

# Top Ways to Gain Support Using Pinterest

Boost awareness and support with this remarkable tool.

By Karen Leland

**G**reat brands are all about telling stories. The social bookmarking site Pinterest is at its core about storytelling in pictures. Pinterest has tapped into people's visceral love of visuals. No nonprofit can afford to miss the boat on bringing what Pinterest offers.

Pinterest lets people create a visual, online pinboard with images they love. They can organize these pictures around topics of their choice.

It's the fastest growing social media site in history. The third largest network after Facebook and Twitter, it has over 25 million members and 10 million unique visitors a month.

Here are the top tactics for achieving maximum results with Pinterest:

## 1. STRATEGIZE FIRST & PIN SECOND

Consider your objectives before you pin. (See "Know Thy Lingo" on page 9 for definitions of "pin," "pinning," and other basic Pinterest terms.) What's your primary goal? Choose one from the following list of possibilities:

- **Drive traffic** to your Web site.
- **Boost awareness** of your brand.
- **Promote** new products or services.
- **Educate** your customer base.
- **Enhance** customer understanding and enthusiasm.
- **Increase** donations, volunteerism, in-kind services, or other forms of support.
- **Improve** customer service.

Depending on your strategy, you'll want to pick the images that best support your main objective.

## 2. MANAGE AND BALANCE YOUR PERCENTAGES

Create inviting boards by making 40% of your pins motivational and inspiring, 40% instructional and educational, and only 20% about your brand (including products, services, profiles, specials, and contests).

## 3. MAKE YOUR WEB SITE PIN FRIENDLY

Install a prominent "Pin It" button on your Web site. Give every page and blog post a featured image that can be pinned automatically. In addition, put a social media "Follow me on Pinterest" button on your home page.

## 4. SHARE WITH, ENGAGE, & PROMOTE OTHERS

Build your brand by engaging with others through repinning and "liking" other pins. Engaging with others in these ways generates flow back to your Pinterest.

## 5. ESTABLISH YOUR EXPERTISE

Craft keyword-rich pin and board titles and descriptions to boost your Google ranking. Use hashtags to highlight key words and phrases your customers search for. Emphasize pins with a focus on problems and solutions you specialize in.

## 6. INTEGRATE PINTEREST WITH YOUR OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA

Connect with your other social media by creating a Pinterest tab on Facebook, tweeting your pins, and embedding pins in your blog posts.

## 7. ORGANIZE YOUR PINBOARD

Research shows that pins placed front and center receive the highest percentage of viewers and capture the most attention. So place your most important pins near the middle of the top or second row of the board.

## 8. GIVE AWAY VALUE-ADDED INFORMATION

Pins that have a call to action see 80% more engagement than those that don't give people a way to follow up. Post pins that focus on free reports, e-books, videos, and podcasts you offer. Be sure to add a live link to each of those pins' descriptions.

## 9. LEVERAGE THE POWER OF MULTIMEDIA

Make your pinboards more interactive by sharing videos, webinars, teleclasses, screencasts, and podcasts. Good multimedia pins include: presentations, expert tutorials, product demos, behind-the-scenes tours, and excerpts from live recorded interviews, courses, and trainings.

## 10. ANALYZE YOUR METRICS

Using your settings page, sign up for access to Pinterest Web Analytics. Use this analytics tool to figure out which of your pins

### PINNING DOWN YOUR STORY & YOUR BRAND

Use articles like these at [www.NonprofitWorld.org](http://www.NonprofitWorld.org) to strategize more ways to raise funds and gain new supporters:

**Why Telling the Right Brand Story Matters So Much**  
(Vol. 32, No. 3)

**Accelerating Fundraising through Social Media**  
(Vol. 28, No. 3)

**How to Transform Your Brand** (Vol. 28, No. 5)

**Telling the Story: Exploring Clients' Lives** (Vol. 17, No. 1)

**Why Invest in Brand? And Where Should You Begin?**  
(Vol. 29, No. 3)

**Exercising Board Leadership with Social Media**  
(Vol. 32, No. 1)

generate the greatest response and interest. The information will help you see which pinning efforts are paying off and shape your future strategy. 

*Karen Leland (kl@karenleland.com) is the best-selling author of nine business books, including Entrepreneur Magazine's Ultimate Guide to Pinterest for Business (entrepreneur.com), from which this article is adapted. She writes a regular branding and marketing column for Entrepreneur.com and is president of Sterling Marketing Group, where she works with entrepreneurs to build stronger personal and business brands.*

## Know Thy Lingo

**Pin:** Any image added to Pinterest. Below the menu on a Pinterest page, you'll see a set of images. Each of these images is a pin. You can create your own pins by adding images from your Web site or the Internet. Pins can be composed of images, videos, slideshows, or audio. A pin's visuals should be accompanied by:

- **a description of the pin** (500 characters or less)
- **the pinner's name** (and the original pinner, if the image has been repinned)
- **the name of the board** under which the pin is housed.

**Board, or Pinboard:** A set of pins created around a specific topic.

**Pinning:** The act of placing content (images, video) onto a particular board.

**Repinning:** Adding an image you find while browsing Pinterest to your own board. A repin maintains the source link of the image no matter how many times it's repinned.

**Pin It Button:** A button that lets you instantly pin content when surfing the Internet. Beneath the "Help" section on the Pinterest site is a tutorial about how to install the "pin it" button on your Web browser for easy pinning.

**Pin It to Win It Contests:** These contests are fast becoming a staple in the Pinterest community and can expose you to a much wider audience. Here are the basics:

- **Decide on the flavor** of the contest you plan on running. For example, offer a prize for the best board created on a particular topic. Or hold a photo competition for the best pin placed on one of your boards, and let your followers choose the winner.
- **Design the pin**, write the caption explaining the action you want users to take, and tell them what they'll get if they win. For example, Gifts.com (<http://pinterest.com/Giftsdotcom/>) created a Holiday Pinterest Board Contest offering \$1,000 for the most beautiful board.
- **Offer a tempting prize.** Since the objective is to get as many repins as possible (thus introducing you to a host of new followers), be sure to offer a desirable prize. Gift cards, as well as merchandise, cash, and experiences, can all be good incentives if they're seen as worthwhile by other pinners.

**Tagging:** Inserting the @ symbol in your pin description before the name of someone else. Tagging other pinners increases your Pinterest community participation and can build ties with others.

**Hashtag:** A way to tag a term using the # symbol that makes it findable by others searching for that same word or phrase. For instance, if you hashtag a graphic as #timemanagement, others will find it when they put the phrase "timemanagement" into Pinterest search.



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