

BRAND AWARENESS: IT'S ALL A 'TWITTER'

By Carol Chapman, Principal & Co-founder of The Brand Ascension Group

Have you been wondering how Twitter, a free social networking service (www.twitter.com), can help you build brand awareness for your company? I must admit, I was a bit skeptical at first, but after encouragement from a business associate, I decided to give it a whirl and a whirl it has been so far. After just a few months of investigative use of the tool, I am now a firm believer that Twitter can definitely build tremendous awareness for any brand.

To date, no one really knows how many users are registered on Twitter. Some say as much as 5 million; others say as much as 10 million or more worldwide. When I heard these numbers, I thought, '*Now that's a huge opportunity for exponential brand exposure – with no hard costs!*'

One thing we do know is that Twitter has grown in popularity at an extraordinary rate. So many people are using Twitter from all walks of life to expand their reach and express their brand—whether business or personal. This includes individuals, businesses, professionals, celebrities, and politicians—from all over the world.

What is Twitter?

1. Specifically, Twitter is a **micro-blogging** and **instant messaging tool** for your company. You can literally Tweet what you want all day long just so long as you stay within the 140 character or less limit per message.
2. It's a **mass-communication tool** to leverage your business message to the world. Some businesses are even dedicating staff to manage their Twitter accounts. And best of all it's free to join – what a great brand awareness tool!

What are Some Basics in Getting Started with Twitter?

1. When you register your account, create a **complete profile** on your business. Make sure you fill out all requested areas to include a graphic (visual) of your brand's logo, your website URL, and a bio of your business. Your bio is very important as it is one of the first things people check out when they go to your Twitter page. They want to find out more about you. In your bio, be specific and to the point, as you are limited in the number of characters – 160. I am constantly referring to other's bios to determine whether I want to follow the person/company or not as it's important to connect with those who have a mutual interest in what The Brand Ascension Group does in the area of internal brand definition, creation, strategy and management.

Also, your website URL in your company profile is important. People who check you out see this as well and they can click on it to get to your website. I check out everyone who has a website URL as that provides a lot more information on who they are and what they do and helps me determine if I want to follow them and their Tweets.

2. Create a **custom background** on your **Twitter page** that is highly appealing and has the same look and feel of your brand based on your unique Brand DNA. See http://www.brandascension.com/Brand_DNA_Process.html for more information on defining your unique Brand DNA. This is extremely important. Your Twitter page should mirror the look and feel of your website, and **emulate your distinctive brand attributes (Values, Style, Differentiators and Standards), which are the foundational elements of your Brand DNA.** This creates consistency every time when others engage with you on Twitter, not to mention how essential it is to define and build your brand, and catapult your business growth. Notice how ours is highly relevant to our unique look and feel of our visual brand dress. Check out www.twitter.com/CarolChapman, www.twitter.com/SuzTulien, or www.twitter.com/brandascension (which we just set up).

How Can I Build Brand Awareness on Twitter?

1. If you want to gain maximum exposure, keep yourself on the “**public timeline**” so everyone sees your tweets. To do so, leave the “Protect Your Updates” box in the Settings area **unchecked**. If you check this, then your Tweet updates will become private and you’ll have to approve who can follow you every time. It will also keep your updates out of search results within Twitter and you don’t want that to occur as this dramatically reduces the ability of others to find your company.
2. Use the ‘**Find Other People**’ or ‘**Search**’ tool on Twitter. Just type a name or particular concept such as branding, culture, marketing, etc. This can be huge if you type in people in your industry and then find others that are following them. It opens up your reach significantly within your targeted industry or area of interest.
3. Post **Tweet updates** (messages) regularly (i.e., several times daily but don’t bombard your followers). Share your knowledge and resources (remember 140 characters or less) on something of interest and that will help others such as case studies, business events, key ideas, etc. Don’t forget to provide any links to the information.
4. Make your **Tweets understandable, inviting, compelling and informative**. You want to attract the right Tweeters as followers and you’ll want to follow those that have a common interest in what your business brand has to offer. So, make sure the information you Tweet is useful.
5. Use **hashtags** by using the hash symbol (#) before a subject (e.g., #brand) in your update. This allows the search engines and others in the ‘Twitterverse’ to find your updates on the subject.
6. Use Twitter to make **connections, identify prospective customers and point others** to your company’s website or others’ website for resources. This is a huge opportunity, as you build

followership, to share your knowledge, communicate information on what you are doing, create a mini-press release, share info on your products and services, new product or service launches, or other resources (e.g., white papers, research, etc.) you may want to point others to.

7. Create **multiple accounts** to exponentially expand your company's (brand) exposure.
8. Leverage **powerful tools** to manage your accounts and the exposure of your brand. Go to <http://adecon101.blogspot.com/2009/03/100-twitter-tools-to-help-you-achieve.html> for **101 resources** you can use. In the meantime, here's a few tools I've checked out recently and am using that you may want to consider:
 - **TweetDeck.com** –allows you to stay in touch with what's happening at any given point in time, and connect you with your contacts on Twitter in a single concise view.
 - **TweetLater.com**– enables you to create and schedule Tweet messages in advance and manage these activities so as to increase your productivity.
 - **TweetScan.com** – allows you to find out information that is being Tweeted about your company and brand keeping up real-time with what is being said about you.

HAPPY TWITTERING! Feel free to respond to this article as it will be posted on our blog at <http://feeds.feedburner.com/BusinessBrandingTips>. We'd invite you to share your experiences in the use of Twitter with us and others who read our blog.

To understand more about Brand DNA, go to http://www.brandascension.com/Brand_DNA_Process.html before you get too far using Twitter—as it will only ensure consistency, relevance and distinctiveness in how your brand shows up on Twitter.

And....stay tuned for future additions to this article as The Brand Ascension Group expands its knowledge, expertise and success in using Twitter and other social media tools to build brand awareness and grow our business.

About the Author

Carol Chapman is Principal & co-founder of The Brand Ascension Group, an experiential consulting firm that helps businesses build memorable brand experiences. She is an engaging speaker, consultant certified trainer and coach. She is author of an ebook – *Getting Your Employees on the Brand Wagon: Learn the secrets of highly successful brands and how they engage the hearts and minds of their employees to deliver consistent and distinctive brand experiences*. She is also co-authoring a soon to be released book entitled *Brand DNA: What every small business entrepreneur needs to know to define and build a GREAT brand, and sustain it for years to come*.

Carol can be contacted at carol@brandascension.com. Website: www.BrandAscension.com Blog: <http://brandascension.com/Blog/>