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SAMPLE: Twitter for Business

A Best Practice Guide

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SAMPLE: Twitter for Business



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Econsultancy London
4th Floor, The Corner
91-93 Farringdon Road
London EC1M 3LN
United Kingdom

Telephone:
+44 (0)20 7269 1450

<http://econsultancy.com>
help@econsultancy.com

Econsultancy New York
41 East 11th St., 11th Floor
New York, NY 10003
United States

Telephone:
+1 212 699 3626

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1. Introduction

1.1. About this report

This report is for companies and individuals who are thinking of joining Twitter and want to find out more about the social platform, as well as people who are currently using Twitter for business.

Twitter is an increasingly useful business tool for marketing, conversation, PR, engagement, branding, awareness, customer service, plus much more. Used effectively, Twitter can bring you closer to your customers, generate traffic to your website, support customer service, extend your marketing and PR efforts, and boost brand awareness.

For companies thinking about joining Twitter, the report enables you to understand the value of the social network, why it's useful, and how it can be used for business. And for those companies who already have a Twitter presence, the report will help you to optimize your Twitter activity, understand what works, including how you can define and measure success.

This guide aims to define best practice in this space, examining how businesses can use Twitter, what they need to do to get started, and the strategies and tactics that will enable companies to reap the most value from the microblogging site.

By reading our best practice tips and case studies, we'll help you to understand Twitter etiquette and avoid some of the most common Twitter mistakes.

Are there best practices around how to use Twitter?

Yes. When any new social platform springs up, there are few rules of best practice, since users are still trying to figure out what works. As the site has evolved, there are general rules around the optimal way to use Twitter and how to make the most of the channel.

However, it is equally important to recognize that these rules will vary across different industries, products, and services, and depend fundamentally on objectives.

A better understanding of best practice can help you to understand the potential risks and avoid some of the common pitfalls and mistakes by brands who have found themselves in the midst of a social media crisis.

Finally, if you think Twitter is easy, then you have to ask yourself why brands that have been using the platform for a long time still get it wrong on a daily basis. There are many users who have jumped on the Twitter bandwagon, without understanding the channel, their objectives or best practices.

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1.2. About Econsultancy

Econsultancy is a [global independent community-based publisher](#), focused on best practice digital marketing and ecommerce, and used by over 240,000 internet professionals every month.

Our hub has 100,000+ members worldwide from clients, agencies and suppliers alike with over 90% member retention rate. We help our members build their internal capabilities via a combination of research reports and how-to guides, training and development, consultancy, face-to-face conferences, forums and professional networking.

For the last ten years, our resources have helped members learn, make better decisions, build business cases, find the best suppliers, accelerate their careers and lead the way in best practice and innovation.

Econsultancy has offices in London, New York and Dubai and we are a leading provider of digital marketing training and consultancy. We are providing consultancy and custom training in the Middle East, and extensively across Europe and Asia. We trained over 3,000 marketers and ran over 200 public training courses in 2010.

[Join Econsultancy](#) today to learn what's happening in digital marketing – and what works.

Call us to find out more on +44 (0)20 7269 1450 (London) or +1 212 699 3626 (New York). You can also [contact us online](#).

1.3. Contributors

Our thanks go out to the following industry experts who we invited to provide additional commentary for this Twitter guide. Their contributions are greatly appreciated...

Ged Carroll is Director of Digital Strategies at Ruder Finn, a PR agency. You can find Ged on Twitter ([@r_c](#)) or connect with him via LinkedIn (<http://uk.linkedin.com/in/gedcarroll>). Ged also blogs at [renaissancechambara.jp](#).

Michelle Goodall is a professional digital communications and social media marketing consultant with 14 years' agency/consultancy experience. Follow Michelle on Twitter ([@greenwellys](#)) or connect via LinkedIn (<http://www.linkedin.com/in/michellegoodall>)

Kate Hartley is Managing Director of Carrot Communications, a [PR and social communications agency](#). You can follow her on Twitter ([@katehartley](#)) or connect via LinkedIn (<http://uk.linkedin.com/in/katehartley>)

Rebecca Hirst is a Media Relations Executive at First Direct and runs their Social Media Newsroom and PR Twitter account. Follow First Direct on Twitter ([@first_direct](#)) or connect with Rebecca on her LinkedIn account (<http://linkedin.com/pub/rebecca-hirst/21/648/631>)

Katy Howell is Managing Director of Immediate Future, an independent [social media agency](#). With over seven years' social media experience, Katy helps brands around the world develop robust strategies and trains for major marketing association. Follow her on Twitter ([@katyhowell](#)) or connect via LinkedIn (<http://uk.linkedin.com/in/katyhowell>).

Stephen Waddington is Managing Director of Speed, the UK agency at the forefront of helping brands manage their reputation in traditional, online and social media. You can follow him on Twitter ([@wadds](#)) or find him on LinkedIn (<http://uk.linkedin.com/in/stephenwaddington>).



2. Twitter statistics

Twitter has huge reach and growth potential. Below are some statistics to help you understand the scale of the opportunities from Twitter. This section also includes consumer research from Econsultancy, undertaken specially for this report in association with [Toluna](#).

2.1. Econsultancy / Toluna Twitter consumer research

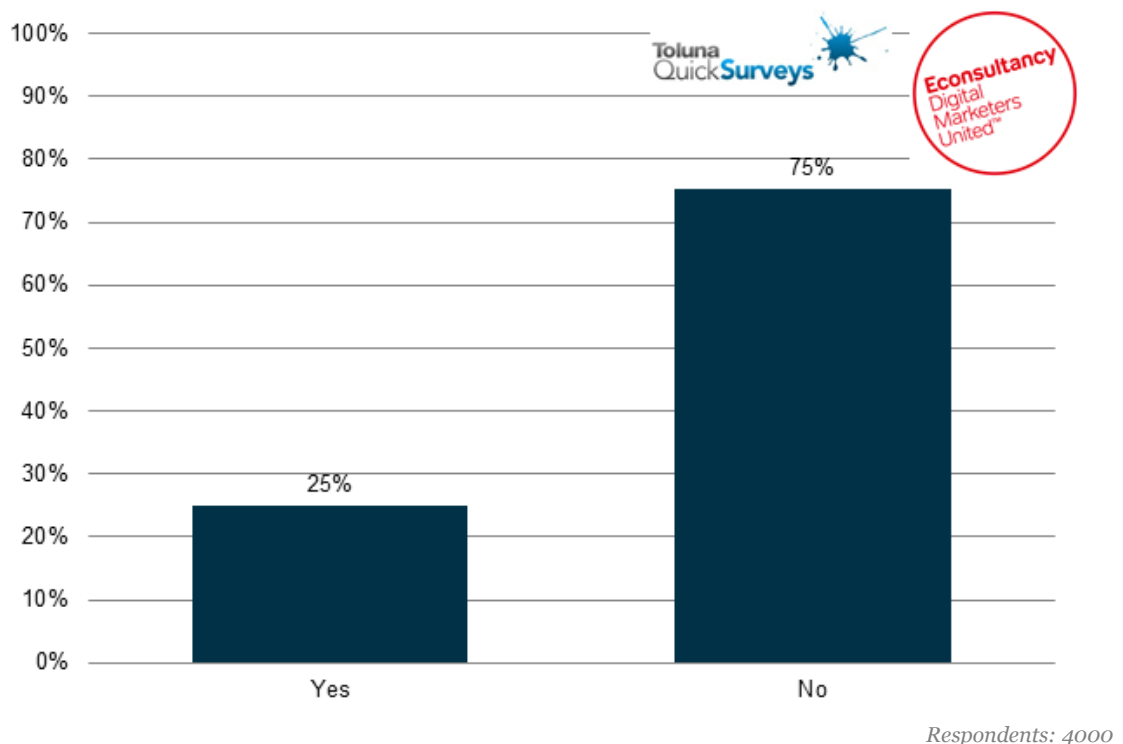
Econsultancy conducted a consumer survey (in association with [Toluna](#)), where 4,000 UK and US respondents were polled about Twitter activity. The key findings of the research are highlighted below.

2.1.1. Background information

This section focuses on background information about whether consumers are using Twitter, how often they tweet, and why they use Twitter.

- A quarter of consumers (25%) now have a Twitter account, according to consumer research conducted by Econsultancy in association with Toluna.

Figure 1: Do you have a Twitter account?



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3. The business case for Twitter

3.1. Should you be on Twitter?

Before investing in any new channel, it is important to understand what your objectives are, what you hope to achieve and the benefits specifically for your brand.

Monitor the channel first. Before making a decision on whether to join Twitter or not, it's a good idea to monitor the conversation, and understand what companies in your business sector and your customers are talking about.

Understand what your customers are saying about you. Search Twitter for brand terms and keywords that are relevant for your company. Twitter can be used as a valuable resource for customer insight. Even if after the research process you decide that joining and engaging via Twitter is not right for your brand, listening can be very useful.

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Voice of the expert: Why should organisations be on Twitter?

“In truth, like any social media platform, there is no compulsion for brands to have a Twitter profile. There are only two reasons for being on Twitter: your audience is there, engaged and active AND you have something to say.”

SAMPLE QUOTE



4. Getting started

4.1. Using an agency to manage Twitter versus in-house

As an initial starting point, companies need to think about whether they manage their own Twitter account in-house or whether they use an agency.

For companies that are new to Twitter or have little experience, they may wish to hire an agency that can set up the company's Twitter account and initially manage the channel.

The right approach may also depend on whether the organisation is using Twitter for a short-term campaign. It may make sense to hire an agency for a short-term campaign, but in the long-term, it is best to manage social media assets in-house. There are advantages and disadvantages for both approaches.

The advantages associated with hiring an agency include:

1. **It's quick.**

- 2.

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4.2. What type of account is right for your brand?

Before starting, think about what kind of Twitter account is right for your company. The business could set up a branded company Twitter account, separate accounts for key people, or both.

In terms of business Twitter accounts, companies can either have a unified brand presence, or separate accounts for different products. This very much depends on the nature of the product or service.

Best Practice Tip

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5. The rules of engagement

5.1. General rules

There are various best practice rules around how to engage on Twitter and maintain authenticity. It is important to remember that Twitter (and other social media channels) form part of an overall organisational strategy.

Social media puts the customer on an equal platform with the company. Marketing is no longer about simply pushing messages top-down to your audience. It is about creating dialogue with customers in a universal exchange.

1. **If you're going to do it, do it.** Once you've started your Twitter account, it's important to follow through and post regular updates. If you stop tweeting, existing customers may still be looking for your Twitter presence and find a dead account.

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5.1.1. Brand hijacking

Another problem with spam relates to brands being hijacked. Spammers can target hashtags that relate to key brand terms or set up rogue Twitter accounts that include brand terms.

Hashtag hijack

Brands can use hashtags to promote events or products. However, if these tags become popular, spammers can target and hijack keywords to promote spam.



6. Twitter case studies

Your objectives from Twitter depend on your product and service and what you hope to achieve from the channel.

Customer service

A study by Brandwatch surveyed brands that are using Twitter for customer service, looking at mentions of customer names and how brands responded.

The chart below shows the overall sentiment of users who talk about brands. The research contrasts with the findings of Econsultancy's consumer survey (*Section 6.1*), which indicates that few consumers have sent negative feedback, while a high proportion have praised brands on Twitter.

6.1. Best Buy and Twelpforce

Twitter accounts:

@Twelpforce

@BestBuy

@BestBuyUK

Twitter can be used purely for customer service enquiries, as Best Buy has done with its Twelpforce account. The company has set up the account Twelpforce on Twitter, which allows Best Buy employees to use their company and Twitter ID to register for the service. All tweets from Best Buy employees are then streamed on a single Twitter account.

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7. Promoted trends and advertising

Twitter launched its advertising products in April 2010, including its promoted trends and tweets products. According to Twitter, Promoted Products are priced on a price-per-engagement basis. The Promoted Products have been operating for just over a year, and the consensus is that it's still too early to determine the effectiveness of these new advertising products.

There are three main types of promoted products:

- **Promoted tweets.** These are ordinary tweets that advertizers pay for to highlight the tweet to a wider group of users.
 - Promoted tweets are shown at the top of the Twitter.com search results and are clearly labelled as 'promoted'.
 - As well as being displayed on Twitter.com, the tweets are also shown on third-party applications that partner with Twitter, including TweetDeck and Hootsuite.



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8. Measurement and return on investment

8.1. Metrics

While the rapid growth of social media has been an undeniable phenomenon in recent years, marketers continue to wrestle with the issue of measurement, metrics and benchmarking. It is important to be able to measure the impact social media to acquire senior management buy-in and make a case for further investment.

Voice of the expert: What can you measure on Twitter?

- “Directly attributable sales through link tracking

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SAMPLE QUOTE

Before you measure...

1. **Commit to measurement.** Social media is not only for one-off campaigns, but also for long-term and on-going engagement. Initially, it is important to see it may take time to see the true impact.

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What can you actually measure?

This is an initial guide to measurement, which gives an idea of some of the metrics that companies could use to benchmark social media activity. The reality is that companies need to set out their objectives and what they hope to achieve, and then make note of the metrics and benchmarks that are important specifically for their business.



9. Resources and further reading

9.1. Econsultancy reports

Social media statistics

Global: <http://econsultancy.com/reports/global-social-media-statistics>

UK: <http://econsultancy.com/reports/uk-social-media-statistics>

USA: <http://econsultancy.com/reports/north-america-social-media-statistics>

Social Media and Online PR Report

<http://econsultancy.com/reports/social-media-and-online-pr-report>

Online Reputation and Buzz Monitoring Buyer's Guide

<http://econsultancy.com/reports/online-reputation-and-buzz-monitoring-buyer-s-guide>

Value of Social Media Report

<http://econsultancy.com/reports/value-of-social-media-report>

Social Media and Online Brand Monitoring Trends Briefing

<http://econsultancy.com/reports/social-media-and-online-brand-monitoring-trends-briefing>

Social Media & Online PR Business Case

<http://econsultancy.com/reports/social-media-online-pr-business-case>

9.2. Econsultancy articles

130+ essential tips for Twitter fiends

<http://econsultancy.com/blog/4176-130+-essential-tips-for-twitter-fiends>

Twitter drives more traffic than you think: report

<http://econsultancy.com/blog/7780-twitter-drives-more-traffic-than-given-credit-for-report>

Listen up! A guide to Twitter engagement

<http://econsultancy.com/blog/6268-listen-up-a-guide-to-twitter-engagement>

A 20-step starter's guide to using Twitter efficiently

<http://econsultancy.com/blog/3780-a-20-step-starters-guide-to-using-twitter-efficiently>

How you can attract more retweets: a 10-step guide

<http://econsultancy.com/blog/7073-how-you-can-attract-more-retweets-a-10-step-guide>

Twitter DM autoresponders: 15 tips and 40+ examples

<http://econsultancy.com/blog/4160-twitter-dm-autoresponders-15-tips-and-40+-examples>

Is a Twitter Promoted Trend worth \$120,000?

<http://econsultancy.com/blog/7636-is-a-twitter-promoted-trend-worth-120-000>

Five ways to monetize social media

<http://econsultancy.com/blog/6961-five-ways-to-monetize-social-media>

Why Klout doesn't count: putting social media influence in context

<http://econsultancy.com/blog/6933-why-klout-doesn-t-count-putting-social-media-influence-in-context>



Promoted Trends: a spammer's best friend?

<http://econsultancy.com/blog/6944-promoted-trends-a-spammer-s-best-friend>

Twitter ads don't deliver: reports

<http://econsultancy.com/blog/7534-twitter-ads-don-t-deliver-reports>

16 bitchin' commands and shortcuts for Twitter

<http://econsultancy.com/blog/4129-16-bitchin-commands-and-shortcuts-for-twitter>

How to make Twitter sell

<http://econsultancy.com/blog/7084-how-to-make-twitter-sell>

Changing Twitter usernames painlessly: four top tips

<http://econsultancy.com/blog/7396-changing-twitter-usernames-painlessly-four-top-tips>

Twitter: the 13 types of tweet to take notice of

<http://econsultancy.com/blog/3418-twitter-13-types-of-tweet-to-take-notice-of>

Want your own Twitter firehose? You can now buy it...for a price

<http://econsultancy.com/blog/6862-want-your-own-twitter-firehose-you-can-now-buy-it-for-a-price>

Five free Twitter tools worth bookmarking

<http://econsultancy.com/blog/7380-five-free-twitter-tools-worth-bookmarking>

The trouble with measuring influence via social media

<http://econsultancy.com/blog/7533-the-trouble-with-measuring-influence-via-social-media>

How Econsultancy measures Twitter via Google Analytics

<http://econsultancy.com/blog/7217-how-econsultancy-measures-twitter-via-google-analytics>

10 ways to measure social media success

<http://econsultancy.com/blog/3407-10-ways-to-measure-social-media-success>

The 27 varieties of tweet used by retailers

<http://econsultancy.com/blog/4594-the-27-varieties-of-tweet-used-by-retailers>

Social media measurement: a 10-step guide

<http://econsultancy.com/blog/5067-social-media-measurement-a-10-step-guide>

35 social media KPIs to help measure engagement

<http://econsultancy.com/blog/4887-35-social-media-kpis-to-help-measure-engagement>

12 sure-fire ways to spot a dirty Twitter spammer

<http://econsultancy.com/blog/7210-12-sure-fire-ways-to-spot-a-dirty-twitter-spammer>

How to extend your Twitter experience by using third party tools

<http://econsultancy.com/blog/7170-how-to-extend-your-twitter-experience-by-using-third-party-tools>

Why your social media strategy shouldn't be owned by a PR or ad agency

<http://econsultancy.com/blog/7094-why-your-social-media-strategy-shouldnt-be-owned-by-a-pr-or-ad-agency>

How you can attract more retweets: a 10-step guide

<http://econsultancy.com/blog/7073-how-you-can-attract-more-retweets-a-10-step-guide>



The revolution will not be socialized, says Malcolm Gladwell. He's wrong.

<http://econsultancy.com/blog/6678-the-revolution-will-not-be-socialised-says-malcolm-gladwell-hes-wrong>

Why Econsultancy is unfollowing 19,000 Twitter users

<http://econsultancy.com/blog/5249-why-econsultancy-is-unfollowing-19-000-twitter-users>

20 tweets that show how travel firms use Twitter

<http://econsultancy.com/blog/4781-20-tweets-that-show-how-travel-firms-use-twitter>

Five Twitter slideshows you need to see

<http://econsultancy.com/blog/4518-five-twitter-slideshows-you-need-to-see>

18 observations on Twitter and SEO

<http://econsultancy.com/blog/4394-18-observations-on-twitter-and-seo>

10 useful Twitter presentations

<http://econsultancy.com/blog/4066-10-useful-twitter-presentations>

Will the OFT regulate paid tweets?

<http://econsultancy.com/blog/7034-will-the-oft-regulate-paid-tweets>

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10. Twitter glossary

This section is a guide to understanding the Twitter vernacular, and is adapted from Twitter's Help Centre. See the link below for more details. <https://support.twitter.com/articles/166337-the-twitter-glossary>

1. **#.** This is a hashtag. The # symbol is used to mark keywords or topics in a tweet.
2. **@.** The @ sign is used to call out usernames in tweet. When a username is preceded by an @, it links to the Twitter users' profile.
3. **API.** Application Programming Interface. Contains all Twitter data and is used to build applications that access Twitter.
4. **Application (Third-Party).** A third-party application is a product created by a company other than Twitter and used to access Tweets and other Twitter data.

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