

# Get More Engagement on Google Plus

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Google Plus is a social network that was created by Google. Both consumers and businesses are beginning to embrace this network and if you have an online business, then you should sign up for a free account.

It's a great way to grow your branding and leadership reputation within your niche. You can sign up as a brand or as a person, so the choice is yours to make.

## **Setting Up Your Profile**

The first thing you should do when signing up for Google Plus is to set up your profile. This is important because your profile information is often the first thing that other Google Plus users will see.

You want to build a connection with them from the first click. Start by uploading a profile shot. Try to use the same photo that you use on your other social networks. This helps you build your personal brand and makes it easy for people to recognize you on Google Plus.

Make sure that your profile photo is a good, clear headshot. It doesn't have to necessarily be a professional one. But when users see your face in your profile shot, they're more likely to trust you than if you had an avatar or stock image.

After you have your profile shot you'll want to upload a cover photo. Google Plus gives you a lot of space for a very large cover photo. You can take advantage of this space by uploading an image that represents your brand and captures your personality.

Since you're focusing on building relationships with other users on Google Plus, don't upload a cover image that feels like a sales pitch. Don't include special discounts, coupon codes or other sales information in your cover photo because people won't like that.

After you've uploaded your images, you then need to fill out your About section thoroughly. Google Plus allows you to create a tagline. This is a great way for you to brand yourself, so make sure you take advantage of this feature.

Don't go with a vague tagline. For example, don't use the tagline, "I help change people's lives for the better." Instead, use a tagline like, "Fitness Coach for Busy Moms!" The second tagline tells other users exactly what you do and who your audience is.

The more specific that you can be, the better. Next fill out your introduction. Use this area to give a brief overview about yourself. Try to keep it to a few sentences. Remember that this section of your profile isn't just about you, but what you can do to make your customers' lives better.

This shouldn't be a sales pitch - just a bit about yourself and why you're the one who's qualified to help your target audience. Google Plus allows you to format this introduction paragraph.

You can use bold and italics to format your introduction so that it's easy to read. You can also include links in this section. However, consider linking to just one website or blog that you own that you want other users to visit.

Also make sure you list your skills on your Google Plus profile. You never know when a potential client might be looking for someone with your type of skills.

### **How to Use Circles the Right Way**

You can follow other users on the site by circling them. You can create circles to easily manage your connections. For example, you could have one circle for your favorite bloggers and another circle for your clients.

This allows you to manage your privacy settings more efficiently. But only add people to your circles who are in your niche or in a related industry. If you add people that are in different niches, they may not circle you back.

Don't circle a lot of other users within a short amount of time. If you do that, you may be mistaken as a spammer. Instead, circle a few users each day to slowly grow your circles.

Google Plus has different privacy setting when it comes to your status updates. Many people mistakenly share their updates with only a few other users. But you want to make the majority of your status updates public.

This gets these updates in front of more people and makes it easy for Google to crawl your profile and index it for the search engine results pages, or SERPs for short.

You can write a status update and select that update to be shared with a certain circle. There is an option to notify the people in this circle by email. This will email the update to the followers you've selected in that circle.

However, you want to avoid this if you don't have permission because it can be seen as spamming. You don't want to get a reputation on Google Plus for not being considerate to those you've circled.

When you log into your Google Plus account, you'll be on the home stream page. This page is similar to a news feed in other social networks. In the home stream, you'll see updates from people you've circled.

However, once you have several large circles, this may not be the most efficient way to keep track of updates from other users. In this case, you'll want to look at the top of your screen.

There will be a link that reads 'more.' If you click on this link, you can view updates from only one circle at a time. This can be helpful when you're looking to interact with only a certain group of people.

For example, maybe you want to interact with the parenting bloggers you follow. Select that circle and only the updates from parenting bloggers in that circle will appear. You don't want to have so many circles that you're constantly overwhelmed by all of the noise in your feed.

If you do have an excessive number of circles, it might be a sign that you're not clear on who your target audience is. If you have people that you've circled and they don't post updates that are relevant to your industry, you can hide their updates without uncircling them.

This will help you keep clutter out of your home stream that takes attention away from statuses that you really want to see. If you really don't like a post, you can click the gray arrow on the right side of the post and click the mute option. This keeps the post from appearing in your home stream again.

## **Building Relationships on Google Plus**

There are several ways that you can find other people in your niche to follow on Google Plus. You want to have a mix of users in your circles. Some of these users should be niche leaders.

These are the authority bloggers, the marketers and the entrepreneurs who have already built a following in your niche. The reason you want to connect with these people is that they are often good affiliates.

They can promote your products to their subscribers, which can result in more customers for you. However, don't push other users to promote your product the first time you connect on Google Plus.

You need to build a relationship with these other niche authorities before you ask them to become an affiliate for your products. The second group of users that you need to connect with on Google Plus are people that are interested in your niche and are savvy when it comes to social media.

These power users may not necessarily become affiliates or even make money online. But they will enthusiastically promote your work. Finally, you should look to find users who fit your audience profile.

These are users who may become buyers of your products. However, they are not promoters or affiliates. Some of these users might be new to the niche and other users may already be familiar with your niche.

Once you know the types of users that you want to find on Google Plus, it's time to begin seeking these people out and interacting with them. The first thing you want to do is look for communities that are in your niche.

For example, if you work exclusively with single moms that build online businesses, you might want to look for communities where work at home moms gather. When you begin joining other communities, it's important that you first look for that community's guidelines.

Some communities may not want you to post links to your site or blog. However, other communities may welcome this practice and encourage everyone to share their online homes.

Once you've located a few communities that fit your niche, you need to interact with them regularly. If you join and only lurk, you won't connect with anyone. You can start interacting in the group by leaving comments on other members' posts as well as answering questions that other members have asked.

Make sure that you ask questions in the group, too. This can be an interesting way to conduct market research and can provide you with feedback that may spark a new product idea or blog post that your readers would find useful.

There's an option to share the posts that you make in communities on your Google Plus profile. However, you don't want to do that. When someone visits your profile, you want them to see your status updates.

If they see the community, they may get distracted and click away from your profile. Then you may lose the potential to interact with that person.

### **Discovering New Conversations on Google Plus**

Besides joining communities, there are other ways you can connect with users and discover new conversations by using Google Plus. The first way that you can find more ways to engage is to search directly through hashtags.

For example, if you're in the pet niche then a hashtag you might want to look up is #pethealth. By using this hashtag, you can discover animal shelters, veterinarian clinics, and pet bloggers.

Another way to find other users that you may want to interact with is to click on the Explore tab on Google Plus. When you use this tab, you'll see a list of top niches like nature, sports, technology, and photography.

When you click on one of these subjects, Google Plus will reload the page and you'll see a new list. This list will contain related hashtags used within the niche. This can be a great way to narrow down your search and find new people to connect with.

Once you've found an interesting conversation on Google Plus, try to contribute to it by leaving a comment. Your comment should be interesting and relevant to the topic. If you leave a comment just adding your link, then you'll look like a spammer.

Instead, you should provide helpful information to the discussion. Avoid leaving bland comments like, "I agree" or, "Thanks for sharing." These comments don't add value to the conversation and are unlikely to generate interest in your profile.

When you do leave a comment, make sure you check back for replies. If someone else takes the time to reply to you, then you should respond to their comment if they asked you a question in it.

But if they just thanked you for your opinion or added to it, then click the +1 button beneath their comment. This lets the other person know that you took the time to read their comment.

If you're in a conversation and you find a commenter who is contributing to the discussion and is in your niche, consider circling that person. When you do this, that person will get a notification that they've been added to your circle.

Some users will then you circle you back. But not all users will do this. Don't worry if they don't circle you right away. Certain Google Plus members are more selective when it comes to their social networking habits.

Once you have a few people in your circles, Google Plus can suggest other users that you might want to connect with. To find this link, you'll want to click on the People tab in the left side menu.

This will bring up a page filled with users that you might have something in common with. You can also click on the discover tab to find brands that you might like to follow on Google Plus.

## **Using Hangouts to Grow Your Brand**

Google Plus has a great feature called Google Hangouts. Using Google Hangouts allows you to schedule group calls (or even record yourself talking to the camera). You can even record these calls and publish them to YouTube automatically.

To use Google Hangouts most effectively, you'll want to schedule a call where you share information relevant to your niche. You don't want to schedule a call that has nothing to do with your industry.

For example, if you've branded yourself as a photography expert, don't plan a Google Hangout on fitness tips for couch potatoes. This will water down your brand and confuse any new followers.

What many marketers have done is used Google Hangouts to record a video about one of the popular topics in their niche. You can also share your screen with the viewers. This can be helpful if you're providing a tutorial of some type or if you'd like to share a presentation that you created.

Google Hangouts are limited to ten participants at a time. Because of this, Google Hangouts is not a replacement for a webinar service. However, there are still some good uses for Google Hangouts.

One thing that you can do is to host a coaching session. If you decide to do this, you may want to make sure the Google Hangout video is not automatically uploaded to YouTube.

You can also use this service to record an interview with a leader in your niche. Then you can have Google automatically upload your interview to YouTube. Your video will also be viewable on your Google Plus profile.

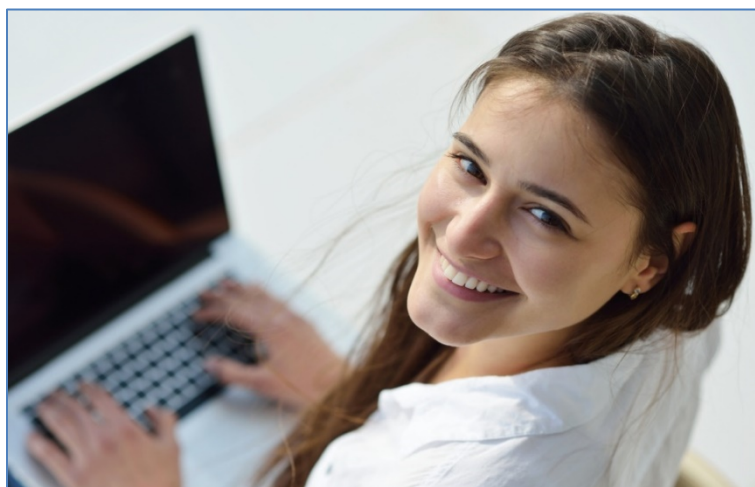
All Google Plus profiles have a videos tab. You want this tab to be visible so that other users can easily find your videos when they're looking at your profile. One of the nice features of Google Hangouts is that anyone with a link can view your video while you're streaming live.

So while you're limited to ten participants, other users can still watch your Hangout session - even if they're not signed into Google Plus. This could be a good option if you want to broadcast an event, but don't need audience feedback.

Of course, if you'd prefer audience feedback, then try to get some questions prepared in advance. For example, if your Hangout is about the newest tablet to hit the market, then ask your circles to share their questions with you ahead of time. Then toward the end of your broadcast, answer these questions.

Another good tip for using Google Hangouts is to outline what you plan to say so that you don't end up rambling and risk losing viewers. You don't have a time limit with a Google Hangout - but generally, you want your Hangout to be between thirty- and ninety-minutes total.

Like all social networks, Google Plus can be a great way to engage with an audience. But make sure that you take the time to learn how to do it the right way so that you get the most from it. That means connecting with the right people, sharing real value, and utilizing all of the tools at your disposal for increased interaction.



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