

How to Tweet Without Feeling like a Twit!

by

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Social Media
Strategy | Training | Advice & Seminars



This is dedicated to You and all the other tweeters I've had the pleasure of getting to know over the last few years!

Thank you so much for all the pleasure you have given me and for all the conversations we are yet to have!

Preface

Dear You!

Thank you so much for downloading this book, I hope you find it useful and that you'll soon be lighting up twitter with your posts!

If you're not already following me there you can find me at @GemLThompson and for daily tips please like my facebook page www.facebook.com/SocialMediaTips

Wishing you all the best!

Gem L Thompson

Contents

Introduction

1. Getting Started on Twitter!

2. Basic Twitter Terms

3. Quality or Quantity?

4. Building a Quality Audience on Twitter

5. To Follow or not to Follow?

6. Using Twitter Lists

7. What to Tweet

8. To Quote or not to Quote ... That is the question

9. Automating your social media output

10. Ten ways to Spot a Twitter Bot

11. Terrific Twitter Tools!

12. Getting 'Influencers' to help you

Introduction

Why even use Twitter Anyway?

Twitter is one of those weird modern phenomena that no-one would have imagined was desirable or necessary 30 years ago, then we were still living in fear of 1984 and big brother slyly capturing information on us! Little did we know that websites like Twitter and Facebook would come along where we would willingly share the details of our daily lives and that far from imprisoning us it would set us free.

Twitter is an amazing resource, you can find out just about anything you want to know, but what's really great about it is you won't just get the 'party line' on things, you'll get real views from real people that will happily tell you the truth (as they see it!)

Currently Twitter has over 30 million UK users alone, and is the place business people gather around on their tea break to exchange information and enjoy a gossip ... make sure you've got your spot!

Chapter 1.

Getting Started on Twitter!

Twitter can seem utterly overwhelming when you first join, it's hard to know who you can follow and what you can and can't say!

It's designed to be moulded by every individual there so it really is what you make it! What you see when you log into twitter is a direct result of who you follow.

Some people join to chat with friends, some to follow celebrities, some to find people with the same hobbies and others to market their business or even to use it for market research!

Most people combine several reasons making each tweeter's stream truly unique.

First Impressions

First things first, if you haven't already, put a picture on your profile as soon as possible! Not having a picture will put people off following you, there are a lot of spam bots on twitter and often they don't have pictures. (There's more about twitter bots later)

You can change this at any time so don't over think it at first, it doesn't even have to be of you, it can be a business logo or a cartoon image or anything else you like!

Create your bio - Write a something, anything!

As with your profile picture an empty bio will put people off following you. It's easy to change this so don't worry about getting the perfect summation of yourself first time (or in fact ever when you have so very few characters to play with!)

If you have a website do add that to your bio, and your location, twitter is great for strengthening local ties but only if people know that you are local!



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Following and Un-Following

It's fine to follow absolutely anyone ... And to unfollow them!

You don't have to be friends with them already or be a friend of a friend, if their profile looks interesting click follow and away you go!

Lot's of people on twitter will follow you because they know it's a great way to get people to follow them back, and if it's a business, potentially find a new customer! There's nothing wrong with that, and if you are using twitter for business it's worth taking a leaf out of the same book!

I suggest following back those that follow you, but not necessarily everyone!

Before I follow back I look at their bio and if this doesn't give me enough information I'll look at the kinds of things they are tweeting. If it seems like the answer to one of the following three questions may be 'Yes', then I'll follow back – after all if they do end up annoying me I can always unfollow them!

1. Am I likely to learn something from them?
2. Are they likely to find me / my tweets helpful?
3. Do they seem friendly?

These questions may not be right for you but do take a few minutes to think about what will affect whether or not you follow someone.

Getting Engaged!

Social media is ALL about conversations so it's fine to talk to absolutely anyone on twitter!

Sometimes twitter can seem like one big party where everyone is already having a great conversation and they don't need you. Well maybe they don't, but maybe they do. I have met and done business with many people on twitter and it all started the same way ... by saying hello or replying to something they said!

But if you are trying to market your business through twitter don't forget the following!



1. Do have a strategy.

It doesn't have to be longwinded or have your tweets planned down to the last topic and time!

But do have some idea what you want to achieve by using it and who you want to connect with.

2. Do be Polite

Treat everyone on twitter as you would a customer in your shop, smile at them, pass the time of day with them, and tell them where they can find things you don't stock even! It's fine to talk about your products or services but don't only talk about that.

3. Don't automate too much!

Please don't set up an Automatic Direct Message saying you are so pleased your new follower has followed you and that you'd love them to read your book/visit your site/buy your product. And definitely don't send an auto DM with just a link! Would you click an unknown link??!

4. Do ask for help

The majority of people on twitter are really kind-hearted and knowledgeable and like extending a helping hand.

5. Don't ignore people

If someone has @ replied to you about something, please respond. Don't worry, it doesn't have to be instant, but if it is more than a few days it is worth apologising for the delay.

6. Do have fun!

There's no point doing anything for long if it's not fun!

Chapter 2.

Basic Twitter Terms

Before we get too far down the road let's just stop and look at what some of the basic terms and abbreviations you'll see on twitter are.

As each tweet only allows 140 characters there are a lot of abbreviations out there!

Tweet

A tweet is a short message that you send out to all your followers, it will be seen by any of your followers that are on twitter at that time.

RT

This stands for Retweet. Retweeting is when you see a tweet from someone you follow that you think your followers might like, so you share it.

DM

A DM is a Direct Message – these messages are completely private and can only be seen by the particular follower you send them to. They can ONLY be sent to people that follow you, and they still have to be 140 characters.

@Reply or @Mention

This is a public tweet so all your followers can see it but it is directed at, replying to, or including a particular tweeter so they can join in or keep up with the conversation. You do not have to be being followed by the tweeter you @Mention

#

Hashtags are the crisscross symbol you can see above and they are used frequently on twitter! They are used to tag keywords so tweeters can easily find and join in conversations around certain topics.

These keywords could be business related, for example you might want to search for business names like #vodafone or you might want to search topics like #SEO. They can also be more social, a lot of TV programs now ask you to join in the conversation by tweeting your views complete with a certain hashtag - #eurovision was great fun this year!

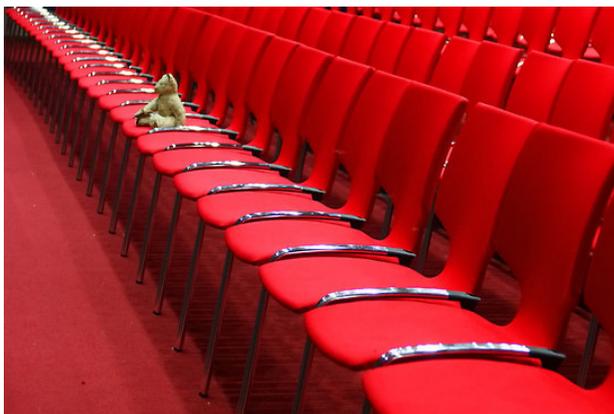
Chapter 3.

Quality or Quantity

Do you need 20,000 followers? Or is it better to focus on having a small, select band of loyal followers that care about what you say?

It's a question many businesses face and it can have a massive impact on how successful your twitter marketing is.

Without a doubt it is important to always keep in mind that it is called social media for a reason and every business, no matter how big, needs to engage with their audience. This simply means listening (or reading!) as well as getting your message out. No one wants to be spammed!



However this doesn't mean that we should all neglect the numbers, talking to yourself won't get you anywhere!

Does this mean you should relentlessly pursue the magic million followers? Of course not, as with all your marketing however, it is wise to have a target. To get to your target first you have to be realistic about your capabilities, getting 400 new customers could ruin you if you only have the capacity to serve 200.

While you are planning this, it's time to think about how easy it is for people to commit to buying from you. Generally the less expensive your product or service, the easier it is for people to buy. It is also a good idea to think about how many of them will be repeat customers (if you use social media effectively you're likely to find that your repeat business increases).

Once you've found your magic number multiply it by 10 to get a rough estimate of the amount of people you need to be talking with through your social media channels. Keep in mind where you want your followers to be – it won't help you much to have 2000 followers from South Carolina if you run a beauty salon in Southwold!

But while you're getting the quantity of followers you want, don't forget to keep the quality of your posts high!

Chapter 4.

Building a Quality Audience on Twitter

Reaching a large, interested audience is fantastic, but how do you find your audience in the first place?

Before you can find your audience you have to know who they are. I recently did some work with a hair salon in Ipswich and we spent quite some time establishing the characteristics of the bulk of her current clients to build a picture of possible new ones. As it is one salon, not a chain, one of the key points for her is geography.

Having decided that her main clients are professional women between the ages of 25 – 60 that live in the Ipswich locality I could then begin searching for people who matched this description and extend the hand of friendship to them.

Having said that, it's important not to limit your search too much, it's great to find your 'ideal client', but wonderful things can come from a chance meeting whether real or virtual so keep the doors to opportunity open!

The most important thing you can do to gain followers on twitter is to follow people yourself!

Twitter tries to help you find people to follow, on your home page is a link called 'who to follow', which will generally list twitter accounts based on those you follow.

It also has a tab marked 'browse interests' where you will find suggestions based on the interests/categories of tweeters – these are usually big hitters though and most of them won't follow you back!

The third tab on the page is marked 'find friends' and this is where you will find the links for you to search for people you already know through your email account and through LinkedIn etc.

Also, on your profile page is a link called 'similar to you', which, as you may expect, lists people that are like you in some way, this isn't limited to people local to you but will usually highlight at least one local person. You are also welcome to go through the followers of anybody you find on twitter to see if there may be anyone within that you want to follow.

I'm not a fan of twitter's search facility, but despite it's failings there are still ways to use it to your advantage. Whatever your speciality is set up searches that point to people who you can help.

For example, a few days ago I saw a tweet asking how to find the # symbol on a Mac. If I sold Mac's, fixed them, or ran computer-training courses for a living I would have that term as one of my searches so I could reply straight away and solve the tweeters problem.

I wouldn't try to sell to them at all, just solve their problem, hopefully this would begin a relationship where they felt they could ask me for help again in the future, and eventually when they are in the market for my services I would be the first person they would think of.

Adding yourself to a twitter directory such as We Follow or Twellow is easy, and as long as you consider the terms you want to be searchable for it can be effective.

The key here is to put yourself into that SEO mindset, ask yourself "if I was my ideal client and I wanted to find me what would I type into Google?" But remember, they may be looking at you as a potential customer not as a potential service provider!

As we often like to do business with our neighbours I strongly recommend that one of the keywords you use is the county you live in!

Chapter 5.

To Follow or not to Follow?

As you start to get established on twitter people will begin to find you and follow you, this leads to a dilemma – whether or not to follow back!

I know a lot of people worry about following too many people and having their twitter stream filled with stuff they don't want to read which will just waste their time.

I understand these concerns but If you use twitter for business, or even if you just use it for fun but have your business name and website address on your bios, there is one sure-fire way to leave a bad impression – don't bother to follow back!

***It's the equivalent of
having a shop but only
allowing close friends and
family to buy from you!!***



Therefore the quickest way to create a great impression on Twitter is to follow back when you are followed.

There are spammers out there so I am not saying that you should follow indiscriminately, as you know I have 3 criteria and the follower needs to match at least one of them for me to follow back.

Let's face it, unless you are a real superstar, and I do mean real superstar, like, say, Madonna, you shouldn't be aiming to have 50,000 followers and only be following 50 back. And even if you are a star it might be worth taking a leaf out of Stephen Fry's book – he has almost 2.5 million followers but he follows back over 50,000!

Luckily there's an easy way to control what you read in your twitter stream
Read on to find out more ...

Chapter 6.

Using Twitter Lists!

Following or following back is not the only control you have over what you read on twitter however; putting people into lists also helps.

You can have lists for people that provide good banter, lists for people that share great links, lists for people that you like to ReTweet, lists for people that are potential customers, the list of lists can go on forever!

Using lists means you can tailor your reading to what you want it to be when you want it to be. For example if you are watching 'The Apprentice' you may want to read just your 'banter' list as it's entertainment you're after at that point. When you are working you may switch between your 'useful info' list and your 'potential customer' list. On the weekend you may want to read your 'local info' list to see what's happening in your area.

Do make sure you read your regular twitter stream sometimes too; you do want to make sure you're not missing anyone after all.

Chapter 7.

What to Tweet

One of the biggest fears people have on twitter is figuring out what to talk about! You've heard that broadcasting is bad, that you shouldn't spam people by just sending out the link to your website everywhere and that social media means you need to be, well, social!

But being social online can be hard. Many people experience the kind of anxiety they had on the first day of school! So here are 5 types of things you can tweet about to get you started!



1. Ask Questions

What do you want to know about the people following you? Or to put it another way ... what do you want to know about your customers?

Although everyone that follows you isn't going to be your customer they can help give you an insight into what your customers really care about!

Questions will help you get those answers!

They'll also help you get social! There is no end to the variety of questions you can ask, from the simple 'How are you today' to more complex market research questions.

All of them are good, all of them count, because every question you ask shows you are interested in other people!

2. Talk about your hobbies

We all work to live not live to work ... or at least aspire to! So what do you do when you are not working? What are your driving passions?

Whether you love sport or spend your free time knitting, talk about it!

There will be other people out there that feel the same way ... even if not about the same thing!

You may also be surprised at how often our hobbies re-inforce some of your key brand attributes, the company virgin is seen as adventurous,

unafraid and exciting, words that could just as easily describe it's founder Richard Branson's hobbies!

3. Talk about your daily business life

Got a big new deal in? Excited about the new logo your designer has created for you? Struggling with your website? Tell us!

Sharing little bits of your everyday work life can help build confidence and allows your followers the opportunity to actually care about you and your business!

And if you do have a problem with something you may just find that one of your connections has the answer!

4. Share useful information

Whatever your industry I bet you know more about it than I do, you are an expert in your field. Even if you are just starting out in the field you can be useful – as you learn you are automatically translating information from industry jargon into plain English, you have to in order to understand it yourself! That puts you in a great position for helping us lay-people understand your field!

So whenever you find some information you think is useful share it. It doesn't matter one jot that you didn't write it, as long as you don't claim you did!

What matters is that you are taking the time to share that with me. It's a small kindness and as such will encourage people to think well of you.

5. Promote yourself.

Just because you shouldn't sell non-stop does not mean you shouldn't sell at all!

Letting us know that you have a sale on, or a workshop coming up, is absolutely fine. That way if we are in the market we have the opportunity to buy from someone we know and care about at least a little!

Chapter 8.

To Quote or not to Quote ... That is the question!

One of the things we see a lot of on social media platforms is quotes.

Whether they are from the great peacekeepers of the world like Ghandi or some of the richest industrialists like Ford or Rockefeller it seems we can't help peppering our news feeds with other people's words!

A few months ago I asked my twitter friends what annoyed them the most for a post I was doing.

I was surprised how vehement they were about quotes; most saying they unfollow people who use quotes!

Personally I don't mind reading quotes sometimes, but people who fill my stream with quote after quote really are just wasting my time.

I suppose Plato sums it up best;

"Wise men talk because they have something to say; fools, because they have to say something"

One of the people I follow on twitter uses a lot of quotes, his stream is definitely highly automated as he tweets around 6 times an hour and usually 3 of those tweets are links to his website and 3 are quotes.

I keep following him as I am curious about his product and want to explore it further at some point. And I know he's real and does jump on to twitter himself during the day and respond to people etc.

I asked him one day why he used quotes so much, he answered that if a quote resonated with him he would share it, that this was another way of expressing his personality and beliefs.

I understand that, and to be completely fair there are times when he personalises the quote.

However, resonating with 72 quotes a day speaks more of a lack of personality and certainly implies a lack of originality.

Also, quite frankly it smacks of laziness and lack of interest in his followers, he could replace half those quotes at least with questions for his followers, get more interaction going in his stream and find out what people really want to know!

If he did he might find out why although I had been following him for months and I'm curious about his product I haven't bought yet!

That conversation might lead to a sale for him just as a similar one with your followers might lead to a sale for you!

If you love certain quotes you don't have to abandon them completely, you can even share them with your followers, but do so sparingly and make sure you personalise them if you can.

My favourite quote is from the rapper Eve, and it seems rather appropriate at this point! In her 2001 hit 'Let Me Blow Ya Mind' she simply said –

***“I do what they can't do –
I just be me!”***

Chapter 9.

Automating your Social Media Output.

You'll hear a lot about how you should automate your tweets, on the surface this seems like a perfectly sensible thing to do, Twitter can be very distracting and I know I've been drawn into spending too much time on it on several occasions!



But automating *all* your tweets is wrong. The reason is simply, this is social media, and standing on a platform with a megaphone shouting to the world is not social!

This behaviour can often cause an audience to switch off, in fact I've seen tweets more than once stating that someone is about to unfollow people who do nothing but broadcast and never engage!

It can also create a disaster if something has happened that makes the scheduled output look either wrong or tactless.

This is not to say that all automation is bad, I am a big fan of planning and it makes sense to schedule a certain amount of the information you want to impart, but it still needs to be monitored and most importantly responded to.

So before you enter all your tweets into a csv. File, or queue all your blog posts for a year, step back and schedule a weekly (or even daily) review of your plans, and don't forget to save some time for socialising with your social media audience.

I use Hootsuite and Bufferapp to help me keep on top of my tweeting, the next chapter tells you more about them and some other terrific Twitter tools!

Chapter 10.

Terrific Twitter Tools!

In order to give my clients the best social media marketing advice, I am constantly testing twitter tools. Some are good, some not so good! Every now and again I find some terrific twitter tools and I love to share them with you! If you are using twitter for business you want it to be effective and time-efficient – here are some twitter tools that can help!

Hootsuite

Hootsuite is a 'dashboard' for your social media accounts, what this means is that it is a website you can log into in order to view your social media sites and activities all in the same place.

When hootsuite started it really was just another website to make using twitter that bit quicker and easier.

I love twitter, but the fact still remains that you have to do a lot of clicking to see what's going on, and if you are working out in the wilds of Suffolk where decent broadband turns up about as often as the Holy Grail you don't want to waste a single click!

Hootsuite solved this by allowing you to have all of twitter's columns neatly lined up next to each other, if anyone mentions you or @replies to something you have said you can see it straight away, the same with your DM's, sent tweets and outbox.

But importantly it also allows you to set up columns for searches. So if you want to get talking to absolute strangers that are looking for your products or services, you can.

It also allowed you to do something else that twitter didn't; it allowed you to schedule posts.

I do not recommend automating your twitter output but there are times this is useful. When you are going on holiday or have a heavy workload over the coming week for example. And personally I use it to schedule what I think of as my sales tweets. I try to make sure around 20% of my tweets actually let people know what I do for a living so if they are looking for someone like me it's easy for them. Otherwise you can end up being the best twitter buddies in the world but they buy from your competitor because they didn't know you had what they needed!

Scheduling helps me do this, I'm too British and feel a little uncomfortable 'selling myself'. Scheduling these tweets softens the blow!

Quite frankly I was pretty happy about all this, but the reason I really fell in love with Hootsuite is because they weren't! They are a company that likes to keep improving!

Just as I started using it they added the same functionality for Facebook profiles, then for LinkedIn profiles. Meaning I didn't need to click out of hootsuite to see what was going on in these places. And I could schedule posts to these places too, in fact it let's you send the same post to multiple places if you wish just by clicking to select the ones you want.

But they didn't stop there! Then they added Facebook pages to the list and now they have added Facebook groups too!

When I had a new blog post to publicise it used to take me up to an hour to send it out through all my accounts ... Now it takes just a couple of minutes!

Some of the features I've just talked about are only available if you pay for Hootsuite, they have two levels of paid service and I started using the first level probably about six months ago now, it costs me \$5.99 a month which is usually around £3.80. The amount of time it saves me I certainly couldn't buy for £3.80 so for me it is worth it, I think it is worth it for anyone using twitter and Facebook regularly.

Hootsuite also have their own analytics suite, which all your accounts can be monitored on. It's bright, colourful and easy to read too!

Bufferapp

It's not always easy to keep updating, let alone time the information to come out a little at a time rather than clumping up your stream and overwhelming your audience! And it's harder still to know the best times to send out updates full of that useful information.

But not anymore! One company has set out to solve all these problems in one oh-so-easy click!

Bufferapp.com allows you to install a button on your browser, click it and the page you are reading will be added to your 'buffer'.

Your buffer will then post it to your tweet stream at a time when your audience is usually around its highest number. If you want to edit either the wording, or the time it'll send, simply click the edit button on the site and away you go.

This works for any page being read, including pages from your own blog, so don't forget to use this to promote yourself a little too!

In fact you can also buffer tweets from within twitter and if you are reading information you want to share on your phone or iPad you can add the link to your buffer via email!



For people like me that have set times of the day available for reading buffer is a godsend. I no longer have to copy & paste every link I like into [hootsuite](#), shrink it, and figure out when to send it.

For most users the free account is all you will need as you can have 10 posts waiting to go out at any one time. And they send you a very polite email to let you know when your buffer is empty.

But if you are an avid sharer or a social media professional do think about upgrading, for \$5 a month you can have 50 tweets in 3 separate accounts, such a low fee it shouldn't be a barrier to anyone.

I will stress here again that this type of posting should be a supplement and should most certainly not take the place of interacting with people!

Tweriod

If you want your tweeting to be effective your tweets have to be read, and the more people who read them the more chance they have of resonating with people.

This is where Tweriod can help, simply log into their website - www.tweriod.com - with your twitter username, and these clever people will present you with a range of graphs for weekdays and weekends that show you quickly and easily when you have your highest number of followers online.

As business tweeters we can't be online all the time, and we don't want to schedule so many tweets that we have one going out every five minutes – that's a sure-fire way to get unfollowed!

In fact I recommend you only schedule something like 20-30% of your tweets. Therefore it's helpful to know when our scheduled tweets will get the maximum exposure. It's also great because if you want to spend some time simply engaging with people you know when they'll be there.

Twocation

Twocation is a twitter tool that tells you where your followers are in the world.

Why should you care where they are as long as they are following you?

Well if you are using twitter to promote your business you should have an ideal customer in mind. Or it may be that you are only interested in selling in certain countries.

Knowing where your twitter followers are can help give you an accurate assessment of your potential sales funnel and your actual return on investment!

First let's assume the UK is your Market.

You may have 1000 followers but if only 500 of them are in the UK then you can see that the fact you've gained sales from 50 people on twitter means you have deeper market penetration than you thought – 10% of your target Market are buying not the 5% you may have thought! Now you know that you know it's worth investing in growing your target audience!

Conversely if your market is global this tool can give you a breakdown that can impact the times of day you tweet and how you phrase things.

For example if you are based in the UK and have 1000 followers, 50% from the UK, 40% from the U.S and 5% each from Canada and Australia, but so far you have only had sales from the UK, it may be time to tweet later at night UK time so you are reaching those other audiences. And, if it's the U.S Market that is your priority to break start using more enthusiastic and dynamic words in those tweets – tell them how 'awesome' stuff is!

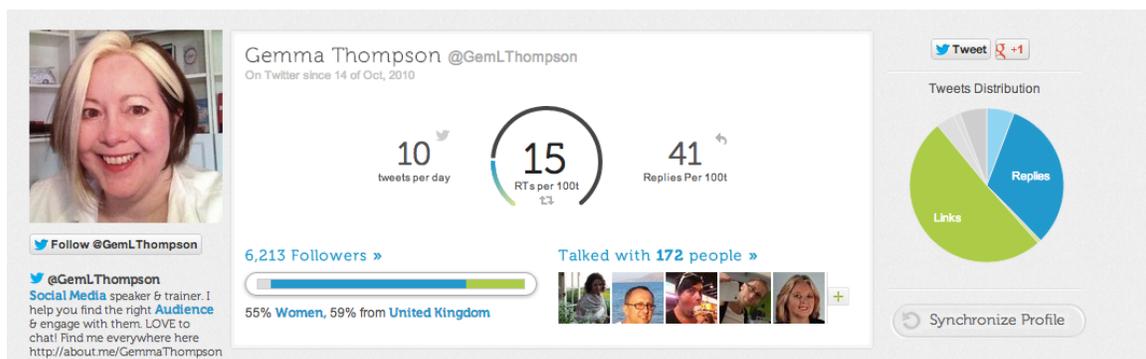
It is a shame the Twocation doesn't specify more about where your followers are – many businesses are concerned with customers much closer to them, and it would be great if it could tell you how many followers you had in Indiana or Ipswich! But it's still a useful tool

Twtrland

Twtrland is a tool created to help you decide whether or not to follow somebody. Often when we are followed we have a look at the person's bio and timeline to see what kind of things they are tweeting about. But looking at their timeline past the last ten or so tweets can be time-consuming, Twtrland solves this.

All you do is type the user name in and it produces a list of their tweets broken into sections. At the top is their most 'famous words', this is their most retweeted tweets. Then it shows the most recent plain tweets.

It goes on to show you tweets that mention others and people they have @replied too, tweets that contain check-ins, tweets they have retweeted, tweets that contain links and tweets that contain links to pictures and songs specifically. A screengrab of the top of my twtrland profile is below.



But it can also be used as a measurement tool!

The thing Twtrland does that I like the best is it produces this lovely little graph you see. This graph breaks down into percentages the type of tweets discussed above.

As it's important to think about what you say on twitter, and how much you actually talk to people compared to just broadcasting links and adverts, this is a tool I encourage you to use to measure yourself with.

Personally I have always had the target of 50% of my tweets being conversations. I've never measured it precisely before, just kept it as a guideline in my head; Twtrland helped me see I was right on target for that!

It also has a handy little 'Statistics' section at the top where it tells you the ratio of retweets you got, an average number of tweets per day, the ratio of retweets you do and the ratio of tweets you favourite.

It takes just 2 minutes to check your own stats with this – I'd recommend doing it monthly!

Chapter 11.

Getting 'Influencers' to help you.

Once you've been dabbling with Twitter for longer than a month you may well notice that there are people within your network that seem to be more influential than others, you may find you look for their tweets above other people's, and that they get re-tweeted a lot.

These 'influencers' will often have large networks and if they share or retweet your message you know it will reach a much wider audience than you can otherwise.

But how can you get these people to help you and spread your message?

First off you need to select the people you want to help you carefully, there is no point them spreading your message to an audience that isn't interested in it! If you are aiming for a local market you need to talk to those that influence that market.

Once you have identified the influencers you wish to help you then you have to attract their attention, you might do this by commenting positively on one of their posts or @replying to a tweet.

This can be rather daunting, particular for us British who are not used to asking for help – particularly if it seems that we are just asking and not giving! But most social media influencers know that giving a bit of help out to others builds their own reputation too so are quite happy to have the opportunity.

Remembering your manners is key, if you are asking a particular person to promote your message it is good to actually ask! And even better if you remember to say thank you, that way you will be building a relationship that both of you may continue to benefit from.

It also helps if you make it easy for them, if you want them to retweet something make sure it is short enough so they can just click retweet and don't have to edit it so it fits into 140 characters again (generally keep it to under 120 to be on the safe side!)

I'm most of that sounds obvious, but unfortunately it seems there are those out there that don't do this. Recently a twitter stream for a local event attracted my attention and that of a few other local influencers by sending out a tweet for their event with 'RT @GemLThompson @ANOther' etc.

Now it was an event I thought the majority of my audience may be interested in, particularly as I have another social media presence that is all about local events! So to begin with I was perfectly happy to send this

out, then they did the same thing again, and again. Maybe I was having a bad day, or maybe it was because they still had not said please or thank you, but I suddenly thought 'hang on a mo ... What's in this for me?'

I took a look at their stream and saw that they haven't spent much time building their own audience (in fact they have only around 200 followers), or engaging with people, and this disregard of social media manners annoyed me even more. After all, I've spent time building and caring about my audience.

So I sent them a cheeky little D M saying '**Happy to re-tweet your event but what's in it for me? Any chance of a couple of free tickets ;)**' I must just say tickets were only £20! Not World Cup tickets or anything of that nature, I'm not greedy!

Their reply was 'How about if you get 20 people there we'll give you some free tickets? Appreciate all the tweeting but we need sales!'

I used to run a local magazine, so this made me think, after all no reputable paper or magazine can guarantee you sales, you place your advert and pay for it knowing this. PR is different, but generally you would expect to give the press tickets to an event if you wanted them to cover it! And you would definitely expect to pay a PR firm to get your information into the press if this was a major part of your marketing mix.

So what makes social media so different? Quite frankly not enough! Of course I don't have printing or distribution costs but to get their message to a local audience of over 5000 you would think would be worth a please and thank you ... And if not that then some kind of perk or benefit!

I want to make it perfectly clear that I am not suggesting that you need to offer goods or payment to influencers, most of us will happily help for free. But please do remember we are people, and if you value our audience so much you'd like us to share your message, then let us know you value this and build a relationship with us based on mutual appreciation and support.

Chapter 12.

Ten ways to Spot a Twitter Bot!

Finally let's talk a little about twitter bots. you heard me mention 'bots' on twitter earlier, but what exactly does this term mean?

The word 'bot' is short for Robot so as you may imagine a bot is a twitter account that is set up by someone to be 100% automated.

By this time you've heard me talk of social media being a tool to facilitate conversation a lot! So why would someone completely automate their account?

Well some people have the wrong end of the twitter stick; they believe twitter can be used to broadcast their message the same way that print, radio and television have been used. So a twitter bot exists to try and drive you to a website where the bot owner hopes you will click 'buy'.

Spotting a twitter bot isn't that hard, there are several clues usually.

1. No profile picture.

A lot of bot owners set up hundreds of bots a day, they don't waste time on adding a profile picture.

2. Or a profile picture of a sexy girl!

Some bot owners do work that little bit harder! They know that sex sells so that having a picture of an attractive young lady will increase the chances of getting followed back, and getting their tweets read.

3. A very unusual name.

Some of the names of bots I've been followed by include FaustinaMzdame and DlrIn_Mahalasu! I know twitter encourages creative names but really odd names are often a sign of a bot.

4. A very common name.

Sometimes they go to the other extreme and use a name like joannesmith, however you may find that joannesmith1980 follows you, and then oddly you get followed a few minutes later by josmith28. Sometimes these two profiles will even have the same picture – bots!

5. No bio.

Well they don't really have a life; they're just a bot, so I guess it's only fair that they should have no bio!

6. An incongruous bio.

The name is western, the picture is of a 20-year-old blonde but the bio is written in pigeon English, or claims that they are CEO of china's version of Facebook or something equally unlikely.

7. They are following lots more people than are following them.

They probably have some followers as a lot real people use tools which will automatically follow people back on twitter, but the chances are the bot is following considerably more than have followed back.

8. They are following no one at all!

Some twitter bots are set up to ignore the whole follow thing and just search for keywords within tweets, when they find that keyword, 'iPad' for example, they send an @reply to that tweet with a link saying something like 'iPads \$75' or sometimes just the link! So if you suddenly see a tweet like this from a name you don't recognise, it's a bot.

9. Their timeline is full of the same tweet.

If you have a look at their timeline and see 'iPads \$75' with a link over and over again, chances are it's a bot!

10. They don't interact.

They're a bot, they don't really know how to have a conversation so they may not have any @replies in their stream ... Unless it's telling someone where to get iPads cheap from!

If you're new to twitter you've probably read that list with increasing concern, maybe thinking 'I haven't uploaded a profile pic yet, or filled in my bio, will people think I'm a bot?' or possibly 'but I am a sexy young blonde woman who happens to be the CEO of China's version of Facebook, and I'm real!'

If that's the case then get your picture uploaded and your bio filled out now! Or if you are the sexy blonde put a link to your LinkedIn profile on your bio so people can see you're real!

It's true that a lot of the above ways of spotting a bot contradict each other, but if an account has 5 or more of these be suspicious. If a bot follows you, you can block it and report it as a spammer. The same is true if number 8 on this list hits you. It's up to you, I usually do because I want to interact with real people on twitter, it's not that I mind being sold to, but I don't want to be sold to by a bot!

Get on out there!

Well we've come to the end of our journey and you should feel comfortable to go out and tweet without felling like a twit!!

Now you need to get out there and get started! Feel free to tweet me anytime or if you need more specific help just get in touch via twitter or the website – www.socialmediaillumination.co.uk

If you need help on any other aspect of social media such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Google+ or YouTube I can help with that too!

@GemLThompson

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