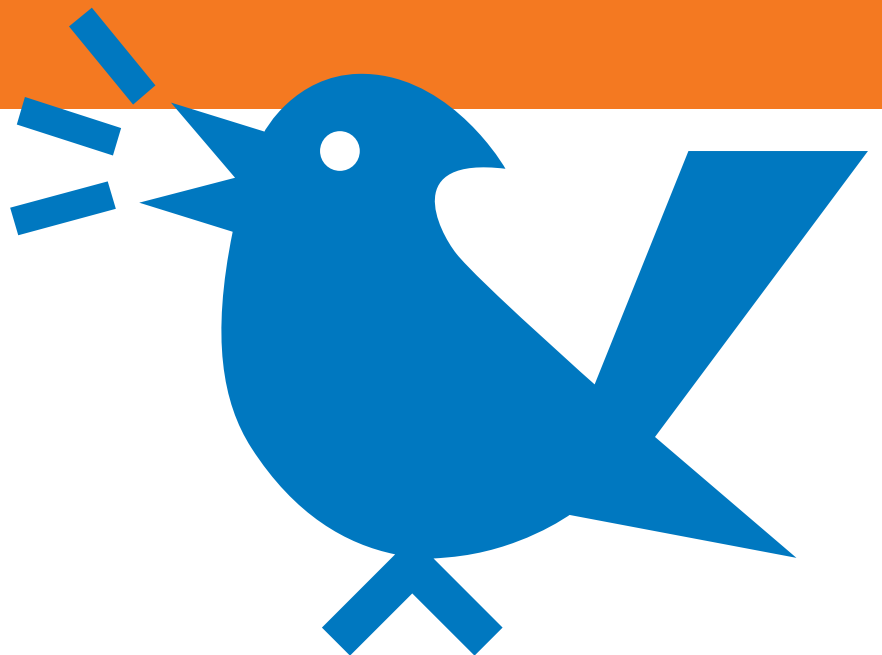


Twitter Success Stories

How 11 companies are achieving their marketing objectives—140 characters at a time



CASE STUDY COLLECTION

Contents at a Glance

INTRODUCTION	1
EXCLUSIVE MARKETINGPROFS SURVEY: TWITTER GROWING DRAMATICALLY AS BUSINESS TOOL	3
ESSENTIAL TWITTER TOOLS FOR BUSINESS	5
11 MEANINGFUL TWITTER CASE STUDIES IN ACTION	8
BUILDING COMMUNITY	9
KOGI KOREAN BBQ	9
THE COFFEE GROUNDZ	10
CUSTOMER SERVICE	12
COMCAST CABLE	12
ZAPPOS	13
SELLING	15
DELL COMPUTERS	15
SOUPLANTATION	16
PROSPECTING	19
TECHRIGY	19
DECHO	20
BRANDING & AWARENESS	22
SHAQ	22
WALT DISNEY CO.	24
FUNDRAISING	26
12FOR12K CHARITY	26
7 QUICK TIPS FOR GETTING STARTED WITH TWITTER	28
NOW, IT'S YOUR TURN TO SHARE	30
ABOUT THE AUTHOR	31
ABOUT MARKETINGPROFS	31

INTRODUCTION



Everyone, including our U.S. president, seems to have a Twitter account these days. Worldwide traffic to Twitter.com reached 10 million visitors in February 2009, up a whopping 700 percent from the same time last year, according to comScore. Unless you are new to social media, you know that Twitter is a pretty big deal.

What you might not know, however, is that Twitter can help businesses get closer to consumers and, yes, sell more products and services—everything from refurbished computer laptops to piping hot lemon muffins. If the results of an exclusive MarketingProfs survey are any indication, Twitter is becoming increasingly more popular among business types.

Until late last year, Twitter was widely regarded as a cool consumer novelty, with no real business application. Even Twitter itself couldn't figure out how to monetize its service (and is apparently still looking into doing so).

Marketers everywhere sat up and took notice in December 2008 when Dell Outlet (@delloutlet) announced that it had generated \$1 million online by posting e-commerce links to its Twitter feed.

Flash forward four months. Businesses are beginning to seriously integrate Twitter into their business operations. Twitter, like other social media channels, is a cost-effective way to reach consumers and other businesses at a much deeper level than other marketing and advertising vehicles. In addition, Twitter users may be more affluent than previously believed. According to comScore, the majority of visitors to Twitter.com in February were 35 years or older; the number of users between 18 and 24 was just over 10 percent.

Twitter now is also being used for a wide range of purposes, from simple networking to running weekly contests to alerting hungry L.A. consumers about the whereabouts of a mobile Korean BBQ taco truck. In nearly every case, Twitter's underlying benefits are that it increases communication and helps build communities.

This report details how 11 innovative businesses and associations use Twitter to improve their marketing and business objectives. *Twitter Success Stories: How 11 companies are achieving their marketing objectives—140 characters at a time* begins with exclusive survey data on key Twitter business trends, followed by a description of essential Twitter business tools. We then dive into 11 individual business case studies, which detail challenges, solutions and results as well as specific business lessons learned.

INTRODUCTION

Rising above the normal chit chat, Twitter can help you boost business and reach your objectives. This case study collection will show you how.

The case studies are organized by marketing objective or purpose:

- **Building Community**—creating a strong community of followers that ultimately help drive business objectives and bring in new customers
- **Customer Service**—using Twitter to successfully engage with customers needing help
- **Selling**—driving online and offline sales by using Twitter to post promotions, discounts and offers
- **Prospecting**—creating demand and pinpointing potential customers needing the type of solution your product offers
- **Branding & Awareness**—employing Twitter in creative ways to increase awareness around a product, person (celebrity) or business
- **Fundraising**—using Twitter to spread the word about important causes

Twitter is still a relatively new phenomenon, so these case studies should provide insight into how businesses are successfully using the tool. In fact, some of the uses and results have never been detailed before.

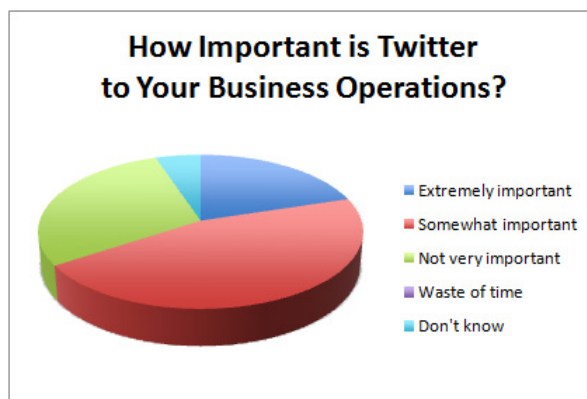
But first, the next section explains what marketers in our survey have to say about using Twitter in their work.

EXCLUSIVE MARKETINGPROFS SURVEY: TWITTER GROWING DRAMATICALLY AS BUSINESS TOOL

Twitter ranks only behind blogs as the social media tool that delivers most value.

Although Twitter is growing faster than the national debt (OK, maybe not that fast), Twitter is not the be all and end all among social media tools for improving marketing objectives. Not yet.

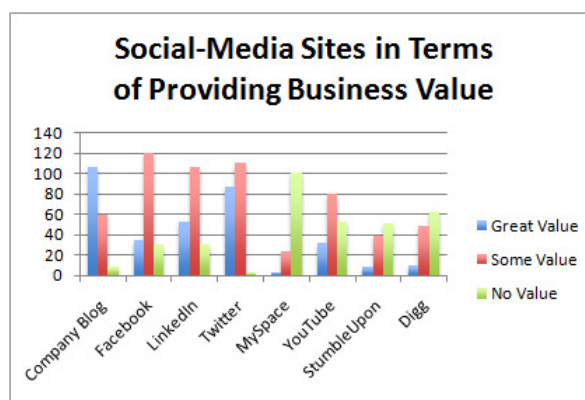
Of more than 200 Twitter users, an impressive 83 percent said that they expect their company's use of Twitter to increase over the upcoming six months —45.5 percent of those by a significant margin. And 45 percent of respondents said they saw Twitter as “somewhat important” to their business. Twenty percent saw it as “extremely important.”



According to the MarketingProfs survey, Twitter ranks behind only blogs as the social media tool that delivers the most value. On a five-point scale, 41 percent of respondents said Twitter delivers “great value” to their company, ranking well ahead of LinkedIn, which garnered 25 percent of that category, and Facebook, which recorded 17 percent. Corporate blogs ranked at the top of the list with 52 percent saying it delivered great value.

Most respondents are using a variety of Twitter-based metrics to chart their successes. That response came up 50 percent of the time.

Respondents were also asked for what business purpose is their company currently using Twitter. They were allowed to pick all that apply. Branding and awareness came out on top (84 percent of the time), followed by networking (78 percent) and community-building (77 percent). Brand-reputation management was fourth with 51 percent, followed by customer service (44 percent) and prospecting (30 percent). Selling was seventh at just over 20 percent.



Also, 36 percent of respondents say they use a corporate Twitter account to promote their business, while 30 percent use their personal accounts. More than 31 percent said they use both.

And when it comes to measuring Twitter, most people are using a variety of Twitter-based metrics to chart their success. That response came up 50 percent of the time, in which respondents could pick all that apply, compared to 44 percent for “analyzing Web traffic data.” Tracking personal interaction and using URL tracking services (such as bit.ly) each scored a response rate of 23 percent. “We don’t use quantitative metrics” registered a 22 percent response.

* The informal survey of Twitter users (mostly @MarketingProfs followers) was conducted from April 11 to 14, 2009. It included 213 completed responses, 66 percent of which were completed by people with fewer than 50 people in their companies. The rest of the breakdown: 101–1000 employees, 14.6 percent; 1,000+ employees, 11.3 percent; and 51–100 employees, 8 percent.

ESSENTIAL TWITTER TOOLS FOR BUSINESS

Thanks to Twitter's open code, free Twitter applications abound—for everything from content management to tracking and metrics.

If you're used Twitter, you know there are literally hundreds of Twitter tools and applications. Because Twitter makes its code available to outside developers, an entire ecosystem has sprung up around it. But which tools are best for business use? The following websites and applications can help get you started.

Twitter Account Management

- [TweetDeck](#): This popular desktop widget offers great functionality for posting business tweets, including the ability to sort tweets into direct messages, topics and keywords. For instance, you can set up a specific column for mentions of your company or industry, and another for those of your competitor. TweetDeck has a sleek Adobe Air interface that looks like a cockpit on your desktop. Plus, it integrates with Facebook.
- [HootSuite](#): A fast-growing free Web service, HootSuite is perfect for businesses needing multiple Twitter profiles and multiple users. It allows you to easily schedule tweets and switch back and forth between accounts. The service also includes a URL-shortening service called "ow.ly" that lets you see how many times your links are clicked. HootSuite counts Google Enterprise, Steve Case and Threadless as users.
- [CoTweet](#): Multiple people from the same company can communicate through a single Twitter account, thanks to CoTweet. Each person maintains his or her own profile and activity record. CoTweet boasts such customers as Macworld, Ford and Whole Foods. CoTweet is accepting private beta registration.

Contact Management & Directories

- [FriendOrFollow.com](#): This is a powerful tool for seeing 1) which of the people you follow are following you back and 2) which people are following you, but you have yet to reciprocate.
- [Twitoria](#): You may have a lot of followers, but how many of those are active? This simple application allows you to see which of your followers are active on Twitter over the last week, two weeks, month, two months, etc.
- [WeFollow.com](#): It is a user-powered Twitter directory. Simply enter the tags you want to be known for (e.g. #socialmedia, #marketing, #measurement, etc.) and you're finished.

ESSENTIAL TWITTER TOOLS FOR BUSINESS

To see if your Twitter content is resonating with your intended audience, use Twitter apps, such as [bit.ly](#) and [Omniture](#).

- [Twellow](#): This tool bills itself as the Twitter Yellow Pages. You can search for users by a wide range of categories. You can also add yourself to the group so people can find you.
- [Just Tweet It](#): Another directory service that notifies you of new additions to people in your particular industry.

Tracking & Metrics

- [TwitterCounter](#): This sleek tool lets you chart the number of followers over time, from last week to last month.
- [Bit.ly](#): This incredibly useful tool not only shortens your URL but enables you to track metrics on how many people click on your links. This provides insight into what types of links resonate with your client base. Retailers, such as Dell, use bit.ly to track click-through rates.
- [Twitalyzer](#): A new tool from the folks at WebAnalytics Demystified, Twitalyzer goes beyond basic metrics to show the influence, signal-to-noise ratio, generosity and a whole host of other metrics related to your Twitter account. Take one trip through Twitalyzer, and you'll have a clear idea of where you need to focus to make your Twitter use more effective.
- [Google Analytics](#): To measure the number of people visiting your website from the Twitter.com domain, try Google Analytics.
- [Omniture](#): This enterprise Web analytics package recently added Twitter integration, enabling clients to view brand comments over time, influencers vs. detractors, and a host of other metrics.

Monitoring & Alert Services

- [Search.Twitter.com](#): Though there are several options for monitoring what people are saying about your brand on Twitter, this one might be the easiest. And it's free. Use this service to set up RSS feeds related to the words you care about. (Please note: It does have limitations, such as how far back in time you can go.)
- [TweetBeep.com](#): This service is like Google Alerts for Twitter. Enter your keywords (e.g. company name, product, competitors, etc.) and receive regular updates whenever someone mentions those words in social media.

ESSENTIAL TWITTER TOOLS FOR BUSINESS

Personalize your Twitter page by using [Twitbacks.com](#) or [TwitterGallery.com](#). Just add your logo, photos and a stylish background to make your page pop.

- [Monitter](#): This new service provides a live streaming view of what people in your location are saying about your company or employees.
- [Radian6](#) and [Techrigy](#): These two enterprise-class monitoring tools help a company listen to conversations happening throughout the social media universe, not just Twitter. The tools are loaded with additional powerful functionality for managing your brand.

Marketing Tools

- [TwtQpon](#): Use TwtQpon to create exclusive deals for your products or services, and share them with your followers.
- [TwitterHawk](#): A novel marketing application, TwitterHawk connects you with people actively talking about your product or service within your area. For example, if you own a sandwich shop and someone in town tweets about getting a sandwich, you can automatically send them a customized response. The service costs five cent per tweet.
- [TwitBacks.com](#) and [TwitterGallery.com](#): Want more than the design options that Twitter provides? Use either of these services to improve the look and feel of your Twitter page. TwitBacks.com allows you to provide additional business contact information, and a photo or logo as well.

11 Meaningful Twitter Case Studies in Action

BUILDING COMMUNITY

One of Twitter's undisputed values is helping to build community.



Kogi Korean BBQ

The Kogi taco truck delivers gourmet tacos to L.A. denizens by the hundreds each night. But where will the Kogi truck be each night? Only Twitter users know for sure.

Company: Founded in November 2008, Kogi Korean BBQ offers tacos from its mobile trucks throughout Los Angeles. Twitter address: @kogibbq

Challenge: Mark Manguera's plan to offer gourmet Korean BBQ tacos from a mobile taco truck was nearly perfect. He had a great name, a tasty product, and a unique delivery method. He knew the demand would be there from L.A. club goers and night owls looking for late-night eats but weary of fast food. There remained one problem, however: How would Manguera let people know where the Kogi Korean BBQ truck was at any given time? It would often travel all over L.A., from Venice to Culver City to downtown and back. Traffic, police and other travel issues often prevented it from being in the exact same spot each night at the same time. Kogi Korean BBQ needed a fast way to communicate the truck's exact location every night to their growing customer base.

Enter Twitter.

Solution: Twitter gave Kogi drivers a surprisingly nimble and efficient method of keeping customers constantly updated about their whereabouts. The Kogi team would use Twitter during the night to tweet out its next location and tell people if and when it was delayed by traffic.

Eagle rock scheduled at 10. Dress warm Eagle Rock! 6:18 PM Apr 4th from txt

Traffic on 110. be @ Eagle Rock eta 15 min 10:01 PM Apr 4th from txt

Pretty soon, customers found they had to be on Twitter to find out where to get the juicy \$2 tacos with the tangy kick. Once the message was sent, Kogi found hundreds of people waiting for them at the next stop. Twitter also fit in perfectly with the street culture vibe the company was trying to establish, affectionately known as "Kogi culture."

Results: When Kogi first started, the team had to hustle a little bit. Only about 10 people would show up at stops. Today, Kogi rules the night, serving as many as 300 to 800 people per stop at multiple locations around Los Angeles. Kogi's success is due in no small part to Twitter; @kogibbq has more than 22,000 followers.

BUILDING COMMUNITY

“Twitter helps us keep in touch with our audience, so we can always give them what they want.”
—Mike Prasad, Brand and Social Media Director of Kogi Korean BBQ

In addition to being used for location updates, Twitter also offered two major benefits: It helped create a bond with customers, and it gave customers a chance to provide valuable feedback on everything from specials to ideas for street locations. Within five months, Kogi became such a street phenomenon that fans have created videos about waiting for the Kogi truck. Kogi has already launched a second Kogi truck and has plans to add more.

Business Lessons Learned

- Think creatively about potential uses for Twitter, including alerts.
- Use Twitter to engage customers and receive valuable feedback.



“Twitter helps us keep in touch with our audience, so we can always give them what they want. It keeps us connected with our customers at all times.”—Mike Prasad, Brand and Social Media Director of Kogi Korean BBQ

The Coffee Groundz

The Houston-area coffee shop was just another coffee shop—until it found Twitter. Today, the Coffee Groundz is ground zero among local social media fans, and sales have soared.



Company: Started in 2007, the Coffee Groundz is a coffee shop, bar and all-around “hang-out” joint. Twitter address: @coffeegroundz

Challenge: Like all small businesses, the Coffee Groundz sought to distinguish itself. Coffee shops tend to be a dime a dozen, so it is very hard to get noticed. Since opening two years ago, the owners of the Coffee Groundz had tried several methods to get new customers and increase sales. They tried print ads in local community magazines and newspapers, radio spots, and even working with local non-profit groups. Nothing seemed to work or deliver the type of impact that Coffee Groundz desired. Then, early last fall, one of the owners began using something called Twitter.

Solution: In September 2008, the managing partner at the Coffee Groundz, J.R. Cohen, began using Twitter informally to interact with friends and customers. One month later, Cohen was in the back of the shop when he received a tweet from a customer asking if he could get a breakfast wrap to go.

BUILDING COMMUNITY

“My advice to businesses using Twitter is to just be yourself. That will take you farther than you could ever imagine.”

**—J.R. Cohen,
Managing Partner of the
Coffee Groundz**



The exchange went like this:

maslowbeer @coffeegroundz I want to pre order a bkfast wrap so I can zip thru to get back for gas man. c'est possible?

coffeegroundz (Cohen): @maslowbeer Oui. What do you want on it?

Just like that, history was made: the first go-to order on Twitter. A couple of *Houston Chronicle* reporters noticed the exchange, and the Coffee Groundz ended up receiving a lot of publicity over the exchange. And Cohen took advantage of it. He started building a vibrant community on Twitter by interacting with Coffee Groundz customers, taking their orders, posting tweets about the local music scene, giving tips on how to make better coffee at home, etc. Soon, he began hosting local tweet-ups, impromptu gatherings of local Twitter users. His biggest event was the Obama inauguration, which he organized on the fly less than 24 hours before the event. More than 250 people showed up to drink coffee, nosh on sandwiches, and watch history being made.

Results: The Coffee Groundz is now widely regarded as a hip, tech-savvy place for local social media fans to get a fabulous cup of coffee. The number of Twitter followers has swelled to more than 5,500 at last count, and Cohen said business has increased 20 percent to 30 percent since October. The Coffee Groundz has integrated Twitter into its overall operations, using it to take food orders and special requests (such as opening a bottle of wine and letting it breathe), offer exclusive deals, communicate with customers, and organize in-store events. The store's Twitter address, @coffeegroundz, now adorns water bottles, t-shirts and aprons.

Business Lessons Learned:

- Use Twitter to communicate with customers and build a community.
- Consider integrating Twitter into your business operations.
- Leverage tweet-ups and other events.



“My advice to businesses (using Twitter) is to just be yourself. That will take you farther than you could ever imagine.”—J.R. Cohen, Managing Partner, Coffee Groundz

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Cost-effective and efficient, Twitter is a natural fit for helping customers online.

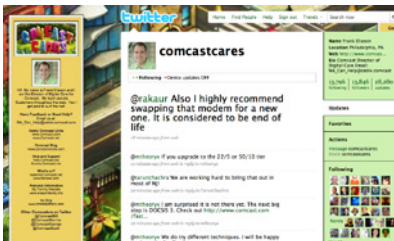
Comcast Cable

Hoping to improve customer relations, Comcast promoted Frank Eliason to engage customers through social media. Eliason is now a rock star, but customers are the true beneficiaries.



Company: Founded in 1969, Comcast (NASDAQ: CMCSA) is the nation's leading provider of entertainment, information and communications products and services. Twitter address: @ComcastCares

Challenge: Comcast sought a way to better engage with customers and get their questions answered on a wide range of topics, from billing issues to cable service outages. However, providing live customer service representatives can be expensive for any business. Comcast began investigating social media strategies, including blogs and chat rooms, to better interact with its customers nationwide. Another challenge was brand reputation management issues, including some irate customers who created unflattering websites regarding Comcast's service.



Solution: In early 2008, Comcast promoted Frank Eliason to director of Digital Care. Eliason's customer service goals were simple: to listen to customers, and meet them where they already were. That led him to Twitter. Eliason created the Twitter address @ComcastCares and began interacting with customers in messages of 140 characters or less. After an initial learning curve, Eliason would regularly scour the Twitter landscape looking to help customers in any way that he could, whether it was checking on a service outage or helping track down the answer to a billing problem. Many times, he could solve the issue in 140 characters; other times, he would provide an email address or even open a ticket for a customer. Also, he made time to simply tweet, "Hi, this is Frank from Comcast. How can I help?" and leave the next step up to the customer. Word quickly spread that Frank was an invaluable resource. The number of his Twitter followers soared to more than 18,500 as of last count. Eliason quickly got the rest of his team onto Twitter, and now customers can interact with @ComcastBill, @ComcastBonnie, @ComcastGeorge and others.

Results: Today, Comcast is widely regarded as having the most successful customer service operations in social media and on the Web. Over the past year, Comcast has handled more than 21,000 customer service requests (official tickets) through social media—a little more than half through Twitter, Eliason said. Those do not include the thousands of inquiries that Eliason and customer service reps handle on their own. Eliason has become something of a social media superstar, having been featured in blogs and national business media, such as the Wall Street Journal. Eliason recently made a star appearance at a

CUSTOMER SERVICE

“I think Twitter is a unique space for business. I find it to be a great early warning system. People are usually talking there before they are even calling in.”

—Frank Eliason, Director of Digital Care, Comcast

Salesforce.com conference to help promote the CRM provider’s new Twitter application, which promises to help organizations make Twitter a more formal and integrated part of their CRM strategy.

Business Lessons Learned:

- Twitter can help augment almost any customer service operation.
- Sometimes, it’s sufficient just to let customers know you are there to help; let them take the next step.
- Listen first, then engage if it makes sense.



“I think Twitter is a unique space for business. I find it to be a great early warning system. People are usually talking there before they are even calling in.” —Frank Eliason, Director of Digital Care, Comcast

Zappos



When Tony Hsieh started using Twitter in 2007, it was just to communicate with friends. Then he got employees involved. Now, Zappos is riding a wave of customer goodwill.

Company: Based in Las Vegas, Zappos.com is an online retailer featuring shoes, bags, clothing and other accessories. Twitter address: @Zappos

Challenge: Competing in the constantly expanding online retail arena is a daily challenge. Zappos decided to differentiate itself from competitors by focusing on customer service and selection. Zappos had spent a lot of effort upgrading the customer experience, including overnight shipping upgrades, 24/7 customer service, free shipping, 365-day return policy and more. However, Zappos wanted to engage customers even further and rely more on word of mouth to propel sales and repeat visits. It sought to break the traditional customer vs. corporation mentality that seems to affect many companies.

Solution: In 2007, Zappos CEO Tony Hsieh began using Twitter as a way to communicate with 20 to 30 close friends. He thought it was good fit with the company’s core values and soon encouraged employees to use it as well. Twitter was a way not only to build bonds internally, he thought, but also to give people on the outside a window into Zappos’ unique culture. Employees soon began interacting with customers, answering product questions, helping with customer

CUSTOMER SERVICE

“We don’t have a director of corporate communications. We want everyone to be the voice of the company.”

—Aaron Magness, who works in business development for Zappos

service, or just talking about the weather. Although Zappos has a customer care team, anyone within Zappos is empowered and encouraged to help customers. One thing the company doesn’t do is offer coupons or special offers through Twitter—just real conversation.

“We don’t have a director of corporate communications,” said Aaron Magness, who works in business development for Zappos. “We want everyone to be the voice of the company.” Nowhere is this truer than at the top, where Hsieh began networking with seemingly the entire Twitter universe. At last count, he had more than 600,000 followers. He is widely regarded as the most active CEO on Twitter.

Results: When Zappos started in 1999, it had almost no sales. In 2008, Hsieh said the privately-held company was on track to do more than \$1 billion in gross merchandise sales. The primary driver of that growth has been repeat customers and word of mouth, Hsieh said. According to Magness, a whopping 75 percent of the company’s orders are from repeat customers. Today, nearly one third of the 1,400 employees are on Twitter, helping and engaging with customers.

Business Lessons Learned:

- Be transparent and authentic; your customers will respect you for it.
- Get your employees involved in your social media initiatives.
- Make great customer service a true foundation of your business.



“The primary driver of our growth has been from repeat customers and word of mouth. Our philosophy is to invest in the customer experience, and let our customers do our marketing for us through word of mouth.” —Tony Hsieh, CEO, Zappos

SELLING

Yes, Twitter is about conversation and building bonds. But it can also be used to increase sales.



Dell Computers

When Dell Outlet employees first discovered Twitter two years ago, they didn't think much of it. But one employee saw promise, and now Dell Outlet is the poster child for Twitter monetization.

Company: Founded in 1984 and based in Round Rock, Texas, Dell is the No. 1 computer manufacturer in the United States. Twitter address: @DellOutlet

Challenge: E-commerce managers at the Dell Outlet online store wanted to increase sales and find a better, more efficient way to offload some inventory they received, such as refurbished computers and laptops, scratched hardware, returned business systems and deliveries that were returned. As an outlet store, inventory levels are often unpredictable. They can vary depending on when hardware gets returned. In 2007, a small group of Dell Outlet employees made the journey to South by Southwest, a well-known music, film and interactive festival in Austin, Texas. There, they heard about something called Twitter.

Solution: Several employees saw Twitter as nothing more than a cool personal novelty, but one employee, Ricardo Guerrero, saw its potential as a business tool. He decided the medium was perfect for posting quick links and messages about inventory as it rolled in. In March 2007, Dell Outlet created @DellOutlet and began posting messages and links to products online. Success did not come overnight, however. It took Dell Outlet several months to hone its tweeting strategy, including finding the right tone, tweet frequency, and level of discounts (anywhere between 15 to 30 percent off) before things began to take off. Dell Outlet also began including an expiration date to create a sense of urgency. Here's a sample tweet:

30% off any Outlet XPS One all-in-one PC! Enter code at checkout: NPZ2DD16C20BCR - <http://tinyurl.com/6z8f3s> - Expires 10/21 11:53 AM Oct 20th, 2008 from web

Results: In November 2008, Dell suddenly announced that it had made \$500,000 through its Dell Outlet Twitter feed. Just a month later, Dell tweeted that it had surpassed the \$1 million mark. The whole industry took notice—it was the first real example of someone monetizing Twitter. Today, the floodgates are open. When Dell announced in early February that Dell Outlet would begin offering exclusive deals via Twitter, the number of @DellOutlet's Twitter followers exploded, from 8,000 followers in early February to close to 500,000 followers in mid-May 2009.

SELLING

In December 2008, Dell tweeted that it had surpassed the \$1 million through its Dell Outlet Twitter feed. The whole industry took notice. It was the first real example of someone monetizing Twitter.

Dell Outlet also began increasing its Twitter effectiveness, such as setting up Twitter landing pages (“Welcome, Twitter Followers”) to help improve sales conversions. Dell declined to give an updated figure on how much it has earned through Twitter, but consider that Dell had more than 100 times the number of followers in May as it did in December when it made the \$1 million announcement. Today, Dell has dozens of Twitter feeds across the company, covering everything from special offers to news and information, to community sites.

Business Lessons Learned:

- If used correctly, Twitter can be an effective channel for e-tailers to communicate exclusive offers.
- Use bit.ly, Cligs or another URL-tracking service to measure click-throughs.
- Create Twitter landing pages to increase conversions.



“Back in the early days, Dell Outlet’s Twitter use was very casual. It wasn’t meant to make a lot of money; it was just a unique tool that met our unique needs.”—Lionel Menchaca, Dell’s chief blogger who also helps execute the company’s Twitter strategy

Souplantation



Successful in Web marketing, the nationwide restaurant chain was eager to engage customers in new social media channels, including Twitter. Followers are now lining up.

Company: Owned by Garden Fresh Restaurant Corp. in San Diego, Souplantation and its sister restaurant Sweet Tomatoes offer fresh, made-from-scratch soups and salads. Twitter address: @souplantation.

Challenge: Garden Fresh had been highly successful with its Web-marketing initiatives, especially its “Club Veg” program, where users can sign up to receive monthly email coupons and a yearly birthday gift. The company has generated close to 1 million e-mail subscribers. However, social media is changing the way people communicate online. More and more consumers are spending time within social networks. The company’s digital marketing agency, Red Door Interactive, suggested that Garden Fresh extend its reach into social media

SELLING

channels to engage with consumers in an entirely new way. Red Door Interactive showed executives the number of conversations about its brand that were occurring online, specifically through Twitter. Garden Fresh agreed that it needed to be on Twitter.



Solution: Souplantation launched its new Twitter feed in November 2008. Red Door assigned a social media specialist to work with Garden Fresh to post news and trivia, answer questions, take feedback, post recipes, and offer coupons. In February, the company launched its first big marketing initiative on Twitter, a Valentine's Day promotion asking users to say, in 140 characters, why their "sweetie was so sweet." Winners received free meal passes. The campaign was moderately successful, with dozens participating. In April, the company launched a trivia quiz playing off its in-store promotion of the month: lemon-inspired menu items. Each day, the company would post lemon trivia and then ask followers for a bit of lemon trivia in exchange for a prize. These "quick engagements" were very effective.

... and first person to tweet @souplantation with a bit of lemon trivia gets a free meal pass! GO! 2:28 PM Apr 7th from Power Twitter

Winner! RT: @llama5492 The Lemon Originated in China Please DM your mailing address for your free meal pass. Boy is lemon trivia fun! 2:53 PM Apr 7th from web

The company also uses Twitter to offer exclusive coupons, such as a recent 2-for-1 PDF coupon:



Help customers save money by offering exclusive coupons on Twitter. Souplantation's customers regularly retweet coupons special offers, and actively engage in its trivia contests.

Souplantation's tweets also drive in-store traffic to specific locations on specific days, such as in this post:

Dine on 4/15 @Souplantation PointLoma from 4-6pm: be entered to win 20 meals. Extra entries for each friend you bring. C U on the patio! RT about 4 hours ago from web

Results: Although there is data to show an increase in in-store traffic from Twitter, Souplantation and Red Door are also getting very positive feedback from customers about their approach, which combines fun, listening and engagement. Customers regularly retweet coupons, or special offers, and actively engage in the trivia contests. For example, during the lemon trivia contest, Souplantation averaged about 18 to 25 responses for each call for trivia. Overall, the company has watched the number of Twitter followers soar from 200 in early January to more than 2,700 in mid-May 2009.

Business Lessons Learned:

- Help your customers save money; offer exclusive coupons on Twitter.
- Consider quick engagements with customers, such as trivia contests to win free meals.
- Experiment with using Twitter to drive traffic to specific locations on specific days by offering an incentive.



"(Souplantation's Twitter followers) are true loyalists. In a lot of respects, promotion is engagement. They are looking for deals and discounts, that is why they are there in a lot of cases ... We also try to have interesting conversations."—Reid Carr, President, Red Door Interactive

PROSPECTING

Listen and monitor. You might be surprised by what people are talking about on Twitter—the need for your solution. Twitter is a dream tool for sales professionals who know how to engage first, sell later.

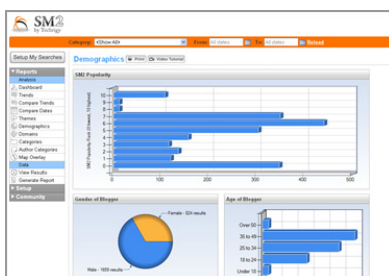


Techrigy

Needing the ability to pinpoint and engage directly with decision-makers, Techrigy turned to Twitter and boosted its business.

Company: Techrigy is a technology firm that offers social media monitoring software. It was founded in 2006 in Rochester, New York. Twitter address: @techrigy

Challenge: Generating quality leads in this economy is a challenge for any technology company, no matter how great the product. Despite assistance from marketers, sales professionals are often faced with cold calling and navigating their way through multiple levels of gatekeepers—secretaries, executive assistants, etc.—to get to the decision-maker. Techrigy sought a method for pinpointing and engaging with decision-makers interested in enterprise-class social media monitoring solutions.



Solution: As a company that monitors Twitter conversations in real time, Techrigy knew that Twitter was a unique way to easily identify people who were having conversations about social media monitoring technology. The company's sales professionals began using its Web-based service, SM2, to track dozens of keywords on Twitter (and across the social media universe) related to its core business: social media monitoring, SMS, buzz monitoring, etc. Techrigy also began tracking different competitors and common misspellings of those names. It monitored Twitter looking for trigger words or phrases that might show intent to buy, such as when someone tweets about doing a demo with a competitor or asking, "Does anyone have experience using Techrigy?"

The key, according to Jim Reynolds, Director of Sales, is engaging first, and talking about the product later. Here are some sample tweets:

@tomjd Would you like a demo of Techrigy Too? So you can see all the major players in the space? 8:40 AM Apr 9th from TweetDeck in reply to tomjd

@schmediachick I'd be happy to setup a one on one demo for you. Shoot me an email to jim@techrigy.com and we can nail down a time. 2:10 PM Apr 7th from TweetDeck in reply to schmediachick

Results: Twitter is now part of Techrigy's selling and customer engagement methodology. The company regularly uses Twitter to engage with potential

PROSPECTING

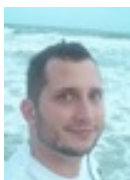
“Hard selling doesn’t work in social media. Subliminal marketing messages don’t work. You have to take part in the discussion.”

—Jim Reynolds, Director of Sales, Techrigy

prospects wanting to better understand the benefits of social media monitoring. Within two weeks of setting up his own Twitter profile, Jim Reynolds, Techrigy’s director of Sales, had lined up demos with decision-makers at Hitachi and IBM. Reynolds now averages two online demonstrations per day through Twitter. He has personally closed more than a dozen deals through the service. The great thing about Twitter, Reynolds said, is that Twitter users tend to be early adopters, and early adopters tend to exhibit two qualities most cherished by salespeople: they are decision-makers, and they have budgets.

Business Lessons Learned:

- Twitter can be a successful tool for identifying those who might be interested in your product or service.
- Join the discussion first. Then sell softly.
- Consider social media monitoring tools to understand where your brand is being discussed across social media outlets.



“Hard selling doesn’t work in social media. Subliminal marketing messages don’t work. You have to take part in the discussion. If the timing is right, then you introduce your product. It makes no sense to blindly engage without understanding what the person is talking about.”—Jim Reynolds, Techrigy’s Director of Sales

Decho

Looking to make a bigger impact with Twitter, Decho tried a weekly contest and ended up with impressive results.

Company: Based in Seattle, Decho’s flagship product is Mozy, a leading online backup service for consumers and businesses. Decho is wholly owned by EMC. Twitter address: @mozy

Challenge: Decho had been using Twitter like many companies: interacting with users, posting blog links and news announcements, and monitoring mentions of online backup technology. The company had acquired several hundred followers through the early part of this year. Although things were going well, Decho desired to make a much bigger impact using the micro-blogging service, to do something that would dramatically increase the number of followers and create new demand for its online storage backup system.



PROSPECTING

At last count, Mozy has more than 3,000 followers and attributes its contest program to generating as many as 15 to 20 paid customers per week.



Solution: During a strategy session earlier this year, Decho product marketers tossed around the idea of doing a contest on Twitter that provided value to both Twitter users and the company. In February 2009, they created “Free Account Friday,” a weekly contest in which @mozy followers could enter for a chance to win a free Mozy Home Unlimited account, good for one year of unlimited backup. All users had to do was: 1) be a @mozy follower and 2) tweet (or retweet) the following message between 12:01 a.m. and 11:59 p.m. on Friday:

Just entered the Mozy Free Account Friday contest! You can win by following @mozy and RT! <http://is.gd/kfOF> #mozyfaf

On Friday, Feb. 20, the Decho marketing staff launched its first Twitter contest. It used the hashtag symbol (#mozyfaf) to keep track of the all entries from which to pick a winner. Decho was not quite sure what to expect, but felt optimistic about the results.

Results: The Mozy “Free Account Friday” contest has become an unqualified success. More than 300 people re-tweeted the first message, and the number of @mozy followers swelled from about 600 to more than 1,000 followers in just a few days. Decho continued the contests with good success. At last count, @mozy has more than 3,000 followers, and attributes the contest program to generating as many as 15 to 20 paid customers per week. Each Monday, Decho announces the winners of the contest, as well as gives a 20 percent coupon to anyone that entered. With its growing community, Decho has expanded its Twitter use to include customer service and product feedback and ideas.

Business Lessons Learned:

- Try a Twitter contest if you have something you can easily give away.
- Get on a regular tweet schedule that users can count on.
- Use hashtags to keep track of entries.



“We were having a strategy session, wondering how to get more value from the channel as opposed to something that could be perceived as a time waster. Giving away an account was something easy for us to do and provided value to the people that were following us.”—Nate Kartchner, Social Media Marketing Manager, Decho

BRANDING & AWARENESS

Twitter can help extend a company's brand and create awareness. Even for celebrities.

The Big Aristotle relished being able to talk directly with fans. “This is the real SHAQUILLE O’NEAL.”

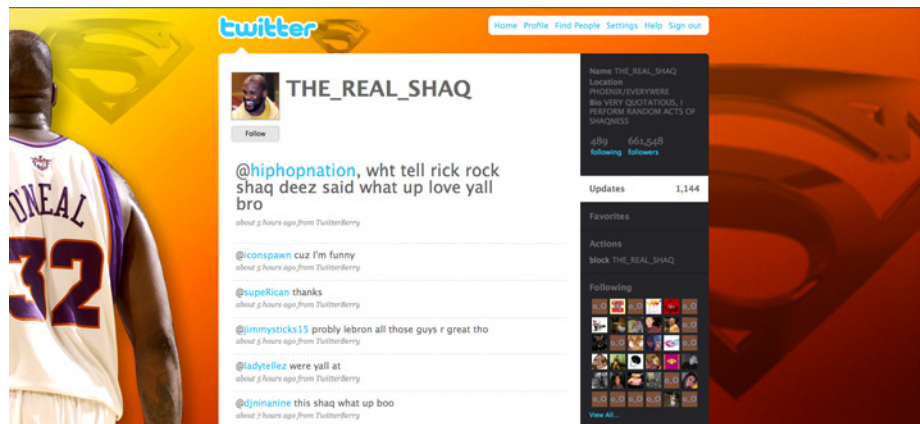


Shaq

Initially drawn to Twitter to thwart an Internet imposter, the perennial NBA All-Star found Twitter to be the perfect tool to communicate directly with fans.

About: Born in 1972, Shaquille (Shaq) O’Neal is a 16-time NBA All-Star. He plays center for the Phoenix Suns. Twitter address: @the_real_shaq

Challenge: Last fall, Shaquille O’Neal’s social media and marketing consultants, Sports Media Challenge, notified the 7’1 athlete of an issue: An imposter was using Shaq’s name to post messages to unsuspecting fans on Twitter. The fake Shaq was a definite problem that had to be addressed. However, another ongoing problem for Shaq—and many celebrities—is being unable to communicate with fans directly. According to Kathleen Hessert, of Sports Media Challenge, which also conducts media relations training, the No. 1 frustration cited by athletes is media relations. Athletes are often being misquoted or having their comments taken out of context—or in the heat of the moment, saying something they probably shouldn’t have.



Solution: Hessert convinced Shaq to start using Twitter to deal with both the imposter and also to engage directly with fans. In mid-November 2008, Shaq announced his presence on the micro-blogging service: “This is the real SHAQUILLE O’NEAL.” At first, fans were skeptical it was the real Shaquille O’Neal. It took several “random of acts of Shaqness,” including several personal phone calls, before followers were convinced that they were engaging in real time with one of the biggest stars in the NBA. Shaq took to Twitter almost immediately, posting so many Tweets that Hessert thought he would burn out for sure. Not the case. The Big Aristotle relished finally being able to talk directly

Shaq's use of Twitter is now being emulated across the NBA, both by teams and individual players. He has also had a positive impact on the Suns' marketing.

with fans. For example, he had this exchange with a fan who was concerned he might be going to the Dallas Mavericks:

- @THE_REAL_SHAQ don't go to Dallas man...phoenix needs a shaqtus about 10 hours ago from Tweetie
- @vgangwal I'm stayin n phoenix dnt believe what u read about unless it comes from here about 9 hours ago from TwitterBerry

As Shaq's number of followers grew, he also leveraged his popularity to get the Phoenix Suns involved. He worked with @PhoenixSunsGirl to host a local tweet-up, a gathering of local Twitter users, and got several front office staff into micro-blogging. In perhaps his greatest coup, he finally got Suns guard Steve Nash to start tweeting (@the_real_nash).

Results: At last count, Shaq had close to a million followers. He successfully thwarted the Twitter imposter and launched into a whole new medium in which he can communicate directly with fans without any media filters. Twitter has also opened up his brand to a new audience. Fans frequently tell him they "don't even like basketball, but I follow you (on Twitter) because you are so funny," Hessert said. Shaq's use of Twitter is now being emulated across the NBA, both by teams and individual players. He has also had a positive impact on the Suns' marketing. For example, more than 125 fans showed up in January 2009 for the tweet-up. Local fans got discounted tickets and met at a local restaurant before sitting together at the game. Afterward, they met the general manager. Just before they left, Shaq himself walked in—providing plenty of opportunities for Twitpics (photos posted directly to Twitter).

Business Lessons Learned:

- Twitter can be a valuable tool for celebrities and athletes wishing to communicate with fans directly and build their brands.
- Tweet-ups can be used effectively to organize fan events and sell tickets.
- Always be transparent and authentic.



"Initially, (getting on Twitter) was to thwart the imposter. However, very quickly I think he saw it as a way to showcase his personality in 360 degrees."—Kathleen Hessert, President, Sports Media Challenge

Conversational marketing is a new trend in which bloggers typically are compensated for posting comments about a brand. The key to this type of marketing is to be completely transparent and authentic.

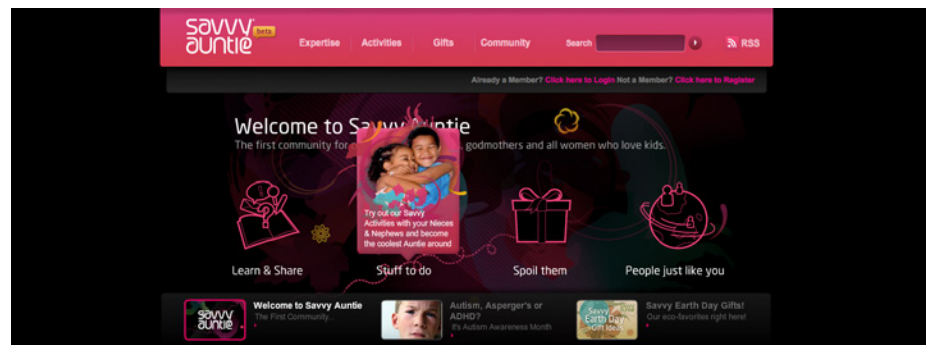


Walt Disney Co.

Looking to promote an important Blu-ray and DVD launch of *Pinocchio*, Disney® becomes one of the first major brands to officially sponsor a Twitter user.

Company: Based in Burbank, California, The Walt Disney Company (NYSE: DIS) operates as a diversified entertainment company worldwide.

Challenge: For the release of the 70th Anniversary Platinum Edition of its movie *Pinocchio* on DVD and Blu-ray, Walt Disney Studios Home Entertainment division (WDSHE) was looking to spur sales in a non-traditional format that would get consumers talking about the product. *Conversational marketing* is a new trend in which bloggers typically are compensated for posting comments about a brand. The key to this type of marketing, according to Forrester Analyst Sean Corcoran, is to be completely transparent and authentic, while adding value for customers. If done correctly, he said, conversational marketing can be quite effective in getting consumers to talk about your brand.



Solution: Instead of using a blogger, Disney, through its digital agency, Razorfish, turned its sights on Twitter. They ended up approaching Melanie Notkin, an entrepreneur who runs SavvyAuntie.com, a website community for so-called “PANKS” (Professional Aunt, No Kids). Notkin helps single professionals buy gifts for their nieces and nephews. She said she was an appealing choice for Disney because she doesn’t use profane language in her conversation nor does she discuss politics on her blog. In addition, she has built a following of more than 8,000 users. After watching Notkin for some time, Razorfish proposed a three-week sponsorship deal in which she would post conversational tweets related to the *Pinocchio* DVD and Blu-ray launch, Notkin said. Notkin agreed, as long as she could be transparent about the agreement, including posting an announcement on [her blog](#).

“Throughout the whole campaign, Disney trusted me and let me take the lead. They always appreciated the fact that I know how to talk to my audience and how to engage them.”
—Melanie Notkin, owner of SavvyAuntie.com

On March 2, she announced the agreement to her followers:

The next sponsor for Savvy Auntie - I am VERY proud to say - is.....DISNEY!!
2:47 PM Mar 2nd from web

Over the course of the next 21 days, Notkin held trivia contests; gave away 2-disc *Pinocchio* packages; and posted links to Disney video clips online. She also posted links to Disney's *Pinocchio* micro-site, as well as to the gift section of her website, where she had the movie on display. With each entry, she included the hashtag “#disneysa” (for Disney-SavvyAuntie). She also used trackable links to see in real time what interested her followers.

Results: Disney's SavvyAuntie.com campaign was a big success, according to Notkin. Although she could not reveal any financial details, she posted more than 300 tweets about the campaign and watched the number of her followers soar by more than 1,000 to 8,000. Disney's agent, Razorfish, declined any further comment on the Twitter campaign. Notkin said the agency was pleased with the results, especially with online comments like this one posted on a March 24 *Wall Street Journal* story about the sponsorship: *As someone without kids and who doesn't watch much TV, Melanie's involvement with Disney was the only way that I was made aware that Pinocchio was being made available for purchase again.*— Rob Blatt. Forrester's Corcoran said conversational marketing sponsorships are usually reserved for bloggers, not micro-bloggers. However, he expects to see more as Twitter continues to grow in popularity.

Business Lessons Learned:

- Consider conversational marketing as a tactic.
- Instead of blogs, try a prominent Twitter user that fits your brand.
- Be incredibly transparent, or things might backfire.



“Throughout the whole campaign, Disney trusted me and let me take the lead. They always appreciated the fact that I know how to talk to my audience and how to engage them. It was always a positive experience (for Disney). They got really excited by some of the reactions they saw.”—Melanie Notkin, Owner, SavvyAuntie.com

FUNDRAISING

Twitter isn't just for business—it's also great for non-profits and charities looking to raise funds in a tough economy.



12for12K Charity

The mission was simple: 12 months, 12 charities, \$12K per charity. But how best to raise the money? Danny Brown turned to Twitter to get people involved.

Organization: Based in Toronto, 12for12K is a charity designed to raise a total of \$144,000 for 12 different organizations over the course of 12 months. Twitter address: @dannyybrown, @12for12K

Challenge: Danny Brown, the owner of a Toronto-based PR and social media marketing firm, started 12for12K after noticing that charities were failing dramatically due to the global recession (an estimated 61,000 in Canada alone, according to Brown). 12for12K's mission is to generate \$12K for 12 different charities over a span of one year, for a total of \$144,000. Brown's task was daunting: How do you get people to donate when many don't even have a job?

Solution: Twitter was the perfect medium to engage potential donors across Canada and the United States because of two important qualities: "in-your-face" instant communications and the power of the retweet, (the ability for others to broadcast your message to their networks). Brown and his supporters began tweeting up a storm about the organization and its mission, but it wasn't until Brown took certain steps that things really took off.

- **Creating a 12for12K Avatar:** Inspired by Bloggers Unite, a campaign for human rights awareness, Brown created a 12for12K avatar for supporters and donors to include on their Twitter profile pictures. This generated intense curiosity on Twitter and the perfect leading question: What is 12for12K?
- **Using Hashtags:** For each of their tweets, 12for12K supporters began including a hashtag (#12for12K) to help categorize their tweets. When people clicked on the hashtag, they could see every 12for12K tweet (plus all those avatars again). This continued to generate great buzz and interest.
- **Tweet-a-thon:** Brown and supporter Scott Stratten decided to host a 12-hour Tweet-a-thon to generate as much money as possible for that month's charity, Share Our Strength (strength.org). Brown and Stratten served as emcees of the event and gave away donated prizes and other packages, talked about the charities, and got the word out about them.

FUNDRAISING

“The great thing about Twitter is that it is in your face and has instant impact ... Twitter is ideal for spreading something like non-profit awareness.”

—Danny Brown, organizer for 12for12K

Results: Through the end of March, 12for12K had raised \$32,000, just under its goal for the three-month period. Twitter generated a lion's share of that amount, about \$27,000, Brown said. The March Tweet-a-thon itself raised more than \$13,000. Thanks to Twitter and the support of a whole lot of generous people, 12for12K continues to make great strides in meeting its year-end goal of helping out 12 worthy charities.

Business Lessons Learned:

- Twitter is a great deal not just for making money, but also for making a difference.
- Consider avatars in your profile pictures to increase awareness.
- Use hashtags around campaigns.



“The great thing about Twitter is it is in your face and has instant impact. You don't have to worry about a blog post getting read. It is instant communications and a great tool for spreading a message ... Twitter is ideal for spreading something like non-profit awareness.”—Danny Brown, Organizer, 12for12K

7 QUICK TIPS FOR GETTING STARTED WITH TWITTER

After reading the Twitter case studies, you know the different ways that Twitter can add value to your business, from customer service to prospecting to branding and awareness. Now, are you ready to get started?

Then check out these seven tips for launching your own successful Twitter initiative.

Increase brand awareness, establish a community presence, and boost your sales, one tweet at a time, just by following these simple tips.

1. Making Sure Twitter Fits Your Strategy

First, take a step back and see if Twitter fits into your overall marketing strategy. Does it make sense for your business? Do you have the resources—and time—to pull it off successfully? Can you be transparent? Which marketing objective(s), detailed in the 11 case studies above, should you pursue through Twitter? Those are excellent questions to consider before you and/or your executives take the next step.

2. Staking Your Claim on Twitter

If you haven't already, be sure to reserve your company name (and variations of it) on Twitter, even if you decide to use another Twitter address. Many business owners and their employees use their personal accounts to promote their business. Others use a hybrid of the two, such as @LionelatDell or @ComcastGeorge. Once you have your Twitter address, you need to spruce up your Twitter page. Talk to your Web designers or investigate the tools listed in this report. Try to reflect some of the brand elements of your website.

3. Assigning Responsibilities

Now that you've decided to make the leap, who is going to manage the Twitter account? You? Someone else in the company? Will more than one person be contributing to a single corporate account? Whatever you do, try to identify the name of the person posting the tweets. This helps add a personal touch. Many companies will put a "managed by @johndoe" at the end of their mini-profile. This brings up a final question: is it OK to hire someone to post your tweets? Yes, as long as you're transparent and it is interesting and adds value for your customers.

4. Finding Friends

Now it's time to start finding friends (i.e. people that you want to follow), such as customers, prospects, friends, colleagues, industry pundits, etc. Find friends through social directories and personal contacts, and use [Twitter Search](#) to see who is talking about the things you care about. Depending on the business, consider going local first. Use [Twitterholic](#) or [TwitterLocal](#) to see who the top tweeters in your area are. Be sure to cross promote your Twitter account on all your outbound marketing material, especially customer communications.

7 QUICK TIPS FOR GETTING STARTED WITH TWITTER

Be sure to track the effectiveness of your Twitter campaign.

Measurement is one of the most important things you can do. It allows you to benchmark your success and show value for your efforts.

5. Recruiting Followers

A good portion of the people you follow will follow you back. But the best way to build a healthy network is to: be interesting, thoughtful, and transparent; post regularly; and most importantly, engage your audience. Don't be overly promotional, unless your business calls for it. Souplantation (@souplantation) promotes its business but in a fun and engaging way that incorporates trivia and contests. Bottom line: No matter what you do, you have to add value to your network. And don't give up! The true power of Twitter doesn't truly reveal itself until you have 100 to 200 followers.

6. Mobilizing Your Employees

Even if you have a central corporate Twitter account, encourage (but do not pressure) your employees to start tweeting on their own. Zappos has nearly a third of its employees online either through personal accounts or Zappos-related accounts. Together, they help customers, post interesting comments, and give people an inside view into what the unique Zappos culture is really like. If you have interesting content or links, a network of employees can help considerably in spreading the message through the power of retweets. Mobilizing your employees for social media is a best practice, although it may require you to set up simple guidelines.

7. Measuring your Effectiveness

There are several ways to measure the effectiveness of Twitter in advancing your business goals, from compiling basic metrics (such as the number of followers and friends over time) to the amount of traffic that your website receives. Some companies track brand mentions; others measure the number of engagements or interactions each month. Check out some of the essential tools mentioned earlier. Measurement is one of the most important things you can do. It allows you to benchmark your success and show value for your efforts. You can start simple and build from there.

NOW, IT'S YOUR TURN TO SHARE

We've detailed 11 meaningful case studies, from big brands to local coffee shops, in this Case Study Collection. We've provided exclusive survey data, links to Twitter tools you can use, and tips for getting started. Now it's your turn. Are you using Twitter innovatively with tangible results? We want to hear about it! Please email us at CaseStudies@MarketingProfs.com. Your ingenuity could make it into our next Case Study Collection.

And, of course, you can also connect with us on Twitter:

**Ann Handley**

twitter.com/marketingprofs

Head of content at MarketingProfs, editor, social media, marketing, great food, good wine, writer.

**Shelley Ryan**

twitter.com/shelleyryan

Den Mother for MarketingProfs, web seminar diva, copywriting whiz, lazy blogger, fois gras foodie on a bacon budget. Amateur designer, too.

**Allen Weiss**

twitter.com/allenweiss

CEO/Founder of MarketingProfs, marketing expertise, entrepreneur, professor, meditation teacher.

**MarketingProfs Wire**

twitter.com/mprofswire

The Premium membership gang at MarketingProfs, updating followers on special content, news and offers.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Erik Bratt is a regular contributor to MarketingProfs. He is a former newspaper journalist turned PR and marketing professional, with more than a decade of experience in the online marketing industry. He previously worked in marketing for Microsoft, and before that in PR and communications at WebSideStory (now Omniture), the leader in online business optimization software. For nearly 10 years, he was a reporter at the *The San Diego Union-Tribune*. Bratt is president of [Engage Social Media](#), which provides results-oriented PR and social media consulting services for both consumer and B2B companies. An established writer and blogger, Bratt speaks at selected industry events. Reach him at www.twitter.com/erikbratt.

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