

Pin it!

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Still don't know what Pinterest is? Recall your old high school days when locker doors were decorated with magazine clippings of favorite things: teen idols, sports stars, and fashionistas. Take that idea, sort it by category, post it online, and you have Pinterest.

Think of Pinterest as your personal filing cabinet with all the folders you need inside all the drawers you could wish for – add the convenience of having it all neatly catalogued on your very own web page. DIY, food & drink, fashion trends, travel & leisure, automotive and more... find something you like online and virtually pin it on the pin board by category. The site saves the link and now you can go back to it later. The categories are endless; but it's more than keeping track of things, it's about sharing ideas.

Earlier this year, Pinterest cracked the 10 million monthly unique visitor mark faster than any site—ever. That's more traffic than Google Plus, LinkedIn and YouTube combined. Part of its appeal to businesses—besides its numbers—has been its audience. The user base is predominantly educated, females, aged 25-44. Many consumer goods and retail companies would describe this demographic as their "sweet spot."

The service industry is a little less obvious, but just because you don't sell a physically tangible good doesn't mean that you can't take advantage of images to promote your public offering on Pinterest. At Alpern Rosenthal, we use Pinterest to tell a story about the personality of our business. We post pictures related to busy season, our ad campaigns throughout the years, and some accounting humor. Check us out! <http://pinterest.com/alpernrosenthal/>

Still, there are some words of caution that you need to know about Pinterest.

- 1. Pinterest skirts copyright laws—but that doesn't mean you are protected.** [ReadWriteWeb](#) has done a good job explaining how Pinterest takes advantage of a provision in the Internet Service Providers Act to protect itself but that you are still liable if you upload an image that you don't own.
- 2. Is it the right fit?** Just because Pinterest is all the rage does not necessarily mean it's right for your company—or that you should divert your attention from other marketing initiatives to rush to Pinterest.

As with any of the other social media platforms, using Pinterest poorly could be more damaging to your brand image than it is helpful.

3. Addiction has a price. If Pinterest begins to contribute to the loss of employee workplace productivity that's no laughing matter. Access to social media is still being debated across corporate America. Surveys show most companies don't let employees access social network sites for risk reasons, but probably also because they fear a productivity drain. Proponents say allowing access benefits corporations in everything from market intelligence to recruiting. What's more, the next generation of workers will require it.

Pinterest may be a great part of your 2012 marketing strategy. Just make sure you don't get "stuck" in the process.