

Using Twitter to Maximize your Impact and Experience at Conferences & Trade Shows

Follow these easy steps to make your company the talk (or tweets!) of the town.

The president of Company X is speechless. Her mouth is frozen open in astonishment. The look on her face: priceless.

What just happened?

She's at an enormous conference, stuck in her seat in a giant ballroom, waiting for the former first lady of the United States to arrive and speak. No one can leave and get back in (security, you know), so the crowd of thousands can do nothing but fidget uncomfortably for what feels like forever and watch a Twitter feed scroll across the giant screens set up around the room.

Suddenly, a tweet from Company X crawls across those screens.

And that tweet keeps popping up every five minutes or so, burning the company's name into the brain of everyone in that huge audience for more than an hour.

Want to feel the power of Twitter? Behold the look on that company president's face.

We can tell you calmly that Twitter's a great tool to use at large conferences. And, that Twitter can be a very effective platform for engaging with key influencers in your industry in addition to current and prospective customers.

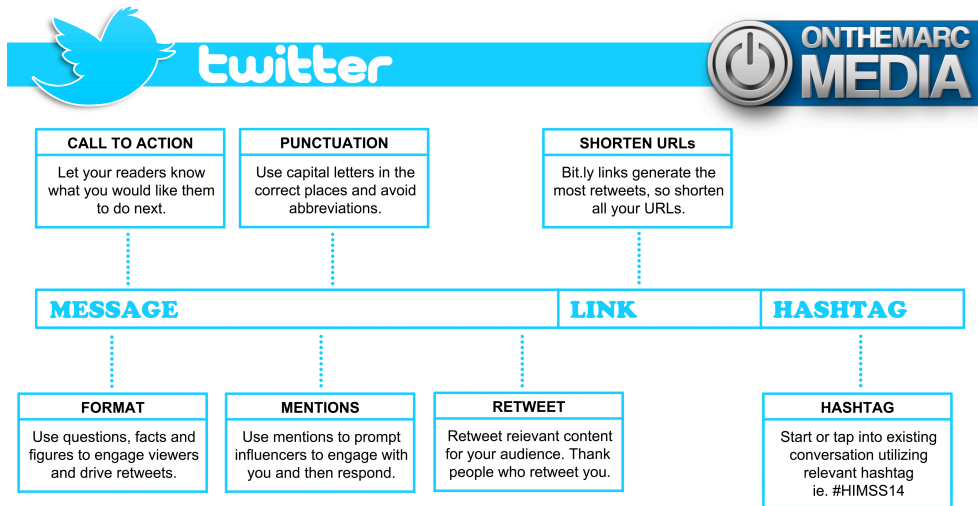
But nothing can convey the gut-level impact of a well-planned Twitter strategy better than the glee on that woman's face as her company's name — showcased in a memorably insightful tweet — went viral among THE most influential audience on the planet for that industry.

Did we say "strategy?" Yep. Company X was an On The Marc Media client. And while the inclusion of that particular tweet in the conference screen crawl was lucky — it was no accident. Our detailed social media plan and a lot of hard work made the likelihood of a *coup de Twitter* pretty high.

Tweeting is an Art

Here's the take-away lesson for you. An artful use of Twitter can help you:

1. Educate fellow exhibitors and attendees in order to leverage social networks to build organic buzz and engagement around your products and services.
2. Demonstrate value by sharing information, expertise and resources with others
3. Engage with your community through relevant conversations.



The actual process of “tweeting” is pretty simple, once you get the hang of it. Kids are doing it. Celebrities are doing it. Heck, even the Pope is doing it.

But just because it’s easy-to-do doesn’t mean every tweet that pops to mind is smart-to-do. Before you rush into tweeting, think first about these very important steps.

Step #1: Get your Twitter profile together — and be sure it has these three elements:

- A memorable picture: Use a great photo of yourself that will help people easily and quickly recognize you if they meet you in person.
- A memorable byline: For example, Tom Hanks’ byline is: “I’m that actor in some of the movies you liked and some you didn’t. Sometimes I’m in pretty good shape, other times I’m not. Hey, you gotta live, you know?” But Warren Buffett’s is: “Chairman and CEO of Berkshire Hathaway.” One is catchy and the other one is purely factual. If you’re not (yet) as famous as Hanks or Buffett, which type do you think your audience will remember?
- Add your company’s Twitter handle to your personal account.

Example:



Quiz: Can you identify these people from their Twitter pictures? (Hint: You'd probably recognize them if they used more obvious photos!)



Answer: Michael J. Fox; Sarah Jessica Parker

Step #2: Write good tweets.

Tweets might be short, but they can be powerful. Use those 140 characters to your advantage. Some points to consider:

1. Keep your tweets brief and engaging.
2. Optimize your tweets with URLs, hashtags, tags and handles when appropriate.
3. Be resourceful when sharing or looking for content.

Example:



Mayo Clinic @MayoClinic · 29m
5 strategies to help prevent #heartdisease. #TheHeartProject @HerHeartCare
mayocl.in/1frB9ul

4. Be visual.
5. Add a pop of humor.

Example:



Oreo Cookie @Oreo · Feb 3
Some might call it a delicious twist of fate. #InfOgraphics
pic.twitter.com/xBn5BKDAwS



6. Engage your audience whenever possible by asking questions and moderating comments.
7. Include a call to action when necessary.
8. Use the official conference hashtag, which can be found on conference website.

Example:



Dell Healthcare @DellHealth · 1h
Wonder how to how to manage #BYOD challenges? Join @Dell's panel discussion 2/26 suite 340C 7.30 am at #HIMSS14 @IntelHealthIT

9. Follow the 80/20 rule - 80% = great content 20% = self promotional

Example:



Step #3: Don't write bad tweets.

For example, avoid these pitfalls:

- Being too self-promotional (remember that 80/20 rule)
- Beginning tweets with a twitter handle (because the tweet will then only be visible to the limited group following you and the other handle)
- Failing to give credit to other sources for their original tweets

Conference Tweet Timing

Integrate your use of Twitter into your conference schedule.

Before the Conference:

- Develop relevant Twitter lists.
- Always include your twitter handle on promotional materials.

Beginning of the Day:

- Tweet your booth schedule.
- Schedule tweets to go out before the event, during it and afterwards, if you know you'll be busy doing other things.

During the Day:

- Live tweet during sessions and presentations. There's nothing like hearing about something great while it's going on.
- Tweet valuable resources — demonstrate your expertise.
- Curate content to boost your buzz. (Can you say that three times fast?) Provide your followers with information they can use.

End of the Day:

- Tweet your schedule for the upcoming day.
- Tweet your greatest takeaways.

Be Ready to Get Lucky

Twitter is one of those tools best used right — or not at all. You can help luck find you if you go all-in and commit to using Twitter as your 24/7 companion during conference or trade show periods. Ideally, you want to be Twitter-smart throughout the year. But savvy strategizing around industry events boosts the odds of having the impact you want — and enjoying your own version of priceless astonishment.