

Content is key to 'winning' Twitter



By Louise Marsland

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We know from a personal perspective that to get more followers on social media, we have to be active daily, post cool stuff, be authentic and be engaged. Is it the same for brands? The world's top 100 brands on Twitter are more active too and the key in 2015 is creating effective content.

Brands' engagement with their customers on Twitter outpaced activity and follower growth, according to a recent 2014 Twitter benchmark report from [Simply Measured](#). The report, available for [download free](#), analyses the tactics of the top brands on Twitter and provides benchmarks to compare your own brand's performance.

Let's start with the impressive stats: at the end of 2014, Twitter had 284 million active users sending 500 million tweets per day. The keyword here is 'active'. Mobile usage of course plays a huge role, as does the global reach of the brand, with 80% of active users via mobile and 77% of accounts from outside of the United States.



Source: Simply Measured

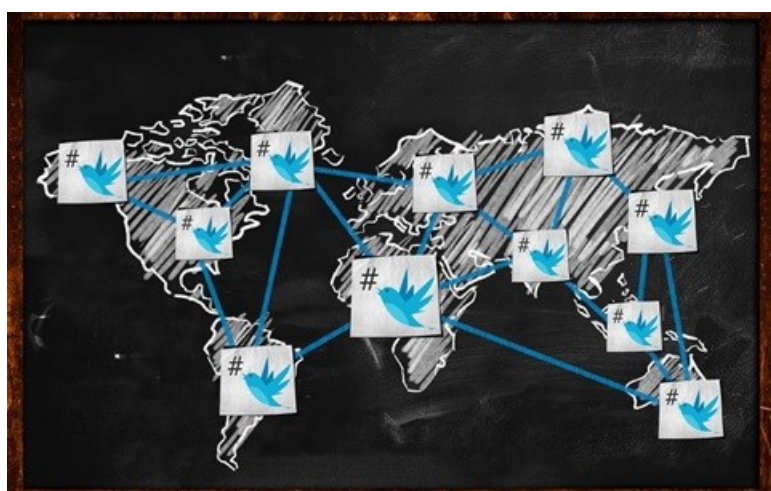
The data comes from Interbrand, which for the first time in 2014, included Twitter data as part of its ranking process for the top brands in the world. All data was analysed using Simply Measured's social media analytics and reporting solution. The Interbrand 100 is an industry standard for measuring the top brands in the world.

The most interesting finding is that the top brands on Twitter didn't actually increase their posting frequency or log any dramatic increase in their followers - but they did create better, more engaging content to connect with current audiences. On average, the Interbrand 100 brands saw per-post engagement rise by 85% year-over-year.

In fact, Simply Measured reports that brands are "really starting to hit the mark with the content they offer up to their followers". Brand activity and the number of active brands on Twitter is increasing:

- Simply Measured found that the percentage of brands that tweet at least once a day has increased from 92% to 95% since 2013.
- And 82% of brands tweet one to six times a day (excluding @replies and retweets).
- Less is more: only 6% of brands tweeted more than 10 times a day.
- But, brands are investing more in direct interaction with users and 48% of brands have replied to at least one tweet per day; 91% of brands replied to users at least once during 2014.

From the report: "An increasing daily posting cadence among brands highlights a more serious approach to Twitter. Only 7% of brands tweet less than once a day. Brands are, however, simultaneously wary of oversaturation. Brands are tweeting more, and a greater percentage of these tweets are coming in the form of @replies to individual users. This shows a growing focus by brands to engage and interact with their Twitter audiences."



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Content creation

So, what are these top brands doing right in terms of the type of content they are posting and the levels of engagement?

1. **Photos** drive the most engagement, making up 55% of tweets and 57% of all engagement. The take out from Simply Measured is that followers are more likely to interact with visual content than standalone links on Twitter.
2. **Links** account for 31% of sent tweets, but are only responsible for 26% of @replies, retweets and favourites from brands. Native content and videos/photos account for the majority of links posted by brands and some of the highest engagement came with Vine.co and Instagram links.
3. **Using hashtags** also drives engagement significantly and tweets that included hashtags in the last quarter of 2014 were up 58% from the previous year over the same period; 30% of tweets have one or more hashtags; and the number of top brands using hashtags more than doubled in the past year.
4. **Media brands** like MTV and Disney head up engagement on Twitter, but the automotive sector is the most represented sector on Twitter with 14 brands as active users. Media brands accounted for 7.6 million engagements in Q4 2014 - 56% more than the next active sector, retail. Restaurant brands like Pizza Hut, Starbucks, McDonalds and KFC, however, engage far more on a one-to-one basis with followers - five times more than any other industry sector.

In conclusion, Simply Measured offers up these pointers to brand success on Twitter:

- Tweet regularly: 74% of brands tweet at least three times a day.
- Tweet links: this is now a social standard.

- Talk directly to your followers: @replies make up 68% of all brand tweets.
- Use Twitter as a platform to engage directly with your customers: engagement with brands is up 105% since Q4 2013.
- Be visual: visual content works and photos inspired 57% of all brand engagement on Twitter.
- Use hashtags: hashtags drive engagement, but overuse causes followers to disengage.

How does your brand measure up?

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