



# MidEx

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Midlands Excellence Organisational Improvement

Birmingham Business School  
& Investors in Excellence

## **Social Media: Be part of the conversation... for FREE!**

Greg Freeman

“We don’t have a choice on whether we do social media; the question is how well we do it”

[Erik Qualman]

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## Executive Summary

Social media is for everyone: from the individual to the conglomerate. The question is not whether your business needs to do social media; but it is how well you do it. Read on if your business has never taken to a social media platform before. Read on if your business has an established social media network, but you understand it could improve. Even read on if you would just like your personal Facebook page to be more interesting to your friends and family. The best part is that social media is free to use!

This report will divulge the keys to social media success, whilst improving your day-to-day output and usage on both Twitter and Facebook.

## Which platform is right for you?

Facebook and Twitter can be used by businesses of all shapes and sizes; however, the platforms lend themselves to businesses based on their potential clientele.

To keep it simple: if you are a business to business company (B2B), start with TWITTER. If you are a business to consumer (B2C) company, try FACEBOOK. Here's why...

## Twitter

- ✓ **Business to business**- thousands of companies join Twitter every day, and it is now largely accepted as a professional environment for businesses to operate and communicate with one another.
- ✓ **Spread the word**- encourage other businesses to spread your message and brand by posting content that is relevant, interesting and mutually beneficial.
- ✓ **Engage**- listen to the feedback that is coming into the business via Twitter, and ensure that if contact is made, a response is given.
- ✓ **PROMOTE. PROMOTE. PROMOTE!**- unlike Facebook, a platform where users are generally online to speak to friends and family, and therefore not open to direct promotion, Twitter is accepted as a promotional haven. Gain new followers, and engage with current ones, by promoting deals, competitions and freebies in exchange for retweets and website clicks.

## How to use your Twitter

### Cover Area

**CrowdControlHQ**  
**@CrowdControlHQ** FOLLOWS YOU  
The smart way to control social media risk  
Birmingham/London · CrowdControlHQ.com

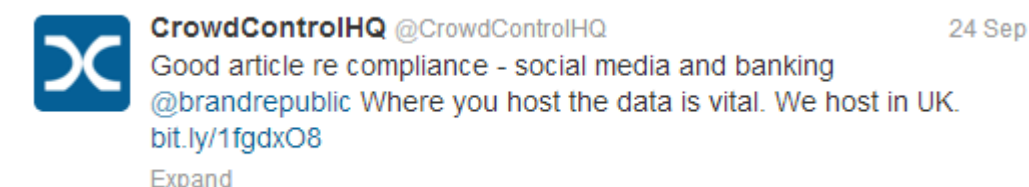
1,132 TWEETS    2,053 FOLLOWING    1,996 FOLLOWERS    **Following**

- ✓ Integrated marketing mix
- ✓ Reflect the brand image
- ✓ Website link

\*Twitter only gives you 160 characters here... make the most of them!

Your cover area/ cover photo may be the first time an individual or business meets your brand on Twitter. They may have seen a tweet they liked which you posted or were @mentioned in (when a fellow Twitter user connects with your page), and decided to check out what else you have to offer. With this in mind, your cover area must reflect the image you wish to portray as a business. Social media is not a place to completely remove the business from other elements of the marketing mix; it must have a feeling of total integration with the rest of the company. If this integration is not achieved, potential clients can become confused by the mixed messages when dealing with you in the 'real world', and walk away. As you can see from the above example, as well as maintaining brand image, this is also a great area to impart your company ethos/ slogan, as well as providing the company web address so followers can investigate further.

#### *Tweet Other Brands*



Twitter is a fantastic platform for connecting with other brands and sharing information. You can connect with other brands by typing their '@handle' into one of your tweets. Twitter only allows 140 characters per tweet, so keep your own @handle snappy, otherwise brands will avoid connecting with you; and do not use too many @handles per tweet posted, as this will not give you enough space for valuable information or promotion. The above example shows a great information share from '@brandrepublic'. Ideally Brand Republic would thank @CrowdControlHQ for sharing their information by retweeting this post and spreading their brand name to all of their followers; however, this does not always happen!

#### *Retweet to Build Relationships and Spread your Message*



As stated earlier in the report, Twitter is now very much a platform for professional relationships to be started and developed. If brands can put each other on the map, the relationship can often develop outside of social media too. Retweeting is the process of sharing someone else's tweet. Above you can see that CrowdControlHQ have shared the tweet put out by Participate UK. Reasons for doing this include: being a source of information which is interesting to your followers makes you more likely to be kept on their Twitter feed; companies will often praise/ thank you via Twitter, and you want your followers to see your good work; partnerships can be formed where businesses agree to engage in regular retweeting of each other, in order to spread brands to a wider audience.

## Facebook

- ✓ **Business to consumer**- your audience is generally online to chat with friends, catch up with distant family members or share photographs with people they know. Facebook for businesses should not be too different. Keep the tone friendly and informal, but consistently professional; and do not overly promote to individuals.
- ✓ **Customer service**- you may find that Facebook is the go-to tool for complaints across your social media platforms. Ensure those representing your brand do not take offence to any of the complaints written on your wall. Initially deal with complaints politely on Facebook, but suggest exchanging e-mails or telephone calls, in order to take the negative impact away from a public audience.
- ✓ **Leave the right impression**- consumers now see social media as a reflection of the business, just as much as any other interaction. Be endearing throughout every engagement, and be careful which employees you allow to represent you in such a relaxed, yet volatile landscape.

## How to use your Facebook

### Cover Area

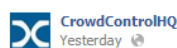


Facebook offers a similar cover area to Twitter, and the same rules apply here... but they give you a few more characters to describe yourself!

### Post with Links and Images to Grab Attention

Facebook is a social environment with millions of people attempting to grab one another's attention. For this reason, it is always preferable to create Facebook posts which engage consumers on a variety of levels. Some consumers will be attracted to words, questions and facts; whereas others will want photo, video or website information to get them hooked. With this in mind, try to avoid posting simple status entries, as these take up small amounts of room and do not grab attention. Posts sent out with links and images are far more likely to steal space on the consumer's Facebook news feed, and therefore your chances of being recognised as a brand are increased. This can be seen in the above example; as although the status without a link is an interesting snippet of information, when placed next to the post with a link, colour and imagery, it is barely noticeable.

\*Facebook post without a link/ image



\*Facebook post with link/ image



*Personal Touch*

Without reiterating the nature of Facebook and its users too emphatically; businesses are encouraged to manage the personal element of their Facebook activity carefully. We know that consumers do not want explicit promotion; so attempt to interact with their personal side, by giving your company a 'face'. Small businesses are often strongest because of their personal approach, and this can be reflected in your social media outlay. If the people who make your business great have done something worth recognising, this can only help the company image, and therefore share this with your consumers via Facebook.



## Summary

- ✓ B2B- Twitter
- ✓ B2C- Facebook
- ✓ Balance conversation, interaction and promotion
- ✓ Make posts interesting and engaging
- ✓ BE SOCIAL!

Although the above rules may seem fairly 'hard and fast', social media is an arena where every business can find its own manner and tone of voice. B2B companies may also find success on Facebook, and vice versa for B2C. The key for all businesses is to make sure social media is a part of their integrated marketing plan: it cannot replace all other marketing efforts; but similarly should not be excluded from them.