

# *Pinterest* for **BUSINESS**



*How to Pin Your Company to the Top  
of the Hottest Social Media Network*



Jess Loren and Ed Swiderski



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# **Pinterest™ for Business**

How to Pin Your Company to the Top  
of the Hottest Social Media Network

**JESS LOREN  
EDWARD SWIDERSKI**

**que®**

800 East 96th Street,  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46240 USA

# Pinterest™ for Business: How to Pin Your Company to the Top of the Hottest Social Media Network

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## About the Authors

**Jess Loren** is a consultant, strategist, speaker, and eternal “lemonade stand” purveyor (aka, entrepreneur) in the world of social media and digital marketing. She is the cofounder and managing partner of Kambio Group, a digital marketing agency that concentrates on social media management and event-based campaigns. Loren has contributed across the industry and across the spectrum, working with everyone from Fortune 500 companies to a company that hosts the “largest bar crawl in America.”

**Edward Swiderski** is a marketing and technology leader with more than 12 years of experience increasing revenue and lowering costs for clients. He is a cofounder and managing partner of Kambio Group. Swiderski focuses on strategy and implementation to help customers embrace digital and social marketing and eliminate traditionally fixed technology costs. Outside of his professional career, he has also costarred on ABC’s *Bachelor Pad*, and ABC’s *The Bachelorette*, where he was selected as the final contestant.

## Dedications

*This book is dedicated to Michael for loving me unconditionally and backing me up in every facet of life (you'll always be my true ninja); my mom, Paula, for supporting the never-ending lemonade stand (you'll always be my sunshine); Nick, for supporting our family and my education (you'll always be my Pops); my siblings, Livie and A.J., for being the only people on Earth who accept "Jess Bucks" as legal currency (you'll always be my eternal sidekicks); and my dad, Alex, for answering all my pesky business questions (Rubber Ducky, you're the one). And, I can't forget about my pets, Casey and Hobbes, the world's greatest office dog and the world's most frequent keyboard-lounging cat.*

—Jess

*With gratitude and love, I dedicate this to my parents who have supported me in all of my endeavors. Additionally, I'd like to dedicate this book to my friends and business partners who have supported me throughout my career—you know who you are!*

—Ed

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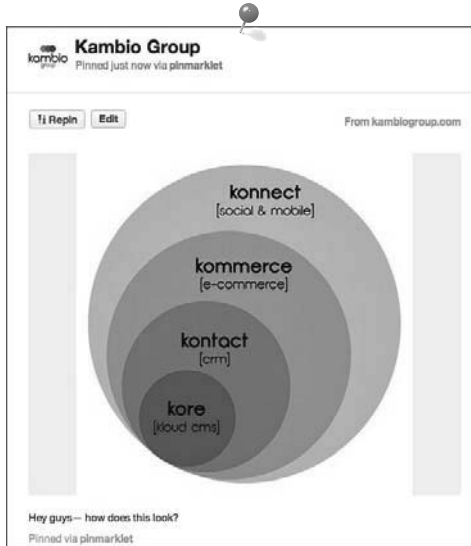
# Pinpointing Your Industry

*Before you set up a Pinterest account for your business, it's important to briefly analyze all the aspects you consider to be central elements in keeping your business alive. The same components that enable your company to thrive outside of social media play a major role in the success or failure it has on Pinterest.*

*Let's look at the clothing business analogy again. If your business has a certain line of best-seller t-shirts, it is wise to pay attention to those t-shirts and make sure you can guarantee the same kind of satisfaction you would anywhere outside of Pinterest. Professionally organize the pins of the t-shirts and show that they are high quality.*

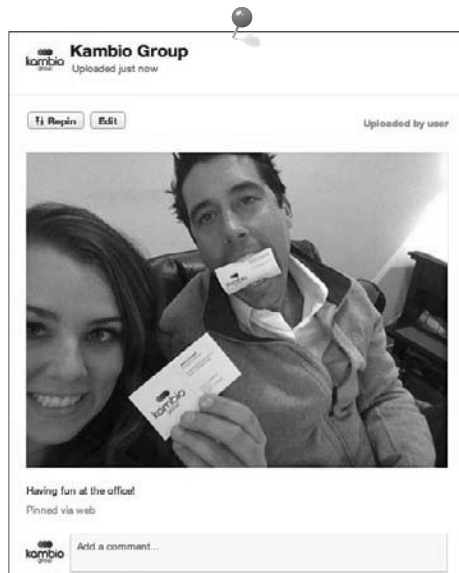
*Keeping up close-knit appearances in your own company is another vital component in running a successful Pinterest board. Having a special pinning place just for those in the company creates a form of communication and can even bring users together in a unique way.*

*If someone in the company has an idea or suggestion or needs to update everyone in a quick way, a visit to Pinterest can get a message out there within seconds (see Figure 4.1).*



**Figure 4.1** *Pinterest can be a great, efficient way to share ideas.*

You can even create a company pin board that enables your followers to get to know you on a fun, personal level (see Figure 4.2). Pinning pictures from company gatherings or parties, setting up bios for members of your business, or updating people on company events can be seen as a warm invitation by those who follow and are curious about the foundations of your company.



**Figure 4.2** *Don't be afraid to humanize your company to your followers.*

Involving your audience is a great way to gain points in the social media world. Depending on your product, you can engage your Pinterest followers in numerous ways to make them feel like they're a valued part of your company. But the first step is to identify your brand and audience.

## Understanding Your Brand

Remember that a company is only as strong as its understanding of its own market. That is, a company is only as strong as its understanding of its own customer base. You have to define your services and how they can best be aggregated to your potential consumers.

Perhaps this theory does not fit in a business book, but philosophy plays a huge part in defining and delivering a product. Beyond that, assigning a philosophy to your company can help you assess whether or not you have a true use for social media and Pinterest.

To assist you in this process, think of your brand in different ways. The following sections present some ways to think of your brand in a different light.

### If Your Company Were a Car, What Would It Be?

This is a simple concept, but it has a huge impact on Pinterest. In a sense, you can think of your boards as different car lots, and your pins as different cars. What kind of car do you want to be viewed as? Don't be afraid to be specific here. It helps you understand the reasons behind why your pins exist, which helps you create an engaging environment for why your followers should care.

Typical archetypes play a role here. Are you traditional, fun, or outlandish? Are you rusty or affordable? Family-friendly? Stylish?

Study the questions and carefully choose your answers. If at all possible, don't allow your brand to identify with a plain, boring car (see Figure 4.3).

### If Your Company Were a Celebrity, Who Would It Be?

Get imaginative here. Have you ever thought of your company as a celebrity? When people view your pins on Pinterest, you want them to come from an authoritative voice. At the same time, you want them to feel like they are coming from a voice that should be listened to.



**Figure 4.3** *This probably shouldn't be your inspiration.*

Much like a celebrity, your pins showcase your style and grace (or in co-author Ed Swiderki's case, slobbery), and should leave your followers wanting more. Is your brand the kind of celebrity that demands attention? Are you controversial? Are you tough, rugged, or just plain friendly? Describe your business and use that to your branding advantage. Further develop this personality and integrate it into your other social properties beyond Pinterest.

## **If Your Company Were an Animal, What Would It Be?**

This is a simple question, but its definition can go a long way toward developing your brand on Pinterest. Hopefully, you don't define yourself as a hunter, but rather something more tenacious and determined.

Loyal, fun, watchful: These are quality characteristics with which your company might want to align. Don't be tame in thinking of your response. Identifying your brand is critical in understanding and developing your success. You don't have to act like the animal you most closely relate to, but use it as a guide to understand your brand.

Think of social media as a zoo. Pinterest's users stop by your boards and gawk at what you've put on display for a while, and then move along on their way.

Finding clarity and confidence in your brand's personality reveals powerful insights into your organization's internal culture. This power can be directly realized through harnessing your marketing prowess on Pinterest. Your personality reigns king here, because this industry thrives on a personal approach to social media and marketing.

## Marketing Your Brand

Marketing tactics and advertising as a whole has evolved a long way since the era of Don Draper and the boys at *Mad Men*. True, some aspects will never change, but the ferocity of your viral reach has added a few feet to its wingspan.

Today, it's probably safe to assume that your business already prescribes to social media theory. The key, in conjunction with having a stern understanding of your business, is understanding the evolutionary arc of social media.

Since the beginning of social media's existence, the future has been largely unknown. Facebook, which was once a digital hangout for college students, turned into a haven for Business to Customer (B2C) companies to contact customers directly. Much in the same manner as America Online provided one of the first opportunities for people to reach out and talk with others digitally, social media has taken a step to provide personality to the process.

From ham radios to Skype, people consistently yearn for progressive communication. Obviously, the former was of poor quality in comparison to what we have now, but do you remember the days of AOL? This sky-rocketed the concept of contacting people you didn't know.

This type of brand reach didn't go unnoticed, and B2B companies soon became privy to the advantages of directly contacting customers in a stress-free environment. Marketers have since taken this concept and applied it toward many of the aspects needed to gain exposure.

Whether you are B2B or B2C, there is much to be gained from social media. In the same regard, Pinterest can offer both industries a platform to reach out toward potential customers. Hopefully, you will have a better grasp of social media fundamentals and how they apply to your business.

Discovering where you stand in the social media world pays dividends in the long run. Perhaps it is the sort of thing that your company should have done a long time ago. Don't be afraid to re-evaluate how your brand operates on social media.

Pinterest enables you to create the way your brand plays in the social media zoo—constantly evolving. In the same way, as you see what works and what doesn't on Pinterest, go back and review how your brand operates.

## Defining Your Purpose

Business is all about purpose, and so is social media. Finding your niche is the first step to carving out a large market segment. Understanding your product and how it affects your potential clientele is necessary to accessing all the possibilities of Pinterest.

Not only do images have a strong potential to tell a story, products have the capability as well. The phrase “the product can sell itself” might be cliché, but Pinterest makes it a possibility. Pinterest users that are connected with Etsy—a website where people can buy homemade art—have explored this concept, and have taken full advantage of Pinterest’s social sales model.

Like Etsy, many resorts and hotels have the opportunity to sell themselves by pinning images of their rooms, facilities, and surrounding areas. This method is used often for attracting guests. By pinning and organizing images on your board that correspond directly to your resort, you are able to reach out and grab the attention of an audience that might or might not know about your venue (see Figure 4.4).



**Figure 4.4** *Jetsetter, an online travel resource, inspires its customers with amazing photography, such as this one courtesy of Viceroy Zihvatanejo.*

In addition, the social aspect of Pinterest enables users to repin images of hotels, pin their own images to other boards, and write reviews for others to see. This capability brings together all the best features of Tripadvisor.com with that of Facebook. If you have products that can be sold, but are limited by Facebook’s

marketplace and Twitter's lack of striking visuals, Pinterest offers a very happy medium (check out Chapters 5 and 6 for more on how this plays a positive role in social sharing). If you don't have a sellable product, you need to think of your services in terms of bankability. With Pinterest, your images tell a story. You have an opportunity to share images from a jobsite, a workplace, or a finished version of a service you offer.

Take the time to look at all of your offerings and how these play into your other social media properties. This role, and how you have used it in the past, helps you to move forward with Pinterest. This isn't to say that Pinterest is for everyone or every company. The key is to think of your offerings in a way that is most attractive to a wider audience.

When Facebook first became a viable source for businesses, many struggled to find a reason to use the network as a functional tool. Business owners uses excuses such as the following:

- We already have a website.
- Our customers aren't using it.
- There are more profitable ways.
- It doesn't fit the goals of our company.
- We simply do not have the time or resources.

Today, some of these reasons are good reasons and are applicable to not participating in Facebook (or social media as a whole). Many companies still have a negative attitude towards social media. So, trying to convince them that Pinterest is another rung on the social ladder might not be worthwhile.

However, all of these reasons can be met with an equally reasonable rebuttal. A savvy social media executive might say:

- We have a website, yet social media complements our continued efforts.
- Our current customers might not use social media, but we can attract new customers.
- There might be more profitable ways, but social media's cost is extremely low.
- Everyone uses social media. We need to connect with our customers as much as possible, and social media is another opportunity.
- The company might have more pressing matters to attend to, but that doesn't mean we should write social media off completely. We can set up a Pinterest account in minutes, pin images throughout the month, and avoid significant time loss.

Nonetheless, some simple facts about social media (and Pinterest in general) remain. If you are in business, it is for the purpose of advancing a service or product. Whether you are a for-profit industry, or a non-for-profit organization, advancing your service or product comes at a price.

In lieu of this, social media shortens the gap between your audience and your business:

- Meet your peers
- Find business contacts
- Build relationships
- Raise visibility
- Get rapid top Google placement
- No cost marketing

Pinterest and social media aren't catch-all solutions for every business problem, but almost every business can find a way to implement social media and find its spot in the "zoo."

## Defining Your Customer

With Pinterest in particular, it is important to understand and define both your customers and your competition. Because of Pinterest's unique social model, you have an opportunity to take direct advantage of your competition's pins, promotions, or contests, while directly reaching customers.

Following your competition isn't a new strategy, nor is it a devious one. There are so many great ideas about business, so it is a good idea to keep informed on all the newest trends and technologies. I'm sure you already have a dedicated file or area where you store information about your competitors.

If you don't, we suggest setting up a Google Alert (<http://www.google.com/alerts>) to keep tabs on them. This helps you stay on top of what is going on. In addition, add a Pinterest account and boards to the file and stay aware of all that is happening (see Figure 4.5).

One of the most business-friendly features of Pinterest is the capability to check your competitor's boards at any time. Some people feel uncomfortable following their competitors, but the point of Pinterest is to share. Although the focus will change in the coming years, Pinterest is a way for businesses to learn from one another and interact.

So, what are your competitors doing on Pinterest? I'll bet you know what they are doing on Facebook and Twitter. Take the time to examine Pinterest by your

industry and competition. Including this community in your research gives you a better grasp on both your business and your industry.

**Google Alerts**

Search query:

Result type: **Everything** ▾

How often: **As-it-happens** ▾

How many: **Only the best results** ▾

Deliver to: **Feed** ▾

**CREATE ALERT**   **Manage your alerts**

**Monitor the Web for interesting new content.**  
 Google Alerts are email updates of the latest relevant Google results (web, news, etc.) based on your queries.

Enter a search query you wish to monitor. You will see a preview of the type of results you'll receive. Some handy uses of Google Alerts include:

- monitoring a developing news story
- keeping current on a competitor or industry
- getting the latest on a celebrity or event
- keeping tabs on your favorite sports teams

**Figure 4.5** You can tailor your Google Alerts to whatever interests you or affects your business.



### Quick Tip

Remember, when searching for your competitors on Pinterest, type the name of the company in the search box, then choose **People** in order to find its direct boards, and not just pins that mention its name.

Understanding who uses Pinterest and how this correlates to your business draws a sound strategy of reaching your intended audience. And, although Pinterest might still be new in terms of viral reach, it still contains many unique tools to create a funnel for your business.

Think of Pinterest as your storefront. It is your window to your products. You can't fill this window until you fully know and understand your product. And you can't fully understand your product until you know your customer. In the same fashion that a proper homepage acts as a window into your company's offerings, your Pinterest account gives customers a brief look at who you are and what you have to offer.

## Who Is Pinning What?

As you research your competition, identify who your customers are and how to reach them. To define your customers, find out who is pinning content from your site and why. To do this, go to <http://pinterest.com/source/domain.com/> and replace *domain.com* with your domain.

This search identifies what images from your site are pinned. You can gain some serious knowledge about your users from simply seeing what they like and are pinning.



### *Quick Tip*

Infographics (images that portray data in a visual manner) continue to be a huge hit across the web and Pinterest.

---

The second benefit of tracing pin activity from your site is the capability to thank those who have pinned your content. This is a touchy subject, because some people fear the invasion of social privacy, such as when a company goes out of its way to interact with others. But at the same time, this is a great opportunity to boost brand loyalty.

There are many ways to use this to your advantage. You can leverage the knowledge of your users into contests, promotions, and general politeness. Never overlook the power of a “Thank you.” Most people won’t shy away from gratitude toward your brand.

Using the term “Brand Ambassador” is old hat by this point, but the theory behind it is right on. Your followers appreciate your thoughtfulness, and a little fortitude goes a long way to create a pleasant social environment.

The third benefit from tracking the pins directly from your site is gaining exposure to public response to your products. Pinterest is a place where people can share images in a creative environment. Just because it has many positive attributes associated with it doesn’t mean that people aren’t going to pin images linked to complaints.

There are a number of boards on Pinterest that are related to products that aren’t good, or ones that are hated. Are your products on there? By using this method of tracking pins from your site, you can connect directly with customers that have a negative impression of your product. This way, you can keep track of how a certain product is doing, and maybe even find ways to improve it. This is an opportunity to win back lost customers by providing a level of service that goes above and beyond what is normally expected.

## **B2C Model**

The majority of businesses currently using Pinterest are B2C companies, because the overall layout and function of Pinterest lends itself to a consumer-friendly atmosphere.

Some of the industries using Pinterest include:

- Retail stores
- Online retailers
- Craft stores
- Grocery stores
- Restaurants
- Hotels
- Travel agencies
- Resorts

Like other social networks, educating your audience is crucial. If a consumer wants to purchase an item from you, they will. No amount of social media can change that. The key is to educate, not sell or appear to be desperately convincing.

Showing your products is a good first step. Showing your products in use is a great second step. So why not educate your potential customers with all the ways your product is useful? Don't shove it down their throats. Instead, inform them by sharing the knowledge your company has of its products. Treat your users as smart consumers capable of making decisions on their own.

Using this tactic gives you a great opportunity to increase your brand awareness. Exposure to your customers is always a plus. But remember to always be cautious about how you wield your Pinterest power. Don't go overboard to either extreme. Engaging and educating your customers benefit you down the road.

## From the Field

We reached out to business professionals who use Pinterest to get their take on how Pinterest affects their market. As mentioned, many B2C companies find success by integrating Pinterest into their strategy.

Many people have already brought Pinterest into the mix, and we talk about specific case studies and results in Chapters 5 and 6. But we can learn from others' successes and failures.

So, we ask:

### **What's your take and opinion on Pinterest?**

Sharon Binford of Shoplet.com (see Figure 4.6), <http://www.shoplet.com>, an online retailer for office and business supplies, says:

“While the majority of our sales are B2B, a good portion of our business is done directly with customers.”

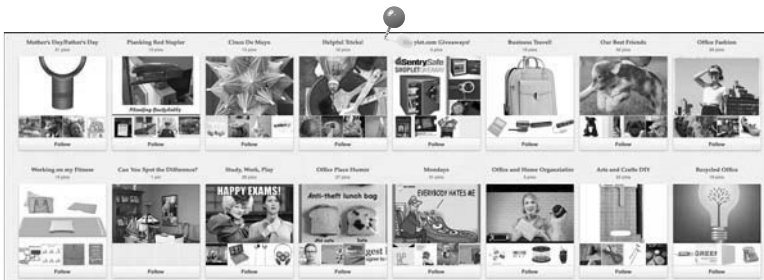


**Figure 4.6** Shoplet's Pinterest profile (see also Figure 4.7). To learn more, visit <http://pinterest.com/shoplet/>.

“Recently, Pinterest has changed its stance on self-promotion. In response, companies have started to build profiles that promote their wares, drum up referral business, and seek followers.

“With this recent policy change, where do you draw the line between what’s hot and what’s not on Pinterest? Some companies are taking this change to extreme and merely pinning their products, listing the price, and adding the SKU. Shoplet.com has decided to join the discussion with our own Pinterest account, and we are taking a different approach.

“As a virtual retailer of office and business products, and an online catalogue that boasts over 400,000 items, it would be easy to limit ourselves to fun-themed product boards such as: Working on My Fitness, Business Travel, and study, work, play.”



**Figure 4.7** Shoplet's Pinterest boards

“However, we have branched out to other areas of the office experience. Who doesn’t love Office Fashion, or get a case of the Mondays, each week? We are contributing to the Pinterest community with more than just our products, and infusing Shoplet.com with some personality.

“Our personality is derived from our unique selling proposition of simplicity, service, and selection, and that is at the center of everything

that we present to our customers. This is why we have devoted several boards to illustrate the benefits of using Shoplet.com and not just push our products. Another Shoplet.com value that manifests on our Pinterest account is our commitment to the sustainability of our customers' businesses.

“Our Recycled Office, Earth Day 4/22/12, DIY Upcycle Art, and Outdoor Inspiration boards not only appeal to Pinterest users, but they also say a lot about who Shoplet.com is.

“We definitely see Pinterest as a benefit. Getting people excited about office supplies is not always easy. Pinterest is a creative way to talk about more than just paper clips, but the whole office experience, as well as the whole office supplies procuring experience.

“Pinterest is a young social media site that blossomed in the past few months. As Pinterest determines what direction it will take its site, Shoplet.com is proud to be part of the discussion.

“With Pinterest being so young, it is important to experiment with different ideas on your boards. And, while the site continues to grow, there are a large variety of avenues that will open up for your network.”

Karen Bantuveris, founder and CEO of VolunteerSpot.com (see Figure 4.8), <http://www.volunteerspot.com>, an online community that enables easy volunteer communication, says:

“We've has been using various social media platforms to market VolunteerSpot.com and engage with her community members for several years, building VolunteerSpot's user base to more than 1.5 million volunteers, mostly busy moms. VolunteerSpot has 6,000 followers on Twitter and more than 20,000 fans on Facebook. Most recently, VolunteerSpot started using Pinterest as a new way to engage the VolunteerSpot community and to add a visual element to email marketing campaigns. VolunteerSpot currently has 12 boards, 128 pins, and over 1,500 followers.



**Figure 4.8** VolunteerSpot.com's Pinterest profile. To learn more, visit <http://pinterest.com/volunteerspot/>.

“Through VolunteerSpot’s email marketing campaign, we prepare monthly email newsletters to send to the community with seasonal topics of interest, tips for active parents and volunteer leaders, and new features updates. This helps VolunteerSpot further engage with their community and drives conversations of their coordination tool users to their social networks on an ongoing basis.

“By adding links to seasonal Pinterest boards in email newsletters, readers are able to engage with VolunteerSpot in a new and fun social platform. Instead of focusing Pinterest boards tactically about how to use VolunteerSpot, the team creates boards and pins ideas related to events and topics of interest to VolunteerSpot’s community—covering everything from teacher gift ideas, to classroom party tips, to school carnival games, to healthy snack ideas, to ideas for recognizing volunteers and charity fundraisers.

“Pinterest has been a huge benefit for VolunteerSpot.com in helping new potential users find VolunteerSpot and engaging current users with new and interesting ideas related to their personal GOOD work.”

By preparing a network around deliverables, your Pinterest account will grow with your crowd. Integrating different models, such as email marketing campaign, will help not only grow your social networks, but your business as well.

We went in depth to uncover the history and goals of a company using the social networking tool. Following are questions and answers we asked Amelia Lerutte, a social media strategist at iLoveDogs, Inc. (see Figure 4.9), <http://www.ilovedogs.com/>, a dog products and lifestyle brand dedicated to educating pet parents on all aspects of enjoying life with a canine companion.



**Figure 4.9** *iLoveDogs, Inc.’s Pinterest profile. To learn more, visit <http://pinterest.com/ilovedogsinc/>.*

### **How long has the company been on Pinterest?**

“Our company has been on Pinterest since November 2011.”

**How did you go about gaining followers? Was there a strategy? Are they mostly personal acquaintances of the company members (including gained through Facebook or Twitter linking) or people who found you via Pinterest?**

“To gain new followers, we generally Tweet or post a link on Facebook to our boards. This strategy worked really well in the beginning, and as we continued forward with Pinterest, I found that liking or commenting on people’s photos helps gain followers as well.”

**How much of what you pin is your own product, or that of vendors you have business relationships with, and how much is repinning from random sites?**

“On our boards, we pin our own products and stories, as well as cute, random pictures of dogs. As for a ratio, we repin about 70 percent of the time onto our dedicated ‘Pawesome Repins’ board and we pin our own content the other 30 percent of the time.

“This strategy for pinning helps show that your company’s Pinterest has personality, color, and that you care about what your followers are pinning.”

**Do you track the referrals from Pinterest to your website? If so, how? Have you seen an increase?**

“We track referrals using Google Analytics. After getting started in November, Pinterest has been a steady traffic referral in our top 10 referring sites each week.”

**In your opinion, does Pinterest have an advantage as a business tool over Facebook and Twitter?**

“One advantage Pinterest has over using Facebook and Twitter for business is that it allows us to see the various dimensions of our readers’ personalities. We love seeing what fashion trends and recipes they love and that inspires us to pin cute and creative pictures of dogs.”

**What advantages does Pinterest offer your business?**

“One advantage Pinterest offers our business is that it allows us to connect with our readers on a whole new level. We get to see more of their personalities, what they like to watch, and what they want to cook, and it gives us insight into what our readers like that a platform like Twitter doesn’t allow us to do. Pinterest is perfect for two-way communication.

“For B2C companies, Pinterest is a great way to foster your connection with your user base, as well as show off new products and their surprising uses. But how can Pinterest aid your company if you are primarily B2B?”

## B2B Model

Companies that use Pinterest in the B2B market are currently few and far between. Although social media has proven to be capable in driving interest for brands that cater directly to this market, they are still passive to the idea of Pinterest. This type of passive social nature is not indicative of what social media represents.

Instead, media offers an opportunity to strategize and share details pertinent to your business. Being a business that works directly with other businesses, this market tends to be tight. That is, the strategies between the two industries don't always coincide. One example comes from Shrita D. Sterlin, chief executive and brand officer at Penn Strategies (<http://www.penn-strategies.com>), a full-service, boutique communications firm specializing in branding, public relations, and marketing campaigns (see Figure 4.10). Sterlin says:

“As a B2B, we are using Pinterest to track visual issues and themes that are gaining popularity. Pinterest enables us to gauge the zeitgeist of users by tracking the most popular images, videos, and other content that individuals are pinning to their boards at any given moment.



**Figure 4.10** *Penn Strategies' Pinterest profile. To learn more, visit <http://pinterest.com/pennstrategies/>.*

“With people browsing one another's boards for ideas, leisure, or inspiration, the platform is fertile ground for new concepts and trends.

“We are also using Pinterest to identify visual elements for branding and positioning. Pinterest, like other social media platforms, allow us a prominent stage to showcase swag and an assortment of other client-branded materials.

“Beyond that, Pinterest provides a window onto images, colors, and textures that are resonating with users.

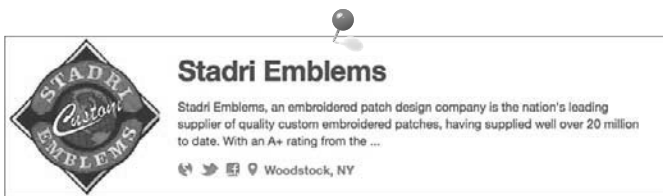
“This surface-level psychographic information can be useful for fine tuning campaign branding, collateral, and other online marketing or promotional materials.”

As mentioned, the visual themes of Pinterest can really capitalize on any industries that need to see and experience products directly. This really applies toward the growing ability to share the processes involved with whatever your company creates.

This goes a long way toward developing your brand, as you can generate awareness by organizing your creative assets. In addition, it is a great benefit to allow your customers to share your images and allow you to track them.

Marisa Brayman, director of Web & Marketing at Stadri Emblems (see Figure 4.11), <http://www.stadriemblems.com/>, a family-operated supplier of custom embroidered patches and promotional products, says:

“Our company is a mix of B2B and B2C. Most of the time, businesses want embroidered patches, but we also provide them to organizations such as the Boy Scouts of America and nonprofits, as well as bikers and other clubs.



**Figure 4.11** Stadri Emblems' Pinterest profile. To learn more, visit <http://pinterest.com/stadriemblems/>.

“Pinterest works so well for the type of business we have. And our company, which sells embroidered patches, is a little unique, allowing us to have an interesting Pinterest strategy. By pinning the images of these embroidered patches, we can generate massive amounts of interest.

“The key is that individuals don't have to have an interest in embroidered patches, but rather, what is depicted on the patch. If we pin a patch that showcases a well-known phrase or quote, for instance, most people who see it that relate to it will repin it. If we make an entire board full of animal patches, animal lovers will follow us—not because they love patches, but because they love animals.

“This expands our reach and increases the chances we'll get seen by individuals who actually are interested in embroidered patches, thus driving more traffic to our site. So, both types of pinner are valuable.

The pinners who are not interested in our products are valuable because they increase exposure to those who are. It's not often that an uninterested person will click the link to our site, but those who want patches will; therefore, most of the traffic is high-quality."

A B2B model is elevated by thinking of business leadership decision makers as consumers in their day-to-day lives, and reaching them as individuals who make decisions within their organizations based on their daily interactions.

Jessica Kupferman, CEO and founder of Badass Biz (see Figure 4.12), <http://www.badassbiz.com/>, a digital marketing company that helps business owners and entrepreneurs set up easy-to-use, low-cost, and great-looking web and social media marketing solutions, answers the next set of questions.

### How long have you been on Pinterest?

"I've been on Pinterest since June 2011, so about eight months."



**Figure 4.12** *Badass Biz's Pinterest profile. To learn more, visit <http://pinterest.com/badassbiz/>.*

### Did you create a Pinterest with the intention of using it for your business or did that idea come to you after making an account for personal reasons?

"No, actually, my sister was pregnant with twins last summer and on bedrest and she spent the summer using Pinterest for possible nursery decorating ideas. She had me sign up for an account so that I could help her decide on things. Since she's on the West Coast and I'm on the East Coast we couldn't do it together."

### How did you go about gaining followers? Was there a strategy? Are they mostly personal acquaintances or people who found you via Pinterest?

"At first they were just people I was connected to on Facebook, and then I started using Pinterest as a search for things I was interested in, like hairstyles for people with curly hair, I would follow people with boards like that, or interesting jewelry or social media articles. Mostly

my followers are Facebook friends I think, or people I've followed on Pinterest first."

**How much of what you pin is your own product, or that of vendors you have business relationships with, and how much is repinning/ from random sites?**

"I think I pin about 20 to 30 percent of my stuff: articles, graphics, past designs, and wallpapers I've designed. The rest is repinning and pinning things I like that I find on the Internet.

"I have a board of my favorite resources, and plan on doing one of my favorite tech tools like email marketing or WordPress themes, but mostly it's stuff I like.

"I find that it's more beneficial to be personal, especially on Pinterest, but this philosophy on Facebook has done well for me too."

**Do you track the referrals from Pinterest to your website? If so, how? Have you seen an increase?**

"Yes, and yes I have—since January it's become the #2 referring site for traffic to my website."

**In your opinion, does Pinterest have an advantage as a business tool over Facebook and Twitter?**

"Yes, but only if people are willing to use it for business, and personal. Pinterest is so visual that it's the first time you can give a *feel* for your brand and give it a live personality that is outside of just what services you offer and what information you can share.

"YOU are a living, breathing thing, and your brand can be that now, too: What foods, gifts, wish lists can your brand recommend? What businesses or celebrities or entrepreneurs does your brand support? It's so much more than just services and expertise. And that's what makes it *fantastic*."

**What advantages does Pinterest offer your business?**

"For me, it offers the ability to share more of a movement—my business encourages small business owners to really show how they shine using digital media—and being able to do that myself is key.

"So I can create a visual movement of sorts—pins with 'swagger'—pins that make the viewer feel confident, cocky, even, to realize that they themselves are "bad ass" at what they do.

“That’s our mission and [Pinterest] helps me reiterate that even more through what I’m pinning, what I say about those pins, even what I name my boards. It’s a business person’s dream, if they use it the right way.

“By focusing on how a brand can gain traction from having their name spread out into the digital community, you can take advantage of the ripple effect.

“Even though it might seem like B2B companies have much less to do on Pinterest than B2C companies, our interviewees show that B2B brands can still thrive. But what if you’re not in the business of making money?”

## Nonprofit Organizations

Non-profit organizations have just as much an opportunity to use Pinterest to generate awareness for their brand. The idea of creating a brand for your nonprofit is not against the mission of your company. Developing a system to share the message and news of your organization can offer great dividends toward your platform. So how does a nonprofit take advantage of a social market that can drive an audience to its brand?

Kate Brodock, executive director of Digital & Social Media at Syracuse University (see Figure 4.13 for the Pinterest profile at the university), <http://www.syr.edu/>, says:

“We use Pinterest to reach out to our entire community: alumni, current students/faculty/staff, prospective students, etc. We see the platform as allowing us a space to be:

- Very visual.
- Very lighthearted.
- And very fun.”



**Figure 4.13** *Syracuse University’s Pinterest profile. To learn more, visit <http://pinterest.com/syracuse/>.*

“Several of the important things we’ve thought about using this platform (which is important for any organization trying to use it, for-profit or non-profit) are:

- Don’t make it a direct repeat of your other platforms.
- Make sure that as many pins as possible are connected *back* to your brand in some way (whether it’s to the website, one of your other social platforms, or is simply labeled with your brand).
- Make sure that the platform is *integrated with* your other platforms, and is not just a standalone solo.”

As you can see, the market for nonprofit organizations to use social marketing has great potential. Whether you are in education, healthcare, fundraising, or philanthropy, sharing the news behind business through pins is a great opportunity.

One approach to Pinterest in this industry is your creativity. Think outside the box, and make your boards work for you. There are great opportunities to increase awareness of your cause. Try creating boards around your fundraisers or events. There is also a chance to reach out directly to your potential donors.

Nikki Hess, public relations representative at Health Advocate (see Figure 4.14), <http://www.healthadvocate.com/>, one of the nation’s leading independent healthcare advocacy and assistance companies, says:

“We follow health bloggers and nutritionists, health publications, non-profit organizations, other healthcare organizations and facilities, and people who simply have an interest in health and wellness.



**Figure 4.14** Health Advocate’s Pinterest profile. To learn more, visit <http://pinterest.com/hlthadvocate/>.

“Repinning from this diverse group (many of whom also follow Health Advocate in return), we’re able to compile a robust set of boards that feature information that health-minded people and organizations are interested in. We also pin and promote plenty of original content from Health Advocate’s own publications, webinars, blogs, and more.

“This promotes awareness of and drives traffic to our products and publications.

“By having a presence on Pinterest, we are able to reach consumers in a new way, giving them valuable health and wellness information. We are also increasing our brand awareness to other businesses: through our boards, they are able to get a better sense of what Health Advocate does. Additionally, having a Pinterest presence allows our company to be viewed as modern and innovative, as well as more personal.

“Our Pinterest boards show that we not only have a wealth of knowledge, but also a personality and sense of humor.”

Humor, creativity, and originality are the tenants that drive views toward your boards. It doesn't matter what industry you are in, you can use Pinterest to your advantage. The message behind your business is worth sharing. So the big question is, where does your company fall in line?

## Where Do You Fall in Line?

Defining the scope of your business is important. There are many companies that can blend the line between industries—Pinterest has the capability to transcend industries.

Defining who you are and what you do helps you decide how to approach social networks. This in turn helps you select a method for approaching Pinterest. No matter where you align your business, focus on the capability of images to tell your story.

Your customers are likely to directly relate with you if you cater your boards to their interests and needs. By doing this, your boards will gain not only exposure, but the kind of quality exposure that will boost your business. Focusing simply on getting repins and followers is a good function, but making sure that your followers can help your business long term is even better.

Pinterest is a social tool that has the rare capability to transcend all industries. With society continuing to rely on visual stimulation, using images to “show, rather than tell” is paramount. Because of this, it is important to develop a strategy of defining who you are and what your business does in the digital realm.

## Business Sectors

When pertaining to Pinterest, the best place to start is by breaking your business down into one of the business sectors. Pinterest lays out a variety of business

sectors within its own categorization model. The benefit of exploring these sectors and setting yourself into one helps your boards achieve higher SEO rankings. With Pinterest enabling boards and pins to be indexed, take the time to properly organize your boards into the right sectors.

Currently, Pinterest breaks into the following areas:

- Architecture
- Art
- Cars & Motorcycles
- Design
- DIY & Crafts
- Education
- Film, Music, & Books
- Fitness
- Food & Drink
- Gardening
- Geek
- Hair & Beauty
- History
- Holidays
- Home Decor
- Humor
- Kids
- My Life
- Women's Apparel
- Men's Apparel
- Outdoors
- People
- Pets
- Photography
- Print & Posters
- Products
- Science & Nature
- Sports
- Technology
- Travel & Places
- Wedding & Events
- Other

The capability of Pinterest to reach a variety of different industries is the biggest selling point of the network. Images are the best way to tell an elaborate story, but the key is identifying your customers. By fully understanding the basis of your company, you can strategically position yourself to use Pinterest for your benefit.

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