

Protect your digital brand against Twitter

By [Howard Scott](#)

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LONDON, UK: A digital brand is the collective impression of all that is online about a person or a business, including your own, and it is important in establishing and building customer trust and loyalty. Increasingly, businesses use popular social networking sites such as Twitter to encompass their digital brand.



Unfortunately, many businesses rush to set up Twitter accounts without recognising that a digital brand communicates your quality, professionalism and standing, and that everything posted on Twitter (or online elsewhere) will contribute to your brand.

Furthermore, companies are letting their employees, who may be untrained and unaware of brand values, manage these accounts on a day-to-day basis. As a business, you should be aware of this, and make an effort to protect yourself on Twitter.

Just one terrible Tweet can do a lot of damage

Just one misplaced Tweet by an employee could have a negative impact on your company. Earlier this year Vodafone was forced to issue an apology to thousands of followers on Twitter after one of its customer service staff broadcast an obscene message. Despite Vodafone deleting the message from its Twitterfeed, users of the service saved a copy of the Tweet and sent it across the internet.

The episode damaged Vodafone's digital brand, and the company was forced to apologise to hundreds of individual followers.

The Vodafone case highlights the importance of choosing carefully which employees manage your businesses Twitter account. Those entrusted with the responsibility should be well aware of the tone, language and brand values you wish the business to express through its Tweets.

It's not just existing employees that can bring damage to your business's digital brand through Twitter misuse. Individuals associated with your company in anyway, such as ex-employees, can bring harm through disparaging remarks made on their personal Twitter accounts.

Kevin's curse

It's no surprise then that US and European players were initially banned from using Twitter during this week's Ryder Cup, though this was later lifted. This was related to the outburst against the England and Wales Cricket Board on Twitter recently by Kevin Pietersen, who reacted angrily to being left out of the England squad for the one-day and Twenty20 series against Pakistan.

So, what can you do to protect your brand against Twitter?

1. You can start protecting yourself by setting up a Twitter account and placing your business in control. This discourages competitors from registering fake accounts with the intention of damaging your digital brand.
2. Put a social media plan in place. This outlines a strategy for social media use. A clear policy also establishes boundaries for your employees tweeting under official business (and personal) accounts, and makes clear what is acceptable and what is not.
3. People increasingly use Twitter to talk about their opinions towards a company or service, including yours. There is nothing your business can do to stop this, so you should look to protect yourself by using Twitter to monitor conversations about your brand, engage with customers and build positive relationships.

Use positive content to protect your brand

It may not be possible to change everything posted on Twitter, but you can protect your digital brand against naysayers by counteracting negative information with lots of positive content. Let the world know how effective your business is by highlighting and re-tweeting positive mentions from your customers.

Even if your business doesn't have an official Twitter account, it's very likely people will still be tweeting about you and building your digital brand in your absence. It's much better for the reputation and standing of your brand, if you can control this process.

Don't shy away from Twitter, embrace it, but have a solid strategy in place. Make sure your business is proactive, and you can deliberately build a positive digital brand that is protected against Twitter, and which extends your ability to achieve awareness and create lasting customer loyalty.

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