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How to Attract Customers with Twitter



Over the past few years, the micro-blogging social media site Twitter has evolved from a curious experiment into a staple of everyday life for many Americans.

Twitter has become an absolute necessity for true-blooded newshounds, with many journalists now breaking stories on the popular platform. It's also Ground Zero for many newsmakers, tastemakers and thought-leaders, and provides a rare, in-the-moment insight into the minds and hearts of many celebrities.

"But how does any of that impact me or my business?" you may ask. Well...the answer is fairly simple.

More than you might think. A lot more.

In conjunction with our valued partners at HubSpot (www.hubspot.com + @HubSpot on Twitter), we here at Fang Digital Marketing (www.fangdigital.com + @FangDigital on Twitter) offer you this valuable and versatile eBook on how to attract customers with Twitter.

We believe you'll find this eBook tremendously helpful in ramping up your business' Twitter presence. It can also assist you in learning and implementing best practices to not only evangelize and grow your brand on Twitter, but also generate new leads that can be passed along to your sales team.

And when you're ready to learn even more, we'd love to hear from you. And find out just how we can make your brand perform even better on Twitter – along with other valuable social media platforms like Facebook.

Give us a call at 626.755.0995. Visit us online at www.fangdigital.com. Or shoot us a Tweet at @FangDigital.

HOW TO ATTRACT CUSTOMERS WITH TWITTER

Optimize Your Twitter Presence To Generate Leads & Sales

CONTENTS:

INTRODUCTION

OPTIMIZE THE BRANDING OF YOUR TWITTER PROFILE

6 STEPS TO OPTIMIZE TWITTER FOR SEARCH

TWITTER ETIQUETTE FOR BUSINESS

6 IDEAS TO JUMP START YOUR LEAD GENERATION STRATEGY

HOW TO MEASURE THE ROI OF TWITTER

CONCLUSION

INTRODUCTION

“If it don’t make dollars, it don’t make sense.”

We live in an increasingly complex, crowded and fragmented marketing world. And that world now includes over 100 million active Twitter accounts.

But what does that mean, exactly? Just because Twitter is omnipresent doesn’t mean it’s automatically going to help your business when you start Tweeting.

Yes, we all know that Twitter can enhance your brand image. But that’s just for starters. Even better...smart Twitter usage can also have a direct, measurable impact on sales.

In this eBook, you’ll learn how to use Twitter to turn fans and followers of your business into leads, which can then be qualified and sent to your sales team. Because, in this marketing world of 100 million Twitter accounts, “if it don’t make dollars, it don’t make sense.” (1)

(1) Dan Zarrella, HubSpot Social Media Scientist, paraphrasing DJ Quik

CHAPTER 1

OPTIMIZE THE BRANDING OF YOUR TWITTER PROFILE

Even in a world limited to 140 characters, it’s easy to go unnoticed. So any chance you get to set yourself apart, to make yourself unique and visible, to stand out from the crowd...well, you should grab it. And make the most of the opportunity.

For about a year now, Twitter has made it possible for companies to create their own official brand pages. Let's take a closer look at how these pages can be set up to help your business.

Call-to-Action Banners

Twitter now lets businesses add a customer header under their profile bio. It's a chance for companies to show more personality. But more importantly, from a lead-generation standpoint, you can also include a call-to-action (CTA) in this space.

So think for a moment about what your Twitter audience will find most beneficial coming from you, and create and post that linkable CTA.

Featured Tweets

As we all know, the shelf-life of a Tweet is short. Very short. So what about those Tweets that you think merit more attention than the others? On your brand page, you can feature a Tweet at the top of your Twitter feed. What's great about this feature is that now you can highlight specific campaigns and offers, and give them more visibility over a longer period of time. You can also support these Tweets with engaging images and videos. In the end, you have a better way to promote your offer, and this can only help your lead-generation efforts.

Custom Background

A custom background is another nice Twitter touch for your brand. You can start out by creating a custom background using any design software.

To create a terrific Twitter background fast, read the step-by-step instructions below and follow along during this video tutorial:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=chC0NWTmQIs>

Step 1. Set The Right Measurements

Once you open up your design software, the first thing you want to do is create a new background with the right measurements. On Twitter, that means:

Width: 2048 pixels

Height: 1900 pixels

Resolution: 72 pixels/inch

By the way, keep in mind that Twitter backgrounds are static, meaning they don't scroll down as users scroll down a profile page.

Step 2. Define Your Design Space

The Twitter timeline feed always appears in the center of the page. The last thing you want to do is design a background where your important company information is blocked out.

To make sure you avoid making this mistake, pull out a marker over the 300-pixel mark on the horizontal ruler in your design software.

You can do this by clicking on the vertical ruler and dragging until the line touches 300 on the horizontal ruler. Now you have created a "safe spot" for your company information.

For most design software, this marker won't appear in your final product. It's just an indicator. If you're working off of a design software that doesn't have a marker, simply draw a line, and delete it later.

Step 3 - Choose A Background Color/Image

You can either make your entire canvas one color, or you can insert an image that takes up the entire background. If it's an image, there are two things to consider.

- First, make sure you own the rights to that image.
- Second, remember that the majority of that image is going to be covered by the Twitter feed. It may not look so great when the central part of the image is hidden.

For starters, we usually recommend a solid color – it's safe and usually easy on the eyes.

Step 4 - Add Your Text

Now let's focus on that "safe spot" – the 300-pixel wide, left-hand column space.

What you choose to place there should best reflect your company's established brand identity. Elements to consider are your logo, company name, brief bio, and website and social media URLs.

As for your company description, it's best if it's kept short and sweet. Much like a Tweet. After all, your audience likes 140-character updates for a reason.

Step 5. Save Your File Correctly

Of course, you'll want to save your file in a place where you can easily find it. What you may not know is in what format to save it in.

Twitter accepts three file types: JPG, PNG, or GIF. Also, make sure that the image size does not exceed 800K. Anything bigger and Twitter won't accept it.

Most design programs give you ways to reduce your file size if you need to. For example, in PhotoShop you are given the option of adjusting image quality when saving a file, which brings down the size without deteriorating the quality.

Step 6. Upload Your Background To Twitter

With your image files ready to go, head over to the “settings” on your company Twitter profile. You can find it on the drop-down menu under your Twitter username on the upper right-hand side. From “settings,” click the “design” tab and select “change background image.” Upload your background, save changes, and in an instant your awesome background will appear.

CHAPTER 2

6 STEPS TO OPTIMIZE TWITTER FOR SEARCH

“Make sure your Twitter handle and updates help your business rank in search.”

With your shiny new brand page ready, you’re all dressed up for the Twitter world. Now let’s make sure people can find you in search engine results. After all, what you want is to have your Twitter handle and updates impact your entire marketing program by helping your business rank in searches for industry keywords.

We’re not talking about ranking higher than your website or key landing pages. We’re talking about being a bit greedy – and having your Twitter posts rank a few links below your key pages. It’s a way that you can dominate the first one or two pages of the search engines.

Here’s how.

Step 1. Make Twitter Handles Spam-Free

Google’s algorithms are always on the lookout for spammers and disreputable sites. When Google sees Twitter handles that include sets of numbers (e.g., @name546789) it often disregards them, since there is no way to differentiate between who is real and who isn’t.

It's therefore a good idea to first choose your company name, and if that's taken, then a unique and professional username.

If you want to change your handle name, that's easy to do, and you can do it at any time with any name that's available. To make the switch, just go to "settings" and look for the field that allows you to change your username.

Step 2. Include Keywords In Bio

When it comes to your bio, Twitter is most generous. It gives you an additional 20 characters. That's right, a full 160 characters worth of information can be used in your bio.

But that's still not a lot, and it has to be readable. So don't pepper this "about" section with industry keywords or buzzwords. Think about one that's key to your business and will help you improve search visibility. Then write your bio in a way that is attention-grabbing, because if someone finds you through your Twitter bio, you want to make the right impression. Right away.

Step 3. Build Your Reach

You want to build a following, and increasing your numbers is good. But even better from a search perspective is gaining quality followers. The algorithms for both Google and Bing check the authority of every user Tweeting content. "We do compute and use author quality," explained a Google representative. "We don't know who anyone is in real life :-)"

Step 4. Create A Special Subset Of Keywords

The fact that Twitter is all about 140 characters can prove a bit problematic for lengthy keywords and keyword phrases. For that reason, think about picking a smaller subset of keywords specifically for Twitter. To boost your ranking, use these phrases throughout the day in your tweets.

Step 5. Keep Tweet Lengths In RT Safe Zone

So you think Twitter is all about 140 characters? Well, actually, in the world of re-Tweets (or RTs), you should be thinking about Tweets that are 120 characters.

The reason for this is that when someone shares your Tweet via “rt @username”, they eat up about 20 characters, and if your SEO-friendly keywords are at the end of your tweet, they might get lost in the re-Tweet.

Another reason to keep it shorter is that data shows that 120 to 130-character Tweets also have the highest click-through rates (CTR):

http://www.mediabistro.com/alltwitter/get-more-clicks-twitter_b17976

Step 6. Create Your Own Inbound Links

Remember how in Step 3, we told you about gaining quality followers? Well, the only way you can get them is by making sure your content is remarkable. A bland Tweet will not gain you much traction.

Google and Bing have said they register the value of Twitter authority figures and correlate it with the value of the link posted. What this means is that if your Tweet is re-Tweeted by someone who has a large following, the search engines will give your re-Tweeted link its proper value of importance – the Twitter equivalent of an inbound link. So if you want to boost your optimization efforts, post something that appeals to influencers, trend-setters and thought-leaders.

CHAPTER 3.

TWITTER ETIQUETTE FOR BUSINESS

“64% of users are more likely to purchase from businesses that answer their questions on Twitter.”

Time is a valuable commodity for all marketers – and social media monitoring can be a huge time suck.

Here are some tips that will help you monitor Twitter in a way that optimizes your results, without having to reply to every Tweet.

Tip 1. Reply Only When Necessary

You don't have to reply to every Tweet with a “thank you.” A better use of your time is to reply to two types of Tweets: questions and negative comments.

Your social media manager can handle most questions. When they don't know the answer, or when the negative comments require more thought, make sure they ask those in the know how to best reply. After a while, you'll get a sense of how to use your resources to give your Twitter followers the responses they deserve.

Tip 2. Follow Back To Allow Direct Messaging (DM)

There are reasons to follow back your followers. One is to hear what they have to say. But probably more important is that you want to allow them to send you direct messages. Twitter will only let people send you direct messages if you are following them.

Tip 3. Place “@Reply” In Front Of Tweet

If you want to make sure your reply Tweet is registered as a reply, you need to place the Twitter handle at the beginning of your update (e.g, “@numinews I read your...”).

Placing the Twitter handle elsewhere would make it a mention. This would mean that your reply would only appear on your profile page and the feeds of people who follow you both. You may notice users dodging this by including a period in front of their Tweet (.@numinews).

So before you respond, decide whether you want that Tweet to be seen by everyone or not. If you are just saying thanks, no need to make your reply visible. If on the other hand, you want others who are following you to see a positive comment about your company, you can respond with “Hey @numinews.”

Tip 4. Schedule, Then Monitor

It's always good to know what you want to Tweet for the day. And we have found that allocating time in the morning to compose your batch of Tweets for the day helps you in a number of ways.

- First, it lets you see how you want to schedule your Tweets – some may play better in the midday and others later, for example.
- Second, it actually minimizes the time you spend writing your Tweets.
- Third, it's critical if you want to schedule your Tweets to be automatically published throughout the day.

By scheduling multiple Tweets at one time, you can think of clever ways to promote your content ahead of time. Furthermore, it gives you more time to follow where that content is going, how it's being discussed, and what leads it's generating for you.

You should look at social media publisher software (like that available from HubSpot and Hootsuite) that allows you to schedule multiple Tweets at once. This automation will allow you to check in occasionally and respond only when necessary – which is much easier than worrying, or forgetting that you have to Tweet.

How Not to Get Lost in the Twitterverse.

When businesses get “lost in the Twitterverse,” bad behavior can occur, like using Twitter in a non-customer friendly way.

There are several myths that are out there in the Internet marketing space that encourage this bad behavior. Let’s look closer at three of them.

MYTH 1 - Longer Membership vs. Shorter Membership

So what if you were active on Twitter before it became “mainstream?” The fact is that Twitter presence is measured by value, not by longevity.

So just because your company has been Tweeting for years doesn’t give you license to spam about your product or service. People on Twitter follow those whose information helps/educates/amuses them. So let’s change the variables, shall we? And remember that value trumps longevity.

MYTH 2 - Tweeting Every Second vs. 15-25 Tweets Per Day

No one is disputing the short shelf-life of a Tweet. But that should not give you license to Tweet constantly. Not only will Tweeting too often cause your other Tweets to move down a user’s feed almost instantly, but it will also ramp up the odds of you annoying your followers.

HubSpot’s data shows that the sweet spot for increasing following is between 15-25 Tweets a day. Keep in mind, this is an average. You can certainly fluctuate above and below.

MYTH 3 - Following Industry Leaders vs. Following Customers

It’s great if you follow industry leaders to learn from their insights and keep track of your competitors’ messaging. But don’t forget your own customers and brand evangelists.

Make sure you give love to those who are willing to publicly show they follow your company and talk you up. After all, social media is all about two-way communication. And it's also fast-moving. Ignore your fans at your own peril. And watch just how fast they decide to unfollow you.

CHAPTER 4

6 IDEAS TO JUMP START YOUR LEAD GENERATION STRATEGY

“The biggest mistake marketers make with Twitter is not realizing it can make you money.”

Why would you invest a lot of time and energy on marketing that didn't have a return on investment (ROI)?

Many who market with Twitter don't realize it can help you make money. Not only is it an effective communication channel, it's also a great place to generate leads.

So how can you make Twitter work for your lead generation? This really depends on the kind of business you are in. The following are a list of ideas we've experienced success with. Try a few of them and test to see which works best for you.

Idea 1 - Tweet Offers

Start with the simplest one. Share your offers.

Depending on your business and the amount of other Tweets you compose in a day, make sure you control the number of offers so you don't appear too “spammy.”

For example, it's okay for a recruiter to repeatedly share offers to job openings because users will naturally be vested in that opportunity. However, constantly offering the same whitepaper about improving heating systems might turn people off.

If you're worried about coming up with content ideas, here's an eBook that can help you out:

<http://www.hubspot.com/100-Inbound-Marketing-Content-Ideas/>

Idea 2 - Connect Your Blog To Your Twitter Feed

This seems like a no-brainer, but you'd be surprised how many businesses fail to Tweet links to all their posts (which should themselves have call-to-action featured in them).

<http://www.hubspot.com/introduction-to-business-blogging/>

Make sure that your post gets Tweeted the second it's published. Many software programs, like HubSpot's, can do this automatically.

<http://www.hubspot.com/products/business-blog/?source=ebooks-ctas>

Idea 3 - Respond With Landing Pages

There is absolutely nothing wrong with replying to questions on Twitter with a helpful landing page link. In fact, answering the question with a few words and pointing them to a solution often gives your company greater credibility and authority.

For example, HubSpot received a question about wanting to improve a company's website presence. @Hubspot responded with a link to the ebook, "25 Website 'Must Haves' for Driving Traffic, Leads & Sales." The user appreciated the beneficial – not spammy – response, filled out the form and received the helpful information. And for being so helpful, HubSpot got a lead along the way!

Idea 4 - Hashtags

The truth about hashtags is that just adding one to a Tweet isn't going to give you any results. For them to be effective, you need to integrate them into a marketing campaign.

For example, when hosting an event, create a hashtag so users can chime in and you can aggregate a list of Tweets from potential leads. The hashtag will allow you to interact with commentary about the event...and help you measure just how many people are paying attention.

If you see a trending hashtag that is relevant to your Tweet, include it in your updates. If you see a user Tweeting with a particular hashtag, include it in your re-Tweet. The advantage of doing this is that your Tweets can reach anyone who is looking at Tweets for that particular hashtag.

Idea 5 – Build Reach

For any of the above ideas to work, you need to build up your following. The more people that follow and read your Tweets, the higher your chance of generating leads.

One of the best blog posts on attracting more social media fans is "8 Guaranteed Ways to Increase Social Media.":

<http://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/27094/8-Guaranteed-Ways-to-Increase-Social-Media-Reach.aspx>

Idea 6 - Twitter Chat

Have you ever been to a Twitter chat? This is where someone or a company hosts a discussion on Twitter. The host or expert gives followers a chance to ask questions in a half-hour or hour period, and these questions are answered in real-time.

These chats all have their own hashtags. The host (@hostname) RTs what users are saying and takes care to answer the follow-up questions that the expert was unable to get to.

To maximize the lead-generation efforts, each chat should come paired with a certain offer – such as an eBook or a free trial of software that supports the topic.

Twitter chats may not work for every business, but if your company conducts webinars or wants to be known as an industry leader, you should at least give them a try. But don't just host one event, and if it doesn't work, quit. Test a few different topics and formats.

To get a sense of how you can run yours, start by joining one of the 600 regularly scheduled Twitter chats on a huge variety of industry topics:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/ccc?key=0AhisaMy5TGiwcnVhejNHWnZIT3NvWFVPT3Q4NklzQVE#gid=3>

CHAPTER 5

HOW TO MEASURE THE ROI OF TWITTER

Everything stated in this eBook is absolutely useless unless you're measuring your efforts along the way.

Unfortunately, Twitter doesn't offer a seamless way to check your analytics.

To analyze your Twitter efforts, you need to have closed-loop marketing. Track the path of a user who clicks a link in a Tweet and then visits a landing page where he or she fills out a call-to-action form and eventually converts into a customer.

To measure the true ROI of Twitter, you need to know exactly how it's making you money.

There are four key steps to the process:

Step 1 - Start Using An Analytics Tool

To find out the number of visitors that come to your site from Twitter, you'll need an analytics tool, such as Google analytics or HubSpot.

While Google Analytics is free, the benefit of using HubSpot is that it does a lot of the closed-loop marketing for you since it lets you see how many leads are generated through Twitter.

The next step is to tie in your Customer Relationship Management (CRM) solution, like Salesforce and SugarCRM, to your marketing software, like Hubspot. This will let you close the loop between your Twitter marketing efforts and sales.

In addition to the analytics, this establishes two-way communication between your marketing activities and sales results. You'll be able to see the connection between your inbound marketing activities, the increase in the number of visitors to your site, and the level of conversions into leads and sales. With this closed-loop in place you can take your Twitter marketing and compare it to your other marketing tactics.

Step 2 - Tracking Tokens For Different Sources

Beware of third-party Twitter clients, such as TweetDeck. If a follower shares a link to your blog post from such a client, it might not show up in your analytics as a visit from Twitter. This won't help the accuracy of your data.

There is a way to get around this – a tracking token. By adding a tracking token to the end of your link, you can help your analytics to pool your traffic into groups.

There are tools that use different tokens, but a generic one looks like this:

[/?utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter](#)

Here's how it works. Anyone who clicks that "tracking" link signals your analytics tool that that lead came from Twitter.

Tracking tokens are a good thing for all channels, like email, paid media and referral traffic. Before using them, make sure your marketing or analytics software has tracking tokens in place and your data gets assigned to the right categories.

Having software like Hubspot's social media publisher takes the process one step further, by placing tracking tokens automatically in its blog updates.

<http://www.hubspot.com/products/business-blog/?source=ebooks-ctas>

Step 3 - Use The Right Metrics

We recommend that companies look at their analytics constantly. Data-driven marketers should follow their progress monthly, if not weekly. Here are the metrics we recommend you keep track of:

Twitter Follower Month-To-Month Growth

Pull the number of Twitter followers and net new followers. This gives you a picture of your monthly Twitter growth. Here is a formula you can use:

$$\frac{(\text{March Twitter Followers} - \text{February Twitter Followers})}{\text{February Twitter Followers}} = \text{Growth \%}$$

By tracking this percentage monthly, you learn which of your Tweeting strategies and campaigns work best.

Twitter Visitor-To-Lead Rate

Pull the number of Twitter visitors and Twitter leads, and with following formula, you can determine your lead growth via Twitter.

Twitter Visitors / Twitter Leads = Visitor To Lead Rate

Tracking your Twitter visitor-to-lead growth rate keeps you honest. The number will tell you how your social tactics are translating into leads for your sales team.

To track this growth more closely, create daily goals. First determine the number of leads you want to generate monthly. Then divide that number by the number of business days in that month, and that will give you your daily goal.

In order to determine realistic monthly goals, analyze your past history. That means don't set a goal for 2,000 leads when you only had 50 the month before. And you don't have to limit this analysis to Twitter. Do the same for all of your social media channels. Marketing software like HubSpot's keeps track of that social media visitor-to-lead rate, so you don't have to maintain various Excel spreadsheets to get these insights.

<http://www.hubspot.com/products/analytics/?source=ebooks-ctas>

Step 4 - Further Qualify Leads

There's an age-old question that always comes up – when is the right time to pass the leads along to sales?

A Twitter lead, fresh off the Tweet, is probably not qualified enough for a handoff to sales. But it is certainly ripe for lead nurturing.

You can nurture this new lead by offering them more resources and further education about your product or service. You can nurture these leads either through drip marketing or, if you have the software, more sophisticated behavior-based communication. Whatever you do, each step should try to get them further down the sales funnel.

This video gives you an idea of what that follow-up process might look like if you used HubSpot's marketing software:

<http://www.hubspot.com/products/marketing-automation/?source=ebooks-ctas>

What About The Other Engagement Metrics?

Twitter has elements that are entirely unique to its environment, such as hashtags, mentions for specific campaigns and replies. So how do you measure their effectiveness?

In this section, we'll cover a range of free tools that can help you measure Twitter-specific interactions.

Tool 1 - Twitter Counter

We love TwitterCounter (<http://twittercounter.com/>). It gives you an easy way to track your follower growth over time. And if you want, you can also see your net new number of followers per day.

With this tool, you can find out how many new followers you got from a campaign, starting with the first day it launched.

This tool is also valuable because it lets you see if your following is growing or remaining constant. While we think quality is important, you certainly want your follower numbers to grow – that will only help your funnel.

Tool 2 - Twitter Advanced Search

Just because Twitter doesn't have a beautiful analytics tool doesn't mean it can't have a beautiful advanced search tool.

We like this search tool because it lets you break down your search terms very specifically: by content, users, location, etc.

You can also use it to track the success of a specific Tweet and story. For example, when HubSpot acquired the marketing automation company Performable, it ran a search looking for Tweets with the words "performable" and found out how people were interested in the news. So think about using this search tool when running campaigns to see if your efforts sparked any conversation.

Tool 3 - Hashtags Revisited

Using hashtags lets you track how well your campaigns perform. Using sites like Hootsuite and Hashtracking, you can see how many times a hashtag has been used.

Furthermore, you can track a topic beyond what you say about it or beyond what you link to. When HubSpot started an #inboundjobs hashtag, any company could include it in their tweets to look for inbound marketing candidates. Because this was open to anyone, HubSpot could track the popularity of inbound job openings and opportunities through the hashtag, without having to be the ones linking to or talking about a job posting.

Tool 4 - Bit.ly

Most marketers know about bit.ly, the wonderful online software that lets you shorten links to be Twitter-friendly. What's also great about bit.ly is that it gives you the ability to analyze the number of clicks on that specific link.

CONCLUSION

“Be smart about the way you prioritize your marketing initiatives.”

In celebration of the 140-character limit, here are the lessons we hope you’ve learned from this eBook (all presented 140 characters or less):

- Twitter is more than a network for engaging conversation and promoting positive brand image.
- Don’t just update on-the-go Tweets. Analyze your efforts to decide if it’s in your company’s best interest to invest time on Twitter.
- Only invest time and effort in marketing on Twitter if you can measure the results and ROI through a closed-loop marketing process.
- Test the waters on other social media channels and find the ones which provide your business with the best ROI.

So be smart about the way you prioritize your marketing initiatives. Be ever watchful of how Twitter can truly help your business. And remember what we said in the beginning...

“If it don’t make dollars, it don’t make sense.”

And when you’re ready to learn even more – and make even more dollars and sense – give us here at Fang Digital Marketing a call at 626.755.0995. Visit us online at www.fangdigital.com. Or shoot us a Tweet at [@FangDigital](https://twitter.com/FangDigital).

Social media is a dynamic, fast-moving and ever-evolving field, where new discoveries and practices are unfolding as you read this. As agile and adept experts who specialize in Internet marketing, we’re here to help assure you’re always up for the next step...and even ahead of the curve. In addition to our acumen in social media, we can also help you employ best practices and craft compelling creative in display advertising, paid and organic search, SEO, affiliate programs, email and more.

We look forward to connecting with you soon. Have fun out there in the Twitterverse!