The Join In guide to social media 2013

Top Ten Twitter Tips

Building an audience on social media platforms takes time, consistency, creativity, patience, and a bit more time.

Aim to create a social network that extends beyond your core club members and remember that there are plenty of people who are interested in what you have to say... you just have to let the around 11m UK users know you’re out there.

Here are ten tips to get you started...

1. **Mind your tone.** Twitter attracts an open & relaxed audience. The individuals who attract the most followers adopt a “conversational” style. Aim to bring a little personality & fun to proceedings.

2. **Use #hashtags frequently... and wisely.** Hashtags connect users around a shared topic or phrase. They are a great feature but be mindful of using too many hashtags in a single tweet – it can make tweets difficult to understand.

3. **Shorten.** Yes, Twitter has its own shortening tool but if you use a free service like Bit.ly you’ll also generate analytics which means you’ll know how many people clicked on a specific post.

4. **Leave a little room.** Yes – you have 140 characters to play with but if you try & limit your messages to around 120 characters your full message and name will be visible if someone ReTweets you.

5. **Don’t just broadcast... chat.** Don’t produce a one-way blast of information - attempt to connect with other users. Frame your tweets to end with a question, try to create debate and mention by @name influencers or people who mention you.

6. **Promote yourself.** Ensure your email signature, business cards, promotional material, presentations and/or byline display your club’s Twitter @name. Where appropriate get into the habit of asking people to follow you after meetings, email exchanges or at social events.

7. **Share rich media.** Pictures and video are far more widely shared than words and links alone. Roughly 60% of all social media traffic includes this kind of rich media so remember to post photos and ask followers to share their snaps with you.

8. **Decorate.** Ensure your Twitter profile image & background is visually engaging and dynamic. There are so many ways to present a fresh aesthetic including Twitpaper (free) and Twitterimage (not free but still good). It’s also important to fill out the ‘bio’ and ‘info’ section.

9. **Timing.** Peak consumption times on Twitter are around 9am-10am and 3pm but if there’s a major sport event related to your club, don’t just watch on TV – duel screen and take part in the online chat too. It’s a great way to meet like-minded people and grow your online audience and influence.

10. **Locate.** Connect with other clubs in your league or area to grow your audience. Identify a list of the relevant, bloggers and local journalists relevant to your sector. Make an effort to engage with them – their digital reach could be invaluable if they ReTweet or favourite your posts.
There are more than 30m users of Facebook in the UK. So if you want your club to be heard above all the social media noise, you need a strategy.

Here are ten tips to get you started...

1. **Win, Win, Win!** Competitions are a tried and tested way to increase engagement and followers. It’s all about incentivising people to follow you. There are plenty of ways to do it, but remember that Facebook have stringent rules on how and where you can promote them. The easiest method is to link from FB to full competition details on your website or blog. Make sure that following your page is a competition entry requirement.

2. **Widen the conversation.** Club business will be central to most posts and updates but don’t be afraid to expand the conversation topics to related subjects and sports. If you’re a hockey club why not discuss other hockey-related and sporting issues?

3. **Ask and answer.** Remember to frame all updates to end with a question or call-to-action. Success on Facebook is built on two-way communication and small interactions pay dividends over time. If someone takes the time to leave a comment, reply back... every time. Remember to ask opinions, ‘like’ good comments and end your reply with another question.

4. **Share the work.** Social media publishing requires resources so why not have more than one club member running the account? This will boost the frequency of posts while different personalities can make the account more vibrant – consider using initials at the foot of each post to clarify who is saying what.

5. **Make specific requests.** Certain interactions are more ‘viral’ than others. For example, asking users to ‘like’, comment, vote and share your updates. These types of responses ensure that your posts are visible to friends of your followers.

6. **Edit before publishing.** Any link pasted into Facebook will automatically generate (via metadata) a headline, thumbnail and snippet text. It is essential that you edit every section where necessary to ensure that your post is as compelling as possible. You should also choose to ‘hide’ the link, increasing the chances of interaction with your post.

7. **Use images.** They are far more widely shared than words and links alone. Roughly 60% of all social media traffic includes photos so remember to post photos and ask followers to share their own with you.

8. **Don’t auto-link to Twitter.** It may seem like a good idea, but Tweets don’t translate too well on Facebook and can look a little off-putting. It’s always worth taking the time to write a different type of headline when publishing on FB.

9. **Timing.** Peak traffic times on Facebook are around 10am and 3.30pm but remember - if there’s a major sport event, related to your club, don’t just watch on TV – duel screen and take part in the online chat too. It’s a great way to meet like-minded people and grow your online audience and influence.

10. **Decorate.** Ensure your Timeline background and thumbnail images are visually engaging and dynamic. Ideally your thumbnail image should ‘reduce’ well. Put another way, it needs to catch the eye and clearly represent the club in question.