

How to Track Your Performance on Twitter

Use Twitter's new analytics dashboard to make sure your tweets fly, not flop.

Matt Alderton

Eighty-six percent of marketers agree: Social media is important to their business. And yet, only 26 percent say they can measure their social media success, according to a May survey from online social media magazine *Social Media Examiner*.

To help bridge the gap, Twitter recently introduced a free analytics dashboard that small business owners can use to track their tweets.

"One of the biggest challenges for small business owners is determining the ROI of their marketing efforts," says Hillary Brown, social media director at Blue Compass Interactive, a Des Moines, Iowa-based online marketing firm. "Twitter Analytics allows you to do just that."

What are Twitter Analytics?

Twitter Analytics includes two tools: Timeline Activity and Followers. According to Brown, the Timeline Activity tool counts mentions, follows and unfollows in six-hour increments over the past 30 days. It tracks how many times the links in your tweets have been clicked; shows how many faves, retweets and replies your tweets received; and lets you sort tweets by "best," "good" or "all" for the purpose of ranking them. The Followers tool, by contrast, reports your followers' demographics, including their gender, location and interests.

Where are Twitter Analytics?

To access Twitter Analytics:

1. Visit ads.twitter.com.
2. Click "Billing history" under "Account and billing" in the top right.
3. Select "Switch to Advanced" in the bottom right.
4. Choose "Advanced" instead of "Simple" (both are free).
5. Access Twitter Analytics using the new "Analytics" dropdown menu that appears in the top left.

How to use Twitter Analytics

The No. 1 reason for evaluating past tweets is optimizing future ones.

"Interactive marketing is pretty simple: You do more of what does work and less of what doesn't," says Chris Marenis, founder and CEO of Surefire Social, a Washington, D.C.-based online marketing firm.

Marenis recommends scheduling a dedicated time every week or month to log in to Twitter Analytics. During that time, study which of your recent tweets have received the most engagement—clicks and retweets, for example—as well as the demographic makeup of your followers. Then, build an editorial plan for what you'll tweet in the weeks ahead; try to replicate content that's performed well, avoid content that hasn't and tailor your tweets to your unique follower base.

Consider, for instance, Rasheen Carbin, director of business development for MBA Project Search, a job search site catering to MBA students. Although his Twitter feed is aimed at MBAs and small business owners, Twitter Analytics revealed that more than a third of his followers also are interested in music, reality TV and celebrity gossip, and that 60 percent are outside the United States.

"I'm now taking these and other facts gleaned from Twitter Analytics into my Twitter marketing campaign," he says.



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