

How to Use Pinterest to Enliven Dull Topics and Boost Your Search Ranking

By Joan Stewart

If you or your PR client has a dull, boring or academic topic, here's a way to make the most out of **Pinterest**, the red hot site that relies on stunning photos of things like stiletto heels, lavender wedding cakes and breathtaking sunsets.

Create a Pinterest board that includes pins of “how to” tips on any topic. That's right. No photos. No images. No eye candy. Just words on a background.

But here's where the board really works for you. You can link each image to a blog post, an article on your website or any other content you've created in which you can embed the image you've pinned on your board.

My Pinterest board “50 Tips for Free Publicity” has consistently had the top organic search ranking on **Google** for the keyword phrase “free publicity” for the last several months. It even beats out my main website.

Pinterest is the third largest social media site.

Why Pinterest Is So Powerful

In case you're not convinced that Pinterest is for you, here are some statistics:

- Pinterest is the third largest social media site.
- Traffic on Pinterest quadrupled from 9 to 40 million users in 2012.
- Pinterest users, mostly women, are buyers—69 percent of online consumers who visit Pinterest have found an item they've purchased or wanted to purchase. Compare that to 40 percent of online consumers who visit **Facebook**.
- The average user spends 98 minutes per month on the site.
- U.S. users spend an average of one hour and 17 minutes on the site.

How to Start

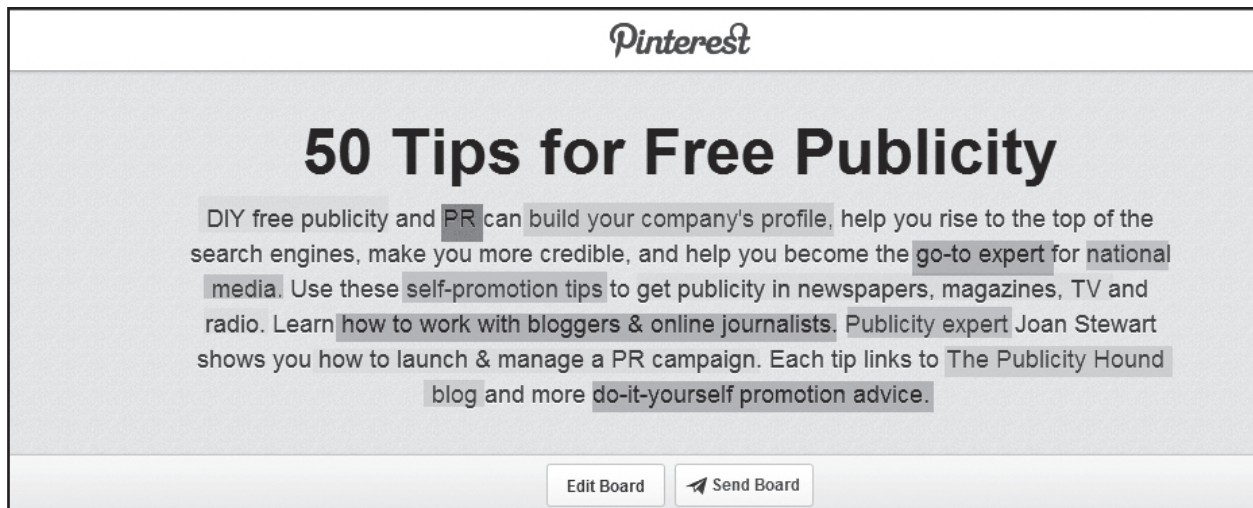
Here's how to really make it on Pinterest:

The Board Name: Choose a topic, and name your board based on keywords used by your ideal customers. Pinterest allows up to 100 characters for a board name, but the visual limit is only 26 characters.

There's something compelling about including a numeral in the name of the board. If people know there are 20, 50 or 100 tips on a topic that's important to them, they'll want to see all of them. Don't feel compelled to stop pinning when you reach that number. And don't change your board name after you've started your board, because the URL will change and people who subscribed to the board will no longer be able to see what you're pinning.

Once it became apparent that my board was consistently claiming the top spot on Google after it had only about 20 pins, I decided to keep pinning after I eventually hit 50. Why ruin a good thing? Just keep adding to the board, and Google will continue to see all that new content.

The Board Description: Pinterest allows 500-character descriptions. Although research indicates that about 250 characters is ideal if you want people to re-pin your images, you'll be able



to insert more keywords as well as hashtags if you use all 500 characters. (More about hashtags later.)

Check out the image above to see the keywords I used in my board description.

How to Write Your Tips

Resist the temptation to pack your image with lots of words. Shoot for about two sentences or a total of 25 words.

If the board includes how-to tips, try to use a verb right at the beginning as sort of a call to action. Tell people exactly what you want them to do.

Don't use your pins to promote a product or service. Each one should provide value to the reader.

Also, make sure every image is numbered. Go back to older, popular blog posts and use those topics for tips.

You don't have to write them all at the same time. Add to the board every week or so, and remember to link the images back to where they were sourced from.

At right is a pin from my board to use as an example.

How to Design Your Images

The simplest way to create your images is in PowerPoint, which has several design templates from which to choose. If you use PowerPoint,

you don't have to start from scratch each time you create an image. Use the image for tip #1 as the template for tip #2 and so on. For Pinterest, the size for these images is 230 by 307 pixels.

You also have a variety of other free tools available, such as **Quozio**, **Pinstamatic** and **PicMonkey** to design your images.

Simple fonts like Verdana, Calibri and Arial are easiest to read. Keep all fonts and point sizes identical on all of your images to keep the board



Where to Promote Your Pinterest Board

Use every opportunity to let people know about your Pinterest board.

Here are some ideas:

- In your email signature. Include the name of your board and link to it.
- In a press release. A board can be so powerful that it's worth it to distribute the press release through one of the major distribution services.
- On other social media sites. Every time you add an image to your board, embed it on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and Google+. You can also include the link within your LinkedIn profile.
- Write a blog post about the board. Be sure to recommend that people subscribe to the board.
- Include it in an email newsletter.
- Do an email blast to your business associates.
- Create a short video about the board for your YouTube channel. YouTube gives you 5,000 characters for the description. Many of the same keywords you used in your Pinterest board and image descriptions can be woven into the YouTube description.
- Link to it from your online pressroom.
- Connect two related boards by including the URL in the board descriptions.
- You can add individual pins to other people's boards.
- Let other bloggers know.
- Let other ezine editors know about the board. Give them permission to excerpt a few of your tips.
- Mention it in media interviews.
- Include it in an author resource box at the end of articles.

consistent. Make sure the color of the text contrasts with the color of the background. After you create your image, turn it into a .JPEG file. This next part is very important.

Name the image with your primary keyword phrase. Mine is “free publicity” and my imag-

es are named “free publicity tip podcast,” “free publicity tip press releases,” “free publicity tip headlines,” etc. Packing your image names with your keyword phrase will lead to a higher rank in search.

Use Hashtags

Hashtags, which help people find your content, are searchable on Pinterest—but only from pin descriptions.

Don't use them in the title of your board or the board description. You can use a hashtag at the beginning of a word within the description or as a stand-alone hashtag at the end. Here's an example that shows both:



It's one of the most basic tools in your publicity toolbox, and people have been using it for decades to get free publicity in national and broadcast media. It's the tips list, or tip sheet. Example: "9 Ways to Convince Your Kids to Take a Nap." #Journalists love these tips lists, and the lists are perfect for sharing on social media. Content creation has never been easier. #PR pros, #publicists and DIY self-promoters can learn to create them correctly. #tipslist #tipsheet #contentmarketing

Link from Your Blog Back to Your Pinterest Board

A visitor who arrives at one of your blog posts via a search engine might have no idea that