



#TwitterForBusiness

A 9-Point Checklist to Improve Results on Twitter

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Is your firm or company on Twitter? Can you explain your Twitter strategy and the metrics you use to measure success in two sentences? If your history with Twitter is short, or if you are taxed for resources, you may simply have a public face on Twitter, without the longer-term vision required to be successful.

Once per quarter – or at a minimum, once per year – take a couple of days to revisit your Twitter strategy, activity and results. You may learn some important facts that will help you hone your message, build your following, and increase engagement. This nine-point checklist can serve as an audit tool.

1. Have you developed a strategy?

Many companies jump on Twitter to build a social media presence, but fail to first define the goals and strategy for being there. When it's realized that social media requires dedicated time and energy, they split the effort among several employees who are free to post whatever they like. In this situation, you'll see an overuse of direct sales pitches, photos of Dan's dog and party shots from the latest trade show.

Manage your identity and brand on social media as you would on your website or in print. Define core business or industry interest areas and perhaps several related topic areas that will be addressed in your tweets and content links. Document this strategy along with key terms and phrases, and share the vision with every employee who has access to post on the company Twitter account.

2. Do your profile and bio introduce you effectively?

The 160-character bio description should convey your identity quickly to Twitter users who view your profile. The bio content will be indexed by search engines and may provide additional web exposure. Use keywords effectively here.

3. Are you using the Twitter Advanced Search tool effectively?

The search tools in Twitter allow you to tailor searches to find content with specific terms and phrases, from specific users or in a particular geographic location. Run searches on the terms and keywords that are important in your industry to identify people or companies you want to follow.

Similarly, run searches on the thought leaders in your industry to see which terms and hashtags they are using that you may want to adopt.



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4. Are you using hashtags effectively?

A hashtag is created when the # symbol is used as a prefix on keywords or topics in a tweet. A hashtag provides an easy way to categorize messages. If you use a hashtag in a tweet from a public account, anyone who does a search for that hashtag may see your tweet; this gives your posts wider exposure and may help you find new followers.

It's important not to overdo it. Don't add excessive hashtags to your tweets. One or two hashtags per tweet is a good rule of thumb, and you can write an effective tweet without any hashtags at all.

Observe and adopt the widely used hashtags in your industry or topic areas. Broaden your exposure by tweeting about and using hashtags from:

- Events and conferences you attend or sponsor.
- Authoritative sources in the industry, such as regulatory bodies, industry analysts or partners.
- New technologies, trends and newsworthy events in your industry.

When creating a new hashtag, look for existing use of that tag (perhaps in an unrelated space). Make new tags unique and short. Reuse effective hashtags across other media: Instagram, YouTube, ads and even print.

5. Are you sharing high-quality content?

Followers choose to follow you because of the relevance, timeliness and value that your posts provide. Keep the quality of shared content high to retain followers and gain new followers. There are three key types of content to include in your tweeting strategy:

Content you create: Tell a story with case studies. Share technical vision with a white paper. Offer practical tips and guides that educate your audience on how they can be more successful at selecting software, hiring employees, creating a compliance policy or some other endeavor in your area of expertise.

Content you curate: Become known as a well-read expert on the key resources and trends in your space. Locate and share high-quality research, academic articles, regulatory decisions, infographics, surveys and other content from subject matter experts.

Promotional messages: On occasion, it's perfectly fine to make a promotional post about your products or services. Ideally, promotion posts should be fewer than 20 percent (1 in 5) of your tweets. Focus on specific, helpful information, such as a screen shot of a new feature that solves a particularly thorny challenge or a news event. Invite local metro users to attend a product demo or speaking engagement.

6. Are you writing effective tweets?

Once you have framed out your identity and strategy on Twitter, take care to tweet consistently and to tweet high-quality content that followers will appreciate, share and respond to. There are a few tricks to creating an effective tweet:

- Write a short and concise message that makes a clear point; if you want to say three things, make each one an individual tweet.
- Include visuals whenever possible; a picture truly is worth a thousand words, especially on Twitter.



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- Try out Twitter polls – a great tool to invite engagement.

7. Does your Twitter activity truly engage followers?

Twitter is not simply a medium to broadcast like television or radio. It is meant for both broadcasting and interaction. Create opportunities for your follower community to discuss and share ideas and opinions. Answer back to people who tweet you. When someone retweets you, consider following that person.

8. Are you using Pinned tweets?

Select or write a tweet that clearly communicates your value proposition, or that offers valuable content to followers. Select the 'Pin to Profile Page' option, and this tweet will be featured at the top of your profile until you replace or unpin it.

9. Are you tracking key metrics?

The best way to improve any business process is to measure, analyze and improve as you go. Analyzing engagement patterns will tell you which topics and types of information are important to focus on and may build your following. Regular auditing will help you keep a balance between thought leadership, retweets and promotional content.

These are just a few of the steps you can take today to raise your visibility and grow followers on Twitter. There are other Twitter options in advertising, list management, and the rumored lifting of the 140 character limit on tweets that should be considered during 2016. A host of third party tools for managing multiple Twitter accounts, lists, and advanced scheduling for posts and retweeting.

About the author

Megan Miller is a senior consultant with Edge Marketing, assisting clients in development and execution of strategic marketing plans and implementation of marketing technologies. A global technology hound, Miller has built brands, trained teams and introduced successful products for global companies and startups. A certified eDiscovery expert, Miller has written on trends and topics in electronic discovery, consumer electronics and the Internet of Things – before it was even called the Internet of Things. Her work has appeared in Attorney at Law, US Tech, TechnoLawyer, ACEDS and other industry publications.



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