

An illustration of a man in a blue suit standing on a green grassy field. He has a thoughtful expression, with his hand to his chin. A spotlight from the top right corner shines on him, creating a bright area around him. Blue confetti is falling from the spotlight, and white dashed lines form a circular path around the man. The background is a gradient of blue and green.

Executive's Quick-Start Guide to the Social Web

Growing Your Personal Brand Online
to Reap the Rewards Offline

Version 1.0
April, 2009

Paul Schwartz
www.congruity.biz

Why this guide?

I have spent enough time helping friends and colleagues get started on the social web that it's time to capture the process and pointers in a simple guide for others to use.

I would probably have done things different for myself based on my current knowledge, so I'd like to share that wisdom so you get off on the right foot.

That's what the social web is all about. Get engaged, contribute and lend value. Do those first and the benefits will follow.

What is the social web and what can I do there?

I've adapted the following content from the book [Groundswell](#), by C. Li and J. Bernhoff, which I highly recommend:

Task	Web App	Examples
Consume	RSS & Widgets	Google Reader
Connect	Social networking sites	Facebook , LinkedIn
Classify	Tagging sites	delicious , digg
Critique	Ratings, reviews, forums	Yelp , Kudzu
Communicate	Micro-blogging, IM	Twitter
Create	Blogs	Wordpress , Typepad
Collaborate	Wikis	PBwiki

Why should I be there?

So, why invest the time and energy? What benefits can I expect? There are three broad categories of benefits that come from the social web:

1. **Listening & Learning:** Increase your knowledge and expertise, and as a result increase your personal value. Gather insight and feedback. Follow your competition. This is the best place to start, so spend more time here.
2. **Awareness & Engagement:** Increase awareness, for you and your company. Expand your personal and professional network and increase your thought-leadership position when you engage with others.
3. **Impact:** Find your next job, your next great employee, your next business partner, your next customer...

Where do I begin?

Here is where I will ask you to wait before visiting any social websites to set-up your profiles. Let's first define your personal brand. It's important because this will allow people to recognize you, relate to you, and want to build a relationship with you.

The key to a successful brand: What's your R·D·C·D?

For a business, the brand really encompasses all aspects of the relationships it has with employees, customers, and stakeholders. Simply put, from the customer's perspective a successful brand is really a shortcut to the purchase decision.

All successful brands have at least one thing in common - a defined R·D·C·D:

Relevant Difference that can be Consistently Delivered

Take some time to define what makes you unique and relevant to your network, and be sure you are able to demonstrate that uniqueness on a regular basis. It may be your area of expertise, it may be an ability to synthesize, strategize, or offer a different perspective. If you're still not certain, ask some trusted friends and colleagues what makes you valuable and unique.

Where should I sign-up?

The best answer to this is the same social website where your personal and professional network hangs out. At this time, it appears to be these three major properties:



[LinkedIn](#)

(Professional Networking)



[Facebook](#)

(Personal Networking)



[Twitter](#)

(Micro-blogging)

LinkedIn: Find, be introduced to, and collaborate with qualified professionals. Best used for professional networking, and has some great apps you can add to your profile.

Facebook: Helps you connect and share with the people in your life. Best used for personal networking, also has some great apps. Pages are great for companies, and they have groups as well.

Twitter: A micro-blogging messaging utility for staying connected in real-time. You follow others and others can follow you. Uses the mobile text messaging platform.

How do I start off on the right path?

Guidelines:

- Start by asking questions, answering questions, offering insight and opinions.
- Be sincere, authentic, genuine, professional, and transparent.
- Focus on nuggets of information – get to the point, brevity is key.
- Treat everyone as equal.
- Remember, it's about conversations – you should be a part of them.
- Give way more than you take.

Profiles:

- Pick a username that is memorable or descriptive of you, and try to use the same one on all sites. Try not to use special characters (_ or -) that are difficult to text.
- Use a unique/recognizable, flattering photo, and use the same one for each profile.
- Complete each of your profiles.
- “What are you doing right now?” Should be thought of as “what are your doing right now that others will care about?” or “what are you thinking right now?”
- Reach out to your network to get connected.
- Consider who you are adding to your network.

[More tips for good social media participation](#)

[A note about blogs: This may be the best tool to help build a personal brand. Realize they take more time, care and feeding than the others I listed. If you do decide to blog I suggest you have about 4 or 5 blog posts ready to go before you first publish online. Check out [copyblogger](#) for great tips on blogging and writing copy.

How do I measure success?

Ahh, ready for the great debate? Short answer is “are you making progress toward your objectives?” I think there are two ways to measure success here:

- Dashboard metrics
 - Number of connections (friends, followers, and fans)
 - Number of recommendations, referrals, and re-tweets
 - For Twitter, check out [twitalyzer](#)
- Directional measures
 - Quality of connections
 - Tone of comments/recommendations
 - Number and quality of “business opportunities” generated

Cool Tools to Help

[BackType Alerts](#) – Email alerts when people are mentioning you, your products and services. Also check out [Social Mention Alerts](#)

[Google Alerts](#) - alerts to e-mail from a variety of sources.

[Monitter](#): Real-time tracking of keyword mentions on Twitter.

[Ping.fm](#) - update all your social networks from one application.

Who am I?

I'm a marketing and customer relationship professional. I run my own business and write the blog [Customer U](#). You can find me here:

Email: paul@congruity.biz

Business Website: www.congruity.biz

LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/schwartzp

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/schwartzp>

Enough about me, how can I help you?

Finally – let's not take ourselves too seriously...

