

101

Twitter Marketing

1. The Lowdown

Twitter (www.twitter.com) is a free social networking and micro-blogging service founded by Jack Dorsey, Biz Stone, and Evan Williams in March 2006 (publicly in July 2006). Users create profile pages that display a reverse-chronological ordered feed of their 140 character posts called tweets. A user can choose to allow public access to their tweets or restrict access to only approved followers. Additionally, users can update their accounts on the go through mobile phones and other SMS clients.

Twitter allows users to “follow” other user updates and provides a customizable feed that is instantly populated with tweets from followed users. The content of tweets is quite broad and inconsistent. Many tweets answer the question posed by Twitter, “What are you doing?” Many more tweets are responses to other tweets, reference articles, and other posts that interested the user or are random statements or questions. When it comes to tweeting, anything goes (as long as that “anything” is 140 characters or less).



2. Why Do I Need to Know About It?

Because all the cool kids are doing it. Who exactly are these cool kids? A hodgepodge of celebrities, CEOs, news publications, event representatives, companies, bloggers, musicians, athletes, some guy that works down the hall from you, and a little-known politician (Barack Obama ring a bell?).

a) The Numbers.

In March 2009 Twitter clocked in with over 8 million U.S. users. Neilson Online reported a growth rate of 1,382 percent year over year in February 2009.

People either love it or hate it. A grey area exists between these two sides only in the honeymoon period of having a Twitter account. However, with a growth rate in the thousands, Twitter is a force to be reckoned with and deserves your attention, at least for a little while.

b) Marketing with Twitter.

Once you’ve set up your account, it will be pretty easy to figure out why many people love Twitter. Remember to cultivate your online presence and really make the service work for you. The information that follows outlines some valuable ways to make your Twitter account earn its keep.

Use Twitter as a relationship-building and maintenance tool. Relationships are more important than ever in today’s rocky economic climate. With travel and event budgets being cut, it is becoming increasingly harder to maintain personalized customer relations. Maintaining those relationships on Twitter is free!

Use it as a virtual networking event or trade show to meet potential customers and leads. You can interact with others in the same or similar industries as well as in target customer industries. Find

the people you're looking for by searching key words related to your product or industry on Twitter Search and then follow those users.

Make friends with bloggers and journalists. They are more likely to write about you if you have a direct relationship with them. Facilitate that relationship by actively responding and retweeting (reposting) their tweets.

Develop and promote your brand—either your company's or your personal brand. Use Twitter to showcase your brand as friendly, approachable, and as a thought-leader, all by what you choose to post.

Interact with your customer base. Notify them of planned outages, new product releases, or recalls. Pique interest by releasing Twitter-exclusive company information. Better yet, encourage your customer base to communicate with you by asking their opinion regarding your processes, products, or even the content of your tweets.

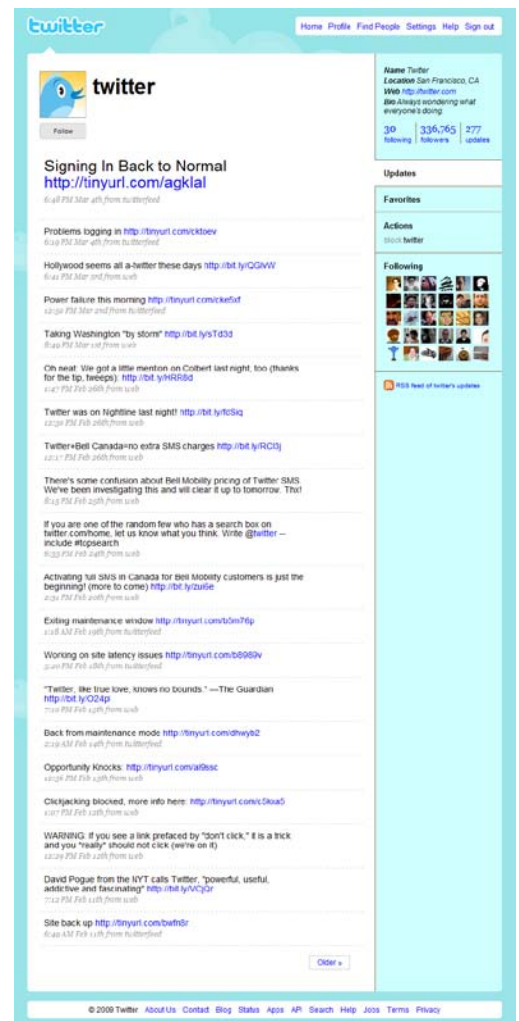
Track what people are saying about your company and brand. Through a third party application such as TweetDeck, you can set up search parameters around specific keywords such as your company name, the names of your executives, and much more.

Create buzz around upcoming events. Let people know when your staff is attending, sponsoring, or speaking at events. Announce your booth number so people can hunt you down. (It never hurts to mention the free schwag you're offering, either.) Don't forget to post your thoughts about sessions and other event activities so that those Twitter users who couldn't attend can still experience the event through your tweets.

Drive traffic back to your company's Web site or score some Karma points by directing traffic to your customer's sites. Feel free to brag a little and promote other content you've created, including new press releases, Webinars, blog posts, or podcasts.

Twitter makes you a more-effective communicator. Learn a little something from that 140-character limit and stop talking your customers to death. Twitter forces users to keep messages short and sweet—an important skill in this day of time-crunched, information overload. Your customers are much more likely to read and remember messages that are succinct and direct.

Finally, find some fresh meat in the Twitter-sphere. Recruit new talent by sending out a message asking for recommendations. Twitter gives you a speedy and painless way to find new hires and freelancers.



3. The Thing to Remember Is...

Twitter is still very much in its heyday. By participating in the Twitter world, you are sure to benefit from the contagious buzz swirling around it.

Especially remember—everything you say is public! Unless you decide to restrict access to your feed, which completely ruins the voyeuristic side that makes Twitter fun—unrestricted access to anyone's tweets! Also, a tweet does not always die when it is deleted; tweets often live on in internet archives and could come back to haunt you.

Tweet carefully, tweet often, and tweet now!

About Digitaria

Digitaria (www.digitaria.com) is an innovative digital marketing and technology firm headquartered in San Diego with additional offices in Los Angeles, Washington, D.C., and New York. Since 1997, Digitaria has consistently led the field in creating digital experiences online through Web sites, intranets, extranets, digital asset management, interactive marketing campaigns and business solutions that are both measurable and memorable. Through its sister agency, Departure Advertising, Digitaria also offers strategic advertising and branding services. Digitaria represents many of the largest brands in the world. Active clients include Atlanta Falcons, ASICS Shoes, Best Western International, CBS Corporation, Cobra Golf, Comcast Corporation, FOX Corporation, Gateway Corporation, Gordon Rush, Hasbro, Inc., KCET Hollywood, NBC Universal, QUALCOMM, Inc., Warner Bros. Worldwide Television Marketing, WPT Enterprises, Inc. and many others.

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