

Twitter for Landcare Groups

when is twitter the right option & how to get results?

Twitter is an information network made up of 140-character messages called Tweets. For many businesses, Twitter has become one of the many ways to announce a new product, a special promotion or link to a press release.

It is also an easy way to discover the latest news related to subjects relevant to your Landcare organisation and can be a useful medium for garnering attention from politicians and the media.

IS TWITTER THE RIGHT OPTION?

Twitter is not a strategy, it is a tool. Before embarking on a Twitter presence, it is wise to develop a strategy and a plan of action, based on your Landcare group's goals and stakeholders. At the very least, basic considerations include:

- Who will be tweeting from your organisation? Will there be one voice or many?
- Who is responsible for monitoring your presence and engaging in conversation as it happens?
- Do new tweets need to be approved? What is the process?
- How will you build up your base of followers?
- How will you respond to positive attention? How will you respond to negative attention to mitigate the damage?
- How does Twitter fit into your overall communications strategy?
- Can you put in the effort? Make sure your organisation has the time and resources necessary to make its Twitter efforts a success.

TIPS FOR MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR TWITTER PRESENCE:

1. Find and Follow Others

By following other interesting Twitter accounts, your organisation can increase its Twitter presence and get a feel for trending topics. Look for other Landcarers, NRM leaders, public service accounts, regional journalists, or news sources.

NB: One great way to find more interesting accounts is see who those you know are following.

2. Retweet, Reply, React

Use existing information (other people's Tweets) to show others what your organisation cares about. Retweet messages your organisation supports, or reply with your reaction to a Tweet.

NB: If you're a new user, others are more likely to find your messages if they are Retweets or replies.

3. Mention Others

Consider mentioning other users by their Twitter username (preceded by the @ sign) in your Tweets. This will draw more eyes to your message, and can even start a new conversation. Similarly, try posting a message mentioning an NRM leader or media personality.



4. Maximise Features

Be sure to connect your Twitter account to your Facebook page, or website. People who have success with Twitter share information in a variety of ways.

5. Mix it Up

Use variety to build your Twitter presence. Post a link to an interesting news story or new research relevant to your organisation. Ask questions to learn what your followers are interested in. Follow other Twitter feeds and engage in conversations.

6. Use a Hashtag

A Twitter hashtag (#) ties the conversation of different users into one stream. Popular hashtagged words often become trending topics. Hashtags are great for centralising conversations around events, marketing campaigns or programs. Where possible, add a hashtag to your tweets.

7. Tweet Regularly

Don't let your Twitter feed go cold. Even if you don't have many followers at first, tweet away. It will show your potential audience that you have something to say, and will get you in the habit of regular engagement.

8. Promote Your Feed

Make sure your stakeholders know about this new way to engage with your organisation. Announce your Twitter presence in your newsletter, and any other social media platforms you are already using. Link to your Twitter profile from your website, or even better, display your recent tweets on your homepage.

9. Be Casual

A unique aspect of Twitter is that it is an opportunity to interact with your audience on an equal footing. Take advantage of this by adopting a more informal, personal voice.

10. Create Value

The only way to get and keep followers is to be interesting. Share what your organisation is doing, what you're working on, what's on the horizon, and anything else that will increase the value your followers get from your feed. The more value they get from you, the more value you will get from them.

TIPS ON TWEET TECHNIQUE

1. Keep Your Tweets Short

Many Twitter experts believe that Tweets should be 115 characters or less. This leaves 25 characters for your followers to use when they Retweet your post.

2. Use a URL Shortener

Adding a link in your Tweet can be powerful as it provides your readers with rich content. Full URLs however, can steal valuable character space. By using a url shortening service, such as bit.ly — you will be able to include a longer message in your Tweet and you will leave space for people to add to your message when they Retweet your post.

3. Check Spelling and Grammar

Though you are only allowed 140 characters be sure to include complete words, accurate sentence structure, and punctuation. This has been shown to increase the likelihood of attracting Retweets.

DISCLAIMER: The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of March 2016. However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that information upon which they rely is up to date and to check currency of the information with the appropriate officer of QWALC or the user's independent advisor.