

Author Directions: Using Twitter to Promote your Book

Best practice and tips to using Twitter to share your success





Introduction

Having a social media presence, such as Twitter, can be a valuable source of promotion and means of interaction with your audience. Twitter can provide the facility for users to communicate with other members of a community which is made up of customers and supporters of an organisation or brand. According to Alan Charlesworth, author of *Social Media Marketing*, studies have shown that having just 10 followers on Twitter will increase your brand awareness significantly as they are likely to share content with their own following.

Currently, Twitter is the leading social media sharing platform. Users are able to target like-minded people who share enthusiasm for the same subject area or topic, and in turn, your product. Twitter can be used to develop a relationship with potential purchasers, interacting with content appropriately.

So that you receive practical and relevant advice, we worked with Elena Woodacre, author of *The Routledge History of Monarchy* and series editor of *Queens of England*, to offer tips and information on how to maximise the use of Twitter to promote your work.

Getting Started

To create a Twitter account, visit www.twitter.com/signup and enter your name and phone number. Choose a username and password and click "create". Your desired username may already be taken so you might have to create one slightly different. If you are setting up a secondary account, you will have to provide a different email address. Once you have signed up, Twitter will send you a confirmation email containing a link to complete your account registration. You can add a picture and a short author bio to your profile: this could contain a link to direct people to your book's page on your publisher's website.

Bear in mind that your audience will have an easier time identifying you if your username is similar to your full name.

Twitter Jargon:



Reply

A public response to a tweet via the reply button. They all show in your Twitter page's home feed and the feed to whom you're responding to.



Retweet

You can pass along someone else's post by 'retweeting' it to all your followers. To them, it will appear as a regular tweet with the author's account name next to it. The more retweets you get, the more people your content is exposed to. A retweeted tweet has a green arrow.



Mention

A public tweet directed to other users that includes their @username. Mentions are clickable and link back to the individual's profile. Note that these tweets can be seen by all your followers.



Favourite

This is Twitter's equivalent of 'liking' a post. This function is an indicator that the audience likes the post.



Direct Message

Commonly abbreviated to 'DM', a direct message is a private message sent to or from a follower. You can start a private conversation or create a group conversation with anyone who follows you. Anyone you do not follow can send you a Direct Message if:

- You have opted in to receive Direct Messages from anyone or;
- You have previously sent that person a Direct Message.

When you enable the 'Receive Direct Messages from anyone' setting, anyone can message you, even if you do not follow them. If you previously had a conversation with a person through Direct Message, that person is able to message you regardless of if you follow them or not. Disabling the 'Receive Direct Messages from anyone' setting does not stop accounts from messaging you whom you have previously had conversations with and do not follow.

To stop receiving Direct Messages from someone:

1. Locate the conversation from the account and click or tap to open it
2. Click or tap the information icon
3. Select 'Report'
4. Confirm your choice. The account will not be able to send you a message until you send them a message first

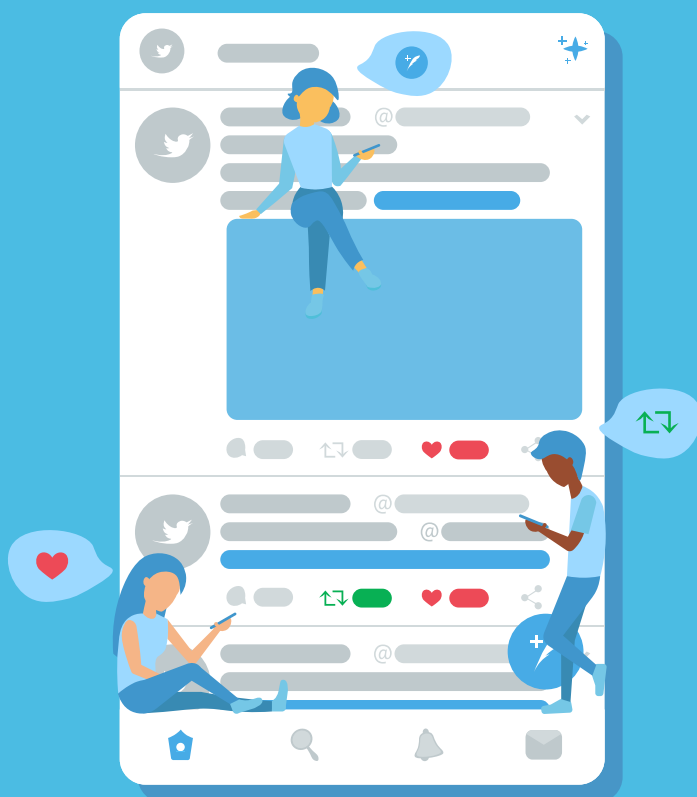
Content of Tweets

When posting on Twitter, focus on creating and distributing relevant and valuable content to attract, acquire and engage a clearly defined target audience. Include 'non-sales' content and related material, such as links to blogs and articles, updates, photos and videos. This will bring more visitors to the post and maintain engagement with your audience. Ensure that you ask open-ended questions to elicit responses, particularly topical questions linked to your product or discipline. Sharing news allows you to comment or raise issues on or around a current story.

All content posted should be valuable to readers otherwise they will not read and engage with it. Quality always overrides quantity. This is particularly relevant as Twitter has a 280-character limit per tweet (an increase from the previous 140), which can often mean shortening the sentence structure to ensure the information is conveyed in a single post. You can add more content to a post with an image or a link; the most shared and clicked on posts are those accompanied with images or videos of up to 120 seconds.

"I use Twitter to raise awareness of publications, my research, the book series and journal that I edit. I find that sharing links and images are useful ways to get your post noticed and also to direct followers to content, events and publications that I want to promote. It's important, to sum up, that you have something dynamic in your tweet—again a link, image, hashtag, user handle or all of the above rather than just text as it will help your tweet get noticed by others, which helps promote yourself and your work."

– Elena Woodacre, *The Routledge History of Monarchy* 2019



What to tweet:

- News on your book or topic of interest
- Opinions
- Interesting articles
- Links that are relevant to the topic and that others will find interesting
- Links to direct people to your book's page on your publisher's website

Making Effective Business Use of Twitter

To ensure that your audience engage with your posts, become part of a community by sharing useful links and others will do the same for you. Respond to those who mention you in their posts and interact with your content. Be authentic and accessible with your posts; audiences engage with people they like. Include a themed #hashtag in your posts to make your topics and ideas visible to those following the thread.

Hashtags

A Hashtag is a word or an un-spaced phrase or a combination of characters prefixed with the hashtag symbol (#); this has become mostly associated with Twitter use. If a hashtag is promoted enough, products, brands or organizations can “trend” and attract further traffic to the topic of discussion. For individuals promoting their work, an obvious hashtag would be to use their name or titles of the book. Creating a hashtag to represent your brand allows users to click on the hashtag to take them to other tweets that relate to the same topic.

“Using hashtags is a great way to connect with – or start up – a thread and using the Twitter handles of other users that I want to loop in is also useful. The #Queenaday series of tweets is a good example where we worked with Routledge to post a series of interesting snippets about various queens who might feature in the series with an image below, looping in my co-editor with her handle. I would retweet these from the publisher, adding a comment and sometimes connecting other scholars who worked in that area with their Twitter handle to keep the thread going out to more viewers.”

– Elena Woodacre

Top Tips:

- Don't use over lengthy hashtags (e.g. #routledgeisthebestpublisher)
- Capitalise each word to clarify phrases (e.g. #RoutledgeBooks).
- Only use hashtags that are relevant to the post.
- Don't piggyback or take on meaningful hashtags for the sake of promoting events or products. Hashtags that already relate to a specific product could cause confusion.



Your Twitter Voice

Using Twitter allows you to establish a tone of voice with your audience that you would otherwise not be able to convey. The language and tone that you use should be approachable, putting your followers in the right frame of mind and showcasing your confidence and passion in your specialist area of expertise. A personable online voice allows you to create relationships with people and conveys a trustworthiness. Ensure that you maintain a consistent tone of voice that accurately represents how you wish your book to be marketed across social media and across physical marketing materials.

“Twitter is a great way to connect with scholars you know but also build new virtual relationships with other scholars in the field and learn more about their work. Those virtual connections can turn into real relationships and professional collaborations in due course. It is also helpful to connect with societies that you are part of and raising your profile via Twitter can raise awareness of your area of expertise which can help you attract students, media interviews and other opportunities.”

– Elena Woodacre

Twitter Live Q&A

Once you have built up a following or have a lot of engagement around your book, you can host a ‘Live Q&A’ session on Twitter. This gives your audience an opportunity to ask you questions on your book/subject area, just like an in-person round table discussion, and you responding directly.



Here are a few tips to get your started:



Pick a hashtag

Use a specific hashtag in your tweets to set them apart from your everyday content that you usually post. Try to select something short that highlights the topic you are addressing or simply consider using 'ask' (e.g. #AskRoutledge)



Pick a time

Q&As should take place during a specific date and time. This enables you to encourage your audience to "tune in" with the conversation. The length of the Q&A is up to you, but the recommended length is between 60 and 90 minutes.



Tweet about it

Tweet about your Q&A sessions a few days leading up to it. This allows you to start collecting questions in advance and inform your audience. Remember to tweet about it on the day to remind people to stay tuned, telling them what hashtag they should be using.



Get the word out

Email your colleagues, influential friends and associates to tell them about your planned Q&A to encourage them to tweet about it.



Get going

As you begin answering questions, send out a tweet so your audience know you're getting started.

You can follow the questions by searching the hashtag that you chose and also by checking your mentions tab. You don't have to answer every question – select the ones most appropriate to the subject you're addressing. Once you find a question you would like to answer, retweet it for all of your followers to see.

Once the Q&A is over, consider writing a blog post that summarises all the points discussed. This gives those who didn't manage to participate a chance to read through the content.

Etiquette

Be responsive

When people comment on your posts and interact with the content, show that you are listening and that you care. If you need time to answer a question, let them know that you are looking into it and will reply later.

Be consistent

The more regularly you post, the more opportunity you will have for connecting with people and building trust. Consider setting a scheduled time to post.

Do what works for you: Take note of the content and language that attracts more engagement and carry this through to later posts.

“I enjoy the rich information that is out there. Twitter is how I keep up with the field, learn about events, jobs, research, upcoming books and much more. That is where Twitter is extremely valuable, as a way to share information and start up conversations. There are very few people I follow on Twitter which aren’t directly related to my research or professional relationships. Of course, some of my colleagues are friends as well but I don’t follow celebrities etc, just researchers, societies and institutions that I’m interested in.”

– Elena Woodacre

Elena Woodacre’s Dos and Don’ts:

X DON’T be boring
If you don’t have something interesting to say or share, don’t post. People will lose interest in you and your work if you post tweets like ‘I walked my dog in the park today’ or things which are very mundane.

✓ DO think professionally
I know some people mix personal and professional use of Twitter on one account while others have separate ones for personal and professional use. I use Twitter professionally – I may occasionally feed in the odd personal detail or comment that makes me human and approachable, but I try to keep my posts about my work, not my personal life or political views.

✓ DO have a sense of humour
People love to laugh and funny or amusing tweets get more likes and retweets. Be very careful – being provocative can get you noticed but can upset and alienate people. I know some people are deliberately provocative in order to get attention, but you may not like the kind of attention you get!

✓ DO check in with Twitter regularly but don’t let it become a ‘time sink’
I check in with Twitter briefly in the morning and evening generally, reading notifications, posts by people that I’m particularly interested in and having a brief look at my feed.

✓ DO like and retweet other’s posts, don’t just tweet and depart
Twitter is all about engagement with others.

Conclusion

Twitter can be a useful tool for promoting yourself as an author and engaging with your audience, communicating with fellows and sharing content of relevant interest. The wide world of Twitter may seem daunting, but it is a great way to interact with end-users and create a buzz around your book and topic.

Acknowledgements

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