

Zen & The Art of Legal Networking

INSIGHTS & COMMENTARY ON RELATIONSHIP BUILDING WITHIN THE INTERNATIONAL LAWYERS NETWORK

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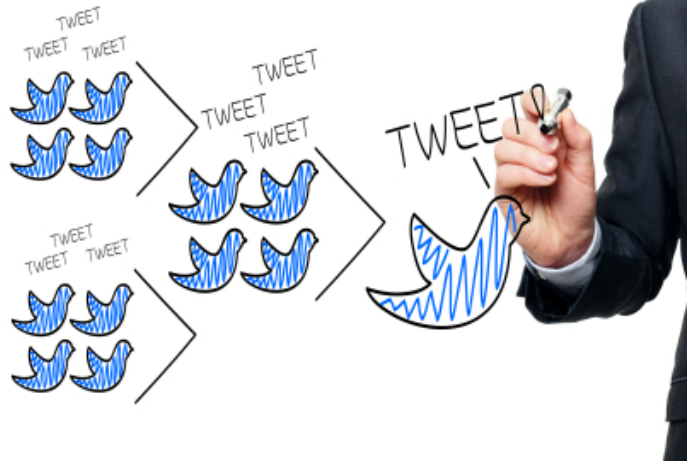
Zen & The Art of Legal Networking

October 28, 2011 by Lindsay Griffiths

Twitter Tutorials - Getting Started

Don't worry - I know I haven't finished my Facebook series yet, or even gotten very far underway. But because we're expecting some major changes with Facebook with the rolling out of the new "timeline," it makes sense to wait until it's out before moving forward.

So in the meantime, I thought I'd get started with our Twitter tutorials, particularly since I had a request from a non-legal family member on behalf of a colleague for some assistance!



Before we get started, I'm sure there are many of you who will roll your eyes at my recommendation to use Twitter. I mean, what can you really get across in 140-character bursts?

So very much.

I'll give you my background on Twitter - several years ago, I launched a very small gifts company, selling designs on tee shirts, etc. through Cafe Press. As a marketer, I was looking for ways to build buzz around my designs without having to spend any money. I found a list of suggested ways to do this, which included signing up for Twitter - something I'd never heard of.

I decided to give it a shot. Now, I'm sure you're all expecting me to say that overnight, I became an internet success and made tons of money for my designs through using Twitter. I didn't (but wouldn't that have been nice?).

But what did happen is that I was there in the early stages of Twitter, and as a result, I was able to connect with many of the early adopters in the legal industry, both attorneys and other marketers. I primarily work alone, and everything I know about legal marketing I've learned on my own, and not through a mentor, so this was incredibly valuable for me. I began to develop relationships with colleagues through Twitter - relationships that enabled me to bounce ideas off of people with more experience than mine, learn from their experiences, see what real concerns both marketers and attorneys have, and more.

Using Twitter, I started to get real-time news from people in the know, both in and out of the legal industry. I connected with thought leaders in other industries, and saw how they shared content, both theirs and others, to become considered go-to sources. I started to do the same.

I learned that even with 140-characters, you could share a lot, including links to blog posts, where you could flesh out your thoughts and ideas more fully. Before I joined Twitter, I didn't think I had much to say about the legal industry - certainly not enough for a blog. But Twitter became an inspiration for me, a place to find ideas, and I realized I had a LOT to say. And Zen was born. Even though Twitter wasn't the first social media site I joined, for me, it was the driving force behind all of my other social media efforts.

Now, I'm considered the leader within our Network for social media, and I'm one of the leaders for the Legal Marketing Association's Social Media special interest group. I'm just about to self-publish my 237-page tutorial on LinkedIn through Amazon and Kindle, and my blog posts are regularly included in the top posts for LexBlog. And I have dear friends, mentors and colleagues within the legal industry who have helped me to become successful and continue to teach me daily.

I can still hear your skepticism though - and I understand it. It's true, Twitter can be a time-suck. But, if you use it carefully, you can connect with other thought-leaders in the legal industry and your specialty industries, form relationships with clients, potential clients, potential referral sources, journalists, conference organizers and more - people who will help to build your reputation. It's a place to share content that interests you, and a place to share your own thoughts.

So now that you've got the "why," let's get into the "how."

Twitter is unique in that although they are a web-based service, most people are using a third-party application to manage their account - because of the sheer volume of information on Twitter, it's just easier this way.

In my next post, I'll go into setting up an account, but for today, let's talk about some of the lingo. It can seem a little silly, especially to serious lawyers, but don't worry, you won't be alone in using the language. In future posts, we'll get into what some of these terms really mean using visuals.

- **Twitter:** The 140-character social network or microblogging service.
- **Followers:** To see what other people are saying on Twitter, you "follow" them (we'll get into how to do this later). Following someone subscribes you to their stream of Tweets. People who subscribe to your stream of Tweets are called "Followers." Unlike LinkedIn and Facebook, you don't have to follow someone back in order for them to see and subscribe to your tweets.
- **Tweet:** A 140-character message that you post on Twitter. These messages are public.
- **Tweeting:** The act of posting a message, or tweet, on Twitter.
- **Twitter Stream or Tweet Stream:** This is a collection of Tweets, normally in reverse chronological order.
- **Re-tweet or RT:** This is the re-posting of a tweet written by another Twitter user. When a tweet is reposted, it will begin with RT and the Twitter user's name to identify it as originating with someone else.
- **Direct Message or DM:** The Direct Message (also referred to as a DM for short) is a private message that you send to someone that you follow. This person must also follow you in order to exchange private messages.
- **@:** The @ sign has two purposes. The first is to designate a Twitter user - within Twitter, the @ + someone's name (such as @lindsaygriffith) will link to that Twitter user in your Tweet. It will also send a public message to that person. If you begin a message by addressing it to that person, only that person and people who follow both of you will see it come up in their Tweet Stream
- **# or hashtag:** The # sign in front of a subject will hyperlink it to make it easier to search. For example, the Legal Marketing Association uses #LMAMKT so that people can search for all tweets marked with this hashtag. It exposes you to other twitter users interested in the same subject who you might not connect with otherwise.
- **#FF or #FollowFriday:** Follow Friday is a way that people promote other Twitter users on Fridays - they will post their twitter name and include the #FF or #follow Friday hashtag to recommend that others follow those people.
- **Tweeps:** This is short for "Twitter Peeps" or people that are using Twitter. It often refers to your Twitter friends. Some people will call Twitter users "Twits," but since this can get you into trouble, it's best to stick with "Tweeps" in my opinion!

- **Fail Whale:** When Twitter isn't working, their site will show a graphic of a cartoon whale being lifted by birds. This is the fail whale.

There is a LOT more lingo, but those are the important basics - as you can imagine, people like to create their own words, particularly adding Twitter's "tw" onto a lot of other words to "twitterize" them.

Don't worry that you're new to Twitter and you need to have all of the phrases and words down - we were all new to Twitter once, and there's still a lot everyone is learning, so just let people know that you're new, and ask questions when you need to!

I've also found that Googling a word I'm not familiar with will often help me figure out what it means. I really wish Google had been around when I was a kid, getting teased because I wasn't up on all the slang!

In my next post, we'll look at setting up a Twitter account, and what the Twitter online interface looks like!

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