



Inventory No: 6C-081003

Format: Reprint

Title: From generating awareness to managing reputations: Why your company needs to Twitter

Public Relations Tactics

Fathi, Sandra, 10/2008

Summary: As Twitter becomes a more powerful business tool, organizations need to understand how to use it professionally in order to maximize the benefit. Businesses can now use Twitter for marketing, market research, and analysis and communications with customers and business partners.

Twitter is a micro-blogging service that allows its users to send updates — or “tweets” — to their followers while trailing other individuals as well. Tweets are text-based posts of up to 140 characters in length (about two sentences long). Updates on Twitter are displayed on the user’s profile page and delivered to followers who have signed up to receive them. Users can receive and send tweets on Twitter itself, a cell phone or PDA, and a host of other Web sites.

Here are 10 ways that companies can use Twitter:

Full Text: 1. Generate awareness

Many companies, employees and consumers use Twitter to spread awareness. Whether a tweet connects followers to the company blog, or a CEO discusses industry trends, tweets generate awareness through an online dialogue that reaches a large and active audience that is seeking information about you or your company.

2. Seek/create media opportunities

Many reporters use Twitter to find sources. Reporters will tweet about their upcoming projects in order to help find spokespeople. By monitoring reporters’ interests and news stories, PR professionals can strategically position their clients or organization to become a part of the conversation. Twitter is also a great way to generate news about a new product or service.

3. Foster customer loyalty

Companies can search tweets from their customers to see what questions and critiques they may have. After compiling that data, companies can decipher what are the most frequently asked questions and concerns and address them by tweeting back or providing individual answers and superior customer services. In this way, customers can use Twitter to get instant resolutions to their questions and strengthen their relationship with the company.

4. Launch viral marketing campaigns

Twitter is a useful tool for launching and maintaining viral campaigns due to its near-instantaneous updating capabilities. Brands can encourage users to follow them on Twitter in order to receive exclusive updates and news directly through device notifications (e.g., instant messages).

5. Manage reputations

Organizations that routinely update their Twitter accounts are actively sending messages out to the public. Companies that respond to individual customers who are tweeting about them will have an impact on their public perception.

Corporate Twitter accounts can also address widespread customer service issues faster and easier through Twitter to help build and maintain a strong public reputation.

6. Promote products and services

Twitter is an easy and free tool to share an idea or gather opinions from a large audience. Companies can promote products and services to their audience by simply writing a few sentences on Twitter without investing a great deal of time or money.

7. Network with customers

Companies that tweet on a consistent basis tend to generate a larger audience on Twitter. These businesses are able to insert themselves into conversations about their industry that are already taking place, promoting themselves and their company’s brand.

8. Enhance your company’s impact at events

Companies can offer exclusive content and insights via tweets from the conference floor of an industry trade show or event. Instead of waiting until after the event concludes, conference attendees can engage in conversation with other attendees and presenters through group tweets.

9. Hear about trends, breaking news

Twitter is already known for breaking news stories such as wildfires and earthquakes in California. But Twitter is breaking news stories every day for vertical markets and industries. It's a great place to listen to chatter in the market and follow key influencers to learn what they are discovering on a daily basis.

10. Recruit new employees

Whether your company is recruiting prospective employees or clients, Twitter can be used to get the word out on all upcoming opportunities. Companies can tweet about job openings in order to attract potential new hires.

Although Twitter is the most widely used micro-blogging site, there are several other options for businesses that are interested in micro-blogging. Other sites that are similar to Twitter include Pownce <<http://pownce.com/>> , Jaiku <<http://jaiku.com/>> and Plurk <<http://www.plurk.com/>>.

Sandra Fathi is president of Affect Strategies and chair of the New Media and Technology Committee of PRSA's New York Chapter. Details: www.tech affect.com. She can be found on Twitter as @sandrafathi.