

Leveraging Google+ for Your Business



Leveraging Google+

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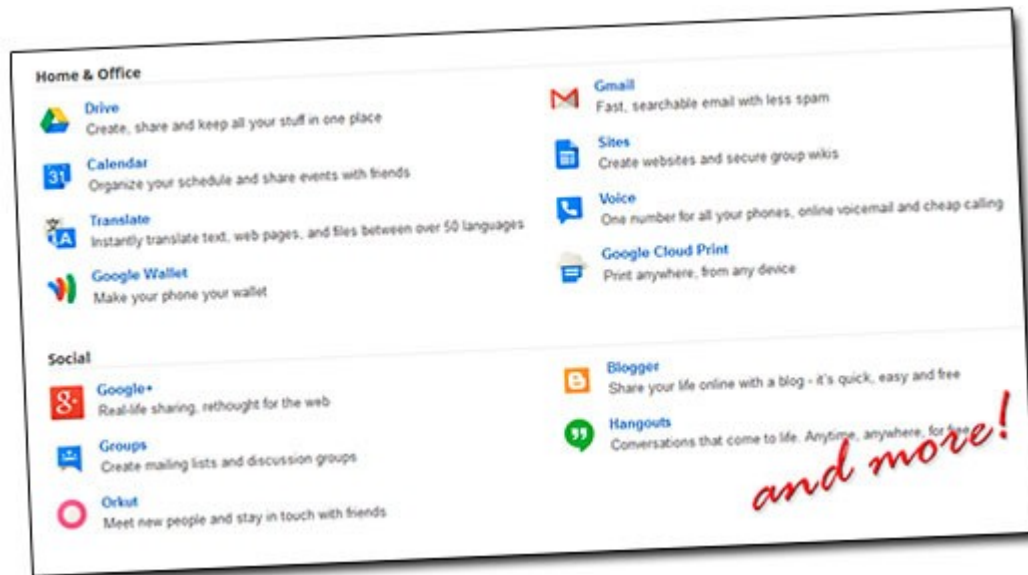
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Leveraging Google+: It's not the largest social network

Google+ is billed as the largest social network in the world. However, that is because Google counts every person who signs up for a Google email address as a user, even if they are not actively using it. But, Google+ is so much more than a social network, it's a way to identify and connect with people all across your web activities including search, maps, YouTube and other Google products with just one log on.



It can be hard to determine how many truly active Google+ account holders exist, but it's somewhere around 343 million active users. Facebook still leads, with over 1.15 billion users, and even Twitter has more active users at over 500 million, it's important to remember that Google + is not trying to be Facebook or Twitter. Google is still trying to be a search engine, but it's using all their other products such as Google+ to return better, more relevant and personalized search results. Once you learn how everything is interrelated you can truly begin to leverage Google+ to grow your business.

Major Benefits of Google+

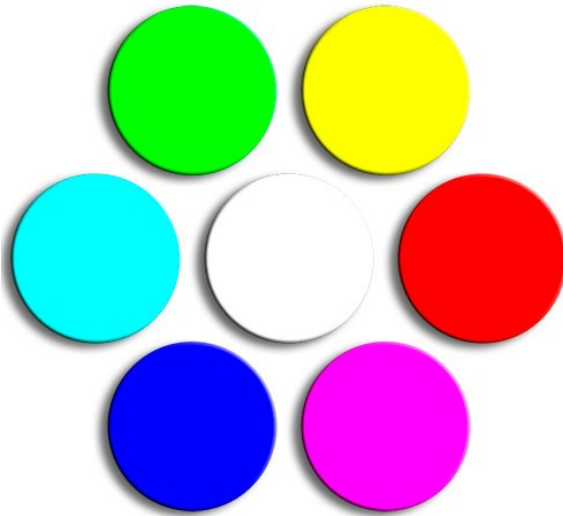
Google Plus is not really a social networking website. It's much more than that. It's a way to communicate, organize, and personalize your experience on the web. Before we talk about the benefits of understand that Google Plus is unlike any other destination on the web. Understanding the benefits and how you can use it will be key in realizing how you can leverage Google+ to increase traffic to your site and connections for your business.



Google Plus is so advanced in its offerings it is important to let go of all of your expectations when experiencing it. It's not going to act like other social networks that you're accustomed to, and you really don't want it to, because it's so much better. Google Plus is truly a game changer. It is, as Google likes to say: A Social Destination. For a business owner, being part of Google Plus is an imperative.

Some of the major benefits of Google+ are:

You Can Organize Your Connections



Using Google Plus Circles you can organize your customers (and any audience) easily by simply creating what is called a "circle" which is simply a way to segment contacts based on their relationship to you. Their relationship to you could be that they're a customer of yours, or that they are a colleague, or even a family member.

You can have a circle of "all customers" and then segment them into smaller circles based on what they've bought. For instance, you may have customers who have bought product A from you and some customers who have purchased service B. You can put them into a circle specifically for them. When you share a post on Google Plus you can choose to share it with one or more circles or the general public.

By creating circles, which is really just another way of segmenting, you can choose what you will share with whom easily.

You Can Improve Your Search Engine Results

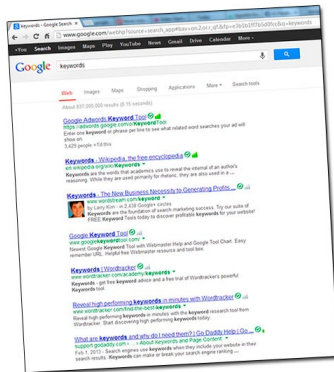
Google Search adds weight to its Author Rank and authorship tag in search results. The +1 feature is a great way to give more social proof for your content's popularity. Adding the Google + One Button to your content will increase SEO dramatically. Creating a Google+ Brand Page and personal profiles is another essential element to increasing your search engine page results (SEPR). Google+ is also a great way to get high quality backlinks to your content.

Not only that, Google+, since it is so good at connecting and identifying people, can let you know what your friends like all across the web. Just like you can see what pages your friends like on Facebook, you can now find out what



websites, articles, and other content your friends (social circles) like all across the entire Internet.

This enables Google Search to return search results not just based on the search terms you use, and the location you reside, but also on what pages your social circles are recommending via Google Search Plus Your World. These very personal results for search terms and phrases are given to searchers signed into their Google+ accounts, which remember, every person with a Gmail account now automatically have a Google+ account, and if they're signed into their email, they're signed into Google+.



Google+ Status Updates are Indexed Immediately

You can help this process by including important keywords within your status update, as well as optimizing them with awesome headlines to create even better and more targeted search results. The people in your circles will be a lot more likely to see your status updates on Google+ too, over Facebook. At least right now Google+ is not requiring funds to "boost" your posts to people who have chosen to follow you. They will see your updates if they are looking.

Understanding Google+ Integration with the Rest of Google

The fact is, Google has done a great job integrating the rest of its products with Google+ the Social Network. You may or may not be familiar with the range of Google products. Many are listed below.

- | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| ✓ Blogger | ✓ Google Documents | ✓ Google Plus Pages |
| ✓ Google +1 | ✓ Google Drive | ✓ Google Profiles |
| ✓ Google Adwords | ✓ Google Events | ✓ Google Search |
| ✓ Google Android | ✓ Google Groups | ✓ Google Sites |
| ✓ Google Authorship | ✓ Google Hangouts | ✓ Google Voice |
| ✓ Google Calendar | ✓ Google Local | ✓ Google Wallet |
| ✓ Google Chrome | ✓ Google Mail | ✓ Picasa |
| ✓ Google Chrome | ✓ Google Maps | ✓ Youtube.com |
| Book | ✓ Google Now | |
| ✓ Google | ✓ Google Offers | |
| Communities | ✓ Google Play | |
| ✓ and more | | |

These Google products work together to create a very powerful interconnected way to do just about anything you want to do on the Internet. Understanding this interconnectedness is important if you want to use Google to get more business. Opportunities for business

are truly unlimited when you understand how your activities and the activities of your target audience affect your impact and your search engine page rank.

The best way to explain how everything is related is to consider Google Email apart from Google+ for a moment. You automatically have a Google+ account when you get a Gmail account. So, any of your customers or potential customers who have a Gmail account are already connected to Google+ even if they don't know it. Let's say you have 200 customers who have Gmail accounts and only 40 of them are active on Google+.

One of the 40 reads a blog post you wrote about something they are interested in, and they use your +1 button. You will know that they +1'd your blog post, and now when they search for anything on the Internet Google Search recognizes that they already +1'd some of your content so Google will be more likely to return more of your content to the searcher.

But, that's not all. Anyone that your customer who +1'd your content is connected to either via Gmail, or via Google+ as an active user will also be more likely to receive a search result with your content that your customer +1'd. Did you understand that? With just one person using the +1 button on your site, they've made it more likely for you to show up in SERPS to not only themselves, but to their friends, customers, contacts, whether or not they're in their circles. Pretty awesome and powerful, isn't it? Now, times that by 40. Excited yet?

Who Uses Google+?

The easy answer is that anyone who has a Gmail account is now automatically signed up for Google Plus. But, the truth is, it's not that easy. Many people who have Google Plus accounts don't use it, at least yet. There are 425 million Gmail users but only 343 million active Google Plus users. So, even though Google forces you to have a G+ account it doesn't mean it's being used.



So probably a better question is: Who Should Use Google+.

And the answer is: *Anyone who wants to continue to return a high page rank on Google Search needs to be active with Google +.*

In fact, some experts argue that getting in now while it's not the most popular network is the best way to get started. You'll have time to learn how to use Google Plus to get the best results before it's as popular as Facebook. Because, frankly,

Google Plus is harder to learn than Facebook. But, it's only harder to learn because it has so many features and works so well with the multitude of other Google product offerings.

It's actually set up better than Facebook, especially in terms of use for business owners, because while Facebook is a great social networking tool, it's not created by and used by Google to help determine search results like Google Plus is. Yes, having a Facebook page helps with search results, but Google naturally places a higher importance on their own

products. Anyway, Facebook is just now starting to get into the business aspects of social networking. While Google Plus seems to be a marketer's dream come true.

By getting active now on Google Plus you'll have a big opportunity to become a major influencer and force within the Google+ community. You'll discover that unlike Facebook, you can actually communicate better with customers as your brand. Facebook actually makes it rather difficult to have two way interactions with your customers as your brand, putting a lot of limits on your activity as a business. Google Plus encourages interaction as a brand and as an individual.

Getting Started With Google Plus

If you use Gmail or any Google products you're basically already using Google+, but you may not realize it and you may not be using it to its full potential. Sign in to your Gmail account, and look at the black bar above the Google logo, search window, and your name. It has your name in the upper left with the + symbol beside it. Click it. This is your Google + page.

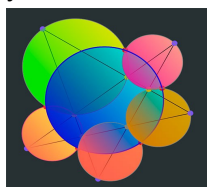
You can now highlight the little house on the left to activate a menu where you can see and edit your profile. You can also click the little down arrow beside your photo if one is showing, (if not, near where your photo will be when you upload one) to bring up a window that allows you to click Account so that you can edit your profile. It's important that you do edit your profile, filling it out as completely as possible. Also upload a picture of yourself.



You can also add in other email addresses that you want associated with your Google+ account such as your business email address. You can also create links back to your business website, blog and other online real estate that you wish to highlight. Remember, as you create your profile to be aware of keywords, keyword phrases, and to ensure that you are found check your privacy settings. This is also where you will connect any devices, or other products and apps that you use to your Google+ account as well.

Managing and Adding People to Circles

Now that you have your account set up the way you want it, with a profile picture, cover page, and your profile filled out as completely as possible, be sure to verify all the email addresses you want associated with the account. Click Home. This is where your stream of content will live



as well as where you can add people to your circles and share updates with your circles or the public.

If you click on People, you may be surprised to discover that several people may have already added you. You might have a message above some

pictures that say "People to add back" this means they've added you to their circles and you can choose to add them or not add them. If you hover over Add, you'll see a few circles that have already been created and a choice to create a new circle. You can add as many circles as you want. Think of circles as a way to segment your audience. You can have as many circles as you want so you can hyper segment your audience.

Go ahead and scroll through the people who have already added you and determine if you want to add them back or not and put them in the appropriate circles. Then look through the suggestions they have provided you. The suggestions are based on your interests as well as with whom you've already connected. You can also click on Find coworkers, Find classmates or use one of the Connect services which will enable you to add more people to more circles. You can also type a person's name in the search window.

Participating Effectively

It will take time for you to build up your circles but a really important part of building your reputation in any type of social media is to participate effectively. You want to create targeted content that is unique and not the same thing you're putting everywhere else. Take advantage of the different products that Google offers, such as Google Hangouts and Google Communities.

Don't just clone what you put on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn.com to Google+. Be different and engaging. Keep in mind your circles and how you have segmented them. You don't want to share all your content with everyone; pick and choose with whom to share information and knowledge based on whether or not you feel they would be interested.



Managing your circles and participating is a good way to get started. You don't want to put off participating until you have a huge audience, you want to get in the habit of participating now, while your circles are small. Spend some time each day building your audience.

Growing Your Contacts

Potential clients and customers will be able to find you better if you are active on Google+. There are many ways to be active with Google+. Even the simple act of writing a blog post and then sharing it with your circles and the public can help you grow your contacts.



In fact, anything you do on Google+ and all the related apps can bring your business attention. Watch an enlightening YouTube.com video? +1 it. Read someone else's instructive blog post? +1 it. The trick is to optimize and enhance all your activity so that your customers can locate you.

Here are a few more ways to grow your contacts:

- **Interact With Others** -- Use the features on Google Plus to interact with others. Use Google Hangout, Google Events, Google Communities and other interactive features to communicate directly with others. Via communities you can have discussions with and get feedback from your customers.
- **Share Other People's Content** -- It's nice to +1 other people's content, sharing it with various circles whom you believe will be interested in the content. They'll do the same for you. People like to feel as if they're dealing with real people and not robots.
- **Give Away Knowledge** -- Don't be shy about your expertise. Freely help others when questions come up. You never know when you will help someone who wants to hire you or buy your products. If you establish yourself as an expert they will come to you.
- **Promote Your Content** -- Naturally, you should also promote your own content, but be careful. You don't want to treat Google+ as another Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn.com. You want to change up the content and make it super focused depending on which circles you plan to share it with.
- **Create a Business Profile** -- The first impression of your business on Google+ is your profile. You have a opportunity to create an awesome, optimized and complete profile that will promote your brand through text, images and links back to your site.
- **Personalize Your URL** -- A great way to personalize your Google+ URL is to go to <http://gplus.to> to create a shorter unique link that you can share with others. Add this link to your Google account profile links by clicking account / edit profile. Use the link elsewhere to get people to connect with you on Google+.
- **Mix Up The Content** -- Use a variety of different types o content on Google+. Try video, blog posts, direct posts, discussions and more. Try adding video to your profile to really up the ante. If you've given a presentation, that would be the perfect video to put on your profile.
- **Build Your Authority** -- Use Author Rank and Google Authorship to boost your authority. If you write for more than one blog or website it's easy to get credit for it. Simply go to plus.google.com/authorship and get your author email addresses verified, then use, make sure you add the sites you contribute to on your Google+ profile and put the proper code into your website or blog as required. If you use WordPress there are a variety of plugins that you can get that will help you with this process.
- **Cross Link From Your Google+ Page to All Your Websites and Blogs** -- Every site you have should be linked to and from your Google + Account. In other words, create a link from your Google+ profile to your website, and vice versa.
- **Create a Link from Your Sites to Your Google Profile Page** -- This will enable people to find you on Google Plus



and follow you if they want to. They can also add you to their circles and then you will be able to add them to yours.

- **Don't Forget Local Search** -- Google is very locally focused due to how they return personalized results based on many factors such as your location and your friends. So, if it's important to you create a Google Business Page in addition to your Google+ profile and get verified by Google.

Building your following on Google+ is a lot like building your following on other social media sites, however, nothing will have more impact on your search engine results page as your combined activities on Google+ and all of Google's related products.

Speaking of related products, a really important thing to do to help you grow your following is to:

Add The +1 Button To Your Website

Whether you like it or not, Google Search is still the most used search engine. Over 80 percent of people who search for anything on the web use Google Search. Therefore, if Google creates something that promotes your content, you better use it. Stop what you're doing right now and add the +1 Buttons to all your websites and blogs.



When your visitors +1's you, your search engine results page ranking immediately goes up to every one of their friends and their friends. It's just a fact. Since Google adds people to Google+ the minute they sign up for an email account, that's a lot of people that could potentially see your online real estate.

Even if they're only Gmail users, they will still be more likely to return your page in a search. In addition, since that person +1'd you once, it's likely they'll like what you have to say later, and Google Search recognizes that, and will return more of your content to the searcher. The +1 button affects SEO dramatically, so you need to include it and use it. If you do nothing else, add the +1 button to your blogs today.

In addition to the tips above it's important to us all of Google Webmaster Tools to their fullest advantage since everything that Google does is linked together and ultimately a big part of the Google Search results that help people searching for your products and services find you. The more ways you can engage with Google, the more opportunities you'll have to engage with the people who use Google.

Conclusion

While Google + is not the largest social media network, it is growing, and remember -- it's so much more than a social media network. It's an interconnected network of features that work

together in conjunction with social capabilities to help create a coherent overall Internet experience that is personalized for each individual.

Your experience with Google+ plus will be successful and fruitful if you remember that any type of online marketing, or social media marketing is a long-term marketing plan. You will not usually get results over night. But, the work you are doing today will pay off tomorrow and it will pay off in a year or two years, and even longer down the line. The work you do is cumulative. Leveraging Google+ to expand your reach will be so much more powerful in terms of the results you will see than any other online marketing you will do, due to the fact that with Google, it's all tied together. The more you interact with all of Google's products the more likely you are to rank higher on search engine results pages.