HOW TO MARKET YOUR BUSINESS WITH PINTEREST
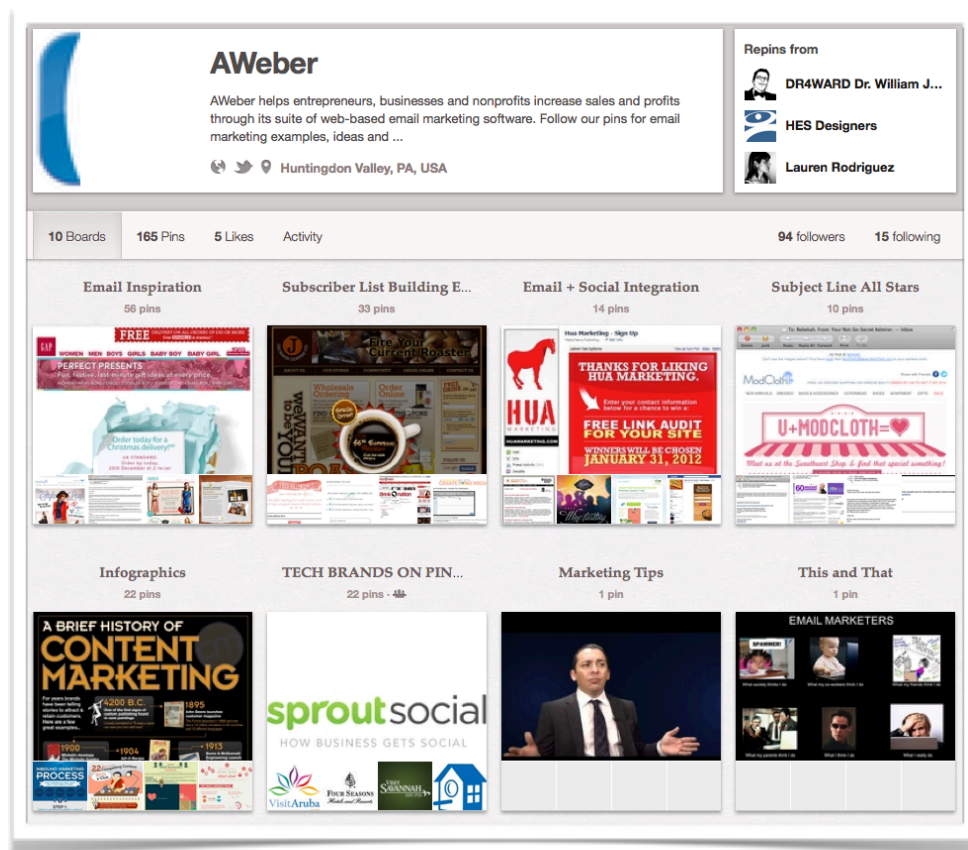
What's so interesting about Pinterest? It's a new social network full of visual stimulation. And it's teeming with creative marketing potential. But why get your brand involved with another social network? Well for starters, it works a little differently than Facebook or Twitter.

Pinterest has been growing fast with 3.3 million users by December 2011. How can you leverage the site for your own content marketing? What kind of content does well on Pinterest? We created this guide to answer these questions and give you some ideas for using Pinterest in your own content marketing plan. At the end of this guide, you'll find a link to a video we created that shows how three real businesses use Pinterest themselves.

What Is Pinterest?

So what is Pinterest, exactly? Pinterest is a visually focused bookmarking site, centered on interests, lifestyles, and planning. Users create themed boards of images curated from sites all over the Internet.

While Facebook and Twitter are excellent platforms for promotional content, Pinterest is a place to show off your brand's personality, philosophy and style.

This channel is less about marketing your products and more about marketing your brand's ideals and core values. Think of your pin boards as collages of your brand's ideals. The content you pin should reflect the lifestyle that your target customers embrace.
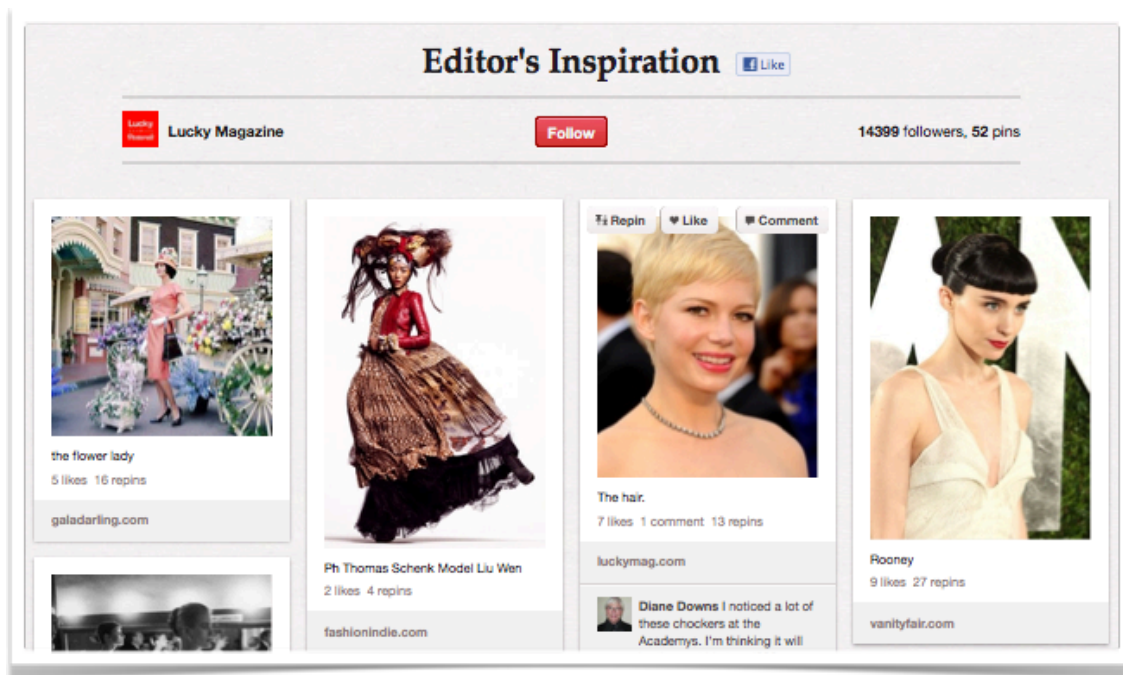
Three Ways to Market With Pinterest

You can leverage Pinterest for your business three ways: gathering ideas, pushing out content and providing supplemental resources.

Let's look at each of them.

Gathering Ideas

At its base level, Pinterest functions as an online bulletin board for your ideas and inspiration. Gathering these ideas can work two ways: as inspiration for your own business and as a helpful resource for your followers.

For instance, Lucky Magazine has a board of Editor's Inspiration - models, fashion trends and artsy photographs that their editor pins for her own inspiration. Jewelry company Zales, on the other hand, curates a board of wedding ideas for newly engaged brides-to-be. Both boards show off the brands' personalities by gathering ideas in different ways.
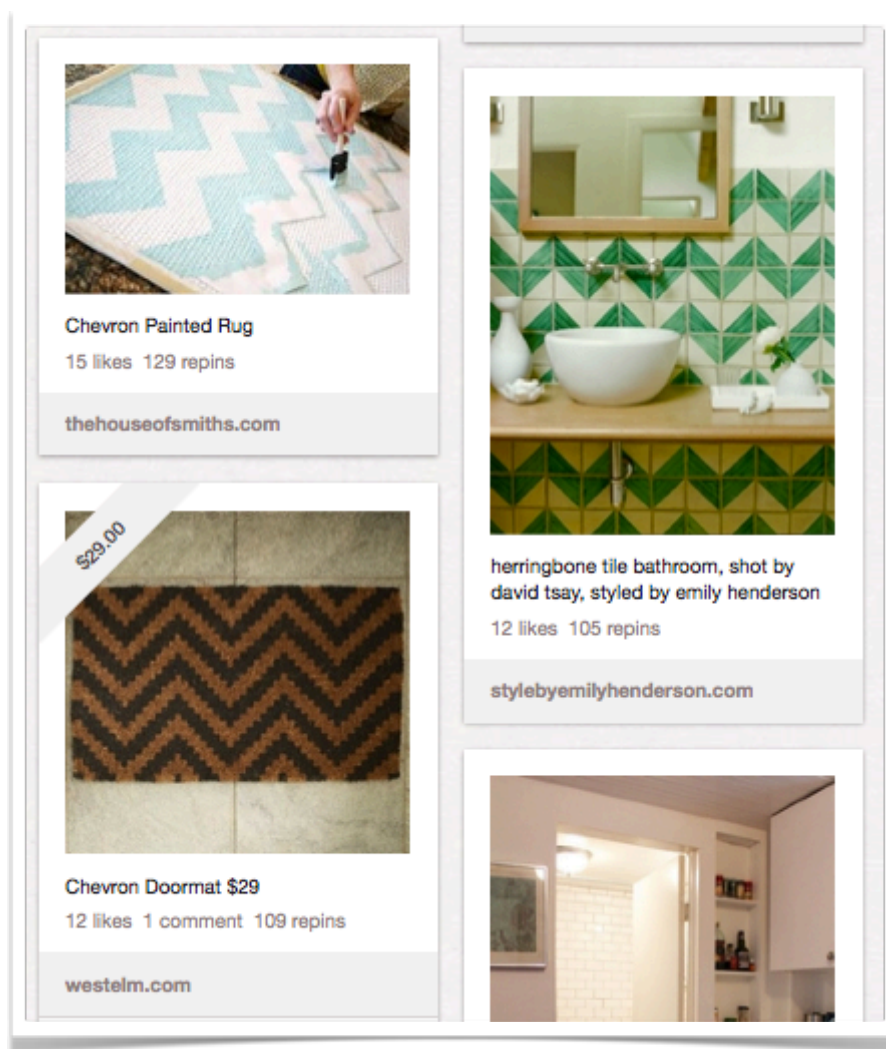

Lucky Magazine's "Editor's Inspiration" board.

"Leverage your brand values. Think color, style and brand values. You've already invested in expensive photography to showcase your products. This is where you can leverage that investment and bring your brand alive." -Mashable

3

Pushing Out Content

Pinterest is about users sharing interest and ideas with one another, so the content you pin shouldn't be purely promotional. But that doesn't mean you can't push your own content onto Pinterest.

To effectively promote your own content on Pinterest, create boards themed around a product. West Elm chose their own chevron patterned products to create a board full of design inspiration from all across the web:
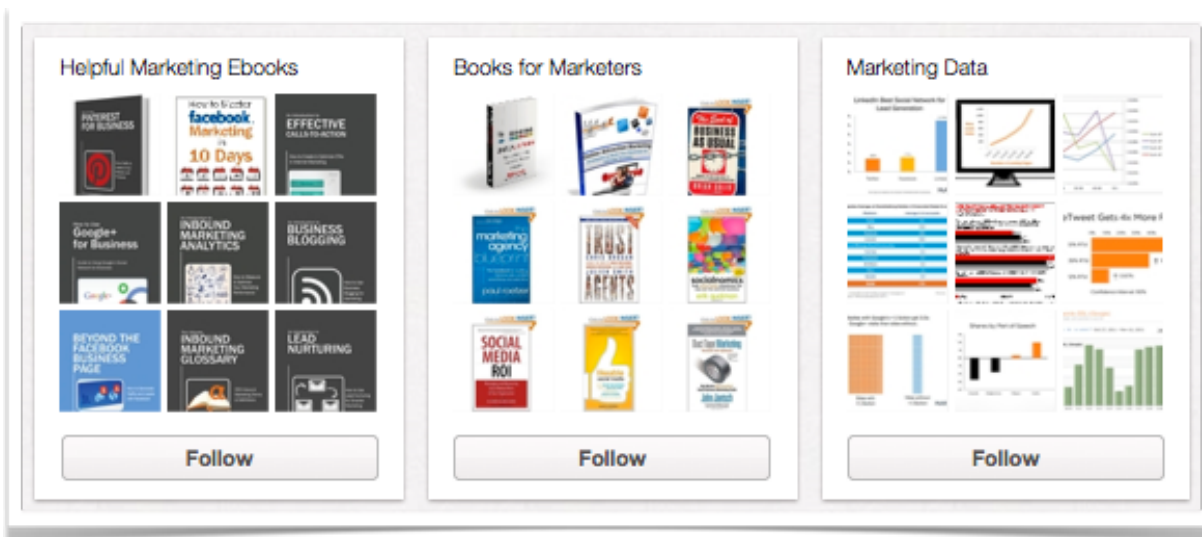

"Promoting a lifestyle is a great way for brands to get started on Pinterest, because it shows you're not just on Pinterest to spam users with your products."
-ReadWriteWeb

Supplemental Resources

A board on Pinterest can also supplement your regular web site content. Pinterest is video-friendly: try pinning a companion video to a tutorial posted on your blog. Charts and infographics related to your industry or web site content do well on Pinterest, too.

You could even pin ebooks or suggest helpful reading materials written by others like [HubSpot](#) does on their boards:

  Be careful how much you self-promote on Pinterest. *Pinterest is designed for sharing lifestyle inspiration and while some self-promotion is allowed, your boards should not be completely promotional. As [Pinteret's own etiquette guide](#) states: "Pinterest is designed to curate and share things you love. If there is a photo or project you're proud of, pin away! However, try not to use Pinterest solely as a tool for self-promotion." Balance your pin boards, like in the example on page 4.*

Pros & Cons of Pinterest Marketing

Like all new media channels, marketing on Pinterest has its pros and cons for brands. On the plus side, getting your content on Pinterest can:

Strengthen your brand personality

People like to buy from brands that feel more human and personal. By sharing your company's likes, inspiration and resources on Pinterest, you make your brand more approachable through your content.

Capture your target audience

Pin items that appeal to your ideal customer. As you keep pinning quality resources and appealing images, the customer demographic you'd like to attract will pay closer attention to your brand. Pin content that appeals to the lifestyle of your target audience to build a bigger following.

Make your content viral

With enough likes and repins, your Pinterest content can go viral. Just like Twitter lists popular hashtags as trending topics, Pinterest displays the most liked and repinned images on its "Popular" page. And it's more than just pretty pictures. You'll find plenty of tip articles, DIY instructions, infographics and more listed as popular. Pin useful content that your followers will be eager to share.

Pinterest is also incredibly easy to update. You don't even need to visit the site to update your boards. Pinterest provides a "Pin It" button you can add to your browser and use any time you find content on a web site that you want to pin to your board. You can select the image, select the board to pin it to, and Pinterest takes care of the rest, including linking back to the original source. You can pin things on the fly as you find them interesting and it shouldn't take you any longer than clicking a link.

But Pinterest isn't for everybody. Here are some precautions and drawbacks to keep in mind before you dive in:

Copyright concerns

In light of some recent controversy, be careful about where you pin images from. Pinterest recommends getting permission before pinning images that aren't yours and always pinning from the original source. If you find an image you want to pin from a Google Image search, for instance, pin the image from the actual site or blog where it's located, not from the image search results page.

Time requirements

Although Pinterest is simple to use, it *is* another social network to keep up with. If you're already involved on several social networks and feeling spread too thin, you might want to wait before jumping on the Pinterest bandwagon unless you have very compelling reasons. You might also consider dropping one of your other networks if your brand has a strong visual element that fits well on Pinterest.
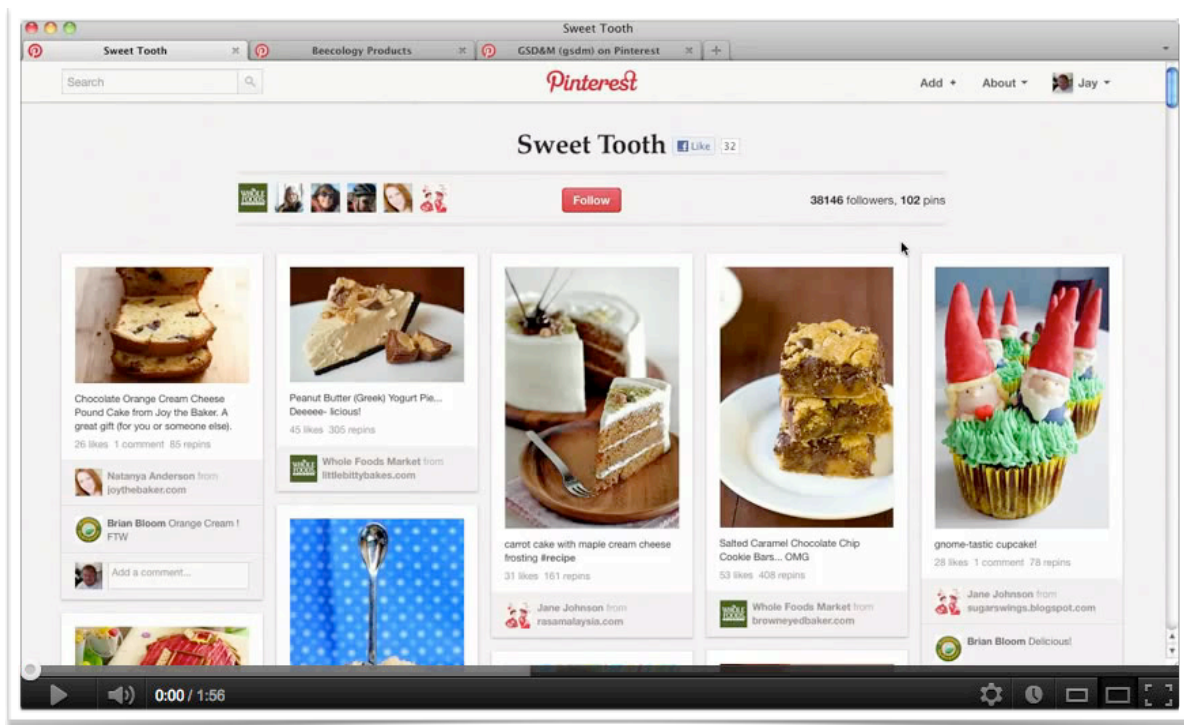
Pinterest's visual nature

Pinterest has obvious value for retailers, designers, event planners and other businesses with a strong visual marketing component. Even bloggers can leverage images in their articles to pin their content. But suppose you're a plumber or an accounting firm. Some businesses just aren't a good fit with Pinterest's focus. If your business doesn't fit, don't force it. Move on to a social network that matches your industry better.

The bottom line is, take stock of how Pinterest works and the demographic who uses it, then decide from there if it's a good fit for your business.

More Pinterest Marketing Ideas

Now that you've read the guide, see Pinterest marketing in action. Watch this video to see how bigger brands and small businesses alike are reaching their customers on Pinterest.

About AWeber

What do leading sites such as Social Media Examiner, Copyblogger, Which Test Won, ProBlogger and Harvard Business Review all have in common?

They rely on AWeber for easy-to-use email and social media tools to cultivate relationships with their readers. Since 1998, AWeber has been the email engine powering the growth of organizations around the world.

Today, more than 110,000 small- and midsize-businesses, entrepreneurs, agencies and nonprofits are making the most of AWeber's sophisticated segmentation and analytics capabilities, social media and testing applications, extensive template libraries, and industry-leading deliverability and live support.

| Blog | Webinars | YouTube | Twitter | Facebook | Pinterest |