



Making Twitter work
for your business

THE



METHOD

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BEGINNINGS

It seems Twitter, like Facebook, has been around “forever”. In fact, it’s just 7 years ago that Jack Dorsey created it, launching in July that year. From those beginnings of 400,000 tweets in the first quarter of 2007, Twitter has grown into one of the top 10 most visited sites on the net with over 150 million tweets per day! The record was during the 2010 FIFA World Cup when users were posting at the rate of 2,940 tweets per second!

Whatever way you look at it, Twitter shows no signs of dying, and, with that many tweets, there’s a huge audience out there to be captured by whoever, or whatever business, is savvy enough to figure out how to reach them.

TWITTER FOR BUSINESS

So, is Twitter a viable business tool? Most definitely!

A business survives on customers, customers are people, and Twitter is full of them. All you need to do is to figure out how to reach them—and define “them”. Just like Facebook, everyone seems to be on Twitter, so a smart businessperson will use Twitter as one arm of their marketing.

Yes, you need to make a marketing plan! Not just about Twitter, but for your whole marketing effort. The good news is that you can apply most, if not all, the same questions to any method. But you can’t hit Twitter, or any other method, without planning a strategy.

THE BUSINESS PLAN

The purpose of this guide isn’t to really teach you how to write a business marketing plan, but to teach you about using Twitter for your business. So this section will be brief, more just to give you the headlines of what to look at.

1. Choose your audience.

So often we hear, “Everyone’s my target!” We doubt there’s a business on earth that can truly make that claim, but, even if there is, the average business doesn’t fit this. With so many people on Twitter, you need to figure out who to target. Try this.

Pick 10 of your customers and Google their Twitter profiles (or you can do it in Twitter too). Look at



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Who they're following and who they're talking with. Oh, and those customers can become part of your group too. Also look at how they describe themselves and what they're talking about.

2. Understand their "speak"

We're not talking about their slang, acronyms, etc, but how they talk and what they talk about. Are they big retweeters, do they use hastags? Here are 5 ways to get a handle on your audience.

- A. See what others are saying about your company (assuming you're not brand new). Is it good, bad or indifferent? Are they giving feedback? This could open up a totally different can of worms for you!
- B. Do the same for your competitors. See if they are reacting or influencing those conversations.
- C. Check how your audience talks—formal or informal?
- D. See what your audience shares or retweets. What gets them excited/annoyed?
- E. Do they use hastags, and do those hashtags have any traction?

3. How much is a Twitter lead worth?

Of course, this will vary depending on your business, but you need to be able to quantify at least what any lead is worth—that's Marketing 101. When you know that you can start quantifying what a Twitter lead is worth in terms of value and cost (how much time and effort you put into getting it) and see if it stacks up against other marketing efforts.

Within this area is your goal (more on that in the next point). Sometimes, if you're just wanting brand awareness for example, quantifying the value of a lead may be difficult—certainly more so that if you're wanting opt-ins or purchases as your goal.

4. What's your goal?

Set a goal and then track it. There are various metrics you can check and various ways of doing it. Followers is one way, but this may not always be the best indicator, depending on your goals. Other metrics could be sales, email sign-ups, @messages, direct messages and clicks.

5. Define your approach

This is going to follow on from your research from 2. "Understanding their "speak". If they're informal, you should be, and vice versa. Don't go in tweeting all about, say, airplanes, if no one else is. DO they use hashtags or buzzwords? Think carefully about content and links you share in the context of your research. That said, does your business have a unique style that you should consider? Followers like authenticity!



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SOME DEFINITIONS FIRST

With 150 million tweets plus a day, it's going to be easy for your tweets to get lost in the sheer volume. The good news is that there's ways of getting found.

Trends

Trends are what people are tweeting about on Twitter—that is, what's hot! Tweeting about what's hot will, usually, get your tweets read and, maybe, retweeted. However, not all trends are created equal—pick your trends to get involved in and use them wisely. Here's a good FAQ page from Twitter about trends—<https://support.twitter.com/articles/101125-faq-about-trends-on-twitter>

You can find trends right on your Twitter page, or by using a number of different sites and/or products.

<http://trendsmap.com/>

<http://whatthetrend.com/>

Once you've decided on your trends, then use the buzzwords or hashtags around those trends to get on the bandwagon (for you trivia nuts like me, here's the [origin of "Get on the Bandwagon"](#)). Be creative and remember you only have 140 characters.

Buzzwords

Opposed to hashtags, buzzwords are a group of words that are less transient than hashtags. "Twitter" and "social media" are among the 20 most commonly tweeted words. Also, use "you" and "RT" or "Retweet" (obviously with please before or after it! See below). Consider the impact the right use of "you" gives:

"Anyone know a good restaurant in Sacramento?" or....

"Do you know a good restaurant in Sacramento?"

Which captures your attention and interest more?

Two very powerful buzzwords make you remember your manners. Yes, "please" and "Thanks" (you can use thank you, but it uses more characters) might be falling out of use, but they work wonders in social media.

Hashtags

Hashtags are really the hot topics of the month, day, or even hour. It's unlikely that the buzzwords mentioned above will go out of favor anytime soon, if ever. However, hashtags (recognizable by the



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"#" in front of the word, can, literally, be here today and gone tomorrow. Their main purpose is making tweets easily searchable for a word or phrase and allows for categorization of tweets.

There are some rules or etiquette when it comes to hashtags:

1. Don't #overuse #them in a #tweet. No more than 2 per tweet. They can appear on the first word, the last, or any one in the middle.
2. Only use them where they're relevant to your topic.
3. They must all have "#" at the start and be one phrase. A safe practice is to #CapitalizeEachWord. Some people have learnt this to their cost! To her embarrassment (or was it planned?) when Susan Boyle was a hot topic, she was an uncapitalized hashtag of #susanalbumparty.
4. Do your research and think about your tweet. Some topics may be hot and heavy, but do you want to use that hashtag in your tweet? In the aftermath of the Aurora, Colorado tragedy, a clothing boutique decided to tweet about the trending #Aurora but not to pay respect to the people that lost their lives. Instead, they chose to recognize a dress inspired by Kim Kardashian. Ouch!
5. Be careful with abbreviations—you may get undesired results. Again, do your research.
6. Don't put anything out there you don't want people to comment on. This IS Twitter!
7. Don't get political. It doesn't matter who you support, how they're doing or not, just don't go there. You're trying to "win friends and influence people". Don't drive 1/2 of them away because you get radically political on them. The same applies to religion—again, regardless of what you do or don't believe. Ditto adult themes and content. Of course, if you're a church, religious organization or adult boutique, you can safely ignore those no-noes in your line of work.

THE CITRUSKIWI TWITTER APPROACH

So you have your #TrendingPhrases all sorted, some buzzwords you want to use, now what? Get tweeting!! But how often and exactly what about?

Like doing a blog, the first part is just starting, but often the hardest part is with what? About what? Here's a good guideline that will help you with your Twitter marketing. Break your tweeting into 10 "slots". Whatever amount of tweets you decide to do, follow this 10 slot formula and you should see good results from it. And like with anything marketing, consistency and tenacity will bring results. It's a long distance race (if not a marathon), rather than a 100 meter dash.



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THE CITRUSKIWI TWITTER APPROACH (Cont ' d)

Your 10 tweet blocks should be broken down as follows:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------|
| 1. Blatant self-promotion | 2 tweets |
| 2. Industry related news/trends/ideas | 4 tweets |
| 3. Off topic items | 2 tweets |
| 4. Humor (tasteful please) | 2 tweets |

Why this mixture? Why humor? Why *off topic*? Let's look at each "category" of tweet and analyse why it's there.

Self promotion. Sort of self-explanatory why it's there, but why so few? Because you self promote too much and you'll lose followers. Everyone expects you to be passionate about your business and want to tell everyone else how great it is. Doing it every tweet, though, will just plain annoy people.

Industry related. People are generally looking in a topic or industry for information—give it to them. Select topics like breaking news, important or significant changes, new product releases, recalled products, discoveries. This is the place where you offer value, not entertainment. These are the tweets that will likely get you the best following—use them wisely!

Off topic. This is also recommended for blogging. Don't keep beating the self promotion drum—use a similar format for your blogs and you'll get more readership there too. What's "off" off topic? Just the few categories mentioned back on page 4, point #7. Here's some ideas:

- Family get togethers
- A holiday you just went on
- A house remodel (assuming you're not a contractor)
- Latest trending news
- Latest #hashtags
- Latest general news
- Something interesting you just heard/learnt

Just be sure of your facts if you're using another source for your information.

Humor. To reiterate—BE TASTEFUL! The net has enough garbage on it without you creating more! So stay away from adult themes, racism, jokes about current disasters, politics, religion. This is where you give your followers relief from their hum-drum day—not make a political statement!



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FURTHER TWITTER DOS AND DON ' TS

1. **Keep tweets short.** According to a recent study, tweets of 100 characters or less were retweeted 17% more than their longer cousins.
2. **#Hashtags—less is more.** As already mentioned, 1 or 2 #hashtags at most. The same study showed that engagement levels drop where 3 or more #hashtags were used. However, only 24% of brands' tweets used #hashtags, and the ones that did received twice the engagement.
3. Use images. The study also revealed that tweets containing images received twice the engagement.
4. **Add a call to action.** Adding "RT" or "Retweet" sounds obvious, but the study shows that tweets with either of these received 12x higher retweets than those that didn't.
5. **Spell out "RETWEET".** Further to above, it was also shown that actually spelling the word out in full nearly doubled that retweet advantage—up to 23 times more than having neither.



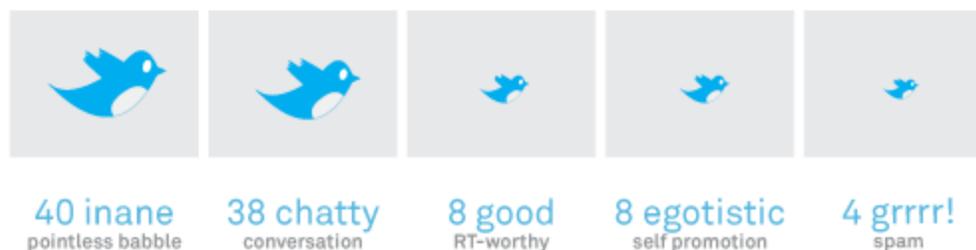
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Twitter Stats

If the Twitter community were 100 people



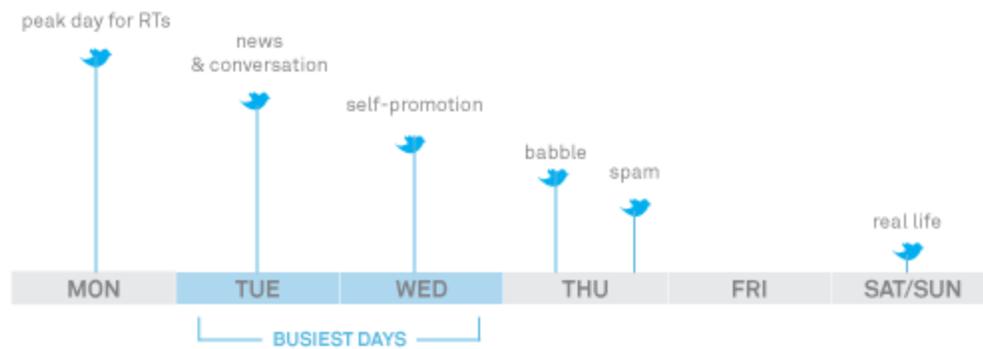
The Average 100 Tweets





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Peak Days



Peak Hours



David McCandless // v1.1 // Aug 09

InformationIsBeautiful.net

source: sysomos.com/insidetwitter, pearanalytics.com



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Tweet Cheat Sheet

-  Tweet on the days that are best for your industry (which are often weekends). Leverage the scheduling functionality of tools like ConversationBuddy™ to automatically publish planned Tweets.
-  Use both Facebook and Twitter to create an "always on" conversation. Engage with followers on Twitter during "busy hours" (7 AM - 8 PM), but post to Facebook fans during "non-busy hours" (8 PM - 7 AM).
-  Tweet four times per day or less.
-  Use less than 100 characters per Tweet.
-  Add links to Tweets to drive higher Retweet rates.
-  Ensure links are clickable by placing a space before the URL.
-  Include hashtags in Tweets, but don't use more than two per Tweet.
-  Use images to drive the highest engagement.
-  Use a "Retweet" or "RT" call to action to prompt followers to Retweet, spelling out "Retweet" to get the highest engagement.

Cheat sheet courtesy of Buddy Media