

# Digital Marketing Tips



## QUICK LINKS

### SITES YOU MIGHT LIKE

#### [PLUS.GOOGLE.COM](http://PLUS.GOOGLE.COM)

Get started with Google Plus

#### [CLICKTI.ME/GPLUS](http://CLICKTI.ME/GPLUS)

Unofficial “complete guide” to Google Plus, from Mashable.com

#### [GPLUSSEARCH.COM](http://GPLUSSEARCH.COM)

Search all public content from Google Plus quickly and easily

#### [GPLUS.TO](http://GPLUS.TO)

Grab a “vanity URL” for your Google Plus profile

#### [CLICKTI.ME/TOP10BLOGS](http://CLICKTI.ME/TOP10BLOGS)

Ten essential business blogs you should be following

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## What’s The Fuss About Google Plus?

As we were putting the finishing touches on last month’s newsletter, we began to hear rumors that something *might be* coming from Google that was *kind of like* Facebook. We had no idea what this thing would be called, how it would work, or if anyone would even want to use it.

The next week we started seeing these little “+1” buttons on Google search results, and we curiously wondered, “Now, what the heck is that?”

Then we started seeing forum questions and blog posts about “getting invited” to this new thing from Google. Apparently, we were not alone in our growing curiosity.

As of this writing, barely three weeks after its invitation-only, “Beta” launch, Google’s new social platform is *on fire!* Fully 20 million people have signed up for it, with no signs of a slowdown.

To put that in perspective, it took Facebook over three *years* (38 months) to reach 20 million registered users. It took Twitter just shy of that (34 months) to reach the same milestone.

Does this growth indicate a major paradigm shift? Or is it another passing fad, like “New Coke” or Google Buzz? (You don’t remember Buzz!?! ‘Nuff said!) It’s too early to tell, but the numbers say it’s worth a closer look.

### What Is Google Plus?

Just what is this thing called Google Plus, and why all the fuss? Why should you care? Will it impact your online marketing efforts, or will it turn into another drain on your employees’ productivity?

Let’s start with the basics. At its core, Google+ or G+ or “Google Plus” as it’s called in polite conversation, is simply one more way to “cast a vote” for something

you like online. When you click the “+1” button, you are saying, to anyone paying attention, “I am one more person who likes this.”

In this way it resembles Facebook’s “Like” feature, as well as all the other social bookmarking services such as StumbleUpon, Digg, or Delicious.

But ...why?! Who asked for another sharing button? Is Google jumping on the social media bandwagon to further their ongoing quest for world domination?

Let’s be honest, it’s clunky. “+1” all by itself doesn’t make much sense; in fact, it’s downright counter-intuitive compared to Facebook (“I like this!”) or Digg (“I dig this!”). Even Twitter’s “Follow” terminology makes more sense.

But once you get over this minor interface hurdle and create an account, it doesn’t take long to fully understand everything G+ offers – and you’ll quickly see why it’s so contagious.

### Pssst! Need an Invite?

At the moment you can join G+ only if you get invited to join; in other words, you have to “know someone.” This gives it an air of exclusivity, and makes you feel like the hot model walking past the nightclub bouncer while everyone else waits outside.

After you get in, of course, you can invite your friends in too, so it’s not really that exclusive, is it? Even so, the ruse has served its purpose, because you’re in!

Once in, you will find it’s extremely easy to use. Setting up your profile takes no time at all. Finding friends already using it takes just a few clicks.

Look around, and everything seems oddly... familiar. In the middle of the page

*continued*

# What's The Fuss About Google Plus?

*continued from front*

is your “Stream,” much like Facebook’s “Wall,” and at the top is where you can “Share what’s new...” which looks suspiciously like a status update – or even a place to “tweet.”

So really, once you get past the two obstacles to entry – the whole “+1” nomenclature and the apparent exclusivity – everything else is truly intuitive. You can master it all in less than an hour.

The first two things new users notice are circles and sparks.

## Circle Around Now

Think of a “circle” as a circle of friends, a “sphere of influence,” or a group of people you consider alike in some way. The default options include “Family” and “Acquaintances” which seem pretty obvious.

The beauty of the system is that you can create as many circles as you like, call them anything you want, and put anyone you want to in them, using any rules that

make sense to you. It’s completely customizable. Then later, when you share something, you decide who to share it with: everyone, or only certain circles.

Circles elegantly avoids an issue many Facebook users have complained

make Google a destination – a place to hang out – not just a quick stop on the road to somewhere else.

If all this sounds like a major time drain to be avoided at all costs, stop looking at it like a consumer, and start thinking about it like a business owner.

No, we don’t mean you should set



about for years: the fact that ALL your Facebook “Friends” can see everything on your wall. Do your co-workers really care what your golf buddies are talking about, and vice versa? You have much more control with circles.

Circles also comes with a circle called “Following.” This is reminiscent of Twitter – you can add people to this circle whom you don’t know personally, and who probably don’t know you – but whose thoughts and recommendations you want to keep up with.

## Sparks Are Flying

A spark on Google Plus is like a one-click Google search that you can save and use again later. The prompt is “Find stuff you’re interested in...” and the samples provided include high-level generic terms like “recipes” and “gardening.”

Type in your own term and save it as a new spark, and then anytime you revisit this page and click that spark, you will get all the latest searches for your keyword.

As the name suggests, a spark is a lightning fast way to find information. It’s also a potential conversation starter and something that can shed light on any topic of interest. In fact, it almost resembles an RSS feed reader..

## More To Come

This only scratches the surface of Google+. There’s a lot more to it already, and a lot more is coming, according to Google. Expect to see games and other “Facebook-like” features. The goal is to

up an account to promote your company, at least not yet. According to Google, a “business” version of G+ is scheduled for release later this year. It will likely include many features specifically for product marketing and brand building, and may tie in to your Places listing as well.

## Invaluable Market Research

But as a market research tool, Google+ could prove priceless. To understand the minds of your customers and prospects, it helps to view the world through their eyes.

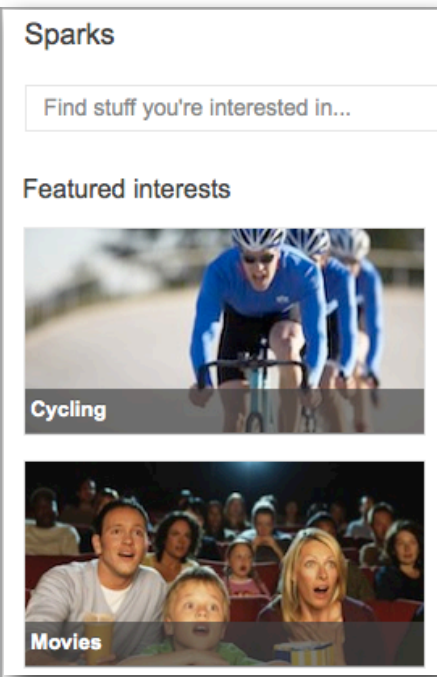
How do they view *your* site? Are they sharing *your* blog posts? Are they talking about your industry, your competitors... your brands? If not, *why not?*

People love to share things they like. They also gravitate toward “easy.” If clicking “+1” is faster and easier than other options that accomplish the same thing, it makes sense for people to choose the easier route. And rest assured, all such user behavior will be tracked and the data will be made available to Google’s customers down the road.

## Make Your Site Plus-Ready

Contribute to that data by putting the “+1” button on your website. Let people share your content far and wide. (Get the code from [Plus.Google.com](http://Plus.Google.com), or call us and we’ll take care of it for you.)

As more plussers see and “+1” your site, the higher it will show up in the search results. More importantly, it *might* add “+1” to your customer list.



## Targeting Prospects With Precision

Google+ may or may not turn out to be the next “killer app.” But one thing it does very well, even at this early stage of its existence, is to help you and your sales team find leads.

You already know that Google.com is the greatest information search tool ever invented. Now that it has a social networking side – which includes detailed personal profiles – the result is the ability to search for specific kinds of individuals with unprecedented precision.

The underlying reason for this is how new members of the service are led through the profile building process. It’s the first thing the system prompts them to do, and they are doing it in droves!

### Profile Privacy

Obviously, Google wouldn’t be where it is today if they didn’t let users control the privacy of their information. In fact, in the profile options, any user can simply uncheck the box next to “Help others find my profile in search results” and their profile will no longer be indexed by (or available in) the search engine.

If they also deselect “Allow people to email me from a link on my profile” in their account options, you won’t be able to email them even if you do find them.

But a few quick searches indicate that not many people have activated these privacy settings. From your perspective as a selling professional, this means they want to hear from you!

### Search Site:Plus.Google.Com

So how do you find the people you’re most interested in? Rather than reading a long, drawn out explanation, just try this out yourself, right now. Pull up Google and type:

*“Occupation: \*CEO” site:plus.google.com*

Did a light bulb just blink on in your head? You can actually do this with any relevant keyword representing an attribute about your potential customer, and any profile field is fair game. Sure, you might actually have to do some work



screening people, but hey, nothing good comes easy, right?

To try one with a geographic focus, type this into Google search:  
*“cincinnati” site:plus.google.com*

Of course you can simply replace “Cincinnati” with any other metro name to find a list of people associated with that city. Try your own city, or one where your company does business, and see what you come up with.

As Google adds features to G+ and indexes more and more information about Google Plus users (already called “plussers!”), the ability to further refine your searches for specific individuals should get even easier.

### Proceed With Courtesy

Now, I have to caution you in the strongest way here. I can’t just hand you a loaded gun and let you run off shooting at people with spammy, annoying, untargeted, irrelevant messages.

That will not only get you thrown into the block circle, but will also spread negative attitude about your business in general.

So be sure to exercise social media etiquette and best practices. Engage the person. Be relevant and interesting. Add value to their life in some way. Offer to introduce them to someone, or share a bit of expertise. In other words, don’t be a spam monkey.

Now get out there and create that tribe of fanatic customers!

## RSS Feed Reading *continued from back*

introductory material, it is time to create your own reading list.

### Add Subscriptions

Click on “Add a subscription” at the top, and type in a search term related to your field of interest. A lawyer might type “legal news,” for example. A dentist might go with “dentistry.”

Hit “Enter” to see page after page of site feeds on your topic. See something of interest? All you have to do is click “Subscribe” to add it to your personal feed. Rinse and repeat.

Now click any **bolded** site name in the left-hand column, and in the main column you will see all recent headlines and posts from that site. Some feeds show entire articles, but some show excerpts. Click on the headline to jump to the site if you want to read further.

As you scroll down and read the content, you will see the “unread” number tick down to zero. When you have read everything (or if you “mark all as read”), the site name will no longer be bold. When a site has a new piece, the site name goes back to **bold**, making it very easy to know where to start.

### Look For The Orange Icon

Whenever you discover a new blog or news site you want to keep track of, look for the RSS icon. Click it to access that site’s feed. It should take no more than a couple of clicks to add it to your subscriptions page.

There is no limit to how many feeds you can track – the only limit is your ability to keep up with the reading! Use the “Folders” feature to organize your subscriptions by topic to find them even faster.

Once you get the hang of it, you’ll find it takes mere minutes a day to keep up with all the latest news and commentary from your favorite sites anywhere online.

## RSS Feeds The Information-Hungry



### INSIDE

#### THE FUSS ABOUT PLUS

Why did 20 million people join Google Plus in its first three weeks? And why should you care?

#### PRECISION PROSPECTING

How to use the fastest growing social network on the planet to find leads for your business

The only constant is change, according to the ancient proverb. This applies to business, to technology, and it surely applies to your favorite websites.

Do you have more than a few sites you like to visit regularly to stay current on your favorite topics? Does it get to be a drag to visit each one individually? Ever forget about one for a while, and then realize you have fallen way behind?

Wouldn't it be nice if you could see all your favorite blogs and news sites on a single screen, so you could find and read everything faster? And wouldn't it be really cool if any new stuff stood out so it caught your eye?

Well, it *is* nice! It's called a "feed reader," and it relies on a time-tested Internet protocol called Really Simple Syndication, or RSS.

#### Really Simple Syndication

Every time a news site or blog is updated, it publishes the new material on

a new web page. At the same time, it announces the existence of that new page to something called an "RSS feed." With a simple tool called a "feed reader," you can be notified instantly about any new pages on the sites you follow.

And if you have a Gmail account, you already have access to a phenomenal feed reader: Google Reader.

#### Google Reader

Login to your Gmail account with your web browser. Near the top, look for a button that says "Reader." Click it. Congrats, you're in.

(If you don't see it, or if you don't have a Gmail account, simply search for "Google Reader" and follow the prompts.)

The first time you do this, you'll see some helpful stuff from Google, including a short video tutorial and even a package of "staff picks" you can load with a single click. Once you've gone through this

*continued inside*

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