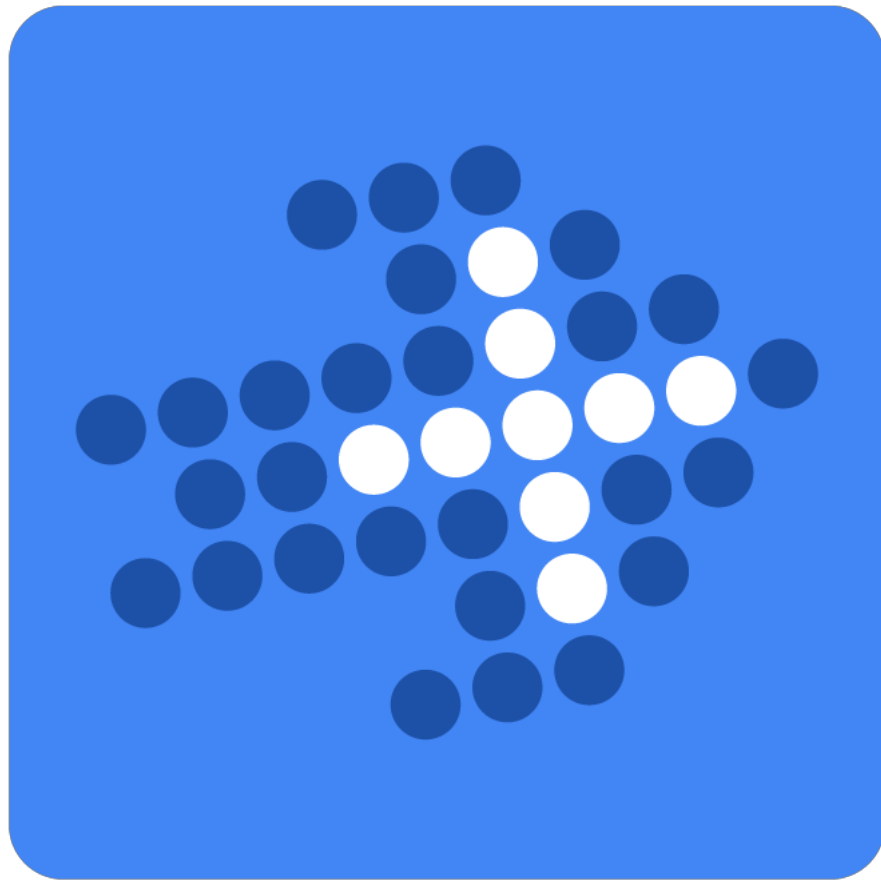


How to build up a successful Google+ Brand Page



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How to build up a successful Google+ Brand Page

Introduction: Google+ is rather different to every other social network....

The relationship between your website, social and Search

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How to build up a successful Google+ Brand Page

In this article I will outline a blueprint for brand pages to build up the followers and make your page truly successful.

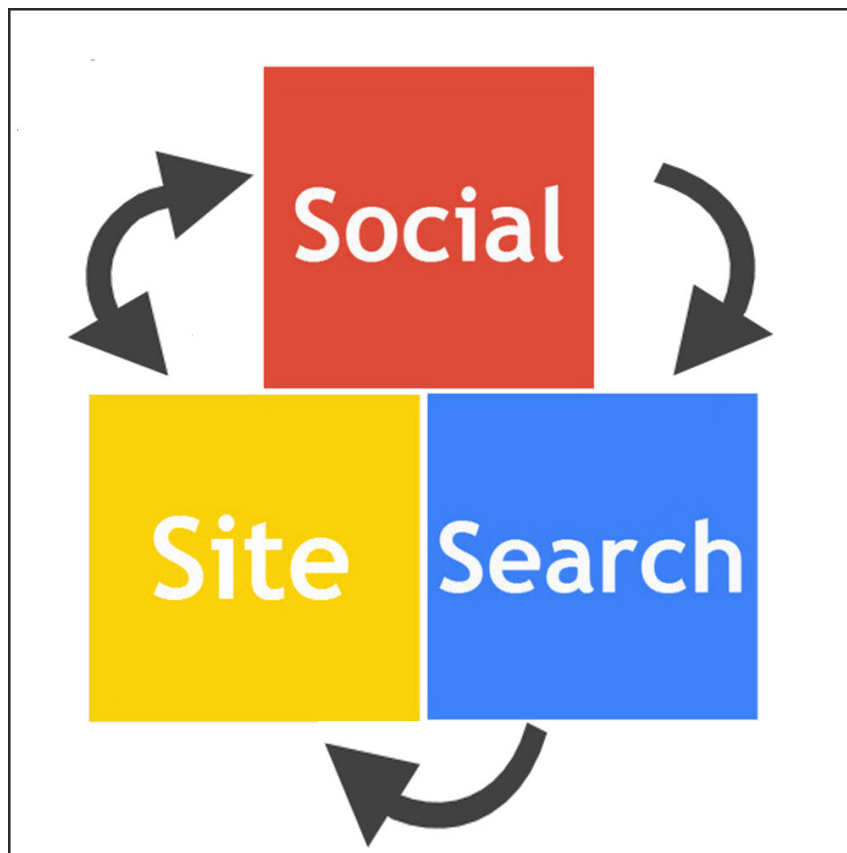
Introduction: Google+ is rather different to every other social network....

Google say that they have put a 'social layer' across Google's products and services, and that layer is called 'Google+'. There is an aspect that is a social destination, the platform, but seeing as Google 'own' Search as well, that content very quickly grows legs and finds its way into Google Search.

After a while you start to see that 'Google+ is Google', i.e. it is the next generation of Google and encompasses it all!

For many businesses, however, Google is about 'Search' and getting better Search results. As such, let's take a look at how Google+ relates to this.

The relationship between your website, social and Search



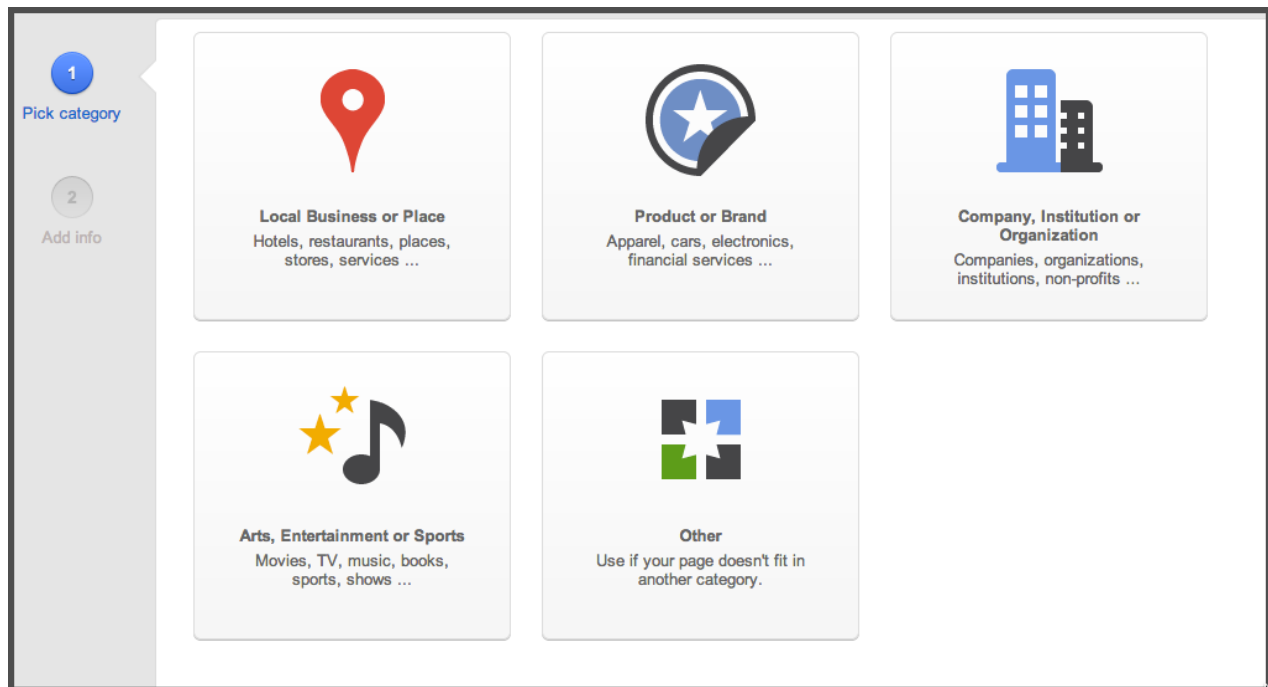
The social aspect for most brands will be their brand page.

Their site, is well, their site.

And Search means whatever keywords and phrases for which they most most to be surfacing in Google Search.

There is, however, a flow between them and this article will help you get that flow moving through focusing on the 'Social' element - your brand page.

How to set up a brand page on Google+?



In this video I cover all of the steps you'll need to take:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z9MdJlW6H0g>

Tip: make sure your Brand Page is linked to your website. You can see if it is set up correctly using this tool: <http://www.google.com/webmasters/tools/richsnippets>

Once you have the page setup you'll want to make it successful, right?

Well, let's break that part down before we get to the tactics.

So, how will you know if your Page is successful?

Well, there are several measures/metrics you may consider as to be 'successful':

Number of people who are following you - this is really about 'who could see your content' in their Stream.

My view: this is important, but chasing numbers alone won't get you Search results (see below)

The 'right type of people' following you AND engaging with you - these include the influencers who can both share and amplify your messages.

My view: this is actually the more important factor. On Google+ you can 'chase' the numbers, but quality engagement is more likely to deliver the results you want.

Number of views your content has had - including the new (launched 31st March 2014) view count number gives you some idea of 'reach'.

Note: the +1 number on the Page itself has now gone and is replaced by the 'view count'.

My view: Be careful though, this metric can be very misleading and I have been joking that people should join the 'Academy' <http://www.plusyourbusiness.com/academy-plus-business/> where people can learn to get their numbers up using nothing but cat gifs! (I do entertain myself.) It is not hard to get high numbers, but what do they really mean?

Amount of engagement - the number of +1s, comments and shares on a post

Check out <https://www.steadydemand.com/tool/index.php> to help you understand this more.

My view: this really is key. Quality engagement by the right people for you will build your community around your content, and when that happens they will amplify your content into Google Search.

Search Engine Results - the flow between Site-Social-Search enables two main results to occur...

- a) personalized search results for those who have connected with you, and
- b) incognito results (i.e. that anyone sees); and you can check on a proxy server if you really want to see unbiased results

My view: you will find increasingly your content is 'getting results' when you use Google+ as part of your content marketing strategy. At 'Plus Your Business' we are also evidencing that 'product pages' on a website are experiencing an uplift in search when content is shared on

Google+ and that content is engaged upon by 'the right people' (this I will keep vague, but we operate on the principle that 'authority rubs off'.)

Traffic to your website - this can come directly from clicks on links shared on Google+ itself, or via Search results.

My view: this is what really matters to a business! Google+ delivers this from social i.e. people click the links, then in Search when people see a relevant results, and also then can share that same content back into Google+ gaining it even more reach.

Zero Moment of Truth (ZMOT) - the idea that people are increasingly seeking out more information before they make a purchase.

Here is a definition: "The zero moment of truth (**ZMOT**) refers to the point in the buying cycle when the consumer researches a product, often before the seller even knows that they exist. The number of consumers researching a product online prior to purchase has been on the rise in recent years as the internet and mobile continue to advance."

Source: <http://www.pardot.com/ideas/moment-truth-care/>

My view: Google+ is great for this as people will receive notifications for e.g. you +1ing their post, as well as comments and shares of their content. It helps you to be part of their process, building the relationship along the way.

Sales/Leads - having this as an ultimate metric is what makes takes social and turns it into business.

My view: if people have engaged on your content in Google+ and you've good brand awareness, then they are already bought into you by the time they visit your site. Google+ enables you to build relationships and turn followers into friends and friends into customers (cue the Seth Godin musics!)

Once you've decided on the key metrics for you, you can start to build up the page....

How to build up a Google+ Page

Now we can move into the tactics section of this article.

Engage if you want engagement

When people add you to circles, you may like to add them back

Sharing other people's content?

This is often used as a tactic to build relationships. Sharing other people's content says 'I want my network to look like your network' and you will often find people 'circle you' when you do this often.

I am, however, working with clients who are unable to step 'off brand' and cannot share content. In which case you are left with the other tools:

+1s

comments

posts into communities

hangouts and hangouts on air

events

etc.

Whichever way you go, you will be most successful when you *make it about them*.

Share Page content via a Profile

This is a handy. If you have people in your organization who are already building their network on Google+, they can share your Page's content via their Profile.

Note: they may well want to make appropriate disclosures.

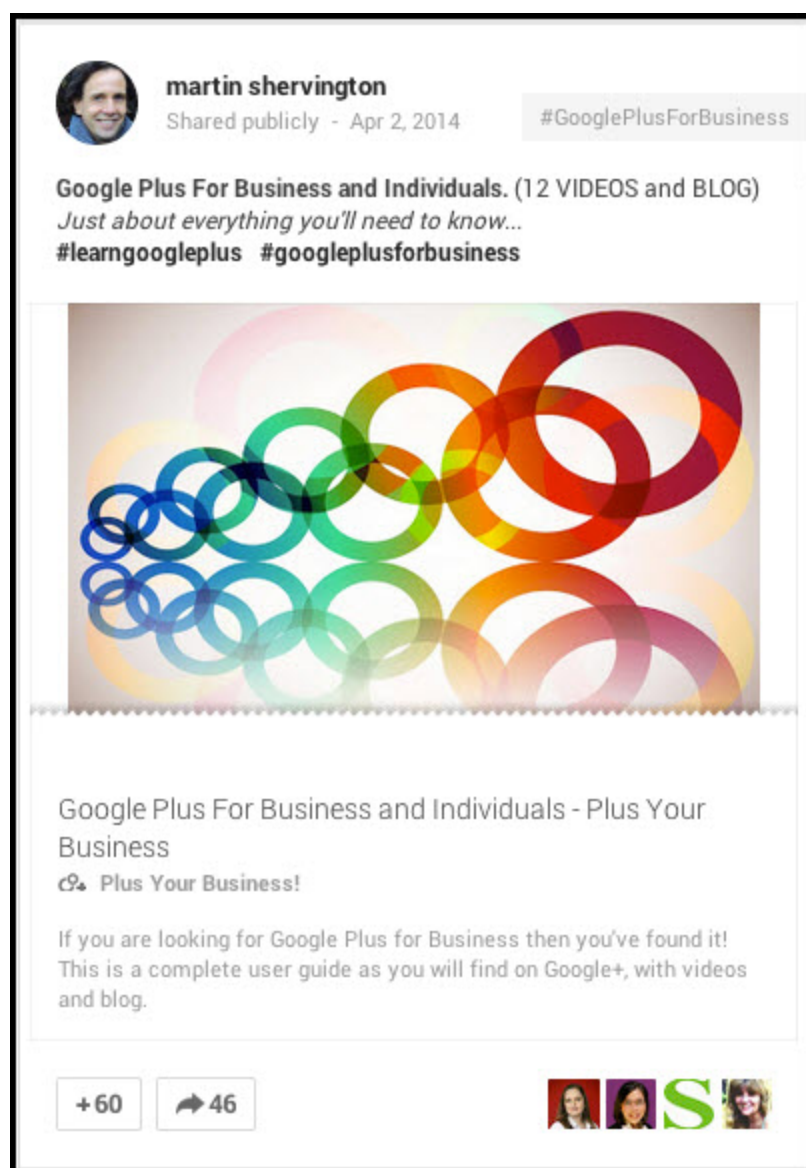
This approach allows your Page's content to gain more reach even when it has a low follower count. In essence, the people within your organization are becoming the influencers.

Be visual

Quality, vibrant visual content will get much more engagement than drab, dark ones.

Optimize the images on your website

When you share a link from your blog on Google+ it is possible for the image associated with that blog to appear as a LARGE image.



The size I am currently using is 800x600 and it displays well, but experiment with your own sizing and see how it gets shared when you embed the link on Google+

Social SEO and sharing links

Sharing with the embedded link above means that:

+1s are accumulated on the original blog post for a) the share from the Page, and b) for ALL OTHER public shares of that post.

As such, you'll see the +1 number really rack up.

If, however, you share a post with an image and two links in the post (instead of using the embedded link method as above) then the signals do not 'get attributed' to the blog post on your website.

So, here is the thing there may well be a correlation between 'social signals' and search results, but that does not mean they are the reason.

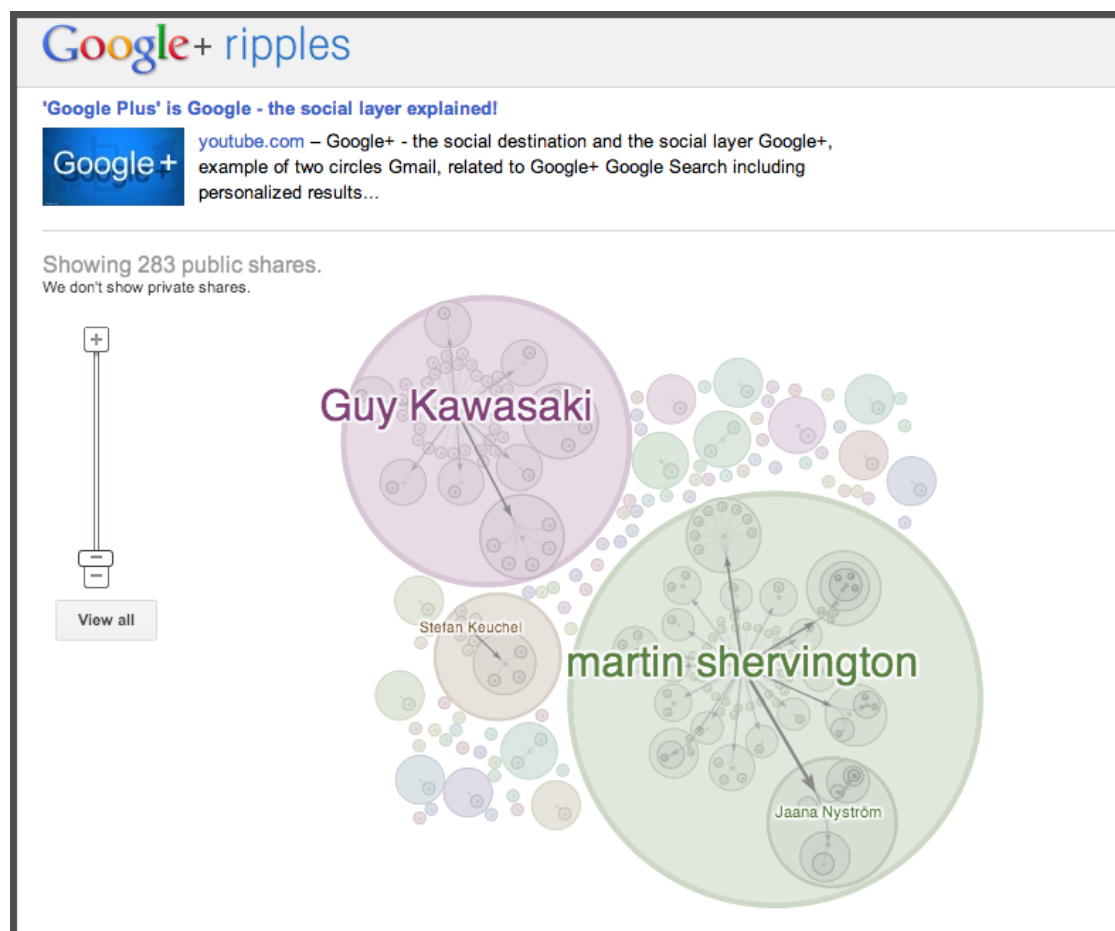
This is going to get geeky, so I will point you here to understand more:

<http://www.blindfiveyearold.com/social-signals-and-seo>

Note: the general view for best practice on SEO is to use the embedded link; and it is not all about the +1s though, Search results seem to be coming from WHO is engaging on the content more than HOW MANY.

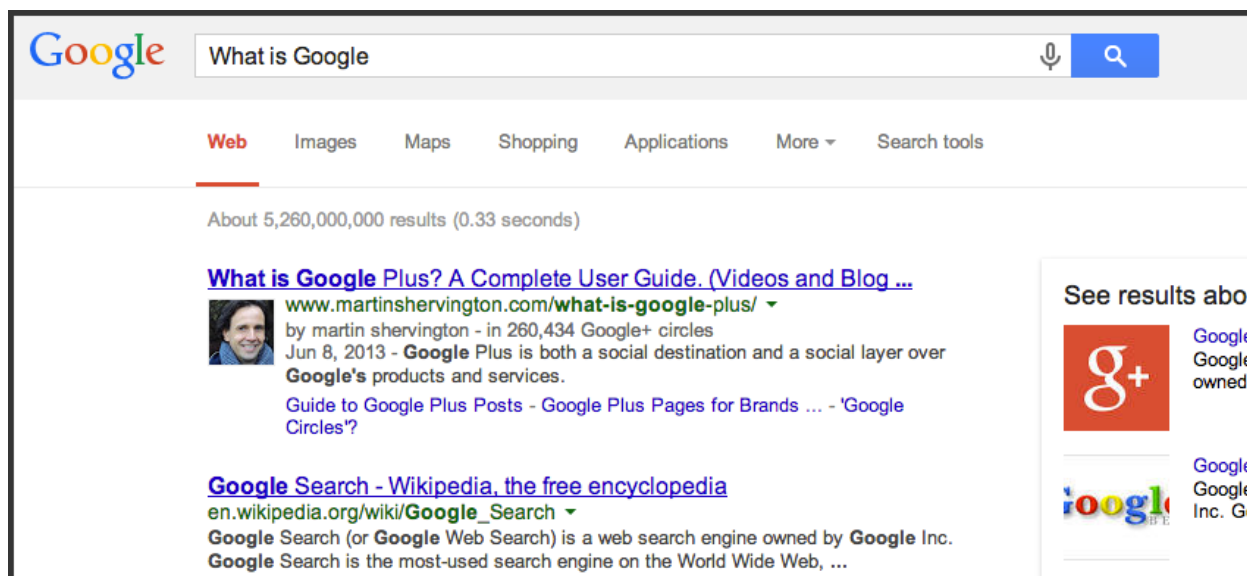
Short version, 'who engages' on your content it what really matters.

Use Ripples to find influencers



Building circles of people engaging people

Think about putting people in circles when they engage with you. Then look to engage with those people more; this way you start to build a community around you and your content. This is exactly how I achieved this web result below - the community in essence, decided this was 'the best answer' to the question.

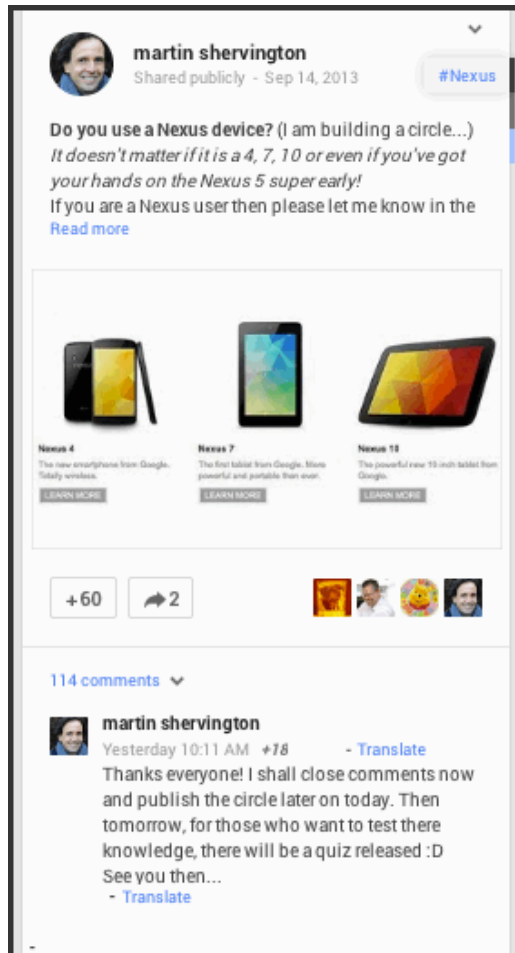


If you really want to take this up a level then you look to have a process of engagers 'moving up levels' so you filter them and in turn find your brand evangelists.



Build opt in lists so you can notify them by email

Below is an example of a time I built a list for a quiz about the Nexus device. A couple of hundred people 'opt-in' to receive notifications and the quiz was filled in around 500 times, many of whom were very keen influencers in this niche.



There are many methods to list building using circles, but there is one main thing you need to consider...

Make it about them!

People enjoy it when a brand features them, adds them into a circle, and generally relates to them as if both parties were human. Don't forget this.

A good brand will make people feel good in the smallest of ways, and in turn, people don't forget how you make them feel.

Sharing content into existing communities

If you 'go easy' you can test out dropping in your Page's content into existing communities, there are over 150,000 (with more than 10 people in them) to choose from!

Assuming people 'visit' the community, people will see your content; and as a REALLY BIG bonus, if you choose a community where people have their notifications switched on, then essentially those people are notified about your post. Very cool.

BUT again, go easy and read the community guidelines to make sure it is 'ok' to do so.

Don't set up your own community...

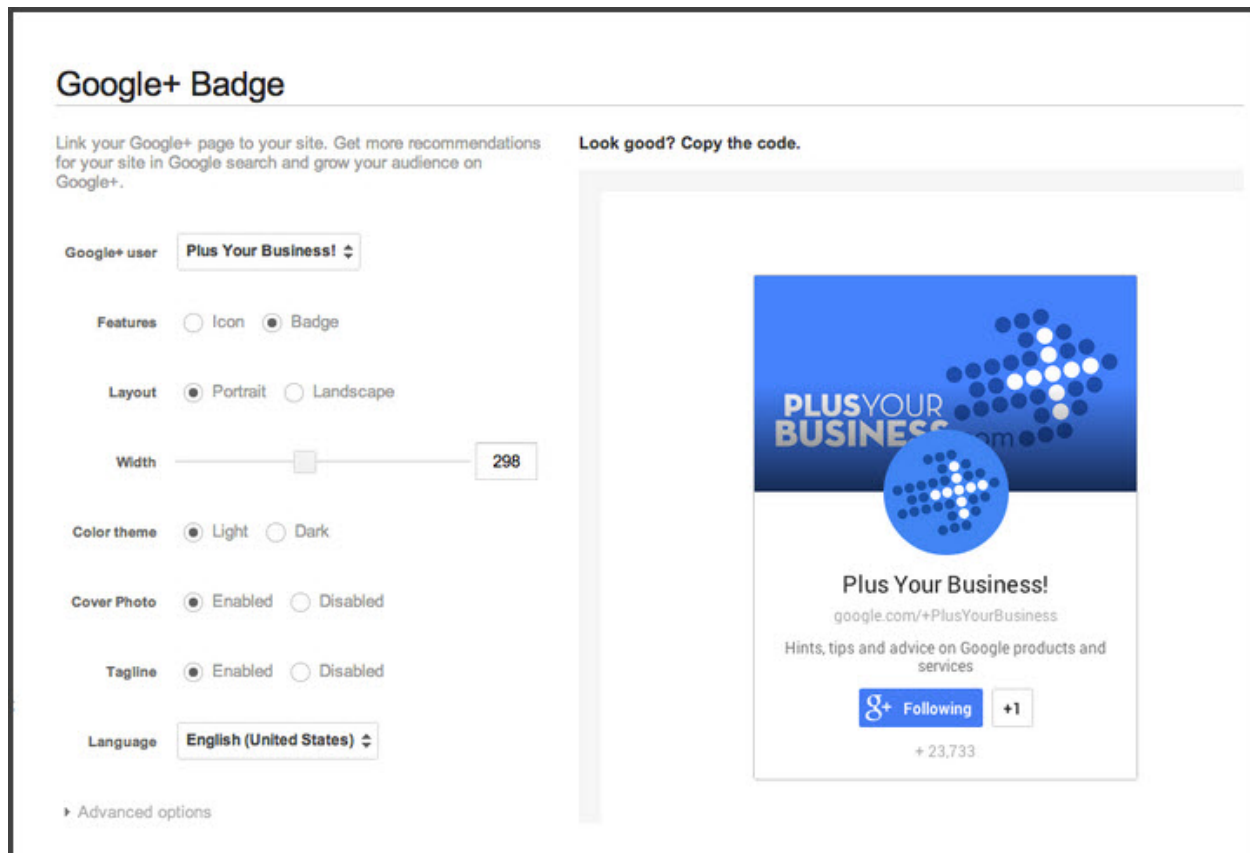
...until you understand what you are doing on Google+, or have good guidance.

You will waste time, effort, energy and money if you create one too soon.

Have the Google+ Badge on your website

Now we return back to the relationship between social and your website.

Put simply, the more visible this badge is, the more likely you will have people follow you!



The screenshot shows the 'Google+ Badge' customization page. On the left, there are settings for the badge: 'Google+ user' is set to 'Plus Your Business!'; 'Features' has 'Icon' selected; 'Layout' has 'Portrait' selected; 'Width' is set to 298; 'Color theme' has 'Light' selected; 'Cover Photo' is 'Enabled'; 'Tagline' is 'Enabled'; and 'Language' is 'English (United States)'. On the right, a preview of the badge is shown. The badge is a blue square with a cluster of white dots in the top right corner. Below the dots, the text 'PLUS YOUR BUSINESS!' is written in white. Below the badge, the text 'Plus Your Business!' is written in black, followed by the URL 'google.com/+PlusYourBusiness'. Below that, the text 'Hints, tips and advice on Google products and services' is written. At the bottom, there is a blue button with the Google+ logo and the text 'Following', and a white button with the text '+1'. Below these buttons, the text '+ 23,733' is displayed.

You'll find the badges here:

<https://developers.google.com/+web/badge/>

Make sure you have social sharing buttons on your blog

If you want to make it easy for people on your site to share your content, then make sure you have social sharing buttons, especially on your blog content. There are still many sites who have not embraced Google+ as yet, and they really are missing a trick.



Google: 'social sharing buttons for website' and you should find what you need ok.

Create content worth sharing!

All in all, you will need the best content you can create, or curate, to engage your audience on Google+

When you create exceptional content it will naturally tend to rise to the surface; but everything in this blog post really will enable people who should know about what you do to find the content you are creating. Put briefly, when the right people engage, they send a signal to Google that this content is rockin' and more people should see it.

If you follow the processes I've laid out you will be well on the way to having a great Google+ experience that turns into solid business results.

About the author:

Martin Shervington is founder, and community manager of 'Plus Your Life' and 'Plus Your Business' on Google+.

He is a consultant, speaker and creator of content to help businesses make the most of the opportunity.

Have you signed up to the Academy yet? <http://www.plusyourbusiness.com/academy/>