

# Promoting in Online Forums

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Not Just Another Ezine <http://annamarketing.com>

Forums can be a useful tool if you're doing business online. You can learn a lot by reading the content and actively taking part in the discussions. Reading a forum's archives can be a great way to get a basic knowledge about a topic, and it can also give you pointers about the changes in trends and opinions through time.

It is always very important to read the terms and conditions of each particular forum for a basic guideline as to what is acceptable. It's also a good idea to read archived posts in order to see the guidelines in action. If you don't, you could end up doing something wrong, like spamming the forum, and that could seriously hurt both your name and your business.

Taking an active part in forums can help you gain recognition in topics you show some knowledge of, and may even result in some great business leads and contacts. Read through posts, and answer any questions you are able to in a polite, friendly and helpful manner. It's a brilliant way to get your name and services known, but you have to be aware that different forums have different rules in regards to self-promotion.

Some won't allow any hint of self-promotion, some are specifically aimed at self-promotion, and a lot of them fall somewhere in between, allowing either signature files or URL's to an off-the-page member profile. The in-between ones are the best ones to use for marketing yourself, especially as the ones aimed at promoting usually end up more like "spam boards" than anything else.

See if you can choose forums that allow a sig file, which is basically a short block of text about you and/or your services which can be automatically attached to the end of every post you make. No matter what you do, never EVER post a reply to a 'legitimate' topic with nothing but spam in the body of your post. This will annoy forum members who are seeking valid answers, and kill your credibility as an online marketer almost instantly.

"Netiquette" is a must-have if you're planning to use forums. What is netiquette, you ask? Basically the same as offline etiquette. It is essential to have a good understanding of acceptable ways to communicate with other forum members. That's why it's so important to do a LOT of reading in the forums before you start posting messages yourself.

This is where good moderators come into play. They check the forums for inappropriate posts and spam, they keep the boards clean, and make sure everybody plays by the rules. Forums without moderators tend to turn into ghost-towns, with nothing but spam bots visiting them. A nice clean

board needs good moderators to keep it that way.

In the worst-case scenario, if you break the rules in a forum, by maybe spamming, or using inappropriate language or behaviour, either the administrators or moderators may well end up banning you from that particular forum. If that happens, they will most likely delete each and every post you've made, whether it's good or bad.

Happy Visiting and Posting.  
Anna-Marie Stewart Venton

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