

Tweet talk: Twitter dos and don'ts for businesses

By Susan Gunelius

There isn't a right or wrong way to use Twitter. However, if you're using Twitter as a marketing tool to build your business, then you should probably follow some unwritten rules of use and etiquette.

Here are some dos and don'ts of Twitter behavior to ensure that your business achieves marketing success:

- **Do have a plan.** Fifteen minutes is all you need. Set aside five minutes in the morning to read through your followers' tweets and send @replies or retweets. Set another five minutes aside in the middle

of the day to search for new people to follow. Finally, set aside five more minutes at the end of the day to tweet your own great content and perhaps send a few more @replies or retweets.

- **Don't over-promote.** No one wants to listen to you talk about yourself all day. Stick to an 80-20 rule: 80 percent of your tweets should be non-promotional, while the other 20 percent can be promotional material.

- **Do integrate your efforts with**

The most important Twitter rule for 2011 is kindness and acceptance.

— Diana Adams, *bitrebels.com*, Jan. 24

- **other marketing initiatives.** Include your Twitter address everywhere — on your business card, your e-mail signature and invoices. Make sure that you brand your Twitter account to match your overall business brand. Logos, images and language should be consistent with other marketing materials.

- **Don't get too personal or too negative.** If you wouldn't share information with a customer in person, then you definitely shouldn't share that information via Twitter. And don't be tempted to be negative or publish overly critical tweets.

- **Do engage and interact.** Make an effort to engage other Twitter users by retweeting their updates and sending @replies and direct messages to them. If your Twitter stream isn't interactive, then odds are that it's probably boring and too self-promotional.

- **Don't use corporate jargon or rhetoric.** No one wants to build a relationship with a scripted brochure. Be human. **T**

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