

twitter

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The Power of Twitter

Social media platforms, like *Twitter*, have changed the way people communicate and interact. This micro-blogging platform that has had a never-before-seen growth, at an over 1,000 percent increase in its user base year-on-year, is the equivalent of a virtual social club where people can meet, get to know each other, socialize, make new friends and maintain existing friendships.

Twitter, though, is unlike any other social media platform you know or have been using for the simple reason that it is extremely restrictive. You are constrained to 140 characters of text and you cannot upload media content or post long articles. However, this is what makes *Twitter* an effective, real time communication system.

One thing that *Twitter* is not is an online mall where people come to buy or sell things. While this may make you stand up, take notice and scream at the top of your lungs that you don't need *Twitter* if you can't promote your offers, you would be sorely mistaken. You see, that is where the true power of *Twitter* is, in the fact that it isn't a marketplace.

Twitter should not be considered a cheap form of advertising because treating it like a traditional advertising medium will get you nowhere. On the other hand, this micro-blogging platform ranks among the most effective and powerful marketing tools that you can use. This is due to the fact that *Twitter* is the perfect place to build relationships with your target market and this is critical to your online marketing success because consumers have changed a lot over the past decade.

The Internet has opened up so many routes of communication that people can go online and find out information and opinions on different companies' products and services almost instantly. In fact, in a study conducted by Harris Interactive, it was found that 45 percent of the respondents considered reviews from friends or people they follow on social media websites to influence their purchase decision.

INFLUENTIAL REVIEWS

"In general, how much do each of the following types of reviews influence your decision to use or not use a particular company, brand or product?"

Percent saying "a great deal" or "a fair amount"

Base: All online adults

	Total	Age			
		18-34	35-44	45-54	55+
	%	%	%	%	%
Reviews from family members or friends <i>Base: All online adults</i>	71	69	76	71	71
Reviews in newspapers or magazine articles <i>Base: All online adults</i>	46	45	48	48	44
Reviews from friends or people I follow on social networking websites <i>Base: Adults who use social media</i>	45	50	44	41	37
Reviews on blogs or message boards <i>Base: Adults who use social media</i>	33	41	35	28	18
Reviews from celebrities <i>Base: All online adults</i>	10	17	8	8	5

Note: Percentages may not add up exactly to 100% due to rounding.

Source: Harris Interactive, June 2010

Consumers are no longer limited to buying from only a select few large corporations and, in fact, prefer to do business with people they know and trust. *Twitter* gives you the opportunity to build that relationship with your potential customers which will help you generate leads as well as more customers.

Assumptions

Before we move further into the material, it needs to be specified that we are assuming you know how to set up a *Twitter* account and if you have not yet done so, you understand that you need an active *Twitter* account to be able to apply the material and information in the present ebook.

Integrating Twitter into Your Strategy

Many *Internet* marketers overlook *Twitter* as they see it as a waste of time. However, you ignore this platform at your own peril because not only can it generate a substantial profit for you in the long run, it will also help you understand your market more effectively than anything else. The more you understand your target market, the more you know about these people and what makes them tick, the more effectively you will be able to sell to them and the more money you will make.

The first thing you need to understand is that *Twitter* and, in fact, most social media sites have become important sources of information for people who are looking to make a purchase. A lot of people go on *Twitter* to ask the opinion of their friends and followers regarding various services and products. As you saw above, over 40 percent of social media users take these recommendations into consideration when choosing which product to purchase. It is basically electronic word-of-mouth advertising, which is by far the most effective form of advertising.

Now, just as with any marketing strategy you need to have a plan. Without a plan your chances of failure increase for the simple reason that you won't know where you are going.

Market Research

Twitter is a highly effective platform where you can begin to learn about your target market. You are no longer in the situation of other businesses that two decades ago had to pay market research companies a fortune to find out who their ideal customer is and they would receive a profile

after the company had done extensive research. However, even this would still be a generalized profile, whereas *Twitter* allows you to come into contact directly with your prospects, not simply an ideal based on a generalized profile.

This allows you to learn about your prospects directly, without having the information filtered and categorized by someone else. Additionally, it is a much more affordable solution, since it's practically free, and you can even design your own survey and ask your customers and prospects to offer you feedback on your service or product. This information will prove invaluable because you can basically ask your prospects what they want in a product and you can offer it to them. If you offer people what they want, then the product or service will sell itself and your customers will also sell it for you.

Never underestimate the power of understanding what your prospects and target market want. The more you know and the more you understand about them, the easier it will be to create a product they need and want which will lead to higher and easier sales. Not only will your revenues increase, but so too will your profit because you won't be spending as much on new customer acquisition.

Identifying Your Target Market

Your first order of business is to find highly targeted and qualified leads for your business. If you are selling baby strollers then tweeting to male golfers all day isn't going to get you a single sale. However, tweeting to pregnant women and young mothers with newborns will be much more effective.

Finding your target market on *Twitter* is not quite as hard as you may think it is. As is to be expected with such a popular service, many third party applications and websites have popped up that make our lives easier when it comes to working with *Twitter*. One such site is *Twellow.com*, which is the *Yellow Pages* of *Twitter*.

The great thing about *Twellow.com* is that it allows you to search out *Twitter* users by categories which are split up by personal interests as well as professional ones. Therefore, if you are in the Internet marketing niche, you can choose the marketing category and then further narrow down your target audience by searching according to a specific keyword.

Other effective tools you can use include:

- *TwitterSearch.com* – this is *Twitter*'s built in search engine which can be quite helpful in locating prospects;
- *Twitterfall.com* allows you to search by keywords and hash tags;
- *SocialMention.com* is especially useful since you can search a wide range of social media sites, regular websites, news and almost all the Internet for certain keywords. It is a system that can be used to identify prospective clients as well as to stay up-to-date with what people are saying about your products and business.
- *Twitterment.com* and *TweepSearch.com* are also two highly effective search tools that are slightly more useful than the *Twitter* search engine because they can also search the bios of people. Bios are effectively where people list their interests, hobbies, profession and so on and so forth. This is basically most of the demographic information on people which will help you find your target audience.

- *NearbyTweets.com* allows you to search for users according to location and you can then narrow down your results even further by searching according to keyword;
- *Twellohood.com* and *Twwtmondo.com* are similar services that allow you to identify prospects by location.

Understanding Your Audience

Understanding your audience is a key step in creating and guaranteeing the success of your marketing strategy. The more you know the people you are trying to sell to, the more you understand what they value, what they dream of and what their fears are, the easier it will be for you to find and create offers that appeal to them as well as products and content that will be useful and provide value.

Additionally, understanding your target market will allow you to stand out from the competition. Remember that people receive vast amounts of information on *Twitter* and if you want to succeed you need to make sure people notice what you are saying. The best way to do this is by tweeting about things that interest your audience and by learning about them, you will discover what will get their attention.

Finding Your USP

Finding your USP (unique selling position/proposition) is essential to building a successful business. No matter the niche you are in, you will have varying degrees of competition and to increase your chances of becoming successful you need to stand out so that prospects will buy from you rather than from competing businesses. Your USP will be the one thing that will set you apart.

You may be tempted to use a lower price point as a USP, however, this is the biggest mistake you can make. There are two reasons for this. First, you can find yourself in the unenviable position of not being able to sustain a low price point indefinitely and when you need to raise the price you will no longer have a USP. Second, a low price can sometimes backfire because many people associate a low price with low quality and you might find that your product simply doesn't sell because people go by the adage "I'm too poor to buy something cheap."

Your USP needs to be based on a unique benefit or service that your product provides to customers. So, if you are in the Internet marketing niche and are selling an ebook on CPA then you could provide a free version of your book in audio format so people can listen to it on their iPod while they are doing other things. This will cost you virtually nothing if you read the book yourself, but will increase the perceived value of your product significantly.

Identifying Your Competition

To be able to compete effectively, you also need to research your competition. The more you know about your competition, the easier you will find it to stand out. Finding competing companies in your niche is as easy as locating your prospects because you can use *Twellow* to do it. All you need to do is run a few searches by keyword in your industry category.

Once you have identified the companies you believe are your direct competition, you can use *TwitterGrader.com* to learn more about their *Twitter* marketing strategy. This service will allow you to see exactly how influential they are on *Twitter* and also to identify the keywords they use most in their tweets.

Simply enter the username of the competing company in the search box and then click Grade. The score that is returned is based on the number of followers, the power of their followers calculated according to the number of followers they each have in turn, how often they tweet, how often they are retweeted and more. You should also consider becoming a follower because this way you will know exactly what approach they are taking.

Likewise, becoming a follower is essential because you can also begin building a relationship with your competitors. Remember that the Internet is vast and there is room for everyone, which means that, often, you can become even more successful by partnering with your competitors in different areas. Most highly successful Internet marketers run joint ventures with their competitors because they understand the power of leveraging each other's followers and lists.

Implementation

Now that you have put together a general plan for your *Twitter* marketing strategy, it's time to implement it and the first step is to craft your message. Since you have researched your market, you know exactly what their "pain" is and your goal is to take away that pain.

Thus, your message should clearly show how the benefits of your product or service will solve your prospects' problems. However, you must keep in mind the golden rule in *Twitter*, which is that you should never bombard your prospects with commercial messages.

In fact, less than 10 percent of your messages to your followers should be commercial in nature because otherwise you run the risk of alienating your followers. Your main goal should be to provide valuable content that is helpful which will establish you as an authority and someone people want to follow. Your messages should show that you know what you are talking about and this will ultimately lead your followers to believe that your product will provide an effective solution.

For example, if you are a real estate agent, you can share articles on how to locate a good property or how to negotiate a lower price. Clearly, a few articles will not replace your services but it will show that you are an authority in your field and your prospects will begin to trust you. Additionally, your prospects will begin to wonder how much better your service or product is if you are providing top notch information for free.

As Twitter is a social communication platform, your marketing will be even more effective if you build a relationship with your followers. To do this, you need to also add a few personal tweets among your business and commercial messages. This will show people that you are human and it will give them something to relate to. The more they can relate to you, the more comfortable they will feel buying from you.

Building a Following

Building a following is not a quick process, especially if you want your followers to be dedicated and loyal. The more your following is made up of raving fans, the easier it will be for you to sell to them. Not only that, but raving fans turn into lifetime customers and your main goal is to work smarter not necessarily harder. Working smarter means making more money from a single customer rather than finding more customers. This is because it takes much less time and it is less expensive to maintain an existing customer than it is to find new customers.

Twitter gives you the added advantage of traffic that converts well. Studies have shown that social media traffic has a higher conversion rate than organic traffic or paid traffic because these are prospects with whom you have established a relationship.

Finding Followers

We have already covered how you can find prospects, but now we need to look at how to turn those prospects into followers. One way to do this is to begin by following these people first. You can start with any existing customers you may have in your personal contact lists and this can be done quickly because you can import your contact lists from *Gmail*, *Yahoo!* and *AOL*. *Twitter* will compare the email addresses from your lists with its database of users and return a list of all your existing contacts who are using the service and allow you to decide who to follow.

Then you can begin to follow people you have discovered in *Twellow* or similar services such as *Twubble.com* or *99Tribes.com* that are in your niche. *Twubble* analyzes your existing list and makes suggestions based on similar profiles while *99 Tribes* allows you to search based on interests. The advantage of the latter is that it allows you to really narrow your focus quickly by employing a wide range of filters making your work much easier and faster.

Following Followers

Another approach to building a list of followers is by following people who are on the list of followers of your competition. You should focus on people who are industry leaders in your niche, so, for example, to continue with our Internet marketing niche, if you provide PPC services or information products, then consider following someone like Perry Marshall's followers.

One advantage of following people like this is that many have auto-follow activated which means that once you follow them, they will automatically follow you back. However, to make sure they stay on your list you need to make sure you are providing valuable and compelling information.

The Power of Lists

Twitter lists are categories of *Twitter* users that people create to make it easier to follow their tweets. For example, some users build lists of their favorite tweeters on social media marketing strategies or lists of their personal friends.

This means that you have a list of people in your niche that has already been researched by someone else, which will cut down on the work you need to do considerably. Additionally, you can follow a whole list of people with a single click.

Credibility and Relationships

Now that you have found people to follow, you need to make sure they follow you back. You do this by providing valuable content and information as well as being helpful. For example, if you come across someone asking for help in your niche, you can provide them with a solution. This will begin to build your image as an expert in your field and an increasing number of people will turn to you for help.

The more people regard you as an expert and someone who provides value, the higher the chance of their defenses crumbling. The latter means that they will be much more open to your commercial messages and the likelihood of them buying your product is much higher.

The Value of Content

No matter what anyone tells you, if you want to build a business that is sustainable for the long term, which we think you do, then you need to understand that providing quality content matters. You might be able to make a few dollars here and there with badly written content that provides no value, but it won't last long and *Twitter* is definitely one place where sub-par content will result in complete failure.

Your main goal should be to keep visitors on your site because the more time they spend on your site, reading your content, the better chance you

have of converting them into customers. However, if your content is unreadable or simply filler, people will hit the back button faster than you can blink.

Additionally, if you provide low quality content on *Twitter*, people will simply ignore you or un-follow you. This is definitely something you don't want. Thus, you need to look at quality content as an investment for your future success, even if it means you have to spend some extra money creating it.

Quantity, Quality or Both?

There are two schools of thought on building a following in terms of quantity and quality. Quantity clearly refers to the number of followers you have while quality refers to their responsiveness which translates into conversion rates. On the one hand, there are those who say that, since *Twitter* has an average 4 percent conversion rate, you are better off building a huge list of followers and ignoring quality.

Then others say that it's better to have a smaller list of highly responsive followers because you can increase those conversion rates. Since this is purely a numbers game and you can never rely on averages to hold true for your particular case, you are better off focusing on both quantity and quality. In other words, build a large list but also focus on increasing your conversion rates by testing different strategies and improving on those that work.

Improve Your Follow-Back Ratio

When you are building your list of followers you need to be aware of the fact that *Twitter* sets certain limits on the number of people you can follow. This is done to avoid people who have a tendency to follow a lot of people with the sole intent of spamming them with commercial messages. Thus, once you are following 2,000 people you are only allowed to follow 10 percent of the number of followers you have per day. Thus, if you have 500 new followers a day, you can only follow another 50 people per day. This means that efficient list management is vital to building a large following on *Twitter*.

So, the first step is to make sure that you follow people up to your allowed limit each and every day. Additionally, if the people you have followed don't follow you back after 72 hours, make sure to un-follow them. You don't want to have a huge list of people you are following who aren't following you back because it will be a waste of your time.

There are a few strategies you can employ to increase the number of people who follow you back. First, you need to start the conversation yourself, so, when you follow someone consider sending them a personalized message that shows you have read a little about them and want to know about them as a person. Even if this takes a bit of extra time, it is worth it in the long run because people will be flattered that you took the time to connect with them and that increases the chances of them following you back.

Additionally, another way to increase the rate at which people follow you back is by adding followers when people are more active on *Twitter*, which is usually in the evenings and on the weekends. If you are adding followers during the middle of the day when people are at work and don't spend too much time on *Twitter* the chance of them following you back is minimal.

Mastering the Tweet

Twitter is all about connecting with people, which means that you need to learn how to join a conversation. Simply introducing yourself and expecting to be welcomed with open arms is not going to work on *Twitter*. You need to be interesting and provide interesting content first. Therefore, if there are people talking about a topic in your niche and you would like to join the conversation, you need to start by providing a piece of interesting information to show that you can add value to the conversation.

Being Interesting: Providing Quality Content

We have already established the value of providing quality and compelling content. But the question is where do you find that content? After all, you likely don't have time to spend hours and hours on a daily basis to scour the net and find interesting content to provide your followers. And yes, you do want to offer your followers content you haven't created as well.

Remember, you are building a relationship with people and if all you do is send people to your own blog, people will think you are only interested in driving traffic to your site. Additionally, the problem is that it can be quite difficult to create the volumes of fresh content you would need to keep your followers interested all the time. Therefore, you can leverage other people's content and kill a few birds with one stone.

First, you will provide value to your prospects through excellent quality. Next, you will show your followers that you are interested in providing them value and not simply in selling. Third, you will also begin to build relationships with the owners of those blogs to which you are sending traffic. You will be able to leverage these relationships later on through joint ventures and ad swaps.

So, where can you find all this content? There are a few powerful tools you can leverage to save time as these are content aggregators from all over the net. One such site is *StufftoTweet.com* which is a content aggregator that lists the most popular content on sites such as *Mashable*, *Lifehacker*, *Digg* and more. You can re-tweet content that you think your followers would find interesting.

Alltop.com and *TweetMeme.com* are similar resources; however, the former has the advantage that it groups content into categories, which will make your life much easier. These tools are so valuable because the content you will be re-tweeting has already proven itself to be popular and interesting or it would have never made it onto these lists.

Using Twitter to Drive Traffic

Besides building relationships with your prospects, your goal on *Twitter* is to drive traffic to your blog or to your offers. Driving traffic is as much a science as it is art, just like any other form of marketing.

Quality content will help you drive traffic but there are also a few other strategies you can employ to make sure your followers notice your tweets:

- Make sure you re-tweet your content a few times per day because people come on *Twitter* at different times of the day and re-tweeting will increase exposure for your site.
- Use a link shortener such as *su.pr* which not only posts to *Twitter*, but also to *StumbleUpon.com*, so you will be receiving traffic from two different sources.
- When posting tweets, try to do it in block of three as this will make your tweets stand out in the timeline. However, don't repeat the same message in each tweet and don't post more than three at a time or you will look like a spammer.
- These are a few strategies that you can use to increase the chances of people noticing your tweets. The more people see your tweets, the more people will click your links and the higher the traffic to your site.

Building a List

Despite the fact that *Twitter* is a highly effective marketing tool, it also poses a problem in that it is a third party platform which you have little control over. There's nothing worse than having your account shut down for some real or perceived mistake and losing all the work you may have put in to develop your list of 5,000 highly responsive followers.

Therefore, you need to also focus on building an email list, which is your property. This means your chances of losing your income are in your hands and not someone else's. There are many ways you can build lists but they all involve driving traffic to a squeeze page or your blog.

The Value of Trends

Twitter trends are an excellent way to increase the exposure of your brand which will ultimately lead to more traffic to your site. *Twitter* trends are basically the most popular discussions that are being conducted in *Twitter* at a certain time. They are usually keyword focused, so, for example, if there are a lot of people talking about a recent news event, that event will appear as a trend.

To find current trends in *Twitter* all you have to do is navigate to the *Twitter* search page, which lists the most popular keywords at any given moment. Some *Twitter* desktop applications, such as *Tweetdeck*, also provide a list of current *Twitter* trends.

Using Twitter to Serve Your Customers

Studies have shown that existing customers are 100% more likely to refer people they know than new leads. This means that one of your main objectives is to keep your customers happy with top notch customer service. Top notch customer service has more value than you probably realize. By keeping your existing customers happy you increase the likelihood of them recommending you to their friends and thus, gaining more customers.

Twitter is an excellent way for you to leverage the power of customer service because not only can you respond quickly but it is also a very visible way to show other people that you care about your customers and see them more than simply a walking, talking wallet. As long as you respond quickly and efficiently, you will find that people will be very happy to help you out in turn by tweeting to their own followers about your product or service.

Besides providing referrals, happy customers will also be more open to providing you with feedback. The latter is essential in improving your service or product as well as your marketing strategy.

Testing, Tracking and Improving

The key to an effective marketing strategy is the ability to quickly determine how efficient your marketing is. Traditional marketing requires you to wait for months to determine its effectiveness and even then you can't be sure whether it was your advertising that increased sales or some other external factors. This is where the beauty of online marketing comes in because you have tools at your disposal that will provide you with this information in real time and for free.

Therefore it goes without saying that you also want to track your *Twitter* marketing so that you can determine which approaches are effective. This will save you both time and money.

There are a number of free and paid services you can use to track the traffic coming to your website, no matter its source. One of the most popular is *Google Analytics*, which is free. It provides a wide range of reports on your traffic covering traffic sources to keywords used to locate your site. However, one drawback is that it does not update statistics in real time as it can take up to 24 hours.

Hypertracker.com is a paid service that is even more effective because it allows you to track each link you post on the web. It also provides information on the activity of those visitors on your website. This is an excellent way for you to improve your marketing strategy because it allows you to follow a prospect from the moment they click the link to the time they leave your site, whether they make a purchase or not. This means that you can adapt and improve your strategies as you have clear information on which approach works and which doesn't.

Conclusion

The efficiency of *Twitter* as a marketing tool has been proven time and again by various companies. For example, Dell Corporation made \$6 million in sales over two years by simply tweeting about discounts and providing coupons for their Dell Outlet products.

Twitter is not only effective to promote your business but can also be essential in creating a brand and offering quality customer service. Many companies are turning to *Twitter* to improve their relationships with their customers as they have discovered that timely customer service does much more to improve their sales and create loyal customers than running massive advertising campaigns.

However, don't make the mistake of thinking that *Twitter* is simply an advertising platform. You must remember the golden rule of successful marketing, which is to build a relationship with your customers. Once you have that relationship in place you will quickly discover the value of loyal customers.

Twitter is only the tip of the iceberg. There are so many sources or traffic, you can create endless flows of traffic to your websites. Without traffic, you don't make sales, it's that simple.

Do yourself a favor and finally end your struggle for traffic, starting today... It's as easy as: [Click here](#)