Fact Sheet: Pinterest

What is Pinterest?

Pinterest is a visual social bookmarking network. It is used to share images that users find beautiful, inspiring or enjoyable. Its popularity has increased enormously since mid-2011, making Pinterest an increasingly valuable social-media resource for marketers.

Pinterest's appeal is not primarily relational, but visual. It allows users to "pin" images they have found on the web onto personal "boards" according to subject names assigned by the user. Boards can be re-viewed, and their images (and image descriptions) shared with others.

Users can "follow" one another, or follow specific boards that others have set up. Following a user or board means that everything pinned is shown to you on your Pinterest account in a real-time, scrolling stream.

What is the value of Pinterest for marketing?

Marketing with Pinterest differs from traditional social media because:

1. The visual nature of the site allows a brand or message to easily be promoted in memorable ways. Both purchases and opinions can be influenced by having users socially share your images.

2. Every pin created from online content creates a "do-follow" (i.e., search-engine indexed) link back to the original page. This will help search-engine rankings, especially when many users re-pin your images, causing many quality backlinks to be created. In addition, all these links create additional direct traffic as interested Pinterest users visit the URLs attached to each pin.

What are the best ways to use Pinterest?

The key to using Pinterest for marketing, as with other social media platforms, is in becoming a positive presence in the community by creating interesting pins that will be shared and followed to the source webpage.

Developing a positive image in the Pinterest community will give you goodwill and influence that may transfer to your other online accounts.

You will need to create a presence and then create good pins to develop a following and a positive presence.

1. Creating a Presence

- Add Value" – create good-quality pins.

- Participate in the community--"like" and re-pin other good-quality pins in related subjects. Once you have some pins and boards of your own, begin following other boards and users. Often these users will follow you in return.

- Maintain your presence – pin and re-pin regularly, in addition to following and "liking" other users' boards.

2. Creating good pins

- Use good-quality images. Users will be more interested in, and more likely to view and re-pin, quality images.

- Pin interesting content. If users are not interested in your pins, they will not follow your boards, or the links back to your webpages.

- Build "tall" content. Images with long height and short width (e.g., infographics) tend to stand out more in the pin-stream, and users find them interesting.

- Pin newsworthy content. Re-pinning is good, but being the first in your industry to pin a news item can result in you being regarded as a thought leader.

- Give your boards relevant titles that briefly yet accurately describe them. Users are more likely to follow a board if they know exactly what it is about and think it is relevant to them. Consider using popular and descriptive keyword phrases (that relate to your overall SEO strategy) when naming boards and writing pin descriptions.

- Help your audience create interesting pins by adding a social-sharing "Pin it" button to your webpages.