

Get Started Building Your **Social Media** Presence

An introduction
to **Facebook, Twitter,**
Foursquare, and other
popular **social media**
marketing sites



MAKING SOCIAL SIMPLE



Social Media

Get Started Building Your Social Media Presence

Social Media Marketing is building your social network fans, followers, and connections using **relevant and interesting content** that is shared, allowing you to reach and engage more people and **drive more business**.

An introduction to Facebook, Twitter, Foursquare, and other popular social media marketing sites

The buzz around social media marketing has been growing to a near crescendo. People are blogging, connecting with Friends on Facebook, posting updates to Twitter, and getting LinkedIn. Is your business or organization still on the social media sideline, looking to get into the game but unsure of how to proceed, or are you wondering if the business value is there?

In this guide, we will introduce you to some of the most notable social media marketing sites: what they are, why you'd want to use them, and how to use them effectively.

With this information in hand, you'll have the right ammunition to start building your social media presence.

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MAKING SOCIAL SIMPLE



FACEBOOK

Facebook is the largest of the social networks, with more than 500 million active users. (For perspective, if Facebook was a country, it would rank third in population, just behind the People’s Republic of China and India. That’s roughly 190 million people more than the population of the United States!) Facebook has become a favorite destination for people, businesses, and organizations to connect and share information because of its easy-to-use interface and interactive features. It’s the most multimedia-friendly of the big three networks as members can post text, pictures, audio, and video, and can share their location too. It also offers tons of applications and widgets that can make your Facebook Page engaging and fun.

Here’s how Facebook works: Users sign up for a free account and then make connections with other users on the service by “Friending” them: When you find someone you know on Facebook, you request to be their “Friend.” If the request is accepted, you can see that person’s profile information, status updates, photos, and more (which is why you may not want to be Friends

with someone you don’t actually know). Users who you accept as a Friend can, in turn, see your profile, status updates, and photos. If you don’t want to share all your information with the public or all your Friends (for example, if you connect with coworkers or family members), there are privacy settings available to limit who can see what information you post or is posted about you by others.

Facebook is a great place to connect with your own friends, family, and colleagues, but it has also become an incredibly powerful platform for businesses and organizations to build community, engage with prospects, and encourage customers and members to spread your message to a larger network. Small businesses and nonprofits are encouraged to create a Facebook



Facebook

Tip for Success:



Page rather than personal profile. A Facebook Page, like a personal profile, provides an information hub that users can choose to “Like.” Liking a Facebook Page is not too different from subscribing to a newsletter. Facebook users will Like a Page to stay updated on events, promotions, and news, or to simply show their appreciation or endorsement. Anyone can build a Page — businesses, associations, actors, musicians, nonprofit organizations, politicians, etc. Some businesses have even built Pages for specific products.

A big advantage to creating a Facebook Page is that you do not have to accept requests for connections; any Facebook user can choose to Like your page. When someone Likes your Page, anything you post to your Facebook Page will show up in their newsfeed. This is how the network effect kicks in. If you post something that your fans like, they will share it with their Friends, who may very well decide to connect with you too.

Finally, Facebook Pages are public-facing, meaning they can get picked up in search engines and give you and your organization and its website even more exposure. (Constant Contact’s Page can be found here: <http://www.facebook.com/constantcontact>)

People who connect with you or Like your Page are interested in what you have to say and appreciate what you do for them. Use that to your advantage by posting exclusive updates, photos, sales/promotions, and other content that will help to form an even closer bond with your customers and members.

When you post interesting content or exclusive promotions, your fans will Share or Like your message with their Friends. This can create an incredible network effect to drive more followers, email subscribers, and ultimately business.

What’s good about Facebook?

- The user base is huge, and that means many of your customers and constituents are already there.
- It’s easy to use.
- You can post any type of multimedia content, including videos, photos, and links to external content.
- You can separate your personal and professional use.
- You don’t need a personal profile to set up a Facebook Page for professional use.

What’s not so good about Facebook?

- You have limited ability to customize your Page.
- Pages do not have email alerts; you will have to check to see if there is any activity — or you can sign up for NutshellMail by Constant Contact to keep track of the activity on your Page through a single email digest.
- It’s a closed environment — only Facebook users can Like your business or organization. (Non-users can check out your Facebook Page, but not your personal profile.)



TWITTER

Twitter is one of the fastest growing social networks, with 190 million users sending 65 million tweets each day, as of June 2010. Twitter is a real-time information network that empowers its users to share and discover interesting content through status updates (or “tweets”). Twitter is often referred to as a microblogging service because it limits your status updates to 140 characters. But the brilliance is in its simplicity and brevity. For businesses and organizations, Twitter is one of the quickest ways to get a message out to people who may be interested in your activities, ideas, products, services, or events. You can also use Twitter to get real-time feedback from customers, members, and event attendees. Like Facebook posts, users can share your tweet with the simple click of a button. This is called a “retweet,” and it is the feature that makes Twitter such a great word-of-mouth platform that can help your message reach an entirely new group of prospective customers.

(Hint: You should pay attention to people who retweet your message as that is a good indication that they are listening to what you say, and may be one of your best influencers. Your influencers are your best friends because they can help you attract new followers and prospects.)

Twitter is a public site, which means anyone can view your tweets. However, users can choose to “follow” you on Twitter to keep track of your tweets. The follower relationship is not two-way; you don’t have to follow someone for them to follow you, and vice versa. However, when you follow someone on Twitter, you’ll see his or her tweets in real time on your private Twitter feed, including updates from everyone else you follow. (If you follow many people, this can create a bit of “noise,” especially if those people are heavy users of the site.) While you can only send private “direct messages” to people who follow you, you do not need to follow a user to send a public message to them; just include the handle (@username) in your tweet and it will show up in that user’s feed. This is called an “@reply” or “mention.”



Twitter



Tip for Success:



You may discover that customers are already talking about you on Twitter by indexing your name with the “@” symbol or the “#” symbol. Twitter is a great way to get real-time feedback from your customers and to discover what people are saying about you, your competition, industry, or any keyword that is relevant to you. You can see what people are saying about any topic in real time using Twitter’s search tools (<http://search.twitter.com>).

Check out the Constant Contact Twitter feed at <http://twitter.com/constantcontact> (@constantcontact is our Twitter “handle”).

Or see what people are saying about us on Twitter search at <http://search.twitter.com/search?q=constant+contact>. Even without an account, you can use that link to see all our updates.

For more information on Twitter, we really love the “Twitter in Plain English” video, created by CommonCraft.com <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ddO9idmax0o>. In addition, you can use a site like <http://listorious.com> to discover interesting people to follow on Twitter by category or subject matter. You can also use this site to discover a list of people to follow by category.

Twitter’s greatest strength is its vast reach. The more engaging and relevant your content is — whether it’s an article you’re sharing, a link to your newsletter, or words of support for the local high school football team — the greater the chances it will be passed on and retweeted to a whole new audience.

What’s good about Twitter?

- The “Timeline” (or the Twitter feed) is public, which can help to give your business or organization greater exposure in web search results.
- The site is like a public forum, so it’s easy to build a community of potential customers you don’t personally know.
- Customers and members can “follow” you without you having to reciprocate.
- There is a quick way to share links to content to help spread your message to a wide audience.
- Users are very vocal, so if they are happy with your business or organization, they’ll say so.

What’s not so good about it?

- The site is text only — pictures, video, and other multimedia content is shared through links.
- It’s sometimes challenging to create a meaningful post in only 140 characters.
- Lots of “noise.” With so many identical-looking tweets, it’s hard to make a single one stand out in the crowd.
- Spammers are increasingly targeting the service.
- Users are very vocal, so if they have a problem with something, they’ll say so.

••••• SOCIAL NETWORKS



LINKEDIN

LinkedIn is the most “professional” social network of the Big Three and is most popular with business-to-business users and those looking for jobs. Individual users’ profiles are tantamount to an online resume (complete with recommendations and endorsements) and, like Facebook, connections between users must be confirmed by both parties. Businesses and organizations can create profile pages that outline the who, what, and where of their operations, and in fact, many businesses use it to recruit (and check references) for new hires. (Constant Contact’s LinkedIn page is here: <http://www.linkedin.com/companies/constant-contact>)

Two of the biggest benefits of LinkedIn are the community (“Groups”) and question areas, which tend to be more professional in nature than those found on Facebook or Twitter. (It’s one reason why LinkedIn is most popular with a business-to-business audience, rather than a business-to-consumer audience.) Answering questions in your area of expertise is a great way to establish you and your business or organization as an expert. LinkedIn is highly recommended for promoting a business-to-business event or communication since it is a professionally-oriented network.

Tip for Success:



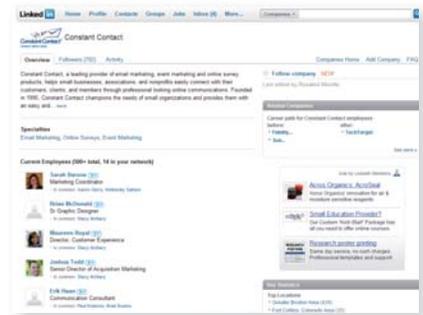
Participants in LinkedIn’s Group forums are an active bunch who are looking for information and insight. Find the groups and discussion threads that are most relevant to your line of business or organization and add your expertise to the mix.

What’s good about LinkedIn?

- The “six degrees” nature of the site allows you to reach out to new people through your existing connections.
- Profiles are straightforward and connections are easy to make.
- It’s a place where requests for endorsement are both welcome and expected.
- Allows for Question and Answer inquiries with a professional slant.
- It’s a great place to look up background information on people before a meeting or phone call.

What’s not so good about it?

- It’s the smallest of the Big Three social networks, though its user base (more than 70 million users) is growing and active.
- Job seekers tend to be more active on the site than those already employed.
- People use the site for purely professional purposes, so marketing messages are not always welcome.



LinkedIn



MYSPACE

MySpace was one of the first social networking sites to rocket to popularity. Today, the site is populated mainly by younger users; the majority is under the age of 35, according to Quantcast. MySpace is a place for promotion, which is why it's still used heavily by musicians, club promoters, and public personalities.

•••••

What's **good** about MySpace?

- Pages are highly customizable.
- It's great for sharing or promoting music.

What's **not so good** about it?

- The user base is shrinking.
 - Many pages are amateurish and poorly designed.
-



MySpace



BLOGS

A blog, by definition, is a web log, where you can post anything you want. It is usually set up as a separate website or an extension of your website, and is often used as a platform to update the world with content that you may not want primarily displayed on your website's homepage, such as your opinions, news, events, product reviews, your email newsletter archive, or anything you want to share with your customers and prospects. There are a lot of blogging platforms that make it easy for you to write, categorize, and publish posts. (We like WordPress, Blogger, TypePad, and Posterous for their simplicity.)



Tip for Success:

Adding a share button from a site like AddThis.com or ShareThis.com will make it easy for your readers to pass along your blog posts and share them on Facebook, Twitter, and other sites. Facebook also allows you to place a "Like" button on your blog, and Twitter has a similar Tweet button, which will let your readers tell their Friends and Followers that they endorse the content, and will provide a link so these new people can read it too. Most blogging platforms make it easy for you to add these Share, Like, and Tweet buttons.



What's good about blogs?

- They provide an easy way to post and manage content.
- They are inexpensive to set up and maintain.
- They are search engine friendly and can give you a nice SEO boost.
- They are a great place to show that you are accessible and authoritative.
- Like other forms of social media, they are great for building relationships, expanding brand awareness, and gaining insight from your customers and community.

What's not so good about them?

- Blogs must be updated somewhat regularly to derive real value.
- They take more time than Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc. to keep current.
- Templates through free services can be limiting.
- Employing an advanced design requires some knowledge of HTML and CSS.

Blogs



FLICKR

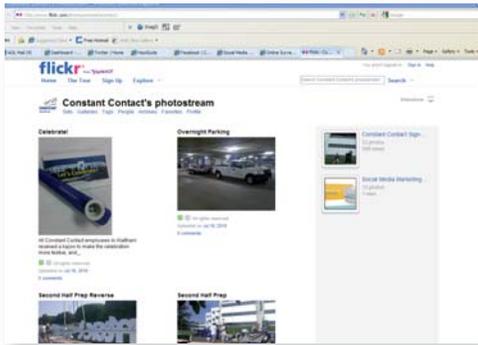
A popular photo-sharing community, Flickr is a great place to host photos and share them with a wide audience. Posting photos to sites like Flickr is a great way to show the world that there are real faces behind your brand. Flickr is free and can also give you a search engine optimization boost by linking your photos to your website. Note that free accounts do have monthly upload and other limitations.

If you host an event or manage a group where multiple people are taking photos, you can set up a “group” on Flickr that serves as a central source for everyone’s pictures. Note that you must have a Flickr account to contribute to a group, but you do not need an account to view photos.

(Other popular photo-sharing sites include Facebook, Picasa, PhotoBucket, and SmugMug. There are also a number of niche photo sharing sites where you can share your photos with other users who share a common interest.)

Tip for Success:

Don't just use the photo file name and call it a day: Give your photos an appropriate name, tag them with relevant keywords, and add a photo caption — it will allow your photos to come up in site searches and increase the likelihood that others will see what you have going on.



Flickr

••••• CONTENT DISTRIBUTION/SHARING TOOLS



YOUTUBE

YouTube is the most popular video hosting and sharing platform. Anyone with an account can upload a video to the site and share it with the world. YouTube makes it easy for your video to go viral through its categorization, search engine, and external sharing tools. If videos are your thing, you can host a video on YouTube for free and even embed the YouTube video player on your website or blog. The site also makes it easy for anyone to view and share your video on Facebook, Twitter, and other sites with a single click. YouTube is an easy way to share video content with a wide audience without having to pay for bandwidth or hosting. Note: While you don't need a YouTube account to watch and share videos, you need an account to publish a video. Also, videos uploaded to YouTube cannot be longer than 15 minutes and the file being uploaded must be under 2GB.

(Other popular video hosting and sharing sites include Vimeo and Blip.tv. There are also a number of niche video sharing sites where you can host and share your videos with other users who share a common interest.)



Tip for Success:

Avoid "cute" video names. Instead, optimize your title by using key words that your customers and potential customers might be using to find you. And don't forget to link your video to your website to get a nice boost on your search engine rankings.



YouTube

..... CONTENT DISTRIBUTION/SHARING TOOLS

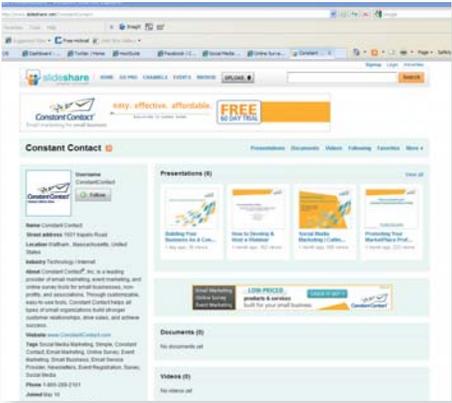


SLIDESHARE

SlideShare makes it easy for you to share and discover presentations, documents, and even videos. It's free for most users but offers advanced features for those willing to pay for a pro account. SlideShare is a great platform for sharing your expertise and getting feedback on your presentations. Like photo and video sharing sites, you can tag your presentations with keywords to make it easy for users to find your content by category. You can also link your presentations to your website, which will help customers find you and give your website a nice SEO boost.

Tip for Success:

Be sure to tag your presentation so users can more easily find your content when researching a specific topic.



SlideShare

••••• REVIEWS AND RATINGS SITES



YELP

Yelp allows consumers to share the experiences they've had with local businesses, and lets business owners share information about their business with their customers. More than 33 million people used Yelp as of June 2010 to find, review, and learn what others think about businesses in their area. Yelp's mobile application is very powerful, enabling users to find nearby businesses and even to "check in" to a business and tell friends where they are.

If your business has a physical location, chances are good that people have already reviewed you. You should make sure that you "claim" your business on Yelp to make sure all the information is correct such as your hours of operation, address, and phone number. However, claiming your business on Yelp has many other benefits, enabling you to communicate with customers who have reviewed you (publically or privately), track how many people have viewed your business on Yelp, promote special offers, events, add photos, share a history of the business, specialties or featured items/services, events, special offers, web links, and more. This way, when a user goes to search for your particular business, or is choosing between you and someplace else, you have put your best foot forward to set you apart.

(Other popular ratings/review sites that are similar to Yelp include CitySearch, YahooLocal, and Merchant Circle. You may have also noticed that Google Maps and Google Search offer ratings and reviews for businesses through GooglePlaces. However, this feature is simply aggregating content from other ratings/review sites. Given the popularity of Google search and maps, it's very important that all your information is correct across all ratings/review sites.)



Yelp



YELP

Tip for Success:



What's **good** about Yelp?

- The site's motto says it all: "Real people, real reviews." Users know they're getting unvarnished commentary from people just like them.
- A business' profile page can be claimed and customized with photos and other details.
- Owners can see who is commenting about their business thanks to the site's free monitoring tools.
- Yelp allows business owners the choice of replying privately or publicly to anyone who has left a comment, positive or negative

What's **not so good** about it?

- The order in which reviews are displayed cannot be changed, which means if a negative review is the most recent one written, it will be the first one a new visitor sees.

To claim or create a page for your business, visit <https://biz.yelp.com/signup>. Once you claim your page, Yelp enables you to monitor the monthly and daily traffic to their site and to learn more about the people who are checking-in, commenting, and rating your business (everyone who does so has a profile on the site). Business owners can also respond privately and publicly to anyone who has commented on the page. Best of all: This information is free.



ANGIE'S LIST

Angie's List is a private ratings/review site, founded by Angie Hicks (yes, there really is an Angie), that is focused on contractors, doctors, mechanics, and other service businesses. It's different than other ratings/review sites because customers pay to use it for its certified data collection process, help if a project goes bad, and live customer support.

On the other hand, businesses can't pay to be on the site and are only listed if a paying member submits a report. You may register your company for free on Angie's List, but only Angie's List members can give your company grades. Grades from members control your company's placement on the List.

Businesses rated on Angie's List are graded by members on an A–F scale, just like a school report card. These grades, as well as full reviews, are available for other local members to view, in addition to company information such as contact information, hours of operation, accepted forms of payment, and special offers. Businesses can monitor their Angie's List reviews and the company encourages you to respond to any and all reports, because Angie's List members will often look at a business' response before they make their hiring decision.



Angie's List



FOURSQUARE

Foursquare allows your customers and visitors to “check in” when they’re at your place of business or event and to share that update with their friends on Foursquare, Facebook, and/or Twitter. When a user checks in to a location, he earns points, virtual “badges,” and sometimes even sponsored deals and offers. Users often compete to be the “mayor” of a given location, a title awarded to the user who has the most check-ins there, and some businesses offer special incentives for mayors. These gaming mechanics have made Foursquare the most popular of all the geo-location services with 3 million active users and more than 100 million check-ins recorded as of July 2010.

Like Yelp, businesses are encouraged to “claim” their business so that they can monitor who is checking in, offer special promotions, or advertise to people nearby using geo-location technology. Foursquare has tremendous potential for hyper-local advertising of businesses. Users within a business’ immediate area can be sent targeted deals, encouraging them to stop by because they are already nearby. For example, many businesses take advantage of Foursquare by offering specials to the mayor, such as free drinks or desserts, or a percentage off a purchase. Others give a special to everyone who checks in at their place of business.



Foursquare



FOURSQUARE

Tip for Success:



To claim your business, monitor your check-ins or to offer promotions, visit <http://foursquare.com/businesses/>

What's **good** about Foursquare?

- By competing to be "mayor," your customers are visiting your business more often.
- Offering specials to the mayor or to anyone who checks in gives extra incentive for customers to patronize your business.
- Publicly broadcasting users' check-in locations alerts those in the area and in users' network where popular businesses and events are.

What's **not so good** about it?

- Many people stay away from Foursquare because they don't want to publicly broadcast their location.
- Users can forget to check in.
- Not every location is listed in Foursquare's database; it's up to users and businesses to add them manually.

Other geo-location based services include BrightKite, Loopt, and as of August 2010, Facebook. Facebook Places is a new feature that enables Facebook users to check in to places using their mobile Facebook application. Facebook aggregates check ins on a Facebook Place page. Business owners can claim their Places Page to link it to their Facebook Page. However, Facebook does not yet offer the promotional services available to businesses on Foursquare.



GOWALLA

Gowalla is a geo-location application that allows its users to check in at places (known as Spots) and tell friends where they are at any given time. It operates in a very similar fashion to how Foursquare does: As a reward for checking in, users may receive virtual “stamps” or “pins,” and sometimes even promotional items from businesses. As of March 2010, there were approximately 150,000 active Gowalla users.

One fun aspect of Gowalla is the idea of Trips, which link together up to 20 locations and encourage multiple stops and check ins. Trips can be created by any user or business and can have nearly any theme, such as “A Walk Down Main Street,” “Best Burgers,” or “Nature Hike.”

Gowalla will often feature Spots and Trips on its website, and with this comes a special status and icon when people check in there. Featured Spots tend to be local landmarks such as Buckingham Palace in London, and featured Trips are chosen for being unique and creative.

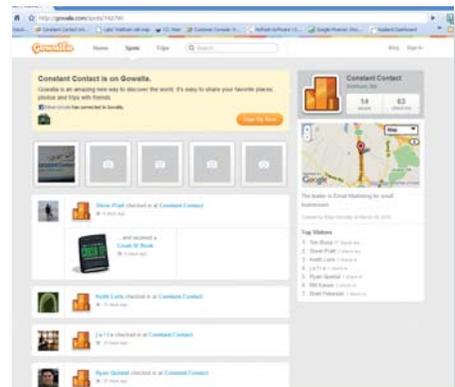


What’s good about Gowalla?

- Fun user interface makes the experience of going places and telling people about it more enjoyable.
- Users can post photos of the Spots they visit.
- Trips and additional information about Spots encourages users to visit places they may not have considered.

What’s not so good about it?

- As opposed to Foursquare, Gowalla is less about marketing and more about encouraging users to get out and be active.
- Larger promotional partnerships give the service more of a “corporate” feel.



Gowalla

••••• SOCIAL BOOKMARKING SITES



DIGG

Digg acts as an aggregator for content found around the web. Individual users can submit links, headlines, and descriptions to the site, which then get voted on by other Digg users. Submissions with the most Diggs are promoted to the Digg.com homepage, which often results in a huge influx of traffic to the submitted site. The challenge for users is getting the votes needed to make an individual submission hit the front page. Typically, one needs to work a network of friends and fellow Diggers to get the submission to the front page as just posting a link and hoping others stumble on it is like hoping your needle gets found in a haystack. It's a time consuming process, particularly for time-starved small businesses and organizations.

A new version of Digg launched in August 2010 added more social media features to the service. Businesses and organizations can create profile pages that other Digg users can then follow. When the profile owner posts a link, anyone following the submitter's profile will see the link on their "My News" page. If the user then "Diggs" the link, it will be forwarded on to all of his followers, much like with Twitter's retweet function. While top vote-getters will still be bubbled up to the Digg.com homepage, the new version of the site will be much more useful for those trying to share content without having to work for getting votes.

If your organization generates a lot of content, sign up for a Digg account and start posting links to your articles, blog posts, videos, and other materials. Tell your existing customers, members, Twitter followers, Facebook friends, and email subscribers to follow you on Digg.com via a link to your profile.



Digg

••••• SOCIAL BOOKMARKING SITES



DELICIOUS

Think of Delicious as a centralized spot for all your web bookmarks. You can store and tag links to sites, articles, blog posts, and more in a Delicious account, all of which is accessible from any web browser. This means you don't have to keep synced copies of your bookmarks between your home, office, or any other computer; Delicious does it for you.

Links stored in Delicious are public by default (you can make them private for stuff you don't want to share with others), allowing you to easily see how many other people are linking to same thing. And Delicious' tagging feature makes it easy to search for interesting links on just about any topic. You can even get an RSS feed for a specific tag, which will automatically update you to any new public links added to the service with that tag.

The Conversation Agent blog has a great post on how you can use Delicious to power your email newsletter and blog content engine:

<http://www.conversationagent.com/2010/07/how-to-use-delicious-for-content-ideas.html>



Delicious

Get Started Building Your Social Media Presence

Get Signed Up!

If you haven't already signed up for an account on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, or claimed your business on Yelp, Foursquare, or other sites, you should do so now. You have nothing to lose and everything to gain. Even if you don't plan to use any or all of the sites right away, they're free and a great place to experiment with different marketing tactics.

And of course, sign up for a [NutshellMail](#) account so you can monitor the activity taking place on those sites, right from your email inbox.

Note: It's recommended that you keep your professional and personal online personas separate, so you have the freedom to share family photos and other personal things just with people you know. To do this, you may want to create separate business and personal accounts on the networks you plan to use.

Also, be sure to check out our social media resource center at <http://www.constantcontact.com/socialmedia> for more hints and tips about effective social media marketing. We are staying on top of the best practices and sharing them with you all the time.



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