

TWIT, "NO FRIENDS" OR REAL BUSINESS?

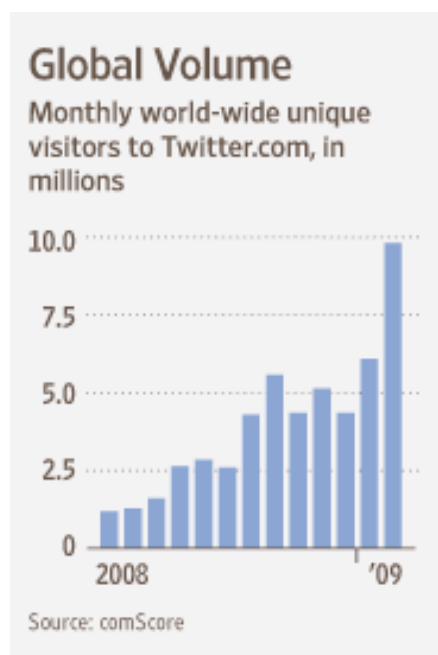
Let me start with a diversion - twitter is SO LAST YEAR - I've already moved on to flutter.

<http://tinyurl.com/cfdfph>

Or rather -- I've rdy mvd flttr ...\$coke

I've been watching twitter from the sidelines, but have now found it somewhere I have to go every day, almost religiously. I'm wondering which of the three criteria in the headline I fall into - maybe all of them.

How can a company of thirty people, with virtually no logical revenue strategy have captivated the world like this? Twitter now has 360 million search results on google, God has 450 million. Give it a month.



The jury is still out though on how twitter will emerge as a business tool, particularly here in Asia. Interestingly, Dell claim they have already made \$1m of sales last month on twitter (yes....twitter). That pales against their \$46b in annual turnover, but don't lose sight of the marketing costs (zero) for this effort. Already travel agents and hotels are getting on board in the US. Trip to Hawaii this Friday for \$499. Click here.

A lot of agencies are experimenting with the medium. WPP (<http://twitter.com/wpponline>) are dumping press releases. Mindshare (<http://twitter.com/MindshareGlobal>) is talking about research, albeit slowly. But right now, tweets are relatively public - so if you're going to jump in,

jump in and do it properly. DDB China (<http://twitter.com/ddbchinagroup>) was naked two months ago, but now has 100 followers. Two months is a lifetime in twitteryears. And please, keep it relevant. I recently stopped following a PR agency CEO in Beijing when he sent three tweets about "preparing for haircut", "getting haircut" and "finished haircut". Not the insight into the market I expected - especially given my follical challenges.

If you're a marketer, figure out for yourself how you or your agency can use it to seed relevant information. Do a trial. Make a test. It's crucial in this whole approach you build in metrics - there's so many add on's already to drive measurability. Remember that leading marketers right now have recognized their role as a connector, not an advertiser. JNJ in the US did an interesting test with Aveeno using a podcast during the Oscars with a twitter base. Sarah Milsten, who has written a book on twitter, notes that "The biggest mistake a company can make is thinking this is a great place to push out information about itself," said Milstein. "It turns out it isn't a great place to do that at all." Twitter, she warned, isn't advertising - it's an opt-in medium. Rather, she said, companies should see the service as a way to have conversations with current and potential customers.

If you're an agency, it's a great recruitment vehicle, and also a great way of engaging feedback within a network (if you protect your followers). We've seen this already for a number of networks trying to get more instant feedback

Finally, twitter has a huge research potential - not yet tapped. Instant feedback to a link, an instant chance to enter a contest in exchange for database information. There's a lot of angles that haven't all been thought through yet. Plenty of potential for the fast and the nimble here.

If you must know, I find it one of the most interesting newsfeeds on the web. Too damn much is happening in China right now to just rely on standard news. Kaiser always has his finger on the pulse - <http://twitter.com/kaiserkuo>. Maggie Rauch <http://twitter.com/rauch22> tells me more about sport than I could ever read. The WSJ China Journal always has a fresh perspective - <http://twitter.com/ChinaJournal>. And for men (and women) who cannot live by business alone, humor can come in 140 characters - <http://twitter.com/TheOnion>

Twitter ain't going to go away. Go online and try it out. But please - keep your haircut secrets to yourself

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