TWITTER: Guidelines for Tweeting

www.twitter.com

Twitter is an immediate communication. It allows you to engage with real-time communication, respond immediately to enquiries and monitor your target market. It provides you with a fantastic opportunity to develop your brand and reach users outside of your normal audience. This document advises on best practice for managing postings and replying to tweets from your account.

1. Setting up a Twitter account

When setting up your twitter profile you should consider the following:

- The Name should reflect how people would search for you on Twitter – don't include acronyms unless that is how you are commonly referred to.
- Add your society url so people believe account is real

2. Managing a SAGE twitter account

a) Posting procedure

- **Tweets must be real – not just rehashed PR/marketing speak**
  Tweets (text-based posts) should be personal and not written in the style of a press release, marketing email etc – you are communicating directly with individuals who can respond to you immediately. Similarly, responses to tweets, or negative posts, should also be personal. Twitter isn't a space for corporate communication – even blue chip companies such as Dell adopt a personal approach.
- **Engage inside and outside of the twitter feed**
  Monitor other feeds via keywords (or by following other accounts) and respond to posts you think are relevant or interesting. Following other related individuals is a quick way of getting relevant people to follow and trust you – as is re-tweeting messages that you find interesting.
- **Social media dialogue starts from real human need**
  Don't just post about what you as a society member/editor think is interesting, post and re-tweet (forward-on) other messages that you think your community are interesting in finding out about.
  Link when possible
  Link to relevant posts, blogs, sites (or facebook site) with your posts. You can shorten the url via Tweetdeck.
- **Track conversations**
  If you have information or news you'd like to track, use an existing hashtag or set one up. Use Twitter search to get your results. Keep it short and sweet. The more you cut into the 140 characters, the less content you provide AND the less likely people will use it.
  When to use a hashtag (#)?
    o Taking notes at a conference (Ask everyone around you to do the same thing and then you'll all have access to ALL notes)
    o Promoting major events (i.e. conference, meeting, etc…)
    o Tracking a message (see how far a reach you're getting)
    o Launching a new product or idea

b) What not to do on Twitter

- **Don't use up your entire 140 characters with a lengthy URL**
  Use applications like TinyURL or Snipurl. They automatically shorten your URL and can offer link customization. Alternatively, third party developers like Tweetdeck offer this when you type in your tweets.
- **Don't ask for followers**
  People ultimately follow you on Twitter because you provide value. Concentrate on your content not increasing your number of followers. This will happen naturally if your content is of value.
  People follow you for a reason
  Whilst adding posts outside of your subject specialism may add humanity to your online presence, it will lose you followers if these posts are more frequent that the reason people are following you.
- **Don't publicly thank all of your followers**
  The quickest way to get people to stop following you is to provide a lack of good content or engaging dialogue. Thanking each of your new followers is a nice concept, but not practical. Keep

in mind that tweeting the names of those following you is not valuable content to anyone. If you set the precedence you're going to thank each and every person, you better be prepared to keep it up. If you really must thank each follower:

1. Use the direct message feature and send it privately.
2. Retweet good content they have posted and give them credit for it (the ultimate thank you!)

- **Don't worry about those that un-follow you**
  Those who un-follow you on Twitter may want to connect with you on a different network, or search your info at their leisure. Worry more about building the community you envision…

c) Monitoring and responds to posts about your society

Your twitter account should be checked daily for comments/communications about your society. Checking may be more dependent on the frequency of the tweets from your account.

Responding to direct messages or tweets to your account

- All these messages should be replied to. If we are unable to respond by the end of our working day, we should send a holding message. As the messages are already in the public space i) users will see if we haven't replied and ii) it gives us a chance to address their concerns.

Responding to tweets about your society when picked up via keyword searches

There is no definitive answer when determining whether to reply to these tweets – you should use your judgement based on the content of the message. Obviously, if the message doesn't make sense or it isn't clear whether they are referring to your society or a different society you may decide not to reply.

If a message is clearly someone complaining about your society then you should respond to this tweet to demonstrate you are proactive in addressing your stakeholders' concerns. If you can't address the problem straight away, you should send a holding email until you are able to provide more information. If you decide to respond by telephone or email (away from twitter) you should reply saying you are doing this. It is important that you are seen to be replying as the complaint will have happened in the public domain.

Negative comments will happen whether or not we reply. By replying you have the opportunity to change address problems and customer's perception of us (see the Air Force diagram below).

Rules of engagement
The US air force put out what has to be one of the simplest best practice guides for monitoring and responding to online community activity. It's a good model to take in and to emulate.

AIR FORCE WEB POSTING RESPONSE ASSESSMENT V.2

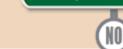## AIR FORCE PUBLIC AFFAIRS AGENCY - EMERGING TECHNOLOGY DIVISION

DISCOVERY

WEB POSTING
Has someone discovered a post about the organization?
Is it positive or balanced?

CONTACT INFORMATION
Phone: 703-696-1158
E-mail: afbluetube@gmail.com

EVALUATE

"TROLLS"
Is this a site dedicated to bashing and degrading others?

MONITOR ONLY
Avoid responding to specific posts, monitor the site for relevant information and comments. Notify HQ.

CONCURRENCE
A factual and well cited response, which may agree or disagree with the post, yet is not factually erroneous, a rant or rage, bashing or negative in nature.

You can concur with the post, let stand or provide a positive review. Do you want to respond?

"RAGER"
Is the posting a rant, rage, joke or satirical in nature?

FIX THE FACTS
Do you wish to respond with factual information directly on the comment board?
(See Response Considerations)

"MISGUIDED"
Are there erroneous facts in the posting?

LET STAND
Let the post stand -- no response.

"UNHAPPY CUSTOMER"
Is the posting a result of a negative experience?

RESTORATION
Do you wish to rectify the situation and act upon a reasonable solution?
(See Response Considerations)

RESPOND

SHARE SUCCESS
Do you wish to proactively share your story and your mission?
(See Response Considerations)

FINAL EVALUATION
Write response for current circumstances only. Will you respond?

RESPONSE CONSIDERATIONS

TRANSPARENCY
Disclose your Air Force connection.

SOURCING
Cite your sources by including hyperlinks, video, images or other references.

TIMELINESS
Take time to create good responses. Don't rush.

TONE
Respond in a tone that reflects highly on the rich heritage of the Air Force.

INFLUENCE
Focus on the most used sites related to the Air Force.