

Twitter Tip Sheet

Accounts on Twitter:

- Set up individual staff accounts and an account for the entire organization.
- Add account information.
- Add a cell phone number.
- Upload an image or icon.

Set up tools:

- Setup HootSuite and Owl.ly to host tweets and monitor click through statistics and search channels.

Following People

- Search Twitter for your issues (enter keywords in the search box on twitter.com).
- Follow keywords and hashtags in HootSuite.
- Look for leaders that are regularly posting on your issues and follow those people.
- Look at wefollow.org and follow the people who are interested in the same subjects and keywords as you.
- Find out who the people you are following are following and follow those people too.

Tweet

- Ask real questions on issues and problems that you are working on, just like on a listerv.
- Post interesting, timely and valuable tweets for others.
- Retweet interesting tweets from people you follow.
- Participate in conversations on hashtag channels that you want to support or see grow.
- Use your real-time collaboration tools and feedback mechanisms to coordinate events on Twitter.

Assess:

- Who is following you?
- What is your click through rate?
- Where are the trends on your account?
- What are the trends on your channels?
- What are the surprises?
- React to what you find based on your communications strategy and objectives.

Create Connections

- Monitor information, influencers and the debate on Twitter.
- Place a Twitter widget on your website.
- Promote your connections with users (ie: email signatures, blog posts, etc.).
- Exploit the collaboration, transparency and group formation on Twitter.
- Find target audiences by Google searching.

Twitter Guide Step-by-Step Tip Sheet

1. Set up both individual and firm Twitter accounts.

Review the basic language, terms and commands needed to use Twitter. There is a good introduction on Wikipedia <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twitter>.

Watch this video <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ddO9idmax0o>.

People will look at the information in your profile before they will follow you. On www.twitter.com under Settings, fill out the biographical and background information on the Account tab. Enter a cell phone number on the Devices tab. On the Picture tab, upload a photo or icon. Watch this <http://www.howcast.com/videos/149055-How-To-Use-Twitter>.

Once you have set up an account and are comfortable with the Twitter terminology, start to incorporate the following tools into your Twitter strategy. All of the tools are free, except for Radian6.

2. Set up tools to monitor and post information.

- Set up HootSuite and Owl.ly

Set up a free account on www.hootsuite.com.

One of the keys to success is to have a unified format for your posts and a central place to monitor the statistics on click-through rates of the links in your tweets.

Use HootSuite for all staff posts to ensure that the posts have a uniform appearance. HootSuite allows you to post the same post on more than one Twitter account at once. You can also view the posts of everyone else in your organization on your dashboard.

HootSuite has a link shortener built in to the dashboard called Owl.ly. The advantage of Owl.ly is that it tracks the click-through rates of tweets sent from your dashboard.

Use your HootSuite dashboard to follow Twitter channels. HootSuite allows you to search for keywords and hashtags. Each channel gets its own column on the dashboard. Each column will automatically refresh as new posts are added to these channels. From the dashboard you can easily retweet posts, respond to tweets or follow the people that tweet on a specific channel.

There are two ways to use hashtag channels:

1. Have a live conversation on Twitter: Michele Payn-Knoper ([@agchat](#)) hosts a live conversation on Twitter called agchat every Tuesday from 8-10 p.m. Eastern. People answer her questions and have a discussion using the #agchat.
2. Search for a more generic hashtag like #environment, #organic, #green to see what people are posting on these channels. These posts will be mostly feelings, links and statistics. These channels contain much less conversation between the people that use these tags, but have more activity on them.

3. Start following people

- Follow people you know. People give out their Twitter handles all the time. Add these people as you meet them.
- Search Twitter for your issues using keywords. There is a search box on www.twitter.com.
- Select a group of hashtag channels and keywords to follow. Find people that are actively participating in the discussion and follow them. They are the leaders of that discussion.

Scan the channels you created for the keywords you selected. Search through posts to find leaders, active posters and other people to follow. Also determine what hashtags they add to their posts, so you can follow those hashtag channels as well.

- Use WeFollow to find peers who follow the same subjects as you—then follow them.

Sign up for www.wefollow.com. When you complete your registration, WeFollow will post a tweet, from your account that says “Just added myself to the <http://wefollow.com> twitter directory under: #“x” #“y” and #“z”. This tweet will act as your introduction on the channels you are interested in. Search through the hashtags in the WeFollow directory. Find other people with the same interests as you and follow them.

- Search and find leaders in a given field. Look at who they follow, and start following the same people.

www.Tweepz.com is a search engine which helps you find and discover interesting people on Twitter. As you find influential people that cover your interests, look at whom these people follow and follow them, too.

- When the people you follow recommend other people to follow, follow those people.

When people you follow and respect recommend Twitter users for #followfriday, #ecomoday, #woofwednesday, #women2follow or any others, follow those people too, because these are new creditable people to follow.

- Follow the people that retweet you.

You want to know who is talking about you. You also want to know who else they are retweeting; maybe those are people that you are also interested in. Finally, following someone is a way of thanking them or telling them that you find what they say valuable. It's a little gesture, but an important one.

- Follow the people that follow you.

Some Twitter users try to make the number of people they follow much lower than the number of followers they have. Unless you are famous this behavior is not respected on Twitter. Danielle Brigida (@[starfocus](#)) has 8,700+ followers, and she follows nearly 8,000 people. You do not have to follow everyone that follows you, but if they are relevant or interesting, follow them back. It tells people that you are not only on Twitter to preach your message but that you also care what others have to say.

- Look for people who regularly discuss your issues, and who also have large followings and follow them.

Use [www.radian6.com](#) to look for keyword and issue mentions (\$500 a month). Sort your results by the number of followers a person has and follow the leaders. Learn what they retweet and what is interesting to them. Then run Google and Twitter searches with your keywords to find people to follow.

4. Tweet

Use [www.hootsuite.com](#) to post your tweets, schedule tweets and post to multiple accounts. Download Hootlet, from your HootSuite dashboard. Hootlet enables you to click a button while on any webpage to create a tweet with a link to that page.

- Most importantly, post content that you'd want to read.
- Ask questions on issues and problems that you are working on, as you would on a listserv.
- Answer questions raised by the people you follow or people that use the hashtag channels you use.
- Post content that you want people in your target audience to see.

- Retweet interesting tweets from people you follow or that you find on the hashtag channels you use.
- Use hashtags in your tweets.
- Jump into the conversation on the hashtag channels that you want to support.

“Hashtags are a community-driven convention for adding additional context and metadata to your tweets. They're like tags on Flickr, only added inline to your post. You create a hashtag simply by prefixing a word with a hash symbol: #hashtag.” www.twitter.pbworks.com/Hashtags.

- Use hashtag channels and Twitter searches to coordinate live events on Twitter like #agchat or supplemental conversations like #sxsw (where people talked about the conference throughout the conference).
- Not all tweets have to be serious and relevant. Let your followers see your human side.
- Talk to the people you meet on Twitter. Develop the connections by sending @replies and direct messages to the people you follow.

5. Assess progress, trends and react

- Who is following you? Go to www.twittersheep.com, enter your Twitter handle and review the clusters of words. Does this indicate your target audience is tuning in? Take a screen shot and date it so you can compare changes over time.
- What is your click-through rate? When are click-through rates highest?

When you post in HootSuite, you can create links with Owl.ly and see how many people click on the links and on what days. If people retweet or copy your Owl.ly links and post them anywhere, those results will also show up on your Owl.ly account.

Schedule to post new tweets during the times of the day when your highest click through rates occurred.

- What impact are your tweets having on your followers?

Use www.tweeteffect.com to determine which tweets made people follow or leave you.

- What are your account trends?

As you use HootSuite and Owl.ly, you can see if the people who are following you are clicking into the links and resources you provide. You can also compare trends on your posting and account at www.twitalyzer.com. How often do people direct message you or retweet things that you post? How has that changed?

- What are the trends on the channels you created and monitor?

Follow the trends around the use of keywords, trend language or how a report does versus other words or trends. You can see how trends interact or compare with each other using www.trendistic.com.

- What are the surprises?
- Develop a communications strategy and communications objectives to help you respond to positive and negative comments about your organization.

6. Create Connections

- Find target audiences.

Find your target audience on Twitter by searching the profiles of people who add themselves to the www.wefollow.com directory. You can look for audiences that discuss your issues on www.tweepz.com and sort by the number of followers. Radian6 reports also identify the people with the most followers who tweet with your keywords and on your issues.

- Help people find you.

You should connect people into your Twitter efforts in all your other spaces. Use your other activities, content, services and tools to cross promote your Twitter account. Put “Follow Us on Twitter” in the footer of your website and e-mails so people can find you on Twitter.

- Promote connections with others.

As you find people on Twitter, build relationships with these people. Carefully urge your followers to retweet your tweets so your messages are seen by more followers. This will result in more exposure for your message. You can ask people to retweet a post, but not every post. Twitter is a place to share information so you do not want people on Twitter to think you are only promoting yourself.

Another way to encourage people to retweet you is to retweet them. You are helping them and they will want to help you in return.

Thank people when they retweet your posts. If you are not following them already, consider following them. Also, thank people when they recommend you for #followfriday, #ecomoday, #women2follow, #woofwednesday or any others. Recommend people you like for these as well.

Using @ replies is a great way to publicize another person, because all of your followers will see that person’s handle. And they will know you tweeted about them. If you start a conversation with someone on Twitter, it’s okay to switch to direct messages. It makes your feed less

cluttered, it's more personal and it's a great way to build a relationship with another Twitter user.

Lessons and ideas that you find in tweets, as well as these new connections, should be regularly cross-promoted in your blog or other online channels, so that people end up following many voices.

Use www.twitter.com/widgets to promote your connections. You deepen the connection with your allies on Twitter and better saturate your readers with your way of thinking.

Share your feedback:

1. Send us a tweet @theGMT
2. Comment Line Widget: <http://www.greenmediatoolshed.org/node/702>

Appendix 1: Twitter Dictionary

Follow: To receive messages on Twitter, you follow other people and companies you're interested in—which means you get their messages as they post. Conversely, people get your messages by following you.

Tweet: Users refer to an individual message as a tweet, alternatives include “post,” “message” and “update.”

@replies: For companies, one of the most useful things about Twitter is that it lets you exchange public messages with individual users. Start a message with @username of the person you want to reach, like this:

“@CNN I agree with your comments about the current state of the economy.”

If CNN is following you, your message will appear directly on their Twitter home page. If they are not following you, your message will appear in their folder of @username mentions. People who are following both you and CNN will also see the message on their Twitter home page. Finally, the message will appear in search results, and people who come to your Twitter home page will see it among the messages in your outgoing timeline.

To find the public messages that are directed to you, head to your Twitter home page, and then on the right side of the screen, click the tab labeled your @BusinessName.

Direct messages (DMs): Direct messages are Twitter's private messaging channel. These tweets appear on your home page under the Direct Messages tab, and if you've got e-mail notifications turned on, you'll also get an e-mail message when somebody DMs you. DMs don't appear in either person's public timeline or in search results. No one but you can see your DMs.

Retweet (RT): To help share cool ideas via Twitter and to give a shout-out to people you respect, you can repost their messages and give them credit. People call that retweeting (or RT), and it usually looks something like this

“RT @Username: Original message, often with a link.”

Trending Topics: On the right side of your screen and on the Twitter search page, you'll see ten Trending Topics, which are the most-mentioned terms on Twitter at that moment. The topics update continually, reflecting the real-time nature of Twitter and true shifts in what people are paying attention to. A key feature of Twitter, Trending Topics aggregate many tweets at once and often break news ahead of the mainstream media.

Hashtag (#): Twitter messages don't have a field where you can categorize them. So people have created the hashtag—which is just the # symbol followed by a term describing or naming the topic—that you add to a post as a way of saying, “This message is about the same thing as other messages from other people who include the same hashtag.” Then, when somebody searches for that hashtag, they'll get all of the related messages.

Tweetup: A tweetup is an in-person gathering organized via Twitter, often spontaneous. Companies use them for hosting launch parties, connecting with customers and introducing like-minded followers to each other.

Adopted from: <http://www.itwo.com/blog/>