

# Social Media Marketing Guide



Better Position Your Business

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## PREFACE

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

Social media best practices are still being addressed for business applications. The Social Media Marketing Guide provides information on current best practices for several social network tools that you can use to engage your company with your customers. 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.

### Disclaimer

Initiated by Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development, funding for this project was provided through ; fck ]b[ : cfk UfX`&žU`ZYXYfUždfcj ]bV]U`žHYff]rcf]U` ]b]h]U]j] Y. The views and opinions expressed in this report are not necessarily those of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada or Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development.

This publication is authored by David West, owner of Continuous Internet Consulting and CAYK Marketing.

# INTRODUCTION

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This publication will outline several best practices to use while managing your business' social media accounts on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Google+.

## Tips for Food Producers and Processors

Food is one of the things all humans can't live without and it just so happens 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's where social media comes in. By developing a strong social presence online, your business can benefit greatly from this open feedback channel straight from your customers.

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

- Seth Godin, author, entrepreneur and marketer.

## 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
- Identify influencers and target your marketing
- Free, effective advertising



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

- Recipes - Encourage customers to share with you their food photos or recipes that use your product. 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 with you in your pocket. As you go about your daily business take a short video (less than a minute) on how your product is made or what's 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.
- 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.



## GENERAL TIPS

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Before you start, 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 your 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 these are some things to remember:

- Organize and consolidate your marketing efforts.
- Measure your efforts so you know when you convert 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 don't 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

Share only what you'd say out loud, in-person, into a microphone, 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 phone number so you can speak to them in person regarding their issue.

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

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

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



Example sourced from  
<http://www.prairiegardens.org/corn-maze/> blog

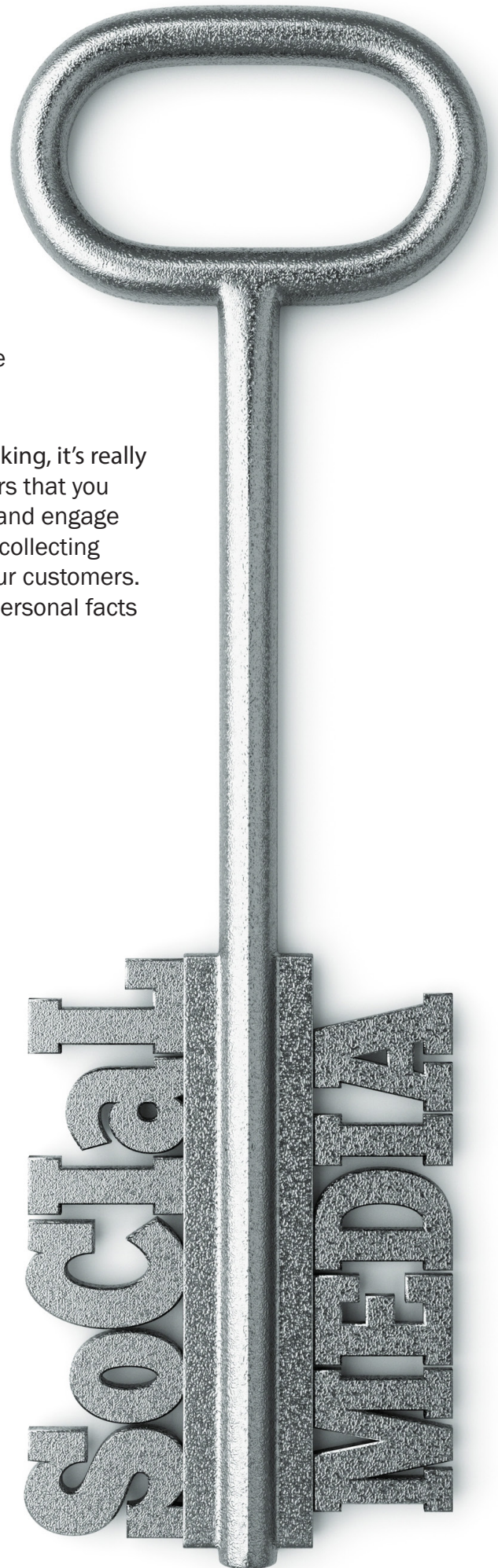


Example sourced from <http://www.davisonorchards.ca> blog.

# The Keys To Success

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1. Make real world networking opportunities extend online. Build real world relationships and fortify them using your social networks. When you meet in person your connections will know more about you and be more comfortable doing business with you.
2. It's not about collecting names. In social networking, it's 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

LAUNCHED: 2004

ACTIVE USERS: 1.06 billion\*



“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 the bi-weekly marketing ezine “Marketing Exclerator”, is a small business marketing expert.

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.

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, phone number, website, email, etc.

## Personal Profiles vs. Business

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 yourself and posting as your business page.

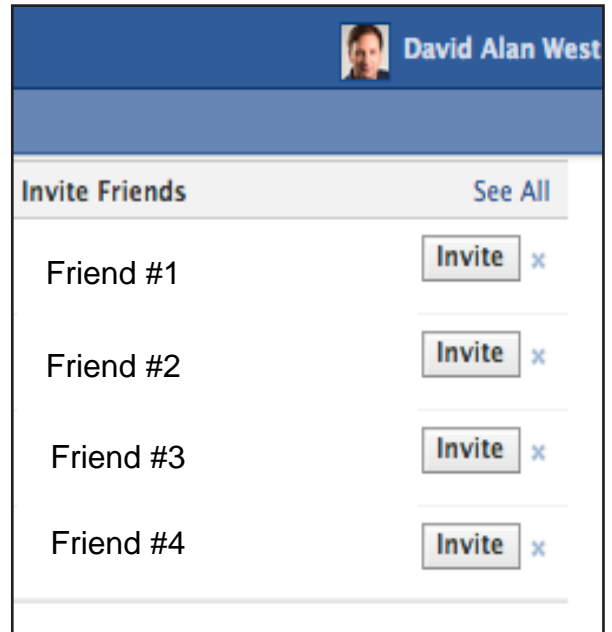
\*Approximate number. Source: Facebook Investor Relations - <http://investor.fb.com/releasedetail.cfm?ReleaseID=736911>



## Profile Avatar vs. Cover Image

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.

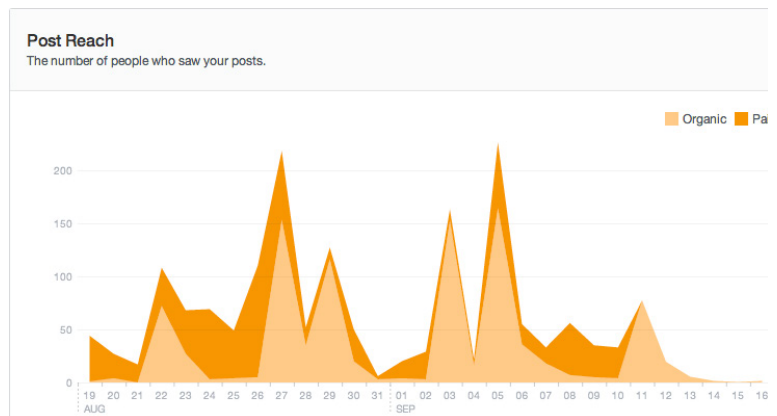
For your business page it's important to set your profile avatar as your logo and your cover image as something very visual that has to do with your business. It's important to remember with Facebook Terms of Service that your cover image cannot contain your website, email address, or your business phone number.



Don't be shy! To kickstart your business page, send an invite out to your friends, family, and great customers.

## 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 how many “likes” the page has received, how many people your posts have reached, which posts were the most popular and even the demographic information of your Facebook fans.



## 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 app to set up and run the contest in order to meet all of Facebook’s promotions guidelines. When choosing a contest support app, you should consider:
  - The ability to customize the design of the app by adding your logo and brand designs.
  - Consumer price that suits your budget. Sometimes these apps are free and sometimes they can be thousands of dollars. Choose an app that has a price that fits your needs.
  - Mobile capability. According to Facebook’s 2012 Report, people accessing from a mobile device increased 67%. 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 them to engage further by inviting them to share the contest with friends or by asking them to comment or 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. This 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% 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’ 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.



# TWITTER

LAUNCHED: 2006  
ACTIVE USERS: 200 million\*



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.

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’s 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 #RedDeer. Using hashtags makes your tweets easier to find and can connect you to people in your local community.



## Great Alberta Hashtags to Follow

- #ABAg - Agriculture news in the province of Alberta
- #WestCdnAg - Agriculture news in Western Canada
- #YYC - Anything going on in the city of Calgary
- #YEG - Anything going on in the city of Edmonton

## Say It...in 140 Characters

Since you only have a maximum of 140 characters, write short, to the point posts that include your latest blog post, exciting business news, a special sale or promotion. It never hurts to have 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 Google to search for anything mentioned by worldwide users on Twitter, such as:

- 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. @YourAlberta or @AlbertaAg or @CAYKinc
- Relevant hashtags related to a specific topic. E.g. #AlbertaAg or #ThinkLocal

## Following Users

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

Clicking the "Follow" button is similar to adding a friend on Facebook. This means that their posts or "tweets", as they are often called, will start appearing in your news feed.

## Great Twitter Users to Follow

@AlbertaAg - Official Government of Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development account.

@Ab\_Farm\_Fresh - The Alberta Farm Fresh Producers Association (AFFPA).

@DavidAWest & @CAYKinc - Online Marketing Tips and News for business owners.



## Retweeting

The option to retweet another's users 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.



# LINKEDIN

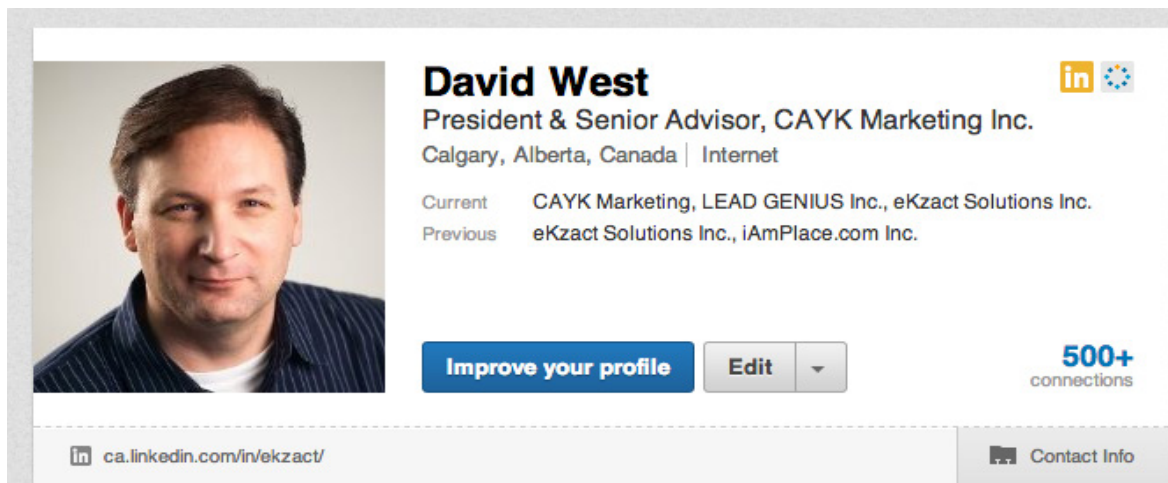
LAUNCHED: 2003

ACTIVE USERS: 200 million\*

LinkedIn is a business oriented social networking site. It strengthens and extends your existing network of trusted contacts. It is a tool to make 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 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.

“ LinkedIn is your modern resume. Keep it up to date.” - David A. West

\*Approximate number. Source: LinkedIn blog - <http://blog.linkedin.com/2013/01/09/linkedin-200-million/>

## Invest Time into Your Profile



### Summary

The internet has evolved beyond place where your website is only expected to validate you as a real business owner. The purpose for websites has evolved beyond the understanding of many Internet Consultants. David's approach to consulting and services is to first educate and then help clients to achieve excellent results.

Backed by his full service marketing agencies David's team produces powerfully effective online marketing campaigns.

June 1st, 2013 a new joint venture business called Lead Genius Inc. was launched. In planning for several years and under development for the past year Lead Genius is David's first venture into online software as a service. More news about Lead Genius to follow!

Do you need a truly interesting keynote speaker for your next trade-show or event? David West is a seasoned public presenter on topics of Social Media, Search, Internet Marketing and the impacts they have on both business and personal lives. When David speaks his dry humour and ability to communicate new ideas are refreshing. David speaks from the heart and does not just regurgitate what you can easily read online.

David started as a freelance web programmer in 1996 and continued to freelance until opening eKzact Solutions. eKzact is now 7+ years old and continues to grow under the leadership of both Helen and David.

David has consulted with many growing businesses and has been the invited guest speaker at many events. David blogs at <http://www.davidawest.com>.

David counts amongst his corporate clients: Science Alberta, Alberta Rural Development, GE Capital, The National Bank, Think Local Market, and the Professional Home Builders Institute of Alberta.

Specialties: Internet Consulting, including;

- search engine optimization
- social media consulting and training
- website conversion planning and objectives
- website specifications
- online marketing
- social media training & strategies
- social media community management

This example is provided by the author, David West.

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



**Ray Woodley**  
Owner at Sales Voodoo

Dave is excellent at explaining the of the power of internet marketing and social media to any level of experince. I... [View ↓](#)

[3 more recommendations ↓](#)



# GOOGLE+

LAUNCHED: 2011  
ACTIVE USERS: 343 million\*

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

## Google+ vs. Facebook

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

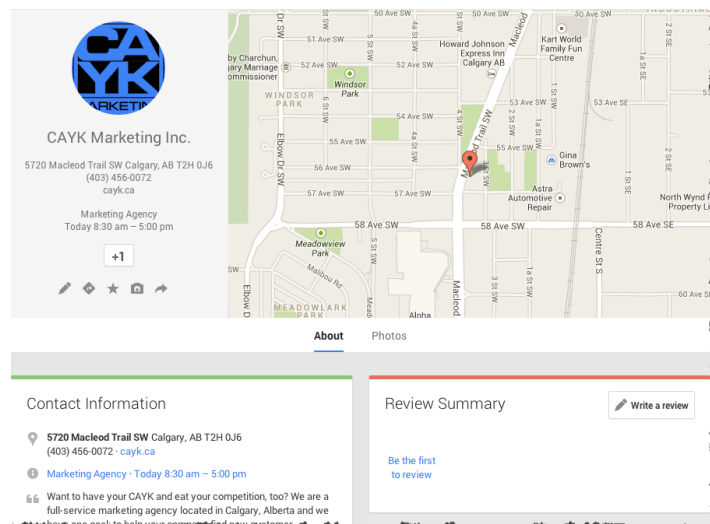
## Google Hangout

If you've 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 Hangout 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. In order to become manager of the Google Local page and link it to your Google+ business page, you must have Google send to your business address a verification postcard with a pin number. This 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 is very important as connecting the two pages will allow users who find your business on Google to see everything they might need about your business.



\*Approximate number. Source: ZDNet - <http://www.zdnet.com/google-moves-up-to-second-place-in-social-networks-7000010372/>



## 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 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, their page will not outperform your original article. The author

verification tagging process helps Google to 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 of 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 an SEO ranking factor, it likely will serve as an additional signal to Google that your highly-trusted content should rank higher in search.

### [What Happens After You've Fallen Off Google's Search Listings ...](http://www.davidawest.com/.../what-happens-after-youve-f...)

[www.davidawest.com/.../what-happens-after-youve-f...](http://www.davidawest.com/.../what-happens-after-youve-f...)



by David A. West

Jul 7, 2012 – there is even a name for it: **the Google Slap**. So what do you do if it affects your business website unexpectedly?

## 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, which many small business owners find difficult to achieve. In this regard, 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 [explorelocal.ca](http://explorelocal.ca)
- CAYK Marketing Inc. Updated articles regarding online and real world marketing <http://www.cayk.ca/blog/>
- The Facebook Marketing Book, Zarrella, Dan., Edition: 1st ed., Publication info: 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.

## Case Study: Gary Vaynerchuk

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

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

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 NY 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 the spring of 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 NY Jets, and the Brooklyn Nets find their social media voices and build their digital brands.

