

# Social Media Marketing Guide



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# PREFACE

Social media provides you, the marketer, with the opportunity to create an experience or to engage your customers wherever they are – social networking on the go. Understanding social media is key to both increasing connections to your company and your products as well as engaging customers.

Social media best practices are still being addressed for business applications. This Social Media Marketing Guide provides information on current best practices for several social network tools that you can use to engage your customers with your company. This document will not tell you how to set up your social network accounts or platforms. Some of the resources listed at the end of the document can help you do the initial set up of your social network tools.

## Contents

Introduction.....	1
General Tips .....	2
Keys To Success .....	4
Facebook .....	5
Twitter .....	8
Linkedin .....	10
Google+ .....	11
Case Study.....	14
Key Points To Take Away .....	15
Resources.....	15

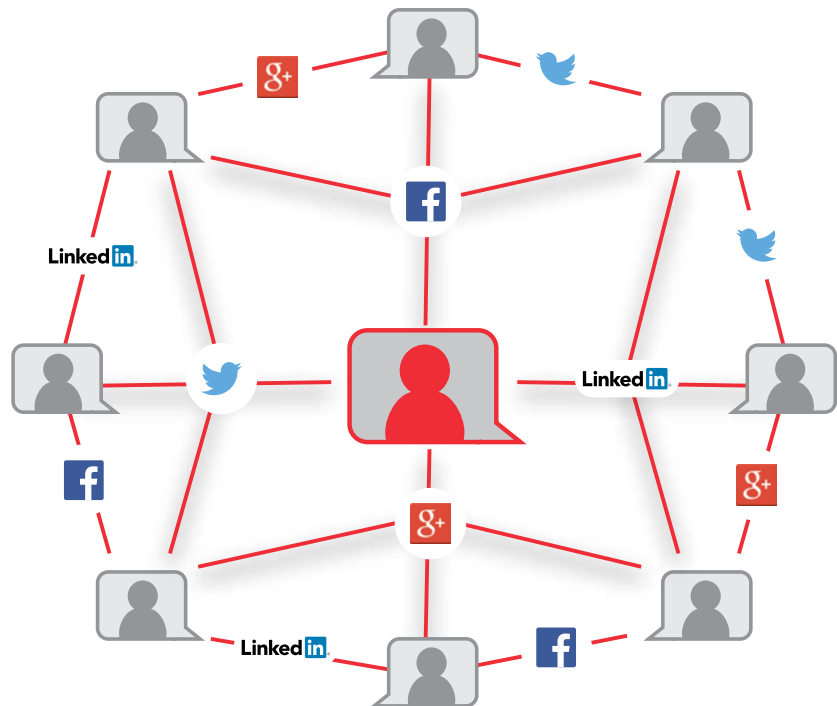
# INTRODUCTION

This publication will outline several best practices to use while managing your business's social media accounts on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Google+. A good social network can mean a bigger network of customers.



*"The conversation is happening about your brand whether you like it or not"*

— Seth Godin,  
author, entrepreneur  
and marketer



*Build your network with social media.*

## Tips for food producers and processors

Food is one of the things people cannot live without, and it just so happens that many people enjoy sharing their eating experiences on social media. With the growing local food movement, many consumers are asking more questions and delving deeper into where the food on their table comes from.

And that is where social media can come in. By developing a strong social presence online, your business can benefit greatly from this open feedback channel straight from your customers.



## Benefits to your business


- add tools to your marketing
- involve your team in direct conversations with your customers
  - hear what customers are saying
  - take an active role in the dialogue
  - improve customer service
- better position your business
- access new customers
- strengthen your relationship with existing customers
- share learning
- increase brand recognition
- identifying influencers and target your marketing
- free, effective advertising

## GENERAL TIPS

Here are a few tips on what you could share with your community using social media:

- Recipes – Encourage customers to share their food photos or recipes that use your product. This material can be shared with you and other clients. Establish a section or photo album where others can find them.
- Short videos – If you have a smartphone (iPhone, Android or Windows phone), then you are carrying around a video recorder in your pocket. As you go about your daily business, take a short video (less than a minute) on how your produce is made or what is new in your business.
- Photos – When you are out in the community at an event, at a farmers' market, giving a farm tour, or anywhere for that matter, take photos. Posting a photo of your latest special or deal can also really increase engagement, especially when you give a discount to customers who mention they saw the photo on Facebook/Twitter, etc.
- Blog posts – Chances are you are passionate about your product and your business. Taking the time to craft a short article about some aspect of your business will position you as a source of knowledge in your industry and increase the likelihood that your website will be found in a Google search of phrases related to your business.

*Social media lets you  
take a more active role  
with your customers*



*Address your  
customers' concerns,  
so they feel connected  
to your business*

- Questions – Asking a poll question can help you gauge what your customers really want. If you are looking to launch new products and services or get ideas for new packaging, be sure to ask your customers for some feedback.

Before you start using social media tools, take some time to evaluate and decide which tools are the best fit for your business. Ask yourself, “How will I integrate social networking with my business goals?” “Where will each tool reach my customer?” “What can I afford for time and tools?” “Who will my team include?”

## Things to remember...

Once you answer these questions and set up the tools best suited to your business, here are a few things to remember:

- Organize and consolidate your marketing efforts.
- Measure your efforts, so you know when you prompt a customer to purchase.
- Secure your profiles.

Include social media icons on your email signature and your website. These icons encourage customers to engage with your business on social networks.

## Professional design

If you do not have a high quality logo or official branding, have a graphic designer create profile pictures, cover images and backgrounds to ensure your business looks professional and is well represented online.

## Responsible sharing

When using social media, only share what you would feel comfortable saying out loud, in person, into a microphone or to a room full of your peers. Social channels are not the way to express frustrations, especially when it comes to your business and customers.

Address your customers' concerns as best you can via social media and, if necessary, ask the customer to privately message you their telephone number, so you can speak to them in person regarding an issue.

Comments on controversial topics such as politics or religion, for example, should not find their way to your business page.



Think you do not have enough time for social media? That is like saying you don't have time to foster relationships with your customers. Make the activity part of your daily work to take a photo, tell a story or share exciting news on your social accounts. You would be surprised at how your passion will result in engagement from your followers.

Your social media pages work best for your business when you dedicate the time and energy to work on them.



Showcase your organization with social media. (Alberta Agriculture and Forestry Facebook page)

## KEYS TO SUCCESS

1. Make real world networking opportunities extend online. Build real world relationships and fortify them using your social networks. When you meet someone in person, your connections will know more about you and be more comfortable doing business with you.
2. Social networking is not about collecting names; it is really quality versus quantity. A small circle of followers that you have met in the real world and who contribute and engage with your social network is more valuable than collecting thousands of connections who will never be your customers. Make your content engaging and share some personal facts while exercising caution.

# FACEBOOK

Facebook is a social networking website. It is a tool that makes it easy for you to connect and share with the people in your life.



launched 2004

active users:  
1.06 billion\*

\*Approximate number. Source: Facebook Investor Relations – <http://investor.fb.com/relaeasedetail.cfm?ReleaseID=736911>

When setting up your Facebook business page, be sure to fill out as many of the fields as possible, especially the sections with your business address, telephone number, website, email, etc.

## Personal profiles versus business profiles

Facebook encourages you to separate yourself from your business by offering both personal profiles and business pages. Look for the little bar near the top of the screen that allows you to switch between posting as an individual and posting as your business page.

## Profile avatar versus cover image

In Facebook, your avatar is the smaller profile picture that appears next to your business name while the cover image is the larger photo spread at the top of your business profile.



Alberta Agriculture and Forestry Facebook profile avatar.

*Did you know that "40% of Canadians over the age of 13 visit Facebook every day? Ignoring this hub as a part of your marketing might not be the best call"*

— Cidnee Stephen, author of bi-weekly marketing ezine *Marketing Exceclerator*, is a small business marketing expert

For your business page, it is important to set your profile avatar as your logo, and your cover image as something very visual that has to do with your business. Remember that with the Facebook Terms of Service, your cover image cannot contain your website, email address or your business telephone number.



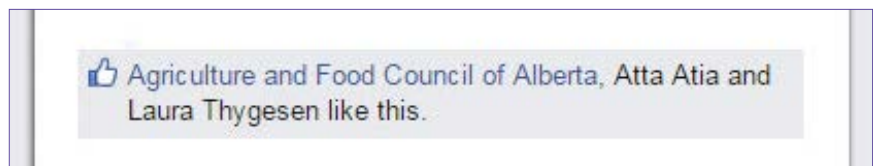
Alberta Agriculture and Forestry Facebook cover image.



## The power of “Insights”

Facebook Insights are unlocked once your page receives 30 “Likes.” Insights are very useful statistics that report how much brand exposure your business is receiving by letting you know the following:

- how many “Likes” the page has received
- how many people your posts have reached
- which posts were the most popular
- demographic information of your Facebook fans



*Example of a Facebook “Like”.*



*“Facebook Page Insights allows you to see not only who’ve you’ve reached – but also who you’ve engaged.” ([www.facebook.com/business/news/pageinsights](http://www.facebook.com/business/news/pageinsights))*

## High engagement

As a rule of thumb, photos and videos gain the highest level of engagement for businesses. Posing questions or polls to your fans also encourages engagement.



## Using Facebook contest to gain exposure and Likes

Running a contest on Facebook is a great way to encourage visitors to “Like” your business page. The contest must follow the Facebook Terms of Service.

1. You should use a third-party application (app) to set up and run the contest in order to meet all of Facebook’s promotion guidelines. When choosing a contest support app, you should consider several questions:

**Can the design of the app be customized by adding your logo and brand designs?**

**Does the consumer price suit your budget?** Sometimes these apps are free, and sometimes they can cost thousands of dollars. Choose an app that has a price that fits your needs.

**Does the app have mobile capability?** According to *Facebook’s 2012 Report*, people accessing from a mobile device increased 67 per cent. Make sure your contest app is viewable on mobile phones.

2. Most contests are set up to encourage the visitor to “Like” the page, but “Liking” the page cannot be the way to enter the contest.

Once a visitor “Likes” the page, the contest details are automatically revealed, and the person can then proceed to enter. After the person enters the contest, you can encourage further engagement by inviting the person to share the contest with friends or ask for a comment or to share a picture on your business page wall.

You cannot make posting a comment or uploading an image to your wall part of the conditions of entry to the contest. This action is against the terms of service.

## Asking for the “Like” as a company culture

1. Point of sale transactions.  
If you have a store, ask for the “Like” by giving customers the option of logging into their Facebook accounts on a mobile device, “Like” the page and receive 5 per cent off their purchase.
2. Set up a digital picture frame.  
Scrolling through your various social networks is an interactive way to make customers aware of your presence online.
3. Train your staff to promote your business’s social networks.  
They can also contribute by shooting photos or videos and passing them along to the business owner to post.
4. Include the logos of the social networks you are on, or simply state: “Like us on Facebook” or “Follow us on Twitter” on all marketing materials.

*Include the logos of the social networks you are on, on all your marketing materials*



*Like us on Facebook button; Follow us on Facebook button*



*Follow us on Twitter button*

# Twitter

Twitter is an online social networking and blogging service that enables users to send and read text-based messages of up to 140 characters, known as “Tweets.” Twitter is a real-time network that connects you to the latest stories, idea opinions and news.



launched 2006

active users:  
300 million\*

\*Source information: “Twitter reaches 300 million active users” at <http://www.theverge.com/2015/4/28/8509855/twitter-earnings-q1-2015-leak-selerity>

*“Tweets” are  
text-based  
messages of up  
to 140 characters*

When setting up your Twitter page, try to fill out as many of the fields as possible, including relevant terms related to your business that people may search for.

## What is a “hashtag”?

A hashtag is a # symbol followed by a keyword or phrase used in a Tweet. The hashtag was created specifically for Twitter as a way to help users to categorize their messages. Hashtags are now being adopted as a standard on many social networks.

## Get to know your hashtags

If you are located in a particular region, get to know the unique #hashtag that users are using to talk about what is going on in that area. For example, airport codes such as #YYC and #YEG are used for larger centres like Calgary and Edmonton, while some smaller communities just use their city or town name like #Red Deer.

Using hashtags makes your Tweets easier to find and can connect you to people in your local community.

## Say it...in 140 characters

Since you only have a maximum of 140 characters for your Tweet, write short, to-the-point posts that include your latest blog post, exciting business news, a special sale or promotion. When Tweeting, it never hurts to include a link back to content on your website, blog or other social accounts.

## Twitter search

The small search bar on Twitter can be used the same way as on Google to search for anything mentioned by worldwide users on Twitter, for example:

- topics and phrases, e.g. Alberta Government, Edmonton farmers’ market or even searching for your business name
- other users Twitter handle to find and follow, e.g. @YourAlbertaAg
- relevant hashtags related to a specific topic, e.g. #AlbertaAg or #ThinkLocal



Search bar on Twitter



## Following users

Using Twitter search to find your customers and other companies and organizations relevant to your business helps you find Twitter accounts to follow.

Clicking the “Follow” button on Twitter is similar to adding a friend on Facebook. When you “Follow,” then posts, or “Tweets” as they are often called, will start appearing in your news feed.



Follow us on Twitter button



Alberta Farm Fresh Producers Association Tweet @Ab\_Farm\_Fresh

## Great Alberta hashtags to follow

### #ABAg

Agriculture news in the province of Alberta

### #WestCdnAg

Agriculture news in Western Canada

### #YYC

events and news in the city of Calgary

### #YEG

events and news in the city of Edmonton

## Great Twitter users to follow

### @AlbertaAg

official Government of Alberta Agriculture and Forestry account

### @Ab\_Farm\_Fresh

Alberta Farm Fresh Producers Association (AFFPA)

## Retweeting

The option to Retweet (a tweet that you share with your followers) another user’s tweet is used most often to express agreement. You can also “Reply” to that particular users Tweet and write a comment rather than Retweeting.



To Retweet, simply click the “Retweet” link just below the other person’s update.



An example of Alberta Agriculture’s Retweet.



launched 2003

active users:  
200 million\*

\*Approximate number. Source LinkedIn blog – <http://blog.linkedin.com/2013/01/01/linkedin-200-million/>

*“LinkedIn is our  
modern resume.  
Keep it up to date”*

— David A. West,  
business professional

# LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a business-oriented social networking site. LinkedIn can strengthen and extend your existing network of trusted contacts. It is a tool that can help you create professional networks.

As with Facebook, you will need a personal profile in order to create a LinkedIn business page. If your business is small, it might be more beneficial to post as yourself, the business owner, rather than manage a business page.

LinkedIn is much more of a professional network than Facebook or Twitter. It is used primarily for business and as such, your posts should include business updates, offers or promotions. Or it can include links to blog posts that might be helpful to your connections.

A professionally written LinkedIn profile is a “must have” as it will help your clients understand more about you and your business.

**Stokes Seeds**  
Home

**Serving Generations of Customers.**

Stokes Seeds is a distributor of flower, vegetable and herb seeds throughout the US and Canada. Our product is sold directly to end users in the commercial and hobby garden market. Purchases are made by mail order catalog, web site or through one of our professional sales representatives calling on commercial growers in certain states and provinces. Orders can be as little as \$8.00 or as large as \$800,000.

We have locations in Thorold Ontario, Buffalo NY and Vineland NJ. In addition we have a research farm in St. Catharines Ontario testing new products each year.

Stokes Seeds is a member of the American Seed Trade Association, the California Seed Association, New York Seed Association and the Canadian Seed Trade Association.

Our Mission - To be the First Choice for our customers.

**Specialties**  
Vegetable Seed, Flower Seed, Herb Seed, Garden Accessories

<b>Website</b> http://www.StokeSeeds.com	<b>Industry</b> Farming	<b>Type</b> Privately Held
<b>Headquarters</b> 296 Collier Rd. S. Thorold, ON L2V5B6 Canada	<b>Company Size</b> 51-200 employees	<b>Founded</b> 1881

Stokes Seeds corporate LinkedIn profile.

## Invest time in your profile

LinkedIn also allows you to request recommendations and testimonials from your connections regarding your skills and expertise. It is also a good idea for you to write some recommendations for other business owners as they will be more likely to return the favour.

# Google+

Google's answer to Facebook, Google+ is very similar, but with a few important exceptions. Google+ offers a number of unique features, such as Google Local, Google Hangouts and Google Authorship.



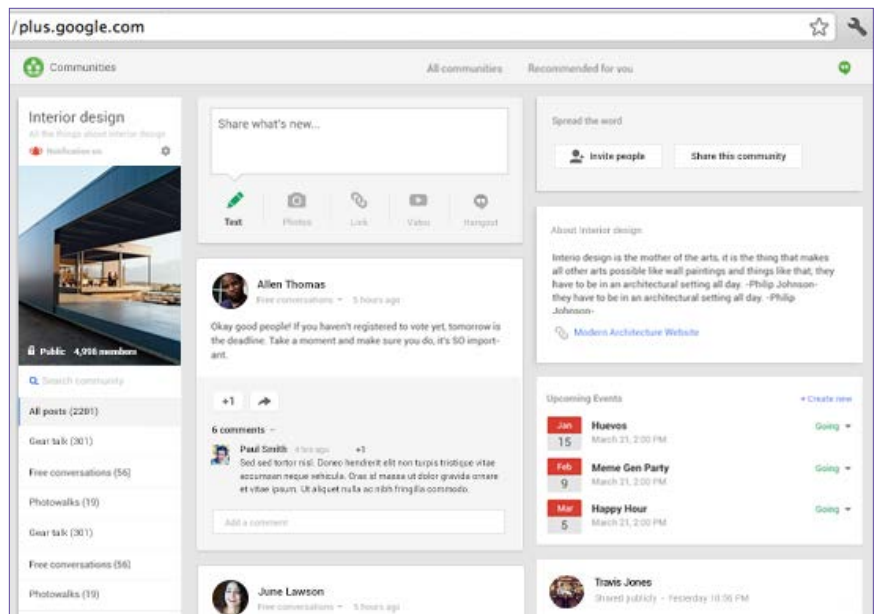
launched 2011

active users  
343 million\*

\*Source: ZDNet- <http://www.zdnet.com/google-moves-up-to-second-place-in-social-networks-70010372/>

## Google+ vs. Facebook

Essentially, Google+ is Google's social network answer to Facebook. With many similar social features, the big difference is that Google+ is intertwined with Google's other features such as Search. So, by posting relevant information related to your business on Google+ and providing a link back to your website, you are essentially whispering in Google's ear that this is what your business is about, thereby improving the chances of your business appearing in a Google Search result.



Google+ features ([www.google.com/+learnmore/features.html](http://www.google.com/+learnmore/features.html))

## Google Hangouts

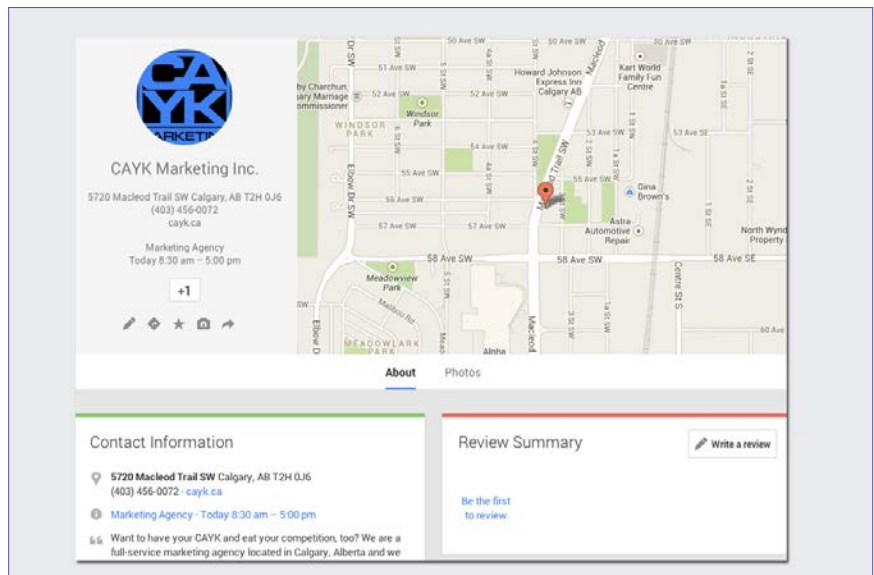
If you have ever been on Skype, you know that you can connect your webcam to your computer and have a face-to-face conversation with anyone, anywhere in the world as long as there is a reliable internet connection.

Google Hangouts is another free video chat service that comes with your Google+ profile, except unlike many other providers, you can hang out with multiple people (up to 9) at the same time.

## Google Local/business pages

Google Local is a review site for your Google+ business page. Usually, these Google Local review pages already exist for businesses, but typically, they are not being managed. To become the manager of the Google Local page and link it to our Google+ business page, you must have Google send to your business address a verification postcard with a pin number. This card will verify that you are the business owner and allow you to respond to reviews on your Google Local as well as make changes such as verify your location, your business hours, upload photos, etc.

This page management is very important as connecting the two pages (Google+ and Google Local) will allow users who find your business on Google to see everything they might need about your business.



*Google+ and Google Local allow users to find your location, hours, reviews and more .  
(CAYK Marketing Inc. Google Business Page)*





*You can use tools to push your rank higher when web searches are made*

## What is Google Authorship?

Authorship refers to the project by Google that gives users methods to make a verified connection between their original content anywhere on the web and your Google+ personal profile.

Your Google+ profile photo next to a result from your site makes it stand out from the other search results. This format could potentially increase click-through rates for you when you show up for related keywords in search.

Google will promote your content over stolen versions. Google wants to combat online plagiarism. If your original content is lifted and posted on another site, the plagiarized page will not outperform your original article. The author verification tagging process helps Google give preference to your original content.

Most importantly, you will begin to build AuthorRank with Google. Via your Google+ profile, authorship allows Google to identify your online content.

All that content begins to contribute to a score that Google maintains as their assessment of your trustworthiness, relevance and popularity in your key topics.

Once AuthorRank kicks in as a search engine optimization (SEO) ranking factor, it likely will serve as an additional signal to Google that your highly trusted content should rank higher in search.



# CASE STUDY

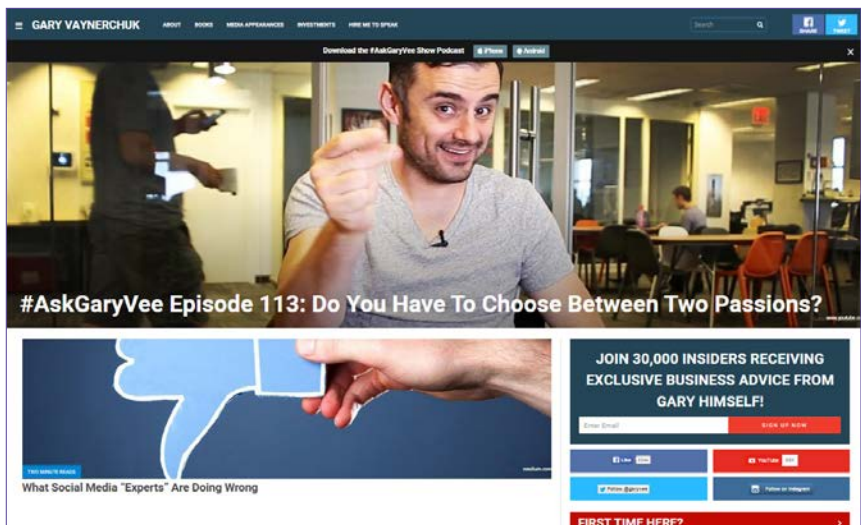
## A real world example: Gary Vaynerchuk

See: <http://garyvaynerchuk.com/>

Videos:

<http://video.garyvaynerchuk.com/keynotes/remax-annual-convention-2011>

*He has close to  
1 million followers  
on Twitter and is one  
of BusinessWeek's  
top 20 people  
every entrepreneur  
should follow*



Gary Vaynerchuk is a 36-year-old New York Times and Wall Street Journal best-selling author who is also a self-trained wine and social media expert. Gary does not claim to be a “techie,” but in 2005, he began video blogging and is known as a true social media trailblazer.

He has close to 1 million followers on Twitter and was included in BusinessWeek’s list of the top 20 people every entrepreneur should follow.

Recognizing the importance of e-commerce in 1997, Gary launched Winelibrary.com and helped grow his family business significantly from \$3 million to \$45 million by 2005.

In 2006, with a flipcam and New York Jets bucket, Gary began Wine Library TV, which revolutionized the wine world. His wine reviews soon attracted over 100,000 viewers each day and his die-hard fans nicknamed themselves “Vayniacs.” Gary’s cult-like following was the result of his unconventional, often irreverent commentary on wine.

In spring 2009, Gary and his brother AJ launched VaynerMedia, a new breed of agency that helps Fortune 500 companies like Campbell Soup Company, PepsiCo, Green Mountain Coffee, the New York Jets and the Brooklyn Nets find their social media voices and build their digital brands.



# KEY POINTS TO TAKE AWAY

## Social media is all about fostering real-world relationships online.

Always remember when networking with fellow professionals or meeting new customers to encourage these individuals to connect with you online. Consider including the Facebook business page and your Twitter handle on your business cards and other point-of-sale materials.

## Successful social sharing is most often achieved through the creation (and curation) of content.

Many small business owners find the above goal difficult to achieve. So, it is completely acceptable to hire a professional writer to produce well written articles and website content as part of your social strategy.

# RESOURCES

*Getting Started with Social Media: A Resource Guide*  
<http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/getting-started/>

Explore Local Resources  
[www.explorelocal.ca](http://www.explorelocal.ca)

CAYK Marketing Inc.  
Updated articles regarding online and real world marketing  
[www.cayk.ca/blog/](http://www.cayk.ca/blog/)

*The Facebook Marketing Book*, Zarrella, Dan.  
First Edition. Beijing, Sebastopol, CA. O'Reilly, 2011.

KLOUT.com  
Social media “influence” score. People with greater KLOUT scores are considered influencers. Brands like people of influence.

Prezi.com – an innovative and unique way to create and do presentations.

WiseStamp.com – creates and manages beautiful email signatures.

