

Twitter Tips for the Social Marketer Cheat Sheet

Brands and organizations can no longer afford to ignore the power of Twitter. This social giant has proven it's a critical part of any marketing mix. Companies that lack a strategic, lead-generating plan for their Twitter presence are missing out on access to a huge user base and an opportunity to showcase themselves in a socially savvy, relevant way. Being followed by a user on Twitter is a strong signal of his affinity for your business. These self-selected audience members are indicating an active interest in your brand, what you have to say, what you do, and are asking to hear more from you.

Twitter is a virtual water cooler where the worlds' news breaks, and people gather to discuss industry news, pop-culture, and their daily musings. Twitter has become an optimal network for thought leadership growth and development, and has become a space where both corporate and personal brands can develop ongoing relationships with followers.

At Marketo, we use our Twitter channel to engage with our prospects, fans and employees. We share content that is interesting and relevant to them—from fun infographics and educational content, to occasional press releases and news announcements. We strive to use our channel as a way to engage and further develop a relationship with our followers.

Build Your Brand Presence

Like other social networks, Twitter offers a way for each user to customize their profile appearance. As an organization, it's important that you take advantage of this and brand your space.

Here are some of the customizable elements on a Twitter Profile that you should pay attention to:

- **Your Twitter Handle:** This is how other users on Twitter will identify you, address you, and talk about you. Try to keep your Twitter handle short so it doesn't take up too much of your 140 characters in a tweet.
- **Your Bio:** Share who you are. You have 160 characters to succinctly say who you are, what you offer, and why

you're important. Put yourself in the user's shoes and see if your bio is interesting and informative or purely self-promotional.

- **Your Profile Photo:** This image shows Twitter followers who you are. For an individual, this is often a headshot, and for brands, this is often a logo. This image sits next to your tweets so other users can visually identify you as the source.
- **Your Header:** This is a background photo that sits behind your profile photo. Most images are resized to automatically fit the dimensions, but Twitter also offers the image parameters on their website. This is the opportunity for you to be creative and share an image that expresses your brand, campaign, or other imagery in a larger format.
- **Your Background Design:** This is a backdrop for your Twitter profile, header, and feed. You can choose from a preset list of options, or you can customize this to match your brand.

Build Your Following

Building your following on Twitter is one of the key activities to drive success on the social network. There are a variety of techniques marketers can use to build their following, and we'll explore them in this section.

Creating Engaging Tweets

Because Twitter is so fast-paced, it's important that you post regularly. Without regular posts, your tweets will get pushed down your followers' stream by more recent tweets. As you craft your tweets, think about creating a mix of content that ranges from entertaining and educational, to promotional. A good rule of thumb to use when creating your content mix is the 4-1-1 Rule, which was originally introduced by Joe Pulizzi of Content Marketing Institute. The 4-1-1 Rule states that for every four early stage, light, and informative content offers you provide, you can have one soft-sell offer and one hard-sell offer, like a demo.

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Twitter Lists

Twitter lists are a simple way to accomplish two important things on Twitter: strategically listen, and curate content for your users.

Curated content often comes in the form of a retweet and is a good way to ensure that your content mix is not purely self-promotional. To make curating content easier for yourself, develop a Twitter list. Lists are a way to segment a group of accounts that regularly feature interesting content. Segmenting these accounts into a list makes finding content to retweet quicker and easier.

Lists can be public or private, and can serve very different purposes. For example, if you want to incorporate an employee voice or perspective into your content mix, you could create a private list of all of your employee handles and use it to quickly find their tweets and retweet them. On the other hand, if you are promoting an event or content asset that features thought leaders you could create a public list, made up of all the thought leader handles, so any Twitter user could follow that list—making it a benefit you are offering your audience.

Crafting Your Tweets

There are a few important tips to make your tweets more searchable, shareable and readable on Twitter.

- **Keep Your Tweets Concise:** Hitting your maximum character count happens, but leaving some space for your followers to add their thoughts when they retweet is ideal. Try to keep your tweet to around 100 characters.
- **Use Hashtags (#):** These symbols have become synonymous with Twitter and are used to tag tweets by topic, making it easier for users to find your tweet. Marketers can develop hashtags and use them to help promote and track social campaigns.

- **Use @Mentions:** @mentions are a way for you to engage other Twitter users in your tweet. If you're posting a tweet that you think is relevant to a specific follower or thought leader, tag them at the end of your tweet with an @mention. This will call their attention to your tweet. Avoid using this in excess, because it can seem spammy.

Twitter Chats

A Twitter chat is a public conversation on Twitter based around a unique hashtag. The hashtag allows you to follow the discussion and easily participate in it. Most Twitter chats are usually recurring and on specific topics, but some are based around special events. Hosting a Twitter chat is an amazing way to engage with your fans and followers. It's also a great way to understand your community and promote your brand or business.

Twitter Advertising & Optimization

Because of its large global user base, Twitter is able to offer marketers advertising options that are highly customizable and targeted. Let's explore the types of targeting and advertising that Twitter offers, and then how to optimize your ads for peak performance.

Ad Targeting

With Twitter, you can target your ads based on the users that your target audience follows, the keywords they search, their profile and interest data, activity on your website, their geographic location, or an uploaded list from your database. Here is a quick breakdown of the main types of targeting:

- **Keyword Targeting:** Keyword campaigns are specific; they target users looking for a specific keyword, which often means they are a more qualified lead or buyer.
- **Interest Targeting:** Interest targeting lets you target your ads to followers of specific @handles, allowing you to reach users with interests similar to the followers of those accounts.

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- **Retargeting:** Twitter also provides the ability to run retargeting campaigns. This helps you target users who have visited your website, are not yet a lead, have not made a purchase, and you want to accelerate their buying lifecycle. This requires a marketer to add a Twitter pixel to their website—a small snippet of code that allows a marketer to cookie individual users to track their behavior. Once installed, when a user is on Twitter, a retargeting campaign allows you to target that user with relevant messages based on their known behavior from your website.

Ad Types

Twitter has expanded its advertising to include options that drive to a variety of goals, from engagement to collecting new contacts. Regardless of the goal, these ads appear in the home timeline of the users you've targeted (based on the previous list of targeting options).

- **Promoted Tweets:** This type of ad can be used for lead generation or for branding purposes. It is a standard looking tweet, but it is promoted to your specified target audience, sitting on top of their Twitter stream. You are charged on a cost-per-click basis, which Twitter calls cost-per-engagement.
- **Website Cards:** Website cards allow you to cut through the noise by letting you use interesting/engaging images along with your tweet to promote your product or message. When a user clicks on this ad, they are taken to an off-Twitter landing page that the brand has created and populated with content. With this type of ad you're charged on a cost-per-click basis so it is to your advantage to use this often.
- **Lead Gen Cards:** This type of ad is similar to Website Cards but includes a 1-click "offer" feature, which provides you with the user's information (from their Twitter account) without requiring a form completion, or navigating away from Twitter. Brands can use lead gen cards to offer a free trial, ask users to enter a contest, sign up for a newsletter, etc.

Optimization

To maximize the effectiveness of your ad spend, ensure that you:

- **Use Both Keyword and Interest Targeting For Your Ads:** Using both types of the basic targeting methods will ensure that your ad is seen by the widest audience.
- **Refresh Your Content:** Keep changing images and tweets for your ads regularly. You won't achieve the success you are looking for with stale content.
- **Test:** Experiment with images, tone, content, and offers. Then gear your ads to reflect your audience's preferences.