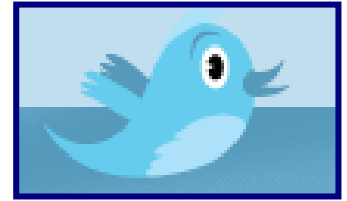


Using Twitter for Business



Twitter - "It's a free and easy way to communicate with potential customers, clients, and colleagues. And it's fun too."

Our research suggests that the effectiveness of Twitter to promote your business depends on 2 factors:

1. The time you are prepared to devote to Twittering.
2. The type of business you are managing. Twitter is more effective for promoting business concerned with people products such as health, clothing, books, food etc and much less effective for business concerned with such things as small scale manufacturing etc.

Take a look at our Twitter at <http://twitter.com/CoolcatsComp>

We are still developing and evaluating the effectiveness of our Tweets.

If you decide to give Twitter a try here are 7 ways to get Twitter working for you:

1. Create a user name that people will associate with you and your business.

Choose a handle (Twitter name) that will not only stand out more but also reflects your business.

Choosing a user name is similar to choosing a domain name for your Web site. If your business name is unique and easy to remember, use it. Likewise, create a background and profile that reflects your business or profession

You want your Twitter page to stand out, but you also want it to bear some semblance to the industry you represent. [Dunkin' Donut's page](#) should obviously have a different look than [Marvel Entertainment's page](#);

Choose a theme and distinctive colors, and create a profile that identifies you and your company appropriately, but isn't all business. Go ahead, mention that you like to ski or are active in your community or coach youth sports. Be brief, be positive, be human!

2. Use your tweets (140 characters maximum) to add value.

This can be done in a number of ways, and there are no rules here.

- Share your company and product news.
- Offer Twitter exclusive coupons or deals
- Take people behind the scenes of your company
- Post pictures from your offices, stores, warehouses, etc.
- Share sneak peeks of projects or events in development
- Provide links to interesting articles, pictures, cartoons, videos. Know that audio and video links can be even more powerful than text links.
- Promote your blog and/or Web site.
 - Compliment people.
 - Recommend “tweeps” (other Twitter users) you find interesting.
 - Market things either blatantly or subtly – both can work with the right touch, especially if you add humor.

Unless one finds value in your content, people won't find you interesting – even if you are a celebrity but you shouldn't be about business only.

3. Engage with people.

Unless you are a celebrity, you need to “follow” people for them to want to follow you. General etiquette is that you follow someone and he or she follows you back, though this is not a hard-and-fast rule.

Twitter provides you with unprecedented access to experts, celebrities, and people you would not otherwise meet. If you don't like the idea of “following” people (similar to but less intrusive than submitting a friend request in Facebook), then you're probably not ideal for Twitter. The act of following someone is basic – you are looking for interesting people who you may learn something from and who may learn something from you.

Similarly, replying to questions or comments, and re-tweeting posts that you find interesting will help you engage with people who could become prospects for your business. The opportunity you have to mingle with lots of different people online is hard to match today.

4. Use Twitter as your support desk.

Even a small business can use Twitter to get immediate feedback, offer assistance, promote goodwill among customers, and publicly display your customer-service successes. You just need to devote time to monitoring Twitter on a regular basis.

5. Check out Twitter tools and mobile applications.

It's mind-boggling to see how many applications have been created to support Twitter. If you have to choose only one, pick one of the mobile applications, such as Twirl, that lets you post and read tweets from your iPhone or cell phone.

Here are some of the others:

- URL shorteners: These come in handy for minimizing the length of URLs , thus giving you more space for your text. TinyURL, is an examples.
- TweetDeck: Let's you see more tweets, as well as replies and direct messages, at once; it also features automatic updates.
- TweetBeep: Get e-mail alerts on Twitter, such as when people have tweeted one of your search terms.
- TwitPic: Send out links to pictures with your tweets.
- TweetLater: Schedule tweets in advance, lets you track keywords on Twitter, and more.

6. Track your results – and use shortcuts to follow what is said about your company.

Building the number of followers you have is one way to generate results on Twitter, but not the only way. Follow the "Updates" section, which is an easy way to see tweets mentioning your user name are listed. Also, use Twitter Search to track any mentions of your company, your industry, and your competitors. If you follow a lot of people and companies yourself, you aren't going to be able to read every tweet. Don't even try!

Also, track how your messages are received. Are people engaging with you? Are you finding new prospects? Are you enhancing your brand? You should be; if not, your messages may be the problem.

7. Know the 8 steps to Twitter failure.

- Don't follow anyone.
- Become the Twitter promo king (that is, do too much self-promotion).
- Don't interact with others.
- Talk about yourself incessantly.
- Use your Twitter feed as an RSS feed.
- Use an impersonal brand as a user name.
- Don't track anything.
- Don't tell your customers you're on Twitter.

That's all there is to it.

If all this sounds a bit too complicated but you wish to learn more then consider our
bespoke Fast Track - Twitter course

at

http://coolcatscomputing.com/enquiries_Form.aspx

select 'Other Course' and mention Twitter in the 'Other Course Details' box.

Resources at www.coolcatscomputing.com