

Why Twitter?

Twitter can be an amazingly powerful platform for connecting to your community as well as driving traffic to the various properties you want people to go. Having an event? Tweet it out! Launched a new bag? Tweet it out!

The key to Twitter is the level of listening you do as well as talking. It is definitely supposed to be an interactive program. And, in fact, this is where you build the majority of your Whuffie (aka social capital). The more you interact on Twitter, the more people will interact with you, which attracts others to you as well.

One of my favorite quotes about the benefits of Twitter is from Tony Hsieh at Zappos:

You send an SMS text message to Twitter with your note, and your message will be automatically broadcast (like CB radio) to whoever is choosing to follow you (your friends). If people don't care what you're doing, they won't follow you, so don't worry about sending out trivial messages.

At first, it will seem really weird and unnatural for you to do this, but just trust me on this one. You will find that it's actually a really good way to stay in touch with all your friends and know what's going on in their lives.

So here's an example where Twitter came in handy for me when I first started using it. I would twitter "I'm at bar X" and it would be broadcast to my Twitter network. A couple of my friends happened to be close by, so they stopped by and we had a drink. Pretty cool.

*Here's another example: **I was flying in to the Vegas airport, and I twittered "Just landed in Vegas airport." I would have never texted anyone that message, but in the Twitter culture, that's exactly what you're supposed to do. It just so happened that someone on my Twitter network was about to fly out of Vegas, so we met up at the airport bar and had a drink. I would have never known otherwise that this person was at the airport, nor would I have ever sent him a text message or called him that I had just landed.***

Source: <http://twitter.zappos.com/start>

I love that story because it is exactly what Twitter does for us all of the time: it accelerates serendipity.

What are Some Good Examples of Corporate Tweeters?

What kinds of interactions are beneficial? Well, take two very popular Tweeters: Zappos and JetBlue. Here are a few examples:

@ZAPPOS:

Some photos of our company picnic are up now at: <http://blogs.zappos.com> - I think we had 1000 people show up! [11:06 AM April 20, 2008](#) from web

I want to meet more customers. On Monday, I will select a random [@zappos](#) follower

for free trip for 2 to Vegas for office tour & lunch w/ me [11:33 AM April 12, 2008](#) from web

At Vegas airport now, waiting a couple of hours until my flight to San Jose, CA. [02:01 PM April 11, 2008](#) from web

@[wisekaren](#) I'm wearing Donald Pliner shoes to the wedding. [12:50 PM April 12, 2008](#) from [txt in reply to wisekaren](#)

Finished photo shoot w/ Forbes. 4 hours & they choose 1 photo. Behind the scenes: [http://www.facebook.com/pag...](#) [about 24 hours ago](#) from web

@[bryanbartlett](#) now says he can't make it. Anyone else want 1 ticket to van halen at 830 tonight at mandalay in Vegas? [07:48 PM April 19, 2008](#) from [txt in reply to bryanbartlett](#)

Just landed in Vegas. Got lots of twitters about our new beta site [http://zeta.zappos.com](#) Thx for all the feedback, keep it coming! [01:17 PM April 18, 2008](#) from [txt](#)

@JETBLUE:

@[laughingsquid](#) Thanks! Just wait until our new terminal at JFK opens! [http://t508.com/](#) (Hope you had a great time in NYC) [about 12 hours ago](#) from web [in reply to laughingsquid](#)

@[BookingBuddy](#) We're happy to support Runner's World, but don't worry, you can still channel surf and eat blue chips if you want! [02:58 PM April 16, 2008](#) from web [in reply to BookingBuddy](#)

Two days left to win two trips on JetBlue to "The Simpsons Movie" premiere in LA. Enter now! [http://tinyurl.com/2x6ql3](#) [10:33 AM July 15, 2007](#) from web

The term 'Interwebular Chronicle' makes me laugh. [08:57 AM July 05, 2007](#) from web

View this month's selection of first-run movies from Fox InFlight Premium Entertainment: [http://tinyurl.com/2o8q46](#) [10:36 AM July 31, 2007](#) from web

To all of our Twitter friends: enjoy your weekend! [01:11 PM July 21, 2007](#) from web

As you can see from these selections, both companies are really great at balancing promotional tweets ("View this month's selection of first-run movies from Fox InFlight Premium Entertainment" and "Got lots of twitters about our new beta site [http://zeta.zappos.com](#)") with personal tweets ("The term 'Interwebular Chronicle makes me laugh." and "At Vegas airport now, waiting a couple of hours until my flight to San Jose, CA.") with conversational tweets ("@laughingsquid Thanks! Just wait until our new terminal at JFK opens!" and "@wisekaren I'm wearing Donald Pliner shoes to the wedding"). They also have fun contests ("I want to meet more customers. On Monday, I will select a random @zappos follower for free trip for 2 to Vegas" and "Two days left to win two trip on JetBlue to "The Simpsons Movie" premiere in LA.") to help increase their follower numbers and keep people reading.

Stuff to Tweet About

There are no rules about what you should tweet out, but a balance of the following is recommended:

1. **Personal thoughts and reflections** that suit your brand - this helps people feel more trust towards you and your brand and strikes up conversations
2. **Events** (both your own and other events your audience may find interesting) - this makes things interesting and, perhaps, gives you a way to meet your followers
3. **Contests** ("The first three people who answer this trivia question get....") - they drive more followers and interest in what you tweet
4. **Replies** (@twittername) - this comes from listening to your followers (you have to follow back to see their tweets). The more personal the reply, the higher the impact.
5. **Direct replies** (d twittername) - this isn't in the public timeline, but people are really touched when you answer them directly. This is helpful to answer people when it is a private matter or when you want to show concern (i.e. someone reports an accident, etc.)
6. **New blog posts** - you should keep these to one per day at the very most and you should also promote other people's blog posts that are of interest
7. **Announcements** - if it is interesting, tweet it
8. **OH's** (overheard) - someone say something in the office or when you are out and about that cracks you up? Type OH: "well, if you don't mind, im trying to work on my love life" or something else funny (sometimes used to offset potentially racy comments...if you didn't say it, but are just REPEATING IT, then it's okay)
9. **Rickrolls or other fun internet games** - this shows you are a bunch of fun and has people trying to do the same for you. Spreading as many internet memes as possible is good.
10. **Lyrics and quotes** - especially fun are the lyrics: ♪Never give the game away | Try to keep me entertained, baby | Don't make it too easy | Leave something for me and my imagination♪ as the musical notes make for lots of questions
11. **Links to media you create** - video is fun, podcasts, perhaps interviews that are posted online about you, etc.
12. **Shout outs** - @twittername rocks! Thanks for the great link: <http://insertlink.com> These make people feel great, too.

Tweets that make people laugh are awesome, but tweets that make people think are even better.

How to Tweet Without Losing Your Soul

So, before you even ask. Yes. Twitter takes time. It takes a bunch of attention and love and care. There ARE ways to minimize the work and keep up to date, though:

1. Run a twitter client on your desktop and connect it to Growl.
For desktop clients see: <http://twitter.pbwiki.com/Apps> My favorites are Twhirl: <http://www.twhirl.org/> Snitter: <http://snook.ca/snitter/> and Twitterrific: <http://iconfactory.com/software/twitterrific>
2. Take twitter on the road! If you have an iPhone there are great sites like: <http://pockettweets.com/> or the twitter mobile experience at <http://m.twitter.com>. You can also just send your text messages to 40404. That's pretty simple. Check out the apps page again for more options on other phones like Blackberries.

3. Keep a good track of who is talking about you, so you can reply back!
<http://www.tweetscan.com/index.php?s=timbuk2&u=> You can track all sorts of keywords there as well as watch who is replying to you (there is also a tab on the main website for your replies). You can always plug the results into your RSS feeds...
4. Put a twitter widget on your blog! <http://twitter.com/badges>
5. Hook it up to your Facebook page! Only update your status in one place at a time and have it show in multiple places! Details here: <http://explore.twitter.com/>

There is also a great listing of fun apps to use with Twitter here: <http://blog.twitter.com/search/label/apps> Watch out, though. It's totally addictive!

How to Talk Twitter

There is a glossary of terms over here: <http://twitter.pbwiki.com/Twitter+Glossary> where you will find that MOST terms used on Twitter start, not surprisingly, with 'Tw'. Like tweet, meaning one post on twitter, and TweetUp, which is a Twitter Meetup. But the basic terms you need to know are the commands to put in front of what you are saying. Like:

D twittername - direct message (not public, goes right to the Tweeter in question)
@twittername - public reply
Follow twittername - start following someone
Leave twittername - stop following someone
on - turns your notifications on (on your phone or however you are receiving tweets)
off - turns notifications off
help - accesses the other commands as you may need them
there is more here: <http://twitter.com/help/lingo>

There are also some things that have come out of the community like:

hashtags or # - put a hashtag in front of a 'tag' for easier tracking (i.e. This speaker is really nailing it. I think her slides are brilliant! #web2expo). This is really useful for conferences, events and specific topics of interest. You can read a little more about the history here: <http://twitter.pbwiki.com/Hashtags> You can track hashtags at <http://twemes.com/>

A Couple of Extra Things

Before I wrap this up, there are a few other 'Tweet like a pro' ideas:

1. Shorten your URLs at: <http://tweetburner.com/> where you can also track stats on these links!
2. The mother of all places to find everything awesome Twitter is: <http://twitter.pbwiki.com/>
3. Want to set up a 'group' tweet? This is way cool: <http://grouptweet.com> (have multiple employees send messages to d timbuk2 with a message that you can aggregate at @timbuk2)
4. Give people beer for good deeds with Foamee: <http://foamee.com/>

Now you are ready to tweet like a pro!

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