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# Learning about Pinterest

By: [your name]

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## **What is Pinterest and Why Should You Care**

Pinterest isn't new but it's just in the last few months that there has been a buzz about this new social media site called Pinterest, which actually was started by a couple of college guys. They had been looking at paper catalogues and then they suddenly had a brilliant idea about how much fun it would be to be able to look at a catalogue of items their friends had picked out. It began in December of 2009 and by March of 2010 they had a prototype in use for friends and family. Since then every user has been given a handful of invites to share with their friends and family.

In December 2011, Pinterest was on Hitwise's ten social networks list in position #5 ahead of Google+ and even ahead of LinkedIn. In just a month from December 2011 to January 2012, the number of unique visitors grew by 155%, and predictions are that this site is going to take off with the same momentum Facebook experienced.

Pinterest is a site of pictures, just as you would find in a catalogue. You can create as many categories as you like and you can share the pins of other users in what is called a 'repin', or pin off the internet from sites that have been wise enough to add a 'pin it' button to their site. The person who is sharing is referred to as the 'pinner.'

Just like other social media networks, Pinterest encourages you to share others' pins on Twitter, Facebook, through email, on blogs, on your website, and just about any other imaginable way.

Any time a new social media site comes about marketers get excited, and this is one site they should be excited about. This site offers you an excellent marketing opportunity once you fully understand the concept, which is not as difficult as most of us initially try to make it.

Pinterest is a social media site that focuses individual lifestyles sharing them with other like-minded individuals. It connects everyone visually through things they find interesting. In fact, it's really the only social networking site that relies strictly on visual images.

If your business relies on bringing targeted volumes of traffic to your website to increase your sales, you need to be finding out more about Pinterest and really get to understand just what its capabilities are. Pinterest is in its infancy so like a fine wine; it is going to get better with age. Be one of the first to recognize the potential it has to offer.

## Understanding Pinning and Repinning on Pinterest

Pinterest is a new kind of social networking that's taking the internet by storm. What makes Pinterest so different from other social networking sites? Its visual presentation is like no other social media site and how you interact is also much different.

On Pinterest you will pin and repin photos or videos. That is how you communicate and show your followers your likes and give them insight to your lifestyle. A pin is an image that you add to Pinterest. It can be pinned from a website using the Pinterest bookmarklet, or you can upload an image.

To get the most out of your pin you should pin from an original source, pin from permalinks, give proper credit, and you should include a good pin description.

If you are using the bookmarklet to pin from your browser, when you come across a page or image that you want to include on your Pinterest board, you will simply click the "pin it," bookmarklet it will ask you to choose which image from the page if there are more than one. The link will also be included, and you need to add a short description and it's good if you include hashtags which make your pin searchable.

A repin is a little different. With a repin you are repining an image that someone else has already pinned. That might be one of the people you follow or it might simply be a post you see when scouring the many categories online.

Before you can pin or repin you have to create boards. There are a few predefined boards when you open your Pinterest account but you can delete or change those boards. You are allowed to create as many pin boards as you like. Don't be afraid to let your personality show here and come up with catch board names. When you create your pin board you will need to choose a Pinterest category for where your board belongs.

A board is made up of a set of pins. It can be one or a hundred. Some ideas for board names might be "Food for Thought," or "Delicious Recipes," or "Tummy Talk." If you pin to a pin board you can later move the pin to another board, or you can delete it. You can also add a comment to your pin, which you should always do.

Pinterest is a new way of interacting with others. It's a bit like having your own lifestyle catalogue, and it's certainly a lot of fun. If you are not yet using, you should be.

## **The Right Way to use Pinterest to Promote Your Product**

Pinterest is a visual social media site. When Pinterest is used that right way, it is a powerful tool in promoting your product(s) or creating brand recognition. The most common mistake that is made is to attempt to directly promote products, rather than creatively promoting your products. Let's look at some examples.

Your company sells vacuums with the latest in technology. You might create a pin board that's shows the different styles of vacuums you sell, but to actually promote your product successfully, you are going to get far more creative than that. After all, how many people do you think are going to spend their free time flipping through pictures of vacuum cleaners? The answer is not many.

So instead, you need to get creative. Let's look at some ideas of pin boards you might set up. Flooring Styles could be a good pin board to create, because you can show a variety of different flooring styles and layouts. This visual will draw a number of viewers who are interested in different flooring styles.

However, you could go a step further and create a pin board such as furry four legged friends. Here you could display pictures of adorable dogs and cats, which subtly show the type of cleaning jobs you face and how your products can help. People love to look at cute pets, which means it's likely they'll get caught up flipping through all the cute photos, and all the while, you can be subtly promoting your product.

Your success using Pinterest as a marketing tool will depend a great deal on finding a way to promote your products and/or services so that they fit into the lifestyles of the audience you are targeting. The key is learn to show off your products and/or services in an indirect and subtle nature that makes your pin boards go pop to other viewers.

You will only know if your pin board marketing campaign is working if you measure the ROI of pinning. By doing so you will be able to determine, which campaigns are working and which you should get rid of. Without knowing the ROI you are marketing blind, and long-term you will not have the success you would enjoy if you paid attention to what was or was not working.

Because Pinterest is so new, only a handful of businesses have recognized the marketing potential that awaits here. Now you have the knowledge to be one of the elite.

## **Use a Pin Board on Pinterest to Feature Your Offline Events**

Pinterest is newest social media site that uses photos and videos. It has actually been around for a couple of years but it seems in just the last few months it is getting far more attention than ever before. It seems the idea of a social media site that that is visual is becoming more appealing, and why not? It's simple, entertaining, and fun.

Pinterest is a bit like have your own personalized catalogue, where at a glance you can tell a great deal about a person. Pin boards are created and you decide what they will be about. For example, you might have a motorcycle pin board if you like motorcycles. If you travel, you might have a pin board on travels, and the list goes on. You can have as many pin boards as you like.

Perceptive businesses are recognizing the opportunities that Pinterest has to offer and one of those marketing opportunities is in promoting and featuring your offline events. You can create a pin board that features video footage from the event along with some of the best photos. This can help to generate interest and create a buzz.

For example, let's say you hold an annual appreciation BBQ for your customers. Then take plenty of pictures, along with some video. You might even interview a customer. Create a pin board called Customer Appreciation BBQ, then you can pin the pictures and videos to that board.

This will not only generate interest it will generate traffic, which you can send back to your site. In addition, it will generate interest for next year's event. Plus, potential customers will see how you treat your existing customers and they are far more likely to purchase based on the image of your company you are creating.

You might hold several events throughout the year. Create a pin board on Pinterest for each of them and share. You can take it further than just featuring the events you hold. When you introduce a new product, create a pin board and promote it. If you have contests create a pin board and post each of the contest details to the board. You get the idea.

The only thing holding you back is your own imagination. Pinterest offers an excellent opportunity to promote your company a number of ways, but one of the most fun and most valuable ways is to promote and feature your offline events.

## **Enjoy a New Social Media Experience at Pinterest**

There are many different social media sites online. Facebook and Twitter are two that most of us are familiar with. However, there's a new kid on the block, who recently has been getting a lot of attention. Pinterest is a visual experience, which makes it different than any other social media site. The site itself is only a few years old, but it wasn't until the past few months that it has suddenly began to grow by leaps and bounds.

Pinterest is a bit like putting your life into a catalogue. You create pin boards that you name and then assign to a Pinterest category. For example, you might create a pin board and call it "The Beauty of Nature," and then associate it to the Pinterest "Gardening" category.

You can create as many pin boards as you like, which makes it great for really being able to express yourself. Your friends can come along and have a look at your lifestyle just by flipping through your pin boards.

Of course, once you create your pin boards you need to pin things to those boards. You can re-pin what others have already pinned, or you can be surfing the internet and come across something you think is interesting and pin it. You can also upload a photo to any of your pin boards. So there are a number of ways to grow your Pinterest pin boards.

Pinterest changes the way we interact in social media. Not only can you post pictures you can post videos too. Crafters are very fond of Pinterest because it's a fun and effective way to share crafting ideas. Of course, cooking, fashion, and pets are other top categories that draw a lot of attention.

Pinterest is a "by invite only," site. You can either receive an invite from someone you know or you can request an invite from Pinterest. The latter can take some time to receive approval. The user base is growing slowly and yet the demand is growing rapidly.

Pinterest is highly addictive. Don't be surprised if the next time you look at the clock hours have gone by. It is also easy to use, and it can be an awful lot of fun. Why not invite your friends and family so they can experience what you are already enjoying. There's a great deal of speculation that Pinterest could give Facebook a run for its money over time. Why not find out now what it's all about?

## **Showcase the Personality of Your Business on Pinterest**

Pinterest is the latest in social media sites to take the internet by storm. Pinterest is unique in a couple of ways. First, it focuses on lifestyle and second it is a visual experience. From a business perspective, this offers a rather unique marketing opportunity where you can give Pinterest users a sneak peek into your company or brands personality.

There are many different ways you can do this. Let's look at a few ideas of pin boards you might create to show case your business. Create a pin board to:

1. Showcase the people that work for your company. Post their photos and in the description, you can give a short blurb about them. You can have a little fun here. Maybe give their position and then a couple of words or wisdom from the employee.
2. Show what's going on in the office. You can bring people into your daily world and make them feel at home by posting pictures of the office where it shows people working together, inventory coming in, and other activities that occur.
3. Show some of the fun activities that happen at work. This could be staff parties (although be careful what you post here), ceremonies, awards, fundraising, etc. You can include video along with photos.
4. Tell the world about your products. Create a pin board that shows your products. Take it further and show how those products are used in people's day-to-day lives. Lifestyle pin boards can be very helpful. What do I mean? Let's say you sell wool. You might create a pin board that first shows the various



woods you sell. You might create one for angora, acrylic, cashmere, satin, etc. Then perhaps create one or more pin boards for various wool creations that can be made from those wools. You get the idea.

5. Showcase lifestyles that are associated with the products or services you carry. This is an indirect association. In other words, let's say you sell paint. Without directly showing the paints you sell, you could show different room paint schemes for different rooms including interior and exterior.

When you let people in behind the scenes of your business you build credibility, you make your brand interesting, and you humanize your company and the products or services you offer. Take advantage of what Pinterest can do for your company and the marketing tool it really is. Why not be one of the first to experience the power of Pinterest when it comes to business.

## Using Hashtags on Pinterest

Many of us first learned about hashtags through Twitter. Hashtags allow individuals to quickly and easily find conversation on a specific topic that interests you. If you aren't aware of hashtags, it simply means you attach the # symbol to a keyword, which then makes it searchable with social media sites.

Many have used hashtags on Twitter. For example, let's say you want to talk about #gardening on Twitter. You could end your comment with #gardening, which would make it searchable to others who are interested in the same topic.

However, many don't realize that you can also use hashtags on Pinterest, which is a social media photo pinning site. This site is only a couple of years old and just recently it's been growing in popularity by leaps and bounds.

Hashtags on Pinterest are potentially more useful than when used on Twitter. This is because Pinterest is made up of photo boards that are made up by the user and are dictated by the user's interests. These individual pin boards are tied to the larger site boards that are created on global interests.

Pinterest is visual in nature, which is what has made it so popular. That's the same thing that becomes its drawback. You can overcome this by writing a description of the picture and using appropriate keywords and hashtags if you want to connect to a larger community.

You use hashtags (#) on Pinterest in the same manner you would use them on Twitter. In the description of the photo you are pinning, simply hashtag the keyword(s) that best describe the picture you are pinning or repining. Make sure the tagged word(s) is broad and that it covers topics that will connect to a much larger audience if at all possible.

Let's look at an example. If you are posting a recipe for pea soup, you would not want the hashtag #pea soup or even just #soup as it is too restrictive. Instead, you would want #recipes, #food, #cooking, etc. By doing this you have the best chance of connecting with the largest audience.

When it comes to marketing through Pinterest using hashtags is a tool you will both want to understand and use. Using hashtags correctly will make your picture(s) more searchable, so when people are looking at specific topics, this is just one more way to connect with them. As with any social media site, the more connections you make the better.

## **Pinterest is Growing Faster Than any Social Media Site**

Pinterest is fun, entertaining, and highly addictive. Perhaps that's why it is the fastest growing social media site ever. In fact according to TechCrunch it hit 11.7 million unique monthly visitors from the U.S. That put it across the 10 million mark faster than any other standalone site in the history of the internet.

In fact, Pinterest users are so busy sharing their favorite photos on Pinterest that only Tumblr and Facebook have more social media time. So what demographics are responsible for this sudden demand and growth? It might not be who you think. The largest market is American women between the ages of 18 and 34.

According to comScore, the average user on Facebook spends 7 hours, on Tumblr 2.5 hours, and on Pinterest 98 minutes per month. ComScore says that Pinterest is the fastest growing site of any on the web. Pinterest strongholds are much different. Today's strongholds are in the West North and East South Central States like Missouri, Mississippi, Minnesota, and Kansas.

The next question that will need to be addressed is when should the Pinterest site begin to monetize with items such as brand pages and branded pin. Pinterest is currently earning money through affiliate links, although the method they are using is quite interesting. It seems they have created they are utilizing an app that looks to outgoing links to see if those sites offer affiliate programs. If they do it secretly creates its own unique identifier and begins to get paid as an affiliate. That's clever!

You could say Pinterest is the evolution of social media. It's no wonder users are so mesmerized with Pinterest – all those pretty pictures are just downright addicting. Most of us are so busy that reading things is just another drain on our time. What better than to flip through pictures like you are flipping through a catalogue? Suddenly you can see a person's entire lifestyle at a glance. Pinterest is a reflection of the society we live in, and a natural evolution of the need to be able to cover more information in a shorter period of time.

It seems those investors that got in on the ground floor will not be sorry since Pinterest's valuation has gone from \$40 million in September to a whopping \$200 million in just a few months. Where will it go from here? Pinterest is in its infancy, and only time will tell if this is going to be the next wave of social media, or whether we will face yet another big change. In the mean time most of us are going to really enjoy what Pinterest has to offer.

## **The Most Successful Brands are Pinning on Pinterest**

Pinning on Pinterest – that’s almost as much a tongue twister as “Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.” Pinning sounds like something you might do on a corkboard. Actually, when it comes to Pinterest it takes on a similar meaning but in a digital format.

Rather than pinning a picture to a corkboard, you are going to pin a picture to a digital board. In addition, you are going to create the different pin boards that you will pin to. This is where Pinterest can become a lot of fun for users. Users create as many pin boards as they liked, based on their own interests.

Pinterest can be a very valuable tool for businesses that want to promote their brand. In fact, the most successful brands are pinning on Pinterest. While Pinterest is just a young site, and its true return on investment remains to be seen, it’s showing great promise.

Companies that are using Pinterest to promote their brand have seen a significant increase in their site traffic. Pinterest offers an interesting visual way of cataloguing information, and this has great appeal to the masses. Pinterest is an excellent medium to connect business and audiences, which are potential customers.

Whether your brand is based on sports or fashion, you can find followers on Pinterest, and you will have the opportunity to show those followers what your brand is all about. For example, according to the data provided by Monetate the referral traffic from Pinterest to five specialty apparel retailers’ websites jumped by a whopping 389% from July 2011 to December 2011.

Chobani Greek yogurt is an excellent example of a company that is using Pinterest correctly. Chobani does far more than just feature the different yogurts it offers. It share recipes, ways to use the different products, and it even has a pin board that shows fun pictures that go with the brand image.

Oreck, which is a vacuum cleaner brand, is another business that has done a great job of putting Pinterest to work for their company. For example, Oreck has a board that’s about the beautiful flooring styles available, which is not directly linked to the product they sell, but it is helpful and fun so people are likely to repin, and that is how you are going to both promote your products and create brand.

Pinterest is a powerful marketing tool. Its full potential is not truly understood as of yet. That means you can experiment, and be one of the first to reap the benefits.

## **How to Use Pinterest as a Marketing Tool**

Pinterest is the “new kid on the block,” in the world of social media. In the past few months, there has been a lot of buzz around this very unique social media site that is based on visual images. It’s a powerful tool for business once they understand how to use Pinterest as a marketing tool.

There are a number of ways you can use it as a marketing tool. One of the easiest things you can do with Pinterest is learn to understand the needs and interests of your customers by viewing the pin boards of your customers. It's quick and easy to do and it can tell you so much.

There's another way to use Pinterest to determine the interests of potential customers, and that is to look at a specific Pinterest category and look at what potential customers are interested in. If you are thinking about adding a new product this can help you decide if there is even any interest for that particular product. If you are considering adding a new product but aren't sure what that might be, then this can give you some potential ideas.

You might want to invest in an integrated marketing software program that will track which traffic gets to your site through Pinterest. It will also follow them via the buying cycle. This will allow you to spot behavior trends, and how you can nurture those leads to increase the likelihood of success. With this type of information, you can email your new leads and send them into your sales funnel, using a custom message you design that will make you stand out as a leader in your industry.

Pinterest is new and only a handful of businesses are taking advantage of it. This is your opportunity to get ahead of your competition. You have the opportunity to make your business the go-to Pinterest account for pins on a particular topic in your industry.

For example, if your business is about internet marketing then you could create a pin board that displayed top-notch visual examples of some of the best online marketing. Let's look at another example. Let's say you sell wool. You could create a pin board that features some wool creations. You might even invite your customers to post what they've made.

Pinterest can become a powerful marketing tool once you learn how to use it to its fullest capacity. It's new, it's in its infancy, and it's a perfect opportunity to jump ahead of your competition.

## **Include Links in Your Pinterest Descriptions for Marketing Value**

Pinterest is the newest in social networking that everyone is talking about. Pinterest itself is only a couple of years old, and up until recently, it really wasn't getting a great deal of attention. It's a site where by you must have an invite in order to set up an account. If you don't have anyone that can invite you then you can request an invite from Pinterest, although this is a much slower method.

Pinterest is a valuable marketing tool that to date is only being used by a handful of companies and internet marketers. One of the ways you can gain a great deal of marketing value from your Pinterest pins is by including links in the description.

Whenever you can, you should include a link back to your website and your landing page(s). This will drive targeted traffic back to your site. You will want to keep track of the traffic referrals as well as the leads that are generated as a result of Pinterest. This information is key to discovering how well these links are performing compare to other marketing methods, including other social media campaigns.

Marketing analytics are very important in all of your marketing campaigns. Otherwise, you would be wasting time, money, and efforts on something that is not working for you. By using marketing analytics you can determine what is not working well and change it, along with what is working really well so you don't change it.

If you are pinning something live from your site, the process of link is easy as it will be to the page where you are pinning from. However, if you are uploading a photo you will need to choose a link that makes sense and is relevant and place that in the pin description.

The combination of re-pins and pin click will be a huge advantage to your site. A single pin may send only a few visitors to your site. However, it has been proven that when the two are combined it results in a significant number of visitors, and it continues to increase, the more re-pins and pin clicks you gain.

It is a good idea to read the Pinterest guidelines prior to beginning so that you understand their rules about what is okay and what is not. Self-promotion is frowned upon; however, when not done in an annoying, blatant manner it is accepted.

Using links with Pinterest is a powerful marketing tool you should begin to take advantage of early.

## **Marketing Using Pinterest**

Just like other social network sites offer a number of marketing techniques you can initiate to introduce your company or brand to a new audience, Pinterest works in the same manner. There are a number of activities you can implement to grow your business. You should be focusing to gain brand recognition for your product(s) or service(s), and drive targeted traffic to your site. Once at your site you want to be able to convert this new traffic into leads and then sales. So, let's get busy. Are you ready to get creative?

Pinterest is a visual site, so you will want to feature visual content. Therefore, you will want to create a pin-board and then pin some of your best visual content to highlight. Be creative with your board name. Make it catchy and memorable. Once the board is created, you are ready to regularly pin to it.

The pages and pictures you pin to the board should be more than just any picture. Make sure they are visually appealing so that viewers are drawn to them. Pins that do not interest anyone will not be of any value to you. Remember you can also pin videos, which can be very handy.

Many of the big brand names are paying attention to just how powerful online visual marketing is, and how it can elicit the desired emotion from the follower. Then again, big brands have been using visual marketing through television and magazine advertisements for a very long time.

One platform being used is Instagram for the iPhone or Android. Sorry to date, it is not available for the Blackberry. Instagram enables businesses to utilize photos as part of their inbound marketing scheme. In fact, in just a few years Instagram has more than 15 million users who have uploaded 400 million

photos. Companies like Starbucks and Red Bull use Instagram in their inbound marketing. Take advantage of this handy app.

There is a very powerful marketing opportunity at Pinterest. Because Pinterest is a relatively young site and social media concept, many are first becoming aware of the site, and even a smaller number are recognizing it as a tool they should be using to promote their business, and send targeted traffic to their website. We've let the secret out – now the question is, what are you going to do with this information? Right now, you have the opportunity to get a head start.

## **How Pinterest Makes Money**

In the last few months, there has been a great deal of talk about Pinterest. There are all kinds of speculation, and all kinds of questions relating to Pinterest users. For those of you who are unaware of what Pinterest is – it is an online pin-board where you can organize and share the things you love, in a visual format.

You may be surprised to learn what the question that is asked most often – How does Pinterest make money? If you want to know the answer to that question, you'll want to read on. What most people are unaware of is that even while Pinterest was in beta it was already making significant money. For a social network site, this is quite a surprise.

What's even more interesting is that this is a social network site that is not making its money based on subscriptions or advertising. If you are placing affiliate programs on your website, you should be paying attention to Pinterest, because that is how it is making its money. Pinterest is taking a percentage of the sales from pinned traffic.

The process is fairly automated. According to the senior editor of The Atlantic, Alexis Madrigal, Pinterest has collaborated with SkimLinks a company, which has an automated process that scans through every link that is posted on the site checking it to see if it goes to a retail site that has an affiliate program. If it locates that kind of link then it secretly will add an affiliate code to ensure that Pinterest makes some money off the sales that the link generates.

There isn't anything wrong with the practice of making money via affiliates. What is interesting is that Pinterest has not directly revealed this information. There are many marketers and bloggers that are complaining about Pinterest's poor communication regarding its business model.

In fact, it has become a hot topic of discussion as to why Pinterest is so quiet about its business model, which other social media sites have been very open about their business model. Some bloggers speculate that this might have more to do with inexperience by the young entrepreneurs behind Pinterest, while others are speculating that their site has exploded so quickly that their focus is on more immediate site demands to ensure it continues to grow and prosper with the least amount of hitches.

Whatever the reason, now that it is out in the open savvy network marketers can learn from Pinterest's practices and increase their revenue as well.

## **Pinterest Allows for Social Sharing**

Pinterest lets you sign into your Pinterest account using either your Facebook or Twitter profile. This type of connectivity is key to the success of social media. Pinterest recognized early that social media sites can't survive standalone – after all, they are social media sites.

Pinterest connects with Facebook, which means you can instantly have your new pins post to Facebook. What this means for you, is that there will expand your reach through these other channels who will now have access to your Pinterest pictures. However, at this time you are not able to connect your Pinterest to your Facebook business page.

As Pinterest members browse through pins, they will be able to share posts through Twitter, Facebook, or email. This is a great way for you to give your social sharing a real boost and provide you a valuable opportunity to expand the reach of your brand, by spreading the word.

This would be a good time to create an effective call to action. You can tie it into your Pinterest pictures in the comment box, because this is what will encourage pinners to click through to your website.

Pinterest is the new kid on the block in the social media front. As a result, many internet marketers are not aware of the value that Pinterest actually can to bring targeted traffic to their site. In fact, Pinterest can be you massive amounts of traffic with very little actual effort on your part.

Facebook, Twitter, and other social media sites are realizing that Pinterest is going to be a real challenge to them. In fact, Pinterest has been busy bragging about the amount of traffic it can drive to a site, and rightfully so. Currently even though the site is in its infancy, it is showing results that exceed what the other social media sites have been able to achieve.

Savvy marketers that are looking for an edge up on their competition will be examining what it is Pinterest has to offer, and how they might incorporate it into their current marketing strategies. Remember the power of connectivity amongst many social media sites is not something you should take lightly. That it itself offers you the opportunity to grow your brand and the exposure to your brand with the least amount of work.

Well, the secrets out – now the only question left to be answered is will you be a leader in the Pinterest movement or a follower?

## How to Build Your Own Pinterest Followers

The first thing you need to do is get an invite and then be accepted. If someone you know invites you the acceptance is right away and your account is up and running. If you go through Pinterest, it can take awhile until you get your approval. Once you have a Pinterest account you don't want to just rush out and begin to build your Pinterest followers. You should follow these easy steps for the best results.

Like any of the other social networks, Pinterest also relies on building a wide encompassing targeted following. When you grow your follower base, you will achieve long-term sustainability in traffic and lead generation.

Generally, you would create a page or blog and create a few posts, perhaps a dozen or so, before you began to promote your brand. Pinterest is somewhat different than a blog. It's not like the 'follower world' we are accustomed to with Facebook, LinkedIn, or Twitter.

For example, with Pinterest you can choose from two different follower options a person can take when they come across content they like and want to repin. A user can follow a specific Pinterest board such as "gardening," or you can follow a user such as your pal Joe W. So, what's the difference? Glad you asked.

When you follow a specific board when a user pins anew content to that board you will receive notification via your stream regardless of the user who posts. Whereas, when you follow a user, you will be notified each time that user pints content to any of his/her boards.

This can result in you following more people than you have following you. As a result, you will want to develop a strategy that will allow you to increase your followers both by your user account and by board category. Let's look at some ways to do this:

1. Interact with others – Start to follow users you think might want to follow you in return. Like, comment, and repin their posts. When a person sees you interacting with the stuff they have posted they might decide to check out what you have to offer.
2. Use other channels to promote – This is probably the quickest way to give your Pinterest following a jumpstart. You should ass a Pinterest follow button on your website, and promote your Pinterest through Twitter, Facebook, and other social networks you use.
3. Create the best boards on any given topic – If you want to have the most people following you on a specific board then create the a better board than anyone else, and people will find you and follow you.



## How to Create a User Generated Pin Board

One of the best ways to open up opportunities for marketing is to create a pin board dedicated to pins from your customers. When you create the new pin board, tick the box that allows other users to contribute their own pins on this board.

Ask your customers to pin relevant images to the board. For example, let's say you sell Product A, then you could ask your customers to pin images involving Product A and how it relates your lifestyle. This is a unique way of getting a customer testimonial, by asking them to capture it in a photo. Of course, you should encourage them to post a few words too.

Something else you could do is hold a contest. There are a number of prominent brands that are already using Pinterest to run contests successfully. However, before you decide to post your own contest, make sure that you read Pinterest's terms of use so that you are not infringing on their rules, and guidelines.

You might hold a contest where you ask users to create a pin board on their account to show others what it is they like about your brand, product(s), or service(s). Let's say you sell shoes, and then you could get them to create a pin board where they show off how they wear the shoes. Have them send the link to the pin board to you to be entered into the contest. You need to set the duration of the contest, name the prize or prizes, and then you will have to evaluate and pick a winner when it's over.

You can take it a step forward and repin the boards to your Pinterest page and then have your followers actually vote to determine who the winner will be.

High Point Market did this in October, running a contest that recruited fashion home trendsetters to show case their favorite trends and products. This contest worked well for them, and many of us could learn a lot from their foresight.

One last thing you can do is to add a pin it button on your website. This will make it really easy for those who are visiting your site to share your images or visual content on Pinterest just by clicking the pin it button. This is similar to what others sites do like Twitter or Facebook.

Finally, you will need to measure the impact of what you have done. After all, if it isn't working you won't want to adjust your strategy. You will want to know how much traffic, how many leads, and how many new customers it generates for you.

## B2B Ideas for Marketing With Pinterest

The toughest challenge for B2B companies that want to use Pinterest as a marketing channel is that there is a lack of visual content. Many B2B companies are selling product(s) or service(s) in industries that for the most part are not visual. In order, to make Pinterest work for you as a marketing channel you will need to get creative with visual content. Let's have a look at some ideas.

1. The Visual Content you Already Have Access To – Perhaps you have some headshots of the executives you could create a management board and each person's bio. Perhaps you have photos of all your staff, and then you could create boards by department or position. Maybe your company does charity work, and then you could create a board from some of the photos for the charity event. Think of the less than obvious photos that are there.
2. Use Images That are Beautiful, Clear, Crisp, and Visually Appealing on Your Blog Articles – When you go to add photos to your blog posts always keep in mind that you are going to pinning these photos to Pinterest.
3. Take Advantage of Data Charts and Infographics – Both of these are extremely popular right now throughout the internet, and that goes for Pinterest as well. If you have any interest data from your industry, brand, or company that might interest viewers use them. In fact, if they are industry data charts or infographics make sure you get around to pinning them before your competition does. You can also build charts and graphs in Excel if you like.
4. E-books and Whitepapers – If your company has recently released an e-book or whitepaper take a screenshot of the cover of the e-book or the whitepaper itself. If there is someone on your team that has authored a book in your industry take a picture of the author and pin it to Pinterest. It will certainly help you become a leader in Pinterest, and help to promote traffic to your site.
5. Customer Photos – What could be better for your business than posting photos of happy customers with a short testimonial? Create a board on Pinterest dedicated to customers smiling faces and happiness.

There you have five excellent ideas for using Pinterest for your marketing needs. Start here, and before long you will be coming up some other great ideas that you can implement. Why wait another day to start promoting.

## **Pinterest Etiquette – What You Should Know**

Pinterest, like other sites that are built around content from other sources, Pinterest users called pinners, are required to cite the source of their pin(s). Pinterest does not make any statement that marketers should not use the Pinterest for promotional purposes. However, it does discourage the abuse of self promotion.

The focus of Pinterest is to share the things you love in a visual format. If you have a photo you are love pin it. If there is a project you are proud of it, pin it. If there is something else you come across on the internet, you can pin it to your Pinterest account if it has the 'pin it' button. If someone else on Pinterest has posted something you like you can pin it to your profile.

Use Pinterest to promote your business but do it in a subtle manner and use common sense so as to not overtly self promote and so as not to do it too often. Don't be afraid to find creative ways in which to promote your brand on Pinterest.

The site is all about lifestyle visions and if you are a good marketer, you should be able to be creative and work your brand into lifestyles visuals. For example, let's say you sell shoes. Just creating a pin-board of the shoes you sell will violate the site and it will be far too pushy. Instead, you might pin an image of a couple of pairs of shoes that you are branding mixed among images of shoe racks, places to wear the shoes, outfits the shoes would look good with, etc. You get the idea.

Quotes have become very popular among the social network sites. Creating a pin-board that's titled something like "Quotes with that ah-ha moment" or "Quotes that make you laugh," etc. would be an excellent example of how your business could use Pinterest to promote its brand through lifestyle.

When it comes to marketing on Pinterest, following Pinterest etiquette and rules, the key is to think outside the box and become creative. You will be surprised at just how many opportunities present themselves for you to self-promote without breaking the rules. Of course, don't forget one of the most obvious – make sure your website has a 'pin it' button so visitors to your site can pin images they like and that's going to go a long way in promoting you on the Pinterest site and driving targeted traffic back to your site.

Pinterest is going to change the way we think of social media. You can either be one of the first marketers to explore its possibilities or you can come along later and miss out on a huge opportunity. It's up to you.

## **Access to Pinterest Comes Through Invitation Only**

As Pinterest gains more and more attention, people are flocking to the site wanting to sign up and discover what it's all about. It is a big surprise to discover that you must be invited by someone in order to gain access. You can also request an invitation directly from Pinterest but be prepared to wait.

If you don't have someone you know that can invite you, just go to the site at [www.pinterest.com](http://www.pinterest.com) and click the "Request an Invite" link. You will be asked to enter your email address where you would like to be notified once your account has been created. Getting a friend or family member to invite you will grant you much faster access.

It's important that you use the same email address that you use for your Facebook and Twitter account so that you can link all of these social media sites together. Once you receive your invite, it is better to sign in through your Twitter account rather than your Facebook account.

That's because your pins cannot be posted to a Facebook business page and will show up on your personal profile, whereas when you use Twitter you are signing into your business Twitter account, which you can then have link back to your business page on Facebook.

Once your account is active, you can optimize your Pinterest profile, which is found under the settings tab. Here you will enter your company's name as your user name, unless of course you are setting up Pinterest for your personal use. However, if you choose to do this, you are wasting an excellent opportunity to generate targeted traffic to your website.

You can upload your logo and you should provide a brief description of your business. If you have a slogan this is a good place to place it. Next, enter links to your website(s). Finally make sure that you set "Hide your Pinterest profile from the search engines" to OFF so that you are picked up by the search engines. This is very important to your Pinterest success.

Pinterest is really still in its infancy. Many Facebook users and Twitter users are not even aware it exists. However, when they discover it, and get an active account, it's one of those sites that draws you in and hours can go by. In other words, users find it highly addictive. Take advantage of what it has to offer in the world of marketing and branding, and begin to reap the benefits sooner rather than later.

## **Why is Pinterest Important to Your Business?**

If your business depends on driving high volumes of targeted traffic to your website to increase your sales, you should think about joining Pinterest. The early research has shown Pinterest is actually more effective at driving traffic to websites than other social media sites. In fact, it seems it is even more effective than Facebook. So you can begin to see why you might want to pay attention to what it is Pinterest has to offer.

Let's look at some traffic examples. Kate Bryan, a blogger, started to pin her work, which resulted in more than 10 million page views. It also resulted in her receiving 16,000 new blog subscribers. Warbly Parker, an eyeglass retailer, says they get 18% of their traffic from Twitter, which they have been using for a long time, and Pinterest, which is relatively new, is close behind at 11%. Finally Time Inc. Real Simple magazine received more traffic from Pinterest than it did from Facebook. Is that enough proof that you should be looking to Pinterest for at least some of your marketing needs.

Pinterest is showing itself to be a real challenge to a number of social media channels that in the past had bragging rights to being able to drive the most traffic to a website. If you are serious about bringing large volumes of targeted traffic to your site, you need to join Pinterest.

If you use the 'Pin It Button' on your pages, it means that each of your pins will link back to the page where the link initiated from. This means you can quickly gain hundreds of links. Now don't confuse these with links you would use for your SEO strategy. These are 'no follow links' so they don't directly affect your SEO ratings. However, those links provide a significant amount of marketing value because they introduce pinners to your content, when they visit your pages. In addition, you will get repins, which will spread your traffic reach at a speed no other social media has been able to do.

Shortly, Pinterest is going to be contributing to lead generation. This part of Pinterest is in its infancy, but many of the marketing professionals believe it won't be long before this changes. Wise marketers are going to sign up for Pinterest early and by the time most of the world is first recognizing the potential it has to offer, you can be miles ahead of the competition.