

# Social Media & Networking

## WHAT IS IT?

Social networking is a way of communicating and connecting with people via social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, & MySpace. It is commonly used as a strictly social tool – to communicate and share photos with friends and family. However, social media is increasingly being used by businesses and organisations to communicate with their clients and customers.

According to research done by Neilsons Media Research in 2010, 42% of New Zealand's social media users engage with "brands" as well as individuals – it is a great tool for people to source information on products, businesses and organisations.

## WHY USE IT?

- It is an easy and useful way of creating and maintaining contact with a wide audience.
- People "log on" to social media sites when it suits them, so it is not an interruption to their day.
- You can connect and network with other organisations – sharing ideas, & discussing problems etc, even if they are on the other side of the world.
- You can use it to promote events, notify your members about meetings, and create groups to support a cause – e.g. Breast Cancer Awareness Month.
- Your whole team can connect in one place. By creating a social media profile, volunteers, sponsors, supporters, funders & staff have a common place to communicate and be kept informed.
- Everyone is doing it! Facebook alone has 600 million users worldwide (if Facebook was a country it would be the 3rd largest in the world) so tapping into a fraction of those users will give you a huge number of new connections.
- It is a good way to reach young people.
- If you live in an isolated geographic location, it can help overcome your remoteness.

## HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA PROFILE

- Choose an appropriate site that you are comfortable with and that your friends and colleagues already use (see text box on which site is best for your organisation).
- Keep your personal and organisation pages separate.
- Include your logo and an image to prove your legitimacy (remember that anyone can set up a social media page).
- Write a good concise bio so people know what your organisation is about as soon as they look at your page, and use lots of images which will make your page attractive.
- Follow or befriend organisations that are similar to your own – social networking online is just like networking in the real world – the more contacts you have the more benefits you'll see.
- Update your page regularly to keep people interested.
- Have a link from your social media page to your website and vice versa. That way people can easily click on your website link for more information, and people can also go through to your profile from your website and "follow" you or "like" your organisation. It can be a good idea to post on your profile whenever you've updated your website.
- A link on your email signature to your social media page can also be an effective way to increase your fan base.
- Try to make your posts on your page useful, informative & inspiring, and always respond to those who leave comments or engage in discussion with you.
- Don't delete negative comments left by users; attempt to resolve their concerns instead. Authenticity is key to the success of social media. Do, however, remove profane or offensive comments.
- Have your page set on "public" so anyone can access it.
- Don't discuss anything that you don't want the whole world to see!

## WHICH SITE IS BEST FOR YOUR ORGANISATION?

<b>Facebook</b>	The most rapidly growing social network site – it is popular with teens and adults alike.
<b>Blogs</b>	A blog is like an online diary that lists entries chronologically. Blogs are beneficial for providing information on various activities and events as an 'update'.
<b>Twitter</b>	A "microblogging" site (the texting of the internet) where users are typically age 18 – 35 years (63% of users are under 35 years, with 11% of users age 12-17 years).
<b>MySpace</b>	Has a broad audience but mostly associated with teens and young adults. Especially good for musician profiles – for uploading songs and music videos etc.

## PROMOTING AND MARKETING YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA PAGE

The best way to start is by contacting people you already know - make sure you advise people of your profile page on your website and in any newsletters you send out. If you have an email database send your social media details to this list.

Make sure your username is spelt exactly as it appears in real life – so your organisation can be found easily with a search function.

**Update your page on a regular basis** – this creates an incentive for people to keep coming back to see what is going on.

## SETTING UP YOUR PROFILE PAGE

Each site will take you through a relatively easy step by step process to setting up a profile page:

<b>Facebook</b>	Go to <a href="http://www.facebook.com">www.facebook.com</a> and click on the "create a page" link at the bottom. This will then give you the option of choosing to create a page according to what sort of category or purpose you come under.
<b>Blog</b>	Free blog sites include <a href="http://www.blogger.com">www.blogger.com</a> and <a href="http://www.wordpress.com">www.wordpress.com</a> or if you have a website you can ask your developer to make an additional page and host your own blog.
<b>Myspace</b>	Go to <a href="http://www.myspace.com">www.myspace.com</a> and click on "sign up", then complete all the necessary fields.
<b>Twitter</b>	Go to <a href="http://www.twitter.com">www.twitter.com</a> and click on "sign up", then complete all the necessary fields.

## WHAT TO INCLUDE ON YOUR PROFILE

- your logo and a photo of your organisation or your team.
- your contact information.
- photos from events you've held or been to etc.
- links to news articles about your organisation or things relevant to you.
- your comments and thoughts on issues and topics affecting your organisation or sector.

Information prepared by



## LINKS / WHERE TO GO FOR MORE INFORMATION:

[www.exult.co.nz](http://www.exult.co.nz)

[www.community.net.nz](http://www.community.net.nz)

For more information or help you can also contact your local Community Development Planner at Venture Southland:  
143 Spey Street, Invercargill  
Ph: 03 211 1400  
[enquiry@venturesouthland.co.nz](mailto:enquiry@venturesouthland.co.nz)  
[www.southlandnz.com](http://www.southlandnz.com)