

does twitter have a place in your marcoms strategy?

The 10 Minute
twitter
Marketing Guide





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Since our first review of Twitter for business marketing (Dec '08) a minor explosion has happened in the world of Twitter. What we thought would be a quick update after a few months turned out to be a virtual rewrite!

Is this the definitive Twitter Marketing Guide? Well it's good, actually it's very, very good (OK we're biased), follow this guide and you won't go wrong in marketing your business on, and with Twitter.

But don't sit back and think that once you've read this and implemented a Twitter campaign that you can relax. Twitter is moving so fast that by the time we finished updating this report more marketing opportunities have arrived, more applications have been released and more changes to marketing on Twitter have presented themselves. In fact the day we were due to release v2, 1st May, Twitter announced more updates! (Which we included). Again as v 2.2 was ready... they did it again!

And yes we will be updating again year but in the meantime if you want to know any more just call us.



THIS GUIDE IS FREE and all I ask in return is that you [follow me](#) and [follow Insight](#) on Twitter and [visit Twtpoll to vote](#).

And of course don't forget to [Tweet about this guide](#).

And feel free to [Tweet me](#)!

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TRENDS COME AND GO BUT SOME LEAD THE WAY – INTRODUCING TWITTER

Twitter, to the uninitiated, is just another media hyped activity. A fad that will come and go. But Twitter, has, as they say in the wine vernacular, got [marketing] legs for business promotion. And it's here to stay and already proven to be a mighty force in marketing.

One day it wasn't there, the next it was being reviewed in national newspapers, discussed on the Jonathan Ross chat show with Stephen Fry, two of Twitter's most popular users, and the word Twitter is being considered for inclusion in the Oxford English dictionary¹.

A social networking service, Twitter's founders are Americans Evan Williams, Biz Stone and Jack Dorsey, three guys who had an interest and successful background in instant messaging, SMS, blogging and podcasting. In March 2006 they formed Twitter. The rest as they say is history. But unlike other social networking services, Twitter, they decided, would have no bells and whistles. Going back to the initial premise of SMS, i.e. one message of a limited number of characters and the essence of blogging, i.e. saying something interesting, frequently and simply. And so Twitter was 'hatched'.

TWITTER - A METEORIC RISE TO FAME

Twitter, in just three years, has reached the same point that email marketing did in twice that time. There was a time when email and email marketing wasn't heard of, yes I know it's hard to believe but it's true. Email came into existence in 1990 as the internet was starting to become popular. Six years later the number of email 'mailers' sent out was more than the number of direct mailers sent out by post. Today it's hard to know how we could function in business without email and how marketing campaigns could be produced without email marketing components.

Marketers used to say of email marketing:

"Shall we run an email marketing campaign alongside our normal marketing?"

UK - Largest Mobile Social Networkers
In Q4 2008, the UK had just under 2m unique mobile web users that visited a social networking site equating to 23% of the mobile population. Compared to the US at 19%, France at 12% and Germany at 7%.³



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They soon realised that email marketing was an integral part of a complete and integrated marketing campaign.

So, as marketers, we need to learn the lesson early on that Twitter, if it's right for your company, your business and your market, needs to be integrated into your marketing and not just a fad that you try or a campaign that you run 'outside' of your marketing activities.

**INTEGRATING
TWITTER PROVIDES
A COORDINATED
MARKETING CAMPAIGN
WITH MAXIMUM
EFFECTIVENESS**

SO JUST WHAT IS TWITTER?

Micro blogging. Concise Instant Messaging. Online SMS. Short hand communication. However you describe it, Twitter gives you just 140 characters to get your message across and if you don't or you can't then it's going to be no use to you. Many journalists have openly stated that their email in-boxes are becoming 'stuffed full' with press releases that are just marketing speak and so will now only accept announcements via a Tweet (a single Twitter message).

The message to companies, marketers and PR agencies: 'if you can't get me interested in 140 characters then either it isn't interesting or you can't get the point across succinctly'. And let's face it, at one point in our careers as marketers we have fallen foul of marketing speak. You, like me, must have visited an old communiqué and even though you knew at the time what you were trying to say, when you reread it, the message is hidden beneath layers of fluff and technospeak.

And it's because we have the freedom – emails of any length, SMS messages that can now run to any length (did you know that the first SMS was just 128 characters long? Hard to believe!), press releases of page after page, blogs that run to multiple screens, websites that say nothing using lots of meaningless words. The list is endless but the point is made – getting your message across in 140 characters means thinking about the message, thinking about what is important and focusing down hard to distil the essence. Basically what marketing is all about.

Wikipedia Definition:

Twitter is a free social networking and micro-blogging service that enables its users to send and read other users' updates known as tweets. Tweets are text-based posts of up to 140 characters in length which are displayed on the user's profile page and delivered to other users who have subscribed to them (known as followers).⁷



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Twitter 'is always online'. Internet based, you can access Twitter and read or create Tweets via a browser, a desktop application from your PC/Mac or via a browser or application on your handheld device. Twitter lets you use push and pull marketing effectively and conveniently to create endless dialogues of one-to-many and many-to-many. You create and send a Tweet to your network of followers (we'll come back to how you create the network shortly) and they in turn can respond to you directly or to their own network. You push a message out and they pull down some information. If you're hitting the right audience then your message will be pushed out by them (Re-Tweeted) to their follower community. And on it goes.

This 'always online and forwarding network messaging' means that your immediate communications can literally go out to the world (OK the world that is on Twitter and that, at last count was between 7m – 19m² depending on whose figures you read). Such an expansive medium needs to be used carefully and effectively to ensure that your brand is communicated effectively, in the right way, to the right people. Spam on Twitter and you will be unceremoniously dumped and in the case of journalists you will be named and shamed by them – and yes it has been done.

IS TWITTER IMPORTANT?

Yes. A simple answer to a straightforward question. As a forward thinking marketing oriented company you want to reach a specific audience. When you know that there are over 10m Twitter users listed as journalists and 56,000 as analysts; here is your audience.

The growth of Twitter is immense:

- Nielsen³ reported in February 2009 that there were 7m unique visitors to Twitter compared to just 475,000 in February 2008

and the readership is split across major business demographics as Nielsen went on to report:

RE-TWEETING: WHERE YOU 'FORWARD' SOMEONE ELSE'S TWEET TO YOUR FOLLOWERS. AKIN TO EMAIL REFERRAL MARKETING



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- Twitter is most popular among working adults. In February 2009, the largest age group on Twitter was 35-49; with nearly 3 million unique visitors, comprising almost 42 percent of the site's audience. The same report found that the majority of people visit Twitter.com while at work.

TWITTER – ARE YOU SERIOUS ABOUT THIS?

The fact that you are reading this probably means that you are. But many marketing campaigns fail because of inadequate planning and investment.

Many companies are bad at planning or investing in marketing and don't view marketing as a strategic activity. However, any company who does not take marketing seriously is not going to be successful in today's highly competitive marketplace. That's why you're reading this, right?

Again likening Twitter to the evolution of email marketing when email came along, marketers approached it in one of two ways:

- Email – it's free! We don't need to invest or plan – just get on and do it!

(as in 'That's what we've always done')

or

- Email – let's test, and plan and then introduce

As a marketing agency, at Insight, we've introduced email marketing to many clients, most have been successful but some, because of email's 'free' persona, we have seen fall foul of the 'just do it email marketing' approach.

On day one, when we plan the email way forward, everyone nods sagely and agrees that a) we need to test email the customer and prospect base with text emails to get feedback, b) we need to send out an opt-in email to ensure we segment our database correctly, c) we need

ARE
YOU REALLY
SERIOUS ABOUT
TWITTER?



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to trial key elements such as different email templates, subject lines and frequency. But, when it comes to integrating email, the investment and effort of 'doing it properly' can become an obstacle and the strategy becomes 'just get it out the door'.

Twitter is free. Yes there have been rumours about charging for business and takeovers by successful commercial companies who undoubtedly would charge. But today it is free and has been since its inception. But to get the most out of Twitter marketers need to be serious, to plan, to invest and to manage. Treat Twitter as a 'freebie' that will 'just' get the marketing message out and you will come unstuck.

Before you start building your presence on Twitter, put in the groundwork, develop a full understanding of what will be involved and the time you need to invest. Companies that dive into Twitter and get it badly wrong can damage their reputation. But there are significant rewards for those brands that invest the time and effort into getting it right.

As a social media platform, Twitter helps to create a lively and immediate dialogue with customers, the media, partners, investors, stakeholders and any key audience. With standard marketing communications strategies you can have intermittent spikes of activity followed by periods of silence, e.g. a press announcement or a seminar series, and then nothing for weeks. Twitter can, and must, be the regular pulse of your marketing communications strategy, a regular stream of sometimes informal, sometimes informative communication that reminds the market that you are still active and updates them regularly.

FREE Twitter to be acquired. During 2008 and into 2009 rumours have been rife that Twitter is to be acquired by all manner of technology suitors.

The list is endless including social networking rivals Facebook, Google and the latest being Apple.

While the future cannot be predicted, and Twitter may yet need to look for investment and support to manage its phenomenal boom, all offers have thus far been rejected.

Speaking on the US ABC Network show 'The View' in May 2009, Biz Stone, Twitter co-founder, told show host Barbara Walters that Twitter was not for sale. He added, "We're just getting started. The company is two years old, we have so much to do, so much product stuff to fix, and so much growing to do."⁹



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JOURNALISTS USE TWITTER – A LOT

Over the past decade editorial teams on leading UK publications have decreased rapidly. The past year (2008/2009) has seen even more pressure as the trend continued and the recession kicked in. Teams are so small that journalists and editors are looking to Twitter as a key source of information because it's short and quick to read. If you can't interest a journalist in 140 characters then it can't be worth reading. Or you (or your PR agency) just haven't thought how to distil the information down to make it interesting and define the key message. Key journalists and publications using Twitter are numerous. Here are some with their current followers:

Guy Clapperton, Freelance	1,901	Accountancy Age	319
Shane Richmond, Guardian	2,096	ComputerWeekly	1,529
Rory Cellan-Jones, BBC	11,548	Building	1,413
Dan Martin, Business Zone	2,030	Caterer & Hotelkeeper	755
Matt Cowan, Reuters	467	The Times	6,247
Declan Curry, BBC	4,780	Travel Weekly	6,115
Chris Nuttall, FT	2,258	Good Food	6,342

Twitter is also used by journalists as a news source by using Twitter's keyword search. Make sure that you (your PR agency) follow key journalists/publications important to your company and sector. By reading their Tweets you can find out what's important to them in both their business and personal lives.

Twitter Search Update - May '09.
On May 1st 2009, Twitter introduced its full search capability to all Twitter accounts. Previously not all accounts had this search facility and the 'standard' search was limited in where it searched and according to reports 'didn't actually work very well'.

On Twitter's own blog, April 30th 2009, they say:

"Every public update sent to Twitter from anywhere in the world 24/7 can be instantly indexed and made discoverable via our newly launched real-time search."

"Twitter teaches us new and amazing things every day and a big lesson learned is that search is so much more than a box and a button. As public tweets fly in from around the globe, we analyze them to detect when certain words or phrases occur with higher frequency."

Read the full update on the Twitter blog: <http://blog.twitter.com/>



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AM I IN GOOD COMPANY ON TWITTER?

So, are your competitors' brands using Twitter as part of their marketing? As you read this the number of companies using Twitter is rising daily; for international conglomerates to local companies Twitter has become and is becoming a standard element of the marketing mix. Here are a few examples of well-known brands and companies using Twitter:

COMPANY	@USERNAME	FOLLOWERS
BT	twitter.com/bttradespace	646
Starbucks	twitter.com/starbucks	120,868
The Guardian	twitter.com/guardiannews	14,913
Ford	twitter.com/ford	2,256
IBM	twitter.com/IBM_DataPower	1,779
Disney	twitter.com/wdwnews	7,354
Burger King	twitter.com/thebklounge	2,496
H&M	twitter.com/handm	2,701
UPS	twitter.com/trackthis	5,381
Asda	twitter.com/asda	147
LoveFilm	twitter.com/lovefilm_uk	1,503
Google	twitter.com/google	307,342

Finding companies on Twitter.

If you want to emulate a particular company or you want to see if your competitors are on Twitter then use Twitter's FIND PEOPLE option located on the user menu bar:

Go directly to Twitter find people:



http://twitter.com/invitations/find_on_twitter

(you must be logged on to use the find people option)



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CORPORATE PLAN - 10 STEPS TO TWITTERING

Now that you've read some of the background and why you should use Twitter, it's time to implement your corporate plan. Here are the 10 steps you need to take to start and manage a corporate Twitter presence:

- **Create** an account
- **Define** Twitter corporate marketing – Product, Price, Place, Promotion
- **Tailor** your corporate Twitter presence
- **Identify** the corporate Tweeters
- **Outline** Twitter guidelines/direction
- **Identify** and invite target audience
- **Understand** Twitter operation and environment to maximise usage
- **Implement** Off-Twitter marketing
- **Read** (and keep reading) about Twitter
- **Revisit** all the steps above to meet Twitter changes!

Did you just skip to this page?.
I know, I know - you're dead keen to get going. But, believe me, reading just a few pages of pre-
amble is well worth it to maximise your corporate Twitter plan.



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GETTING STARTED WITH TWITTER

If you don't have an account it's easy and free to sign-up. Visit <http://twitter.com> and enter a username and password. Twitter will tell you if your username is already taken:

**TWITTER USERNAMES
APPEAR IN TWEETS AS**

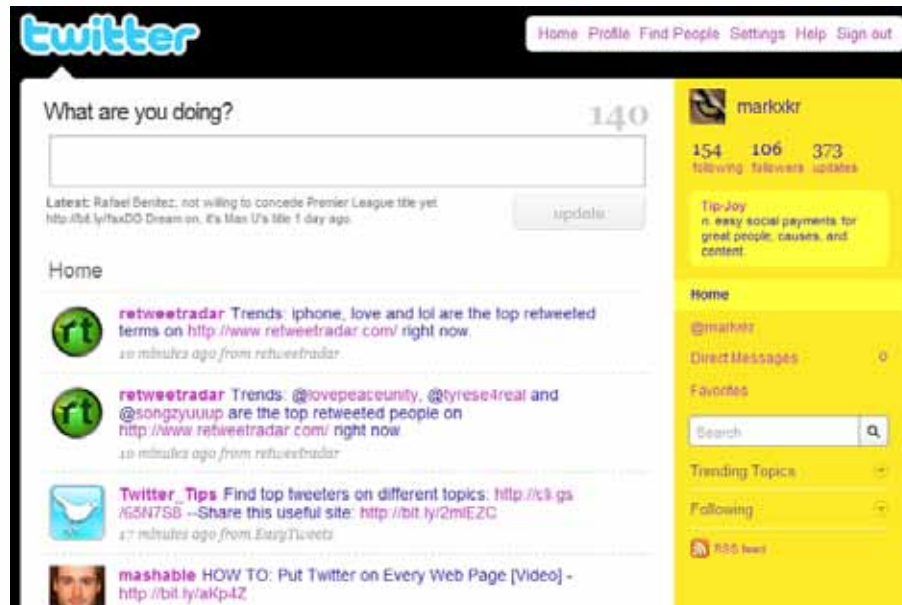
@USERNAME





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Once logged on you will see your Twitter user home screen, similar to this:



NOW STOP! THINK. READ THIS FIRST.

Faced with a @username and Twitter home page you have a message box and the inviting question

‘What are you doing?’

It would be so easy to just go straight ahead and start Tweeting. But you’re a marketer. You know how to ‘do’ marketing - by planning. And if you are using Twitter for your company



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promotion then you need to call on all your marketing skills and training and use them now.

That's right - PLAN!

FINDING YOUR WAY ROUND THE TWITTER WEB INTERFACE

The screenshot shows the Twitter homepage with several callouts:

- Enter your message 'Tweet' here:** Points to the text input field at the top left.
- Your picture and @username:** Points to the user profile picture and name in the right-hand sidebar.
- Your stats:** Points to the statistics (154 following, 106 followers, 373 updates) in the right-hand sidebar.
- Home page links, click for:** Points to the navigation menu in the right-hand sidebar, listing: @username, Direct Messages, Favorites, Search, Trending Topics, Following, and RSS feed.
- Messages from users you are following are displayed here alongside their user pictures and @usernames:** Points to the main feed of tweets.

SO BACK TO BASICS TO GET TWITTER WORKING FOR YOU/YOUR COMPANY

Philip Kotler, who some say is the Grandfather of marketing, clearly outlined the fundamentals of a successful marketing campaign, "The Four Ps". Get these right and your marketing will



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succeed:

Product • Price • Place • Promotion

You need to decide on and research all of these correctly in order to Tweet:

PRODUCT – Why are you using Twitter? What is it that you are going to promote? A product, a range of products, services, facilities, a private support forum, software/hardware updates???

PRICE – Twitter is free, so there is no cost, but free doesn't mean abuse. Twitter has a strong code of conduct so don't abuse it by just Tweeting special offers. You need to invest time and budget into planning a campaign properly and your price model is for discreet promotion on Twitter.

PLACE – Who is your audience? You've created a @username, but who's going to listen to you? You need to investigate who is out there, what people are reading and Tweeting, and how to get your message to the people that you want to talk to.

PROMOTION – OK, so, Twitter is a 'what are you doing now' promotion vehicle, but once you've promoted on Twitter what next? The call to action as part of the Twitter promotion needs to link into your other activities – and yes you do need other marketing activities otherwise Twitter on its own just won't work.

Philip Kotler

Distinguished Professor of International Marketing at the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University. He received his master's degree at the University of Chicago and his PhD at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, both in economics. He did postdoctoral work in mathematics at Harvard University and in behavioral science at the University of Chicago.

He was selected in 2001 as the #4 major management guru by the Financial Times (behind Jack Welch, Bill Gates, and Peter Drucker) and has been hailed by the Management Centre Europe as "the world's foremost expert on the strategic practice of marketing."

Kotler has consulted many major companies, including IBM, Honeywell, and Motorola—in the areas of marketing strategy, planning and organisation, and international marketing.



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YOUR TWITTER PRESENCE – BRAND MANAGEMENT TIME



Your Twitter home page, like your corporate web page, promotes your identity. So make sure that it reflects what you want to say. Use 'Settings' to edit your @username settings:

Basic content including the 'extended name' (as opposed to the @username) associated with the account, the url and overview are all seen when anyone clicks on one of your Tweets to see who sent it. So, as a minimum, change these as soon as you have registered.

The User Picture is shown against your Tweets so make sure it is meaningful. This can be done by selecting 'Settings + Picture'. It might be amusing to have a picture of Barack Obama's dog, but is that what you want prospects and customers to see?

Twitter Design covers the colour scheme and background. You can just leave it with the default background and colour scheme – but that doesn't say too much about you, so think about changing at least the colours to match your corporate colours. This can be done by selecting 'Settings + Design + Change Design Colours'.



If you want to change the background you can change it by selecting 'Settings + Design + Change Background Image'. Twitter lets you select either a standard image from its own collection or upload a pre-designed image. We'd urge you to consider an image that is specific to your company. The image can be centred or tiled so that it



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repeats across the background.

Take Caution! When you change the background image you are facing a design constraint: Twitter is a fixed width centred column, and your background image will be aligned from the top left corner. So despite all your branding efforts, your background might just look dull or clumsy if visitors viewing your profile are not using the same screen resolution.

In order to accommodate all visitors you need to look at your customer and prospect base and see what resolution they are using. (*You should be able to discover this from your web visitor logs*). Then create your background image to the lowest, common resolution utilised.

We have created a template that allows us to create a background image and show you what it will look like at different resolutions from 1024x768 to 1920x1200⁴. Current market statistics (April 2009⁵) show that the most common screen sizes are 1280x800 and 1024x768 and these account for 92% of the market (desktop based browsers only – not mobile displays). There is a minority that have 800x600 which cause distorted displays of Twitter pages and backgrounds. In fact Windows 7 will no longer accept configuration of displays with a height of 600 pixels or less so this resolution shouldn't be a major consideration with the technology audience.

WHO SHOULD BE TWEETING?

As you are setting up Twitter for your company then it is important that all Tweets are relevant and follow the company 'voice'. You may want to spread the load and utilise your PR agency as a controlling source and have several people (at the agency and in your company) producing and entering Tweets for the company. This is a good approach because it ensures that different people contribute to the content to keep it fresh and to post everything that is happening company-wide.

**WE'VE CREATED A
TEMPLATE TO SHOW HOW
BACKGROUNDS LOOK AT
DIFFERENT RESOLUTIONS.
DROP US AN EMAIL FOR
INFO:**

TWITTER@INSIGHTGROUP.CO.UK



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But from day one you need to accept that Twitter is an on-going investment. There are numerous examples of 'dormant' Twitter accounts (which we won't name and shame here!), accounts that have been set up, used and then left. If someone searches for your company's Twitter account and arrives at your Twitter page with no news then you're sending the wrong message. A dormant account is akin to a website with no recent news and no updates; a store front with special offer posters for Christmas when it's Easter; or direct marketing campaign with a special offer with a close date of 3 months previous. The message you send with a dormant Twitter account can seriously affect your corporate brand.

Lay down some Twitter usage ground rules as of day 1:

Who and When to Tweet – don't let anybody Tweet anytime that they want. You will effectively be spamming if you send too many Tweets and people can easily, very easily, stop following you. And in worst cases you can be black listed by a Tweet & Re-Tweet activity (by other Twitter users) about your bad etiquette. Conversely you do need to post regular Tweets. So set up a schedule to ensure that you a) Tweet regularly and b) control the frequency so that you don't over-tweet. The frequency needs to be decided by you based on your resources. You may need to involve your PR agency to assist in 'Tweet management' as they will be able to schedule this as part of their regular PR activities for you.

Time of Day/Day of Week – Tweeting has, in common with advertising, email marketing and press relations a direct relationship with time. (And yes, before you say it, all marketing is time critical, these three have been used as sharing similar time critical examples). Advertising is known to have the best effect when repeated as readers pick up on 3rd or subsequent reads; email marketing has been found to be better received by repeating and by sending at specific times on specific days, and press announcements are significantly more likely to be read (by journalists) *prior to* press days rather than *on* press days.

Twitter users vary in when and how they read Tweets. As yet there are no published trends on popular times to read Tweets, the very nature of its flexibility may mean there never will be. So, as with any communication, you need to be repeating it in different forms, at different times,



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with a different message focus and with different calls to action to ensure you maximise your opportunities. As an amusing aside this table showing the best time to Tweet was published by Joe Szabo⁶ in March 2008 – the ticks indicate the most effective times during the week to Tweet - enjoy:

EST 5:00	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
6am	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
7am	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
8am	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
9am	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
10am	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
11am	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
12am	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
1pm	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2pm	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3pm	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4pm	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5pm	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6pm	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
7pm	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
8pm	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
9pm	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
10pm	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
11pm	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
12am	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
1am	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2am	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3am	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4am	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5am	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

REMEMBER: NO MATTER WHAT TONE OF VOICE YOU USE FOR YOUR AUDIENCE, ALL TWEETS CAN BE SEEN BY THE TOTAL TWITTER UNIVERSE SO TAKE CARE!!

Voice – Decide on your tone of voice for Tweets. Friendly? Formal? Casual? Humorous? Technical? You know your audience and know how you want them to see you. Always Tweet in the first person to ensure it's seen that the Tweets are coming from a single individual representing the company.

Approval – Decide who will be response for approving corporate Tweets. There should be at



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least two people responsible for this to ensure no delay is incurred in a time relevant Tweet being issued. Approval should only be given on documented Tweets to ensure the approving person knows exactly what is being said and who it is being distributed to.

Logging – Tweets should be logged in a central control table with the date, time, content, Tweeter, audience (just followers or the name/s of any #hashtags used) and authorisation/ approval logged by name and date.

Content – Like any communication don't just Tweet because the frequency outlined says you need to Tweet today. You do need to keep to a regular schedule but if you miss a target Tweet that's OK. As with external communication you need to create a topic list of information in advance that you want to announce. This can easily be linked to your forward press release schedule. Tweets can include links to images (for product or people announcements) using Twitter image management such as Twitpic, online polls such as Twtpoll for getting instant feedback on a topic, or TweetCube to share files – the list is endless and if you think of a way that you want to use Twitter to get your message across, you can bet that there is a Twitter app already available.

If you have a regular blog for your company then you can link this to Twitter either automatically or manually.

Don't swear. Remember Twitter is 'totally' public and while the odd swear word might not go amiss internally, just the one swear word on Twitter might alienate the corporate buyer you have been trying to build a relationship with. What's worse you could enter the cursing hall of fame and have your company listed on Cursebird - <http://cursebird.com/>.



Call To Action – Twitter usage is more powerful if you are pushing followers to read a link on your corporate Blog; a corporate news site; an industry comment that you want followers to read; view an image that you upload, or get feedback via a poll or questionnaire. 140 character Tweets as statements are OK, but are far more powerful when they are linked to information.

Hashtags

A Twitter convention for grouping similar Tweets together. Hashtags are a powerful, simple tool for tracking topics, communities, live events, or breaking news. They make you 'findable', and they allow on-the-fly collaboration. When you insert one of these short character-string tags beginning with #, you make it easy for Twitter users who don't already follow you (plus anyone searching Twitter) to find your public contributions to the coverage or discussion on that topic.

Hashtags are discussed in more detail in a few pages.



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And remember if you are using a URL shortener then there are options to track how many people have clicked thru to let you monitor exactly what is working for your Twitter personality.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Twitter is exactly like a web site: 'just because you build it, people don't automatically visit'. You need to find people to follow and people to be followers to start creating a community.

As a first step you can just invite people directly to follow you. Start with people you know, companies you work with and Twitter users that you identify as having similar interests and ask them to follow you.

Finding users that have the same interests as you can be done using Twitter's own search and suggest tool to find like-minded users based on your profile and Tweets.

You can also search for a specific topic or hashtag in Twitter and read Tweets by other users. You will quickly see users that you find of interest so follow them. Following users couldn't be easier, when you find a user that fits your search criteria then click their Twitter @username, you'll be taken to their web Twitter page and below their name will be a box that says 'follow'. Click on this and you are following them and will receive any Tweets that user publishes.

When you follow a user they will be notified of your following and will probably investigate you and if interested will follow you back.

There are also numerous Twitter add-on apps such as Tweetwheel and Twhither, which find which of your Twitter friends know each other.

Some useful links for locating users to follow:

- **Use Twitter's 'Find People + Suggested Users'**

Twitter will look through its users and based on your profile and your Tweets will suggest users that you can follow

The Gadget Show Twitter Experiment
In May 2009 The Gadget Show decided to run a head to head experiment of Twitter against Facebook. The challenge was to get as many people in one location as possible using just Twitter or Facebook to spread the word. The result was:

Twitter 208 - 23 Facebook.

This just demonstrates the power of hashtag & Re-Tweet on Twitter. Of the 208 Twitter's that attended the presenter knew just a handful. Whereas all the Facebook attendees were known 'friends' of the presenter.

Apply this to business and Twitter hashtag & Re-Tweeting is exactly what you need to reach a wider audience of prospects. You know your customers but your prospects could be anywhere. A Tweet from you re-Tweeted by your followers or seen by hashtag groups can increase your [prospect] audience 10 fold.

<http://fwd.five.tv/gadget-show>



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- **Visit <http://wefollow.com>**
search for hashtag topics relevant to your company and then enter that hashtag to see a list of people that have indicated they are interested in that topic
- **Visit <http://twemes.com/>**
to see what is being Tweeted in your hashtags to verify that the hashtag name is covering relevant content
- **Visit <http://twitterpacks.pbwiki.com/>**
to follow 'packs' of related people
- **Use <http://twitterator.org/>**
to easily add a list of people in one go
- **Follow @hashtags**
to ensure that any hashtags that you use in your Tweets are picked up and registered.

Following users also creates users that will follow you, because many users are set up to automatically follow anybody that follows them. Remember Twitter is used to get your message across so unless you are building a community you are just reliant on hashtag groups to pick up your messages.

VIRAL MARKETING. THAT'S EMAIL MARKETING, RIGHT?

Wrong! The term viral marketing (the ability to forward a single message to multiple users) has become synonymous with email, purely because email made it popular and because email makes it so easy to 'push' the message on to one or more contacts by using the email forward button. Viral Marketing as a promotional activity was first introduced by Reader's Digest in 1922, the first company innovative enough to realise that its readers could promote their product by



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introducing their friends and relatives. Reader's Digest capitalised on this and incentivised its readers with gifts for providing additional names to invite as subscribers.

In the 1960's a form of viral marketing was introduced called pyramid selling or multi-level marketing which involved one person selling to two or more of their friends who in turn sold to two or more of their friends and on it went to build the network/pyramid. Sellers were incentivised based on the number of friends - the more 'friends' that a seller had in their network the more money they earned.

Email marketing introduced viral marketing and coined the phrase 'refer-a-friend', on the basis that the message you were reading could be of interest to other colleagues, family or friends that you knew. While email viral marketing was easy it became tiresome and tedious typing in (or selecting) those names, so commonly a viral email went to a maximum of five others.

Not so with Twitter. Use the single command to 'Re-Tweet' a message, i.e. forward to your followers, and the number of contacts that the message is virally distributed to can be endless. Take for example Kevin Rose, founder of DIGG, he has, as of March 2009, 471,970 followers. A Re-Tweet by Kevin, to his community, can have a massive viral marketing impact and really get your message across.

HASHTAGS

A Twitter hashtag is one of the most powerful uses of Twitter and incredibly flexible in how it can be used. It's also one of the most complex concepts in Twitter - no matter who explains or discusses how it can be used, someone always has a different view on the best way to use hashtags and the definition. The most important thing to remember from a business marketing perspective is that:

Hashtags are powerful links enabling you to reach a wider audience.



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Hashtags group Tweets together and ‘tag’ them so people can easily find Tweets on a [hashtagged] subject by searching or by automatically including them in their Tweet listings (application dependent).

By including #tagname into your 140 characters then your Tweet is linked into that hashtag group. How the Twitter community reads and receives these hashtagged Tweets is through a combination of push and pull to read hashtag Tweets.

As a user you can’t setup your Twitter web account to follow messages from users in hashtag groups, only user messages. You can use Twitter’s web based search option to find any Tweets that have a specific hashtag and ‘**pull**’ them down to read as the result of a search.

There are third party applications such as AlertThingy!, Twhirl and Tweetdeck, which allow you to specify a hashtag search which will remain active and will ‘**push**’ any Tweets with the specified hashtag directly to you.

The additional advantage of using hashtags in a Tweet conversation is that because every Tweet is public, you may be having a conversation about the latest security development in firewalls and include a hashtag of ‘#firewall’. Anyone that is tracking #firewall could then jump into your conversation. Suddenly your knowledge base and community increases.

However, remember that while hashtags are immensely powerful and even though you will identify a hashtag group as a potential audience you cannot guarantee that all of them will read your Tweets. Only those that are using push applications are guaranteed to receive them. And even then Tweets have a time-line-life (i.e. they are only displayed on-screen for a defined period). While your Tweets don’t disappear (unless you delete them) if a user isn’t viewing at the time you Tweet they may still not see your message. This is why the frequency of Tweets (as mentioned earlier) is important to adhere to – the prospect or customer that you want to reach may not view your Tweets until the third or fourth time you have Tweeted even in hashtags.

The POWER of Hashtags.

According to a Twitter fan website (<http://twitter.pbworks.co>), the hashtags achieved significant notoriety with Twitter users in 2007 during the San Diego fires, when users designated their tweets with “#sandiegofires.”



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How To Use Hashtags:

1. First, follow @hashtags on Twitter. They will follow you back automatically, and your hashtags will then be tracked.
2. Next, start using hashtags in your tweets, as part of the message. It can be helpful to do a little research first, to find out if the subject you're tweeting already has an established hashtag - <http://wefollow.com/> or <http://hashtags.org>
3. Finally, track other tweets on the subjects you're interested in (ie: those containing the appropriate hashtags) by browsing/searching at <http://wefollow.com/>, <http://hashtags.org> or <http://twittgroups.com>.

OFF-TWITTER MARKETING

Using Twitter resources to develop your Twitter community is the start, but you can build your community further by fully integrating Twitter into your off-Twitter marketing activities:

- Add your corporate Twitter @username to direct marketing as a call to action
- Use Twitter @usernames as contact points for press to hear about you or as a call to action for general press relations
- Add your Twitter @username to your standard signature block as you would your mobile or skype contact details
- And adding Twitter links to your web marketing can further increase penetration and add followers within your target audience.
- All of these activities are straightforward to implement but create a significant increase in marketing responsiveness. Adding a simple 'follow-me' logo to key marketing documents and email signatures is simple: just publish your Twitter name in the format @username or



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<http://twitter.com/username> or use a Twitter follow me logo with your @username url as a hyperlink:



That's It - YOU'RE OFF

If you have followed the steps above then you will have an effective campaign in progress. The important action now is to keep focused with your corporate Twitter activity.

Good luck and successful Tweeting.



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AND FINALLY, A FEW WORDS...

WATCH WHAT YOU SAY

Twitter is powerful. Very powerful. Information can buzz round in minutes and, if it gets interest, can be Re-Tweeted; then your Tweet can be everywhere in a matter of hours. That's great. Especially great if it's a message that you want to distribute or see distributed. But that same power can take a poorly crafted Tweet, that you haven't checked, and distribute Twitter-wide.

This awesome power can also be used against you if you use Twitter poorly or with bad etiquette. A well publicised case on Twitter early in 2009 saw a leading journalist 'name and shame' two major UK PR agencies that he accused of using Twitter to spam press releases. Whether his gripe was well founded or not was immaterial at this point, in his mind it was and he had the power at his fingertips (literally) to act immediately. And he did. He gave the PR agencies in question fair warning that he didn't want 'any old rubbish' sent to him on Twitter, and they ignored him. So out went his Tweet and within a few hours the PR agencies in question and the clients they were Tweeting about were all over Twitter. The messages were blogged and picked up in on-line marketing publications and broadcast media. Not good press. All because basic Twitter etiquette wasn't followed. So beware, the power of Twitter can be used against your company as well as to support your marketing activities.

MEASURING SUCCESS

Like anything you need to measure if Twitter marketing is working for your company. There are numerous tools on the web associated with measuring Twitter success. But success for one campaign or company is different for another:

Embarrassing Tweet at BBC
The head of the BBC multimedia newsroom, Peter Horrocks, has 'fessed up to messing up on Twitter.

Horrocks sent out a tweet on Wednesday to his BBC colleague Richard Sambrook, talking about two senior newsroom appointments.

The message had been intended as a private, direct message. But instead it went out as a reply and was visible to all, causing in Horrocks' words "a bit of a flutter in the newsroom".

<http://bit.ly/pYRma>



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- Tracking an included url will show how popular a Tweet link has been
- ReTweet Radar shows the current most popular Tweet/words, which is great, but only useful if you are Tweeting a major message, because in an audience of up to 17m it needs to be a wide reaching announcement to get you to the top of the ReTweet Radar list
- Keyword searching lets you see what people are or have been Tweeting about. You can easily do this using Twitter's own search option or by using tools such as Monitter (<http://monitter.com/>).
- Discover what sort of impact you have had by using Twinfluence (<http://twinfluence.com/>) to analyse your activity and reach.

Remember the right measurement tool for your campaign can only be decided by you. Sometimes it can just be as simple as seeing how many new contacts were included in your campaign results from Twitter.

BUT THIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING...

Setting anything up is just the first step. Continually investigating Twitter, understanding your target market, refreshing your ideas – in fact treating Twitter as ‘just another marketing tool’ - is the key to marketing success on Twitter.

You can't learn everything from just reading this document. It will give you a head start and get you rolling. But you need to keep on reading, finding out more and staying on top of Twitter developments. If you type ‘Twitter’ into Google today you get about 390m hits which is an indication of just how important it has become.

And remember, this is a free guide and all I ask is that you follow us:

<http://twitter.com/markxkr> - <http://twitter.com/insightgroup>



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TWICTIONARY - THE LANGUAGE OF TWITTER

Like any good technology product, Twitter has a language all of its own. So a quick whizz through some of the language that is used in the Twitter environment. There are lots of 'unofficial' Twitter terms like Twitaholic, meaning someone who can't stop Tweeting (a bit like being a CrackBerry – someone who is addicted to BlackBerry messaging) or Dweet, meaning a Tweet sent while drunk! But here we've just focused on some of the more serious business Twitter terms:

140 character limit

Twitter messages are meant to be short. Most people don't even go up to the 140 character limit when posting a tweet. This is the reason for utilities like URL shorteners such as TinyURL, which we'll get to later in this list.

Block

The act of blocking a particular user name from following your tweets. You block someone by clicking on their profile and choosing "Block" on the right sidebar.

Direct Message (DM)

This stands for direct message, which is the Twitter equivalent of a one-to-one e-mail. To DM a Tweet, click on "Direct Message" on their profile and type out your message. Only the recipient @username sees your email.

Keep in mind that you cannot send Direct Messages to people that are not following you, even if you are following them. This is Twitter's built-in spam protection. DM is used as shorthand in a Tweet to indicate that you want someone to send you a message directly or to thank them for a direct message e.g. 'Send me your email address in DM'



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Failwhale

The whale logo that pops up when the Twitter service crashes/is busy:



Favorites

If you see a Tweet that you would like to keep for reference or come back to later on you can 'Favorite a Tweet'. In the Twitter page click the star by their name, in other applications click the Favorite or FAV icon. This will then create a shortcut to that Tweet for reviewing later.

Follow/Following

You can either sign up to follow other Twitter users or they can sign up to follow you. If you follow someone, it simply means that you automatically receive that person's Twitter updates. Each time that person posts an update on Twitter, it appears on your Twitter home page instantly.



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Updates for all the people you follow appear in reverse chronological order with the most recent update on top of the page. Anyone following you will see your Tweets automatically displayed in their Twitter page.

Hashtags

Hashtags, such as #infosec for “Information Security”, denote groupings on Twitter for popular, commonly referenced items. You can follow updates on hashtags in real time at Hashtags.org. They were developed as a means to create groupings on Twitter.

In order to have hashtags tracked you need to start following @hashtags on Twitter. It will then follow you automatically and your use of any hashtags will be tracked.

Locking Your Profile

You can “lock” your profile so that only friends can see your updates. This may deprive you of followers who would have otherwise followed you based on keywords in your posts and isn’t advised for general use, but can be useful for a closed group such as a corporate support Twitter ID.

Mistweet

A Mistweet is a tweet that you will regret! Twitter is immediate, once you click send everyone following you gets your Tweet. You can delete your Tweets on your profile page, but everyone on your follow list will still have seen it when it was posted. **This term is in here as a warning!**

@reply

@reply precedes messages sent from one person to another that are public. In other words, anyone who can see your Twitter updates can see the @replies that you send or that are sent to you, whether or not they are following you or you are following them. These messages appear on Twitter updates as @username (with “username” replaced by the person’s actual username from their Twitter account).



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RT/Retweeting/Re-Tweeting

Re-Tweeting is the process whereby you repost (forward) someone else's Twitter post on your feed. RT #usernameyouarerequotingfrom "text of the Re-Tweet". Following this convention you are showing that it is a Re-Tweet and including the full @username so others on your list can choose to follow them if they like it.

TinyURL

Name of one of the popular URL shortening services which trims URL lengths to allow for inclusion in twitter messages. (<http://tinyurl.com>). A great way to help you stay in the 140 characters but still push people towards a key web page or blog entry. An example of this is shown here which you can try by clicking on both links:

Actual URL:

http://www.etelligent.co.uk/etelligent/mp-ViewWebPage.asp?CC=insight&FRM=1&page_ID=452

Trimmed URL on Tiny URL:

<http://tinyurl.com/ctf4pw>

Twitter handle (@username)

The name you chose to represent yourself when you signed up for Twitter. This is displayed at the beginning of any Twitter messages from you in the format '@username...'

Tweet/Tweeted/Tweeting

When a Twitter user posts an update to their Twitter account, that update is often referred to as a "Tweet" and the user is said to have "Tweeted". Tweet can be used as a noun, referring to the actual written update, or a verb, referring to the action of publishing an update.

Tweeter

A Twitter user. Now, after reading this guide, that's you!



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SOME TWITTER APPLICATIONS (FOR YOU TO INVESTIGATE)

For Windows Desktop:	For the iPhone:	Twitterrific
AlertThingy!	Tweetie	Twitticious
Seismic Desktop	Twitterfon	
(tested yet to be released)	Twittelator Pro	For Windows Mobile:
Snitter	Tweeter	ceTwit
Spaz		GPS Twit
TweetDeck	For Symbian (Nokia):	Locify with Twitter
Thwhirl	Gravity	PockeTwit
Twitteroo	jTwitter	Quakk
Google Gadgets	Tiny Twitter	SQIJ
Yahoo widgets	Twibble	TinyTwitter
	Twim	Twikini
For Blackberry:	Twittix	Twitter Answers
Mobio		Twitter2Go
TwitterBerry	For Mac:	TwitToday
ÜberTwitter	TweetDeck	Twitula
	Tweetr	Twobile
	Thwhirl	



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DISCLAIMERS, COPYRIGHT, TRADEMARKS AND ALL THAT STUFF

In putting this guide together I used my experience of working with Twitter both for personal and business use; information gathered from Tweets I received; information from the Internet; and reports that I have read along the way. All copyright and trademarks are recognised.

And of course the disclaimer... this is my/our view on Twitter. You may be an experienced user and read this and have a different way of using Twitter. That is the beauty of Twitter, no one source is 100% right or 100% wrong. There are many ways of using Twitter that can work for you. We've found a way that works for our clients. We've seen success and our clients have enjoyed the benefits. If you want to tell me about your experiences that have worked or comment on this guide then please Tweet or email me.

Where possible I have made notes of information extracted from sources and these are listed throughout the guide and here. If I have missed your name or your company, sorry, let me know and I'll add your details to the credits. Otherwise thank you to everybody that provided input.

Front cover Twitter logo - thanks to Henry Jones at DesignRiviver, CA, USA

FOOTNOTES

1. Currently the OED lists Twitter 'Of a bird: To utter a succession of light tremulous notes; to chirp continuously with a tremulous effect.' It is now being considered as a definition of social networking in the next issue. According to language historians the word 'twitter' was first used by Geoffrey Chaucer in 1374: '1374 CHAUCER Boeth. III. met. ii. 54 (Camb. MS.) The langelynge bryd..enclosed in a streyht cage..twiterith desyrynge the wode with her swete voys.'



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2. 7m Twitter users: <http://bit.ly/b637s> or 19m Twitter users: <http://bit.ly/iyBUM>
3. Nielsen, Twitter's Tweet Smell of Success:
http://blog.nielsen.com/nielsenwire/online_mobile/twitters-tweet-smell-of-success/
4. If you want to see your background at different resolutions please email twitter@insightgroup.co.uk with your contact details.
5. Browser News > Stats > Browser Trends;
http://www.upsdell.com/BrowserNews/stat_trends.htm#res
6. Joe Szabo blog:
<http://digitaldigs.wordpress.com/2008/03/28/best-time-of-day-to-tweet/>
7. Twitter definition: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twitter>
8. Twitter directory: <http://wefollow.com/tags>
9. Twitter not for sale: <http://bit.ly/6vqrh>, <http://bit.ly/uHb3X>

The 10 Minute **twitter** Marketing Guide

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