

Twitter or not to twitter for small business marketing?

Twitter is often treated as a double edged sword. It has kudos in the media for its newness, strangeness and rapid growth. These same qualities can often put off a small business owner. Many an internet-savvy marketer has confessed that they didn't "get" it for a long time. So what is the average small business person to think? Even though Twitter is free, their most valuable currency is usually time and they want to know where the money is.

Big brands are using twitter as a **lightning-strike form of customer service** and pouncing on complaints, magically creating confidence. If you complain about a product or service you may find the washing machine or the computer replaced, and even airline tickets available where none existed before. Banks with serious reputation issues in the past year are using twitter to be seen as human and helpful for a change.

Small businesses don't have the customer service issue. Most have a good relationship with their customers and handle problems personally. So why use twitter?

The usual reasons given are about **creating a community, finding out what prospects think**, connecting with peers leading to **joint ventures** or collaborations, and of course being the **helpful person solving the relevant problems**. All of which can lead to clients and money.

In the twitter workshops I have been running for a while I have noticed that a great deal of clarity and confidence is gained by looking at the world according to twitter. By making twitter part of the plan in fact **the plan gets clearer**, the spark gets more sparky, and the **next actions are easily identified**.

The participants have learned about their business and themselves, as well as about twitter. In a small business where one person carries out many different roles, this can provide the edge that leads to greater profitability. Unlike the lengthy soul searching associated with a business plan or marketing plan twitter-readiness can be achieved quickly and easily.

Once people have a handle on twitter (in every sense of the word) it becomes a really valuable tool for a small business.



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