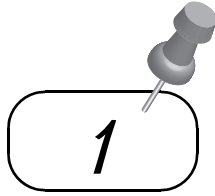


Part One

Getting Started

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Why Pinterest?

Ana White started her blog (ana-white.com) in 2009 as a way to share her love of woodworking with other people. The site began as a way for her to share plans for building furniture, including the beautiful bed frame she created for her own house. She posted photos and ideas for new projects, as well as stories about her family life in rural Alaska, on her blog every single day.

Now White's blog attracts *nearly three million page views every month*. And while those traffic numbers alone are cause for surprise, the source of that traffic might shock you even more.

Pinterest is White's number-one source of traffic, bringing her site 6,000 unique visitors every day. By its second year, this Alaska mom's blog began bringing in enough advertising revenue to support her entire family.¹

Pinterest is the perfect platform for White's blog. Her furniture plans and home photos get passed around like wildfire on the image-sharing site, and users share her posts with their friends as they plan their next projects. You can check out her pinning strategy at @antiquewhite.

White's story of success—with her blog, and with Pinterest—is truly remarkable, and her designs and products are wonderfully crafted. However, I share her story not merely to expose you to a talented artist, but also to give you a glimpse of what is possible with Pinterest. Done authentically and well, Pinterest marketing can be a powerful source of traffic to your website, and can help you build an incredible community of followers and superfans who loyally support everything you do.

¹www.socialmediaexaminer.com/how-alaskan-mom-brings-millions-to-her-carpentry-blog.

The Appeal of Pinterest

Ben Silbermann, one of Pinterest's co-founders, was apparently a meticulous collector who, as a child, kept glass boxes full of beetles and stamps. It was this collector mindset that generated the inspiration for Pinterest. Silbermann noted that the simple act of collecting is universal, and he wanted to build a site that made the act of online collecting—and sharing these collections—easy and fun.² Pinterest's ability to indulge the inner collector in all of us is likely part of the reason why the site is so addictive.

Dr. Christopher Long teaches a course on consumer psychology at Ouachita Baptist University, and explains it in the following way: "Pinterest boards are like its users' personal happiness collages," he says. "[They represent] things that I appreciate, that I desire, and that express who I am, whether the things are cupcakes, shirtless David Beckham, or an inspirational quotation."³

Chelsea Smith, the Social Media Specialist for Oreck, reported that her CEO asked her to set up a Pinterest account for the company after he'd gone on a family vacation to Mexico and noticed something surprising on the trip. He observed that every woman in his travel party was "more interested in Pinterest than getting tans and drinking margaritas!" He admitted that he wasn't 100 percent sure what the site was all about, but he observed, "This is big. We've got to get on this!" Smith had already started a Pinterest account for the vacuum cleaner company, and was given the go-ahead to dive into planning extensive Oreck Pinterest campaigns.

Addictive? Yes. Brilliant marketing for Oreck? Absolutely.

Smart companies are all getting on Pinterest these days, especially now that it has become a proven source of traffic and

²www.nytimes.com/2012/03/12/technology/start-ups/pinterest-aims-at-the-scrapbook-maker-in-all-of-us.html?_r=3&pagewanted=1 (March 11, 2012).

³www.fastcompany.com/1816603/why-pinterest-is-so-addictive.

conversions for the websites that embrace it. And your company should be following their lead.

The Pinterest Audience

You've likely heard by now that most of the current Pinterest user base is made up of women. While reports on the exact statistics differ, most researchers claim that approximately 60 percent of U.S. Pinterest users are female, most between 25 and 34 years old.

Yet there's nothing inherently female-centric about the site; it is essentially an image-sharing service that lets people collect their favorite stuff from the web. At its onset, Pinterest happened to have caught on particularly well with a young female demographic group. But as the site continues to grow, there is no reason to believe it won't also attract lots of men. It's already starting to attract male gadget lovers and home improvement aficionados by the score.

Social Media Strategist Mike Street (@mikastreet), for example, manages a great collection of male-friendly pins on a board called "BroPin." His board, which is a collaborative collage maintained by more than 35 men, includes over 800 images of clothing, cars, technology, and food that specifically appeal to guys. And Ben Golder (@beng), an ecological architecture design student from Barcelona who has nearly 200,000 followers, curates male-friendly boards about robotics and architecture.

Pinterest also has a growing user base in other parts of the world, and the gender mix in those countries is quite different from that in the U.S. For example, Pinterest gets about 200,000 unique visitors each month from the United Kingdom, and the majority of those British visitors (56 percent) are male.

So don't let anyone tell you that Pinterest is just a *chick thing*, or that it's only good for advertising in women-friendly industries like weddings and fashion. We'll talk later about ways to use Pinterest for non-profits and B2B companies, too; but

realize that Pinterest is a flexible, friendly, easy-to-use tool that can have enormous benefits for a great variety of businesses—and customers.

Why Pinterest?

So why should *you* use Pinterest for marketing? The following are some reasons why smart and effective companies are harnessing Pinterest to attract new leads, drive traffic to their websites, and engage with their customers:

- **Pinterest can be an important part of your content marketing strategy.** Content is still king in the online world, and Pinterest's visual content can really help to round out your online strategy. Publishing great content via blogs, social media sites, and image-sharing sites like Pinterest helps you attract new customers and develop great relationships with your current ones. And if your content is really outstanding, those customers and followers will share your brand's message *for* you. What more could you ask for?
- **People are making buying decisions based on what they see in social media.** Massachusetts-based marketing software company HubSpot reported in January 2012 that individuals are 71 percent *more likely* to make a purchase when a product or service has been recommended by a friend via social media. Smart businesses are making sure that their products are easy to find and recommend on social media sites like Pinterest.⁴
- **Humanizing your brand.** Pinterest's visual nature makes it a great way to give customers (and potential customers) a glimpse into the heart of your brand, and what your

⁴<http://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/30239/71-More-Likely-to-Purchase-Based-on-Social-Media-Referrals-Infographic.aspx>.

company stands for. The more you let your brand's personality come through in your pinboards, the more human you can be—and the more successful you will be with Pinterest.

- **It can act as a constant source of inspiration for you.** No matter what industry you're in, interacting on Pinterest and looking at great content can be a terrific source of inspiration. Artists, photographers, and other creative professionals use Pinterest as a sort of online muse—and you can, too!
- **You can use it to grow your platform.** As a collector and curator of interesting things on Pinterest, you'll attract like-minded people who enjoy the same things that you—and your company—do. You can use Pinterest to build a strong, lively, engaged community, whether you want to use that platform to sell books, advertise coaching services, or pitch your book to a big publisher. With a great platform, the sky's the limit!

Now that you've seen all the reasons why Pinterest marketing is a great choice for modern businesses, let's walk through the first steps of building your presence on Pinterest—starting with how to build a powerful business Pinterest profile.

