

Workforce Professionals: Social Media Corner: Using Twitter Effectively: Smart Strategies for Workforce Professionals

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Twitter has come a long way from answering the question “what are you doing”? The micoblogging, 140-character tweeting tool has evolved to more than just sharing everyday experiences to sharing interesting content on the web, conversations around hot topics (using hashtags), photos, videos, and most importantly, real-time accounts from people who are in the midst of a newsworthy event, crisis, or natural disaster.

Pew Internet Research has been tracking Twitter use in their 2012 Pew Internet & American Life Project, and the data shows that the use of Twitter is still climbing as of February 2012. In fact, for internet users age 18-24, the number using Twitter in 2010 (16%) nearly doubled (31%) by February 2012. Also of interest is the percentage of the internet population who use Twitter overall; it has also nearly doubled from 2010 to 2012, reporting eight and 15 percent respectively.

Workforce organizations interested in incorporating Twitter into their communication mix should broaden the usual scope of shared content by answering the question “What do my followers need to know?” Think about the strategic roles of workforce professionals and you’ll find that Twitter lends itself to supporting these functions: 1) discover and identify trends and emerging issues that are pertinent to workforce organizations; 2) convene & lead efforts that mobilize key stakeholders to promote awareness around key workforce issues, and mobilize interest groups for action; and 3) outreach & promote the relevancy of the organization’s mission, communicate value propositions for customer groups, send compelling calls to action to various target audiences, and improve market position.

Here are smart strategies for workforce organizations in using Twitter.

Brand your organizational Twitter page. Personalize your page by uploading your organization’s logo. Change the standard Twitter background (click the “Change background image” link under the Design tab of your profile), and adjust

background and text colors. Make sure the account is public, not private.

Be strategic and follow key influencers in your industry. Follow policy makers, funders, partner organizations and subject matter experts in the field of workforce development. Use search.twitter.com’s advanced search link to find people in your sector or geographic region.

Use Twitter as a PR tool to build relationships with reporters. Use tools like Muck Rack to locate reporters using Twitter and to evaluate future trends and news that is of value. Muck Rack tracks what journalists are saying about the top news and hot topics. It is a great tool for building relationships with reporters and creating targeted pitches for proactive coverage about your workforce organization.

Expand your professional network. Pay attention to @ messages, and you’ll start to notice the network of your connections. If the discussion is interesting, you might find someone you’d like to follow on Twitter and eventually build a professional relationship.

Follow the 60-30-10 rule. Posts should be 60% retweets and pointers to promote items from other users or sites, 30% conversation and responses, and 10% announcements and events Tweet daily and regularly. Share what your workforce organization is doing, what workforce issues are being addressed, and any news and information that will be of value to your followers.

Use hashtags. Join in relevant Twitter conversations and trending topics by using #hashtags. Use existing ones or create your own. You can conduct an online search for “40 hashtags for social good” for ideas.

Promote your feed. Get the word out to current stakeholders and customers through traditional communication mediums (email, newsletters, conversations) to let them know about engaging with you on Twitter. Link to your Twitter profile from your website, or use widgets to display the feed on your homepage.



Listen and learn. Actively listen to what others are saying and examine key trends where your workforce organization could make a difference. Track issues that are important for your organization using search.twitter.com to create RSS feeds of key terms you want to follow. TweetBeep is another good tool that is Twitter’s equivalent to Google Alerts.

Do you have burning question about social media? Join FCM’s Workforce Professionals Social Media Workgroup at <http://ow.ly/dzGBD>, or contact us for questions and support at celina@FullCapacityMarketing.com. For additional free tools and resources about SM and effective websites for workforce professionals, go to www.FullCapacityMarketing.com.