

The Basics of Google Plus: Are you in?

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Google Plus (Google+) is a social network powered by the search engine giant Google. According to a 2013 report by market research firm Trendstream, it has attracted 500 million registered users, growing into the second largest social network behind Facebook. With its recent redesigns, feature add-ons, and integration with other popular Google products, it is becoming a high value-add marketing tool for organizations looking to expand their reach by taking full advantage of social media. Key features of Google+ include a content stream, a dynamic profile that can be automatically linked to any content you post on your website or your blog, and “hangouts,” which is a video chat service from Google that enables both one-on-one chats and group chats with up to ten people at a time.

What are the advantages of creating a Google+ business profile? Since it is operated by Google, your Google+ profile helps to get your organization's online content (website, blog, Google+ posts) more effectively ranked and indexed by Google's search engine. You increase your odds of getting highly targeted visitors from Google's organic search results if you have a Google+ business profile. The status updates you post on Google+ are indexed immediately into search results, increasing the possibility that your Google+

network will see links to your organization's content in their search results.

Unlike Facebook and Twitter, Google+ allows you to separate your followers into different groups or “circles.” This powerful feature improves the privacy and effectiveness of communication by allowing an organization to target information to specific groups of people. The circles feature is a great way to organize your followers along interest lines and manage distribution of content more effectively. Think of it as a segmented Facebook feed.

Google+ connections are made when one user (in this case your organization) places another user (one of your followers) into a “circle.” You can have several circles, and can place the same person in more than one circle if you choose. Only the people in a specific circle can see the updates you post in that circle (e.g. special job clubs, employer groups, etc.).

Much like your Facebook “News Feed,” Google+ has a “stream” that contains updates made by people you are connected with and which can be filtered based on the various circles you have created. You also can post your own updates, which may include a photo, video, or a link. You also have the ability to comment on, share, or “+1” (signal your appreciation for) your followers' posts. When

posting a new update yourself, you are given the option to select which circle or circles see that update.

As mentioned earlier, Google+ has a new video chat feature called “hangouts.” It is available via a plug-in on Android devices, iPhones, and iPads. An advantage to hangouts over skype is the number of people who can take part in a hangout for free.

We'd love to know if your workforce organization is tapping into the power of Google+. Send us a quick email at celina@fullcapacitymarketing.com, so that we can check it out and share your innovations with others. Next month, we examine specific Google+ strategies for workforce organizations. You can learn more about Google+ and how to set up a business account for your organization at <http://www.google.com/+/business/>.

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