

Twitter for Dummies

Basic Rules for Online Business when Using Twitter

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Software Business, Published date: August 26, 2008

This article is the second after '[Linkedin for Dummies](#)' and it revolves around another social media tool, called Twitter.



Twitter is a project that was started in March 2006 by the San Francisco start-up company being launched in October 2006. Initially, it was used just inside the company. With regards to the number of users, there have been lots of speculations. [Their end](#) has been settled by Techcrunch which estimates there are over 1 million users, more than 200.000 users per week and more than 3 million messages a day.

Twitter could be easily defined as a social media and micro-blogging service that permits its users to send text-based updates which are up to 140 characters in length. The updates are shown on the user's profile page and the followers receive those updates via instant messaging, SMS, RSS, email or other applications.

The Benefits of using Twitter

Among these, it is worth enumerating:

1. **Social assets**

From a business point of view, of course you may build up trust and gather more prospects.

2. **Informational benefits**

Twitter is good means to keep up-to-date with the latest news. Important news companies like [CNN](#) or [BBC](#) use Twitter to post their news.

3. **Promotional purposes**

Twitter can be employed in order to promote a blog or other resources. The advantage is that the visitors will be pretty targeted. I read an article in this respect '[How to Use Twitter - Tips for Bloggers](#)' which I warmly recommend.



4. **Rapid feedback**

If you encounter any problems, you'll see that irrespective of the field of activity which the problem corresponds, you will find the answers you need really easily. Twitter is blogger's paradise since he can find lots of ideas he can later elaborate on. They just have to follow other people and they will get the necessary ideas.

5. **Mobility and rapidity**

Twitter is mobile and fast. It works even on mobile devices and it won't take long to send your messages.

6. **Competition Analysis**

Twitter is a great way to find feedback about the competition through search.twitter.com, you can see the positive or negative reactions, whether there are any new updates

7. **Spreading word of mouth**

As previously specified, Twitter could very well work as a viral marketing strategy, spreading quickly and easily across community.


Some concrete example of this is [Mozilla Firefox](#) account used to increase the awareness around setting a new [Guinness World Record](#) for the largest number of software downloads in 24 hours for its [Firefox 3](#) browser.

I like this post with more answers on why you should use Twitter for your business: '[17 Ways You Can Use Twitter: A Guide for Beginners, Marketers and Business Owners](#)'.

How do software companies use Twitter?

Since it has become quite popular nowadays, more and more companies tend to use Twitter as a way of promotion. Nevertheless, there are already some of them that do not use Twitter at its full potential. One example is [CorelDRAW](#) - you can observe a screenshot below.

Although it might seem quite all right at first sight, it is recommended that they should have both followers and persons following. Secondly, another recommendation is to be someone behind the account, If you just browse among their tweets, they seem quite impersonal, press release - like. Twitter is not a press release directory. Here's a post:



coreldraw

CorelDRAW Graphics Suite X4 now in 17 langs: EN, FR, DE, IT, SP, BP, DU, SU, SV, PL, CZ, MA, RU, CS, CT, KO & JP -
<http://tinyurl.com/5l5beu>
3 days ago from web

Join some Corel employees tomorrow in a live chat session at 11AM Eastern to discuss about CorelDRAW: <http://CorelDRAW.com/chats/> 05:04 PM August 07, 2008 from web

The CorelDRAW X4 Unleashed eBook is now available - great resource for every user. Find out more at <http://coreldrawunleashed.com/> 11:22 AM July 29, 2008 from web

About

Name CorelDRAW updates
Location Ottawa, ON, Canada
Web <http://coreldraw.com>
Bio Latest news about the CorelDRAW family of products, which include CorelDRAW Graphics Suite and Corel DESIGNER Technical Suite.

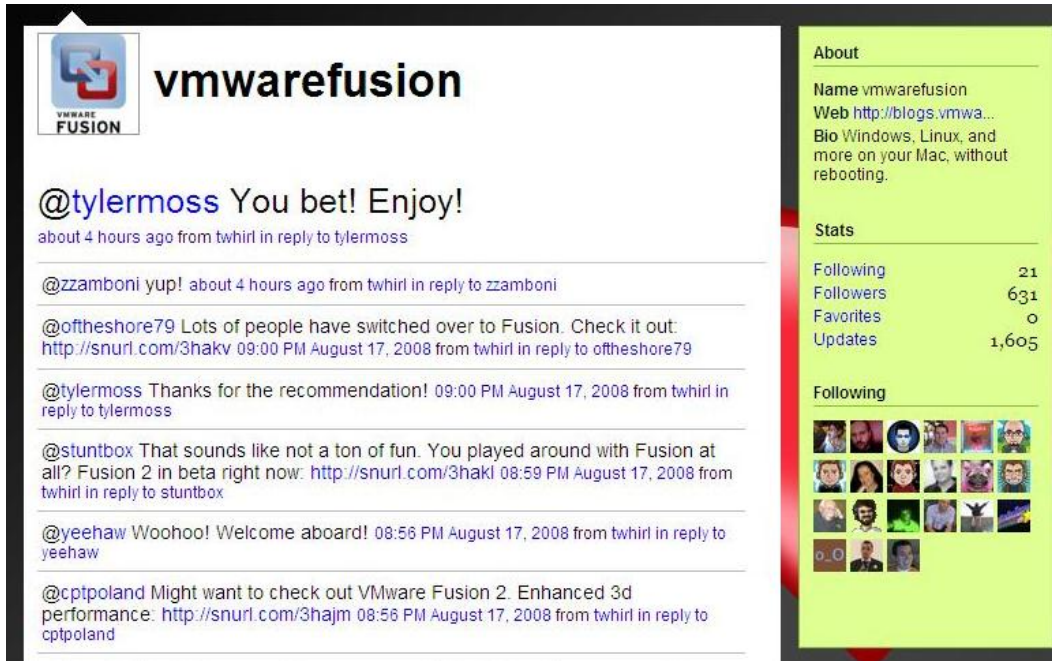
Stats

Following	0
Followers	35
Favorites	0
Updates	51

You can see on the left side of the window that they've got 30 followers and 48 updates. Apparently they have been 'twittering' since 14th of April 2008. As far as the content is concerned, you might observe that tweets have the form of product announcements. But it is not only CorelDRAW that doesn't get it, here's a another controversial post: '[33 Brands That Suck on Twitter](#)'. Nevertheless it is a really good sign that they thought of Twitter as a way of business promotion.

In spite of some rumors with reference to spammer's menace, a great deal companies realized the great value of Twitter. Among them, we cannot fail to mention: [Cisco Systems](#), Dell (with various accounts), [Zappos.com](#), etc. But what about the software industry? We have already seen the example of CorelDRAW which was not very 'positive' i.e. the rules of Twitter were skipped. The situation is similar for [Sun](#) since they follow only four persons (on 19th of July 08).

The situation changes for [Vmware](#), the famous virtualization software which has 21 people following and 629 followers (on the 19th August 08). The advantage before the other two is the manner they talk with other twitters, in a friendly helpful way. You can also find sales pitches but not too many.



Tips for Twitters

Follow other people

Like any other socializing site, it is really useful that you look after your followers. The more followers, the more popularity. Don't exaggerate though with following too many different twitters - you might be overwhelmed with twits from people you don't even know. I read an [article on Dosh Dosh](#) citing some psychological studies which revealed friendship is about reciprocity, about following and being followed. Consequently, the more connections the longer the friendship. It is my form belief that the study can be applied to Twitter also.

Socialize with other people

The first rule of the socialization process is letting people know you do exist. It is recommended to employ @username message so as for the respective twitter user name to receive the message under his replies tab. Twits should be visible for all the followers and profile guests. In a nut-shell, the main idea is to network and interact.

Be original

When using Twitter, you should always keep in mind that you have to give your followers enough reasons to follow you. Therefore, you should always have in mind: who is your follower? What can you make for him? Why would he choose you instead of someone else? So, you must have a distinction in front of the others: either be useful, original, funny or preferably, all three at the same time.

Do not exaggerate with twitting

Of course, if you have interesting twits, this rule might be skipped but even then, you run the risk of annoying people. If you annoy people, you will certainly be added to the un-followed list. Another tip: personal stuff is ok as long as it is moderate.

Do not keep a low profile

Keeping too low profile is not recommended since it will affect considerably your personal development as a twitter. Some might say that it is possible they could forget about updating their profile on a daily basis. In this respect, they can activate the reminding option in the settings section.

Do not exaggerate with the promotional purposes

One pitch or two will not hurt anyone. More than two will already be more for your followers to bear. You might be regarded as spammer. Don't forget therefore to be original and provide useful information to the community.

Personalize your profile

Update your profile with a photo or an avatar of yours. Define your background in order to better brand your name. The conclusion is that Twitter can be very well used in order to promote your blog or persona so that your twitter profile is in accordance with your blog profile. Allow readers/followers to recognize you.

Respond to twits

The tip might come as obvious since the socialization process even if it is online, involves both asking and replying. By means of the '@' feature you can check on a regular basis the replies you have given up to one point. It is of vital importance that you reserve some of your time for commenting to other twits. Commenting will allow you to promote yourself more.

Publicize your Twitter

Whenever you've got the chance it is advisable that you put a link leading to your account on the other social media accounts that you may have like [Stumbleupon](#), [ma.gnolia](#) or [digg](#). Also in your mail signature, it is worth adding all your social media profiles.

Conclusion

Although I feared a bit in the beginning because of spammers, I think that Twitter is in the end quite valuable. You can build trust, credibility and prospects will come. You can read news and you can attend to your personal matters; Twitter is a benchmark for innovative thought about internet communication and media.

Check out my colleague's [Twitter profile](#) although it is still at the beginning; if you decide Twitter is worth, create a profile of your own and start twitting!

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This article was written by Bogdan Popescu, Online Editor at Avangate. The author has in depth knowledge of internet marketing services and website analysis applied to the software industry and e-commerce development.

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options, software promotion management, real time reporting, 24/7 shopper support, and the ARMS reseller management program specifically designed for software sales.

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