

Lesson no. 1: Twitter Marketing

I. UNDERSTANDING TWITTER

Twitter is where news is broken, links are shared, and memes are born. It's also a place for chatting with friends. Yet unlike Facebook, Twitter is public. So if you do tweet with friends, it's all out in the open by default. And that's not a bad thing. It means your jokes can go viral (if they're funny) and in addition to your friends, you can interact with your favorite journalists, athletes, artists, or political figures, all in the same space.

Why Is Twitter So Popular? Why Do Millions of People Follow Others?

In addition to its relative novelty, Twitter's big appeal is how rapid and scan-friendly it is: you can track hundreds of interesting Twitter users, and read their content with a glance. This is ideal for our modern attention-deficit world.

Twitter employs a purposeful message size restriction to keep things scan-friendly: every Micro blog 'tweet' entry is limited to 280 characters or less. This size cap promotes the focused and clever use of language, which makes tweets very easy to scan, and also very challenging to write well. This size restriction has really made Twitter a popular social tool.

How Does Twitter Work?

Twitter is very simple to use as broadcaster or receiver. You join with a free account and Twitter name. Then you send broadcasts daily, or even hourly. Go to the 'What's Happening' box, type 280 characters or less, and click 'Tweet'.

You will most likely include some kind of hyperlink.

To receive Twitter feeds, you simply find someone interesting (celebrities included), and 'follow' them to subscribe to their tweet micro blogs. Once a person becomes uninteresting to you, you simply 'Unfollow' them.

You then choose to read your daily Twitter feeds through any of various Twitter readers.

Twitter is that simple.

Why Do People Tweet?

People send tweets for all sorts of reasons: vanity, attention, shameless self-promotion of their web pages, boredom. The great majority of tweeters do this micro blogging as a recreational thing, a chance to shout out to the world and revel in how many people choose to read your stuff.

But there is a growing number of Twitter users who send out some really useful content. And that's the real value of Twitter: it provides a stream of quick updates from friends, family, scholars, news journalists, and experts. It empowers people to become amateur journalists of life, describing and sharing something that they found interesting about their day.

Yes, that means there is a lot of drivel on Twitter. But at the same time, there is a growing base of really useful news and knowledge content on Twitter. You'll need to decide for yourself which content is worth following there.

So Twitter Is a Form of Amateur News Reporting?

Yes, that is one aspect of Twitter. Among other things, Twitter is a way to learn about the world through another person's eyes.

Tweets from people in Thailand as their cities become flooded, tweets from your soldier cousin in Afghanistan who describes his war experiences, tweets from your traveling sister in Europe who shares her daily discoveries online, tweets from a rugby friend at the Rugby World Cup.

These micro bloggers are all mini-journalists in their own way and Twitter lets them send you a constant stream of updates right from their laptops and smartphones.

People Use Twitter as a Marketing Tool?

Yes, absolutely. Thousands of people advertise their recruiting services, their consulting businesses, their retail stores by using Twitter. And it does work.

The modern internet-savvy user is tired of a television advertisement. People today prefer advertising that is faster, less intrusive, and can be turned on or off at will. Twitter is exactly that. If you learn how the nuances of tweeting work, you can get good advertising results by using Twitter.

But Isn't Twitter a Social Messaging Tool?

Yes, Twitter is social media, absolutely. But it's more than just instant messaging. Twitter is about discovering interesting people around the world. It can also be about building a following of people who are interested in you and your work/hobbies and then providing those followers with some kind of knowledge value every day.

Whether you are a hardcore scuba diver who wants to share your Caribbean adventures with other divers, or are Ashton Kutcher entertaining your personal fans: Twitter is a way to maintain a low-maintenance social connection with others, and maybe influence other people in a small way.

Why Do Celebrities Like Using Twitter?

Twitter has become one of the most used social media platforms because it is both personal and rapid. Celebrities use Twitter to build a more personal connection with their fans.

Katy Perry, Ellen DeGeneres, even President Trump are some famous Twitter users. Their daily updates foster a sense of connectedness with their followers, which is powerful for advertising purposes, and also quite compelling and motivating for the people following the celebs.

So Twitter Is Many Different Things, Then?

Yes, Twitter is a blend of instant messaging, blogging, and texting, but with brief content and a very broad audience. If you fancy yourself a bit of a writer with something to say, then Twitter is definitely a channel worth exploring. If you don't like to write but are curious about a celebrity, a particular hobby topic, or even a long-lost cousin, then Twitter is one way to connect with that person or topic.