

Excerpt from the chapter on *Twitter...*

The right kind of follower

Having lots of followers may make you feel popular, but it won't necessarily help your business.

A taxi firm's wonderfully entertaining tweets were followed by hundreds of people from Preston to Papua New Guinea. As they only served the north Norwich area, however, they were simply wasting their time ingratiating themselves with the wrong people.

Promotional tweets to previous customers may appeal to a few loyalists but will cause mass desertion among the rank and file.

An inkjet company uses Twitter, as well as email and 'phone calling, to hassle every person that has ever bought anything from them since the day they started in business. Their tweets are as welcome as an unsolicited salesman repeatedly turning up at the front door and, not surprisingly, followers rapidly become ex-followers.

Tweets created with specific influential people in mind stand a chance of being passed on. Their credibility and their own following can give a single tweet enormous impact.

The Cakery, a small bakery in Leeds specialising in impressive cupcakes made the effort to cultivate a small number of high quality followers. One of them, an industry blogger whose posts are read by all the bigwigs in food retail, mentions them in a piece about the current craze for cupcakes amongst teenage girls. The following day, the buyer from Marks and Spencer is on the line to The Cakery wanting to discuss those wonderful cupcakes he has been reading about.

At the same time, a presenter from the local TV station who keeps an eye out for local stories on Twitter retweets a Cakery message about 'the ultimate cupcake experience', adding a 'yum yum' comment of her own. It brings in more customers than a mountain of flyers pushed through letter boxes, in a fraction of the time and at no cost at all.

Quality followers trump large numbers of followers every time. Rather than tweeting to anyone that will listen, or pestering potential customers with promotional tweets, the followers that will make a real difference to your business are ones that share a common interest with you – such as location,

industry, supply chain or (this is the best one) your target market. A well chosen follower can influence vast swathes of potential customers.

How to get followed (by the right kind of follower)

When you start Tweeting, who is going to receive them? Nobody. Which is why you should put the following methods into practice as soon as you sign up to Twitter. This will not simply attract followers, it will attract the invaluable influential followers that I have just described.

1. Write an appealing biography

You are not compelled to submit a personal profile when you sign up to Twitter, but you should. It is how most people find others to follow. Your profile provides you with up to 160 characters to write a potted biography. Forget any ideas about reeling off your life story, it's got to be short, memorable and, crucially, hold out the prospect of there being something in it for the reader.

Here's how to make sure your biography gets noticed by the right people.

✧ Use keywords

There are numerous applications that locate users by searching for keywords in their Twitter profiles. You should, therefore, include keywords that will appeal to your target followers.

A maker of pine furniture in Cardiff specialising in rocking chairs uses the following keywords in their Twitter biography:

Cardiff Pine Carpentry Furniture Rocking chairs

Anyone with an interest in any of these keywords will find this like-minded tweeter and decide to take a look at what they are tweeting about.

✧ Describe your business fully

A Therapist describes themselves as:

Holistic Therapist providing Health & Wellbeing for Mind, Body & Spirit

Similarly, you could use more subjective terms, such as:

The Picture Framer - passionate about art and what surrounds it

✧ Offer something useful

A gardening service tweets daily gardening tips:

Your daily dose of gardening wisdom – from Graham’s Gardens

A newspaper photographer tempts followers with:

Behind the scenes tweets from a freelance photo journalist.

✧ Keep it punchy

Remember it is not a CV you are writing, so avoid phrases like, ‘Before being a life coach I was an accountant’. Instead write:

Life coach who knows what it’s like to be trapped in an office.

✧ Express your personality

Despite the fact that you are using Twitter to market your business, it is still a social medium. So, inject some personality:

Vicky’s Healthfood Store – All tweets guaranteed 100% organic.

✧ Add a website address

Although Twitter does show your web address, you can use your profile to include a useful link to anything:

When I’m not tweeting or copywriting I write a blog about being a copywriter (tiptopcopy.com/blog)

Now, put them all together...

If you can combine each of these biography guidelines you will end up with a bio that will make you eminently followable by the people that matter.

Here is what the completed bio for A Pine Romance, the Cardiff-based manufacturer of rocking chairs, would look like:

A Pine Romance tweets furniture tips & carpentry tricks from their Cardiff showroom while making remarkable rocking chairs ~ See some at pineromance.co.uk/rocks