

GUIDE

Twitter Marketing in 2018: What You Need to Know

With 330 million active global users and a demographic that's [heavy on the coveted younger audiences](#), Twitter remains a powerful stage for brands in 2018.

Twitter is simple—think up a handle, upload a profile photo, fill in your bio and send out that first Tweet.

But elevating your Twitter account to grow your following and leverage the platform as a lead generating and brand building tool isn't so simple.

Cultivating an engaged and substantial following for your brand on Twitter involves more than sending out Tweets when your company launches a new product or has an upcoming event to promote. It comes down to meaningful interactions with your target audience: captivate them with relevant content beyond brand promotion, personalize your customer care, and drive conversations.

Twitter's open, public nature provides some key opportunities for brands. From generational content to the convenience of automation and outsmarting the algorithm—here's our guide to maximize your use of Twitter in 2018.

Millennials, Move Over

The time has come for brands to shift focus from Millennials (born between the early 1980s and mid-1990s) to the larger, more influential, Generation Z (born between the mid-1990s and mid-2000s.)

As the oldest of Gen Z gear up to enter the workforce and contribute their purchasing power to the market, it's important to understand how a generation of digital natives consumes social content and how you can tweak your strategy on Twitter to engage them.

Gen Z reportedly spends up to [eleven hours daily](#) on social media. With roughly [66% of the generation](#) on social specifically using Twitter, they typically

view it as a [platform of utility](#), more than one of entertainment or socializing. Where Facebook and Instagram provide more of a platform to interact with friends, the real-time feed makes Twitter an ideal place for Gen Z'ers to get up-to-the minute updates on the news that's most relevant to them and the public figures they follow.

To leverage your Twitter presence in reaching the generation that [Goldman Sachs](#) suggests are more valuable than Millennials, think highly visual and highly interactive.

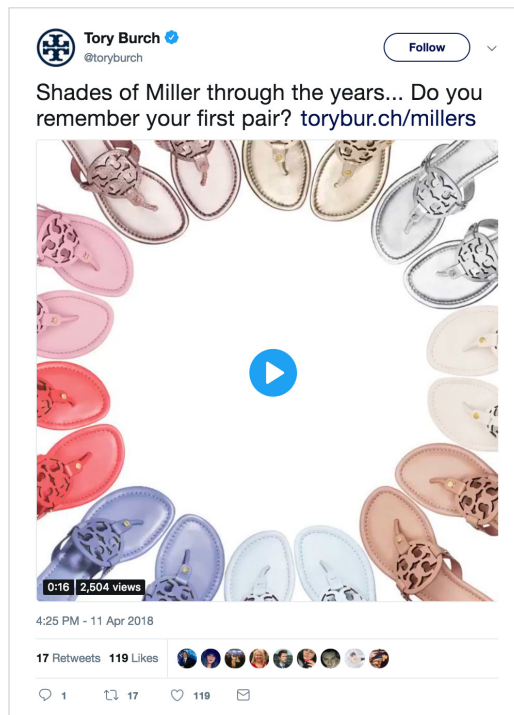
Focus your Twitter content strategy on three things: visual content, influencers and collaboration.

Get Visual with Branded Content

Social media influences 80% of Gen Z purchases. Make it a point to entertain your following with more visual content. Tweets with images receive [150% more](#) retweets than tweets without images.

Captivate your audience with product videos and photos. Use Twitter to cross-promote new product launches and make it easy for users to discover you and get excited about your brand's social presence.

Designer brand Tory Burch often mixes fun, eye-catching GIFs into their Twitter stream. It's content that makes users stop and engage. [Sprout research](#) found that 58% of people actually want to see GIFs from brands.



[Tory Burch Gif](#)

Starbucks, known for aesthetically-pleasing social content, often uses Twitter to hype up the latest launch of a seasonal or limited edition drink.



The combination of simply stylized content, a little wit in the copy and the excitement of a new product amounts to some significant engagement for the brand.

Invest in Real People

Influencers continue to be a cornerstone of social marketing, and they're only becoming more effective when Gen Z comes into play.

A Deep Focus study found that [63% of Gen Z customers](#) want to see real people in advertising. It's vital to align your Twitter strategy with content that features influencers and customers alike.

Whether you retweet influencer content, highlight short videos from customers, or provide an inside look at the people behind your brand, real people are going to make up the content that will deepen your connection to your social audience.

Vans does a great job of promoting their audience in attention-grabbing, mixed-media posts. For their [Vision Walk](#) series—an opportunity for photographers to get together in designated cities and photograph together for a day—they select social influencers that represent the Vans' lifestyle to guest host each event and promote accordingly with custom content.



[Vans Gif](#)

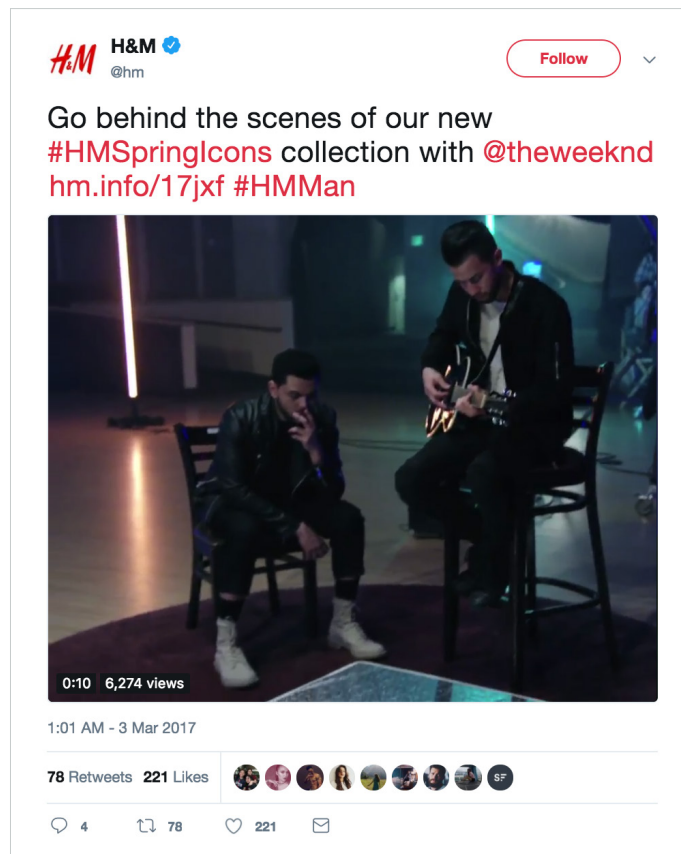
“Vans’ ethos on creative expression is simple—you don’t need professional training, instruction, or equipment to make art. You just need to have an idea and the desire to create something.”

Sometimes giving a behind-the-scenes look at what your company is actively doing helps to not only promote specific content, but your culture. It makes consumers feel like they’re getting exclusive content in their Twitter feed.

Edelman PR promos new podcast episodes with snapshots of the hosts in the studio.



Taking that a step further, H&M produces highly-stylized behind-the-scenes videos of photoshoots to share with its social followers.



[H&M Video](#)

These inside looks are a small gesture of transparency that go a long way with your audience.

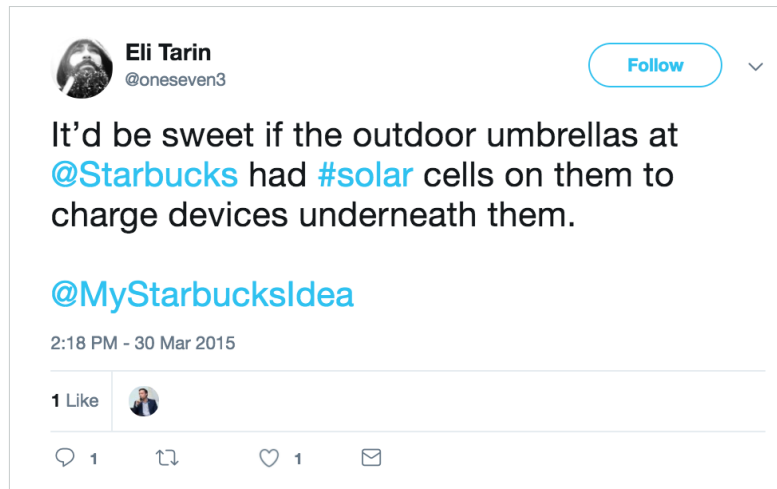
Explore Collaborative Opportunities

In a recent study, [44% of Gen Z consumers](#) globally said they were eager to submit their own ideas in product development.

With a generation of digital and social natives eager to contribute, make the effort to occasionally ask your audience for new product suggestions. Considering consumer interest's are progressing toward more customized products and experiences, use Twitter to pool opinion on desired paths.

Starbucks launched a dedicated Twitter account for [My Starbucks Idea](#), a program that crowdsources customer innovations and satisfaction. The FAQ

goes as far as to state that the goal of the program is to “shape the future of Starbucks.”



Boost Tweet Exposure

When Twitter [rolled out its own algorithm](#) almost two years ago, it was with the promise that users would “never miss an important Tweet.”

For marketers, it's important to understand the nuances of an algorithm that can be educated by preferences in order to use it your advantage.

Users have more input on their feed than ever with the ability to train the algorithm to hide Tweets they're not interested in. For example, if you're seeing Tweets in your feed which have been liked by someone you follow, and you don't want to see them anymore, in a single click you can select 'I don't like this Tweet' and completely eliminate Tweets liked by that user.

Given this, brands should to consider making the effort to engage more frequently with responses to Tweets and mentions. Positive actions boost exposure and the algorithm learns to show users content that's actively being engaged with.

Because Twitter uses likes and retweets as indicators of popularity, simply

liking a Tweet means there's a higher chance it gets shown to more users. Logically, you actually increase your exposure by liking and retweeting your own content, or (if you're a brand with multiple accounts) use the accounts to support each other in engagement.

As with any social platform, more engagement equals more opportunity, more actions, more exposure. It's worth it for brands to allocate the time to responding and engaging with it's audience as much as possible.

Better Customer Care With Automation

An area that Twitter [tends to have an advantage in](#) when stacked against other social platforms is customer service.

The fast-paced, public nature of Tweets makes it an ideal avenue for customers to make their opinions and brand experiences known.

Cue chatbots.

Traditionally customer questions are routed to businesses via email or by phone, which makes the user experiences fairly standard and and unpersonalized. But a chatbot offers an interesting, and interactive way for customers to engage with brands.

A great example of a brand using chatbots in an innovative way comes from [Patron Tequila](#) Twitter account.

The leading spirits brand wanted new ways to reach the Millennial audience and showcase its versatility in cocktail trends and recipes, globally.

With this in mind, [Patrón created their “Bot-Tender”](#)—a chatbot with the cocktail prowess of a real mixologist.

The chatbot offered the opportunity for personalized, one-on-one conversations with followers and managed to serve up cocktail recommendations tailored to the consumer's preferences. Ultimately, the

Bot-Tender proved to offer deeper engagement than traditional customer care tactics on Twitter.



Out of everyone who interacted with the Bot-Tender across several different chatbot platforms, 67% of total conversations happened on Twitter and Patrón saw that 39% of recipes served in Direct Messages led to website views where consumers could go even deeper into Patrón's content.

The trick to the successful use of chatbots on Twitter is making automation approachable.

[Domino's Pizza's Twitter](#) allows customers to order pizza by simply sharing an emoji. The Domino's bot then routes those orders appropriately and asks additional questions if necessary.



Good use of a Twitter bot comes down to enhancing the human experience, not replacing it. Make Twitter conversations simpler for customers, implement innovative ways to engage, but never totally replace the human experience.

Building a Real-Time Brand

Despite the rise of other social platforms, Twitter has remained the go-to for breaking news and real-time conversation. When it comes to timely, relevant discussion, Twitter is (so far) unmatched.

In an era where real-time events are covered not only by news outlets, but anyone with a smartphone, it's important for brands to tap into the

conversations happening all over social, not just in their feeds.

Social Listening for Relevant Conversation

Whether people are directly mentioning your brand or not, you need to know what your Twitter community is talking about.

A Tesla customer sent a Tweet about how the one of the company's superchargers (a station where Tesla customers recharge their vehicles) was always full from people leaving their cars charging for hours. The founder of Tesla, Elon Musk swiftly replied.



Musk saw a negative Tweet and responded, that's basic social monitoring. But taking note of the first sentence, "You're right, this is becoming an issue," tells a bigger story.

This clearly wasn't the first time Tesla had heard of this issue. A quick Twitter search reveals several Tweets before and after the one above with customers experiencing the same issue.

By listening for a combination of keywords like "Tesla" and "supercharger," the company is able to easily see trends in the number of people Tweeting about this issue, related topics and hashtags, an overview of their sentiment and where the conversations are happening around the world.

Informed by social listening, businesses can not only jump into timely and meaningful conversations with customers, but better their product.

Pushing for Dialogue

As a brand you have to be able to interact with your customers, not just reactively respond to concerns.

When Wendy's was reaping the benefits of [it's hilarious and authentic brand participation](#), the funniest thing was that their social strategy wasn't anything out of the ordinary, it was just good listening



The brand leveraged the power of tools like social listening and monitoring to easily address every single user interaction. The responses weren't direct brand promotion or canned customer service responses, they created genuine, personalized dialogue with a majority of users.

No matter what side of the fence you sit on with the level of snark Wendy's was dishing out, it can't be denied that it was an effective way to utilize listening in a way that lures consumers in with an entertaining user-generated campaign.



Conclusion

Instead of aimlessly following Twitter users in hopes of a follow back or resorting to [buying followers](#), your brand should focus on what Twitter is best for: customer care, social listening, real-time conversation, and tapping into the next big generation.

In 2018, there's no doubt that these things will (and have begun to) take center stage when it comes to social marketing strategies and digital media overall.

To have a successful Twitter presence is a mighty position to be in. If you can master this fast-paced social platform, you'll unlock big opportunities to grow your brand.



Simply Measured

A Sprout Social Company

About Us

As part of Sprout Social's end-to-end social media management system, Simply Measured exposes social media's total impact, from conversations to conversions. We're here to help social marketers generate actionable insights from social data.

[REQUEST A DEMO](#)