

BATTLE

OF THE NEW SOCIAL NETWORKS



A publication of
HubSpot

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brings your **whole marketing** world together
in one, powerful, integrated system.

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- ✓ **Convert:** Nurture your leads and drive conversions
- ✓ **Analyze:** Measure and improve your marketing
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INTRODUCTION

Two new networks have emerged on the social media landscape, demanding the attention of marketers. Google+, [with more than 100 million active users](#), and Pinterest, now the [third most-popular social network in the U.S.](#), are competing for wide adoption and luring businesses that want to keep up with the new hangout spots of their audiences.

+100
MILLION
ACTIVE
USERS



#3 MOST
POPULAR
SOCIAL
NETWORK
IN U.S.

Both Google+ and Pinterest take time to figure out from a marketing standpoint. So how do you decide which one of the two platforms is really worth your time and efforts? In this deep dive we provide you with a breakdown of the pros and cons of each social network. The side-by-side comparison should help you prioritize which channel to pursue as part of your internet marketing strategy.



GOOGLE+

Google+ is a social network that allows users and brands to share status updates, links, images, and videos. Users can comment, share, and support (+1) these interactions. Here are some of the marketing advantages Google+ offers:



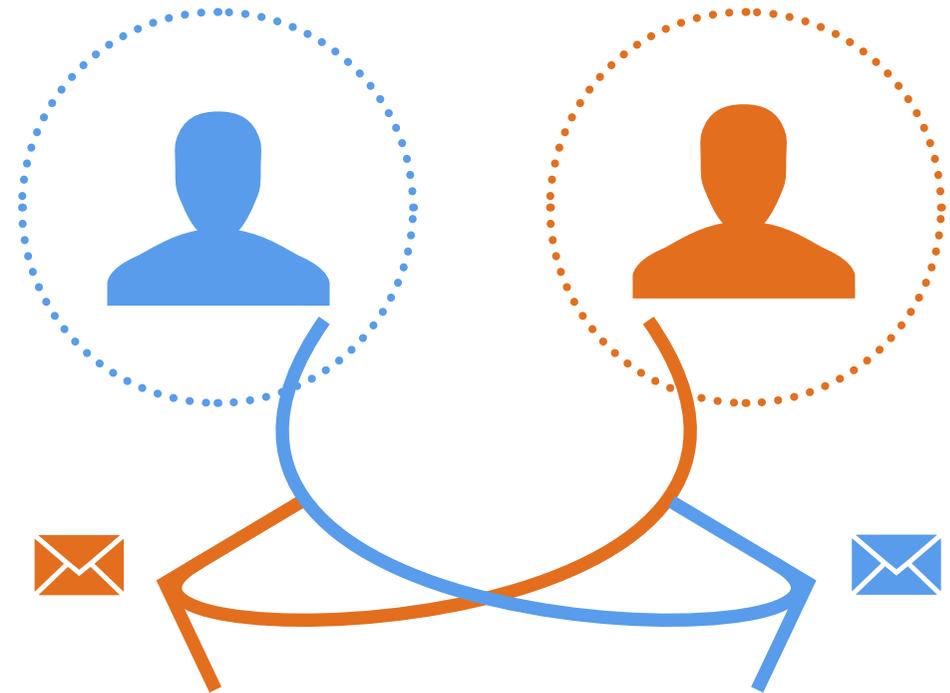
ADVANTAGES OF GOOGLE+ FOR MARKETING

1 GOOGLE+ CIRCLES & THE IMPORTANCE OF TARGETING

Circles, a key Google+ feature, allows for better targeting. You likely have several buyer personas and know that each of them needs different pieces of your marketing content. Circles enables you to do exactly such segmentation by sending updates to select groups of followers, e.g., “friends,” “marketing professionals,” etc. Such content targeting results in high click-through rates and an engaged social following.



Segmentation plays a crucial role not only in social media communication, but also across various marketing initiatives. In [MarketingSherpa's 2012 email marketing benchmark survey](#) respondents ranked segmentation the second most effective tactic (right after the ability to automatically send email based on triggers). Behavior-driven segmentation is a sophisticated marketing tactic that yields scalable results. Consider nurturing different target groups based on their conversion event on your website (what information they were interested in). [Find out how you can do that with HubSpot's all-in-one marketing software.](#)



2 GOOGLE+ AND THE BENEFITS OF SEARCH

Perhaps the best argument for getting started on Google+ is its integration into search results. Google+ status updates and content people have endorsed with +1 now appear in the organic search engine results on Google.com. So whether you simply have a +1 button on your blog or you're actively publishing content to Google+, your content has a much greater chance of dominating search results than it did before your participation in Google+. To learn more about how you can use Google+ for business, [check out our comprehensive ebook.](#)

Add the Google +1 button to your website and blog so that people can easily share your content with their friends, and help your pages rank better. You'll also benefit from increased traffic: [as our research shows](#),



WEBSITES USING THE +1 BUTTON

**GENERATE 3.5X THE GOOGLE+ VISITS
THAN SITES WITHOUT THE BUTTON**



Also, think about your overall keyword strategy and how to best exercise it on your Google+ page. To make sure your business page shows up for searches on keywords for which you want to rank, maintain a regularly updated Google+ business page and optimize your updates with those keywords.

HubSpot customers have the option to add the Google +1 button to their blog posts and website pages. [See how that might look like for your website in your custom demo of the HubSpot software.](#)



DISADVANTAGES OF GOOGLE+ FOR MARKETING

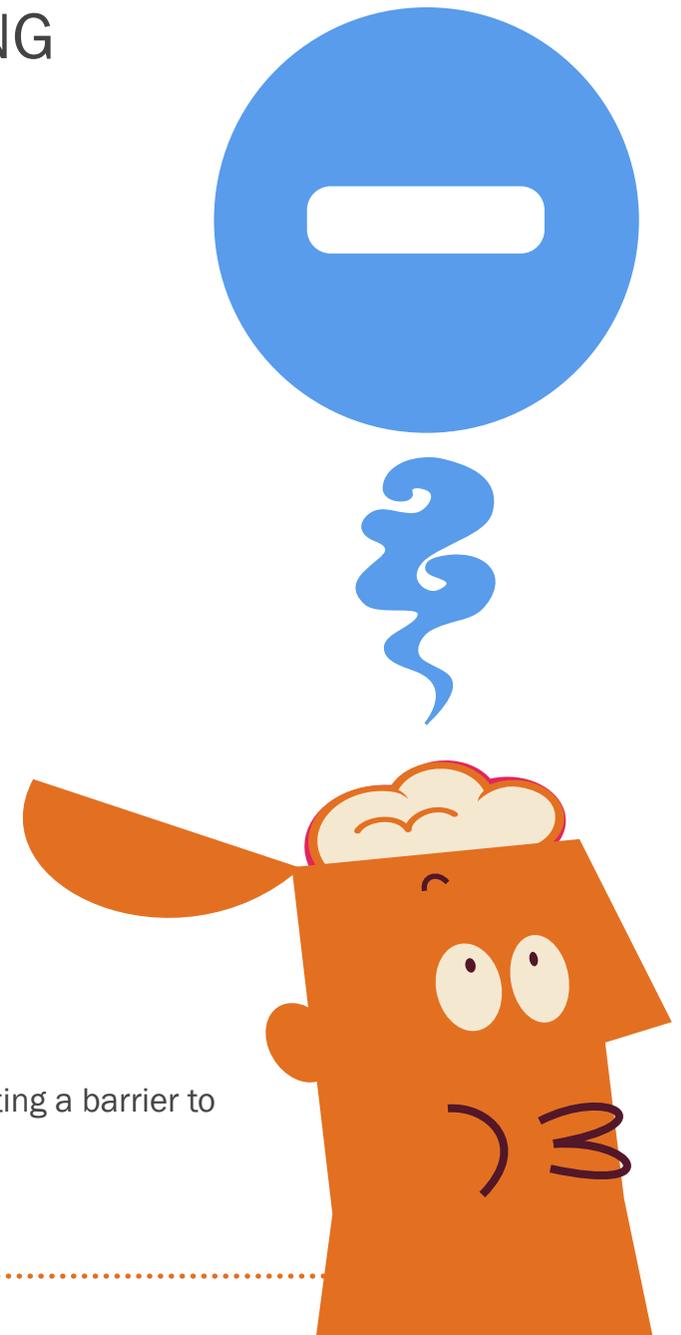
Despite the marketing opportunities Google+ presents, it is also a source of new challenges for businesses. As companies are making sense of the social network, they are exposing some of its major weaknesses from a marketing standpoint:

1 GENERAL CONFUSION

People still find Google+ confusing. Internet users are facing a number of questions:

-  WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN POSTING TO GOOGLE+ AND JUST +1'ING CONTENT?
-  IF I DO EITHER OF THEM, DOES IT MEAN I SHOW UP IN SEARCH?
-  HOW CAN I USE GOOGLE+ TO SHARE CONTENT WITHOUT MAKING IT INDEXABLE IN SEARCH?

These are all valid concerns that our audiences face. The intricacies of Google+ are creating a barrier to entry for users because if they don't get it, they won't use it.



2 LACK OF CLEAR VALUE PROPOSITION

eMarketer reports that in January

USERS SPENT AN AVERAGE OF JUST 3.3 MINUTES ON GOOGLE+ (COMPARED TO NEARLY 8 HOURS ON FACEBOOK.COM AND NEARLY 100 MINUTES ON PINTEREST).

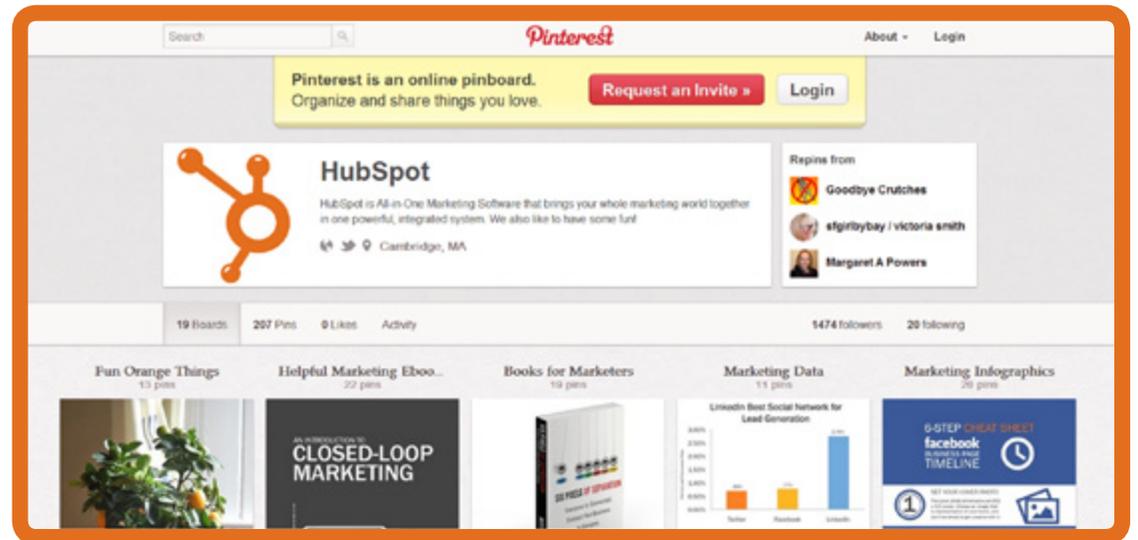
So Google+ might brag about its userbase of more than 100 million active users but those users aren't actually spending much time on the site. Do then marketers want to spend time on a social network their audiences aren't using?

To provide the same kind of value for its users as Facebook and Pinterest do, Google+ needs to provide a unique value proposition. Until it can differentiate itself further, it's not likely users will spend more than a few minutes a month on there.



PINTEREST

Since the fall of 2011, Pinterest has been extensively covered in both mainstream and marketing blogs and publications for its rapid growth and wide adoption. It's a visual social network for "pinning" images or videos to users' own or others' pinboards (collections of 'pins,' usually with a common theme). Here are some of Pinterest's key strengths for marketing:



ADVANTAGES OF PINTEREST FOR MARKETING

1 RAPID GROWTH

As of February 2012, Pinterest had 10.4 million users. Not only is its reach growing, but the average amount of time spent on the site per visitor was 97.8 minutes. These stats show that the site is sticky, providing significant value to its users so they're willing to set aside a large chunk of their day to spend on it. If those metrics continue to go up, it's an indication that Pinterest is not just a passing fad.



2 EASE OF SHARING CONTENT

Pinterest has also made it very easy to share content on the web. The platform prompts users to download a pinmarklet (a Pinterest toolbar bookmarklet) that allows them to pin any content they find on the web to share it. No copying and pasting links or switching between tabs and browsers. If you offer interesting visual content – infographics, cartoons, videos, etc. – Pinterest just made it easier for that content to be disseminated by your readers to a brand new audience.

3 HIGHLY VISUAL

Which brings us to one of the best parts about Pinterest: it's an image-driven site. Study after study show that people love browsing through images online. In fact, images and videos are the most shared content on Facebook, [with over 250 million photos uploaded each day](#). If you're a product-driven business, sharing beautiful images of your products on Pinterest is a simple way to leverage the tremendous power of visuals on a booming social network that is dedicated solely to sharing remarkable images. Here is an example of an infographic

[HubSpot shared on one of our pinboards:](#) 

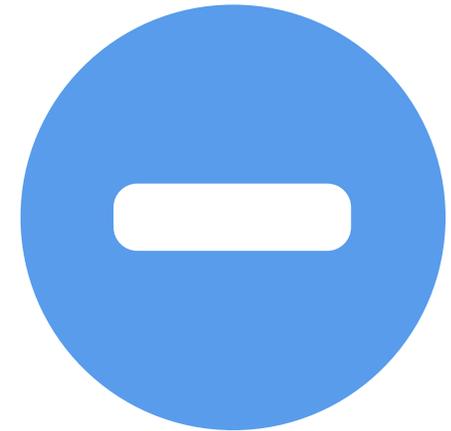


DISADVANTAGES OF PINTEREST FOR MARKETING

Similar to Google+, Pinterest poses some challenges to marketers.

Businesses are seeking to take advantage of this new visual network but they have a hard time incorporating it in their existing marketing tactics.

Here are some of Pinterest's key weaknesses from a marketing standpoint:



1 VISUAL ELEMENTS CAN BE LIMITING

One of Pinterest's biggest strengths, its emphasis on visual content, is also one of its biggest weaknesses for some businesses. Frankly, most people think of Pinterest as a place to look at things like clothes, hairstyles, furniture, crafts, and other visually stimulating images. If you're not a B2C or product-oriented business, it seems like a stretch to find a use for Pinterest.

That's not to say you can't be successful on Pinterest; HubSpot got creative and combined pinboards of our visual content, like infographics, ebook covers, and inbound marketing graphs. If you are looking for advice on what visuals to create and pin, [check out our ebook "How to Use Pinterest for Business."](#)

2 LACK OF DEDICATED BRAND PAGES

Google+, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and LinkedIn all eventually created spaces specifically for businesses. Pinterest doesn't offer such a space. The challenge marketers face on Pinterest is figuring out how to market without seeming like marketing. How do you create visual content that's so cool that people won't care it's also driving referral traffic and inbound links to your website?

You should always be monitoring the referrals that Pinterest sends to your pages. Many businesses, HubSpot included, have already reported that they got more traffic from Pinterest than some other social networks like Twitter, Google+ or LinkedIn. Evaluate if that is true for your organization by looking at your [marketing analytics](#). Here is a screenshot of how that view might look like if you use the HubSpot software. The data below is fake but it gives you a good sense of the type of information you should be able to access:

REFERRER	VISITS	VISIT TO LEAD	LEADS
hubspot.com	77,879	.67%	520
google.com	27,003	.07%	19
pinterest.com	9,682	.18%	17

[Get a personal demo of HubSpot's software](#) to see how this data might look like for your business. Start tracking the ROI of your different marketing channels, social media included.



TWO OF THE BIGGEST USER GROUPS ON GOOGLE+ ARE COLLEGE STUDENTS & SOFTWARE DEVELOPERS

63% OF GOOGLE+ USERS ARE MEN, WHO TEND TO POST ABOUT TECHNOLOGY



MOST PINS ARE ABOUT DESIGN, FASHION & HOME DECOR

83% OF PINTEREST USERS ARE FEMALES, 18-34



WHEN TO CHOOSE GOOGLE+?

●..... IF DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME

There is no rule against posting the same content on multiple social networks, e.g. Twitter, Facebook and Google+. (Pinterest, on the other hand, isn't as universally accepting to content due to its visual character.) If the only time you have to give, at this stage in the game, is sharing links to written content, Google+ is much more appropriate for you than Pinterest.



●..... IF YOUR TARGET DEMOGRAPHIC IS MALE

As we have already established, Google+ users are largely men. If you look into your buyer persona and see that your ideal audience is primarily men, then you should consider spending more time on Google+ to appeal to that segment.



●..... IF YOU CARE ABOUT ORGANIC SEARCH

In his [2012 update](#) Google's CEO Larry Page touched upon the concept of next generation search, in which Google+ will play an increasing role. The connections you have on Google+ will impact the search results people see when they search for industry-specific keywords and how they consume information. Stay ahead of this next generation search game by building your presence on Google+.



WHEN TO CHOOSE PINTEREST?

●..... IF YOU CAN INVEST THE TIME

Pinterest has the opportunity to be extremely valuable for retail businesses, or anyone who sells an aesthetic-centered service—hairdressers, for example. Yet it can also offer a lot of value to businesses that are willing to put in the time to create visually stimulating content. If you ‘pin’ boring images, they are not going to perform well on Pinterest, so if you want to tackle this network, you’ve to invest the time.



●..... IF YOUR TARGET DEMOGRAPHIC IS FEMALE

As opposed to Google+, Pinterest users are largely female. So if the key decision makes in your market are women, you should focus on Pinterest to appeal to this segment. Don’t forget that Pinterest users spend a lot of time on the site, so you have a good chance of engaging with them there.



●..... IF YOU CARE ABOUT REFERRALS

As we already mentioned, many businesses report that Pinterest has become a bigger source of referrals for their sites than Google+. Increasing the volume of traffic you get is great but make sure you use [marketing analytics](#) to track the quality of that traffic (by looking at visitor-to-lead and even lead-to-customer conversion rates). Learn more about this type of closed-loop reporting [in a free inbound marketing assessment with HubSpot’s experts](#).



BEFORE YOU JUMP IN, ASK YOURSELF THESE QUESTIONS:



Does your business' target audience have a heavy skew in one industry, job type, or gender? If so, this data may be key in deciding whether it's worth your time to pursue marketing on Google+ or Pinterest.



Do you have budget to allow someone on your team (or hire someone externally) to spend more time on social media marketing? If you don't have the budget or the time at this point, focus on the low-hanging fruit: maintaining your existing social channels and reusing content when possible.



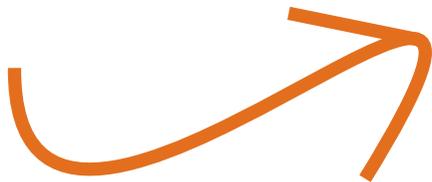
Are you equipped with [marketing software](#) that enables you to do closed-loop reporting? If not, you won't know how much of the traffic your are getting from Google+ and Pinterest converts into leads and customers. You might easily get confused by focusing on the quantity of the traffic when you don't have any insights into its quality.

Make sense of closed-loop marketing and how to integrate Google+ or Pinterest with the rest of your marketing. [Sign up for HubSpot's 30-day free trial to learn at your own pace.](#)



INTEGRATE SOCIAL MEDIA IN YOUR MARKETING

Don't let social media live in a silo from the rest of your marketing. Integrate it with all other assets you are using to optimize your efforts and get better results.

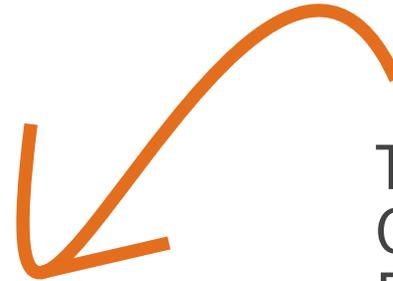


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...to learn how the HubSpot all-in-one marketing software can help you with these tasks.

TRACK THE ROI OF GOOGLE+ AND PINTEREST

Not sure if Google+ or Pinterest are worth your time and ongoing investment? Make up your mind using real data by tracking the ROI of your marketing channels.



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