

# Marketing Thought Leaders

A playbook for leading your company to future success

## Talk is Tweet: CMOs Build Brands 140 Characters at a Time

by Nancy Pekala

*You tweet? Really?*

Yes, really. While not long ago, this question may have been met with snickers or surprise, today's C-suite is increasingly recognizing the value of the 140-character tweet. Two Twitter camps still exist, however. The first is comprised of CEOs and CMOs who proudly proclaim their handle and hashtag. The second represents those who vehemently defend their right not to share their 140 characters worth.

Today, an increasing number of CMOs are fully entrenched in Twitter camp. Indeed, the question heard more often in business circles is not "You tweet?", but "What's your handle?"

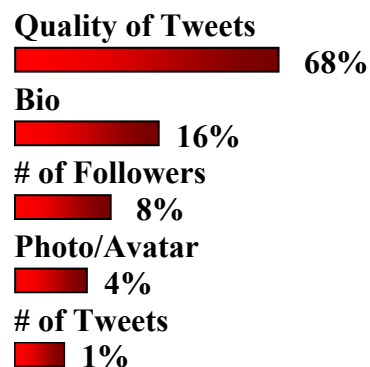
Yet, despite a growing number of C-suite marketers who are logging on to Twitter, they are still not allocating either appropriate time or resources to engage with their followers. In a recent survey of 124 CMOs by [The CMO Club and Hill & Knowlton](#), more than four out of five (84 percent) CMOs allocate less than 10 percent of their budgets to experimenting through social media and non-traditional communications channels, with more than half (55 percent) allocating just five percent or less. Nearly half [indicated](#) they do not have a social media communications policy and only 14% indicated they were "proactive" about creating external brand advocates and leveraging them.

A recent [Weber Shandwick](#) study confirmed these trends indicating that "for the majority of Fortune 100 companies, Twitter remains a missed opportunity. Many of their Twitter accounts did not appear to listen to or engage with their readers, instead offering a one-way broadcast of press releases, company blog posts and event information."

In a recent online [AMA Weekly Poll](#), of 334 respondents, 42% indicated they have no online listening strategy in place at all. Of those who do monitor online conversations, only 12% characterized their efforts as very successful while 22% rated their online strategy as either fair or poor.

[Kodak's](#) CMO [Jeffrey Hayzlett](#) now boasts 15,000+ followers while [Kent Huffman](#), CMO of [BearCom Wireless](#) tweets for more than 16,000 followers. In fact, Huffman believes so strongly in the value Twitter can bring to C-suite marketers, that he launched a [campaign](#) that aggregates those influential marketers who are using Twitter.

### What Most Influences You to Follow Someone on Twitter?



Source: AMA Weekly Poll, 3.1.2010

These CMOs and others are fast recognizing that a social media strategy that includes micro-blogging platforms such as Twitter is critical to engaging today's new consumer. During [The CMO Club](#) Summit late last year, Guy Kawasaki delivered a keynote presentation, "How to Kick Ass on Twitter" in which he proclaimed that "The nobodies are the new somebodies." Once you turn an average Twitter critic into a fan they will Tweet to many, many more followers.

The old marketing theory of influencers is no longer relevant, Kawasaki suggested. "Don't just focus on the top influencers with the most followers. Rather than suck up, you should suck across or suck down," he said, "Twitter allows you to do that."

## 10 Tips for C-Suite Tweeting

### 1. Feed and Nurture

Make sure you provide a constant stream of tweets with Twitter-worthy content. If you have a blog, run an RSS feed to generate automatic updates in your Twitter account. Link to valuable content on your site or other sites you trust.







### 2. Tweet and Repeat

While retweeting (repeating a follower's Twitter post) offers some value in attracting followers, you need to create original content if you truly intend to use Twitter to engage your followers (customers). What kind of content will you distribute via your tweets? Product news? White papers? Special offers? Research highlights? Links to articles? Twitter can be used as an effective platform for sharing your thought leadership. The goal is to have interesting links so people will retweet you.

### 3. Hone Your Hashtag Strategy

Inserting hashtags (the # symbol followed by a keyword or phrase) within your tweets is a simple way to connect tweets about a specific topic while allowing Twitter users to easily search for content. Your hashtags should always be consistent with your brand and the content of the tweet itself. To avoid spam, never use a hashtag that does not relate to the tweet's subject matter and do not attempt to insert popular hashtags in tweets just to generate search results.

When used appropriately, hashtags are a way to effectively track social media campaigns and build your brand. Create hashtags that are short, memorable and easy for Twitter users

CMO Tweet Sheet	
	Asked "my best <a href="#">#sales</a> moment?" - My answer scored my major points at home!! Husbands, take note - <a href="http://ow.ly/1gs17">http://ow.ly/1gs17</a> <a href="#">#s20c</a>
	For a glimpse into Twelpforce origins check out this post. I like it cause it also shines a light on our culture <a href="http://tinyurl.com/ya6nfcw">http://tinyurl.com/ya6nfcw</a>
	OpenSky is platform 4 influencers 2 connect 2 suppliers & create shopng xpriencs 4 consumrs tht r intractions, not just transactions <a href="#">#OSfamfun</a>
	Most corporate change is "threat based change" not opportunity based change. <a href="#">#sbs2010</a> (so true, such ashame)
	Online Only: Get \$10 off all shorts now-3/14, code 2074. 4 Her: <a href="http://bit.ly/aOqRye">http://bit.ly/aOqRye</a> 4 Him: <a href="http://bit.ly/cQ5bxz">http://bit.ly/cQ5bxz</a> <a href="#">#EXPRESS</a>
	Just finished reading World Wide Rave. Great book by <a href="#">@DMScott</a> about how to get millions of people to spread your ideas.

to spell. Think about how Twitter users search for the topic you're covering. Once you've started using your hashtags, don't forget to incorporate them in company blogs, e-newsletters and other communication vehicles.

You can—and should—track those using your hashtags via tools such as [Twitter Search](#), [Monitter](#) and [TweetGrid](#) which allow you to monitor in real-time those using your hashtag and subscribe to an RSS feed of the results. [TweetDeck](#) and [Seesmic](#) offer useful search functionality while [Twilert](#), [Tweetalarm](#), [TweetBeep](#), [CoTweet](#) and [HootSuite](#) allow you to set up alerts.

#### **4. Use Your Brand Voice**

What is your brand voice? Whether it's serious, clever or humorous, your brand's voice needs to be expressed in your tweets consistently and clearly. Be sure to include taglines, unique lingo and other communication specific to your brand where appropriate.

#### **5. Commit Necessary Resources**

Are you willing to make the time to tweet? If you want to build your brand and engage with your customers, you'll need to commit to tweeting regularly. You'll need to devote time not only to composing new tweets but responding to followers' replies as well.

#### **6. Tweet, Respond, Repeat**

Pushing out 140-character tweets of value to your followers is Job 1 in your Twitter strategy but it's not your only job. You also need to establish policies to actively monitor your Twitter feed and respond to your followers. Will you respond to everyone who replies to you? If so, will you say something of substance or simply say, "Thanks for the follow." Or, will you invest the time in sending a direct message to each follower who responds to your tweets? Do remember to thank those who are retweeting you.

#### **7. Don't Forget to Follow**

Your goal is to engage with as many Twitter followers as possible and have them spread the word. But be sure to follow others as well, including other CMOs and influential marketers. Learn what they're tweeting about and who they're following. (*For a list of CMOs and their Twitter handles view the chart at the end of this article.*)

#### **8. Host a Tweetup**

Turn your tweets into something bigger by hosting a tweetup (an in-person gathering of those who follow you on Twitter). These offline gatherings are a great way to engage with your followers in an extended way and promote your brand. Take photos, videos and live Tweet from the event, tagging all content with the common hashtag. Post the content on sites that allow the content to be easily shared and send links to your attendees to follow up on your event.

#### **9. The Good, the Bad, the Twitter Worthy**

Recognize that when you send out tweets to hundreds or thousands of followers, you won't make everyone happy. Some will love what you tweeted; others won't. Some will take the opportunity to talk about how great your product or brand is, others will do just the opposite. Don't allow the silent majority to affect your marketing.

#### **10. Be Personable**

Your tweets should be an expression of you...and your brand. Compose those 140 characters in a way that clearly represents your personality. Twitter is not the platform for corporate speak. To engage your followers, don't be afraid to let your true character come through.



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## CMO Top Tweeters



● **Acquisio**  
[Marc Poirier](#)

● **AMD**  
[Nigel Dessau](#)

● **American Health**  
[Sam Mallikarjunan](#)

● **Aspect**  
[Mike Sheridan](#)

● **Bazaarvoice**  
[Sam Decker](#)

● **BearCom Wireless**  
[Kent Huffman](#)

● **BestBuy**  
[Barry Judge](#)

● **CCA**  
[Myles Bristowe](#)

● **Dick's Sporting Goods**  
[Jeff Hennion](#)

● **e.l.f. Cosmetics**  
[Ted Rubin](#)

● **Environmental Data Resources**  
[Jay Gaines](#)

● **Ergotron**  
[Jane Rodmyre Payfer](#)

● **Express**  
[Lisa Gavales](#)

● **Fiat Brazil**  
[João Ciaco](#)

● **Fuel Brand Group**  
[Joshua Smibert](#)

● **GenMobi Technologies**  
[Karina Goldrajch](#)

● **Green Leads**  
[Mike Damphousse](#)

● **Hay Group**  
[David Harkleroad](#)

● **interlinkONE**  
[Jason Pinto](#)

● **Jive Software**  
[Sam Lawrence](#)

● **Kodak**  
[Jeff Hayzlett](#)

● **MI6**  
[Chris Herbert](#)

● **MotiveQuest**  
[Tom O'Brien](#)

● **Mzinga**  
[Patrick Moran](#)

● **Newsforce**  
[Dana Todd](#)

● **PEMCO Insurance**  
[Rod W. Brooks](#)

● **Powered**  
[Aaron Strout](#)

● **RatePoint**  
[Richard Turcott](#)

● **Revolution Money**  
[Stephanie Fierman](#)

● **SmartyPig**  
[Jon Gaskell](#)

● **SocialGrow**  
[Ken Herron](#)

● **StormExchange**  
[Jarvis Cromwell](#)

● **StreamServe**  
[John Rueter](#)

● **Swarmforce**  
[Brandon Geiger](#)

● **TCG**  
[Alasdair Munn](#)

● **Victoria's Secret Direct**  
[Patrick Adams](#)

● **Ware Malcomb**  
[Ruth Brajevich](#)

● **WeddingWire**  
[Sonny Ganguly](#)

● **XpertUniverse**  
[Alex Romanovich](#)

Sources: Paul Dunay's [List of C-Level Tweeters](#) and Kent Huffman's list of [Top CMOs on Twitter](#). You can also follow CMOs using Chris Herbert's [Twitter list](#). Follow the AMA at [twitter.com/marketing\\_power](https://twitter.com/marketing_power)