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How to Use Social Media Tools to Connect with Customers and Build Your Business"

In this hands-on session, you'll learn from social media professionals how to reach customers using the tools you've heard of but may have been afraid to touch.

From Facebook to Twitter to Seesmic, you'll learn how to create some buzz for your business & how to engage customers in realtime. Find out the value podcasting can offer & hear how easy it is to create your own show. Learn how important it is to be transparent in an increasingly digital age.

Bring your horror stories or specific challenges with you. At the end of the session we'll have an interactive Q & A.

Why are you here?

Heard of Twitter, Facebook, new media, social media and you want to jump into the pool.

We'll discuss why you should jump in, or why you should stay OUT.

Social media is just one element of an entire marketing plan and it might make sense for your firm and it might not.

Things to realize are:

Connecting with your audiences - customers, investors, competitors, media - requires time and effort no matter what the vehicle.

And similar to traditional approaches, new media still requires you have something to say.

So why do you want in?

Sales

Buzz

PR

Customer Service

All of the above?

The approach you take and the tools you use are going to vary depending on industry.

Tour companies - Adam - are going to find value in one vehicle while restaurants will use another.

In fact, even the big names are finding a way to leverage social media tools.

Steve - Panasonic

Ford - Twitter

Overview of the tools and my \$.02 on what they can bring to the table.

Your mileage might vary.

*After I dash through this, we'll go into video and podcasting and how these specific technologies can add even more value to the conversations you're having.

Website

If you don't already have a Website, set one up.

Can cost as little as \$80 to get a domain name - BRANDING - and hosting for the year.

You can build the site yourself or get it done.

Logoworks, Craigslist, MassArt, Aquent, Hollister, staffing agencies, Advertising agencies, give a shout on Twitter (places to look for creatives

Benefit:

Brand building

Point of contact

Easily indexed (google, search engines)

Cheap way to share info - hours, location, specials

Low maintenance - once you put up info it probably doesn't change regularly

Drawbacks:

Cost - especially if you don't have a clear mktg plan. You can get mired in revisions, changes, approvals.

Blog

Yes, it's a Web site...or more specifically a Web presence. It's a fantastic way to conduct regular - monthly, weekly, daily, hourly - conversations with customers/audiences.

Multiple software choices. Multiple pricing.

Benefit:

Brand building

Give and take conversations - no need to wait for emails

Easily updated

Better link juice (indexed and found by google other search engines)

Less daunting to consumers than a monster site with only mail and email points of contact.

Drawbacks:

Comment moderation

Can be time consuming or daunting for someone who doesn't churn out info.

Hard to keep up with new details all the time

Blog platforms - TypePad, Wordpress, Blogger, your own software, html.

MySpace

Mostly for music and artists - my opinion.

Equal to FaceBook in terms of users, but not easy to use for branding or conducting conversations.

Facebook

115+ Million users. 195% growth - about 90 Million visits per month.

Used to be open only to college students. If you haven't heard the story, Facebook is now open.

It changes quickly and is fast becoming a destination for people conduct all their conversations.

From a Search-Engine-War.co.uk article...

Facebook Fan Page Benefits

Still need convincing? Here are 6 reasons why you should consider creating a Facebook fan page and the search engine marketing benefits it can bring:

1. Pages are public.

Most of Facebook is behind a login, preventing search engines from indexing. However, some Fan pages are not behind a login and thus search engines can index the page. Hopefully, people will stumble on the result in SERPs, visit the Facebook page, and then get to your site via the link (see reason #2).

2. Pages include links.

Because the pages are public, you can get some nice facebook.com link credit. You can't use an anchor text, but hey, it's free.

3. Send "updates to fans".

One of the greatest features is that you can send "updates" to fans whenever you want. It's a nice way of building a database of interested users. Send messages about new products, updated website, etc.

4. You control the page.

Making the page before a Fan or a competitor is critical. You want to be able to send the messages, edit or remove sections, and control the information to an extent.

5. News feed.

When a someone joins a Fan page, it's published in their News feed for all their to read (unless they have turned this off). It makes someone joining your Fan page somewhat viral.

6. It's free and easy.

Making a Fan page takes just a few minutes – add some information, URL, and upload the logo and you're done. You can make your page here.

Finally...

PR is currently one of the few forms of marketing thriving during the recession so 2009 will inevitably see Facebook fan page activity increase as companies compete in the current climate. We will check back in 6 months time to see how the top 25 Facebook fan pages have changed, if Obama is still leading the way or Homer can steal the crown...keep you posted!

Benefits:

Free
Fairly easy to use
BIG audience potential
More people coming each day
Searchable, open to the world (fan pages)
Access from anywhere

Drawbacks:

A lot of noise (when I say noise I'm talking about everything else vying for your audience's attention)

Not THAT easy to use

Need to be relevant and new...can be time consuming

Could change in a second - Zuckerberg changes his site at the drop of a hat

Can be a total time suck

Twitter

Business owners are joining Twitter, but quite a few know how to promote their business on Twitter.

Five tips for you to help you get more clients on Twitter:

- Use Twitter To Research Your Target Market. One of the biggest benefits that Twitter provides business owners is the ability to connect with your target market and hear what your target market is talking about.

- Build Your List. If you're not keeping a mailing list/email list/contact list, you should. This lets you share other info - newsletters, coupons, etc.

- Build Relationships With People You Meet On Twitter. People buy from people they know, like and trust. Don't just promote yourself all the time. Get to know your contacts and they will get to know you.

- Blog And Share Your Blog Posts On Twitter. Sharing your blog posts is another great way to demonstrate your expertise to your target market. And you don't even have to share your posts manually. There are tools that will automatically check your blog and post your blog post to Twitter automatically.

- Offer Events And Teleseminars. A great way to invite more people to your list is to offer an event and invite your Twitter contacts to join you for the event.

Benefits:

Free (although there are pro accounts coming)

Lots of tools and interfaces - tweetlater

Can do it from anywhere

Fast - instant response

Growing by 1200% per year

Can be fun

Drawbacks:

HUGE TIMESUCK

Can be overwhelming

Can be aimless

Timing is key. Messages missed if someone turns away for an instant

No real certainty about future

Outages

Here's what Twitter's given me:

1. Instant access to thought leaders in social media, digital trends, technology and marketing in the new age of community. They're all here: the staff of Wired, the lead strategists at the next generation of agencies, the pioneers of social media itself. Not just the expected names like @crowdsourcing (Jeff Howe) or @johnbyrne (BusinessWeek's digitally proactive editor) or @henryjenkins (MIT's director of comparative media studies) or @jaffejuice (Crayon's Joe) but a new generation of even younger social media enthusiasts. Most of them are remarkably generous with their knowledge, willing to answer questions, share ideas, even give away their content.

2. An opportunity to experience crowd sourcing in action. Conduct a brainstorming session in your own agency and you're pretty much limited to the usual suspects. But on Twitter there are thousands of people willing to help out. And because no one pays attention to seniority or title, new voices are more willing to express an opinion that more often than not is both fresh and provocative. I'm constantly surprised where the quote or thought or insight or example I'm looking for comes from. But it's always to be found.

3. A new way to connect with Millennials. We live in a society that does its very best to isolate generations. But because a Twitter relationship centers around content, information and ideas, it erases differences in age. I'm now connected with college students in New York, Austin, Boston, Chicago, Atlanta and Miami. Many of their blogs are far more telling than another research report from Simmons or Forrester. And all of them are willing to make me smarter about how marketing has to change if it's to connect with a generation defined by community, collaboration and responsibility.

4. The first hand experience needed to become an authority. As has been noted by Adweek, clients are critical of most agencies' lack of experience in social media, specifically calling them out for not using the space themselves. For me, hanging out on Twitter inspired ideas like Trash Talk from Section Twitter and RedCarpet09, two virtual gatherings created around the Super Bowl and the Academy Awards. They not only became successful events in and of themselves -- generating visibility for Mullen and attaining status as hot topics on Twitter -- they demonstrated to clients how one agency in particular actually gets it.

5. A better understanding of how to weave together all things social. If nothing else, Twitter gives you a clear sense of everything a brand can and should do with social media: enable connections and ultimately create a community that let's you listen, engage, inspire, build and mobilize. Maybe you can't achieve social Nirvana with Twitter exclusively -- you still need a broader brand network, relevant content and genuine utility -- but Twitter makes it easier to create connections and to identify the content and utility that can help make sure those connections last.

TOOLS for TWITTER - This could be a standalone session (and is).

iPhone apps, Tweetdeck, Tweetlater, Tweetworks, Twhirl and so on.

But the key is to use the tools that let you use Twitter effectively.

SITE MADNESS - a bunch of sites you should be familiar with...

1. Reddit: Popular social news website with a large user base. Covers a wide range of news. Includes several topical sections called subreddits, which focus on specific topics like programming, science, politics and business.

reddit

2. Digg: The largest and most popular social news website on the internet. Covers all topics including politics, entertainment, technology and general news. Includes a separate video and image section.

digg

3. Propeller: A social news site that covers all topics from technology to politics and entertainment. Operates in a similar fashion to Digg.

Propeller

4. Fark: A community news site which allows users to comment on news articles. User submitted links will be posted on the main page once they are approved by the administrators.

Fark

5. Slashdot: Primarily a tech news site, Slashdot also covers topics like books, games, politics and entertainment. Users can submit

stories and they may be published after editors approve it. A popular site that can send a large amount of traffic.

Slashdot

6. Metafilter: A community weblog which allows users to share links and discuss interesting websites/topics. Moderation is done through editors as well as peer pressure in order to prevent gaming.

Metafilter

7. I am bored: Covers general topics with a strong focus on weird and offbeat news. You can submit a link which may be posted after the editors approve it.

I am bored

8. Mixx: A general social news sites which has a category for all types of news. Topics covered include business, entertainment, sports, health and tech. Includes the ability to create groups to share news with other users.

mixx

9. Shoutwire: General news site that is well populated with a loyal group of users. Topics covered include technology, politics, entertainment, lifestyle and sports.

shoutwire

10. Newsvine: A website consisting of community-driven news stories and opinions. Users have their own blogs and can write articles, save links to external content and vote/comment on other user stories.

newsvine

11. IndianPad: A general social news site that with a large indian userbase. Topics covered include entertainment, sports, videos and tamil news.

indianpad

12. Linkfilter: Covers all sorts of news. All links are posted and moderated by users. Links can be ranked on several levels: clicks, votes, age, or a combination of all three called points.

linkfilter

13. NewsCloud: A general social site with a focus on news in all topics. Similar to Newsvine, each user has their own blogs and can publish content to be voted up by other users.

newscloud

14. Hugg: Hugg is a social news site with a strong focus on environmental issues. Also includes other categories like politics, science, fashion and technology.

hugg

15. Plime: A general news site which features a wide variety of topics ranging from religion and sports to technology or business. Odd news performs best in this community.

plime

16. C2NN: An active social news site with a variety of topics including environment issues, business, politics, animals and offbeat. Similar to Hugg in focus but much more populated and active.

c2nn

17. Kirsty: A general news site with a focus on fashion, entertainment and design on top of other topics like technology and food. Has a strong female user base.

18. Nowpublic: A participatory news network which focuses on citizen journalism. Each user has their own individual profile blog/page and can upload videos, images and news stories.

nowpublic

19. Stirrdup: General social news site with four broad categories: politics, technology, news and entertainment.

stirrdup

20. Searchles: A hybrid social news sites which covers all topics. Includes a video section and offers personalized filtering features and the option of joining groups made up of other users with similar interests.

searchles

21. Linkinn: A social news site that specializes in pictures and video. Covers a broad range of topics, particular offbeat and weird content.

linkinn

22. Earthfrisk: Covers topics like humor, politics, entertainment and business. Combines a social network and group features with digg-style news voting.

earth frisk

23. Truemors: A social rumor news site which focuses on the publication of "true rumors that are relevant, informative, and interesting." Users can post links anonymously via text, voicemail, web or email. Editors moderate content.

truemors

24. StumbleUpon: A social network and browser toolbar which allows users to channel surf the internet. Technically not 100% a social news site, although users can submit webpages to be rated by other users. Here is a guide to StumbleUpon.

stumbleupon

25. Linkswarm: Covers a wide range of topics from celebrity gossip to funny media, science and politics. Focuses on pop culture and bizarre news as well.

linkswarm

Here are social websites which focus on a specific niche. For best results, only submit to them when your site falls within the same niche or covers the same topics. Or else you're likely to be marked as spam.

26. Sphinn: Sphinn is a social site for search and interactive marketers. It's designed to allow you to share and discover news stories, read and take part in discussions, discover events of interest and network with others.

sphinns

27. Dzone: DZone is a free link-sharing community for developers. Other topics commonly featured include web design and programming.

dzone

28. Tweako: A user-powered site and social network with a focus on guides and tutorials in all categories like computing, technology, and the Internet.

tweako

29. Autospies: A social site that focuses on automotive news, car reviews, auto show photos and videos.

autospies

30. Design Float: A social news site for design-related content. Topics covered include business, freelancing, advertising, digital art and branding.

design float

31. Ball Hype: A site that aggregates content from thousands of sports blogs. Users can submit stories and votes will determine if they make it to home page.

ball hype

32. YCombinator Hacker News: A news site that focuses on technology, startups, business and entrepreneurship.

hacker news

33. SWiK: A community driven resource for people who use open source software.

swik

34. Buzzflash: A user driven progressive political news website that allows you to submit political stories.

buzzflash

35. DNHour: DNHour.com is a user-powered news portal built specially for the domain name industry. Most members are generally from the domain name industry, which includes domain name owners, companies or professionals.

dnhour

36. PlugIM: PlugIM is a user driven internet marketing community. Topics covered include search engine optimization, products, business and marketing.

plugim

37. Showhype: Operates in a similar way to Ballhype. Stories come from two sources – users and aggregated content. Users can also submit a link to a story that they've found or write their own article on ShowHype.

showhype

38. Small Business Brief: A niche social site which focuses on small business news. Topics covered include marketing and sales, website development, management and entrepreneurship.

small business brief

39. Hypediss: Social news site with a focus on design, fashion, urban culture and art.

hypediss

40. Chictini: Product-oriented social site which a focus on new trends and styles. It's possible to submit news stories although most of the submissions feature products from online retailers.

chictini

41. DotNetKicks: DotNetKicks.com is a community based news site that focuses on topics like NET development techniques, technologies and tools including ASP.NET, C#, VB.NET, C++ and Visual Studio.

dotnetkicks

42. Lipstick: Reddit-style social news site for celebrity gossip.

lipstick

43. Hubspot: Social news site for marketers, entrepreneurs and business professionals.

hubspot

44. Winelifetoday: A niche social site for wine lovers. Topics covered included news and opinion articles to do with wine.

wine life today

45. iliketotallyloveit.com: Allows users to publish and share products with the broader public which they find cool, innovative,

exceptionally beautiful, or just weird. Included with every item is a link to an online shop where it can be purchased.

iliketotallyloveit

46. Wordsy: A niche social news site for people who love reading and books. Topics covered include small presses, fiction writing, authors, book awards and poetry. (Note: Wordsy has suspended its site since Dec 2008)

wordsy

47. Value Investing News: A niche social news site that covers stocks and investment news. A small but active community.

value investing news

48. Teenwag: Focus on celebrity gossip. A hybrid social network with digg-style voting. Users can submit links to be voted up by other users.

teenwag

49. Muti: Muti is a social bookmarking site inspired by reddit and Digg but dedicated to content of interest to Africans or those interested in Africa.

multi

50. Tip'd: A social media site for finance, investing, and business topics. Tip'd users vote on stories they like by clicking the 'Tip it' button that appears next to each story, and then can comment by pressing the 'Discuss' link below the story.

tipd

1. Reddit: Upload stories and articles on reddit to drive traffic to your site or blog. Submit items often so that you'll gain a more loyal following and increase your presence on the site.

2. Digg: Digg has a huge following online because of its optimum usability. Visitors can submit and browse articles in categories like technology, business, entertainment, sports and more.

3. Del.icio.us: Social bookmark your way to better business with sites like del.icio.us, which invite users to organize and publicize interesting items through tagging and networking.

4. StumbleUpon: You'll open your online presence up to a whole new audience just by adding the StumbleUpon toolbar to your browser and

"channel surf[ing] the Web. You'll "connect with friends and share your discoveries," as well as "meet people that have similar interests."

5. Technorati: If you want to increase your blog's readership, consider registering it with Technorati, a network of blogs and writers that lists top stories in categories like Business, Entertainment and Technology.

6. Ning: After hanging around the same social networks for a while, you may feel inspired to create your own, where you can bring together clients, vendors, customers and co-workers in a confidential, secure corner of the Web. Ning lets users design free social networks that they can share with anyone.

7. Squidoo: According to Squidoo, "everyone's an expert on something. Share your knowledge!" Share your industry's secrets by answering questions and designing a profile page to help other members.

8. Furl: Make Furl "your personal Web file" by bookmarking great sites and sharing them with other users by recommending links, commenting on articles and utilizing other fantastic features.

9. Tubearoo: This video network works like other social-bookmarking sites, except that it focuses on uploaded videos. Businesses can create and upload tutorials, commentaries and interviews with industry insiders to promote their own services.

10. WikiHow: Create a how-to guide or tutorial on wikiHow to share your company's services with the public for free.

11. YouTube: From the fashion industry to Capitol Hill, everyone has a video floating around on YouTube. Shoot a behind-the-scenes video from your company's latest commercial or event to give customers and clients an idea of what you do each day.

12. Ma.gnolia: Share your favorite sites with friends, colleagues and clients by organizing your bookmarks with Ma.gnolia. Clients will appreciate both your Internet-savviness and your ability to stay current and organized.

Professional-Networking Sites

Sign up with these online networking communities as a company or as an individual to take advantage of recruiting opportunities, cross-promotional events and more.

13. LinkedIn: LinkedIn is a popular networking site where alumni, business associates, recent graduates and other professionals connect online.

14. Ecademy: Ecademy prides itself on "connecting business people" through its online network, blog and message-board chats, as well as its premier BlackStar membership program, which awards exclusive benefits.

15. Ryze: Ryze lets members organize contacts and friends; upcoming events; and even job, real-estate and roommate classifieds.

16. YorZ: This networking site doubles as a job site. Members can post openings for free to attract quality candidates.

17. Xing: An account with networking site Xing can "open doors to thousands of companies." Use the professional contact manager to organize your new friends and colleagues, and take advantage of the Business Accelerator application to "find experts at the click of a button, market yourself in a professional context [and] open up new sales channels."

18. Facebook: Facebook is no longer just for college kids who want to post their party pics. Businesses vie for advertising opportunities, event promotion and more on this social-networking site.

19. Care2: Care2 isn't just a networking community for professionals: It's touted as "the global network for organizations and people who Care2 make a difference." If your business is making efforts to go green, let others know by becoming a presence on this site.

20. Gather: This networking community is made up of members who think. Browse categories concerning books, health, money, news and more to ignite discussions on politics, business and entertainment. This will help your company tap into its target audience and find out what they want.

21. MEETin.org: Once you've acquired a group of contacts in your city by networking on MEETin.org, organize an event so that you can meet face-to-face.

22. Tribe: Cities like Philadelphia, Boston, San Francisco, New York and Chicago have unique online communities on tribe. Users can search for favorite restaurants, events, clubs and more.

23. Ziggs: Ziggs is "organizing and connecting people in a professional way." Join groups and make contacts through your Ziggs account to increase your company's presence online and further your own personal career.

24. Plaxo: Join Plaxo to organize your contacts and stay updated with feeds from Digg, Amazon.com, del.icio.us and more.

25. NetParty: If you want to attract young professionals in cities like Boston, Dallas, Phoenix, Las Vegas and Orlando Fla., create an account with the networking site NetParty. You'll be able to connect with qualified, up-and-coming professionals online, then meet them at a real-life happy-hour event where you can pass out business cards, pitch new job openings and more.

26. Networking For Professionals: Networking For Professionals is another online community that combines the Internet with special events in the real world. Post photos, videos, résumés and clips on your online profile while you meet new business contacts.

Niche Social-Media Sites

Consider linking up with one of these social-media sites to narrow down your business's target audience. You'll find other professionals,

enthusiasts and consumers who are most likely already interested in what your company has to offer.

27. Pixel Groovy: Web workers will love Pixel Groovy, an open-source site that lets members submit and rate tutorials for Web 2.0, email and online-marketing issues.

28. Mixx: Mixx prides itself on being "your link to the Web content that really matters." Submit and rate stories, photos and news to drive traffic to your own site. You'll also meet others with similar interests.

29. Tweako: Gadget-minded computer geeks can network with each other on Tweako, a site that promotes information sharing for the technologically savvy.

30. Small Business Brief: When members post entrepreneur-related articles, a photo and a link to their profile appear, gaining you valuable exposure and legitimacy online.

31. Sphinn: Sphinn is an online forum and networking site for the Internet marketing crowd. Upload articles and guides from your blog to create interest in your own company or connect with other professionals for form new contacts.

32. BuzzFlash.net: This one-stop news resource is great for businesses that want to contribute articles on a variety of subjects, from the environment to politics to health.

33. HubSpot: HubSpot is another news site aimed at connecting business professionals.

34. SEO TAGG: Stay on top of news from the Web marketing and SEO (search-engine optimization) industries by becoming an active member of this online community.

General Social-Media Sites

The following social-media sites provide excellent opportunities for businesses to advertise; promote specials, events or services; and feature published, knowledgeable employees.

35. Wikipedia: Besides creating your own business reference page on Wikipedia, you can connect with other users on Wikipedia's Community Portal and at the village pump, where you'll find conscientious professionals enthusiastic about news, business, research and more.

36. Newsvine: Feature top employees by uploading their articles, studies or other news-related items to this site. A free account will also get you your own column and access to the Newsvine community.

37. 43 Things: This site bills itself as "the world's most popular online goal setting community." By publicizing your company's goals and ambitions, you'll gain a following of customers, investors and promoters who cheer you on as you achieve success.

38. Wetpaint: If you're tired of blogs and generic Web sites, create your own wiki with Wetpaint to reach your audience and increase your

company's presence online. You can easily organize articles, contact information, photos and other information to promote your business.

39. Frappr: Embed a Frappr map and guestbook into your company's Web page so that you can pinpoint exactly how users find your site, discover in real-time what they have to say about your company profile and services, and create an "interactive, fun and engaging" spot for visitors.

40. Yahoo! Answers: Start fielding Yahoo! users' questions with this social-media Q&A service. Search for questions in your particular areas of expertise by clicking categories like Business & Finance, Health, News & Events and more. If you continue to dole out useful advice and link your answer to your company's Web page, you'll quickly gain a new following of curious customers.

Job Sites

If you want to secure high-quality talent during your company's next hiring spree, you'll need to maintain a strong presence on popular job sites like the ones listed below.

41. CareerBuilder.com: Reach millions of candidates by posting jobs on this must-visit site.

42. The Wall Street Journal's CareerJournal: The Wall Street Journal's CareerJournal attracts well-educated professionals who are at the top of their game. Post a job or search résumés here.

43. CollegeRecruiter.com: If your firm wants to hire promising entry-level employees, check CollegeRecruiter.com for candidates with college degrees.

44. Monster: Post often to separate your business from all the other big companies that use this site to advertise job openings.

45. Sologig: Top freelancers and contractors post résumés and look for work on this popular site.

46. AllFreelance.com: This site "offers self-employed small business owners links to freelance & work at home job boards, self-promotion tips" and more.

47. Freelance Switch Job Listings: Freelance Switch is the freelancer's online mecca and boasts articles, resource toolboxes, valuable tips and a job board.

48. GoFreelance: Employers looking to boost their vendor base should check GoFreelance for professionals in the writing, design, editing and Web industries.

49. Yahoo! Hot Jobs: This site is often one of the first places that job seekers visit. Post open opportunities and check out informative articles and guides to gain insight on the hiring and interviewing process.

50. Guru.com: Build your company's repertoire with top freelancing professionals by advertising projects on this site, otherwise known as "the world's largest online service marketplace."

1. SmallBusiness.com: Yes, wikis can be a great way to leverage web 2.0 technology for your business. Not only is it a great source of small business information (with user-generated guides on everything from starting your business, financing, and marketing to e-commerce and blogging), but it's also a great place to promote your business. You can create a profile, and if you have any small business knowledge not already covered, then you can contribute to any of the guides. If you offer services for small businesses, then you can add a link to your site or blog to any of the small business directories listed. Note: wikis are not for link spamming. It's advised that you take a good look at the information available and contribute if you have something solid and useful to add, and add your links in only the most relevant directories.

2. Briz: Briz is a social networking site where consumers can interact with local businesses. As a business, you can create a free profile, which includes a link to your website, your business address, your phone number, and even your logo (among a plethora of other things). Consumers can search for businesses in their local areas, send messages to them, vote for them, and bookmark them. This is a great way for small businesses of all types that serve a specific geographic area to promote themselves to and interact with their customer base.

3. Hubspot: Hubspot offers a variety of tools to help small businesses use the Internet to effectively market themselves (such as keyword research, link building, business blogs, lead intelligence, and a ton of other tools). They also have a beta site, titled Social Content for Marketing Mavens, where you can find and post links to articles about online marketing and vote them up or down. Plus, if you're a marketer and have a profile on LinkedIn, you can join the Hubspot Marketing Mavens group.

4. KillerStartups: Do you have a startup? Is it killer? Add it to KillerStartups! They review each new business added to their system, then post them on the site so visitors can vote on "the next big thing". It's a great way to gain insight into the popularity and viability of your startup idea. You never know - a potential investor may just find your business and think it's "killer" enough to finance.

5. Upspring: Like Briz, Upspring allows all types of businesses to create a profile, which potential customers can find. It works for both B2C and B2B businesses, and customers can search by business name, location, or category (which, for some strange reason, Upspring has hidden at the bottom of their pages). Unlike Briz, you don't get all the bells and whistles for free - the free basic profile comes with your logo, a link to your website and email address, up to 1 mb of photos, and your business hours, while the Premium Listing (at a pretty inexpensive \$19.98 a month) gets you the ability to add videos,

coupons, and testimonials, as well as interact directly with customers and create groups.

Questions.....