

# Pinterest

for Your Business



## Pinterest for Your Business

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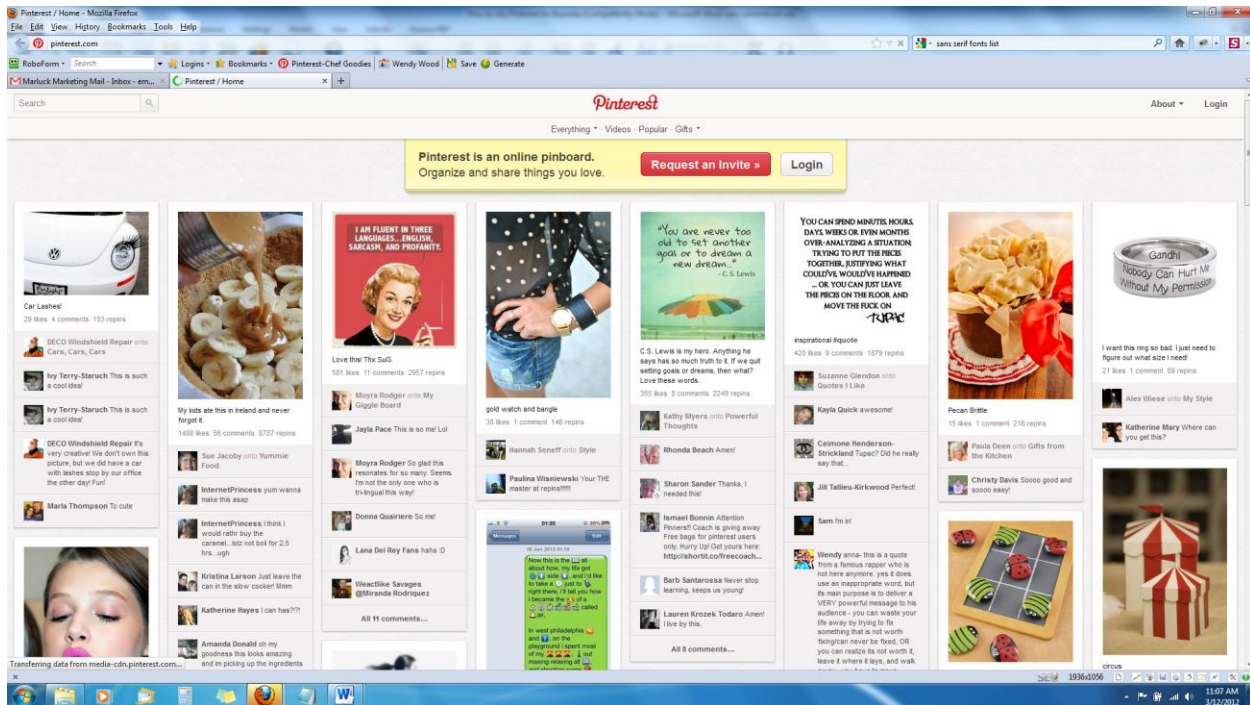
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# How to Use Pinterest to Build Your Business in 7 Steps



Social networking has changed the way we interact. We use it to connect with friends and family. We use it to stay on top of current events. In fact, most media outlets have Facebook and Twitter accounts. From celebrities to world leaders, it seems everyone has a profile on at least one major social networking site. In fact, in late February Israel's President Shimon Peres announced on ABC's the View that he was looking for friends on his new Facebook page.

We also use social networking to learn, grow and connect with ideas and people around the world. For many, checking in on Facebook and Tweeting are part of their daily routine.

Just when you think that social networking has reached its peak, a new social trend has taken over. It's called Pinterest and it has grown exponentially since its beta launch in 2010. According to Hitwise, in December of 2011 Pinterest entered the top 10 social networks and receives around 11 million visits per week.

### ***The Power to Build Your Business is Immense***

Pinterest isn't your typical social networking site. In fact, according to several sources the vast majority of the members are female. And many estimate that the average user spends a whopping 90 or more minutes on the site each day. This presents business owners with the opportunity to forge a truly powerful connection with potential prospects.

## What Is Pinterest And How Is It Different From Other Social Networking Sites?

Pinterest is a social site, which means users join and create profiles. They can then create “Boards.” Think of a board as a visible folder that can contain a variety of images. For example common boards include:

- Places I Want To Travel
- Books I Love
- Fitness Goals
- Dream Home
- Favorite Movies
- Art That Inspires

Pinterest users create boards that represent their interests, passions and goals. They fill their Pinterest Boards with “pins.” A pin is simply the name Pinterest gives to images you attach to your board. So for example, if you have a board titled “books I love” then you may have pictures of individual book covers on your board. Each book cover image is a pin.

Pins can be uploaded from your computer, “pinned” from a website using a “Pin This” plug-in for your browser or by using the simple “Add +” tool on Pinterest. You can also “Repin” images that other users have added. Repinning is essentially copying a pin and adding it to your own board. Users can also “Follow” other users or they can follow individual boards. You can “Like” pins, comment on pins and share pins on Facebook, Twitter and your own blog or website.

### It's a Large Scale Vision Board

There are a number of features that make Pinterest stand out from the crowd. Pinterest is a self proclaimed visual pinboard. Users create boards (much like a vision board that you could create at home with magazine cutouts and photos) by “pinning” images.

For example, you might find a fitness board where a user pins images of healthy people or pins motivational fitness quotes. Or you might find a home organization board where a user pins images of organization ideas they want to use in their home. The purpose of Pinterest is to provide members with an ability to create their own vision boards and share them with others.

It's brilliant and the design is so incredibly simple.

### ***Pin Images and Videos***

When you visit Pinterest you'll notice immediately that the “Content” is 100% visual. Every pin is an image. You can pin infographics, pictures, and videos.

*“Be Nice” Is The Name Of The Game*

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Pinterest has a few rules of etiquette which we'll get into in a bit. To sum them up they are:

1. **Be Nice** - Pinterest is a community of people. While everyone has their own definition of what "Being Nice" means, it is important to remember to treat people how you would like to be treated. Many people are using Pinterest to organize their inspirations and there's very little reason to be negative or critical.
2. **Credit Your Sources** – Per Pinterest, "Pins are the most useful when they have links back to the original source. If you notice that a pin is not sourced correctly, leave a comment so the original pinner can update the source. Finding the original source is always preferable to a secondary source such as Google Image Search or a blog entry." We'll talk a bit more about copyright issues and sourcing your pins later.
3. **Avoid Self Promotion** – Pinterest is just like any social networking site – blatant self promotion is an unhealthy business practice. You build your community by providing value and creating a connection to your audience – not by promoting yourself and using Pinterest as an advertising site. That being said, do occasionally pin images, products and links to your site – when it serves your audience.
4. **Report Objectionable Content** – Per Pinterest, "We do not allow nudity or hateful content. If you find content that is objectionable or violates our Terms of Service you can submit the content for review by pushing the 'Report Content' link." It's easy to report offensive content. All you need to do is click on the pin. On the right hand side of the image you'll see the option to Like on Facebook, Tweet, Embed, Report and Email. Click on Report and you'll see a list of reasons. Check the reason why you're reporting it and hit send. Reporting is anonymous and it brings the pin to the attention of the staff and developers.

## Is Pinterest Right for Your Business?

Pinterest is a unique, albeit large, community of members. It may not be the ideal social networking site for your business. Here are a few questions to ask before you integrate Pinterest into your social marketing strategy.

### *Are My Prospects On Pinterest?*

We've already mentioned that the majority of users are female. According to Modea.com 68.2% of the users are female. The most popular age bracket for users is 24-34, though 35-44 comes in with a 17.9% share. 50% of users have children and a median household income of \$100,000. Does that describe your target audience in a nutshell?

If it does then jump on the Pinterest bandwagon quickly!



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### ***How do My Prospects Use Pinterest?***

According to the same Modea study, users stay on the site almost 16 minutes each time they visit and many people visit several times a day. “Pinning” has become something people do during lunch breaks and while they’re watching television at night.

There are several ways you can use Pinterest. The most popular way is to browse existing pins and boards and to repin images to your own board. Additionally, when you join Pinterest you can install a “Pin This” tool to your browser. This makes it easy to pin images to your board when you’re visiting other sites and see an image you want to collect.

For example, if you’re redecorating your kitchen and you’re browsing the web for appliances, countertops, lighting and so on you might collect images to create a vision board for your kitchen. With the browser tool you can simply pin a photo of a refrigerator you want and keep all of the ideas in one central location.

### ***Why Do They Use Pinterest?***

The motivation to pin comes from a few different places. People pin to establish social credibility and define their persona online. With boards like “My Style” or “Quotes I Like” you can quickly see how everyone is branding themselves and subconsciously creating their online identity. However, few would actually admit that.

Instead they’d say that they use Pinterest to...

- Find motivation – for example a health and fitness board
- Get organized – for example, a DIY ideas for the home board
- Find ideas – for example, a recipes for dinner board

According to one source in an article on Inc.com, “I love Pinterest because it’s like getting a whole bunch of magazines without adding clutter in my house and without the cost.” This individual adds, “there are so many great ideas and recipes, and it’s all organized on the computer so I can access my favorites at anytime.”

And they’d most certainly say they use Pinterest because of the beautiful images – it really is a lovely and visually interesting site.

As more and more businesses get on board with the Pinterest craze you will see that people are using it to drive traffic, sell products and connect with their audience. In fact, major retailers are finding tremendous success with Pinterest. Whole Foods for example, has a reported 12,000 followers.

## **Finding and Connecting With Your Niche**

Because Pinterest is a site that uses images rather than the written word, your strategy is going to be different than it is with other social networking sites. However, you can integrate your Pinterest activities with both Twitter and Facebook. Think of it as the next

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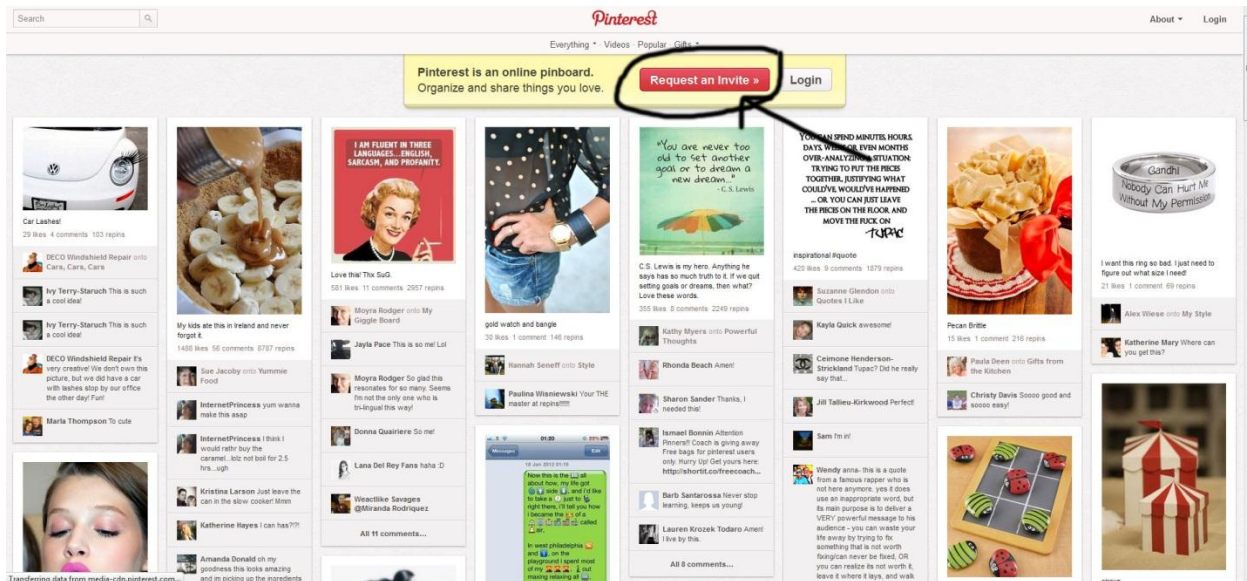
level of social networking. Integrating Pinterest with your website, blog and other social networking activities is the key to building a large and profitable following.

### How to Get Started With Pinterest

Getting started with Pinterest is easy. Here's the quick step by step process...

#### Step One: Sign Up

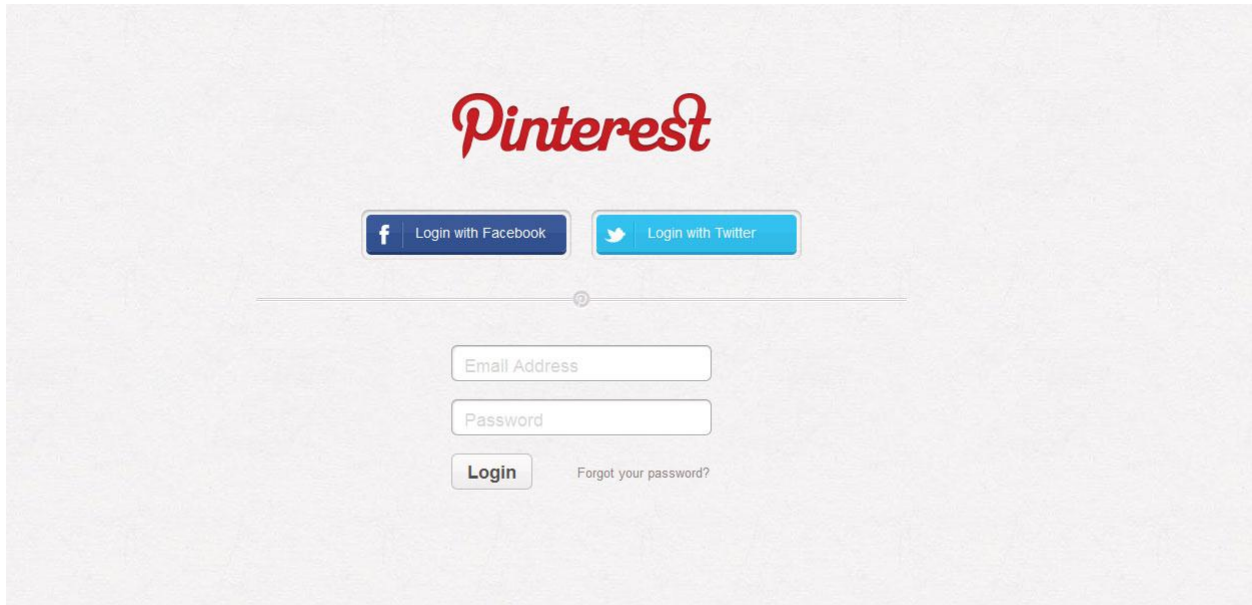
Pinterest is still in beta, which means you need an invitation to sign up. You can garner one by asking someone you know who is active on Pinterest. You can also visit [Pinterest.com](http://Pinterest.com) and request an invite. It usually takes a few days to receive your invitation. You can use the time to plan your Pinterest Strategy.



Once you have an invite be sure to register with the email address you use for your business. It's important to know that in order to sign up for Pinterest you need to have a Facebook or Twitter profile. You can disconnect the account from your Pinterest profile (and even delete your Twitter or Facebook account) without losing your Pinterest account. If you have separate Facebook profiles for business and personal be sure to use your business profile for your business Pinterest account. (You can send an invitation to yourself and create a separate personal account with your personal email address if you'd like to have your own personal Pinterest account.)

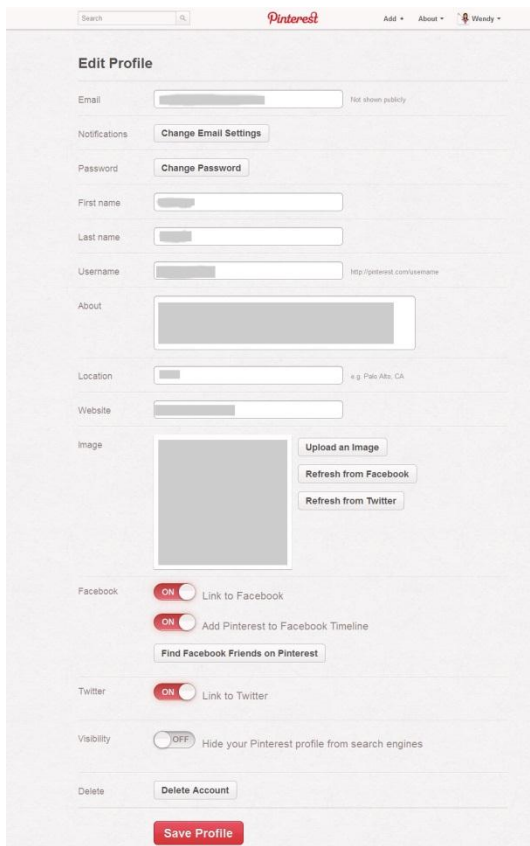


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If you already have a personal account, send yourself an invite by clicking on Invite Friends in the drop down box under your account name – it's in the upper right hand corner of the page. Send an invite email to your business email address and create your business Pinterest account.

### Step Two: Create Your Profile

The image shows the "Edit Profile" page on Pinterest. At the top is a search bar and the Pinterest logo. Below the logo are links for "Add", "About", and a user profile icon labeled "Wendy". The "Edit Profile" section includes fields for "Email" (with a "Not shown publicly" note), "Notifications" (with a "Change Email Settings" button), "Password" (with a "Change Password" button), "First name", "Last name", "Username" (with a URL "http://pinterest.com/username"), "About" (a text area), "Location" (with a placeholder "e.g. Palo Alto, CA"), "Website", and "Image" (with a large placeholder and buttons for "Upload an Image", "Refresh from Facebook", and "Refresh from Twitter"). Below these are social media linking options: "Facebook" (with "Link to Facebook" and "Add Pinterest to Facebook Timeline" buttons, and a "Find Facebook Friends on Pinterest" button), "Twitter" (with a "Link to Twitter" button), and "Visibility" (with a "Hide your Pinterest profile from search engines" toggle). At the bottom are "Delete Account" and "Save Profile" buttons.

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Your profile represents your business and will ideally be crafted to help you achieve your marketing goals. When you create your profile consider the following:

### Your Username

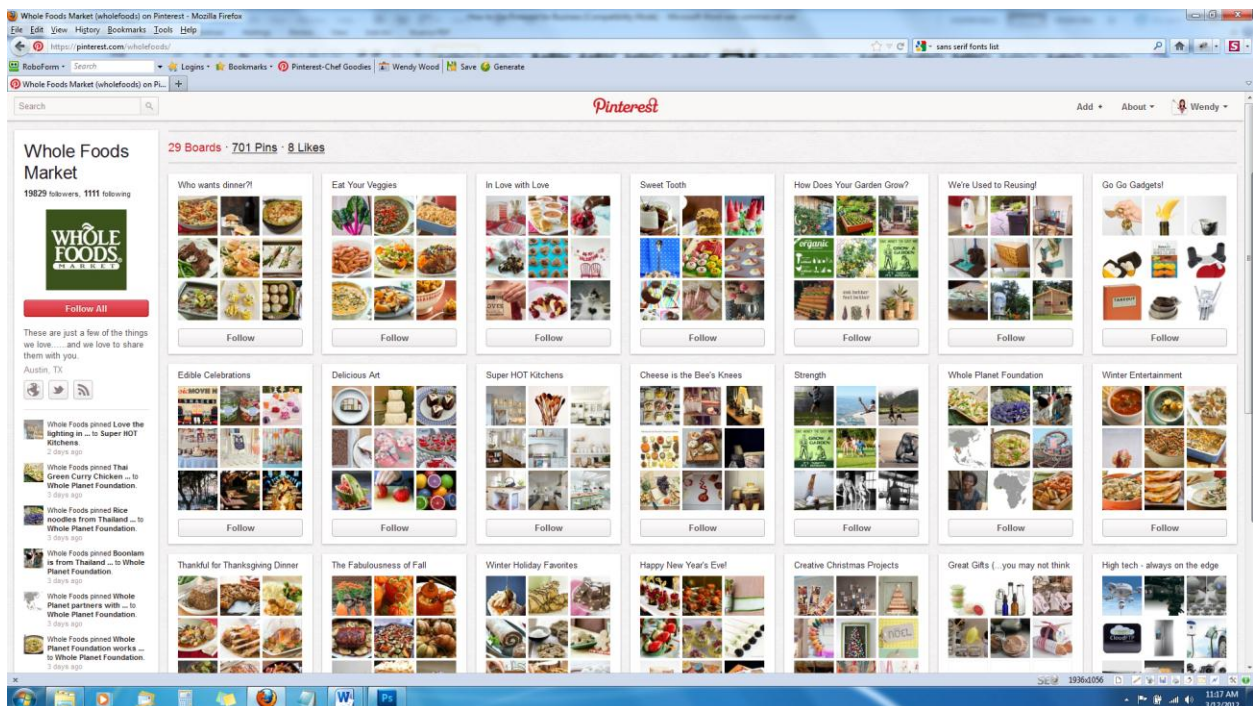
If you are a solopreneur and your brand and business is you, for example, Jane Doe Personal trainer and fitness coach – then use Jane Doe as your username. You want people to be able to easily find you online and connect your name to your other social networking accounts.

It also makes sense to align your Pinterest username with your Facebook username and your website domain name. Keeping your usernames consistent throughout your marketing efforts will help create a stronger brand and connection.

### Logo and Business Description

You can also upload a logo or a picture of yourself and include a biography or description of your business. Some people are creating elaborate images that include links to their website and a biography about who they are and what they do.

Remember that any social activity, whether it is on Pinterest or another site, is about making a connection with your audience – not advertising your services. If you visit the Whole Foods Pinterest page you'll notice that they have their logo and a short description that reads, "These are just a few of the things we love.....and we love to share them with you."



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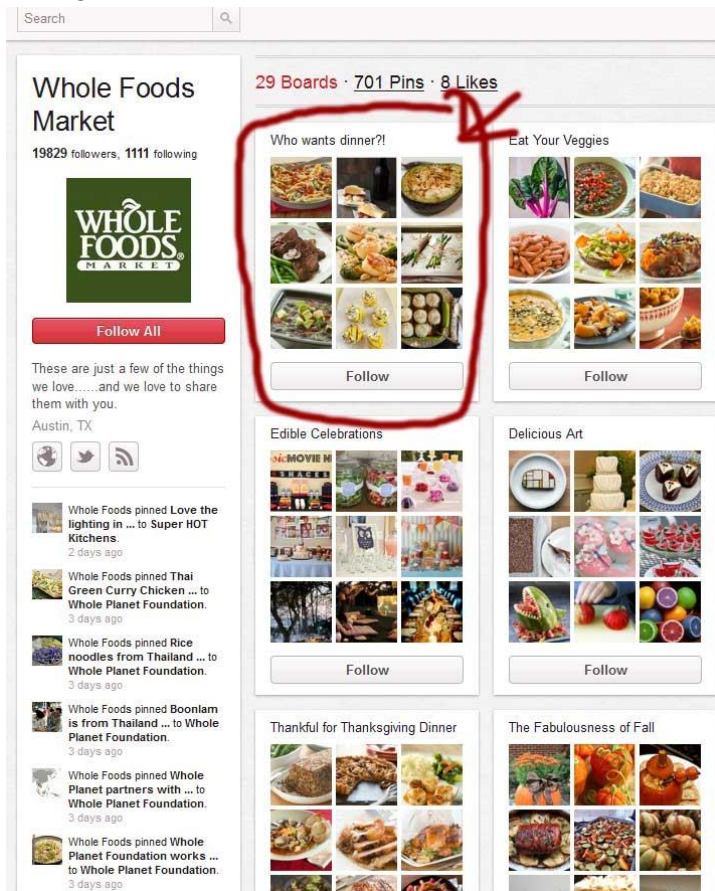
They're offering value, not advertising their store. They have 27 different theme-based pinboards.

Instead of creating an elaborate sidebar image and a lengthy biography about you and your business, consider a simple mission statement that reflects your personality. For example, a marketing coach might have something like this, "Back to the basics of marketing. No magic pills, no quick fixes. Just good solid planning and execution."

When you register you can also add follow buttons to your profile so your followers can connect with you at your website, Twitter and Facebook.

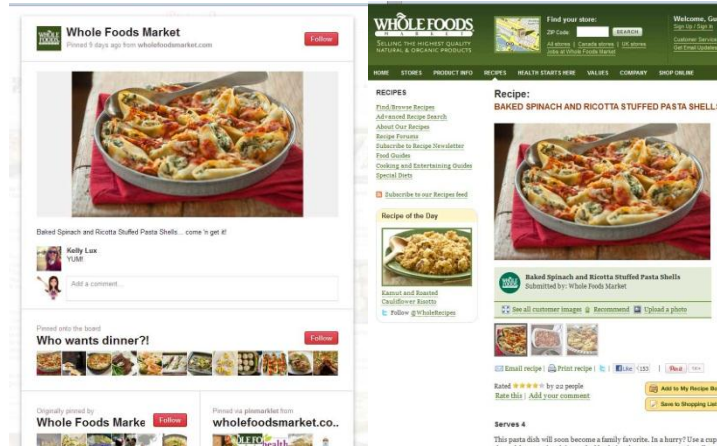
### ***Step Three: Start Pinning and Creating Boards***

Let's go back to the Whole Foods Pinterest example because they do an excellent job of creating theme-based boards. For example, they have a board titled, "Who Wants Dinner?"



Click on any image in the board and you'll see a picture of the recipe. Click on it again and you're taken to the Whole Foods recipe page where you can see, and print, the recipe.

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There are several important things going on here. The first is that the board's theme provides value and it is relevant to the store. It's also very specific in that it lists dinner recipes only. The second important thing here is that by clicking on the image users find their way to the Whole foods website. Third, not all of the recipes go to the Whole Foods website. Whole Foods also links to good recipes found elsewhere on the Internet. So they're not just promoting their business; they're interacting and sharing with other business owners, bloggers, and Pinterest users. They're building a community.

Before you start creating boards you'll want to think about niche and value . ***How can a board theme you create offer value?***

Now, when you sign up you'll have the option of adding a "Pin It" button to your browser toolbar. This is a very useful tool because it automatically includes the link to the site where you found the image. When you come across an image online that you want to add to one of your Pinterest boards all you have to do is click on the "Pin It" button in your browser's toolbar.

You can also click on Add+ in the upper right hand corner of your Pinterest page and add an image by:

- Adding a pin – enter the URL for the pin and add it to your relevant board.
- Upload a pin – upload an image from your computer. Note: a link will not be connected to this image. However, you can include the link in the description of the pin. For example, "visit [www.janedoefitness.com](http://www.janedoefitness.com) for more information."

You can also create boards that invite others to contribute. We'll talk more about why you might want to do this in just a bit.

### ***Step Four: Integrating with Facebook and Twitter***

When you sign up you have the choice of integrating your pins with your Facebook and Twitter accounts. This is a huge advantage because it can help build your profiles on all three sites. However, you can also choose to share on those sites selectively.



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For example, under your settings you'll have connected your Pinterest account to your Facebook and/or Twitter account. You'll have chosen to not automatically share each image on those sites. And when you do add or repin an image if you want to share it on Facebook or Twitter you simply check the box to add it. This gives you a little more flexibility with your image sharing and it ensures that your Facebook and Twitter accounts don't become inundated with Pinterest images.

### ***Step Five: Place a Button on Your Website/Blog***

The second step to integrating your Pinterest account to your online presence is to integrate it into your blog or website. Now there are an abundance of options here and as developers continue to capitalize on Pinterest there will be more options. Here are just a few to consider:

- Add a "Follow me on Pinterest" button to your blog or website – Pinterest offers a downloadable code you can cut and paste into your site at: <http://pinterest.com/about/goodies/>. WordPress also has a few plug-ins that you can choose from.
- Add a pin this button to your articles and blog posts – Pinterest offers a downloadable code you can cut and paste into your site - <http://pinterest.com/about/goodies/WordPress> has a few plug-ins that you can choose from.
- Add a "Pinterest Recent Pins" plug-in to your blog – shows the pins you've added to your boards. This is a WordPress plug-in.

### ***Step Six: Socialize! Remember, Pinterest is a Social Networking Site***

Creating your own boards and pins is a start. However, to really build your following you'll want to network and share. That involves:

- *Commenting on pins* – this is where the interaction happens. Comment, discuss and thank people for their pins. Remember the Pinterest golden rule - be nice!
- *Linking pins* – It's like Facebook Liking or giving someone the thumbs up for their pin. You can store your likes and later add them to a new board.
- *Repinning pins* – adding pins others have shared to your own boards. For example, Whole Foods added recipes others had shared onto their What's For Dinner? Board.

### ***Step Seven: Get Creative with Your Boards - 10 Ideas to Use Pinterest for Business***

There are many ways you can use Pinterest to drive traffic to your website, build brand awareness and sell products. Here are 10 ideas to help you get started.

1. ***Visual content from your article/blog*** posts – Make sure your blog or website is visually interesting. For example, add a photo to each blog post or article you publish and share the images (along with a link to your site) on Pinterest.
2. ***Infographics & charts*** – Infographics are graphic visual representations of information, data or knowledge. They're growing in popularity and with tools like

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Visual.ly (<http://visual.ly/>) you can create them yourself or hire someone to do it for you.

3. **Info product covers** – If you're an information marketer you can pin images of your products. This is a great way to drive traffic to your product's sales page.
4. **Photos related to your business** - For example, Whole Foods has many theme-based recipe, gardening and "Green living" boards all aligned with their brand, mission and business.
5. **User-generated pinboard** – Invite your followers, and blog readers and even Facebook or Twitter followers to help you create a board. For example, if you're a personal trainer you might invite users to contribute to your "motivational quote" board and share their favorite quotes. This is an excellent way to get your prospects and followers involved in creating content for you.
6. **Contest** – Continuing with the user generated pinboard concept, you might motivate people to submit pins by holding a contest for the best pin and then having people vote on their favorite pin by commenting. The pin with the most unique comments wins a prize. You're not only motivating people to pin, you're also motivating them to comment and become an active participant on your Pinterest board.
7. **Behind the scenes board** – Consider creating a board that shows you or your business behind the scenes. For example, if you're a crafter you might showcase images of crafting rooms including one of your own. You could also invite others to share their crafting room photos.
8. **Video/slideshow board** – If your niche lends itself to how to videos or slide shows you can pin videos too. Consider creating video boards that link to informative and interesting content.
9. **Pin products** – If you're a retailer you can pin products that you sell or represent. This is ideal if you're a crafter. You can pin photos of your creations along with a buy link and/or a price. Adding a price to a pin is easy. Simply type the \$ or £ symbol followed by the number amount in the description. When you are finished, click "Pin It" and the price will automatically appear in the corner of the pin.
10. **Share pictures of happy customers**, testimonials or other "Brag board" items.

These are of course just the beginning of what you can do on Pinterest. There are many ways you can add value, connect, and build your brand. Before you start planning and pinning take a look at the following useful tips. They include basic etiquette tips along with marketing tips to help you maximize your Pinterest efforts.

## Tips to Maximize Your Pinterest Interactions and Efforts

### #1 Use hashtags

Just like you do on Twitter, tag your pins by adding hashtags to the description. This also helps users find your pins if they're shared on Twitter. For example, a Whole Foods pin on their "What's for Dinner" board might be as simple as #healthydinnerrecipes



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### **#2 Create theme based boards**

You'll increase the value of your Pinterest pins by creating theme-based boards. The more specific the better. For example, instead of a recipes board you might have a breakfast recipes board. Instead of a home organization board you might have a "Home office organization" board. Be specific so followers know exactly what your board is about.

### **#3 Don't over promote yourself**

It's fine to create pins that link to your website, blog, online articles, and products and so on. However, keep it under control. Pinterest is a social networking site, not an advertising directory. You'll make more friends and gain more followers if you're focused on providing value for them.

### **#4 Include links in the description**

Include accurate and interesting descriptions with each pin you post. The description may motivate others to repin your pins. It may also motivate discussion. Consider including questions in your description as well as benefits – remember that we all want to know "WIIFM?" What's in it for me?

### **#5 Pay Attention to Copyright**

There's a lot of controversy about Pinterest and their copyright policy. When you agree to the terms and sign up for a Pinterest account you're agreeing to not infringe on anyone's copyright. Here's one statement in the Pinterest terms that scares many:

*"You agree to defend, indemnify, and hold Cold Brew Labs, its officers, directors, employees and agents, harmless from and against any claims, liabilities, damages, losses, and expenses, including, without limitation, reasonable legal and accounting fees, arising out of or in any way connected with (i) your access to or use of the Site, Application, Services or Site Content, (ii) your Member Content, or (iii) your violation of these Terms."*

This means that if Pinterest gets sued because you pinned (or repinned) a pin that violates copyright then you have to pay for their legal fees. Scary, right?

Make sure when you pin images that you find online that you have permission to pin them. If you are in doubt, ask the owner for permission. Source any and all pins and make sure to include links to the sites you pull images from. As the Internet continues to evolve and Pinterest continues to grow, no doubt that these issues will be sorted out. Already, there are "no follow" tools so people can prevent their images from being pinned.

### **#6 Remember keywords**

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Pinterest members use keywords to search for pins. Imagine you're building a board to store ideas to redecorate your kitchen. You might search by kitchen appliances, kitchen design and more. Adding these keywords to your pins by including them in the description will help members find your pins.

### **#7 Categorize your boards**

When you create a board you can add it to a category. There are presently 32 categories including Geek, Travel & Places, People, Pets, Humor, Home Décor, Food & Drink, Art, Fitness and many more. Categorizing your boards helps people find them.

### **#8 Tag**

Tag people when you reply to them or comment, for example: @janedoe. This helps increase awareness for their pin profile. It helps with search, and it helps brand on Twitter and Facebook.

### **#9 Create a Pinterest Friendly Site**

The more visually stimulating your blog or website, the more likely it is that people will pin images you have on your site. Each pin drives traffic to your site.

### **#10 Create a Marketing Plan**

As you probably already know, planning your marketing tactics is a key element of success. The same is true for your social networking and Pinterest activities. Begin by establishing goals for your Pinterest efforts. Goals include but are not limited to:

- Driving traffic
- Building awareness
- Building your community
- Generating incoming links
- Generating profits

Once you have identified, and hopefully quantified, your goal(s) the next step is to create a plan to achieve success. Your plan will include:

- When you're going to pin – schedule it and beware of the amazing time suck that Pinterest can be. If you find yourself wasting hours on Facebook, Pinterest can be ten times worse. It's easy to spend hours perusing pins and boards.
- What you're going to pin including your board themes and categories.
- How you're going to interact on Pinterest and when.
- How you're going to integrate your Pinterest activities with your website, Twitter, Facebook and current marketing, content and promotion strategies.
- Finally, how are you going to evaluate success? Testing and tracking is an essential element of any marketing tactics and strategy.

### How Can Affiliates Take Advantage of Pinterest

As an online business owner you probably want to figure out how to use Pinterest to make money by sharing affiliate products via Pinterest. However, you need to know that there have been some issues with this very thing, lately. One issue is that if you pin a product that has an affiliate link, or could have an affiliate link, Pinterest was using tool called Skimlinks to change the affiliate link to their own. After a huge uproar they have ended their partnership with Skimlinks. However, this may not continue and this is why you have to make sure you have the rights to use the image you pin as stated in their terms of service, as explained before.

These terms make it pretty clear that they are going to monetize the content that you supply one way or another. It's going to be either via a program like Skimlinks or it's going to be via advertisements. When a service is free there is little point in getting bent out of shape about this.

But, for now, they stopped using Skimlinks ONLY due to the possible issue with copyright infringement that doing this may cause. If they don't use Skimlinks they do not have to accept any blame for copyright infringement but by adding their own links to your links they could possibly end up being libel. And anyway, as you'll learn later, it is possible to override the links Skimlinks generates.

If you want to use Pinterest for Internet Marketing it is important to:

**Choose The Right Products** – Keep in mind the audience that uses Pinterest. The people who use Pinterest are very visual so your graphics should be stunning. They're also more interested in arts and crafts than other social media sites. They like cooking (and pretty pictures of food) and learning how to do things. In addition, people who use Pinterest love to dream about doing something great, like going on a vacation, planning a wedding, or wonderful birthday party.

Therefore it's important that you choose the products you want to promote based on this idea. For instance, you can create a vision board of your ideal wedding, linking each pin to the affiliate link.

**Edit the Affiliate Links** – Once you've chosen your products, after you post them, go back and edit the URLs, this way even if Pinterest decides to go back to using Skimlinks for all the products you recommend, you can actually edit their link replacing it with your affiliate link! So, no reason to freak out over the "Skimlink" brouhaha.

**Consider Issues & Problems** – Ensure that you have a right to use the image you're using with your affiliate link. Many companies, even though they want you to promote their products do not allow you to copy their images out of their catalogs. It seems kind of silly, but you need to always be aware of what each product you wish to promote has about their graphic images, and words to describe their product.

### Conclusion

Pinterest is on an uphill swing right now. It continues to grow in numbers daily, and more and more businesses are getting involved. Review your audience demographics and evaluate whether Pinterest is a relevant social networking tool to connect with them. If so, begin by creating a Pinterest profile and spend some time reviewing the website.

Create a marketing strategy that offers value to your prospects and fellow Pinners. Also make sure to integrate your other social networking and marketing efforts with your Pinterest strategy. With the ability to connect Facebook, Twitter and your blog to your Pinterest account you can create a huge and loyal following.

As with any marketing strategy the more you can plan and schedule your efforts the better your results. It's easy, so very easy, to spend hours on Pinterest. With a predetermined plan in place you can make sure your Pinterest efforts are effective and efficient. Happy pinning!

**To your Success!**  
**Andre W. Klein**

