

What is Pinterest?

With more than 48 million users, Pinterest is the world's third largest social networking site. It is a virtual pinboard (think scrapbook) that allows users to gather and share images and videos to reflect who they are and what they want to say. As Pinterest states, the goal is to "connect everyone in the world through the 'things' they find interesting." How can you, as a political activist or candidate, use Pinterest to develop your interests and powerfully influence your audience?

How will Pinterest help me?

Visual content rules online (and on your mobile device). Other social networks like Facebook and YouTube constantly adapt to make their content more visually appealing. Pinterest, on the other hand, already does this by its very definition. By utilizing Pinterest, you're communicating through a medium that reaches your audience and meets their expectations for visual content.

Pinterest is a resource that can reach an important demographic: women. Currently, around 80 percent of its users are women. In fact, 19 percent of female internet users are on Pinterest (versus the 5 percent of male internet users).

As a conservative, you want to communicate your opinion, beliefs, and values. Pinterest allows you to do this effectively while also powerfully communicating who you are. Through the use of pinboards, you are able to highlight your personality and lifestyle as well as your platform. Boom.

Do you have a website that you'd like to drive traffic to? Pin it on Pinterest. Pinterest is one of the top social media sites that can drive a high volume of traffic to your site. In the last year, it has become a significant traffic driver for retailers.

People use Pinterest to explore their aspirations and gain new inspiration. Determine who your target audience wants to be and how they can get there. Tie this in to what you want your town, state, or country to be and give your ideas on how to get there. Think smart and Pinterest can be the perfect political platform.

Best content to pin:

Visual images are the key to Pinterest. Spend a lot of time up front determining the combination of pinboards to feature on your account. Don't think solely in terms of what you want to say but think about the themes your Pinterest followers want to see. Then, pin high quality, beautiful content.

Create pinboards that relate to your campaign or issue, but also include boards that display your personality, culture, and lifestyle. Boards can range from infographics highlighting statistics that support your policies or issues (i.e. Where are the Jobs?), pictures of your city or state, books to read (What I'm Reading), inspirational quotes (Founding Fathers, Anyone?), blog posts, resources, American history highlights, and the list goes on. Lifestyle boards can include topics like At My Kitchen Table, Family Time on a Budget, Places to Visit, etc. These are simply suggestions to get your creative juices flowing—the sky is the limit. Always ask yourself, "Would I want to repin this if I was seeing this for the first time?"



Set the timer for five minutes and brainstorm about the issues that are important to you. Select your favorites and categorize those issues into themes. Presto! Those themes become your pinboards. Title them using interesting keywords. And begin to pin.

What not to do on Pinterest:

Blatant self-promotion is a turnoff. As Pinterest states, “Pinterest is a tool for collecting and organizing things you love.” Share what you’re passionate about, but don’t become a salesperson or marketer.

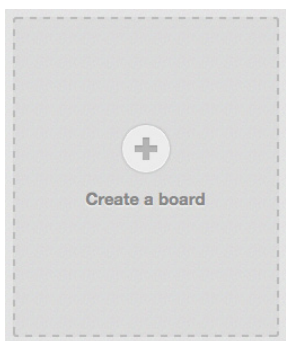
Pinning poor quality images poorly reflects you and your cause or campaign. High quality is everything to Pinterest users. If it’s not attractive, don’t pin it.

Pinterest is a tool for collecting and organizing things you love.

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Don’t create themes that are akin to inside jokes. That’s confusing. And confusion is poor communication. Be clear. Be relevant. For instance, if you’re pinning pictures of a recent conservative event in your town, explain what it is, what it means to you, and why each image is significant to your viewer who may know nothing about it.

Don’t be an Eeyore. There’s a lot of ranting and bashing on Facebook and Twitter. That makes sense when so much of social media is about wit, relevance, and strong opinions. But according to studies, less than 1 percent of the content Pinterest are negative in tone. Keep this in mind when framing your issues and naming your pinboards.

A screenshot of the "Create a Board" form on Pinterest. The form includes fields for Name (filled with "Grassroots Done Right"), Description (with placeholder text "Add a short description to your board"), Category (with a dropdown menu "Choose a category"), and a Secret checkbox (checked "No"). There are "Cancel" and "Save Changes" buttons at the bottom.

7 best ways to stand out as a top conservative on Pinterest:

1. Know your competition. Know the number of followers, the frequency they post, and the type of content. Note what they do well and what they do poorly. Observe and learn.
2. Hone in on meaningful keywords. People are coming to Pinterest for inspiration. Insert keywords into each pin that you would use in the search box when looking for something related to your interests. Be specific and sprinkle the same, solid keywords lightly throughout your boards and pins. When setting up your account, describe yourself with rich keywords that reflect the theme of your pinboards.
3. Act as a resource. Pin content from your blog or site that is helpful to your audience, but also pin resources from other online sources. Point your followers to the good stuff on the web and they’ll keep coming back.
4. Engage. Allow people to pin to some of your boards. Comment on their pins, follow them, and repin. This isn’t just a platform. It’s a community. It’s not a monologue, but rather a conversation.
5. Do it with excellence. This can’t be overstated: choose quality images that spark interest.
6. Link to your site or other social networks. Don’t let your Pinterest account be an island unto itself. Insert links in the descriptions of many of the pins.
7. Be consistent. Think of your Pinterest account as a puppy dog, not a goldfish. Tend to it regularly. Pin at least every few days and interact with other Pinterest enthusiasts. Keep learning, experimenting, and have fun!

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