



## Online Communities

**5 Popular Online Community Types:** Try out these different types of communities to get your feet wet. You can use them to promote your business, establish credibility, network, and see what people are saying about you.

Online Community Type	What is it?	Example
Wiki	Allows users to create, edit, link web content, typically for reference material. Post your own company page here.	Wikipedia
Video & Photo Sharing Sites	Upload or view videos/photos, post comments in response. Upload photos/videos of your business.	Youtube, Flickr
Online Forums	Online chat rooms, discussion groups. A credibility enhancer and networking opportunity.	Google Groups, Yahoo! Groups
LISTSERV	Email discussion group with subscribers---each message members send is forwarded to all members—you're pushing content vs. users coming to visit a page and pull content.	LinkedIn Groups
Social Bookmarking Sites	Users share their favourite websites and comment on them online. Users can click through to other users who have bookmarked the same page to see where else they're visiting online.	Stumbleupon.com, del.icio.us.com

### Best Practices

- Continually monitor the conversation in the communities because online chatter can make or break your reputation
- Learn about your target audience's interests within the online community and use it to revise or build your product/service.
- Give before you ask. Comment on other's posts first before soliciting a new discussion.
- Don't give the appearance that you are trying to sell something. Learn to do it subtly or only seek out members who are openly looking for business contacts.
- Don't spread yourself thin by joining too many communities and stay alert for emerging communities because things change fast online.