

Business is changing quite profoundly and at the heart of this change is recognition that good relationships are the key to a sustainable and successful organisation.

Social Networking is gaining ground as THE preferred mechanism for both individuals and employees to build and strengthen existing relationships, as well as find new ones.

In this brief guide, you will be introduced to four key networks. Use of each of these can help your businesses online profile significantly, as long as you keep to a few simple rules.

Business Blogging

<http://www.growabetterbusiness.co.uk/index.php/category/blog/>



Every social media marketing plan needs a hub around which to revolve and in my opinion this should almost always be a **blog** of some description.

All marketing activities, whether they are online or offline, need a hub around which to work. Yet one of the problems that most business websites have is that they are too sales focused. A **business blog** is the ideal compromise and makes a perfect hub for your social networking activities.

The problem is, there is so much choice and it is the *PURPOSE* of your **blog** that will determine:

- where you host it
- what you put on it
- how you broadcast it

Will you use your **blog** to Sizzle, Sell, Serve, Save or Speak? Each one of these activities attracts a different audience, and therefore it needs to be aligned closely with the overall business objectives you are probably beginning to think about now.

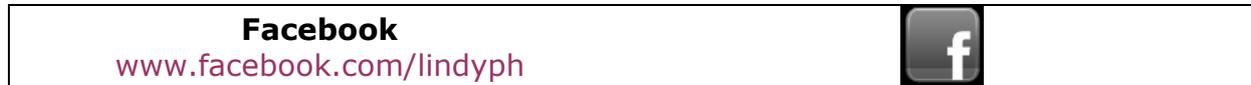
Every **blog** should contain some key information; otherwise it won't be doing you any favours, if you are planning to use it for business.

Your key information consists of basic details about you and your business. Typically, they may include the following types of information:-

- Information about you / about your business
- Your contact details
- A page about your businesses products and services

Each of these pieces of information is usually a separate page on your **blog**, although some information can be added to the sidebar. However, you may need to add others in as well. For instance, I've added in separate pages about each of the books and I've added shopping cart functionality as well on my **blog** at [Woman](#)

on the edge of reality. I've also added in a page about the publications I've contributed to and conferences I've presented at. Finally, I've included details about me, with links to my websites and a bit about the sort of work I do too.



Facebook is apparently attracting users at a rate of 600,000 signups every day – I can't say that this is accurate, but even if it's a wild exaggeration the power of this college start up can't be denied and let's face it – it's now owned by Google!

However, few businesses can see the benefits of using **Facebook**; they see it as a purely social tool – where people share photos and funny stories with their friends. They haven't yet realised that it is in fact one enormous shopping mall, populated by people who are interested in their products and services, even those in the B2B arena.

There are a number of questions that need to be answered before you even begin to think about using **Facebook** for your business:

1. Do you want to build relationships?

Facebook users join primarily to connect with old friends, keep in touch, network, make connections and build relationships through sharing content they generate. Which means it's not the place to only do advertising.

Most **Facebook** users dislike and avoid advertising and tend to treat many marketing messages as spam, the primary aim of **Facebook** is community and connection.

*2. What are your goals for using **Facebook**?*

If you want to make connections, keep in touch, start a community or group raise awareness for a cause, or gain brand advocates without overt selling then you're probably on target with the **Facebook** user ethos. Causes and events are great ways to raise brand awareness and get community involvement.

3. Is it Business and/or Personal?

People may be happy to connect with you if they already know you on a personal/individual basis, but may prefer their personal **Facebook** activities to remain private. Some users might not want to be "personal friends" with, say a boss, or even a client or customer. For some business is business and personal is separate. Be aware of people's comfort levels, and don't be offended if you are "unfriended" or a "friend request" is ignored.

Consider creating a company **Facebook** page, as opposed to a personal profile, and invite people to become fans of your page. Alternatively create a group.

5. *What's your business risk tolerance?*

Users can freely post comments thoughts and opinions if they join your group or page, are invited to be a friend/fan or invite you to connect as a friend. This is a great way to share, collaborate and create community; however it also carries an element of business risk. You also need to be fully aware of the **Facebook** privacy policy and what that means as far any content you post.

6. *Do you have the time to commit to always provide fresh content?*

There is nothing worse than a **Facebook** profile where the last activity occurred two or three months ago. It tells visitors no-one can be bothered and discourages them from joining up. You need to be consistently adding valuable and interactive content, in different forms, such as audio, video clips, contests and so on. If you can't commit to doing this, or can't delegate it, reconsider whether **Facebook** is right for your company.

7. *Are **Facebook** users your demographic?*

Or are you simply looking for people to view your ads?



LinkedIn is one of the most important social networks for the business world. It is the PROFESSIONALS social network and gives you the opportunity to connect in a meaningful way with 1000's of people you wouldn't ordinarily meet at any other time. However, the biggest mistake that most people make is that they simply use it as an online CV – they stick it up and forget about it.

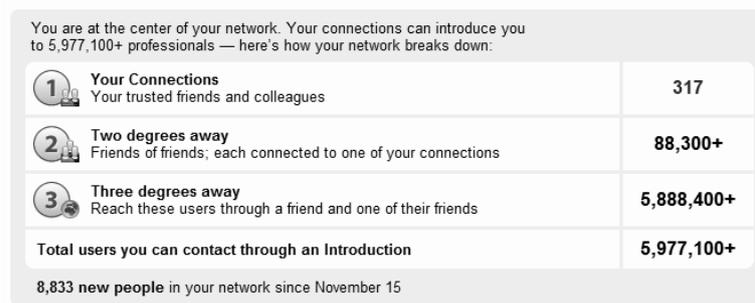
With over 40 million users worldwide representing around 125 different professions, **LinkedIn** is an online social network that seeks to connect people in their PROFESSIONAL capacity. It is very different from many other social networks that you may already have heard about, such as **Facebook**, Beebo and Myspace because it focuses on our working lives rather than on our social lives.

One way of looking at it, is as an extension of the face to face networking you may do in your local area, when you get together with other business people. However, this is networking on a GRAND scale – how so you might ask?

Well, **LinkedIn** allows you to connect to a network in three ways. Your 1st degree connections are people you know and they are the centre of your network. Each person connected to your direct connection makes a 2nd degree connection and those who are linked to your 2nd degree, make up your 3rd degree connection.

According to my LinkedIn Statistics:

Your Network of Trusted Professionals



So, in this way you can say that you have linked with friends' friends and you don't feel like your connections are strangers. You actually trust people who made a new connection possible for you. And as a connection yourself, you feel responsible for recommending somebody to a friend... this is what could be called "the circle of trust".

It enables you to find anyone you have been associated with in a working (or college/education) environment, because the power of a business lies in its networks of people. In other words – the people you know, may be those who are best placed to help you do things like:

- look for a new job
- find out about prospective employees/employers
- research business questions and issues you may have
- provide you with networking opportunities you might not have otherwise
- showcasing your own expertise, knowledge and skills

LinkedIn is full of industry experts who are willing to share their knowledge and expertise with others interested enough to ask.



It seems that everyone is tweeting these days and yet it can seem so random as well. **Twitter** has the power to transfer a huge amount of attention in a very short space of time, simply because of the way in which the network operates. This short time span is the key to getting your message across, and is something that needs careful management.

One of the most difficult things to get right on **Twitter** though is the initial profile on your account simply because you have such a small amount of space in which to put anything meaningful. Setting up an account is a very simple process, in the style of **Twitter**. To get started visit: <http://www.twitter.com>, and follow the on screen instructions.

Some things to bear in mind though:-

- Pick a short username, your first name would be perfect if it's possible. This is because, although **Twitter** allows you to use business names, people want to be friends with people. If you can't use a given name, you could try adding a moniker of some description that defines you, for instance LindaGBB (GBB for Grow a Better Business)
- You get 160 characters for your 'bio' so craft it in advance
- Use a good headshot if you are going with your name, or are reflecting a person –
- If you have multiple web addresses, pick the one that is most relevant to what you intend to write about
- Finally, remember this can all be changed at any time – should you decide to re-invent yourself!

What Next?

Well, if this little booklet has got you interested there are a number of things you could do next:

You could always take one of my **Social Networking for Business Courses**. You can find details on my website at: www.growabetterbusiness.co.uk/courses



Buy the e-book **LinkedIn Made Easy** for just **£4.99** and get started on **YOUR** Social Media strategy **TODAY**

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