

# Becoming Buzzworthy

A GUIDE TO MAKING YOUR  
STORE e-SAVVY

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## WHY SOCIAL MEDIA?

AS AN INDEPENDENT RETAILER, your schedule is already time-crunched. You wear more hats than you have heads and are wondering how you can add yet another task to your to-do list. But stop, take a deep breath, and relax – getting up to speed on marketing with social media is faster and easier than you might think, and is definitely worth the effort!

Social media is essential as a marketing strategy since you can engage your customer base directly and establish a relationship with them. As they come to know (and like) you, they will also come to trust you as a valuable resource for reliable information and service. This relationship makes them more likely to do business with you in the future, bringing their social friends with them.

With this quick overview, you can make the best use of your social media time. Try a variety of communication tools and see what your customers respond to best.

# BLOGGING

**A BLOG** is a great way to establish you as the source of industry information with insider insights. When you talk about the latest news, your customers come to feel more connected with you, and develop a trust that you will give them valuable information about their hobby.

To get the most out of blogging as a marketing tool, give your visitors a reason to come back to your blog, as well as come in to your store to do business with you.

## WHAT TO SHARE:

- Techniques
- Tips contributed by customers
- Tutorials
- Descriptions and photos of upcoming class projects
- Sales promotions/special offers
- New product sneak peeks
- Blog-only giveaways and contests

## DID YOU KNOW?

You can blog for free! Setup your blog instantly through online services like:

[blogger.com](http://blogger.com)  
[typepad.com](http://typepad.com)  
[wordpress.com](http://wordpress.com)  
[weebly.com](http://weebly.com)

You can customize the look of your blog when you are setting it up, choosing from a variety of templates and themed styles. You can pick your layout, colors, and fonts, and even add a variety of custom sidebar features.

There are many free blog headers and templates that you can find online and add to your blog design to personalize it a little more. There are also an abundance of inexpensive options for personalizing your blog, from utilizing pre-designed templates and headers available for a few dollars, to hiring somebody to do a completely custom blog header for under \$50.



**A FACEBOOK PAGE** can be used much the same way that a blog can – to communicate in a casual way with your customers and also get feedback from them. One thing that makes a Facebook page different is that once someone “likes” you, your page status updates show up in your followers’ News Feed. You can also invite them to events – your friends become an instant mailing list. If your customers are on Facebook frequently, these features put you in front of them more often, reminding them of why they want to do business with you.

You might find it takes a while to develop a community of followers on Facebook, so plan on being patient with the process. Include your URL in store signage and flyers, and encourage store visitors to “like” your page to receive updates in their News Feeds. Think of ways to encourage them to check back with you often.

#### **WHAT TO SHARE:**

- Question of the Day to get people involved in a group discussion
- Surveys about favorite products
- Photos of new products and class projects
- A video tour of your store
- Video clips taken during a promotional event
- Reminders about class deadlines and availability



# TWITTER

**THINK OF TWITTER** as a mini-blog since your content must be 140 characters or less. Your communication will be short and to the point, and on a more personal level. You can use Twitter as a tool to broadcast reminders about upcoming events and other information your customers will find useful. You can also use Twitter as a mobile marketing tool, since many people view Twitter on their mobile devices. Twitter is a great place to share the newest releases from your favorite manufacturers, or share news from the latest trade show you are attending.

## WHAT TO SHARE:

- Quick news updates about “this just in!”
- Questions about current projects
- Reminders of upcoming deadlines
- Coupons that people can show you on their phones during checkout
- Links to instructional videos that customers can view on their mobile phones

## DID YOU KNOW?

There are some fabulous resources out there for managing your Twitter account. You can download free or nominally priced Twitter desktop clients or use online software to set up searches for keywords (like community or industry buzzwords), schedule tweets, and manage lists of companies, customers, or industry personalities that you follow. Many of the applications even integrate facebook and other social media channels, making staying on top of all of your social media easy!

Some favorites include:

[tweetdeck.com](http://tweetdeck.com)  
[twhirl.com](http://twhirl.com)  
[seismic.com](http://seismic.com)  
[hootsuite.com](http://hootsuite.com)



# FLICKR



**FLICKR IS** a community site where users can view and share photos and discuss common interests. As a retailer, you can use Flickr to create an instant online photo gallery of project ideas. Flickr provides an easy way to create an online portfolio that you can link to or share as an embeddable “widget” on your store website and/or blog.

## **WHAT TO SHARE:**

- Photos of product displays
- Step-by-step instructional tutorials for projects
- Customers’ projects made from products purchased at your store

### **MAKE IT MANAGEABLE**

No matter which social tool you use, it's best to post content regularly and frequently to keep customers coming back for updates. Take the pressure off yourself by delegating social media management to a trusted member of your staff. By using someone who is already familiar with social media, you'll get your message out quickly.

### **WHO CAN HELP**

- A knowledgeable staff person familiar with your business and personality
- A local high school student well versed in social media
- A college intern, majoring in marketing

### **MAKE THE MOST OF IT**

The time spent developing your social media will prove invaluable to the growth and development of your business. Connecting directly with your audience and sharing your message in real-time (and all for free) is sure to improve your relationship with your customers. And that's always worth the effort!