



## B2Bs Get Pinned on Pinterest: 12 Ways to Get Started

By [Nancy Pekala](#)

An increasing number of brands are putting a pin on it.

The “it” in question is [Pinterest](#), a relatively new social bookmarking site that has been gaining significant traction, having [grown](#) a whopping 429% from September to December 2011. The site [registered](#) more than 7 million unique visitors in December 2011, and according to a [report](#) from Cambridge, MA-based content-sharing site Shareaholic, the platform is driving more traffic to company websites and blogs than YouTube, Google+ and LinkedIn combined.



While B2B and B2C brands may collectively heard groaning, “No, please, not another social network,” Pinterest looks to stay around awhile as it offers companies and individuals alike a unique way to share who they really are to fellow users and potential customers.

### How Does Pinterest Work Exactly?

Pinterest provides users general categories like “Geek,” “Products,” “My Life,” “People” and “Humor.” The idea is to fill these categories by “pinning” images and videos that are organized around “pinboards”. Simply upload an image or video from your computer or find something you like online, clip the URL, and enter it under “pin” and the image will appear in the stream of your Pinterest page. Users can browse through the pins and “like”, “repin” or “comment” on them. Pinterest users are urged to share pins on Facebook (but not Facebook business pages yet) and Twitter or via email and embed individual pins on their website or blog.

Unlike other social networks such as Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter, Pinterest is primarily a visual network, formed around the concept of a person’s lifestyle. It is intended to connect with others based on their interests via the “things” they find interesting. On Pinterest, you can search for pinboards such as Apple accessories, IBM or B2B marketing.

### Why Does Pinterest Work for B2B?

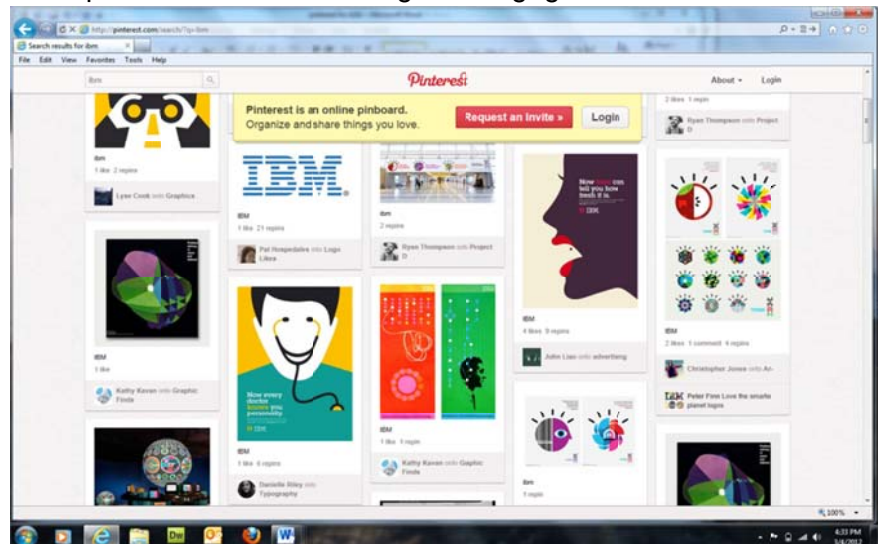
While B2B companies may not be the first brands that come to me when it comes to ideal users of Pinterest, the social bookmarking site is actually a good fit for business-to-business organizations. Pinterest is a very visual platform and is all about show, not tell. It’s a perfect fit for B2B organizations which often build credibility and preference by demonstrating their

products, rather than just talking about them. B2B marketers are used to telling and showing a better story.

Pinterest also allows B2B organizations break down complex products or services into sizeable chunks through the display of images and video. Creating pinboards that focus on key product overviews in digestible chunks can help facilitate understanding and engagement.

## A Dozen B2B Uses of Pinterest

1. Create a board that showcases your company's personality and culture. Post images of your sales and executive teams and attach a bio.
2. Does your business create infographics or data charts? Pinterest is a perfect platform to post industry and trends data.
3. Make sure to upload screenshots of your company's latest white papers and e-books. Create a board just for white papers and e-books to help establish your company as a thought leader in your niche.
4. Have you collected customer images for testimonials or other purposes? Why not create a board featuring your customers? Customer images can be especially engaging if they feature customers using your product or service.
5. Do you have loyal customers? Encourage them to contribute pins to your boards or create new ones dedicated to their pins.
6. Launch a Pinterest contest. Ask customers to create a pinboard about why they like your product or service and link back to it.
7. While images are the most prevalent form of content found on Pinterest, the platform also encourages the sharing of videos. In fact, Pinterest features a separate tab for videos. Be sure to upload product demos, how-to and other videos to your Pinterest page and create video galleries where appropriate.
8. Events and conferences that B2B companies participate in or sponsor provide ideal opportunities for Pinterest content. Upload video or images taken during events. To help promote the event, create a pinboard and include images related to the event location. Add images about dining, entertainment and other opportunities available to attendees. If you're sponsoring an event, you can also create a pinboard with images detailing key tasks event attendees will need to perform when they arrive. Whether it's picking up their attendee materials, getting a badge stamped, visiting the trade show floor or snapping the event's QR code on their smartphone, a pinboard with a collection of images that direct attendees can be useful. You can also create pinboards with collection of speaker images or attendee images so that attendees can better match faces with names during the event.



9. Create a visual media kit by creating a board for logos, press releases, white papers and more with links to download.
10. Use Pinterest to show off your achievements. Create a board to post your awards, honors and recognitions.
11. Post images of your company's products organized by Pinboard and link them to your website.
12. Pin images, infographics, video and other content from your own blog to get users reading

## Getting Started

The best way to determine if Pinterest is right for you is to create a free account and take it for a test drive. Start by following some interesting pinboards and users who post images that intrigue you. Spend some time pinning other people's content and commenting, liking or repinning other users' content in order to attract a few followers. You're now ready to map out a plan and create a new board or boards for your products and services. Add descriptions and make sure images and videos link back to your website.

Once you've started the content ball rolling, think about launching a Pinterest-based contest and start tracking [www.pinterest.com](http://www.pinterest.com) as a referral source in your website analytics. Be sure to add a Pin It Button to your website as well. Monitor referral traffic from your Pinterest content and revise your content roadmap if necessary.

Other tips to keep in mind when launching your Pinterest strategy:

- **Pinboard Names.** Develop creative names for your pinboards to drive SEO from Pinterest (board names become the title of the page and the first word of the board name becomes the meta description).
- **Pin Keywords.** Make sure to include keywords for your business within image and pinboard descriptions.
- **Pinboard Headlines.** Be creative when writing headlines for your pinboard; using targeted keywords within headlines can help drive traffic.
- **Pinboard Hashtags.** Just like Twitter, Pinterest encourages the use of hashtags to make content more search-friendly. Be sure to include relevant hashtags with images and video you pin.

## A Few Caveats

As with any emerging technology, Pinterest is in its early stages and offers not only opportunities but some legal issues for brands to be aware of. While still relatively new, Pinterest has yet to work out all the kinks related to copyright and intellectual property issues.

### B2B Brands on Pinterest

Who's on Pinterest? Socialfresh.com recently aggregated a [list](#) of top brands that have a presence on the popular platform. Here are a few B2B brands that top the list.

- [AMD](#)
- [Constant Contact](#)
- [Conduit](#)
- [General Electric](#)
- [HubSpot](#)
- [Intel](#)

A panelist on the recent discussion, [The Basics of Marketing on Pinterest](#), sponsored by [Focus.com](#), Jamie Wallace, Content Strategist and Writer with Suddenly Marketing suggested that it is unclear where liability will rest. "Some are suggesting that if you upload something, you are liable as the person who uploaded it or originally pinned it," she said. "So, if you pinned a photographer's image and they decide they don't want it to be pinned, you can potentially be sued, not Pinterest."

Wallace added, "It's better to err on the side of caution while these issues get sorted out. Make sure you link from original sources, that the URL is appended and that you provide attribution in the comment whenever possible. Just do whatever you can to make sure you're giving credit where credit is due."

[Olivier Blanchard](#), Principal of [BrandBuilder Marketing](#), also suggested that marketers would be wise to keep an eye on future incarnations of SOPA (Stop Online Piracy Act) "because if something like that were to pass based on the language so far, we would all be going to federal prison for using Pinterest."

He added, "I'm just waiting for a war between a Pepsi and a Coca-Cola or a Ford and GM or an Apple and Samsung to try and shut the other one down because of each other's use of each other's product images on Pinterest. It's just a matter of time before somebody tries that."

Wallace suggested there will likely be options for creators of content to keep their content off of Pinterest. "There is now a way for site owners to say they don't want anything on their site pinned. In the future, there might be a way for content owners to be alerted that somebody would like to pin something. It might need to evolve to that level so that we avoid that red tape that will make it all very ugly very quickly."

Despite the legal issues, Pinterest is a platform that is likely to continue to offer unique opportunities for B2B organizations to showcase their work, products, portfolio and client base. "If you're a company that makes lights for office buildings, you can use Pinterest to show how your lights are being used across the U.S.," Blanchard suggested.

"It's just a matter of how you can communicate the value of what you do, how you can bridge the gap between the service that you offer and their ultimate outcome in the real world and how relevant they might be to your general audience or community," Blanchard said. "It's about positioning yourself in a different light."

Wallace agreed, noting that brands should think of using Pinterest to humanize their brand. "There are a lot of networks from Facebook to blogs to LinkedIn where brands can promote their products and services in a much more direct way," she explained. "B2B brands need to get really creative about how they visualize their brand and how they convey the non-physical aspects of their brand including their philosophy, beliefs, sense of humor and personality because those are the things that can really gain traction on Pinterest."

[Nancy Pekala](#) is the AMA's Senior Director of Online Content and Editor of [B2B Marketing](#). Continue the conversation about Pinterest and its uses for B2B organizations in the Interactive Marketing and B2B Marketing groups in [AMACONNECT](#), the AMA's online community exclusively for marketers. Follow us on Twitter @[marketing\\_power](#).