

Lots of Ways to Use Facebook for your Business



Facebook is not just for keeping tabs on friends, old high school acquaintances (ugh!) and filling out quizzes — it can also be used as a highly effective business tool. It's great for marketing your products, landing gigs and connecting with your customers.

Here are many ways to use Facebook in your tourism or any business.

Manage Your Profile

1. Fill out your profile completely to earn trust.
2. Establish a business account, if you don't already have one.
3. Stay out of trouble by reading the Facebook rules regarding business accounts.
4. Create a fan page
5. Install appropriate applications to integrate feeds from your blog and other social media accounts into your Facebook profile. (Although you should be careful before integrating your Twitter feed into your Facebook profile, as a stream of tweets can seem overwhelming to your contacts.)
6. Keep any personal parts of your profile private through Settings.
7. Create "friends lists" such as "Work," "Family" and "Limited Profile" for finer-grained control over your profile privacy.
8. Post professional or business casual photos of yourself to reinforce your brand.
9. Limit business contacts' access to personal photos.
10. Post your newsletter subscription information and archives somewhere in your profile.

Connect and share with others

11. Obtain a Facebook vanity URL so that people can easily find you.
12. Add your Facebook URL to your email signature and any marketing collateral (business cards, etc.) so prospects can learn more about you.
13. Post business updates on your wall. Focus on business activities, such as "Working with ABC Company on web site redesign."
14. To establish credibility, Share useful articles and links to presentation and valuable resources that interest customers and prospects on your wall.
15. Combine Facebook with other social media tools like Twitter. For example, when someone asks a question on Twitter, you can respond in detail in a blog post and link to it from Facebook.

16. Before traveling, check contacts' locations so you can meet with those in the city where you're heading.
17. Research prospects before meeting with or contacting them. *How many of you will look for me on Facebook tonight?*
18. Upload your contacts from your email client to find more connections.
19. Use "Find Friends" for suggestions of other people you may know to expand your network even further.
20. Look for mutual contacts on your contact's Friends lists.
21. Find experts in your field and invite them as a guest blogger on your blog or speaker at your event.
22. Market your products by posting discounts and package deals.
23. Share survey or research data to gain credibility.
24. Use "Facebook Connect" to add social networking features to your web site.
25. Suggest Friends to clients and colleagues — by helping them, you establish trust.
26. Buy Facebook ads to target your exact audience.
27. Read up on Facebook Beacon to see if it might be useful to you.

Use Network, Group and Fan Pages

28. Start a group or fan page for a product, brand or business. Unless you or your business is already a household name, a group is usually the better choice.
29. Add basic information to the group or fan page such as links to company site, newsletter subscription information and newsletter archives.
30. Post upcoming events including webinars, conferences and other programs where you or someone from your company will be present.
31. Update your group or fan page on a regular basis with helpful information and answers to questions.
32. Join network, industry and alumni groups related to your business.
33. Use "Search" to find groups and fan pages related to your business by industry, location and career.

More Ways to Use Twitter for your Business



Most of you know that Twitter can be used for much more than just announcing what you ate for breakfast. Many of your customers may comment on your restaurant or hotel in Twitter. You can still take it further and use it to market your business, grow your network and gain free publicity — all in 140 characters or less.

It's true that Twitter is what you make of it. Some people publicize their daily activities, some make it about "link love", while others share quotes all day long. Smart people using Twitter for business mix it up. Here are over 60 ways to use Twitter more effectively in your business or tourism, dining or lodging entity.

Share Expertise to Build Credibility

1. Help others with problems.
2. Think of it like a billboard (the old ad agency adage was 10 words or less...hey, you have more words now!)
3. Share tips related to your business and work-life balance.
4. Share photos (Twitpic makes it easy) of conferences, travel, products and other interesting finds.
5. Provide selected highlights from a conference or event – *if you have the app on your phone, you can twitter on me right now.*
6. Report industry, company, world and other news that's related to your business, together with some commentary.
7. Link to articles and content posted elsewhere with a summary of why it's valuable.
8. Post original thoughts on your topic, industry and business.

Grow Your Network

9. Ask about other locales so you can make the most of a trip, or meet up with Twitter friends.
10. Connect with friends from other social networks. Can you name many who have only one social network account, one they start? (Grandparents on Facebook don't count.) For the X and M generation it's pretty much unheard of.
11. Join industry and topic groups related to your business and career on sites like www.twibes.com and www.wefollow.com.
12. Feed your Twitter tweets into other social networks like FriendFeed. (Although consider carefully before integrating your Twitter feed into other profiles, like Facebook, as a stream of tweets can overwhelm your contacts.)
13. Combine your social media approach: when someone asks a question in Twitter, respond briefly in Twitter with a link to another site with the detailed response.
14. Participate in Twitter chats related to your industry or business on a regular basis. Although you should beware that the stream of tweets from chats can overwhelm contacts that aren't participating in the chat. So, consider using a separate ID for chats.
15. Research prospects before meeting with them. You can gain a lot of valuable information just from scanning their tweets, profile and contacts.

www.lpmedia.net

16. Discover trends. You can use Twitter Search for this purpose. “Mashable” also has a list of tools that you can use for tracking trends on Twitter.
17. Network to find new clients or land a new job. Just be careful of making your tweets overly promotional, as that’s not appreciated by most Twitter users.
18. Stay in touch with friends and colleagues. You ever know when a friend or a colleague might have a lead for you.
19. Get referrals.
20. Give referrals.
21. Ask questions.
22. Answer questions.
23. Recommend other Twitter users to your network including reasons to follow them — by sharing goodwill, you will encourage others to reciprocate.
24. Use search feature to find topics, keywords and locations. Use “hashtags” or user names to limit results to topics or responses mentioning a person (i.e.: Dawn has some more tips on advanced Twitter search here).
25. Spread your tweets throughout the day, rather than posting the all at once, as people check Twitter at different times of the day. It’s always prime time on Twitter.
26. Look for connections related to a job you want.
27. Find vendors and contractors.

Marketing

28. If your site’s not working or you’re suffering from another problem, give updates on Twitter so customers know what’s going on.
29. Find experts to invite as a guest blogger on your blog or as speaker at your event.
30. Seek sponsors for a contest or program.
31. Hold a contest using Twitter: it can spread like wildfire. “Squarespace’s iPhone Contest” made the trending topic list.
32. Use applications and tools like www.clickablenow.com and www.twittercustomizer.com to enhance your Twitter background and profile.
33. Put together a virtual mastermind group.
34. Track conversations mentioning your name or your brand.
35. Respond to tweets talking about you and your brand.
36. Link to your content wisely and sparingly to avoid looking too promotional.
37. Do market research and gain knowledge with polls and surveys.
38. Share those survey and poll results.
39. Publish your Twitter ID on all marketing collateral, including business cards, email signature, email newsletters, web sites and brochures, so prospects can learn more about you.
40. Share what you’re doing so people learn about the type of work you do. Do this on occasion rather than all day long.



A Division of Light & Power Communications Ltd.

www.lpmedia.net

41. Avoid hard-sell tactics: focus on relationship building.
42. Write honest and valuable recommendations for your contacts on sources.
43. Link to your presentations and videos.
44. Mention when you're attending or speaking at an upcoming event.
45. Announce the publication of your newsletter's latest issue, along with a brief description.
46. Post discounts, coupons and package deals.
47. Announce job openings to find qualified talent.

Do the Right (and Fun) Thing

48. Share information that is useful for prospective clients or employers to enhance your reputation.
49. Be nice, even when you have a difference of opinion.
50. Save the "Thanks for following me," "Thanks for the RT" or similar tweets for direct messages (DM).
51. Use Twitter often to improve, tighten and sharpen your writing.
52. Remember to laugh and have fun because it inspires you to innovate and be creative in your job.
53. Make your goals public to compel you to reach them.
54. Start your day strong: some people find Twitter interactions put them in a good mood.

Finally, Some Tips for Absolute Beginners

55. Read Twitter's own Twitter 101 Guide and other Twitter articles.
56. Use keywords on your profile and a fun fact to earn trust, add personality and enable you to be found.
57. Dump the default Twitter avatar and use a photo of yourself or a suitable image.
58. Follow experts, companies, competitors and leaders in your industry.
59. Limit Twitter automation, because it comes across as phony.
60. Think quality, not quantity.
61. Be authentic, genuine and real. In other words, be yourself.
62. Mix up the tweet types to include "retweets" (RT), @replies, original thoughts, and links to other people's content (not just your own).
63. Don't get overwhelmed by the number of contacts you have. Organize them into groups using third-party applications like Tweetdeck and Seismic.



A Division of Light & Power Communications Ltd.

www.lpmedia.net

When Jonathan Fields spotted William Shatner waiting to board a JetBlue flight at New York's JFK in May, he did what any other self-respecting blogger would do. He popped open his Apple (AAPL) Mac, connected to the Web using the free Wi-Fi provided by JetBlue, and used Twitter to share the sighting with pals. "JetBlue terminal," Fields wrote on the blog service that lets users send short messages of 140 characters with status updates to groups of friends. "William Shatner waiting in pinstripe suit and shades to board flight to Burbank. Why's he flying JetBlue? Free, maybe?"

But he was caught off guard by what happened next. Within 10 seconds he got an e-mail informing him that JetBlue ([JBLU](#)) was following him on Twitter.

"It totally startled me," says the 42-year-old author, who initially worried that JetBlue might be monitoring his use of the Wi-Fi connection. JetBlue employee Morgan Johnston quickly explained that wasn't the case. JetBlue keeps tabs on what Twitter users say about it, using a scanning tool, to find customers who might need information, say, on flight delays or cancellations, Johnston said.

Keeping Constant Tabs

A growing number of companies are keeping track of what's said about their brands on Twitter. Comcast ([CMCSA](#)), Dell ([DELL](#)), General Motors ([GM](#)), H&R Block ([HRB](#)), Kodak ([EK](#)), and Whole Foods Market ([WFMI](#)) are among a handful of companies haunting Twitter to do everything from burnish brands to provide customer service. The attention to Twitter reflects the power of new social media tools in letting consumers shape public discussion over brands. "The real control of the brand has moved into the customer's hands, and technology has enabled that," says Lane Becker, president of Get Satisfaction, a Web site that draws together customers and companies to answer each other's questions and give feedback on products and services.

Begun in 2006, Twitter is a pioneer of microblogging, a way for users to keep others informed of their current status by way of text messaging, instant messaging, e-mail, or the Web. Other services that have followed suit include [Jaiku](#), Pownce, [FriendFeed](#), and Plurk. At this stage, many brands are sticking to Twitter, which has amassed a larger number of users. While Twitter doesn't release exact numbers, estimates range from 1 million to 3 million users.

It's not just audience size that draws brands. People who use the site are likely to hold sway over others. A single Twitter message—known informally as a tweet—sent in frustration over a product or a service's performance can be read by hundreds or thousands of people. Similarly, positive interaction with a representative of the manufacturer or service provider can help change an influencer's perspective for the better.



A Division of Light & Power Communications Ltd.

www.lpmedia.net

JetBlue, Comcast, and H&R Block are among the companies that recognize Twitter's potential in providing customer service. For companies, tools such as TweetScan or Twitter's own search tool, formerly known as Summize, make it easy to unearth a company's name mentioned in tweets. "Why wouldn't you want to be able to take care of that person at the moment when it's most important?" says JetBlue's Johnston. The services are free, helping keep costs low.

Get on the Ball

GM took notice the day a prospective buyer was at a Saturn dealership, ready to make a purchase, but couldn't find anyone to help him. "He was starting to get upset about it," says Adam Denison, who helps coordinate social media communications at GM. "When we saw it, we immediately let our Saturn colleagues know about it...and they could get the ball rolling a little bit better." The person bought a Saturn in the end—though at a different dealership, Denison says.

Not all customers want Corporate America following their tweets. "It has potential for delivering business value, clearly, but at the same time there are some risks to it," says Ray Valdes, research director of Web services at consulting firm Gartner ([IT](#)). While it is a useful brand-monitoring tool, it "can come across as a little creepy." Christofer Hoff tweeted his displeasure with Southwest ([LUV](#)) on Apr. 28, when his flight was delayed and his luggage disappeared. The next day he received the following message from Southwest: "Sorry to hear about your flight—weather was terrible in the NE. Hope you give us a 2nd chance to prove that Southwest = Awesomeness." In a blog post about the incident, Hoff wrote that it was "cool and frightening at the same time."

Companies can mitigate the creep factor by clearly identifying the individuals who are Twittering. Putting a face on the Twitter account goes a long way to making it friendly, experts say. Dell has more than 20 official Twitter accounts, each managed by an individual, not a faceless business unit.

For some companies, the Twitter learning curve can be steep. That was true for Frank Eliason, who began publicly tweeting for Comcast customer service in April. People told him that his language was too formal. "I came from financial services, and that's how I always speak," he says. So he tried to loosen up. "If you do that, you get a lot of respect from the followers," he says, referring to people who sign up to receive your tweets. Also, he says it's important not to get defensive when a customer vents about your company. Instead, he says the best response is, "Can I help you?"



A Division of Light & Power Communications Ltd.

www.lpmedia.net

Embracing Transparency

Zappos CEO Tony Hsieh looks at any opportunity to interact with customers as a chance to burnish his company's brand. Perhaps one of the most zealous CEOs when it comes to Twitter, he follows more than 10,000 people, and nearly the same number follow him. (Zappos, an online shoe, clothing, and accessories retailer, has about 8 million customers.) Hsieh tweets multiple times per day, talking about everything from what he had for lunch to his trip to China for the Olympics. "You have to embrace the whole transparency thing for it to work well," he says.

Hsieh has encouraged his employees to use Twitter, even posting a guide to using Twitter on the Zappos site. He says using Twitter can help employees to get to know one another and create a cohesive corporate identity. "Initially, it took a bit of commitment because nobody had used it," he says. "Twitter has helped with our company culture." Today, more than 400 employees Twitter at Zappos.

In a July 2008 report, Gartner added microblogging to its list of technologies that will transform business over the next two to five years. Yet, the majority of companies still haven't gotten the microblogging religion. The result is that a good many Twitter domain names have been registered by other people. A British site called Twitter Names Parked is selling Twitter domains for about 20 pounds (\$36.70). As of Aug. 28, brand names for sale included ChevyCars, ChryslerMotors, FordMotor, LincolnMercury, INGDirect, Purell, and StephenKing.

Some people use unofficial accounts to send messages that weren't authorized by the company. Earlier this year, Exxon Mobil ([XOM](#)) discovered that a person named Janet was fooling many people by posing as an employee of Exxon Mobil. "Our concern was that people reading the postings would think that this person was speaking on the company's behalf," says Exxon Mobil spokesman Chris Welberry. "We didn't want to do anything heavy-handed about people expressing their views in a social networking environment. We just wanted to make sure that people who are doing that are open and transparent."

No Impersonation Allowed

After Exxon discovered Janet, the company contacted Twitter. "Twitter doesn't allow impersonation or domain squatting, which is grabbing a user name and saying you want money," Twitter co-founder Biz Stone says. "But they really do have to be impersonating or infringing on copyright. If somebody's last name happens to be Mobil, the company doesn't have a strong case there." Janet's account was taken out of commission.



A Division of Light & Power Communications Ltd.

www.lpmedia.net

But social media sensations are like quicksilver. Today, companies may need to pay attention to Twitter. Tomorrow, they may have to join Pownce, Jaiku, FriendFeed, or Plurk, especially if outages keep hobbling Twitter. Newell Rubbermaid ([NWL](#)), owner of more than 30 brands including Rubbermaid, Graco, and Sharpie, is hedging its bets by trying several different microblogging sites, including Twitter, FriendFeed, and Pownce. "Eventually we'll determine which ones work," says Bert DuMars, Newell Rubbermaid's vice-president for e-business and interactive marketing. Dumars cautions that brands can't expect instant results. "It's a long-term commitment," he says.

JetBlue's Johnston concurs. "It's a very delicate balance, and I've messed it up a couple times," he says. After startling Fields at the outset, Johnston apologized and e-mailed Fields, saying how he only intended to make a lighthearted retort about how maybe Shatner flew JetBlue because he wanted to watch the Sci-Fi Network. Ultimately, Fields was won over. "I was blown away that a company of this size actually had a guy dedicated to Twitter not only to monitor it, but to engage in conversation."