

SOCIAL MEDIA QUICK START



3. Google +



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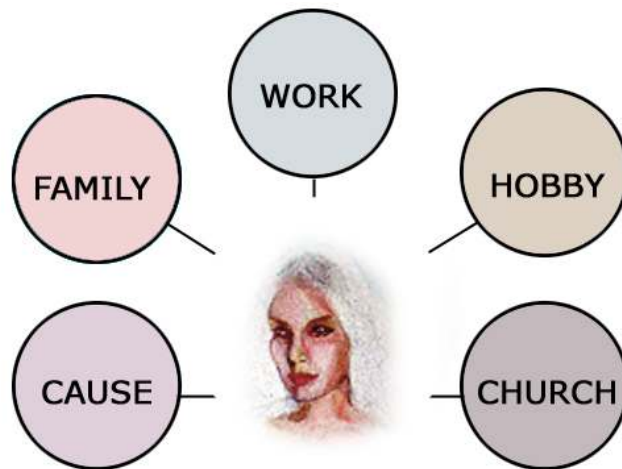
Week: Three: Google+ for Business

If you've been feeling disappointed with Facebook (i.e. it's not the right fit for you and your clients) then Google+ may be your salvation!

What Google has deliberately done (apart from learning from its mistakes with Buzz) is to seemingly tackle all the common objections to the way Facebook currently allows you to share content -- and overcome them.

Google+ is the perfect tool for a highly-focused audience that dislikes "wasting time" wading through -- as one Google+ Circle member put it -- "sentimental" posts that end with 'if you love your [Mother, Father, Dog] please repost' or 'If you've lost someone to [disease of the week], please repost' -- along with 'Where did you meet me on Facebook? Let's see who my true friends are'."

Google+ also pleases those who think visually... thanks to **Google+ Circles**:



Speaking of which, one subject we didn't touch upon when exploring the psychology of social media users during Week One: **Learning styles**.

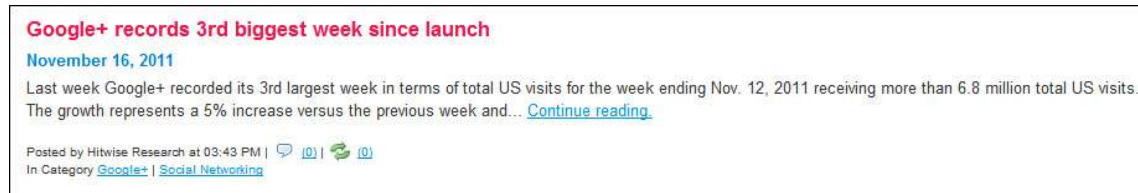
It has long been accepted there are **four basic learning styles**:

- **Visual** -- Thinks in images and pictures. Prefers diagrams to descriptions.
- **Auditory** -- Retains things best on hearing them rather than seeing diagrams or reading text. Prefers .Mpegs and audio tapes to reading.
- **Text-based** -- Needs to see things in print before being able to retain them. Prefers books or written instructions

- **Tactile** (kinesthetic) -- Needs to actually do something, hands-on, before it will "stick". This is the person who has to "just start using the software" -- and to whom manuals make no sense

However, there's a fifth group, thanks to the internet, that is rarely acknowledged: Busy entrepreneurs who have learned that **visual "shortcuts"** -- ***imagic thinking*** -- **save time**. This "fifth element", through experience, has grown capable of grasping abstract concepts or detailed information very quickly with the most basic visual clues. And the simpler, the better!

Google+ has already been embraced by entrepreneurs who fit this description, as well as by tactile and visual learners. In fact, this social network racked up 40 million users in October 2011 -- and another 6.8 million U.S. active return visitors were recorded, according to analyst weblog site, [Experian Hitwise](#), making that a jump of 5% in one week alone:



The only active users you need to worry about, however, are the ones in your own Circles. That puts us back to knowing your audience (and all their preferences and psychological profiles).

And ***educating your potential audience***, of course. (Many people you'd like to network with will join you, if you let them know how easy it is to connect on Google+.)

But before we explore the potential advantages and disadvantages for your business purposes, it helps to delve further into what many feel is Google+'s biggest advantage...

Step One: Understanding -- and Using -- Circles

Dragging and dropping someone into a particular Circle, using their profile photo, is so much simpler than sending "friend" requests, waiting for an answer, being unable to remember which "group" or "list" you put them in; then discovering that the group accidentally got wiped out with the social media network's last volley of changes.

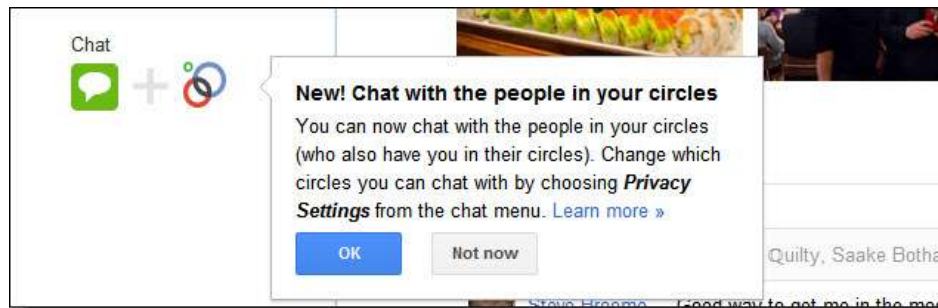
With Circles, "you can choose who gets to know what", as Google+ puts it.

You can include or exclude personal information separately for each circle (complete customization). For example, you wouldn't include your relationship information in your "Work" circle, but you might want to detail your work history. On the other hand, it

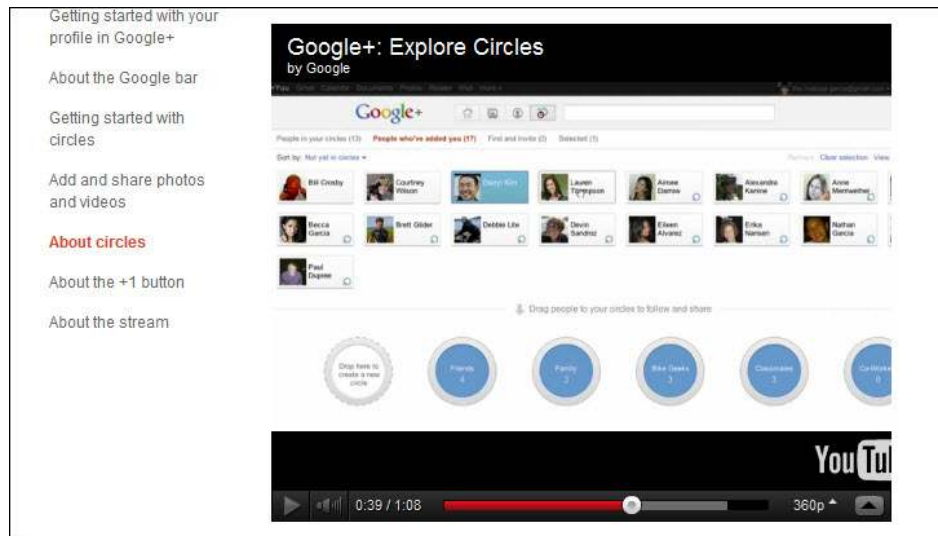
would be entirely appropriate to include your relationship details, birthday, etc. in your "Close Family and Friends" circle -- but you'd most likely exclude your employment history, because -- as one teenage relation put it -- "nobody cares".

The five main benefits of Circles include:

- Ease of use and management
- You don't need permission to add people to your Google+ Circles (though you will only be able to see Public posts from them)
- It's much easier and more efficient to segregate different types of contacts in Google+ Circles -- without the endless (and ever-changing) confusion of creating and managing Facebook lists
- When you add someone to a Circle, they know they've been added -- but they don't know which Circle they're actually in. This prevents Aunt Joan from realizing she's been put in your "Christmas Cards Only" circle (yes, you can designate your own categories), for example.
- Google+ allows you to chat "off the record" (select **Options>Off the Record**). Your discussion with that particular Circle contact is not saved. (You can also disable the Chat option in individual circles via the Privacy Settings.)

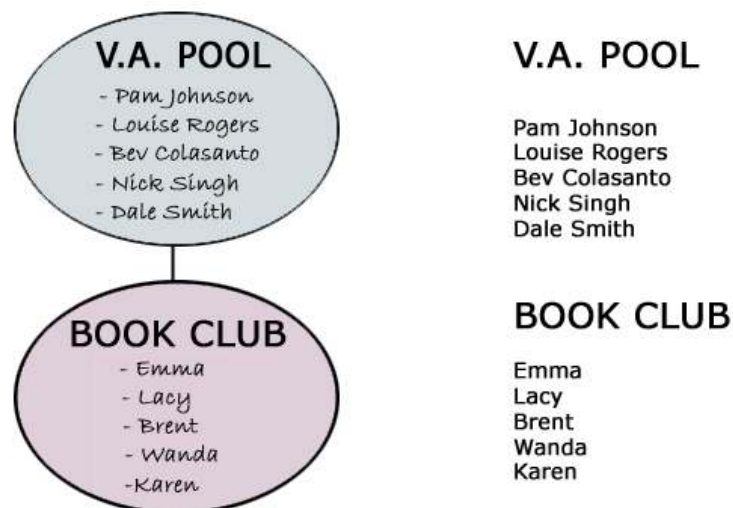


And nothing could be simpler than adding people you know to your Circles, once you've signed up and imported your address lists. Google+ walks you through the process (visually, of course). You can check it out further by viewing the [Google+ video](#)...



So *go ahead and register with Google+ right now.* It will walk you through the steps in minutes. The only "prep" you'll need to do?

1. **Plan your Circles in advance**, so you don't end up moving people later
2. Make sure you have that great profile picture (created for Facebook last week) ready to load!
3. **Optional:** Make a quick list of key contacts and pre-assign them to your upcoming Circles (and you can do this visually -- mind-mapping software is great for this -- or list-style, of course):



How to Create a Circle:

When you select the circle button in your top menu bar...



You'll be taken to a page where you can manage your circle or create a new one. To create a new circle, simply drag-and-drop profile pics for the people you want into the blank circle that says: "Drop here to create a circle".



(Profile photos of people who are likely candidates will *be displayed in rows above the Circles*, so it's a strictly one-page operation. These include:

- People in your circles
- People who have added you
- A "Find People" option
- Acquaintances

(You can also change the name of any circle too.)

Once you've got your Circles created and populated, it's time to take a look at other Google+ features and advantages -- especially the newest ones.

You can find out more about Circles by visiting the [Google webmaster support](#) page.

Step Two: Stepping Back for an Overview

Now that you are beginning to be familiar with Google+, it's time to bombard you with a few facts...

The Latest...

1. You no longer need an "invite". Google+ has opened its doors to all and sundry
2. Google Plus now has Business Pages
3. If you run or service a non-profit organization, you'll love Google+ special options for non-profits!

4. Google+ is set up to encourage focused networking for those who prefer social networks for business rather than pleasure

Google+ has all the features Facebook users like: Some say, done a little better. This new social network allows you to...

1. **Sync Google+ with several email address books** so that you can instantly add contacts
2. **Chat, real-time, to others in your Circles.** You no longer have to have know their email addresses and a list of those available for chat appears in a sidebar, just the same as in Facebook
3. **Import contacts from Gmail.** (Facebook doesn't).
4. **Chat "off the record".** (Select "Options">"Off the Record"). Your discussion with that particular Circle contact will not be saved. (You can also disable the Chat option for an entire circle via the Privacy Settings.)

One word of warning: ***You cannot import your Facebook Group lists directly into Google+.***

And remember that ***Google+ content is public.***

Step Three: Understanding -- and Using -- Google+ Tools



1. (The "+1" button)

One tool that's promising to become especially valuable is the Google +1 button. This chiclet has been compared to Facebook's "Like" button, but it carries weight in Google Search results as well as on the entire World Wide Web.

Also worth noting: It carries real value -- unlike the Facebook "Like" button, which often is pressed only because a user wishes to (a) please a friend (b) gain some bonus one can't access without "Liking" a post or page.

Using the "+1" button yourself to favorite others' content won't artificially net you bonuses -- but it often will show your photo and link in search results for that item.

Think of the +1 button as your recommendation. If part of your services includes sending your subscribers and followers to powerful resources, the +1 button is a natural tool to use, when sharing the content of others.

- a. ***Install the "+1" button on all your sites*** -- Google+ helps you do this by walking you through the process and generating code you can copy-paste into your website. If your site is a secure one, however, do check the code and manually add the "s" to your "https://" designation. (The Google+ code generator currently defaults to "http://" when writing code.)

b. **Educate your blog and website audience about "+1"** with prompts and calls to action.

c. **Share "+1" recommendations in your Circles** to:

- Get the ball rolling on conversations
- Share high value resources and links
- Put your personal seal of endorsement on other web content or posts.

Remember, however, that it goes both ways: When you +1 a website or piece of content, you're putting your reputation behind it -- so be selective and be sparing. Other Google+ users may see your recommendation in Google search results.

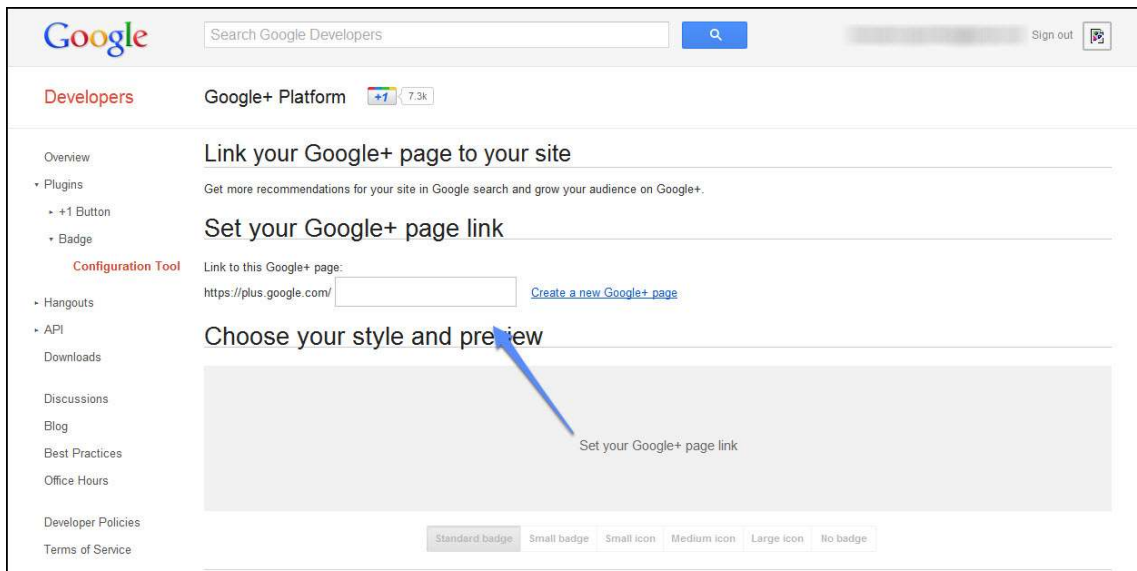
e. **Mobile Support for "+1"** -- Another advantage is that the "+1" button will be visible on your site to iPhones with iOS 4.0+, as well as Android 2.1+ browsers.

f. **"+1" badge Sizes** -- The chiclets come in four sizes, ranging from 15px to 60px

2. Google+ Badges

Another tool you won't be able to live without: Your Google+ badge. Use these much as you would use your Facebook badges: Embed them on your websites.

They are easy enough to create -- simply go to the [Badge creation plugin page](#) and fill in the blanks, selecting the size of badge you want to end up with:



You can learn more about badge creation and customization on the [Developers page](#).

3. Keeping Up with Google+ Changes

You don't have to subscribe to a bunch of Tech blogs to hear about the latest Google+ Pages -- though if you have the time, it's always nice to read outside opinions.

You can simply subscribe to the [Google+ Platform Preview](#) group. Do this, and you'll be the first to hear about upcoming changes or new features!

4. Google+ Security

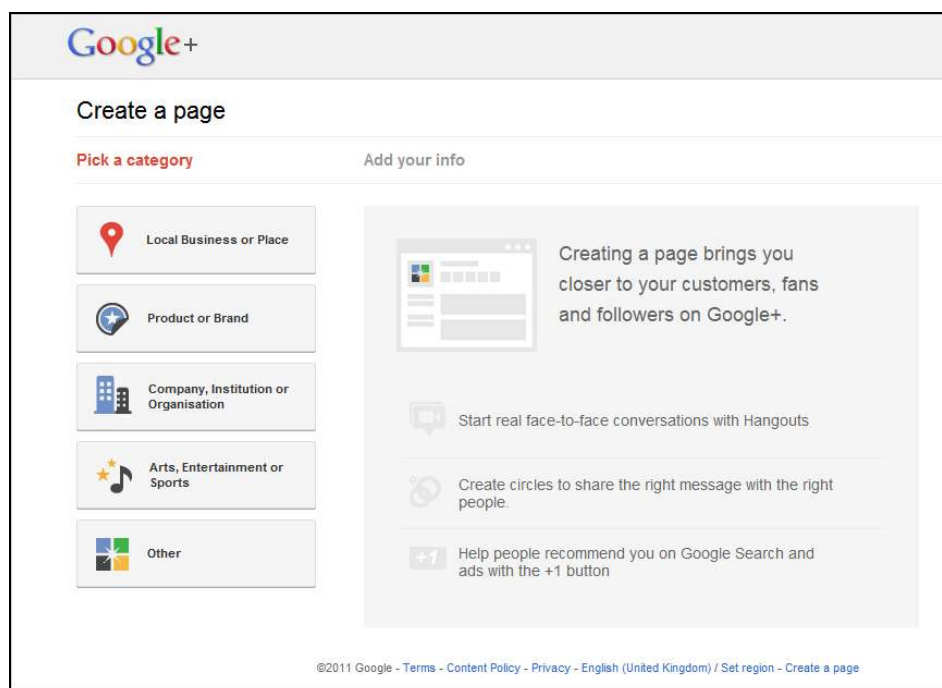
Google itself has a thorough and helpful section packed with easily-followed security recommendations and tips in its [Webmasters Tools Help](#) section.

Don't assume that because Google+ is run by Google, it's safe: You'll still be vulnerable to phishers and frauds, just the same as on any other social network -- so don't skip visiting the link above!

Step Four: Your Google+ Page

One of the biggest advantages of Google+: It allows you to create Google+ pages for your business, and the format addresses many of the problems Facebook pages have not yet resolves. So set up a Google+ Page for your business straight away.

Google+ will walk you through [creating your Google+ Page](#). The most important choice you'll have to make is ***picking the best category...***



Once you've selected your category, it will prompt you to add your contact information, which will differ slightly for each category. Be prepared with your phone number if you've selected "Local Business or Place" and your website URL.

It will also allow you to designate who can see your site:

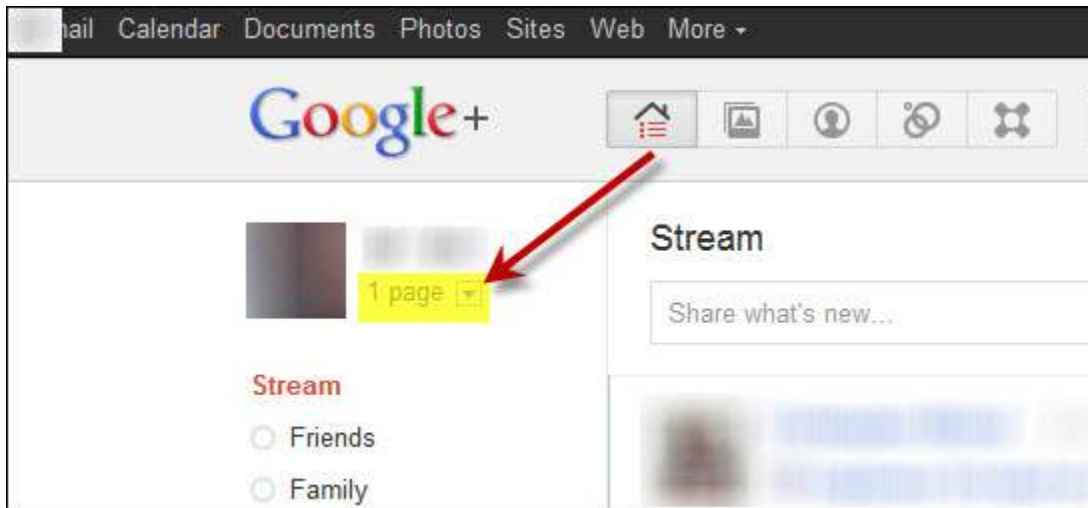


Leave it on the default setting (above).

It's pretty straightforward to set up -- and of course you include your perfect profile photo (the one you are using for all your social networks) -- but the most important part, once your page is set up?

Finding Your Page Again -- One of the most common complaints from new Google+ users has been: "I can't find my page!"

Nothing could be simpler: Go to the top-left corner and look beside your Profile picture. Your pages will be listed and you can access them via the drop-down arrow.



Share it with your Circles! (As well as everywhere else you can think of!)

You can use your new Google+ Page to share:

- a. Photos
- Videos
- Links

- Tips
- Information
- Anything else you can think of!

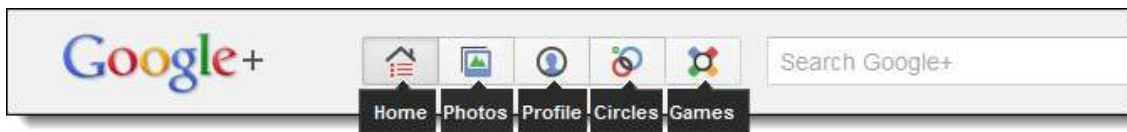
-- In short, everything you'd share on a Facebook page... only people looking for your page or the information it provides will find it much more easily in Google Search results.

Be sure to use Google+ badges or your Page URL on all your sites -- as well as calls to action.

Step Five: Getting Familiar with Google+

Your next important step is to get into the habit of using Google+... and nothing could be easier!

Simply use the icon buttons at the top of your browser to navigate your content. (Google+ is visually-based -- remember?)



As you grow more familiar with it, you'll no doubt generate your own ideas as to how Google+ can help your business grow -- and help brand you as an expert and trusted resource in your field.

1. **Consider using long posts.** Unlike other social networks, Google+ allows up to 1000 words in posts! While shorter often gets the point across more efficiently, there are times when a longer post will demonstrate more knowledge, be more helpful to the reader or just plain interest them into reading. And the longer they read, the more they psychologically engage with you!
2. **Remember to include photos, graphics, videos and links** within your posts. (Calls to action won't be as important here, if you're concentrating on building credibility and trust.)
3. **Use your tagline and keywords in your profile.** This is a "must" for anyone looking to network for business!
4. **Segment your customers by using Circles.** This is ideal for putting customers or clients who come from two differing demographics in their own

separate circles. Not only will it help you quickly share highly-customized content with each group, but it will help you "organize" them in your mind. You'll create the habit of catering to each segment automatically.

Remember -- educate your subscribers and fans. Don't abandon your Facebook Page -- instead, promote each Page on the other.

Be sure to look out for the red Notifications icon at the top right of your page letting you know you have messages.

Keep on managing your Circles -- they'll be your most powerful tool as you grow with this powerful social network.

And above all, make visiting and using Google+ a daily habit.

WEEKLY ASSIGNMENT:

1. Sign up for Google+. Have your profile photo, Tagline, contact information and keywords ready
2. Import contacts from your other address books to quickly populate your Google+ network
3. Put some thought into Circle categories you could create that would be helpful.
Make a list for each!
4. Create or populate your Circles, dragging and dropping your contacts into each preferred Circle
5. Create at least two custom Circles, with your unique Category designation (name)
6. Create a Badge and install it on all your sites
7. Study the Google+ Webmaster section
8. Join the Google+ Platform Preview group
9. Create a Google+ Business Page
10. Share it with your Circles -- and your subscribers, clients, etc.
11. Get into the habit of using Google+ daily

Social Media in Business Checklist: Week Three (Google+)

- ✱ I am aware of the four basic Learning Styles plus one created by the web itself:
 - ✱ Visual
 - ✱ Auditory
 - ✱ Text-based
 - ✱ Tactile
 - ✱ The "fifth element" (those who are not naturally visually-oriented, but who realize visual cues save time)
- ✱ I have studied the material in the lesson on Google+ Circles
- ✱ I have planned my Circles in advance
- ✱ I have made a quick list for each circle of people I already know
- ✱ I am aware that on Google+ I can now:
 - ✱ Sync Google+ with several email address books to instantly add contacts
 - ✱ Chat, real-time, to others in your Circles
 - ✱ Import contacts from Gmail
 - ✱ Chat "off the record"
- ✱ I am aware I cannot import Facebook Group lists directly into Google+
- ✱ I am aware that Google+ content is public
- ✱ I have created a Profile on Google+
- ✱ I have installed the +1 button on all my sites and blogs
- ✱ I have educated my website and blog audiences about the +1 button
- ✱ I have begun to share +1 recommendations on my Circles to:
 - ✱ Get the ball rolling on conversations
 - ✱ Share high value resources and links
 - ✱ Put my personal seal of endorsement on web content or posts I enjoy or value
- ✱ I am aware that the +1 button will be visible on selected mobile browsers and I have made sure my contacts and subscribers are aware of it too

- ✳ I have created Google+ sharing badges in my preferred sizes
- ✳ I have placed them in all my blogs and sites
- ✳ I have joined the Google+ Platform Preview group
- ✳ I am keeping up with Google+ changes
- ✳ I have created a Google+ Business Page
- ✳ I have chosen the best category for it
- ✳ I know how to find my Google+ Page again
- ✳ I have announced my Google+ Page and shared it with my Circles
- ✳ I have used my Google+ Page to share:
 - Photos
 - Videos
 - Links
 - Tips
 - Information
 - Anything else I can think of! _____
- ✳ I have segmented my customers, clients and network contacts by using Circles
- ✳ I have included my Tagline and best keywords in my Profile
- ✳ I am using Google+ daily (and adding to my Circles)