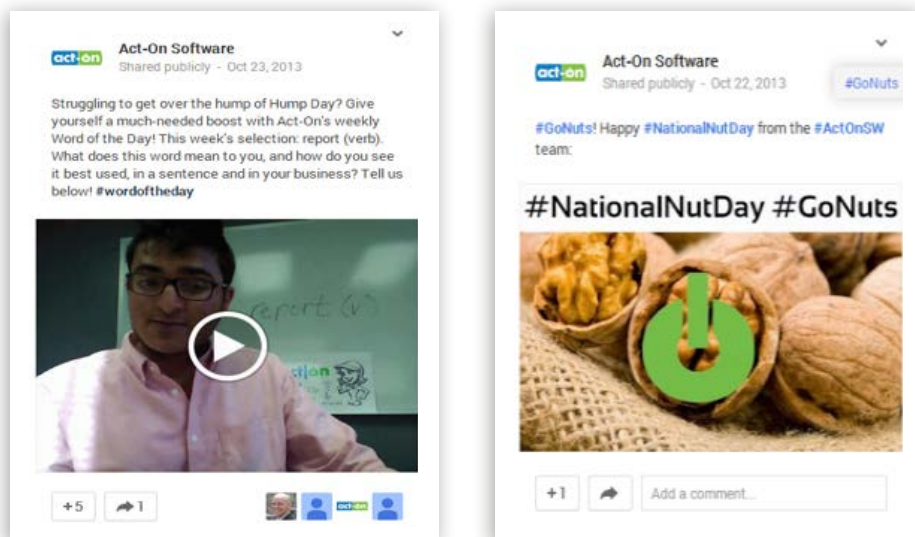
How to:

6 Ways to Generate More Leads with Google+—Continued

4. Use visuals and videos copiously

The more variety your content has, the likelier your followers are to stay attentive. Videos and images are a good source of such variety and can be a welcome change of pace from plain written copy. In fact, nearly 90% of online shoppers say they find videos helpful in making their final purchasing decisions, which makes video a sound investment for brands looking to boost their visibility.

Users of G+ also have the ability to post to their pages a profile picture and cover photo. Make sure to take advantage of this feature by showcasing images unique to your brand, and by including in those images links that track back to your business' main website. This should increase the traffic your site receives and enable visitors to investigate your product more easily.



Left: a meme for one of many National Awareness holiday; right: our weekly Word of the Day segment

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Part 8 Using Google+ for Lead Generation

How to: 6 Ways to Generate More Leads with Google+— Continued

5. Underscore authorship where and when possible.

Just as on Twitter, the right hashtags on G+ can help connect content you feature to larger discussions taking place elsewhere on the site. Tag your content often, and be specific in what you tag (e.g. “#contentmarketing” vs. “#marketing”). This ought to boost your page’s visibility and draw in new readership.

Additionally, make sure where possible to mention (+) other thought leaders or experts whose content you use. This not only will help to forge a positive relationship between your brand and others, but will also ensure that those leaders’/ experts’ followers will see your brand and take notice.

6. Draw from other brands active on G+.

Finally, always be willing to learn from other brands on G+! There are all sorts of content and strategies to sift through on the site, so keep a close eye to what works for other businesses, what doesn’t work, and what could be improved.



Part 9

Social Media Lead Generation Technology

Part 9 Social Media Lead Generation Technology

How to:

6 Steps to Using Social Media in Act-On

1. Establish Twitter, LinkedIn, and Facebook connectors

Establishing Act-On connectors to Twitter, LinkedIn, and Facebook is the first step to help you amplify your marketing content into the social media ecosystem. Authorize multiple accounts to allow you to share marketing content on their behalf through Act-On's Social Publish feature.

2. Social Publish

Use the Social Publish feature to push out any form, landing page, or media asset to your Twitter, LinkedIn, and/or Facebook accounts. The feature allows marketers to instantly publish their content or schedule for a later publishing time.

3. Twitter Dashboard

The Twitter Dashboard includes the Prospector, a lead generation tool. This tool allows you to discover, communicate with, and track new prospects. Finding potential customers is easy. Act-On provides custom search templates in a Twitter prospecting dashboard. Your searches yield potential prospects tweeting about your preferred search terms. Once you discover a prospect, you can keep track of your dialogs, save incoming tweets, and analyze your prospect's website activity. Review the user guide [here](#).

4. Competitive Insight

Act-On Insight is a tool that shows you how your website and social media presence stacks up to your competitors. You can benchmark your site against the competition in web traffic, blogs, tweets, keywords, and YouTube videos. Learn more [here](#).

5. Rich Text block for messages, landing pages, and email templates

Insert a social share block within the Rich Text block. This allows your email recipients to share your content on their Twitter, LinkedIn, or Facebook account.

6. Additional ideas

With one click, you can create a landing page from any sent or draft message. Then, publish your landing page to your social media account to allow you to further extend your marketing reach beyond your database

Also, consider adding links to your company's Twitter, LinkedIn, and Facebook accounts in your messages. Headers and footers are popular places to include those links.

Learn More

Other courses in this series:

- Email Marketing
- Intro to Landing Pages
- Sales & Marketing Cooperation
- Introduction to Webinars

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Read customer case studies:

[Learn more](#) about how real people use marketing automation for lead generation and customer lifecycle management.

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About TOPO

This course was created by Act-On and TOPO, a research, advisory, and consulting firm that believes in a really simple, but powerful idea – that the most important thing in business is to deliver a great buying experience.

About Act-On Software

Act-On is a leading provider of integrated marketing automation software, helping companies to tie inbound, outbound and nurturing programs together – across email, web, mobile, and social. Our customers achieve superior Return on Marketing Investment by using sophisticated behavioral data to increase engagement throughout the customer lifecycle, reduce the cost of customer acquisition, and strengthen customer loyalty. Act-On's fresh approach to marketing automation gives its users full functionality without the complexity other systems impose, and makes campaign creation and program execution easier and faster. Act-On offers a best-in-class professional services team, around the clock customer support, and the APEX ecosystem of partners to provide clients with the tools they need to achieve marketing success.

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