

Advertising Versus Social Networking on Twitter

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Twitter is a social networking site that's popular around the world. What's unique about it is that users can post Tweets or short messages of less than 140 characters. Users can 'follow' brands and marketers that they like to see these updates.

One of the benefits of using Twitter is that information can be Tweeted in real time, meaning you can share the latest news about what's happening in your niche right now.

Ads or Networking – Which Works Better?

Many marketers wonder what the difference is between advertising and social networking on Twitter. The simple answer is that advertising on Twitter allows you to carefully target a select group of users and present them with an offer to interact with your brand.

You get to pick that audience and the message you want them to see. You can vary your message according to the different audiences that you're targeting.

You can focus on getting your message out to Twitter users who may not have been exposed to your brand yet. For example, you might create a Tweet about your eBook on clean eating and pay to have this Tweet promoted to other Twitter users.

Then users who see your Tweet will have the option of clicking through in order to buy your product. But social networking on Twitter is all about selling your products organically.

You post information that's useful and focus on building a relationship with your followers. For example, one of your followers asks about the best green smoothie recipes, so you Tweet a link to your blog where you have recipes for smoothies and an eBook that you're selling on clean eating.

The follower who asked the question then goes to your blog and loves what she reads, so she goes on to buy your book and even Tweets about it to her followers. This is social networking at work helping your business grow.

Now unless you paid to promote that Tweet about green smoothie recipes, your followers are going to be the only ones that ever see it. If you've already built a large following of Twitter users who love what you're doing, then you may not need to use advertising to get a lot of buyers.

This is where building a personal relationship with your followers can come in handy. Because your followers trust you, they'll gladly promote you to their own followers, resulting in even more growth because those people will then want to follow you.

One important thing to keep in mind if you're trying to decide between social networking or advertising is the amount of time you have available to dedicate to Twitter. If you decide to sell your products through social networking, it can take a while before you see results from your Tweets.

This is because you'll be focused on building relationships and it does take time to get users to follow and trust you. But advertising doesn't take as much time for you to see the results because you're skipping the relationship stage and moving straight into the selling stage.

Remember that different audiences respond to different tactics, so you'll want to consider that before deciding between the two options. If you pick the wrong audience, you can offend people when you promote something to sell if that audience is one that prefers a relationship-based interaction.

Building Your Twitter Community

Like all social networks, Twitter has active communities in a variety of niches. If you want to get the word out about your online business, then you need to find followers who are in your niche or are interested in the information or products within it.

You can start by looking at influential people in your niche. For example, if you run a fitness blog and want to grow your brand, then look for influential fitness bloggers who are already using Twitter.

Follow these users and look through their Twitter profile to see who they follow (and who follows them) and follow some of them. Bloggers who are in your niche can often turn into affiliate partners if you take the time to interact with them.

Once you've followed all of the influential bloggers, then start looking for the enthusiasts in your niche. Enthusiasts are often fans of your favorite bloggers and love the niche you're in.

They may or may not be making money from their hobby but they are passionate about it and they would open to the idea of making money this way. Connecting with the enthusiasts is important because these are the people that will happily tell their followers and friends about you.

They don't care if you're a big brand or a tiny one. They just want to Tweet about their niche and find others who feel the same way. While it can be tempting, don't follow too many Twitter users in a short period of time.

Spammers will often follow thousands of users each day and then post annoying and obnoxiously repetitive Tweets. So to avoid looking like a spammer, try to follow just 20 to 50 new users each day, maximum.

If you want to grow your follower base in a hurry, you can use advertising. This is called Twitter Promoted Accounts. When someone logs in to Twitter, they'll see your profile and have the option to follow you.

Beside your profile will be the word promoted. That's Twitter's way of letting users know they're being advertised to. The good thing about promoted accounts with Twitter is that you only pay for the people who actually decide to follow your account.

That means that if you decide you'd like to promote your account on Twitter but no one new interacts with your account, then you don't have to pay Twitter. However, given Twitter's algorithms, it's unlikely that you would promote your account and not get at least a few new followers or some ReTweets.

Keep in mind that Twitter allows you to choose who you'd like to promote your account to by interest or location. This is helpful if you want to target only knitters in Chicago or work at home moms across the globe.

Another way to find new followers on Twitter is to search for Twitter chats online. Most niches have a regular chat once or twice a month. Participating in these chats is a great way to build connections and grow your following.

For example, there's a popular chat on Twitter called #RunChat. At 8 PM EST on the second and fourth Sunday of each month, runners get together on Twitter. During winter, they might discuss the best gear to use to keep warm when running outside.

If there's a new gadget or product release that helps runners, they might talk about that, too. You can join these chats by Tweeting as usual but adding #RunChat to the end of your Tweet.

Then other users that are following the run chat hashtag will see your message and respond. This is a great way to use your own list of subscribers for a live interaction and more exposure of your community and leadership skills.

Promotional Tactics that Work on Twitter

Whether you decide to use advertising to boost your Tweets or plan to go the organic route, there are some promotional tactics that work well on Twitter. You can use these tactics for a variety of products and services.

The only thing you want to be careful about is posting status updates that are too similar, too often. If you do this, then you're probably crossing the line between promotional and spammy.

You don't want to get a reputation as a spammer on Twitter because it will make it hard to build an engaged audience. Many marketers and businesses plan a Twitter launch campaign.

You'll want to plan this several weeks before you release your new product to get the most exposure. Start by posting that you're working on a new project to release soon. Don't post too many details initially, because your product may change a lot between the creation and launch phases - plus, you only want to share teasers to keep the people hooked.

When you're a week from the launch, then begin Tweeting little hints. You don't want to make it so obvious that users can easily guess what you're releasing. Instead, you're trying to make them curious so they'll be paying more attention to your Tweets than usual.

A day or two before the launch, you can post a picture of yourself hard at work. If your product is content based, then take a selfie with your laptop. If your product is audio-based, then take a selfie as you're editing some audio tracks.

When the actual release day comes, you'll want to post repeatedly about your new product. One way to do this without annoying followers is use to a variety of content to share information.

For example, if you're releasing a premium WordPress plugin, post a picture of your plugin on a live website. Create a Vine video showing the settings page of your plugin. Then post this video to your Twitter account.

ReTweet messages from users that are talking about your product and be sure to thank them. By sharing both the creation and launch stages with your followers, you're letting them feel like they're right beside you.

This is important because users that feel a connection with your brand are more likely to ReTweet your content and share it with their followers. Another promotional tactic that works well on Twitter is a Tweet to unlock campaign.

In this case, you post a special discount for one of your products on Twitter. The catch is that users only get the discount if you get a certain number of ReTweets. This encourages users to ReTweet your message, resulting in more followers for you.

But you want to be reasonable about your Tweet to unlock plan. Unless you're a celebrity with millions of fans, you probably won't get one hundred thousand ReTweets. Instead, shoot for a smaller number like fifty or one hundred ReTweets.

You can also encourage users to follow you on Twitter in exchange for exclusive discounts. This is a great way to motivate followers to make a purchase from you. Try to offer coupons regularly for the best results.

You could start by having twenty percent off Tuesdays with a special coupon that your followers can enter during checkout to get their discount. But you should also disable coupon codes after a short amount of time, like twenty-four hours.

This adds a sense of urgency to your Tweet. You want your followers to feel like they're going to miss the discount if they don't use your code right now.

Use Analytics to See What's Working

Whether you do or don't advertise on Twitter, each user has an analytics section. This means that you can look at your Twitter stats for the past month. Your analytics dashboard can give you valuable insight into your Twitter campaigns if you'll take the time to look it over.

Twitter will show all of your Tweets for the past month and you can see which ones were most popular and which ones received the most responses. Look for patterns as you examine this data.

Maybe your Tweets that have questions in them get 25% more views. Maybe your Tweets that contain a link to a photo never do well and are generally ignored. This is data that you can use to build better Twitter campaigns.

Once you've looked through your Tweets in the last month, examine your Tweets for the past few months. This will give you a good idea if certain topics are always popular or if your discount coupon is really boosting sales as much as you had hoped.

Your analytics dashboard can also show you how many clicks were made on your links. This can let you see which links your followers were most interested in and can help you see what types of Tweets prompted your followers to take action.

You'll also be able to see how many ReTweets, replies, and favorites that you received. These numbers usually only make up about 5% of your Tweets. That means for every hundred Tweets you send, you'll probably only have 5 followers interacting with your content.

Another thing you can use analytics for is to gather data about your followers. You can learn about the top interests that your followers have and use this information to your advantage.

For example, if you're a fashion blogger and you notice that a lot of your followers are interested in photography, then you could do a blog series on photography tips for fashion bloggers.

You'll also be able to see other accounts that your followers are interacting with. This can be a great source of new people to connect with. If you're not already following these other users, then you should be.

Once you click the follow button, look at their recent content and pick one Tweet to engage with. You can favorite, ReTweet, or respond to this Tweet. When you do this, you almost guarantee that the other user will look at your profile, too.

Twitter analytics may not keep data on all of your Tweets. But that's okay because you can use the export your data into a file that you can look over later.

For the best results with Twitter, you don't want to focus on just one part. Many marketers find that it's best to use a mixture of advertising and social networking to gain followers and interactions on Twitter.



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