

Updated and Expanded Edition



Google+ for Business

Second Edition

How Google's
Social Network
Changes Everything

Chris Brogan  81

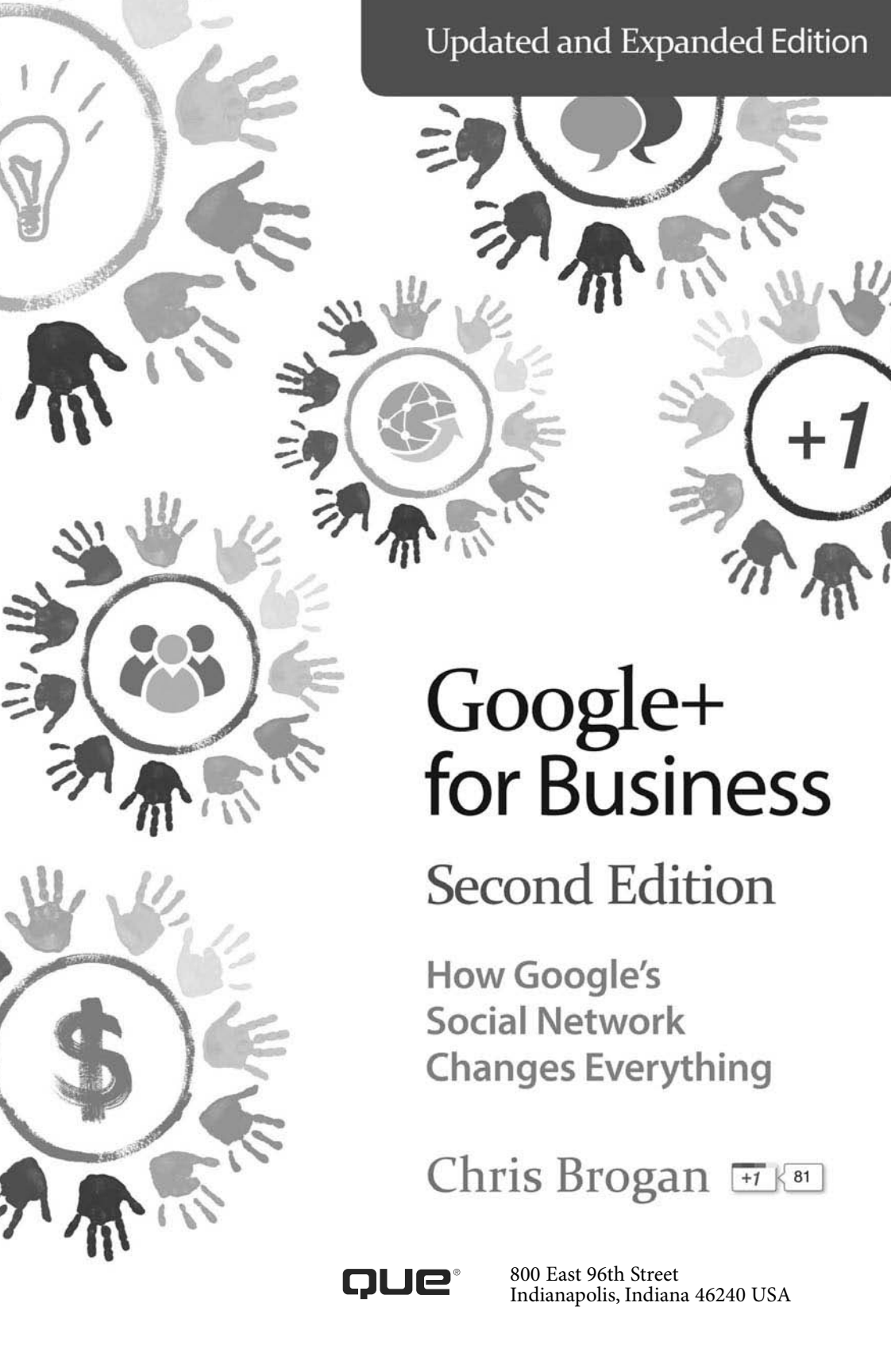
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Updated and Expanded Edition



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How Google's
Social Network
Changes Everything

Chris Brogan   81

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800 East 96th Street
Indianapolis, Indiana 46240 USA

Google+ for Business, Second Edition

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About the Author

Chris Brogan is a *New York Times* bestselling author and professional speaker, as well as president of Human Business Works. He has been involved with social networks since the bulletin board services of the 1980s and started blogging in 1998, when it was called journaling. Chris cofounded the international unconference experience, PodCamp, which teaches media making and its value to people all over the world. He keynotes at many major corporate events, as well as several technology and web culture events.

Dedication

To everyone who brings a positive view of the world to their surroundings. And to Jacqueline, for believing.

Acknowledgments

Thanks to Katherine Bull, for suggesting I could do this, and to Ginny Munroe, for helping me make it all work better.

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Introduction

How do I convince you to get interested in Google+? How do I convince you that this is important to consider, even if you ultimately choose not to use the service? How can I tell you what I might have missed or underestimated from the first edition of this book? I'm writing this at 33,000 feet, which is where I do a lot of my writing. I took a few deep breaths, and thought, "What should I say to entice people to buy this book about using Google+?" And with that, I discovered a problem.

You see, for the first time in my experiences with social networks and social media (which is over a decade and counting), I'm running into people everywhere who are saying, "I'm just not interested in joining another social network." I hear this from executives at huge companies, from my fellow "play with every new toy" social media types, and from the mom-and-pop stores. In most cases, people use a belligerent voice (I'll admit that it is a whining voice), and they almost always add, "I just figured out Facebook."

Right or wrong, I tend to answer in a somewhat smart-alecky way: “So, how’s that AOL working out for you? Can I be one of your top eight on MySpace?” My point is that companies don’t get to vote on which social networks people will adopt. They simply have to equip themselves to adapt to new channels as they appear.

Wow, way to sell that book to them, Brogan.

Here’s the real story, and I’ll tell you this the way I tell this to people in closed rooms for lots and lots of money: If you don’t jump into Google+ and start figuring it out now, you’ll be behind by the time everyone else shows up. If you doubt for a moment that the world’s largest search engine (Google), where 68 percent of all business start looking for *you*, is going to give up easily on the whole “build a useful social network” project, think again. Google has tied the success of Google+ to the annual reviews of several senior staffers, and understanding how people share information on social networks is a huge component to how Google has changed how they do search.

Although I don’t compare Google+ to Facebook much (they’re both social networks, that’s about it), I will say that even though Facebook nears a billion users, Google+ has a huge embedded user base with Android mobile devices (both smartphones and tablets) and they’ve baked Google+ into several of their flagship Google offerings such as Gmail, YouTube, and more. If you don’t see these secret indicators as Google meaning business with Google+, and if you’re a business that seeks to do more via the digital channel or you just want to be found via search results, then I’m not sure I can convince you.

I’ll tell you some other ditties that might convince you, though:

- The top experts on search engine optimization actively use Google+ and are figuring out its mysteries.
- More small businesses are creating personal pages and business pages to build relationships with potential buyers.
- The President of the U.S., Archbishop Desmond Tutu, and many more notable people have taken to showing up on live Google+ Hangouts on air to share their thoughts.
- Celebrities and entertainment professionals have shown up.
- My own personal “regular people” index (I measure how many non-techies use the service) is going up.

If you’re even vaguely curious about using Google+, it’s time to get in and start setting up shop. There’s money to be made. There’s gold in these hills. Come on, let’s get some.

—**Chris Brogan** (somewhere between Boston and Chicago in seat 21A)



First Moves with Google+

You've signed up for Google+. Now what? In some cases, you've purchased this book because someone in the organization or a colleague told you, "You've really got to get on this Google+ thing, and you've got to start now, before everyone's here!" And some part of you said, "YES! That's exactly what I'll do! I'll sign up, get in there, and then I'll... I'll..."

Yeah, that happens. Don't worry about it. Hopefully, Chapter 3, "A Day in the Life," gave you some ideas by walking you through some of the day-in-the-life scenarios. Now, you want to dig in and start implementing some of what you've learned up until now. This chapter covers the steps and ideas of implementation at a higher level (with great detail here about your profile page and your privacy settings) and then Chapters 6, 7, and 8 discuss some more detail.

Consider profiles first, and then you can get into the other first moves.

Profiles Matter for Business

Profiles might make or break most people's immediate experience with Google+. Why? Because the profile is the first signal you have when connecting with someone. It's the first chance to make an impression. It's a lot like a business card blended with a peek at someone sitting in a waiting room. Because of that, it's important.

Using Your Google+ Profile for Business

In the early days of Google+, users were concerned with how they could best represent their businesses on the service. The first attempt at business pages was made by users simply changing the name on the account to whatever company they wanted to represent, and making their logo stand for their screen name.

But Google wasn't ready for this, and so it requested that companies take those accounts offline for a while, until it was ready to unveil its true intentions for business profiles. Some people were up in arms about it. Others felt like Google didn't understand how people would want to use this platform for business.

Here's another take: People could most certainly use Google+ for business long before Google was ready to release "official" business pages, even without violating any terms of service. People keep confusing the technology of "Google+ business pages" with what a business person does: connects with potential buyers and existing customers, and builds relationships that add value to both parties. Business pages are a great additional piece of technology to have, but by simply being on Google+ as a person representing your business, there's much to do.

Businesses Are Made of People

Chapter 3 includes some interviews with people actively using Google+ as representatives of business. In most cases, people are highlighted who represent larger companies, but a few small business owners are included as well.

Jennifer Cisney is Chief Blogger for Kodak, but she also represents herself on Google+. When she shares interesting posts about photography and video, we *know* she's sharing something that Kodak will approve of as part of her role, but it also comes off as authentically sharing her interest in the subject matter of the films or photos.

Scott Monty is the head of social media for Ford, and as such, his stream has a lot of content about Detroit and surrounding cities (he lives there) and also talks about the automotive industry. However, just as with Jenny Cisney, there's a lot of Scott in there, and these personalities matter.

Darren Rowse of Probblogger *is* his business. When people connect to his stream on Google+, they see pictures of his family that give you a sense of him but that also promote his Digital Photography School. When you look at what he's sharing, there's a natural inclination to want to get involved in his business.

In all cases, these people are representative of their business. They are not the “official Kodak page” or the “official Ford page” or the “Probblogger” page. These people represent a business that you can get to know, and that can lead us to helpful information that can improve your world. Businesses are made of people—you don't need to talk to Ford. You can talk to Scott.

Connections Before the Sale

Google+ is a platform that can enable people to connect to people, and you, as a representative of a business, have some steps to take to build those relationships. One of the most important parts to get your best business value out of using Google+ comes from getting your profile put together, and building the other human elements that people will respond to upon seeing it.

If you look up Chris Zoller from PolarUSA (maker of fitness accessories and the like), his bio reads as follows:

“Customer experience thinker, community manager, content creator, father, triathlete. I like creating amazing consumer experiences by combining today's tech with good old-fashioned local hardware store love.”

This is the kind of person you'd want to do business with. You might think, “Huh, maybe I should check out what Polar sells, because I'm sure Chris wouldn't work for a company full of jerks.” Wouldn't you want that kind of reaction for your business?

Chris is sharing stories and information of interest to the fitness community. If you're interested in this, you can see something of interest through what Chris shares. But when you go to his profile and see his language, about hoping to give his community “good old-fashioned local hardware store love,” you have a strong sense of what kind of person Chris is, and by extension, you share those feelings with the brand Chris represents: Polar.

Mike Bowler is in the real estate business. He does training, consulting, and selling. When you visit his stream, you can find a mix of local Michigan interest items (which lets you know that he cares about his community and it gives you interesting items from the area he services), stories from the real estate community at large, praise to his colleagues and community members, videos from Mike about what interests him, and more. The humanity of Mike shines through and says to you, if you're in the market to buy or sell a property in Michigan or if you want to train

your team of real estate professionals, that Mike is the man for you. Business is made up of people.

If you're Richard Binhammer at Dell, you're part of a larger corporation, and you have a somewhat more defined role. It's a lot easier to be personal and personable, and yet the company requires that Richard shows results that justify his time on various social networks such as Google+. To that end, Richard almost has it easier than if you represent a small business.

If you are president of a small design firm, you have a lot more of the burden to represent the company. And yet, if you don't balance your personal self with your business self, you'll miss the opportunity to build relationships before the sale.

Now let's start on profiles, and then work from there.

How You Appear to Others

Often when established users of Google+ come across someone new (such as yourself, perhaps), the first view they have is of Figure 5-1.

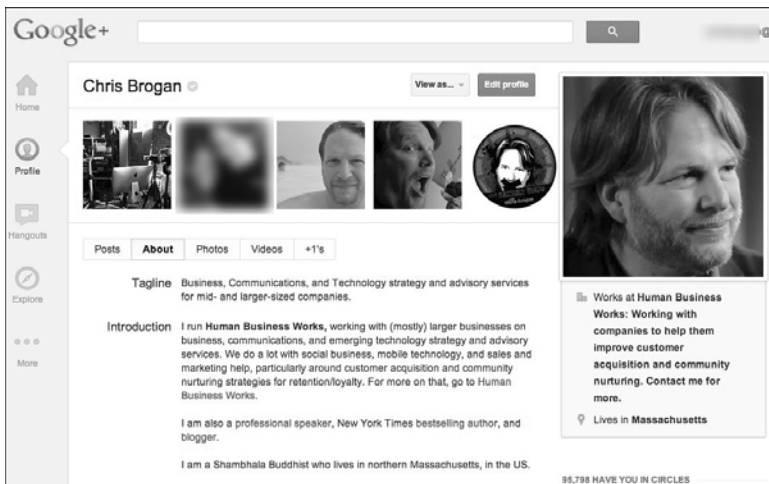


Figure 5-1 Brief user information in Google+.

Now, when people see this, they can decide a few things. “Hmmm, I’ve never heard of Chris, nor have I heard of Human Business Works, so maybe I won’t circle him.” Or they might think, “Well, he runs a company of some kind, so maybe that means something to me.” But because they see that information, they have just a little bit more to go on before deciding in a split second whether they want to add you back to a circle of their choosing.

This is just the first part of the importance of making sure your profile is in good working order. There are more steps, but initially people make choices.

Other things to consider, obviously, while looking at the previous picture and text is whether your avatar profile is helpful to people deciding whether to add you to one of their circles. If you have a cute, fluffy kitty, it's less likely that you represent some business of significance to the people viewing you—unless you're fortunate enough to be in the cute, fluffy kitty business.

That preview of your profile is people's first view of you—their first inkling into whether they should consider connecting with you. That's a great reason to give it some attention.

Danie Ware's profile is succinct but gives you a sense that she's creative, artistic, multi-faceted, and definitely not your typical person to connect with (see Figure 5-2). The beauty in this is that when you stand out in the crowd, you get more opportunity. Danie's clearly a "Plate-Spinner Extraordinaire."

Figure 5-2 Danie Ware. Courtesy of Danie Ware, <http://danieware.com>.

David B. Thomas used to work with me, and we've known each other for a few years now. He gives you insight into what matters most by leading with being a dad and husband (see Figure 5-3). In his business section, he starts with his new book with links right to where one can purchase it. And then Dave finishes with his work

history and a link to his professional site. What I like is that his profile is well rounded.

David B. Thomas
Dad, husband, home cook, music nerd, tech geek. Director of Social ... You are in David B.'s circles too

Send an email

Posts About Photos Videos Buzz

People in common (118)
View all »

In David B.'s circles (292)
View all »

Have David B. in circles (1100)
View all »

Block David B.
Report this profile

Introduction

I'm a dad and husband, a home cook, a music nerd and tech geek and a marketing and social media professional.

I'm co-author of *The Executive's Guide to Enterprise Social Media Strategy*, with Mike Barlow. You can buy it.

I'm Director of Social Strategy for Radian6, a salesforce.com company, working with customers to help integrate social media in general and Radian6 in particular into the enterprise.

I love speaking to groups large and small about how enterprise companies are successfully integrating social media across the organization.

I started my career in 1989 as a reporter and photographer for The Chapel Hill News in Chapel Hill, N.C. Since then I've worked in marketing communications for a variety of companies and clients, mostly in technology.

I came to Radian6 from New Marketing Labs, where I served as Executive Director and oversaw client services, as well as the development of new product and service offerings for enterprise customers. Before NML I was Social Media Manager for SAS, the business analytics software company. I directed the company's global social media strategy, policy and training.

Before that, I worked for Yap Roc, a leading independent record label, where I directed web and social media marketing and

Links

- my blog
- Twitter - davidbth...
- My del.icio.us bo...
- David B Thomas
- davidbthomas
- dbthomas
- davidbthomas
- David B. Thomas

Figure 5-3 David B. Thomas.

Nick Bilton's profile is brief, but in there are so many interesting bits that one simply needs to learn more (see Figure 5-4). He writes for the *New York Times*, but that's not nearly as cool as the fact he cofounded NYCResistor and that he's "jumped out of 50 perfectly good airplanes." I admire the brevity, plus the ability to get to know about the man behind the column.

Rick Klau makes good use of links, both in his introduction and in the sidebar of his profile (see Figure 5-5). He leads with his CV, giving one the sense of his capabilities, plus a hint of what you could do with him professionally. Rick also uses the "scrapbook" photos above his profile to good effect, leading you in to want to learn more.

Scott McCloud's scrapbook photos to the right of his profile are the best part (see Figure 5-6). His clever use of an eye plus time equals a comic's progression is the perfect shorthand for his most well-known work, the book *Understanding Comics*. Scott's also done a lot to use appropriate anchor text (the text that shows up in blue

Nick Bilton Beacon Filchers

Posts **About** **Photos** **Videos** **Buzz**

Introduction Nick Bilton is the Lead Technology Writer for The New York Times Bits Blog and a reporter for the paper covering consumer technology, hackers, privacy and the future. He is author of the book "I Live in the Future & Here's How It Works." Nick helped co-found NYCResistor, a hacker space in Brooklyn NY, and is an Adjunct Professor at NYU. He has a dog named Pixel who enjoys playing air hockey on the iPad.

Links

- <http://nickbilton.com>
- <http://flickr.com/n...>
- <http://twitter.com/n...>
- <http://facebook.c...>
- Google Reader
- Nick Bilton

Bragging rights I've jumped out of 50 perfectly good airplanes — with a parachute, of course.

Occupation Lead Technology Writer, Reporter

Employment The New York Times
Lead Technology Writer, present

Places lived

- Brooklyn, NY
- England
- England, Georgia, ...

Gender Male

Other names nickbilton

People in common (40)
View all >

In Nick's circles (158)
View all >

Have Nick in circles (5693)
View all >

Figure 5-4 Nick Bilton.

Rick Klau Attention Getters

Political junkie. Husband. PM @ YouTube. Father of 3. Not in that order.

Posts **About** **Photos** **Videos** **+1's**

Introduction I'm a tech entrepreneur who currently works at YouTube as a product manager, where I'm responsible for YouTube's homepage as well as various social stuff at YouTube. I was previously a PM on Google Profiles and Blogger, and before that I ran the publisher services team at FeedBurner prior to the acquisition by Google.

Links

- Sins :: Rick Klau...
- YouTube - rklau
- LinkedIn - Rick Klau
- Flickr - rklau
- Facebook - Rick ...
- Foursquare - rklau
- Picasa Web Albu...
- Klau Family Tree
- Twitter - rklau

For a whole lot more detail than you were looking for, I suggest you swing by my CV.

Bragging rights 100% of politicians who've been to my house have been elected President.

Occupation PM, maker of things

Employment **YouTube**
Product Manager, 2011 - present

Google
Product Manager, 2007 - 2011

FeedBurner
VP, Publisher Services, 2005 - 2007

Socialtext
VP, Business Development, 2004 - 2005

Interface Software
VP, Vertical Markets, 2001 - 2004

People in common (65)
View all >

In Rick's circles (394)
View all >

Have Rick in circles (15615)
View all >

Block Rick
Report this profile

Figure 5-5 Rick Klau.



Figure 5-6 Scott McCloud. (Top right graphic copyright Chris Ware.)

to indicate a link), so that he can use Google+ to try to boost his ranking for the terms “online comics” and “public speaking and teaching.”

Your About Page: The Basics

The elements of your profile page are a photo avatar, your name, a small “summary line” below your name, a spot for your introduction, “bragging rights,” your occupation, your employment, your education, places where you’ve lived, relationship status, a sense of what you’re looking for, your birthday, your gender, other names (in case of a maiden name or a common spelling error), a nickname, and whether your information should be visible in a search (see Figure 5-7). Besides this, in the right column, there is a spot for links, where you can insert links to other social networks plus point people to important URLs that matter to you and your business.

You can also choose whether to let people send you email via your profile page. They can’t see your actual Gmail account address, but they can click a button (if you expose it) that lets them fill out a form and send it to you.

Via this About page, you can also control whether you want people to view who you’ve added to your circles. You can choose to hide that, and then people see only who has added you to their circles via your About page. (I’m not sure of the value to show or hide that data, but I currently have mine hidden, so as not to upset or offend anyone that I haven’t chosen to add to a circle yet.)

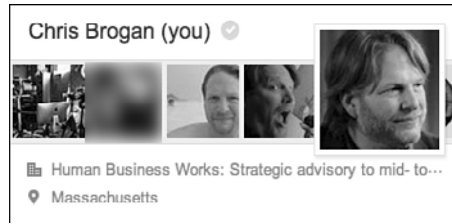


Figure 5-7 My profile page.

The other tabs on your profile include the following:

- Posts, which shows what you've posted
- Photos, which shows people photos that you've uploaded where you and others have been tagged in the same photo, and photos that others have chosen to share of you
- Videos, which shows videos that you've uploaded to Google+ (and not your YouTube account specifically)
- +1s that you've shared via the +1 function OFFSITE (versus the +1s you give things on Google+)

Start at the Top

This feels like a lot of stuff to cover. When you get to your About page, click the Edit Profile button in the upper right, and now, when you hover over various sections of the page, you see that you can click them to edit them.

For instance, if you click the little blue Change Photo link below your profile photo (or avatar, as it is often called), the system enables you to upload a photo or pick one from your existing albums, pictures people have posted of you, mobile uploads, and so on.

Your Profile Photo

Your profile photo tells people a lot about you. If you choose something too formal (those photos that look like they're the grown-up equivalent of a school photo, complete with a cloud-like background), people will get one sort of impression.

The opposite can happen when you choose a red-eyed (from flash) snap of you where someone else was in the photo, but you've cut them out because it was a good smile. That never comes off as especially professional or inviting, either. There's a kind of happy medium you should aim for in these matters.

Shoot for something personable that might also give a sense about who you are outside of work, if that's acceptable and of value. For instance, perhaps you're not only the vice president of your bank, but maybe you're an avid fly-fishing enthusiast as well. This would make for a great avatar photo, insofar as it gives another view of you and humanizes you to your audience.

Following are some tips about how to choose avatar photos:

- Don't include photos of your kids as an avatar. People friend you, not your children (or pets).
- Photos of your company logo are far less engaging than photos of you.
- Cartoonized avatars are only cool if you're an illustrator or someone in a business that relates to these.
- Check whether you think your photo qualifies for "also looks a bit like a serial killer." (Some people choose "interesting" photos to represent themselves on the web.)

Editing Your Name

The Google+ profile editor enables you to edit your name as it appears in Google+. You might be inclined to add something to your name that you want people to think about when they see you. But if you change your profile name here, by clicking your name and then typing in something new, you might run into a problem.

If you edit your name on the Google+ Profile page, it changes that information on all other Google accounts related to this one. Meaning, if you change your Google+ profile name to "Dave 'The Incredible Plumber' Taylor," it's going to change your Gmail account and your Google Calendar account, and everything else that's tied to it. So, in short, you might not want to do that.

Editing Your Tagline

Think of the line below your name on your profile page as a summary line or a place for a tagline. What it might *best* serve as for you would be the answer to the sentence, "What do you do for your prospective customers?"

At the time of this writing, I have a little comment about what I believe I do for the world, plus I put an immediate and obvious link to my primary website URL. By the time this book is printed, I will probably have edited it some, and that's okay. To me, this little piece of territory might be best used flexibly.

Your little “summary” section might be something you change often, like an announcement, for instance, or a status. Maybe not, but it’s an idea. For instance, if people hovered over your summary in the fall, they could be sent to a blog post or an article on your primary site that talks about how your business works in this season. The idea, simply, is that you can have some fun with this summary because it’s visible only when someone clicks your About tab on your profile, and as such, it means they’re open to learning more about you.

The Most Important Part of Your Profile: The Introduction

At this point, maybe you’re thinking, “Geez, Chris. We get it. You want the profile to be robust and good.” But to me, there’s a lot to consider, especially because every time I survey other people’s profiles, I’m left with an urge to shake many of these people and say, “You could be doing *so much more business*, if only you’d consider a few updates and improvements to how you use your profile page. So, that’s why I hammer this home.

In your introduction, write it so that people understand how you might work with them. Blend this with some personal information so that people understand what matters to you outside of business. Be sure to use links inside that text; although be wary of having too many links. (Because too many links leads to the opposite effect of what you want: People won’t click anything.)

My own profile is about as messy as my business life. I work for a lot of projects and companies. Therefore, I’ve done my best to explain how I work for large companies in one capacity, and how I work for smaller companies in another capacity.

In your case, try to be clear about how others will work with you. Explain what services or offerings you present. Be clear about what you do for your organization. Don’t write a novel, but give it more than a sentence. For instance, maybe you can say this:

“I teach franchise owners how to empower their franchisees, and I help franchisees navigate the complex waters of running a franchise. I consult in person and via online courses. If you want to see a sample of my online courses and some testimonials from professionals I’ve helped, click here.”

That would simply sum up what you’re doing and give people a sense of what they can do with you. That’s the goal. Try to hook someone in the grand theater of no attention span.

A LITTLE TRICK ABOUT YOUR INTRODUCTION AREA

If you want to finish your Introduction section in style, do this: Put a way to contact you at the bottom of the introduction. That way, when people decide you're interesting and might be useful to their business needs, they know how to reach you. Do NOT include a link to your website but include a link directly to how people can contact you, or an email address and a phone number. I put a link to my primary contact form so that people can reach me easily.

Employment: A Useful Hack for You

When you fill out the Employment part of your profile, the part of your employment that's "current" is what shows up when someone hovers over your name in a post or in a comment. *That* is where you can insert a useful summary of what you do to catch people's attention.

Mine, at the time of this writing says this:

Human Business Works: Large Business Digital Marketing Strategy & Advice and Small Business Tools and Smarts.

Write yours in a way that it engages people. It can be reasonably simple—actually, it's probably better that it is simple—but it must be engaging.

Instead of "Marketing Manager for Pearson Publishing," consider writing something such as "Finding great books about education and sharing them with people who love books." See how that might lead to more engaging interactions?

Create yours accordingly.

The Links Section

The Links section of your profile is probably the second most important part after the Introduction because it's where people can learn more about you and where you can point people to the specific pages or sites that best extend your conversation.

This is another situation in which a little goes a long way. Consider not sharing every potential place where people can connect with you. Consider also pointing people toward specific pages or posts on your sites, instead of to the main link, unless the main site URL is the best representation of continuing the conversation.

For instance, if you have a page that talks about your services, point people to that. Remember that you can select what text you want the link to present, so maybe a photographer's will say "Photography for Corporate Projects." It's up to you how you use it.

Moving on from the Profile

The profile can improve your potential chances to build business relationships on Google+. You can do this in many ways, but hopefully what this chapter covers gives you enough to start. If you have questions, you can always connect with me via Google+ and ask specifics: <http://gplus.to/chrisbrogan>.

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