



Twitter

This is an informational article on Twitter. The author, Ryan Shell, works for Truliant Federal Credit Union based out of Winston-Salem, NC.

What is this thing called Twitter I keep hearing about?

Twitter is a free social networking and micro-blogging service that enables its users to send and read other users' updates known as *tweets*. Tweets are text-based posts of up to 140 characters in length which are displayed on the user's profile page and delivered to other users who have subscribed to them (known as *followers*).

Part of Twitter's appeal is that it's simple. It gives people the chance to connect with friends, coworkers and brands in a way that we've never before seen. Simply put, it is a conversation starter, a connector and an information portal all in one.

For further explanation of Twitter take 2 min. and 25 sec. to watch "[Twitter in Plain English.](#)"

Twitter is growing. No, it's really growing!

While Twitter is a social networking platform, it is also being used as a customer service tool by organizations such as Apple, Priceline, Starbucks and many more. It's also being used by Jon Doe, Jane Doe and about 4.5 million others. From February 2008 to February 2009 Twitter experienced a growth rate of 1,382% and continues to grow today.

A Twitter success story.

There are tons of examples of how Twitter has proven to be a successful customer service tool, but I'd like to share how Truliant Federal Credit Union has effectively used the service. In this example you will see how the credit union connected with a member via Twitter, engaged in conversation, solved the problem at hand, and then had the member suggest to all of their Twitter followers that they should also follow Truliant.

Here we go.

The following tweet was sent to Truliant,



TopDerek @truliant Could anyone at Truliant help guide me through the Mint.com authentication? No matter what I try, it says # or PW is wrong

10:07 AM Apr 27th from web

Upon receiving the tweet Truliant responded with,

@TopDerek I'll shoot you a DM tomorrow. I use Mint.com with my Truliant account and it works just fine. Be in touch soon.

11:42 PM Apr 28th from Tweetie in reply to TopDerek

As promised the credit union followed up the following day.

@TopDerek Follow Truliant and shoot us a DM with a way to reach you. Should be a quick fix.

12:32 PM Apr 29th from web in reply to TopDerek

The member then sent his phone number and email address to Truliant via a Direct Message (DM) on Twitter. Once the DM was sent the member received a phone call no less than a minute later. After a short conversation and clarification of what account number Mint.com asks for the member felt his problem would be fixed. Shortly after ending the call the member sent a follow-up email confirming that everything was working 100% and that they were happy with how helpful Truliant had been.

But wait, there's more.

After the member had a positive experience interacting with Truliant they went back to Twitter, the place the conversation started, and told their followers how happy they were about the credit union's "awesome" customer service.



TopDerek My bank, @truliant federal credit union, is awesome! Best service around

12:45 PM Apr 29th from TweetDeck

Every Friday something called "Follow Friday", better known as "#followfriday," takes place on Twitter. This is simply when people suggest individuals/brands that they think their followers should follow. Two days after the Truliant @TopDerek had a positive customer service experience with the credit union he still had them on his mind and included them in his first ever "#followfriday" tweet.



TopDerek Ok, time for my first follow friday. @ThatKevinSmith @truliant @novaspivak @BrameCo @adamarnold14 - Sorry some shameless plugs #followfriday
about 1 hour ago from web

Okay, I'm starting to "get it," but what do we post?

While you read this section please pretend that I'm standing on a soapbox. Reason being is that the content you publish on Twitter, or any other social media outlet, is extremely important. Social media is NOT a place for brands to go and simply dump their latest press release. If you do so on Twitter I can guarantee you that your number of followers will remain stagnant and you'll eventually start to lose the followers you've gained.

Twitter is about taking part in and creating conversation. And if you haven't figured it out yet it isn't just about telling someone what you are doing at that very moment. Now you might be thinking, "But how do I join random conversations with people?" In typical face-to-face conversation if you hear someone talking about something that interest you, you might walk over to them, introduce yourself and jump in the conversation. You can do the exact same thing on Twitter. How? Search.twitter.com is the answer.

Go there, and put in something that interests you or that's related to your brand. Consider this to be your eavesdropping technique on Twitter. If you see something worth responding to, simply click the reply button and jump in the conversation. Here is a random example of how I did this with Truliant Federal Credit Union.

To start, Truliant has several locations in and around Greensboro, NC so I did a quick search to find out who was talking about "Greensboro." To do so I went to search.twitter.com and put in "Greensboro." I immediately saw the tweet below.

On my way now to Greensboro to find a coffee shop to work from this the morning. Any suggestions?
about 3 hours ago from TwitterBerry

I live in downtown Greensboro and immediately thought of a cool coffee shop this person should visit so I responded from Truliant's Twitter account with,

@akaScooter The Green Bean on Elm St is fantastic!
about 2 hours ago from web in reply to akaScooter

It's important to know that when I sent this tweet I didn't have an expectation that @akascooter would respond, but they did, and with something I totally wasn't counting on!



akaScooter @truliant I might try there later this afternoon...thank you! I didn't expect a reply from the entity that has financed all my cars...

about 2 hours ago from TwitterBerry

Can you imagine how happy I was to see that this individual was also a member of the credit union? I had no clue, but now he knows that we're on Twitter and we probably just gained a little "cool factor." I simply responded with,



truliant @akaScooter Ha! Glad to know we could help with your cars. Didn't realize that. Thanks for being a member!

about 1 hour ago from Tweetie in reply to akaScooter

Closing

These are two very different examples of how your organization can use Twitter. What works for me, might not work for you and it's important to understand that from the start. Venture out and give it a go, but accept that your game plan might change and that you might even mess up along the way.

If you'd like to follow me on Twitter I'm @RyanShell. Happy tweeting.