

50 Ideas on Using Twitter for Business

We really can't deny the fact that businesses are testing out Twitter as part of their steps into the social media landscape. You can say it's a stupid application, that no business gets done there, but there are too many of us (including me) that can disagree and point out business value. I'm not going to address the naysayers much with this. Instead, I'm going to offer 50 thoughts for people looking to use Twitter for business. And by "business," I mean anything from a solo act to a huge enterprise customer.

First Steps

1. Build an account and immediately start using [Twitter Search](#) to listen for your name, your competitor's names, words that relate to your space. (Listening always comes first.)
2. Add a picture. ([Shel](#) reminds us of this.) We want to see you.
3. Talk to people about THEIR interests, too. I know this doesn't sell more widgets, but it shows us you're human.
4. Point out interesting things in your space, not just about you.
5. Share links to neat things in your community. ([@wholefoods](#) does this well).
6. Don't get stuck in the apology loop. Be helpful instead. ([@jetblue](#) gives travel tips.)
7. Be wary of always pimping your stuff. Your fans will love it. Others will tune out.
8. Promote your employees' outside-of-work stories. ([@TheHomeDepot](#) does it well.)
9. Throw in a few humans, like [RichardAtDELL](#), [LionelAtDELL](#), etc.
10. Talk about non-business, too, like [@astrout](#) and [@jstorerj](#) from Mzinga.

Ideas About WHAT to Tweet

11. Instead of answering the question, "What are you doing?", answer the question, "What has your attention?"
12. Have more than one twitterer at the company. People can quit. People take vacations. It's nice to have a variety.
13. When promoting a blog post, ask a question or explain what's coming next, instead of just dumping a link.
14. Ask questions. Twitter is GREAT for getting opinions.
15. Follow interesting people. If you find someone who tweets interesting things, see who she follows, and follow her.
16. Tweet about other people's stuff. Again, doesn't directly impact your business, but makes us feel like you're not "[that guy](#)."
17. When you DO talk about your stuff, make it useful. Give advice, blog posts, pictures, etc.
18. Share the human side of your company. If you're bothering to tweet, it means you believe social media has value for human connections. Point us to pictures and other human things.
19. Don't toot your own horn too much. (Man, I can't believe I'm saying this. I do it all the time. - Side note: I've gotta stop tooting my own horn).
20. Or, if you do, try to balance it out by promoting the heck out of others, too.

Some Sanity For You

21. You don't have to read every tweet.
22. You don't have to reply to every @ tweet directed to you (try to reply to some, but don't feel guilty).
23. Use direct messages for 1-to-1 conversations if you feel there's no value to Twitter at large to hear the conversation (got this from [@pistachio](#)).
24. Use services like [Twitter Search](#) to make sure you see if someone's talking about you. Try to participate where it makes sense.
25. 3rd party clients like [Tweetdeck](#) and [Twhirl](#) make it a lot easier to manage Twitter.
26. If you tweet all day while your coworkers are busy, you're going to hear about it.
27. If you're representing clients and billing hours, and tweeting all the time, you might hear about it.
28. Learn quickly to use the URL shortening tools like [TinyURL](#) and all the variants. It helps tidy up your tweets.
29. If someone says you're using twitter wrong, forget it. It's an opt out society. They can unfollow if they don't like how you use it.

30. Commenting on others' tweets, and retweeting what others have posted is a great way to build community.

The Negatives People Will Throw At You

31. Twitter takes up time.
32. Twitter takes you away from other productive work.
33. Without a strategy, it's just typing.
34. There are other ways to do this.
35. As Frank hears often, Twitter doesn't replace customer service (Frank is [@comcastcares](#) and is a superhero for what he's started.)
36. Twitter is buggy and not enterprise-ready.
37. Twitter is just for techno-nerds.
38. Twitter's only a few million people. (only)

39. Twitter doesn't replace direct email marketing.
40. Twitter opens the company up to more criticism and griping.

Some Positives to Throw Back

41. Twitter helps one organize great, instant meetups (tweetups).
42. Twitter works swell as an opinion poll.
43. Twitter can help direct people's attention to good things.
44. Twitter at events helps people build an instant "backchannel."
45. Twitter breaks news faster than other sources, often (especially if the news impacts online denizens).
46. Twitter gives businesses a glimpse at what status messaging can do for an organization. Remember presence in the 1990s?
47. Twitter brings great minds together, and gives you daily opportunities to learn (if you look for it, and/or if you follow the right folks).
48. Twitter gives your critics a forum, but that means you can study them.
49. Twitter helps with business development, if your prospects are online (mine are).
50. Twitter can augment customer service. (but see above)

Twitter is huge and getting GINORMOUS! It seems that everyone is writing about ways to get more followers. Here are a few tips that will help you to get more Twitter followers.

Tip #1: Get your name listed with Twitter Directories such as JustTweetIt, WeFollow and Twibes will increase your visibility and attract more followers.

Tip #2: Match your Twitter Theme with your Blog Theme and your Website Theme and your MySpace and your Facebook, etc. List all your info in the back ground. It may not be clickable but at least it is listed!

Tip #3: Be PROactive! ReTweet interesting articles. Start conversations. Join conversations. But remember the PRO part of that- BE PROFESSIONAL!

Tip #4: Don't just post links to your site! Post links to other peoples sites. People tend to return the favor. However, Don't post links to sites you have not actually seen, this could assoicate you with poor content!

Tip #5: Add Widgets to your blog, MySpace, Facebook, etc with your feed. Make them show around 5 posts. People will see how much fun you are having and join you!

Tip #6: Put your twitter info in your e-mail signature and your signature everywhere including message boards! The more it is listed the better!

Tip #7: Add your Twitter info to your business card! This one is a no brainer! People actually still use business cards!

Tip #8: Add your Twitter info to any Press Release you may send out! Mention that you Tweet current information on a regular basis!

Tip #9: Ask your followers to share you with their Twitter followers. Be sure to ask nicely! Get more followers by asking your followers to spread the word about you. Word of mouth is the best FREE advertising anyone can have!

Tip #10: Always follow those who are following you! It will help you to interact! If you keep a close balance ratio people will see that you are actively following others as well.

Tip #11: Use #followfriday every Friday! This little tradition has gotten huge! There is an article written about that on here somewhere!

Tip #12: Do unto others! Treat everyone on Twitter like you would like to be treated! The Golden Rule applies to every social networking site!

Tip #13: Tweet often! The more you tweet the more you will get followers! Tweepers like active tweeters!