



# How to get started with your first Hangout

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## Quick tips:

- + Join Hangouts on Google+ to see how others use them—it's a good way of getting started.
  - + Choose a topic related to your business or brand that people like to talk about. Participants will be more engaged, and your Hangout will be more exciting.
  - + Try making your first Hangout 20 minutes long. You can always make the next one longer or shorter.
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Google+ makes connecting on the web more like connecting in the real world. Hangouts are a great way to have a personal conversation with customers or colleagues, from different time zones, and in different places, all at the same time.

## What is a Hangout?

Hangouts are one-click video conversations that let you receive face-to-face feedback about a product or to create buzz for a product launch. Fiat Nederland, for example, hosted a Hangout to reveal its latest car designs.



## Types of Hangouts

You can use Hangouts for many different purposes, from announcing products to hosting seminars or meetings with people in different locations. Here are a few ideas:

- + **Customer service:** Host Hangouts at regular times, so followers can ask questions and receive live support.
- + **Customer feedback sessions:** Be sure to take notes on customers' thoughts and ideas in a live Google doc.
- + **Product demos, seminars, and live training:** Explain to your customers how to best use your latest products or services. You'll also receive instant feedback.

## There are two types of Hangouts:

- + **Public Hangouts:**  
Anybody can join these open Hangouts on a first-come, first-served basis. Invite your fans to participate via public posts, other social media networks, and newsletters.
- + **Exclusive Hangouts:**  
Send invitations or pre-select your participants. Cadbury, for instance, asked followers on its Google+ page what they would ask during a Hangout. The company then invited the followers with the best questions. Alternatively, you can choose to invite your most engaged brand advocates. Find out who they are on Google+ by using Ripples.

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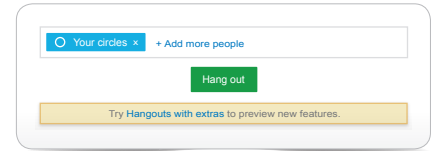
### Quick tips:

- + Do a test run with some participants or colleagues before your first Hangout, to make sure you understand how it works. Check that the light in the room and the quality of your webcam are sufficient.
  - + Use a wired connection, never wireless. Have a backup connection in case your primary fails.
  - + Have a list of topics or a rough script, to guide the conversation without being too obvious.
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## Cool stuff you can do during a Hangout

Here are some tips for having engaging Hangouts, depending on what you want to do:

- + **Share presentations and videos.** Hangouts allow you to share your screen, go through a presentation together, or watch a YouTube video.
- + **Work in the same document.** Hangouts with extras also let you open a new or existing Google doc, so everyone in the Hangout can work on it at the same time. With Sketchpad, you can even create drawings together. Just look for the *Try Hangouts with extras* bar at the bottom of the window.
- + **Record your Hangout.** Make an active collection of all your Hangouts accessible for everyone by posting them in the Video section of your Google+ page, on your website, and on YouTube.



## Promoting your first Hangout

Hosting your first Hangout is exciting, so make sure to promote it well. Make a short video invitation that explains the Hangout time and topic, and share it on your Google+ page. Post announcements a week before, the day before, the morning of, and an hour before the Hangout for maximum awareness.

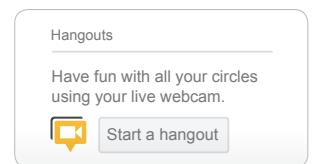
Include an announcement for the Hangout in all your other communication channels, such as your website, blog, other social media, and your offline media.

To generate extra PR for your Hangout, invite a guest who will excite your followers—a celebrity, your lead product designer, or CEO. Announce the appearance publicly, and ask your guest speaker to add your page to his or her Circles. Also, invite your guest to a Hangout hosted by your page.

## Setting up your Hangout

This is all you need to do:

- + Log in to your Google+ page.
- + Start a Hangout from the right side of the stream.
- + Send invitations to guests.
- + Get started as the guests join you in your Hangout.



## After the Hangout

- + **Create a short video** of the Hangout and share it on Google+ and other social networks. Share the video in a post on your Google+ page, for example. Store it in the Video section too. By using Ripples, you can even see how your video has been shared across Google+.
- + **Thank the participants** for joining, and ask for their feedback.
- + **Set expectations** for when you might host your next Hangout.
- + **Evaluate and learn** from your Hangout. Did it work for you? Did the attendees have fun and gain value? Did you and your team? What can you improve? Even if it isn't perfect the first time, learn from your Hangout, keep practising, and find the best way to connect with your followers.

Please visit our help centre if you have any questions.

<http://support.google.com/plus/?hl=en>

