B2B Marketing™



BEGINNER'S GUIDE

Beginner's Guide to Pinterest

B2BMARKETING.NET



Contents

Introduction....p.3

How to build a successful presence on Pinterest....p.4

Pinterest: Ten everyday tips....p.7

Pinterest: The basics....p.8

Reading list....p.10

About B2B Marketing....p.11

Introduction

Once you have built a solid presence on the mainstream social networks such as Twitter and LinkedIn, where do you go next to increase your social following? Pinterest might be the answer – it's a platform that is being used increasingly in B2B, and it offers something different from other social networks. However, it's important to do your research before you start, to make sure it's the right network for your brand and your audience.

This Beginner's Guide will help you to decide whether or not Pinterest is the right platform for your brand, and help you to make the most of the network and integrate it into the rest of your social media strategy if you do decide to give it a go.

In the following pages you'll find an outline of the basics of Pinterest, a 'how to' article filled with practical advice to help you build your presence on the network and a list of everyday tips to remember. We've also included further reading material.

For advice regarding how to get started on other social networks, please see the rest of our series of Beginner's Guides on LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook.

How to build a successful presence on Pinterest

Pinterest has been described as a 'virtual pinboard' where members organise and share images of their favourite things. Part of Pinterest's appeal lies in its simplicity. Put plainly, users pin pictures, videos, quotes and other visual content to boards that can be repinned and commented on by other pinners (users). Different boards allow users to categorise their favourite things.

The fact Pinterest is a visual platform can present a real challenge for many B2B companies wanting to use the network as a marketing channel. Finding relevant, highly visual content can be difficult, particularly for businesses that are selling a product or service in an industry that at first sight might not be particularly visual. But Pinterest can be a major driver of referral traffic and inbound links, even in a B2B context. As a B2B business you need to think outside the box and find Pinterest-friendly content that aligns with your company's narrative or internal culture.

Things to ask yourself before joining Pinterest

Here's a simple checklist for B2B marketers thinking of adding Pinterest to their social media mix. If you get to the end without saying no, you are good to go:

1. Do we have a social media policy in place?
2. Is our target audience on Pinterest?
3. Do we have a content marketing plan?
4. Do we have some original image assets to use (e.g. product images, event photographs, infographics, ebook covers, concepts)?
5. Do we have the resource and authority to manage engagement on Pinterest?
6. Do we have the ability to track traffic to a landing page and monitor goal conversions?

It's worth noting that though Pinterest tends to have more female than male users globally, this is not necessarily the case in the UK where usership is reportedly more balanced.

Integrate Pinterest into your content and social media strategies

Pinterest should not be a stand-alone activity. Rather, it should be an integral part of an overall content marketing plan. You will also need to think about how to use Pinterest as part of your wider marketing strategy. Consider how Pinterest will fit into your current social media ecosystem – ensure you create consistency between brand and product narratives across the social media landscape.

Pinterest should be treated as any other social media channel, which means that its use should be planned carefully. Your plan should include:

- Objectives: what are you aiming to achieve (in terms of web traffic, awareness)?
- Measurement: how will you track engagement?
- Alignment: how will it align with other activities (e.g. every time a blog is posted, images are pinned and tweeted, etc)?
- Responsibility: who is going to be responsible for it?
- Time allocation: how long should they spend doing it?
- Creating guidelines for Pinterest use. (This should be covered by general social media usage guidelines.)
- Training and supervision. This could fall under your wider social media policy/framework.

Share different types of content

Once you have set up a profile, the key to gathering a following on Pinterest is to find a way to communicate your brand's personality and create your own niche or expertise. The network offers the chance to show the human side of your business; you can use it to provide insight on what goes on in your office, for example, by pinning images from an event.

Best practice is to use Pinterest to bring together all your visual content in one place, organising

it into categories that are user-friendly. While images were the primary content of Pinterest when it launched, the site has evolved as users discovered the breadth of content that could be pinned. Pinning different types of content (such as images, infographics, text and video) will help to sustain interest in your brand.

Think about generating cheap content with camera phones to keep your boards up-to-date and using better quality content for specific campaigns. Consider creating a comms plan where you can set out how often you need to update your Pinterest boards and build up a library of stock images to use first.

Infographics
Infographics – graphic visual representations of information, data or knowledge – are a powerful way to promote your expertise or research findings because they allow you to target your audience in a way they will find valuable.

Infographics should include useful information that other businesses can use straight away. They should also be visually pleasing, using colour, shapes, diagrams, bold fonts etc. Eighty per cent of pins are repins. If you can create an infographic that is both useful and visually pleasing, you could find it gets pinned far and wide. It has also been found that long images stand out, and are, therefore, more likely to be pinned and repinned. If you don't have industry data that you can visualise, 'repin' other infographics that are relevant to your business and customers.

Whitepapers
One of the greatest assets to your B2B business will be your expertise. No doubt you will have a great deal to say on the themes affecting your sector and may already have written whitepapers, columns or blog posts to address them. This content is just as relevant for Pinterest if given a visual element. To do this, create aesthetically appealing covers for your whitepapers and columns.

Videos
Pinterest not only allows for pinning images, but video content too. You can create a pinboard offering interesting videos such as speaking events, award ceremonies, tips and advice. Pinterest's homepage has a separate tab for videos so you will gain further exposure by being featured in this category.

Make your content discoverable

You don't need to sell creative products to have interesting boards; you just need to be creative and help people discover your content by naming your boards with descriptive, keyword-rich titles. B2B marketers must aim to pin content that provides value to customers and prospects – content needs to be useful, interesting and unique enough to catch the attention of the demanding Pinterest community.

Pinning content related to what your target audience is talking about will help start the journey for people to discover things they didn't know they wanted.

Focus on engagement

The primary focus of your Pinterest activity needs to be engagement. Make users feel valued and encourage them to share, like and comment on your pins. You can increase the chance of people repinning your images by including several images on every page or board. By giving them a choice of images you are increasing the likelihood they will repin from your profile.

One of the best ways to engage your company's existing and prospective clients is to show them that there's life behind your company website and social media profile. Depending on the type of service you offer, your website may appear very corporate. Having a board on Pinterest dedicated to your work culture will show others there are real people, who they can identify with, working in the office. Do you interact socially outside of the office space, or regularly hold or attend internal or external events? Pictures from

these types of events will help humanise your business.

Pinterest also offers the opportunity to share stories that can engage people with your business; this will be particularly effective if the stories you tell are inspiring to others. Interesting topics include celebrating a milestone, paying tribute to iconic brands or campaigns and charity fundraising. You can also monitor the types of content your competitors or other relevant industry groups are using to successfully engage their audience with, for inspiration for your own pins. Alternatively find out what type of content is being shared the most by visiting the 'Popular' page on Pinterest.

React to fans and users interested in your brand, even if it's negative. If you notice fans taking an interest in you, it's polite to repay the favour. If you can find them on another social network, say thanks or strike up a conversation with particular fans or think about pinning 'thank you' images to their boards where appropriate. If users react negatively, deal with their issues in a polite, friendly way – don't ignore them.

Promote your profile

To make the most of your Pinterest profile and maximise ROI, you need to promote your profile. Link your Pinterest profile to your blog and website, and integrate Pinterest share buttons with other social media platforms. Adding the 'follow' button and 'Pin It' button to your website will empower people to share your content.

To promote your Pinterest profile it is also important to invest time visiting other people's boards to comment, like and repin their content. Utilising the repinning function will help brands engage with individuals; a repin is akin to having a conversation with another Pinterest user rather than using the site as a platform to try and broadcast. This could make it easier to retain a business relationship with customers who feel you value their input. Uploading your own content rather than limiting your activity to liking and repinning alone is the most effective practice for B2B marketers on Pinterest.

Pinterest: Ten everyday tips

1. Posting excessive volumes of text is discouraged. This may hinder the attractiveness of your pinboards as users visit Pinterest to escape from information overload.

2. Be mindful of image size – avoid posting images that are too large or too small.

3. Organise boards properly so you allow users to follow content relevant to them – adding the wrong posts to the wrong boards could annoy users who only subscribe to this board.

4. Credit the original source of everything you pin.

5. Be sure to track repins from your Pinterest profile and say thank you for repins to the user. Not only is this good etiquette, it provides another opportunity to connect with people on the site.

6. Don't feel obliged to follow everyone that follows you; there is no worth in following spam profiles or ones irrelevant to your business.

7. Don't use Pinterest to overtly market your products or services, or you risk turning users off.

8. Give thought to the frequency of your pins. You want to pin regularly but should avoid posting all your content at once as users could find this irritating.

9. Take the time to politely interact with a user who posts a negative comment, this only helps to strengthen your brand's reputation. Do not let a negative comment discourage you from pinning.

10. Respect that Pinterest is a community. Pinterest etiquette dictates that users should be authentic and not post spam or content that is a poorly disguised advertisement. As with all social networks, marketers walk a thin line between spamming and providing useful information. You only do it to promote your brand, but you should nonetheless give some thought to the quality of pins.

Pinterest: The basics

Pins

Once live on Pinterest, users can begin 'pinning' things they like via the 'plus' button at the bottom right-hand corner of the page. A pin is an image or video uploaded by the user either from a website or existing file. Pins are usually accompanied by a description of what the image represents or why it is being pinned.

Boards

Pins have to be organised by topic onto themed boards. When a user joins Pinterest, they are presented with a selection of boards. These are selected based on information required at the sign-up stage. These can be deleted or edited to suit a user's interests.

Following

Like Twitter, you can follow other users, even if they aren't following you back. You have the option to follow all of another user's boards, or you can select certain boards to follow. If users have chosen to sign up via their Facebook or Twitter account, they can find and follow people they already know. You can also receive real-time pin updates for the users you follow. It is recommended that you follow other people's boards and share industry-specific blog posts, infographics or images.

Repins

Repins are similar to retweets on Twitter. Repinning is sharing an image pinned by someone you follow or find while browsing Pinterest, and then adding it to one of your own boards. You can do this by hovering over a user's pin, and clicking on the 'Pin It' button in the top left-hand corner. Repinning gives credit to the person who first pinned the image and encourages third-party interaction – one of the key ways to increase referral traffic. You can also edit (or add to) the description when you repin a piece of content. Source links also stay on the pin no matter how many times it is repinned. You don't need to be following someone to repin one of their pins.

Likes

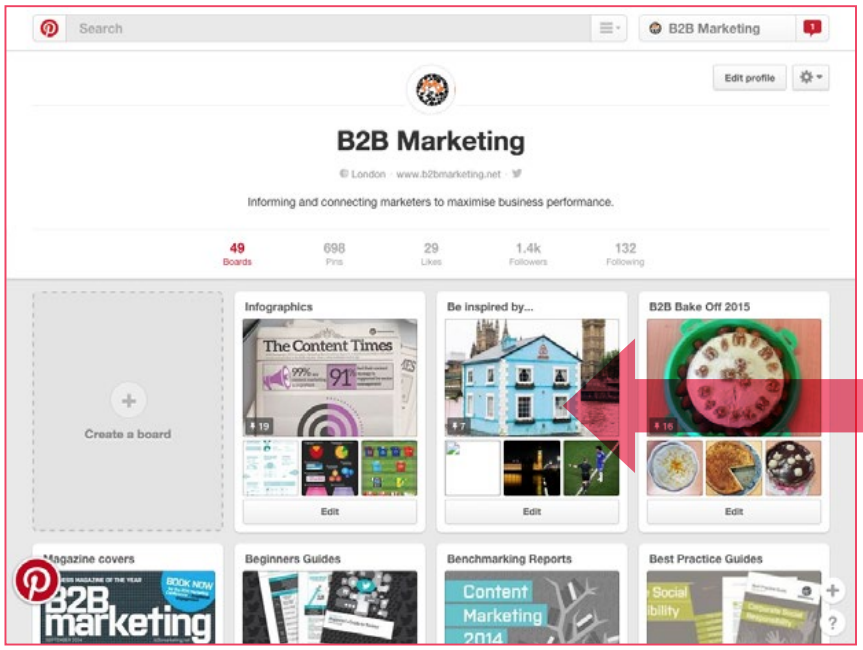
Users can 'like' a pin, not dissimilar to features found on other social networks. This will add the pin to the 'likes' section of their profile. As most B2B marketers will be looking at Pinterest in order to get their material shared, this may be of less relevance. Liking a pin adds it to the 'likes' on your profile, but not to one of your boards. Again, you don't need to be following someone to like their pin.

Pinning from the web

A 'pin it' button can be added to your browser via the 'favourites bar'. This enables you to easily pin content found on the internet. From here you can select which of your boards to pin to and add a description. The source link is automatically added to the pin.

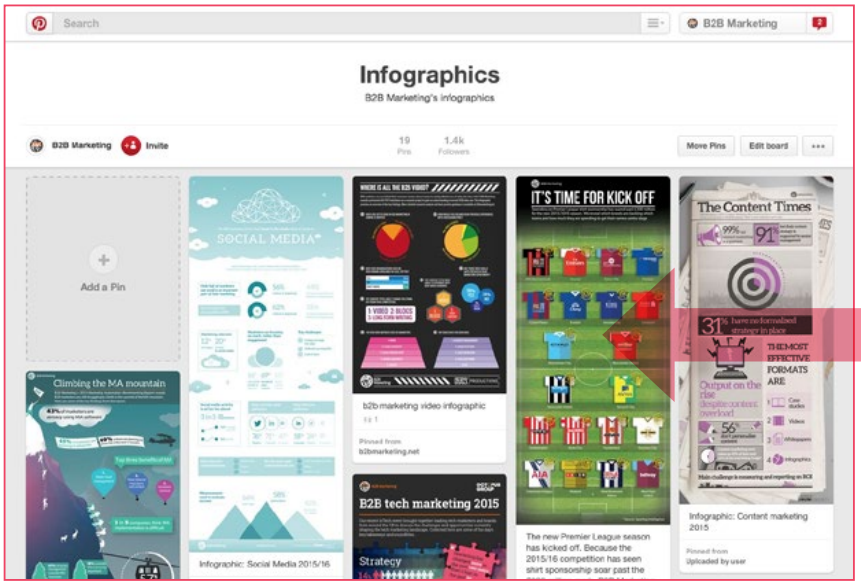
Sharing

Pins can be shared via Twitter and Facebook. You can also comment on and tag users to pins.



Board display

222x150
(large thumbnail)
55x55
(smaller thumbnail)



236w (expanded pins have a width of 600)

Further reading

- *How to: Use Pinterest for business,* Midas Media and B2B Marketing
- *17 Smart Ways B2B Marketers Can Use Pinterest,* Pam Neely, Act-On
- *Pinterest Marketing (Give Your Marketing a Digital Edge),* Gabriela Taylor (July 2013)
- *Make Pinterest Work for your Business: The complete guide to marketing your business, generating leads, finding new customers and building your brand,* Alex Stearn (October 2014)

About B2B Marketing

B2B Marketing is the comprehensive information resource for B2B marketers. Its mission is to provide practitioners with the information they need to perform better and achieve more, whatever sector of the B2B space they are operating in.

Launched in 2004 as B2B Marketing magazine, it has since evolved into a multi-faceted resource, delivering a broad range of content in a variety of different forms and formats.

Its key products are:

- Online community
- Magazine
- Awards
- Research and reports
- Training
- Events
- Membership

For more information on any of these products or services go to b2bmarketing.net or call +44(0)20 7014 4920

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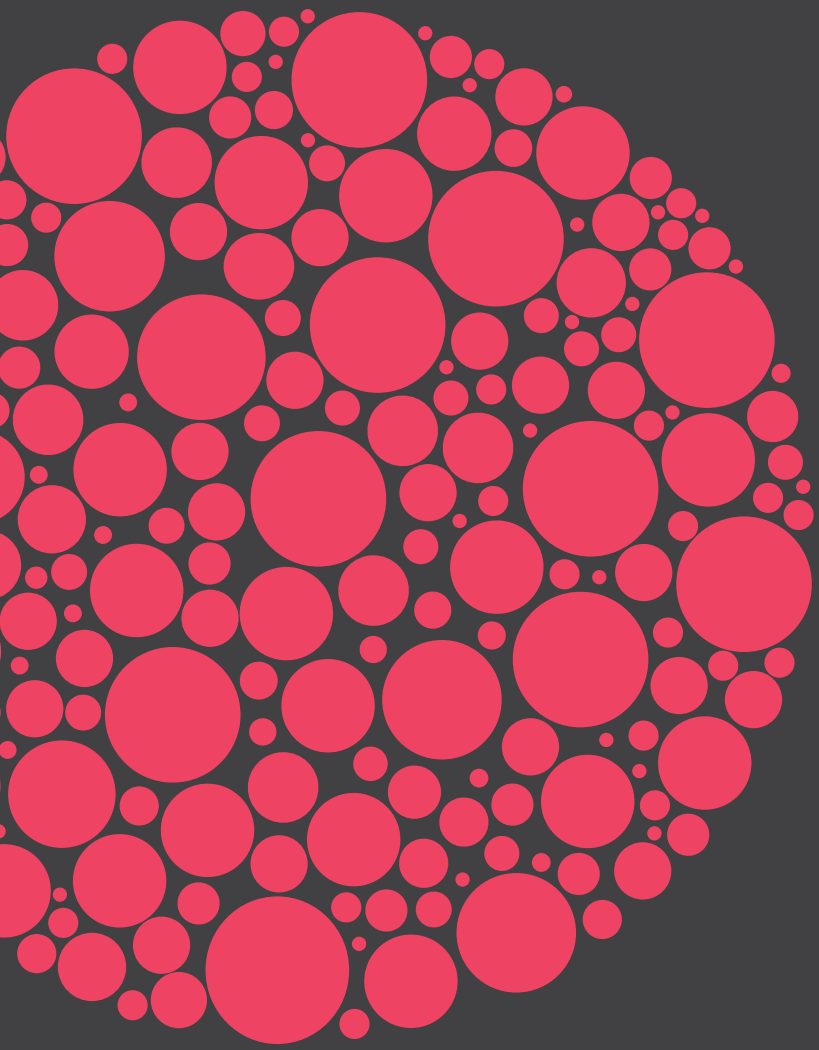
Corporate membership

B2B marketers have never had to be so multi-skilled, multi-tasked, and accountable to business objectives. Marketers need up-to-the-minute research, knowledge and insight to ensure they are not left behind.



Join us today

To find out more, contact our membership team:
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