

## Social Networking Tips for Business Owners

In President Obama's 2010 State of The Union address, he laid out his plans to help small businesses create more revenue, help stabilize the economy, and create more jobs. But business owners can't just rely on government programs to grow. One of the best ways a small business owner can help him or herself in this fast-paced internet world is to add social networking to their marketing plan.

Because this medium is relatively new, many business owners aren't sure how to use online social networking to connect with clients. Social networking isn't just about logging into your Facebook account and exchanging personal stories with your college buddies. It is about finding and networking with potential clients or people who can introduce you to them, interacting to build relationships, and being a resource.

### Social Networking Tips

**1. Make sure you are networking on a site where your clients are.**

In order for social networking to be effective, find places where your clients already are. Forums they may visit, websites like Facebook and Twitter, and professional networking sites with subsidiary groups like LinkedIn could all be great places. On sites like Facebook and Twitter where you must get friends or followers in order to interact, add those friends and followers who could be your clients or who could introduce you to people who could be your clients.

**2. Interact socially and unselfishly—don't just deliver your message and leave.**

If you do nothing during your social networking attempts but talk about your product or service, then you are not going to get very far. Treat social networking like you would any in-person networking event. Talk to people, ask them questions about themselves, and be a resource with no ulterior motive. It is appropriate to talk about your business or service when it will solve a problem that the people in your network express they have.

**3. Be relevant, useful, and informative.**

The purpose of networking is not to force your message upon others. Be connected with the conversations going on, be useful to others in the group, and be informative. Giving away your knowledge for free will help you illustrate your expertise in your field and is one of the best ways to help people trust you and buy your product or service.