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New At Aplus.net

July 2009

- ▶ Aplus.net has launched [Codoro](#), a new dedicated and managed solutions brand.
- ▶ TopSEOs named Aplus.net a Top Hosting Company.
- ▶ We're discussing the move to a ['televisual experience'](#) with ReadWriteWeb.

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Social Media Businesses



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Social media: the new buzzword in marketing campaigns for businesses of all sizes. If you're new to the social media playground, read on.

The exact definition of social media is controversial and difficult to pin down, but for our purposes social media is any interactive, Internet-based content-sharing community. A few of the most popular social media sites include Twitter (a microblogging platform), Facebook (a social-networking platform) and YouTube (a video-sharing platform). Blogs and forums also play a big role in social media.

"But I don't market to teenagers," you say. "Why should I bother?"

Here's a wake-up call: social media isn't just for teens! Facebook's 18-25 age bracket only accounts for 35 percent of its users, its fastest-growing demographic is the 35-and-older set, and it has more than 200 million users. If marketing to the people means going where the people go, head to Facebook (and other social media sites).

Before you jump in, familiarize yourself with the following four social media guidelines:

1. Don't start by creating a company profile. Make a personal account and test the site from a user perspective. See what your competitors are doing, and look at how users are responding. Only once you're comfortable as a user, and if you think the platform meshes with your company's desired image, should you make a company profile.
2. Never try to sell anything. Social media platforms focus on relationships between real people. Once your new friends trust you, they might visit your website and find out what you have to offer – and even if they don't, they might refer their friends to you as a reputable and responsive business.
3. Give the people what they want. People won't flock to you just because you're online – you have to engage them! Make them laugh or give them information that makes a difference in their lives, but don't overwhelm them with advertising or irrelevant information. You'll lose their hard-earned trust.
4. Stick with it. Relationships can take years to build online, just like in

real life. You might not see much happen during the first weeks and months of your campaign, but that's ok. Your audience's reactions will tell you what worked and what didn't, you'll learn something new with each experiment.

For more information on specific platforms such as [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Delicious](#), check out the [Aplus.net blog](#).

Buzzword: Microblogging

Microblogging, or sharing small chunks of text on the Internet, is a growing phenomenon on social media sites. Twitter, the most famous microblogging site, allows users to share 140-character messages with their followers. Facebook and LinkedIn have a similar feature, called a status update. Microblogging can be used to share behavioral information (Twitter's main question: "What are you doing?") and links to other sites. Microblogging can also be used for PR and marketing purposes because of its one-on-one feel. Users can update many microblogs via Web sites, desktop widgets, and cell phones.

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