

Twitter Tips By Trudy Thompson

Thursday is social networking day at Bricks and Bread Sustainable Living Centre. I share my knowledge to help people improve how they use twitter, to make it work as well for them as it is for me. My sessions are fun, interesting and useful for networking with likeminded people.

If you are a [#BBhub member](#) it is just £25 to attend - [To book a session click here](#)

Apart from spending my time tweeting, I also do this ...



Bricks and Bread Sustainable Living Centre
Hub of experts collaborating to make it easier for people to live, work & build sustainably



Change to Save
Entrepreneur training by Trudy Thompson for people who want to make a difference



Crafters & Makers Exhibition
Showcasing inspiring creative people who share their skills in workshops for all the family every Saturday

Some background info about why I started using Twitter and how it has helped my business

I did my first Tweet in 2009 just before I opened the Bricks and Bread Centre in Aldershot. I was very unsure about what to say, I didn't know if anyone would notice what I was saying and for months hardly anyone followed me, so I did wonder if it was worth doing.

At the time I was taking the biggest risk in business that I have ever taken, by launching an innovative new social enterprise, so I had lots of interesting things to say! When nobody seemed to notice my tweets I decided keep going and just use it tweet the links to websites I found interesting and record my daily activities at the Centre, as in the future it might be useful to see what was going on in the world and the Centre.

I tweeted about how I had leased a huge disused industrial warehouse to turn it into a sustainable living centre. How I was intending to make it accessible for all, rather than just eco warriors! I shared the issues I was having as the business was in Aldershot where the only green things the town is known for are the army's uniforms! I tweeted to find experts to share their experience and develop sustainable businesses with me at the Centre.

Twitter gave me an open source and free method of sharing information about sustainable living, eco building and social enterprise. I shared the practical knowledge of eco builders, sustainable business innovators and self-reliance experts and invited people to activities at the Centre where we could pool our resources to collaborate in enterprise and educational projects.

In three years I've done over 13,000 tweets and have learnt so much about Twitter. It is more powerful and useful than it appeared to be when I first started using it.

Some background info about why I started using Twitter and how it has helped my business

People say my tweets are both inspiring and informative. Most of my tweets are re-tweeted by at least one person and some by hundreds. Over 5,000 people are following my Twitter feed and between 50 to 100 new followers connect with me every day.

I am writing this on a Friday, on Twitter it is Follow Friday, all day people who follow @bricksandbread have been sending tweets using the #ff hashtag to recommend who they think others ought to follow. www.followfriday.com tracks the 23 million recommended tweeters and ranks them. For the last month we have been ranked in the top 100 in the UK and globally we are in the top 1,500.

Bricks and Bread Sustainable Living Centre has grown from a handful of people into a huge network of more than 60,000 people who have joined the Bricks and Bread hub to share their skills, resources and information. Tens of thousands of visitors have come to the Centre for advice, training, events and meetings at the Centre. In the last year the business model I created to run the business was made available for replication as a social enterprise franchise and so far 300 people are using my methods to help them avoid re-inventing the wheel and costly mistakes when setting up a similar venture.

There's no doubt that my use of social media has played a significant part in helping grow Bricks and Bread into an internationally known brand and helped to raise awareness about social and environmental issues. Twitter has enabled me to discover and talk to interesting people and find out great information that I would never have discovered so quickly and easily.

This year, as well as sharing my sustainable business techniques and social entrepreneurship skills, I am sharing my knowledge of using social media by running workshop sessions every Thursday to help other people fast track their businesses too. **[To book a session click here](#)**

A few tips and links to help you use Twitter

[If you want me to retweet you or help you find out something on twitter send me a tweet using my username @bricksandbread and #BBhub](#)

The [help section](#) on Twitter is very useful [this a link to their guide to get started on Twitter](#)
To understand any confusing terms use this [Twitter Glossary](#)

Username

If your name has already been taken try to avoid using the suggestions that Twitter gives you as they are often difficult to remember with numbers and abbreviations.

Try to use something that defines you; such as your personality, favourite hobby, an abstract name or a short phrase.
Having different accounts for everything *seems* like the right move, until you realize it's hard to grow multiple followings.

Profile Pics

Use your own pic, do not use the egg picture that Twitter provides – When I see an egg profile pic I think they are either secretive or dull people who can't be bothered to update their profile.

Look at popular tweeters images, good ones are funny pics, a clear head shot of the tweeter, a simple logo.

What to say in profiles

It is most important to have your real name in the profile if it isn't in your username, I tweet as Bricks and Bread Sustainable Living Centre when I added my name to the profile it made a big difference to the way people contacted me and the number of new followers I got – people want to talk to people, not brands (unless they are complaining about them).

Small business profiles - Try not to use corporate speak – be a small biz run by a person with a personality & interests.

Get your website link or blog post address in the profile - people will click on this to find out more about you.

Please put onto your website & business stationary the info about your social media platforms.

Who to follow & how many followers do you need

When you start using Twitter you can follow a maximum of 2000 people, only follow about 150 a day, that isn't a Twitter rule I think they let you follow 1000 a day, but if you start off slowly and follow who you know, admire for their knowledge and content, or do a search for your favourite topics and follow the people in the Top search results as they are the most retweeted and likely to be popular.

It is not how many people you are connected to, but how engaged you and your followers are – [read this blog 'how to get loads of followers fast by @purpledognet](#)

Unfollowing

I unfollow people who don't follow me back, I give them a fortnight to do this after I have followed them, I only keep them if they tweet useful info. I also unfollow those who are inactive for longer than a month. There are lots of sites that will help you unfollow people, I like JustUnfollow which enables me to find unfollowers and inactive people, this site will let you unfollow 50 a day for free, I wouldn't bother paying for the premium service as mass unfollowing can get you in trouble with Twitter. <http://www.justunfollow.com>

Managing many social media accounts

You can use Tweetdeck or Hootsuite to manage your social media activity, I have never got to grips with them but they are useful and lots of my social media pals love them.

Tweetdeck - <http://www.tweetdeck.com>

Hootsuite - <http://hootsuite.com>

To put your tweets on your website or to feed your other social media platforms

My twitter feed is also on my website and all the other social networks I use, to do this I use Ping - <http://ping.fm>

I use Wordpress to make my websites, there is a Widget in Wordpress that automatically adds your Twitter feed

Or go to the Twitter Help section to find out about creating Twitter Widgets - <https://support.twitter.com/articles/15354-about-twitter-widgets>

Writing effective tweets

- Using Twitter for business is exactly the same as having a good conversation with a friend in real life, watch you don't sound like a market stall trader shouting at people going past
- Invite conversation with people – why, when, where, how, what do you think?
- Check your spelling - nothing makes you look more stupid as a business if you can't get a 140 character tweet right
- Avoid using punctuation marks after words you want to be searchable, such as hashtags, links or important words – it may render them unsearchable
- Don't use too many abbreviated words and text speak - not everyone understands
- Tweeting is like text messages, only everyone can see them and easily misinterpret your tone of voice!
- Take care with sarcastic, argumentative, naming & shaming tweets when you are representing a business – it might lose you more than just a follower
- Keep it short & simple – make your tweets shorter than the 140 characters – they will stand out more and are easier to re-tweet – 100 -120 characters are good sized tweets
- Write tweets that will make sense out of context, such as when people read it without seeing the other tweets you have written – or if replying to a busy tweeter about a subject they stopped talking about an hour ago
- CAPITALS = SHOUTING – don't use capitals unless you want to look angry
- Avoid doing tweets with lists of twitter user names in them – it is really boring to read
- Invite your Twitter followers to your other social media platforms and visa versa
- Frequency & timing of tweets is important – I regularly post 5-10 tweets with valuable content, well-spaced throughout the day to achieve maximum impact
- Tweet links to a variety of sources - Vary the destinations of your links. If all you do is send tweets to your own blog or products, followers will drop off or stop clicking your links

Timing your tweets for greatest effect

I use Timely to do this for me - <http://timely.is> I don't rely on it to send all my tweets, just the standard messages I want to distribute at the best times.

Timely analyzes your past 199 Tweets or Facebook posts and figures out the best time slots. Then uses this info to auto-schedule your tweets and learn as your followers grow when to send your tweets. It is great for scheduling messages from different social media accounts

It is also worth signing up to <http://www.tweriod.com> as it will check your activity and tell you when are the optimal times to tweet for a RT or mention

Deleting tweets

If you really mess up and send a tweet you want to delete – you can, but do it quickly, once it's out there it's being read To delete go to your list of Tweets cliczk on the mistake & the delete link will show, click on it and you will be asked to confirm you want to take this action

Tweet pictures – they say more than words

People look through your pics to see if they want to follow you, so make sure you regularly add new ones that reflect what you do

Don't just attach a pic and say nothing about it, describe what you are showing people

Shorten website links

The only time I think you need to keep the link in full is if you want to promote your website name – as it becomes very anonymous

Don't waste your characters with long website names – shorten them with site such as TinyUrl or Bitly

<https://bitly.com/>

<http://tinyurl.com/>

Using hash tags

Hashtags enable people to gather into groups on Twitter, they are searchable keywords. This is how you find others interested in similar topics – type #BBhub into the search box to see what I mean. To find out about particular hashtags have a look at - <http://hashtags.org/>
Check out <http://tweetchat.com> sign in with your twitter username to track a hashtag, especially useful for seeing what is happening at an event

How and when to DM (direct message)

You can only send a private message to someone who is following you, they can only reply back if you are following them
I tend to use DM to send my email address to someone – never tweet your email address, it invites spammers to email you
I DM someone to let them know I want to have a less public or longer conversation with
I might send a DM to a friend to remind them to tweet about something or look at something on Twitter
You can choose to have Direct Messages sent to your phone or email address – go to your Settings & Notifications to change this
Don't send promotional messages via DM it annoys people and is seen as spam – you can get blocked or reported

Retweeting

There is no rule really, just RT what interests you or you think it fits with your followers interests, or just to support the people you know on Twitter.

As with everything you do on Twitter, RT in moderation and in between RT send other types of tweets.

Thanking people who RT you

I used to do this religiously every time someone RT'd me when I didn't have many followers or RT's, as I now get hundreds of RT every day it is difficult to keep on top of and would get a bit boring if my tweeting was mostly thanking people for RT's – so I thank people who do more than others and return the compliment by RT their messages

Lists

If you follow lots of people your timeline will get blocked up with a lot of boring and random tweets, use LISTS to watch tweets from particular groups of people you follow – such as [my crafters & makers list](#)

If you create your own [Twitter lists](#) you can monitor what people say via these lists, you can set up public or private lists. Private lists are useful for following your competitors and you'll be the only person to see this private list on your Twitter profile.

Your social media profile how do you rate?

Register & check your social networking status with these two sites, I use both of them, compare yourself to @bricksandbread to see how effective you are compared to us; <http://www.peerindex.com> & <http://www.klout.com>

Using the search facility

To use it as a basic word search just type in a word or a #word with a hashtag before it, by default the results will show you the Top tweets (those that have been RT'd the most)

Click on the word **Top** a drop down arrow will appear – select **All** to see a timeline of all the latest tweets

You can do an advanced search by clicking the **Refine Results** – I use this to find people tweeting in my local area and find more detailed searches

Trending

This tells you what topic is immediately most popular, rather than topics that have been popular for a while or on a daily basis, it helps people discover breaking news stories from across the world. When you see a topic trending you can click on it in the trending list and see a timeline of tweets, to take part just send a tweet with either the hashtag or the topic being discussed – [for more info see Twitters help section on Trending](#)

Popular events on Twitter

There are so many of these and new ones start every day – follow @bricksandbread to see which ones I take part in, these are the main ones I do;

Follow Friday – happens for 24 hours on Friday - send a tweet using #ff hashtag saying why you think people ought to follow people you follow and like on Twitter

To see why you need to take this seriously see our current rating on

<http://www.followfriday.com/followfriday/bricksandbread>

Use the search facility on www.followfriday.com to see where you are ranked in the UK & Globally

Send a tweet for each twitter user you like and want people to follow – do not send lists of usernames – personalise your tweet to say **why** you want people to follow them

The maximum number of Follow Friday tweets I send around 30 but I don't send them all at once, I spread them throughout the day in between other tweets.

If you send more than 50 Follow Friday tweets, the Follow Friday ranking will not count your tweets and you will lose your own points on the ranking for that week too

For more tips about Follow Friday ranking – [see Follow Friday ranking rules](#)

#SBS or Small Business Sunday is 2hrs 30 minutes of small businesses tweeting @theopaphitis on a Sunday starting at 17:00 and finishing at 19:30.

after this time Theo will review the tweets and RT his top 6. Winning tweets must include @theopaphitis and #sbs.

I am a #sbs winner and I now do business with many of the other winners, I can highly recommend you take part in it, even if you don't win it is worth entering.

If you want me to RT your #sbs tweet then send me a tweet to @bricksandbread using #BBhub & #sbs to let me know after you have sent your message to Theo Paphitis.

All previous #SBS winners are [here](#) on @[virtualbuscent](#) website - [2010 #SBS winners \(64\)](#) - [2011 #SBS winners \(273\)](#)

I hope this was useful, to find out more [tweet me](#) a question or book into my Twitter training sessions on Thursday

Feel free to share this pdf with anyone

Pop in any Saturday to Bricks and Bread Sustainable Living Centre if you want to have a chat with me and see what I do.

Contact details

Website - www.bricksandbread.com

Telephone: 01252 314060

Address: Albion Works, Church Lane East, Aldershot , Hampshire GU11 3BT

[Join our hub](#) to share our resources, skills & information

Follow us on [Twitter](#) to read inspiring articles our latest news

Like our [Facebook](#) page

Connect with me on [Linkedin](#)

Regular events at Bricks and Bread Aldershot

Trudy's [Twitter training](#) & networking sessions every Thursday

Change to Save [entrepreneur training](#) Wednesday & Friday

[Crafters & makers](#) exhibition & creative workshops every Saturday

[Free Advice Clinic](#) from Trudy every Saturday