Hashtags and brand presence

#OMG
#BRAND
#NEW

April 2013
# CONTENTS

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Summary

This report seeks to examine, identify and summarise best practice by brands using hashtags, principally on the Twitter social media platform.

Hashtags are essentially a tool to help users identify posts that have something in common. For brands they offer an opportunity to demonstrate that they are relevant to a particular topic – typically an issue, or an event. They can also be used by brands as easy labels for a campaign that can quickly be remembered or searched for (hashtags as a URL). Users expect hashtags to coalesce conversations.

Hashtags are a tool for curating information. They provide context and category to content so that they reach a specific but usually broader community of interest than a brand’s particular followers.

Most brands successfully using hashtags have a clear idea of why they are doing it. This is typically to engage a broader audience, to track a conversation, to demonstrate brand values (humour, innovation, service, thought leadership etc.), or to support a broader marketing campaign.

Hashtags are most successfully used to engage a brand with a particular conversation (or to start one). Typically this will not be about a product, but be more generic unless they are used for one of the following purposes:

- Managing specific campaigns, particularly competitions or to label a conversation around an event;
- Raising brand awareness, this is nearly always accompanied by considerable above the line advertising;
- Sharing content that is high quality, engaging, and audience focused - this is a conversation not a shop window.

The use of hashtags is aligned to encouraging followers. Successful hashtag use will lead to more engagement and then more followers. Hashtags should not replace @ accounts. They have discrete functions and one is not a substitute of the other.

Individual hashtags are carefully crafted, particularly to ensure focus - no-one will search for #food but they might search for #pizza. The use of hashtags fails where:

- Simple technical practices are not followed, such as using punctuation or spaces in hashtags;
- Hashtags are not specific enough;
- Overuse makes them meaningless;
- There is no conversational resonance or call to action;
- Hashtags are simply repeating a corporate slogan;
- Hashtags are hijacked by spammers or others seeking to damage a brand.
- Hashtags are confused with Twitter account names. The latter are addresses customers use when they want to talk to you or get your attention, not necessarily talk about you and should be kept to a minimum.
Introduction
What are hashtags?

Hashtags are words or strings of words with the # symbol immediately preceding. They do not use punctuation or spaces. They are used to categorize posts around a particular topic, and are often used for humorous effect. When you see a hashtag on Twitter, clicking on it takes you to a page containing all the posts that have been tagged with that hashtag. Essentially they are a tool to group together conversations to assist search.

Hashtags are most closely associated with Twitter, but they did not originate on Twitter, they have been in use for many years, starting with Internet Relay Chat [IRC]. Hashtags are used on Google+ and Instagram [owned by Facebook] amongst others.

- The # symbol, called a hashtag (also know as the "pound sign"), is used to help Streamzoo users categorize their uploads by topic or content.

To begin using hashtags, simply add # to keywords in your upload’s title or description. There must be no spaces between the hashtag and the keyword itself.

Why use hashtags? Using them allows for greater and easier discovery of your uploads! When you tag your photo with a hashtag, the photo is automatically inserted into the appropriate streams, allowing anyone who is following those streams to see your photo.


- What's a Google+ #Hashtag - And Why Should I Care?
  Hashtags: What are they used for? - Organization / Finding Stuff
  Hashtags: How can I use them? - In Google+ Search
  Hashtags: How can I make them? Use the # symbol with a 'word'
  Hashtags: How can I find just my stuff with them? - Filter Your Search
  Hashtags: Where they do NOT work! - They don't work in comments [edit... they DO work in comments NOW!]
  Hashtags: How can I find just my Friend's stuff with them? - Filter Search using Hashtags and Circles
  https://plus.google.com/109164280656499025716/posts/7jCB71MZ1UA

- Whenever a new Web trend comes along, there are people who ask, "What is the point of this?" If millions of people are using something, there has to be a reason. In our What Is the Point of... series, we'll explain it to you.

This week, we're asking, What is the point of #hashtags?
What Is a Hashtag?

The hashtag was invented as a label for groups and topics in IRC chat. By adding the ‘#’ sign before a string of text, users made that string easy to find in a search. But the hashtag went mainstream thanks to Twitter.

In 2007, as Twitter was just picking up steam, Chris Messina - an open-source software champion currently at Google - tweeted what is believed to be the original proposal that Twitter users adopt hashtags as well.

It caught on. For a long time, it was just a hack; hashtags were simply plain text in a tweet that could show up easily in search. Twitter's early-adopter crowd used hashtags like “#barcamp” (for BarCamp open-source conferences) or “#sxsw” (for South by Southwest) to filter their messages. Nate Ritter's #sandiegofire hashtag became one of the first news topics to go viral during the October 2007 California wildfires.

Twitter Makes It Official

By July 2009, Twitter had realized what an ingenious trick its users had invented, so it began to turn hashtags into links. When a Twitter user clicks on a hashtag, it goes to the stream of tweets containing that hashtag. You can also find hashtags using search. This is how you find things on Twitter by topic.

http://readwrite.com/2012/05/17/what-is-the-point-of-hashtags

How useful are hashtags?

Hashtags are useful when searching for posts on a particular topic, finding other users talking about a particular event, for advertising campaigns, running competitions, spreading memes. They are also used for spamming or hijacking conversations; popular hashtags will often be used by persons or companies unrelated to the hashtag to promote their content. They are meant to be used to group tweets so that users talking about the same thing can interact with each other.

- I can sum up what hashtags do in one word: nothing.

That's right, a hashtag doesn't actually do anything. It's a tag, a badge, a label, a whatzit that acts as shorthand for "this post is about x."
Let's say, for example, that you've been invited to attend this year's Real Men and Women of Genius conference (sponsored by Bud Light, natch). And at the ve-e-ery bottom of your invitation, you see something along the lines of "Tweet about this event with the hashtag #rmawog."
Curious, you hop onto Twitter (or your app of choice) and do a search for #rmawog. The resulting page reveals every tweet that's been posted using that hashtag. As you scroll down, you begin to realize that this search is looking an awful lot like something you've seen before ... a chatroom, maybe?

Congratulations! You've just unlocked the hashtag's secret superpower: offering a means for multiple people tweeting about the same topic to view and react to each other's tweets. And not just for in-person, live events.


Running a competition is a common way of using hashtags, people enjoy entering them and it is believed to be a good way to increase tweets about a brand. If you have run a competition, you may find it hard to pick a winner; (there is a website that can help you draw a winner at random: Draw random Twitter followers, retweets and hashtags instantly! www.twitterdraw.com). Using a hashtag is a quick way of identifying relevant tweets.

- Many marketers have begun taking advantage of this by introducing hashtag competitions. In order to enter a contest, you simply incorporate their hashtag in your tweet. It is usually the name of the company running a contest or the particular product they are trying to promote. The ultimate goal is to get enough mentions to be listed on the Twitter search page as a trending topic. That will lead to greater visibility to twitter users who would learn about your company, perhaps visit your site, or at least participate in the contest as well and increase the buzz around your product or brand.


Hashtags can be used to directly sell (as opposed to market) products and services. American Express recently started allowing twitter users to link their credit cards to their twitter accounts, and advertised products that could be purchased via hashtag.

- Will that be cash, charge, or hashtag?

Credit card company American Express has announced a partnership with Twitter that allows cardholders to purchase items by simply typing in a hashtag. For those unfamiliar with Twitter, the hashtag is a word or phrase preceded by the "#" symbol.

http://www.usatoday.com/story/tech/personal/2013/02/12/twitter-american-express-hashtag/1912325/

- Social Purchasing Via Hashtag: Why It Can Work
Considering that fact that Twitter has millions of users and American Express (AmEx) is one of the leading credit card companies in the world, it is only expected that the two groups would collaborate to offer a new approach called social purchasing.

The strategy aims to make it easier for individuals to purchase and shop for a variety of items while enjoying all the benefits of social media. The method is quite similar to online shopping wherein online users can simply click on products that they like and then pay via credit card.

http://www.hashtags.org/platforms/twitter/social-purchasing-via-hashtag-why-it-can-work/

- American Express is upgrading its Sync program with Twitter to let cardholders buy stuff by using a hashtag.

Starting Monday, AmEx customers who sync their cards can buy items if they use the right hashtag. The first such item is a $25 AmEx gift card, which will go for $15 if you tweet #BuyAmexGiftCard25. Other offers will be rolled out on Wednesday Feb. 13 at noon EST including an Amazon Kindle Fire HD for $149.99 (a $50 discount), an Xbox Controller for $29.99 (a discount of about $10) and an Xbox 360 4GB console with a three-month Xbox LIVE Subscription and two game tokens for $179.99 (which is the price of the console without those extras.)

If consumers opt for those items and use the correct hashtags, then they will get a verification from @AmexSync, which will contain a confirmation hashtag. Cardholders then have 15 minutes to tweet the confirmation hashtag to confirm their purchase. If they do so, the item will be shipped to their home within two days for free.

The program expands on AmEx's Sync program for Twitter, which rolled out last March. That initiative rewarded participating cardholders with discounts on items if they used various hashtags.

Though the program appears to be breaking new ground, AmEx isn't the first company to see potential in Twitter-based commerce or "t-commerce." In 2012, a startup called Chirpify linked up with PayPal to let users buy and sell things on Twitter using @ handles.

For AmEx, the move may be less about boosting a fledgling ecommerce platform and more about promotion; With each hashtag, users give a tacit endorsement to the program and, by extension, the AmEx brand.

http://mashable.com/2013/02/11/american-express-twitter-hashtag-purchase/
Using hashtags

To use a hashtag, you simply type ‘#’ and then type the word or words you wish to tag immediately after the # sign with no spaces or punctuation symbols. To end the hashtag you use a space or tab.

Advertisements

Hashtags can be used in advertisements to encourage people to talk about your brand. It is easier for users to talk about your brand on a social network that they are already regularly using rather than visiting a new website.

- Budweiser has spent untold millions on rolling out its Black Crown line. That includes two 30-second Super Bowl spots. One thing it failed to do: get the hashtag right. Outdoor placement urged consumers to use “#taste is,” but, alas, hashtags can’t have spaces.

We are now entering the hashtag era, as evidenced by the half of Super Bowl ads that carried them. The bet by marketers is that these will allow them to get people talking on platforms they are already on, which is not as big of a request as going to a dedicated microsite. And there’s some evidence that works: brand-related hashtags were mentioned 300,000 times on Super Bowl Sunday, an increase of 273 percent from last year.

“Hashtags are all about shared conversation, so as a brand, you need to put conversation at the heart of any hashtag strategy,” said Jon Lombardo, head of GE’s social media center of excellence. “We use hashtags either to join in larger conversation or to surface a focused conversation on a topic of passion for @GeneralElectric.”

Take GE’s #IWantToInvent hashtag, which the company uses on an ongoing basis to get people to participate in conversations around innovation. The hashtag wasn’t created for one specific campaign. Instead, it’s thematically connected to a lot of the marketing that GE does and resurfaces when relevant.

#IndustrialInternet is another GE hashtag. It was created to foster conversations at the company’s Minds and Machines conference in late November. This is another example of a hashtag that is connected to GE’s business strategy and will remain a key hashtag for both short-term events and longer-term conversations.

GE says that a hashtag strategy does not mean having a different hashtag for every campaign. That makes things too confusing for consumers. It’s about hashing out the key messages in your brand’s marketing strategy and creating hashtags for each. According to Lombardo, having a hashtag strategy means
creating hashtags that will be relevant over long periods of time, given that hashtags never really die.

Joe Barbagallo, manager of social media at Volvo Cars of North America, agrees that a different hashtag for every marketing campaign is not the equivalent of a well-thought-out hashtag strategy.

“Some brands have gotten a bit too hashtag happy,” Barbagallo said. “When brands create a different hashtag for each initiative, the experience becomes fragmented. Unless brands want to invest long-term and have an ‘always-on’ strategy behind their hashtags, the best way to introduce a new hashtag is to align it with something meaningful at scale. Super Bowl is a prime example of that.”

http://www.digiday.com/brands/brands-adopt-hashtag-strategies/

**Formatting**

A multi-word hashtag can be difficult to read, consider capitalizing each word.

- One helpful hint to consider is the appearance and legibility of a hashtag. Phrases are often used, blending the words together, resulting in a jumble that can be difficult to sort out or copy (retweet later). Consider capitalizing the first letter in each word of your hashtag, which won’t take up any extra character space but still help define the hashtag itself.

  http://thebuzz101.blogspot.co.uk/2013/02/too-many-hashtags-so-little-focus.html

- Three to four words is optimal for readability, and be sure to capitalize the first letter of each word. This is known as “camel case.”

  http://www.ragan.com/Main/Articles/The_6_most_irritating_ways_to_use_hashtags_on_Twit_45869.aspx#

This can also avoid any mix-ups over ambiguous letter/word combinations.

- Causing great mirth on the social network on Thursday, the unfortunate choice of hashtag #Susanalbumparty to promote the singer’s new album event has spawned a wealth of mock invites to the party and ridicule. Gawker reports the rumour-bashing site Is Twitter Wrong (run by @flashboy) managed to track down the original tweet from Susan’s account, which was hastily changed to #SusanBoylesAlbumParty.

  http://www.guardian.co.uk/technology/shortcuts/2012/nov/22/twitter-susan-boyle-susanalbumparty
Punctuation should not be used, as any punctuation will end the hashtag. The RAC have tried to use the hashtag [#Don'tgetcaughtout] but they have ended up with #Don because they left the apostrophe in the phrase.

@Number10gov David #Don'tgetcaughtout get one of these for your chauffeur
http://www.racshop.co.uk/car-maintenance/maintenance-essentials/product/rac-fuelsure-diesel-misfuelling-prevention-device.html ... fuel is pricey enough @FairFuelUK

https://twitter.com/RAC_Breakdown/status/314824774167707649

They have tried something similar here with [#mis-fuel], again the hashtag will end when punctuation is used, so they have ended up with the meaningless #mis.

@BarackObama think your chauffeur could do with one of these
http://www.racshop.co.uk/car-maintenance/maintenance-essentials/product/rac-fuelsure-diesel-misfuelling-prevention-device.html ... Designed by one of our patrols @Number10gov
#mis-fuel

https://twitter.com/RAC_Breakdown/status/314820870663176195

You can use numbers in hashtags, for example #dancelikeits1999 works, but a hashtag that is entirely made up of numbers, for example #1999, will not become a linked, clickable hashtag.

**Choosing hashtags**

You may want to limit the number of hashtags you are using to avoid confusion, and try to make them mean something specific. Volvo is very successful in their twitter campaigns and use only five hashtags.

- Companies like Volvo have taken steps to use specific branded hashtags like [#SwedeSpeak] and [#MyFirstVolvo] to interact with specific consumers about particular topics. By doing so and educating their audience about how to use them and what to expect, they have been successful in transforming these conversations into engagement tools for existing consumers while driving awareness of that usually positive relationship to those consumers’ networks.

In order to be successful with your hashtag strategy, leaders in the space recommend several best practices to follow:

Limit the number of hashtags you use and keep it simple. Too many hashtags make it difficult to track and are confusing to consumers.

Make them mean something. Figure out what you are going to focus on and then consistently leverage those across numerous campaigns.

Volvo have detailed but precisely defined definitions of all their hashtags on their website.

- #Volvo
  
  #Volvo is the official hashtag of Volvo Cars. We're a Scandinavian, luxury car company with a soul. Get involved in the conversation and read what people are saying about #Volvo.

- #SwedeSpeak
  
  #SwedeSpeak is a branded Twitter chat by Volvo Cars of North America. It's a monthly chat designed to connect with our fans and to share information about our new products, accessories, auto shows & more. Each month you can participate in an open discussion where you can get your questions answered, as well as share new ideas!

- #MyFirstVolvo
  
  The first time you purchase a Volvo, your journey with us begins. The #MyFirstVolvo hashtag captures your first memorable moments in your Volvo and explains how you felt, where you went and who took the first ride with you.

- #VolvoFacts
  
  Volvo has a rich heritage dating back to 1927. #VolvoFacts shares fun facts, tips, Volvo innovations and technology advancements through the years.

- #VolvoLove
  
  From our Scandinavian styling to the 'most-comfortable' seats and everything in between, there's plenty to love about a Volvo. Show us why YOU love Volvo. Use the hashtag #VolvoLove and we'll retweet our favorites!


**Frequency of use**

You may want to limit the frequency that you use your unique hashtags in your own tweets, they should be a way for users to talk about the brand, not a way for you to constantly talk about your own brand.

- Tagging every tweet with your self-made hashtag can come across as amateurish. If your company name is clearly related to your username and you briefly explain your company in your bio, you don't need to tag the content with your company name again.

  [http://www.ragan.com/Main/Articles/The_6_most_irritating_ways_to_use_hashtags_on_Twit_45869.aspx](http://www.ragan.com/Main/Articles/The_6_most_irritating_ways_to_use_hashtags_on_Twit_45869.aspx)
• A lot of new Twitter users tend to provide their own self-made hashtag with every tweet, which can mislead other online users. As a rule, make sure that the hashtag actually pertains to a relevant topic to avoid confusion.

http://www.hashtags.org/how-to/etiquette-how-to/5-truly-irritating-ways-to-use-hashtags/

• #HashtagAbuse. Hashtags are without a doubt the most interesting part of Twitter. But in addition to sometimes being hilarious, they are extremely helpful for organization purposes. Don’t abuse the hashtag, save it for when you need it.


As well as creating your own hashtags, you can include trending hashtags that might be related to your brand.

• By keeping a close eye on trending topics (hashtags) on Twitter, and watching for any that might legitimately connect with your brand, you can join into a conversation and possibly find new followers that way. While people might not do a Twitter search for @YourBrand, they might be keeping an eye on #latesthottesttrend. Your tweet will come up on their radar, and you’ll find new followers.

You DO NOT, however, want to piggyback a trending topic that has nothing to do with your brand, particularly if it’s a sensitive topic. American Designer Kenneth Cole learned this the hard way by hopping onto the Twitter hashtag being used by protestors in Cairo, using it to try to market clothes instead.

http://todaymade.com/blog/using-hashtags-on-twitter/

When you do this it is a good idea to stick to a maximum of 2 hashtags in a single tweet, perhaps one that includes your brand name, and one related to the trending topic.

• Use hashtags, but don't overdo it. Tweets with hashtags receive two times more engagement than those without hashtags. But going overboard has a negative impact. Tweets with one or two hashtags receive 21% higher engagement than those with three or more hashtags. Using more than two hashtags actually leads to a 17% drop in engagement.

http://www.buddymedia.com/newsroom/2012/06/buddy-media-twitter-tweeting-best-practices/

• Now with this being said, it is recommended that you only use hashtags for 1-3 words per tweet. I suggest only using it for 1-2 words, if at all possible. You don't want to flood your tweets with hashed words that make your brand or company look like spam. You want your
tweets to be simple and filled with content to direct the user back to your website or link that you are promoting.

This would be a good use of hashtags if you were tweeting about sports. For instance, I was tweeting on National Signing day about one of the most highly sought out basketball players not committing to Michigan State.

The tweet is simple and to the point. And, at that moment in time, the sports nation was tweeting about Jabari Parker and him committing to Duke opposed to Michigan State. So thousands had the potential to see my tweet when I hashtagged #MichiganState and #Jabari.

Here would be an example of an over hashed, in my opinion, flooded bad tweet: "So #excited to go to #Paris for #winetasting and #food. So #lux!"

With this tweet and use of hash-tags you see that almost every other word is hashed. It makes the tweet flooded with hashtags as opposed to getting your content across. It has a hard time getting the point across due to the reader focusing on the hashtags.

http://socialmediatoday.com/jamesharpermedia/1260071/importance-hash-tags

• Avoid loading up your tweets with so many hashtags (no more than two is a general rule of thumb) that there is very little content to the tweet. Hashtags annoy some Twitter users. Even if it’s “only” microblogging and “only” 140 characters and “only” a tweet, it is still content. There is an end reader, and your followers aren’t as likely to retweet a collection of hashtags as they are something witty, useful, or profound.

http://todaymade.com/blog/using-hashtags-on-twitter/

Make use of popular hashtags such as Follow Friday, #FollowFriday or #FF. You can look out for interesting twitter accounts and suggest them to others, this will put your tweets in the #FF search and may increase your visibility. Only on Fridays though!

• Take Advantage of Follow Friday

In January 2009, Micah Baldwin announced on Twitter that he would suggest people to follow every week from then on. The Follow Friday trend soon took off with the hashtag #FollowFriday, but is now more commonly shortened to #FF.

The Follow Friday movement is still alive and well. And it’s a great excuse for your small business to join the conversation and get its name out there.

You can craft a #FF tweet in one of two ways. Create a list of great people to follow and squeeze as many Twitter handles as you can into one tweet, with the hashtag #FF, of course.
However, I suggest making sure this list has a theme — are these the best foodies to follow? Political analysts? Activists? Comedians? Narrow down the type of people you’re suggesting and indicate that in the tweet.

Otherwise, many people choose to support only one or two people per #FF tweet, which is a more personal approach. You may consider crafting a tweet for a single person if you wish to compliment or communicate with that person, be it a journalist, executive or potential business partner.


Create a call to Action

There is little to be gained if the brand is the only person using the hashtag. Other people need to be encouraged to use your hashtags if there is to be a cohesion around a conversation.

Consider using a photo with text or a call to action such as a #hashtag in order to encourage user engagement.

http://excelamktg.com/blog/tag/hashtags/

- I had a meeting with our partners at Twitter HQs last week, and they said (I quote), "The Hashtag is the New URL." I think that’s a bit extreme (and they are biased, obviously), but I know where they were going with it. The hashtag is a more engaging call to action, where as the URL is just a place to go for information (not necessarily conversation).

http://www.eventmanagerblog.com/hashtag-revolution
Controlling hashtags

Making hashtags distinctive

The twitter handle, @mybrand can only be used to talk to the brand and is therefore in some measure controllable. A hashtag is uncontrollable and can be attached to anything so there is always a of danger tweets unrelated to your product containing a particular hashtag. Any trending hashtag attracts large amounts of spam.

- Start using hashtags in your tweets, preceding key words. It can be helpful to do a little research first, to find out if the subject you’re tweeting already has an established hashtag. Also, check Suggestions and Tips and Example Uses below for etiquette and general usage. http://twitter.pbworks.com/w/page/1779812/Hashtags

It is therefore good practice to create a unique hashtag.

- Sorry if this is a dumb question. I’m new to Twitter and trying still figuring things out. Why don’t you just move your live game microblogging to a new hashtag? Like #redsoxlive ? All your loyal followers could start using that one and hopefully it would take the advertisers and robots some time to catch on...? http://www.allthingscahill.com/2009/04/twitter-hashtags-baseball-and-a-dose-of-spam/

For example, at least one company has already used the hashtag #didyouseethat in a marketing campaign, this means that if using this hashtag, tweets referring to your brand will be mixed up with tweets aimed at the other brand. The other brand doesn’t technically ‘own’ this hashtag, as anyone can use a hashtag, but it is a good idea to create something relatively unique to avoid confusion.

- Not at #SESNY? You can still win. Tell us where you want to see #didyouseethat next, and we’ll fly you there. http://wbtrnd.co/jpF12 https://twitter.com/Webtrends/status/316566046029000705

- Winning is really, really easy. Just:#didyouseethat in action

  Find the shoes on the show floor.
  Tweet a picture of the shoes with the hashtag #didyouseethat.


Using another brand’s already popular hashtag may be seen as hi-jacking and could be considered offensive.

- One of the biggest mistakes that you can do on Twitter is hijacking hashtags. It shows disrespect and lack of online etiquette.
Some individuals can get banned or suspended on Twitter when the creator of the hashtag reports mischievous activities. When joining a hashtag, stay within the topic of the conversation and respect others online to boost your reputation and warrant the same degree of respect when it is your turn to make one.

http://www.hashtags.org/how-to/etiquette-how-to/5-truly-irritating-ways-to-use-hashtags/

To make sure you are creating a unique hashtag, click on it and check that there are no other tweets using that hashtag.

If you have really created a brand new hashtag, your tweet should be the only one on the page. Now, every time someone includes your hashtag in a tweet, it will be added to the page.

http://www.wikihow.com/Use-Hashtags-With-Twitter

**Hi-jacking**

You will have no control over how a hashtag is used, they can be used by anyone to say anything about your brand and you will never be able to delete them. People with something against your brand can use them against you by ‘hi-jacking’ them.

McDonald’s have experience this when they tried to create a hashtag for people to share stories about their brand, instead of the positive tweets they asked for, they got hi-jacked by those who are not McDonald’s fans.

- McDonald’s has tasted the dark side of Twitter, following the launch of a marketing strategy involving the hashtag: #McDStories.
    - This is the lovely thing about hashtags. They are searchable, and high-jackable. Nice one.
    - Whoever handled their SM strategy wants shooting – funny tho :D
  - It upsets me to see some of the crap you let on here. I have been with mcdonalds for 36 years. It hurts to see people so cruel and put us down and the vulgarity, just outrageous. I thought it was being screened. Either get rid of it or do better at screening the tweets.
A Twitter campaign that was supposed to reveal positive stories from McDonald’s suppliers turned into a nasty hashtag hijacking, as unhappy customers tweeted a variety of unpleasant tales — such as finding fingernails in their food.

The hashtag #McDStories started last week with a few tweets from the brand, promoting tales from suppliers. "Meet some of the hard-working people dedicated to providing McDs with quality food every day #McDStories http://t.co/BoNlwRJ5," one of the tweets said.

What ensued was less laudatory. "I haven't been to McDonald’s in years, because I'd rather eat my own diarrhea," read one. "One time I walked into McDonald’s and I could smell Type 2 diabetes floating in the air and I threw up," said another.

In an interview with PaidContent, McDonald’s social media director Rick Wion, said, inevitably "fans and detractors will chime in." That they did.

"Within an hour, we saw that it wasn’t going as planned," said Wion. "It was negative enough that we set about a change of course."

http://mashable.com/2012/01/24/mcdonalds-twitter-campaign/

Starbucks have experienced similar problems with unwanted negative use of a hashtag it created.

A seemingly innocuous Starbucks Twitter campaign in the UK backfired on the coffee giant when critics used the #SpreadTheCheer hashtag to bash the brand.

To compound the embarrassment, the tweets were displayed live at the Natural History Museum in London over the weekend. Starbucks has made headlines in the UK recently when it was disclosed that the company paid just £8.5 million ($13.8 million) in taxes in Britain, despite sales of £3 billion ($4.9 billion). Though many fans offered their heartfelt suggestions on how to spread cheer, others referenced the tax issue.

http://mashable.com/2012/12/18/starbucks-twitter-taxes/
Reasons for using hashtags

Increase engagement

Hashtags may stimulate conversation around a brand, because people will often be inspired to tweet because they want to use a particular hashtag that they have seen someone else using, so they can join in on the conversation.

- Users on Twitter have developed a tagging culture of placing a hash symbol (#) in front of short strings, called hashtags, on their posted messages, called tweets. Since then, a phenomenon of tagging which we call micro-meme has arisen. Participation in micro-memes is a priori; an individual user is unlikely to have composed a tweet on the topic in question if they had not observed the micro-meme tag in use by other Twitter users. The concept of a priori tagging may seem counterintuitive, but tagging in Twitter is harnessed to achieve goals different from those of other social tagging platforms. A user who observes the rise of a compelling trending topic micro-meme may be inclined to take the tag associated with the meme and compose his or her own tweet on the subject. Thus, it is overwhelmingly likely that they might never have written the tweet if they had not been inspired to participate in the micro-meme phenomenon. This is supported by observations from our study, where the tags associated with micro-memes generally had not been used before they were embraced as micro-memes. [http://jeffhuang.com/Final_TwitterTagging_HT10.pdf](http://jeffhuang.com/Final_TwitterTagging_HT10.pdf)

Tracking

Tracking conversations. Using hashtags helps to track conversations, but there are questions as to the extent that they may drive sales.

- Good way to track—not the best way to measure.

Sure, hashtags are good for TRACKING conversations. But, they’re not the best at really measuring any kind of return, outside of maybe engagement. I realize many of the brands advertising during the Super Bowl are behemoth brands that have huge advertising budgets and they’re really only after awareness (and for that, hash tags can be a piece of the measurement puzzle). But, that can’t be true for all those brands. Didn’t any of those brands want to use their big-buy Super Bowl ad to drive actual sales? Leads? Posting a hash tag at the end of your spot isn’t going to help with that.

[http://www.arikhanson.com/2013/02/05/did-hash-tags-really-work-for-brands-with-super-bowl-commercials/](http://www.arikhanson.com/2013/02/05/did-hash-tags-really-work-for-brands-with-super-bowl-commercials/)

Increase visibility

You can increase your brands visibility if you are using the hashtag to provide something of value. This can be either a competition to encourage people to use the hashtag, or it can be information, a
funny image or a concept that people want to share with others. You often will need to give some incentive for using the hashtag.

- Visibility is another way a brand can benefit from using a certain type of hashtag. This tool really increases visibility for a brand. If a brand is using a hashtag and supplying information of value, it is more likely to have the content retweeted or republished. This can also serve as a means to attract followers interested in that particular subject.

  

- Starbucks UK #freestarbucks campaign

  Now if that was successful, the #freestarbucks campaign was a monumental triumph in social media advertising. The campaign was only advertised online via Twitter and Facebook, and this campaign was to last only 1 day.

  A few days before the launch of the campaign Starbucks posted images and messages via social media promoting the offer of a free latte if you give your name to barista. The response was enormous, with thousands of people engaging and interacting with the brand online. More than 25,000 tweets were sent using the #freestarbucks hashtag which Starbucks claims created 5.12 million Twitter impressions over the course of the day.

  The coffee chain ended up giving away 2,000 lattes every minute between 8 and 9 am on Wednesday (14 March) and around 350,00 overall!

  The #freestarbucks hashtag trended in the whole of the UK for the entirety of the day and the online buzz surrounding the campaign survived for weeks after. The campaign drove thousands of new customers in store, gained thousands of new social media followers and started personal relationships with each and every person who took part.


- Brands both large and small choose to create their own hashtags for several reasons. Hashtags are a great way to generate buzz around a marketing campaign. Domino’s Pizza encouraged followers to tweet with #letsdolunch — once the number of tweets reached 85,000, Domino’s dropped prices by more than half during the hours of 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. that day.

  Or turn to Twitter when launching a contest, another great marketing tactic for your brand. Simply ask people to tweet with a specific hashtag when they submit ideas, jokes or photos.
That way, when the entry period is over, you'll be able to easily locate submissions in one place.

Events are great opportunities for creating conversation around hashtags. Award your event a unique hashtag well before the actual date; you'll be able to generate content and discussion about the event before it even begins. (For example, Mashable created the hashtag #MashBash for one of our largest events ever, at CES 2012.) Then during the event, encourage participants to tweet with that hashtag with signage and other hashtagged swag. People in attendance both physically and via the web then will be able to follow interesting activities and discussion.

Finally, get creative. Use hashtags for Twitter chats — invite an industry expert to answer tweeted questions from your brand's followers. Or begin a game on Twitter using hashtags. For instance, ask people to tweet #PastTenseSitcoms, like "Family Mattered." It's a clever way to get people excited to connect with your brand's followers. (We'd be remiss if we didn't mention our own #Mashtags fun here.)


- Social media allows brands to start conversations, but are they conversations worth starting?

Lately it seems like nearly every ad closes with an invitation to “join the conversation” with a dedicated Twitter hashtag. Over half of the Superbowl ads closed with a hashtag, and I’ve even seen hashtags at the end of cheesy local TV ads. Hashtags can be used effectively to amplify TV content, but I think many brands miss the point.

Many brands assume that consumers are dying to join a brand’s conversations. Instead, consumers have conversations with each other. Brands can be a part of those conversations, but the best examples I’ve seen are when they enable conversations that consumers are already having.

The marketing world is buzzing about "culture-jacking", demonstrated by Oreo’s timely tweet during the Superbowl. When the power outage happened, Oreo quickly posted an Oreo image that said “You can still dunk in the dark”. It was clever and widely shared. The image provided a piece of media that helped consumers communicate about the power-outage.

But what I found far more compelling was Oreo’s “Daily Twist” campaign last summer. To celebrate 100 years of the Oreo, Oreo posted a new image every day for 100 days, using the
Oreo to celebrate different events. It launched with a Gay Pride Oreo, and continued with Shark Week, Mars Rover, Elvis Week and 96 other images.

With “Daily Twist”, Oreo didn’t merely start brand-centric conversations that consumers could easily ignore. Instead, they inserted themselves in a positive way into conversations that consumers were already having.

A hashtag alone does not make a conversation. They are only a means to an end.

http://tomfishburne.com/2013/02/tv-advertising-hashtags.html

Migrating followers

Whilst users can easily follow a Twitter handle, unless they are using specific Twitter tools (eg tweetdeck), they cannot “follow” a hashtag. This has to be searched for. You will not be able to ‘migrate your followers’ from @your_brand_name to #yourbrandname, for example.

Successful use of hashtags

Brands

There is little evidence of much confidence in the successful use of hashtags as a long-term branding strategy, they appear to be more useful for running competitions and other time-limited campaigns, specific events, or themes. Hashtags coalesce conversations.

- Despite #C4Cuts, I’m with Faisal on this. There’s no point branding a hashtag. It’s just daft. If the BBC is trying to crowd source opinions on the budget, it should be listening to anyone who says something on the #budget.

http://onlinejournalismblog.com/2011/03/23/should-you-brand-a-hastag/

And that’s the worst part about this: the concept of a branded hashtag page — which Twitter says consists of “a combination of algorithms and curation [that] will surface the most interesting Tweets” — pollutes the concept of the hashtag as a community-driven conversation, one of the best and most beloved features of the Twitter platform. By turning the hashtag into nothing more than a branded content portal, with content curated by anonymous Twitter employees, Twitter is missing the point. And by using the hashtag to talk AT their customers, instead of WITH their customers, brands are missing a huge opportunity.

Events

South by Southwest Interactive Festival, \#SXSW, 2011, 2012, and 2013. \#SXSW has been successfully used for people attending or who are interested in this event. SXSW is an annual music, film, and interactive conference and festival held in Austin, Texas. The \#SXSW is useful for finding other people who are attending the event. It has been used over 100,000 times.

- Live tweeting at an event (e.g. conferences, meetings, educational courses, etc.). More and more promoters are communicating their unique event hashtag to generate buzz before, during, and after an event. For example, tweeting to a unique hashtag while at an event is a great way to locate participants you may want to meet. The recently concluded mega social media conference, South by Southwest, used the hashtag \#SXSW. Participants at SXSW generated literally thousands of tweets within just a few days. People who were interested in this event but couldn’t attend followed the \#SXSW hashtag to see what was happening in real time.

http://www.bluefocusmarketing.com/blog/2012/04/10/the-twitter-hashtag-is-the-new-neon-sign/

Parties Vs. Panels: We broke down the keywords within the \#SXSW Tweets, looking at some party related terms and some conference related terms. The word “party” alone doubled our list of conference keywords, racking up nearly 60,000 Tweets. At the conference, “panels” were the biggest driver, surprisingly outshining “keynote” and further driving home the point that people were focused on the conversational and networking aspect of the festival.

Year Over Year: The 2013 Interactive festival saw almost 200,000 more Tweets than in 2012, with the biggest spike on Saturday, with two 20,000 Tweet spikes during the afternoon. Tweet volume has steadily increased over the last three years, and 2013 activity is more than double what it was in 2011.

Tweet Types: Over 66,000 photos were shared with the \#SXSW hashtag this year. Over twice what we saw last year. The most interesting shift was in the “check-ins” column. Last year, check-ins drove more than 25,000 check-in tweets with the hashtag, and this year, that number dropped significantly. In fact, Foursquare checkins dwarfed Instagram posts during the 2012 festival. 2013 saw an entirely different story, with over 44,000 Instagram photos shared on Twitter with the hashtag.

South by Southwest is an amazing collection of innovators in the digital space, with outstanding speakers, panels…and yes, some awesome parties. As it grows and evolves, it’s interesting to see the ways that people engage. What are your predictions for the 2014
festival? Will we see the party craze continue? Will Instagram continue to dominate the shared content? Will Justin Bieber give a keynote and completely alter the data?

http://simplymeasured.com/blog/2013/03/14/panels-vs-parties-sxsw-by-the-numbers/

American Idol TV show, #AmericanIdol 2013. During the shows live broadcasts, graphics will appear on the screen encouraging viewers to take to the second screen [laptop or mobile phone] and to give their thoughts on the show. In the past month this hashtag has been used 3000 to 8000 [figures from topsy.com analytics graph] times per hour during the shows airing.

- For example, the popular singing show American Idol developed hashtag #idolresults, which it posts during its weekly results show. Fans of the show may incorporate #idolresults into their own posts. For instance, you could say “Hoping Chris gets the 9th spot! #idolresults” or “Watching #idolresults... fingers crossed!”

In the end, your post will pop up in Twitter or Instagram’s search engine, grouped with others who also used the hashtag #idolresults.

http://herahub.com/2013/03/25/wth-are-hashtags-and-how-do-i-use-them/

- Live shows like American Idol and The Voice often post selected tweets during their broadcasts. Viewers are encouraged to join the conversations about the shows by adding show-specific hashtags to their tweets. People can chat in real-time with the hosts, the performers, celebrity panelists and so on, which adds a fun, interactive element to these shows.

Since these programs typically draw audiences in the millions (and sometimes in the tens of millions), even if only a small percentage of viewers are actually tweeting about the shows, this still represents a massive audience following on Twitter.

http://sproutsocial.com/insights/2012/04/twitter-hashtags-tv/

- the real game changer was the integration of hashtags into mainstream media, like TV shows. If you’ve somehow missed this, turn on American Idol, look at the lower right hand corner and you’ll see a prominently placed hashtag. That hashtag is telling all the people watching to centralize their conversation on twitter against that hashtag.

http://www.thekmiecs.com/tag/hashtags/

- Witness “American Idol,” which on Wednesday will start to use Twitter to take instant polls of the audience.
Graphics on this Fox singing competition will include questions like “Do you agree with the judges tonight?” and two hashtags (words or phrases preceded by a # symbol, making the comment easy to find) with differing answers. Viewers with Twitter accounts, if they want to participate, will post a comment with one of the two hashtags, and the network and its production partner, FremantleMedia, will update the graphic almost instantly as the results come in. They say it will look like an online tug of war.


HubSpot webinar, #smsci 2011. This hashtag was created so that people could talk about the webinar, and was used 13,500 times.

- Two weeks ago, HubSpot hosted the world’s biggest webinar, which attracted over 30,000 registrants and close to 11,000 attendees. The event also achieved a serious level of buzz on Twitter with a trending hashtag of #smsci. Not only did the 11,000 attendees learn about the science of social media, but they also benefited from the related conversations with thousands of other Twitter users. Creating a hashtag on Twitter allows for event attendees to connect with each other and discuss your event, which you can then measure and use to gauge the topic’s success.

  On August 23rd, the hashtag #smsci was used to facilitate and track the conversation around Dan Zarrella’s “The Science of Social Media” webinar. Hashtracking.com allowed HubSpot to follow the effect of conversations surrounding the event. Its analytics allow users to track campaigns, measure reach, and calculate the influence of a given topic. The hashtag #smsci was mentioned in 13,500 tweets and resulted in over 19.7 million impressions, most of which occurred during the span of webinar. For marketers, having access to these type of statistics can help to measure the effect and reach of their events and promotions.


- For example, in August 2011, the hashtag #smsci was used to track and facilitate conversation around Dan Zarrella’s “The Science of Social Media” webinar. Hashtracking.com enabled HubSpot to track and quantify the effect of conversations surrounding the event. The analytics enable users to track campaigns, measure reach and determine the influence of a given topic. The hashtag #smsci was mentioned in 13,500 tweets and resulted in over 19.7 million impressions, most of which occurred during the duration of webinar. With access to these types of statistics, Marketers are able to measure the effect and reach of their events and promotions.
http://edge-collective.com/5-simple-ways-to-transform-an-event-into-an-online-experience/

**Campaigns**

Hershey's Kisses #CookieHQ 2011-2012. Hersheys created the hashtag #CookieHQ to stimulate conversation about baking, answering customer questions and actively engaging with people who were already talking about baking. This was a very successful campaign, the hashtag is reported to have been used 14,875 times. @HersheysKisses on twitter has seen a 1,725% growth in the number of followers since the campaign began.

- WCG – Hershey's Cookie Headquarters: Seeking to promote its four core cookie recipes, Hershey's used @HersheysKisses and the hashtag #CookieHQ to field consumers' questions, and 137 million+ impressions were secured.

- Hershey's Cookie Headquarters (#CookieHQ)
  Whether it's a seasoned baker or novice in the kitchen, everyone needs a little help to ensure their holiday treats turn out just right. And with 76% of consumers planning to bake cookies and 458K+ online mentions about baking cookies in Q4 ‘10, Hershey’s created Cookie Headquarters to become the ultimate online baking resource for consumers.
  Using the newly launched Hershey's Kisses Twitter handle, Hershey's baking experts conducted daily engagement (8-12 hours/day, Nov-Dec) with consumers who were passionate about baking cookies, answering their questions with personalized responses using the tag #CookieHQ. In addition to answering direct questions to the handle, Hershey’s proactively found users talking about baking cookies to suggest recipes and tips to address their holiday baking needs.
  To drive additional awareness and engagement, Hershey's incorporated paid media via Promoted Tweets/Accounts and hosted a series of Twitter chats with mom blogger organization, Mom It Forward.
  “Taking an iconic brand like Hershey's Kisses onto Twitter was no simple task. We started with a consumer insight that showed consumers loved baking with our brand, and Cookie Headquarters became a way for consumers to showcase and share their love of baking cookies, and learn from others just in time for the holiday season. The positive results showed that consumers welcomed us into their kitchens and shared the joy of Hershey’s Kisses with friends and loved ones this holiday season.” - Anna Lingeris, Manager of Global Brand PR & Consumer Engagement for Hershey's Results
In just two months (Nov/Dec), and as a result of an integrated media campaign for Cookie Headquarters, the Hershey's Kisses team secured the following results:

Hershey's Kisses now has a valuable asset in the @HersheysKisses Twitter account, with 180+ online influencers and 6,600+ consumers following it (1,725% growth since start of program). Hershey's share of online baking cookies conversations (SOC) doubled from the previous two month period and online related conversation about Hershey's increased 438% over the previous period. The following components impacted this growth:

- #CookieHQ hashtag used 14,875 times by 898 people, resulting in 34.6 million possible social impressions. Top 25 contributors of the tag fell in brand’s target demographic.
- Twitter chat series resulted in 35.9 million impressions, 6,411 tweets, 2,017 clicks to Hershey's digital properties and helped Hershey's build relationships with more than 180+ online influencers, all within target demographic of females, 25-44 years old.
- Hundreds of consumers engaged with Hershey’s - more than 740 questions were answered and suggestions provided via the Hershey's Kisses baking team, primarily via Twitter.

Paid media grew Hershey's Kisses social properties:

- Paid media components including Twitter's Promoted Accounts secured higher than average follow rate of .46%, bringing in 4,733 new followers; also resulted in 1,030,556 impressions and 2,550 profile views. Promoted tweets resulted in 583,000 impressions, 5,670 clicks to profile, 352 retweets and 52 replies on Twitter.
- Via promoted tweets, able to bring precise target demographics into follower base including females (87%) who were food and mom bloggers (9% new follower base), and Twitter users who are passionate about baking (1% of new follower base). Promoted accounts provided .46% follow rate, above the average .1-.3%.


Uniqlo [#LuckyCounter] campaign. In 2010 Clothing retailer Uniqlo used a hashtag campaign to raise awareness of the brands merchandise. Visitors to their website were able to choose products they were interested in, and each time someone tweeted about them the price of the item was lowered. At the end of the promotion the items were available to buy at the lower price. One blogger estimates that this form of advertising has a very low CPM [cost per thousand views]. Over a year later various bloggers were still talking about the campaign.

- This is excellent: Uniqlo have a new promotion in the UK to celebrate the re-launch of their website.
Their promo page features 10 products. Click on any product and you get re-directed to a page letting you tweet about it. The more tweets the product gets, the more the price drops. Your followers see something like this:

This is part of a growing trend of reciprocity. Ask your consumers to raise your profile and give them a reward for doing so.


- A current campaign by retailer Uniqlo encourages site visitors to Tweet about featured items they’re interested in – in turn, the price of the product will be reduced. The promotional site features about 10 items, along with the price and by how much it has been discounted thus far. A special price will be announced on September 9th for redemption and purchase on Uniqlo’s UK website (which currently only ships within the UK).

We’ve previously discussed some of Uniqlo’s digital marketing and creative messaging tactics. This latest promotion relies on customers - and social media - to increase awareness of the retailer's merchandise, in exchange for a reduced price; perhaps trading reach (and volume) for a price cut (and a bit of profit). Perhaps more interestingly, it also allows customers to influence the final price of a product, which is pretty unique for the retail category.


- LONDON (Adage.com) -- Japanese clothes retailer Uniqlo has found a novel way of encouraging U.K. shoppers give the brand a big presence on Twitter -- by reducing the price of clothing pieces every time someone sends a tweet about an item.

The "Lucky Counter" promotion has been running ahead of the relaunch of Uniqlo’s U.K. e-commerce site this week, and has seen the brand’s name appear in Twitter's trending topics list for the country.

In a web page dedicated to "Lucky Counter," users can choose from 10 pieces they would like to see discounted on the website when it relaunches on September 9.

Clicking on one of the pieces of clothing brings up a pre-written tweet using the hashtag #luckycounter. Users can add their own message and then send it, and watch the price fall.
The more tweets users send about a particular item, the lower the price goes. At the time of writing, one of the items -- a gray, crewneck long-sleeve T-shirt -- had hit its target price of nearly 60% off, meaning it will go on sale on Thursday at $4.60 instead of $10.70.

Uniqlo worked with Hiroki Nakamura, web director of its global advertising agency, Dentsu Japan, to create the campaign. The U.K. is the first market that Uniqlo, which also has stores in the US, France and throughout Asia, has tried the approach.

The company has relied solely on users to spread the word on Facebook and Twitter, rather than paying for promotional tweets, as well as trailing the promotion heavily on its website, which was otherwise closed for business.

The tweets being sent are largely a mixture of people taking part in the promotion and those who are telling their followers about Uniqlo's unusual social-media experiment.

Amy Howarth, head of marketing at Uniqlo in the U.K., said: "The initial aim was to maintain contact with the customer while the website was temporarily closed for its e-commerce migration.

"The campaign has been really successful and we've been delighted with the response to date. Customers seem to really want to engage with us, and it's great as the campaign is so transparent and immediately dynamic, so they can see their tweets actually making a difference."


- Uniqlo does it again with Lucky Counter campaign. The fashion retailer asks people to promote their favorite Uniqlo items via Twitter against price reduction for the said item of estimating from my experience - 0,01% per tweet.

This inspired me to a small calculation: if one tweeting Briton has 126 followers on average, and we assume that any given tweet is seen by 1/10 of followers = 13 followers on average, we can derive that 77 tweets are needed for 1000 people to see the message. As a result, Twitter's CPM in this campaign e.g. for the jacket in picture (originally 59,99€) sets to 59,99€ x 0,01% x 77 = 0,46€ per jacket sold to the participants in the campaign. This last point is crucial: if none of the participants buy any jackets, the CPM will not be realized and the marketer won't pay a penny for media - not even if 1.000.000 people tweeted about the jacket and another 1.000.000 non-participants bought the jacket, as non-participants wont get the discount. Furthermore, we need to bear in mind that this campaign generates a lot of buzz also outside Twitter (this blog for example).
If there's any readers of this blog still doing marketing comms budgeting the old way (25% planning & production, 75% paid media), now's the time to wake up!

http://www.samiviitamaki.com/?cat=13

Dominos #letsdolunch campaign 2011. Dominos ran a similar campaign whereby tweeting about a pizza lowered the price. There were reportedly 85,000 tweets were made during the promotion and the price was lowered from £15.99 to £7.74. Again, a year later, bloggers were still talking about this campaign. It has been reported that online sales increased by 43% in the year the campaign was run.

- Domino’s ran a nationwide campaign on March 5th promising to cut the price of their pepperoni passion by 0.01p every time someone tweeted #letsdolunch between the hours of 9am and between 11am and 3pm.
  http://socialmediafrontiers.wordpress.com/2012/11/page/6/

- Domino’s Pizza U.K. offered fans a solid reason to participate in its Twitter campaign: cheaper pizza. The promotion, which ran from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. on March 5, cut the price of the chain's Pepperoni Passion Pizza by one pence every time someone tweeted the hashtag #letsdolunch. After 85,000 tweets, the price dropped from £15.99 to £7.74, and Domino's offered that price from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. that day. A similar campaign also took place in Ireland that day with the #pizzalunch hashtag, which lowered the price to €13.24 from the original €20.
  http://mashable.com/2012/03/23/twitter-hashtag-campaigns/

Recently released figures show that online sales for 2011 in the UK and Ireland increased 43% to $287.2million and accounted for 44.3% of delivered sales, up from 35.8% in 2010.

"A growing number of stores take over 75% of their orders online and it is a channel that Domino's continues to dominate in the quick service sector," said Chief Executive Lance Batchelor.

http://www.bizreport.com/2012/03/dominos-uk-discounts-treats-for-tweets.html

- Domino’s Pizza ran a campaign that lowered the price of a Pepperoni Passion pizza with a starting value of £15.99 each time Twitter users posted with the hashtag #letsdolunch.

The 'Tweets For Treats' campaign ran from 9am to 11am today (5th March), allowing followers to buy the cheaper pizza between midday and 3pm, with each tweet shaving 0.01p off the price. The falling price of the pizza was displayed in real-time on Dominos' Facebook page here, though the price wouldn't drop below £6.59, according to the terms.
Given that Monday lunchtime is hardly likely to be prime pizza ordering time, I doubt a loss-leader like this will hit Domino's too hard financially, but it gained some nice online love and their Facebook 'likes' increase by 4,000 within the morning.

I do like that the campaign isn't ashamed of the fact it's being run to earn Domino's money - all too often, social media campaigns are all about the 'engagement'.

However, I am a bit unsure about the number of tweets the campaign claims to have encouraged.

Calculations: the final pizza price was £7.74.

From £15.99, the price dropped £8.25.

As each tweet shaved 0.01p from the price, 825 x 100 (tweets per 1p) = 82,500 tweets with the hashtag #letsdolunch.

You'd expect this to be enough to trend, wouldn't you? But it didn't, although a look at a Twitter search for #letsdolunch shows people were certainly getting involved:

UPDATE - this is from the terms and conditions, as pointed out by Econsultancy's David Moth:

A tweet that includes the hashtag #letsdolunch will result in a minimum of 0.01p being knocked off the price point of the large Pepperoni Passion. However, please be aware that Domino’s reserves the right to change the value being knocked off the price point at any point during the time period of 9am and 11am on Monday 05 March 2012 but at no point will it drop below 0.01p.

I guess they increased the amount knocked of with each tweet by quite a bit.

http://prexamples.com/2012/03/nice-social-media-campaign-from-dominos_uk-but-are-the-figures-accurate-letsdolunch/

RadioShack's #kindofabigdeal campaign 2011. RadioShack ran a competition to win a phone whereby tweeting using their hashtag #kindofabigdeal would make the phone vibrate and when the phone fell off a table, the person whose tweet caused the fall would win the phone. The hashtag trended worldwide with over 80,000 @RadioShack mentions.

- Electronics retailer RadioShack welcomed Verizon Wireless in September 2011 with a memorable hashtag campaign that made tweeting #kindofabigdeal into a real-time interactive game. The premise: A bunch of Verizon phones
were arranged on a table. Whenever anyone tweeted that hashtag, the phones would vibrate. Eventually, a tweet would send a phone off the table, in which case the final tweeter would get the phone. The campaign netted more than 80,000 mentions of @RadioShack.

http://mashable.com/2012/03/23/twitter-hashtag-campaigns/

- RadioShack's #kindofabigdeal - RadioShack welcomed Verizon Wireless in September 2011 with a memorable hashtag campaign (more than 80,000 mentions) that made tweeting #kindofabigdeal into a real-time interactive game. The premise: A bunch of Verizon phones were arranged on a table. Whenever anyone tweeted that hashtag, the phones would vibrate. Eventually, a tweet would send a phone off the table, in which case the final tweeter would get the phone.

http://phungkimle.blogspot.co.uk/2012_03_01_archive.html

- The Verizon Launch at RadioShack was a huge deal for both companies. It was something they wanted to celebrate and announce to the country. We were tasked with bringing this into the social conversation.

Using the promoted Twitter trend, #kindofabigdeal, we generated tons of buzz and millions of impressions.

Real life verizon phones were setup on a gently inclined board. The phones were hooked to the RadioShack Twitter feed and set to vibrate. Every tweet made the phones vibrate down the board. The last person who tweeted and made the phone fall off won the prize. Everyone could see the action live via USTREAM, including the "hand of RadioShack" placing phones each round.

The fun and excitement resulted in 80K mentions of @RadioShack which is 68 times the retail average along with 85M impressions.

http://www.funkyhat.com/radioshack_verizon.shtml

- Our task was simple, announce that Verizon was now available at RadioShack. We had already several popular and successful Twitter promotions for RadioShack, so this announcement would be no different. Except, it was. During this campaign, I sat in a small room with a large team, Tweeting conversation starters every hour, joining active conversations, following the @RadioShack mentions, explaining the #KindofaBigDeal topic, communicating with the lucky winners and collecting their information for the gifts they won. Needless to say, it was a busy day.

This video shows just how different the promotion was. And, here are a few numbers, too:
1 - #KindofaBigDeal was the number one trending topic, globally.

191 Thousand - Mentions of @RadioShack

84.6 Million - Impressions on Twitter

https://tarabanda.jux.com/532777#

Starbucks UK #freestarbucks campaign, 2012. Starbucks introduced #freestarbucks in 2012 when they gave away free Starbucks to anyone who gave a barista their name on the 14th March. The hashtag was used 25,000 times on the day. This hashtag is still in regular use outside of the campaign and seems to have become part of twitter vocabulary.

- Starbucks claims its free latte giveaway initiative earlier this week to introduce its stronger British drink and personalised service achieved more than 5 million Twitter impressions.

More than 25,000 tweets were sent using the #freestarbucks hashtag which Starbucks claims created 5.12 million Twitter impressions over the course of the day.

The coffee chain says that it gave away 2,000 lattes every minute between 8 and 9 am on Wednesday (14 March) and around 350,00 overall. It could not, however, share comparison figures for a normal morning.

http://www.marketingweek.co.uk/news/starbucks-claims-51m-twitter-impressions-in-latte-giveaway/4000698.article

- Now if that was successful, the #freestarbucks campaign was a monumental triumph in social media advertising. The campaign was only advertised online via Twitter and Facebook, and this campaign was to last only 1 day.

A few days before the launch of the campaign Starbucks posted images and messages via social media promoting the offer of a free latte if you give your name to barista. The response was enormous, with thousands of people engaging and interacting with the brand online.

More than 25,000 tweets were sent using the #freestarbucks hashtag which Starbucks claims created 5.12 million Twitter impressions over the course of the day.

The coffee chain ended up giving away 2,000 lattes every minute between 8 and 9 am on Wednesday (14 March) and around 350,00 overall!

The #freestarbucks hashtag trended in the whole of the UK for the entirety of the day and the online buzz surrounding the campaign survived for weeks after. The campaign drove
thousands of new customers in store, gained thousands of new social media followers and started personal relationships with each and every person who took part.

http://www.curve-interactive.com/top-4-twitter-competitions-of-all-time/

- Ever since my time spent working in the USA I’ve had some form of emotive link with Starbucks. However, despite my fond memories of XL iced coffees during the height of summer and late night jam sessions with some musically talented folk, of late I’ve lost interest in the brand. As of 1pm on 13th March this all changed...

Yesterday, Starbucks launched a new campaign focused on improving relationships between their staff and customers. In a nutshell, they will now refer to me as Luke and not ‘Grande Americano with soya milk’.

Yes, I love this campaign, (It makes Starbucks feel original again) but what I love more is the way that they launched it: Swarming Twitter and Facebook with content whilst supporting with print and TV. While I sip on my well earned #FreeStarbucks latte, I’d like to share my thoughts on their marketing strategy.

The first place I encountered this campaign was Twitter, where Starbucks had a promoted trend and promoted tweets. Within minutes, my stream was swamped with statements around the activity. (I was surprised to see emails and text messages on the topic as well) What Starbucks did well was they not only had big budget for the promoted activity, they backed it up with some great content and engagement – Perfect!

Foolishly, I thought this campaign was exclusive to Twitter... I was hit with the activity again on Facebook, then the Evening Standard and finally with a TV Ad during Super Fat Vs. Super Skinny! By the time I went to bed, reminders had been set and my morning was planned.

So the morning arrives and I’m really excited to see what buzz there was around free coffee. As expected, there was bundles! Yes, there were queues at every Starbucks across London, but I was very impressed with how on board the staff were. It was clear they had been thoroughly briefed, as my barrister made a huge effort to ask me how I was. It is this kind of company-wide buy-in that makes campaigns a success.

So in short, I loved this campaign because it was creative, fun, and used multiple online/offline mediums to touch their consumers. I believe it is this integration/takeover approach to marketing strategy that made this activity spread like wildfire.

http://www.4psmarketing.com/blog/my-thoughts-on-the-starbucksuk-freestarbucks-campaign/
Tesco #FindTheEggs, 2013. Tesco ran an Easter egg hunt which was promoted using a hashtag, this was used over 10,000 times [source: Topsy.com search graph] over the course of a week. Users had to search for virtual eggs using googlemaps and were sent a voucher for chocolate after finding three eggs. According to [https://www.tescofindtheeggs.com/](https://www.tescofindtheeggs.com/), Tesco awarded over 200,000 chocolate vouchers.

- Superstore Tesco has created an online Easter egg hunt using Google Maps, challenging the public to search out and collect three eggs of thousands that have been secreted all around the virtual countryside.

After finding three eggs, searchers are awarded with a chocolaty prize via a printable voucher that can be used in Tesco stores.

The campaign has already been widely shared thanks to the use of a hashtag in the title. [http://www.socialmediafrontiers.com/2013/03/social-media-promotions-of-week-29032013.html#more](http://www.socialmediafrontiers.com/2013/03/social-media-promotions-of-week-29032013.html#more)

- Tesco #FindTheEggs game in Google Streetview

This is a special Easter campaign from Tesco, where you have to find Easter Eggs in Google Streetview to win chocolate.

You set your location, then navigate the streets to try to find eggs. When you have found 3 you win a voucher for a free chocolate at a Tesco store.

The clever part for Tesco is that you need to Like the game to see the radar view - which makes it easier for you to find the 3rd egg.

I won a 'MaltEaster' Bunny:

Then you need to give them your email address to get the coupon.

So it was really just a data capture activity all along...

At time of writing they still have 343,000 prizes remaining. [http://digital-examples.blogspot.co.uk/2013/03/tesco-findtheeggs-game-in-google.html](http://digital-examples.blogspot.co.uk/2013/03/tesco-findtheeggs-game-in-google.html)

- The UK's largest superstore, Tesco, has launched an Easter social media campaign using Google Maps.
The online Easter egg hunt competition called #FindTheEggs allows users to navigate around any location of their choice using Google Street View and collect three eggs of thousands that have been hidden on the map.

Once you have managed to find 3 eggs you win a prize and a chocolatey prize at that. The eggs aren’t too hard to find so you should be a winner before long.

Using the Facebook like button there is also an “egg radar” that indicates where the eggs are hidden to help you find them more easily.

Once you have your prize, you can either print off a voucher to take in store and claim your chocolate, or if you are an online shopper you can add the chocolate into your basket when you do your next shop.

This social media campaign incorporates a variety of Social platforms and is fun and engaging for all ages. It has received a high number of social shares already and so receives our tasty social slurp of the week!


Hashtags on Facebook

Coming Soon?

It is rumoured that hashtags are due to be introduced on Facebook in the near future. It may be useful to start thinking about a Facebook hashtag strategy.

Facebook is shifting into territory occupied by networks like Twitter and Instagram with the re-introduction of a chronological newsfeed and hashtags.

The WSJ reported this last week Facebook is moving to allow users to engage around topics by using a hashtag field in status updates, that would (presumably) be viewable openly by Facebook’s 1 billion users.

Hashtag Facebook

When Facebook introduces the hashtag, it will transform the way people use the platform and, importantly for marketers, the way users engage with brands. The implications of this change have yet to be deeply explored by social media makers. It remains to be seen how open the hashtag network will be, but a Facebook with hashtags could have major implications for how brand marketers work with Facebook.
Brand mentions

Previously, brands were only alerted to mentions of their brand name either via users commenting on brand pages or tagging brands in status updates (only users with public settings). Now, conceivably, brands will be constantly tagged in millions of conversations via Facebook, meaning not only will brand marketers have access to many times the volume of data currently available to do with what they want, they will also be able to encourage more real time conversation, and influence millions more conversations on social media.

Traditional vs. social marketing becomes more blurred

As Adweek notes, traditional media campaigns have ramped up efforts to encourage users to engage via hashtags on Twitter; now brand marketers will be able to encourage conversations on Facebook, introducing the hashtag to millions more users. Twitter is typically much less popular than Facebook, with approximately 400 million Twitter users versus an estimated 1 billion on Facebook.

Why now?

Zuckerberg may have fallen in love with hashtags after the famous $1 billion buy out of Instagram in 2012, and as many of you would see in your feed, any friend sending Instagram content to Facebook usually carries a litany of useless hashtags on their update, links currently not clickable. However, many questions remain, as Facebook still has yet to officially confirm the move to hashtags, let alone how the new Facebook ecosystem will work.

http://socialmediatoday.com/ryannorthover/1314666/facebook-hashtags-brands-and-users

- The latest rumored change in the Facebook model is hashtags. The company hasn’t confirmed it yet, but most observers expect a hashtag option nearly identical to the one we all overuse so often on Twitter to launch in the near future. Marketers and PR pros are pretty excited about the potential change, and we spoke to Stacey Acevero, social media manager at Vocus, to figure out why.

While Acevero hesitates to call what may or may not happen a “social network war”, it’s pretty clear that Facebook is looking for new ways to make bank — and that its redesign could make the whole experience less frustrating for brands and social managers. Here’s her take on the three possible benefits of the Facebook hashtag function:

1. Makes all of Facebook more searchable: Not only would it make your brand’s own original content easier to find for users who don’t “like” the brand, it would also make the act of conducting market research on Facebook by subject or keyword a whole lot easier.
2. Expands the reach and power of a marketer/social media manager: Building on the first point, a “trending hashtags” option would increase a manager's ability to see what people are liking and discussing on Facebook — and tailor original content to ride on these trends. It's a crucial part of the Twitter experience, as we all know.

3. Increases viewership and value of original content: The visibility of branded content has been decreasing even as Facebook encourages more companies to purchase “sponsored” posts. But by using strategic hashtags, branded content could attract a whole lot more eyes without paying for the privilege.

The real difference: a hashtag-enabled Facebook could reward organic, creative marketing rather than running on the current “pay to play” model. The combination of graph search and hashtags could also help convince brands and businesses that they're not throwing their time and money away by developing original content.

Acevero calls it “a game changer” that could “breathe new life” into a service that has increasingly shown “diminishing returns” for marketers, PR pros and brands at large.

What do we think? Do we want Facebook to develop hashtags?

http://www.mediabistro.com/prnewser/3-ways-facebook-hashtags-could-help-brands_b60867

• Ah, the Hashtag… we see it on Twitter often and it might be making a debut on Facebook (officially) in the near future. We also see them used on Google+. One couple reportedly named their baby Hashtag. But what is a Hashtag and why should you care?

http://socialmediasatisfied.com/understanding-social-media-hashtags-and-using-them-correctly/

• 3 Reasons Why Facebook Hashtags Will Be a #MarketingWin

The social media world is like high school: every week there's a new rumor circulating. But a big one seems to be gaining traction recently: Facebook hashtags.

In mid-March, The Wall Street Journal reported, “Facebook is working on incorporating the hashtag, one of Twitter’s most iconic markers, into its service by using the symbol as a way to group conversations . . . It is unclear how far along Facebook's work on the hashtag is, and the feature isn't likely to be introduced imminently.” Nevertheless, if and when Facebook launches a hashtag feature, there's no doubt that it will fundamentally change the way users engage and interact with brands on the platform.
The implications of using hashtags on Facebook have yet to be fully explored by marketers, but with the feature looking more and more like it will become a reality, it’s time to seriously prepare to enter the #fray.

Here are three reasons why Facebook marketers should start strategizing today:

1. Hashtags Will Make Facebook More Searchable

One great thing about Twitter is that regardless of the number of followers your brand has, there are opportunities for users to find your original content. Let’s say a brand tags referral marketing; any user who searches for that topic will inevitably stumble upon your content as well. This result wasn’t (and still isn’t) possible on Facebook. Not yet. But with the introduction of a hashtag feature on Facebook, users will be able to search for relevant content, thus increasing your brand’s reach into new territories.

With or without hashtags, you should ensure that your content is searchable and can effectively engage multiple audiences. Either through the use of SEO keywords or by posting in specific groups and communities, you should always be looking for ways to engage with more users online.

2. Hashtags Will Help Brands Conduct More Targeted Market Research

Building on that last point, once people are able to search for specific topics on Facebook, your brand should be able to find those users who are interested in and engaged with your product. You’ll essentially be able to bypass the time-consuming process of looking at groups and segmenting your existing user base. But that doesn’t mean these practices will no longer be important; hashtags will simply make the process more efficient.

As you know, finding those users who are inclined to share your brand with others is extremely important to developing an effective referral marketing program. While hashtags will make this easier to do in the future, it’s still worth your while to keep searching for brand ambassadors however you can today.

3. Hashtags Will Expand the Reach of a Social Media Manager

A huge reason why Twitter is such an effective marketing tool is because it helps brands identify current trends and ride the wave to increased visibility. Bringing this feature to Facebook would allow brands to target their content to better fit the conversation that’s already happening online. Hashtags on Facebook would be a game changer in the marketing world, putting an entirely different spin on how to best target customers on the social media juggernaut.
Although Facebook hashtags haven’t been officially announced, there’s no reason to assume Facebook won’t move ahead with the feature. Therefore, marketers should start planning for the best-case scenario now.

http://blog.getambassador.com/
Recommendations for using hashtags

Don’t hashtag every post

Attaching a single brand #MyBrand to the majority of posts is not going to make #MyBrand trend on Twitter. Nor would this be desirable. There is a broad consensus that hashtags work best around a conversation. People do not talk about brands per se, but specific aspects, events or campaigns. eg #cycleroutes, #brightonmarathon. Whilst not overtly branding, using broader conversational hashtags would bring your brand into a conversation as a thought leader.

- Not every post necessarily needs a hashtag. Many people feel unless they have hashtags in every post, they aren’t doing social media correctly. If there’s not a logical place for a hashtag, don’t try to force one. How do you know if there’s a logical place for it? A good test is to get into the habit of adding hashtags as you type the sentence. If nothing comes to mind as you type, chances are your post may not need one after all. And that’s OK.


- Hashtags considered #harmful

  A New York Times social media editor says they don’t attract an audience and “are aesthetically damaging.”

  The noble hashtag is cursed by a problem Yogi Berra could appreciate: Too many people use it, so no one goes there.

  Presumably, most Twitter users use hashtags intending to add their tweet to a river of similar information and to expose their own thoughts to a wider, interested audience. Twitter itself markets the hashtag to those ends. But does that actually happen? It’s unlikely, especially for the most popular hashtags. There are many useful exceptions, but hashtags for big news stories are particularly vulnerable to mathematical futility.

  According to Twitter, #SuperBowl was used 3 million times over about five hours on Super Bowl Sunday this year. Look at all those people who might be interested in our jokes about Beyonce! And yet getting any single person’s attention is just short of impossible, like a single Niagara droplet screaming for notice as it shoots down the falls.

  Though there were peaks and valleys, 3 million tweets over five hours comes out to an average of 167 tweets per second. To say that someone would have to search for “#SuperBowl” in the split-second you sent it would actually be a little generous; assuming they’ll notice your tweet if it’s in the most recent 10 tweets, users would have a window of 1/17 of a second to find you.
Maybe this would be fine if 17 people were performing a search for #SuperBowl every second — then you’d perhaps have one extra reader! — but there’s no evidence that people are actually using the search tool in that way at anywhere near that frequency. In most searches, the quantity of tweets is overwhelming and the quality underwhelming. It’s worth questioning how many users find hashtag searches useful, but it’s hard to know, since Twitter doesn’t provide such data.

Compounding the problem is how the tweets are displayed when you do perform a hashtag search. The default view will show you the “Top” tweets, which is based on a formula that favors tweets and users that have already gained a following. This is a smart effort by Twitter to deliver more relevant tweets, but it also decreases the likelihood that the average user will find a new audience. Average users are buried under another click, as you’d have to toggle over to “All” to find them.

It’s not just massive events that have the problem. If you lace your tweet with topical signifiers like #china, #food or #art, or of-the-moment news stories like #marchmadness or #prop8, you’re calculating that there will be a lot of people searching for it, but not so many using it that your tweet would be overwhelmed. It’s a narrow set of circumstances. When the goal is to increase your audience, the hashtag’s effectiveness depends entirely on how many people are searching for it, a number to which we have no access.

Additionally, some searches, like #socialmedia, return results from tweets that mention “social media” without the hashtag.

Does this mean the millions of Twitter users who deploy such hashtags to increase their reach are all wrong? Well…yes. We certainly have a history of carrying out myths in technology. Shaking a Polaroid picture didn’t make it develop any faster. Blowing on Nintendo cartridges didn’t help, either. We’ve all been told at some point that hashtags connect you to more people, and it’s been widely accepted as fact.

In some cases, they can indeed be useful. They’re great for gathering small groups of people; at a conference, there’s no better way to connect with other attendees and read brief summaries of sessions. When kept to a small scale, they can ably perform their service as a filter of relevant tweets (#EastVillage is more manageable than #NYC). They can be useful for subtext; we’ve all sent emails and text messages that should have had #sarcasm attached. The New York Times started the #snowku hashtag to gather snow-themed haikus during a February snowstorm.

I’ve heard before: What’s the harm? Why not at least try to include #SuperBowl if every little bit helps? Somewhat of a fair point. Using a hashtag does no harm in the same way wood
paneling does no harm to your station wagon, or a misspelled tattoo does no harm to your bicep.

Here’s where I’ll join the rest in unquantifiable hoodoo: I believe hashtags are aesthetically damaging. I believe a tweet free of hashtags is more pleasing to the eye, more easily consumed, and thus more likely to be retweeted (which is a proven way of growing your audience). I believe for every person who stumbles upon your tweet via hashtag, you’re likely turning off many more who are put off by hashtag overuse. We need not banish the hashtag, but let’s start putting more thought into when we’re using it.

http://www.niemanlab.org/2013/03/hashtags-considered-harmful/

Post interesting content
If your aim is to get more followers and re-tweets, it is important to share content that others want to share. It is perfectly acceptable to ask your followers to re-tweet your post if you have posted something important. You could link to articles on current affairs that have relevance to your brand.

- Content should, first and foremost, be audience focused and not vehicle to push information about one’s self (on blog as well we other SM platforms)


- It’s OK to tell (or ask) people what to do. In their presentation about listening and strategic planning, Jennifer Kane and Kary Delaria, both of Kane Consulting, made the point that people don’t mind being told what to do. It’s OK to tell (or ask) people to “like” an article on Facebook, for example. This correlates to what Dan Z. mentioned about retweeting. His research found that the phrase “please retweet” or “please RT” in a Twitter post were among the most retweetable words.


- Brands with a lot of followers aren’t conversational. They’re tweeting links and sharing interesting content.

Don’t refer to yourself or be negative too often. You’re less likely to get new followers and be RT’d.

Saturdays and Sundays are “high share” days. Since there is less content being published on the weekends, its more likely that your content is going to be seen and shared. Experiment with your publishing schedule.
Do you want to be RT’d? Want comments? Provide a clear call to action for your readers. A tweet with the words “Please RT” in it is 4x more likely to get RT’d than those who don’t.

It is important to keep in mind that you should be more concerned about your reach than with engaging in conversations. I was pretty concerned when I wasn’t getting a lot of comments on my organization’s blog, but then I realized that posts were being RT’d quite often, which is really what I should be more concerned about.

It seemed like when social media first started out, it was a glorious invention because it paved the way for two-way communication. Now it seems people are more concerned with sharing interesting content than they are about getting an @reply from Justin Beiber (ok, so maybe not all people).

I always thought it was really cheeky to ask to be RT’d, but it does make sense that if you give a clear call to action, you are more likely to get the results you want. If someone supports your brand, they are likely to help you spread the message. Especially if you ask them to be an ambassador for them with a simple click.


**Use hashtags properly**

Run a competition, start a meaningful conversation, join in on a relevant conversation that is already ongoing by hashtagging your posts with something other than #YourBrandName.

SO: GO AHEAD and use hashtags and their other social media equivalents. Just take the time to learn to use them well -- not merely to engage your community in what interests you, but to discern what people in your community currently find interesting. And don’t overuse them.

Consider adding to your website a reference page that keeps a running list of the most important hashtags for your community's current and ongoing issues. Or maybe curate a Twitter List of recommended users to follow for certain key community matters.

http://www.knightdigitalmediacenter.org/blogs/agahran/2013/03/seven-reasons-why-hashtags-are-good-especially-community-media

3. Don't go OTT with the #

One of the biggest sins committed in social media. The important thing to remember is every hashtag is a new conversation, so don’t go crazy and add them all in together as this will make reading them tricky, will make your tweet look tacky and you also run the risk of losing the impact of the hashtag.
4. Jump on the hashtag bandwagon

If you don’t want to set up a hashtag yourself, don’t worry because you can easily jump on other hashtags. If you spot an existing hashtag that’s linked closely to what your brand is offering, and you think you can add to the hashtag or even win business by appearing on relevant topics then hop on board the hashtag bandwagon!

5. Short and sweet is the winning formula

Making your hashtag long-winded can bring confusion and make it harder for your audience to read let alone find it! In summary, keep it simple, keep it short, obvious and relevant.

http://jungle-media.com/social-media/6-hashtag-tips-business/

- The Science of Social Media: 8 Best Practices

HubSpot set the tone with the waiting music and Dan Zarrella kept the energy rolling all the way through The #smsci Webinar. Let’s get into it.

The 8 Best Practices:

1. Tweet links
2. Identify yourself. Your profile picture is your online first impression. Do you think that is important?
3. Write a powerful bio and use key words (Founder, speaker, expert).
4. Give your brand a personality and let your audience get to know you, but don’t over do personal tweets. #StopTalkingAboutYourself
5. Linguistic Content. Positive is the most effect. Negative is least effective. #BeOptimistic (Personal advocate of this one)
6. Don’t over tweet. 10 tweets in 5 seconds #TheBestWatToGetUnFollowed
7. Utilize combined relevance.
8. Use social call-to-action. Tell your audience what you want them to do such as comment on this post.

My twist on “The Science of Social Media.” A great presentation from Hubspot. How will you apply the science of social media?

http://centerattn.com/blog/the-science-of-social-media-8-best-practices/

- It’s difficult to express how annoying the misuse of hashtags on Twitter is. While there are definitely some upsides to using the popular conversation-tracking feature, there are many of us on Twitter who either simply don’t understand how to use them appropriately, or think it’s funny to overuse them.
Inspired by recent hashtag fatigue, we’ve decided to help out our readers with this helpful do-and-don’t guide on the proper use of hashtags via Twitter. Enjoy.

Do:

Use hashtags to keep track of communities.

Some communities online are utilizing hashtags on Twitter to keep track of conversations going on within their group. Matthew Doucette, game producer at award winning indie game studio Xona Games, says he follows #XNA (XNA Game Studio) to keep up with what's going on in independent game development.

Use hashtags to join a cause.

In the case of rallying the Internet together to support both positive and controversial causes, hashtags can be used to organize the conversation. Hacktivist group Anonymous, for example, previously used the tag #OpBart to keep track of conversation revolving around a peaceful (yet disruptive) protest being conducted in San Francisco, CA.

Hashtag keywords to encourage topic participation.

In some cases, Twitter users are adding hashtags to keywords like #Twitter in order to keep track of helpful tips being shared that pertain to Twitter. This is a great way to add to an existing pool of information without soaking up your 140 character limit to discuss what your tweet actually pertains to.

Run contests with hashtags.

Some companies and Twitter users craft hashtags to keep track of contest participants. By monitoring search results for those entering, they can keep track of who is actively engaging with the brand and who is not. Actually, this is one of the only ways to keep track of conversations on Twitter period (as Twitter isn’t currently keeping track of conversations for you).

Don’t:

#Hashtag #every #word #in #your #tweet.

Laura Devencenzi replies via Facebook, “[I hate] when people break up their sentence and each word has a hashtag. I mean come on man, don’t you realize it’s pointless to hashtag the word #the??? #I #hate #that #so #much.” So do we, Laura. So do we.

#Useonelonghashtagtodescribeyourentiretweet.
Another annoying instance of hashtags used incorrectly is when someone uses an entire sentence to mark a tweet. We can see this being hilarious in some instances, of course, but not everyone will see the humor or find value in this sort of hashtag misuse.

#UOLHT

Do you know what that means? Of course you don’t. No one does. That’s because it’s nonsensical crap that no one understands, since some users tend to abbreviate long phrases with acronyms like the above. In this case, our acronym refers to using one long hashtag in a tweet.

#Twitter #OpBart #XNA

In one example, Twitter users will string together a series of popular hashtags in an attempt to be picked up by search and gather more followers. In most cases, the actual tweet has nothing to do with the hashtags being used, and the useless tweet only serves to dilute an otherwise helpful conversation.

That said …

Not everyone on the platform knows exactly how to use hashtags to properly track conversations or participate in discussion. In many cases, I’ve seen users completely leave out hashtags even when I specifically request that they use them. Whether this is because they don’t understand the tool or because they’re lazy, it’s hard to say.

Until Twitter can keep track of conversations in a more intuitive way, this is one of the mediums Twitter users are being forced to use to tag topics we’d like to follow on the service. Hopefully, the above will serve as a helpful do-and-don’t guide on how to properly use hashtags.

Have you seen any other interesting ways hashtags are being used on Twitter? What about more annoying examples? Sound off in the comments.

Don't do this:

Use tools to find the right hashtag

There are various websites that can help you identify trending topics that may be related to your products which you can then use in your tweets. You can also find people who tweet about a particular subject who you can then either engage with or gain useful information from.

- How to Find the Best Twitter Hashtags

If you want your tweets on Twitter to go beyond your own following, hashtags are a great option. When you add a hashtag to your tweets, your updates can be seen not only by the people who follow you but also by anyone who happens to be following that particular hashtag.

Once you know exactly how to use hashtags, the next challenge is to find the best hashtags to incorporate into your tweets. Here are some great resources that will help you do just that.

Hashtags.org offers a simple interface to search for hashtags and their trending popularity. For example, if you search on the hashtag #business, Hashtags.org will graphically display the times of day and days of the week when the #business hashtag is most popular. If you scroll down below the graph, you’ll also see the latest tweets that include that hashtag.

Hashtags.org also lists a number of topics along with their related hashtags. So, instead of using the #mybrand hashtag in your tweets, you might consider the alternatives suggested by the site, such as #networking, #consumer or #marketing. Hashtags.org will help get you thinking about other possible keywords, topics, and hashtags that you can use in your Twitter updates.
What the Trend gives you insights on the top topics and hashtags that are trending worldwide. You can even narrow your selection down to particular countries and cities. What the Trend offers a Top 10 board which shows you the current trending topics, the most active trends of the day, trends marked as spam, and the most popular trends within the last 30 days.

If you don’t see the trend you need, you can use the search box to see more data about a hashtag you’re interested in. As with Hashtags.org, you’ll get the latest tweets about that topic as well as related blog posts.

Twubs is a unique site that lets Twitter users form groups around popular hashtags. Since the information is user-generated, you can see what hashtags are popular under categories such as books, conferences, the Internet, movies, news, politics, and much more.

Since Twubs is one of the few sites where you can find hashtags grouped into categories, it’s an excellent place to find other Twitter users with similar interests to connect with. Once you start interacting with other people on the site and through Twitter, you can expand your own network with like-minded individuals.

Tagalus may not be the most comprehensive hashtag resource, but its powerful search capabilities more than make up for that. Like Google, when you start typing a hashtag idea, Tagalus will auto-suggest related hashtags.

The auto-suggest results will help you come up with new ideas related to the topic you’re planning to tweet. For example, if you start typing “Twitter,” Tagalus will have make suggestions with Twitter at the beginning (#twitterindex), middle (#famoustwitterquotes) or end (#etsytwitter) of possible related results.

Tagdef has columns of information about trending hashtags including “Top today,” “Top this week” and “All time high.” Click on any of the hashtags to learn more information, such as the user-provided definition and related tags.

Beneath the definitions for each hashtag, you can also view the latest tweets for that hashtag. You can then click on accounts that have tweeted that tag and go directly to their Twitter profile.

Trendsmap is a visual Twitter trend generator that shows you the latest trends and hashtags used around the world — all displayed on a map. If you’re looking for location specific trends for your local business, this is the perfect place to find them.
Whenever you click on a trend or a hashtag, it will give you the latest tweets for that topic, in realtime. You can also see trending analytics graphs for each topic showing the local and global popularity of that trend.

These are some of the best resources available to find, create and analyze Twitter hashtags. Know any others? Leave us your best link in the comments below.


Advertise the hashtag using conventional media.

Where branded hashtags have been seen to be successful they have been supported by large-scale above the line advertising, typically around events. If you advertise, use a hashtag to direct people to engage on twitter, and try doing it linked to a big event to get the highest visibility. In 2013 various companies used the SuperBowl to introduce their hashtags.

- Now that the Super Bowl singing and dancing is over, let’s talk about the corporate ads. After all, some people say they watch the biggest televised event of the year in the U.S. just for the commercials. (I am just kidding, before some of you flip out in the comments.)

Beyonce may have generated more buzz than the game scores. According to Bill Gross on Twitter, Beyonce Generated 5.5 Million Tweets During Super Bowl Halftime Show. That was more than all the combined tweets in 2007.

Back to the ads. According to some great research, from my friend Jeremiah Owyang, who pens the popular Web Strategist blog and is a principal at Altimeter Group: 2013 Superbowl Ads Favor URLs, Hashtags – Not Facebook.

“Expect Hashtags to Overtake Corporate Websites in 2014” – Jeremiah Owyang

Brands are basically up against real time interactions with customers and integrating their brand experience – Altimeter calls this the Dynamic Customer Journey and explores how brands are meeting the challenge. The firm did research during the Super Bowl to see what people were sharing on social media. Top findings include:

75% of Brands integrate second screen experience, up 7 percent.

Overall, 75 percent of brand ads integrated social, mobile, hashtags, or apps in their $4m, 30 second spot (that’s $133k per second), this is up from 68% integration in 2012. This second screen promotion extends engagement to their websites and social sites, fostering a further integrated experience.
Hashtags, presumably aimed for Twitter, dominate over Facebook.

Hashtag integration in ads dominated the airtime, with 38% of ads including Hashtags in visual display on ads, up 31% out of a total of 64 ads.

7 Percent of Brand advertisers integrated Facebook URLs

Facebook's limited hashtag search restricts how brands can identify and engage in trends beyond a specific page. While individual URLs to microsites and corporate accounts maintain dominance, Hashtags, which can be used in a variety of social networks, are permeable to multiple networks, extending broader engagement. Expect that the 2014 Super Bowl will favor hashtags over corporate URL usage.

So, what this means for your social media marketing — figure out how to leverage the power of hashtags into your brand experience.


- Every year the Super Bowl is always just as much about ads as it is about football, but this year half the Super Bowl ads will include Twitter hashtags in their game-time spots.

That's up from just a handful of hash tags in Super Bowl ads last year, and from just one hashtag in Super Bowl ads 2 years ago.

Twitter's Role During the Super Bowl

CNBC's Julia Boorstin reports that half of Super Bowl commercials this year will have Twitter hash tags as marketers encourage viral conversations around their ads.

Twitter is expecting thousands of tweets-per-second, making it one of its biggest events ever. Tweets have become such a powerful tool for advertisers that Nielsen, which last year announced a partnership with Twitter, is releasing a new metric to show the value of the "second screen."

Here's an amazing statistic: a Nielsen study revealed that a third of people using Twitter are tweeting about content they're watching. And Twitter found that 65 percent of people are accessing Twitter via mobile devices while watching television.

This second screen experience is transforming the way people watch TV, and now it's starting to revolutionize the way advertisers communicate with customers.
"What we're seeing this year is that leading up to the Super Bowl, during and after, the game, Twitter is playing an amazing role," said Joel Lunenfeld, Twitter's VP of Global Brand Strategy.

Twitter is offering advertisers a number of ways to connect with customers around the Super Bowl. Bowl advertisers can buy promoted tweets and trends around the game to ensure that people watching and talking about the game are also seeing their message on the second screen.

And thanks to some new tools Twitter introduced last year, marketers can now target specific demographics — like women over the age of 35 who love football. The social-networking site isn't just cashing in on advertisers who are spending on Super Bowl Ads, but also helping other advertisers connect around hot topics of the day.

So, it's no surprise that the Super Bowl will be a cash cow for Twitter. The private company won't reveal any details about ad prices or how much it'll bring in from this year's Super Bowl, but Lunenfeld noted "it's really a good boom for our business. There's absolutely high demand." And that demand, Lunenfeld added, is much stronger than last year.

In addition, marketers are now using Twitter to make ads an interactive experience. It's what advertisers call "paid-plus-earned" media, which means advertisers are paying to reach consumers, but they're also benefitting from the attention and goodwill they've earned with their content.

For example, Toyota is running Promoted Tweets and a Promoted Trend for its RAV4 car, turning the Super Bowl ad into an interactive experience. Consumers can win a chance to appear in the commercial by submitting photos via Facebook and Twitter with the hashtag #wishgranted.

And some advertisers are simply looking to get customers involved — and feeling invested — ahead of the big game. Budweiser, which just this week launched its first Twitter account, is soliciting Twitter and Facebook followers to help name a baby Clydesdale, which appears in a Super Bowl spot. Audi is asking its social media followers to tweet their bravest moments with the hashtag #Braverywins.

http://www.cnbc.com/id/100419767

- Who Won the #Hashtag Super Bowl: The Most Popular Hashtags [Infographic]

It has become customary to include Twitter hashtags with every campaign these days. Half of the brands advertising
during the Super Bowl 2013 had publicized #hashtags. As the Super Bowl was going on and afterwards, some of the tags were trending on Twitter.

It appears Doritos #doritos won the #hashtag SuperBowl, followed by #KalvinClien and Go Daddy’s #TheKiss.

About Us

Social Media Monitoring tailored to your needs.

UKNetMonitor has been tracking social media since 2005 - before Twitter or Facebook started in the UK – making us one of the most experienced and long-standing social media monitoring organisations. Our clients range from large-scale manufacturing, to the retail and service sector. Our roster starts with The AA, Anglo-American, ArcelorMittal, Asda, BSkyB, BSM ...

Our corporate heritage lies in corporate communications, with expertise in PR, IR, CSR, marketing, regulation and government affairs. Our focus is therefore on our clients’ issues and reputation, rather than the buzz of social media. We are not a technology company. Nevertheless, we have developed our own proprietary systems and in house expertise to meet the specific requirements of our customers. Our service is customised exactly to meet your needs. Whether clients are concerned with customer service & relationships, brand reputation, digital marketing, consumer insight or risk management we provide a tailored service that feeds into existing workflows, and provides actionable information based on your needs rather than our system architecture. Each of our clients receives a different bespoke service with an account editor, dedicated researcher, and personalised online dashboard.

Comprehensive Coverage

We offer comprehensive coverage monitoring across the entire public web including blogs, discussion forums, newsgroups, online mainstream media, customer reviews, comparison sites, video, and social networks, including sites requiring registration and passwords. We are continually assessing and plugging-in to new emerging social platforms, such as Google +, Path and Pinterest. We monitor in most of the common languages, including Arabic, Russian and Chinese, across all territories around the world.

Full Service

We understand that the biggest single challenge facing companies seeking to manage social media is dealing with high volumes of irrelevant, duplicated, and insignificant citations. We provide a range of services that finds needles in haystacks:

- Digestible executive summaries and reports.
- Drillable online dashboards, statistical analysis, segmentation and metrics.
- Concise extracts with direct links to original content.
- Urgent Monitoring alerts by email, phone or SMS.
- XML/RSS feeds.
- Bespoke research.
- Advice on responding to adverse issues.
- Retained and accessible historic data and trend analysis.
- Profanity filters.
- Sentiment measures.
- Tailored categorisation by business area, product, territory, or theme.

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