



March Master Class with Warren Whitlock - "Twitter (and social) as the Best Influence Tools"
Thursday, March 24, 2016

Crystal Cook: Welcome to our special training with Warren Whitlock, "Twitter (and social) as the Best Influence Tools" Please type any questions you have in the Q&A Box.

Participant: What is the best metric for measuring the ultimate value of social media, when sales are rarely a direct outcome of engagement.

Warren Whitlock:

Well first of all I'd be asking, what is the goal? Because any goal you have is anything you could apply this to... so if the goal is new dealers, new prospects, you count them and then you tie that back to what you're doing.

I just barely talked to somebody who was another project I'm helping a client with, but he is trying to build his speaking career. What he needs is to appeal to the kind of people... he's got all of the people to come to what he does; thousands of people come and see him. But really only a few people make the decision to buy, and so most of the time he's been working on trying to satisfy all of them and that's what he tweets about. But really he's got to find those finite people that are going to help him network with them, and one connection could lead to the next million dollars in sales.

So it's a matter of establishing your goal and going for it. Metric of how many followers you have is ridiculous, I do not get any more engagement on a tweet because I have 225,000 than if I had half that. I'm getting more in some places; I have a whole lot of lurkers that are following me. But I don't know what my lurkers want, I just see that the demographics say they are above average in income and education. And most of what I do is about business and marketing, so I think I'm on the right track.

But the only way I find out is to engage; so measure your engagement, go for more of that, and then listen to people, find out what they want, and that's something you can give them... whether or not that's selling them your product, then you know you're heading in the right direction (if those are the kind of people that will become your customers).

Casey Markee:

Very good answer, on a related note is there a specific tool or tool suite that you personally use to measure your engagement? We do recommend the use of Sprout Social here; I know a lot of us use that. Of course you know Hoot Suite and others exist... is there something specific you like over anything else?

Warren Whitlock:

Well Hoot Suite or Sprout Social are great for listening and scheduling, those kinds of tools are. Personally, I just tweeted last night; I have just deleted Tweet Bot from my iPhone (and I deleted it from my iPad some time ago). I use the native app on iPhone and iPad; that's where I actually tweet and talk to people and reply because it's very versatile. And my favorite thing right now, I have to admit it, in the last couple of weeks [is] I'm really into animated GIFs.

Casey Markee:

So you have a GIF keyboard and everything?

Warren Whitlock:

No it's built into the Twitter app right now. And it may be from some keyboard that I installed before, I really haven't researched how I got this, but I also have it when I'm replying to things on Twitter.com. And I use Twitter.com as much as anything and I've always used just Facebook. I've never seen a tool that's better for posting to Facebook, than just going on Facebook and being there.



For me, I have a large “I’m an influencer” kind of account, that’s what I talk about. So all of my planning, scheduling; all of what I do is me being me... very authentic and of course, time consuming. If you’re doing this for one or more brands or accounts you work for:

Step 1 is do everything you can to get the people involved doing it themselves;

Step 2 is if it’s your job to speak on behalf of your employer, make it as personal as you can and then look at the engagement.

So analytics.twitter.com or it’s in the menus of Analytics, fantastic information real-time. I can post a tweet, wait two minutes, and open up the analytics on it and tell whether I have a hit. I couldn’t always do that; it took a little bit of practice to get to that point. But most of my tweets will get engagement within the first two minutes, and I tweet a lot.

I use the same tweets over and over and over again because I know that people respond to them and like them... and getting new people. I get generally about 1% of my audience even sees the tweet, so I’m now planning them.

By the way this is advice if you have 200,000 followers, it doesn’t work if you’re tweeting 3,000 times a day and just repeating the same tweets over and over and over again. I engage all day long with people, I am the Twitter guy that wrote the first book about Twitter. So I’m on there and I now schedule things like I would if I was scheduling a line of radio ads, which is where I started 30 years ago (was selling radio)... and we would never just use one tweet one time. So I use the same content, I’ll rewrite the tweet and use the same photo. When I share something that’s a new story, I’ll share it at five or six different times in the day. And I can do that; I tweet 100 times a day.

Casey Markee:

Do you schedule a lot of those Warren? How many of those are live and how many of those do you schedule?

Warren Whitlock:

First of all, all of the answering people is live... that’s me. In fact, everything is me... I wrote everything. The repeat ones, I use... Social Oomph is what I’m using right now. I’ve used several others; Hoot Suite’s fine for this, Sprout Social fine for this... same thing, anything for scheduling. If you’re having an event, I was going along with the purists saying don’t schedule anything.

And when I wrote the Twitter book, I was living in a house by myself that summer, nothing else interrupting my day... spending 2-3 hours a day playing around with Twitter throughout the day. I was always there answering people, and then sharing things. Then sharing became a lot more prevalent... today sharing and retweeting and likes, that’s what the major brands are measuring (likes and retweets). So I was getting lots of replies, but not likes and retweets... so I started focusing on that and sure enough, those stupid quote cards work great.

Those stupid quote cards are chained to something that mean something to me; I shared a Bob Berg quote here, that’s something I would feel good about sharing anytime. People buy from those that they know, like, and trust; that’s something I teach all the time. Bob Berg is a good friend... I like promoting him. And every time I post it somebody goes, “Wow, that just hit the nail on the head.”

So that’s what I go looking for in quotes, instead of... I didn’t buy a quote service and pump them out every 27 minutes... because that just makes you a quote site. It’s real, it’s me... but yeah, that kind of cutesy stuff works.

And I’m playing with animated GIFs right now, frankly I’m not holding out that they’re going to work very well. But I’m looking at whether or not I can get somebody to retweet my answer to them... so I say thank you and post a picture of Jimmy Fallon saying thank you. I’m getting people to retweet that, and



I'm not really sure what effect that has on the overall engagement. But it's up in the last week, maybe just because I'm trying stuff.

But for the most part, when I find a news story I'll make sure that it has a photo and I will put a tracker on it, so I can track engagement there... whether it's mine or somebody else's. Then I will schedule that out so it runs every four hours for six times, and then I know its run throughout the day. And kind of haphazardly... I don't try too hard to make those: What is the best time with the most readers? Because again, I am tweeting 100 times a day.

The same with other social media... I found on Facebook that if I do something that's personal, like change my profile picture and tell a story; that gets a lot more engagement. I was down in your neck of the woods, at the Warner Brothers store... I took a picture of me standing next to Wiley Coyote. Boy every time I change my profile picture to that, I'm going to get 50-60 people telling me what a great shot it is. I'm going like, "Great, I haven't been to San Diego for 2 years. Thanks for liking this picture."

Again, I don't go with the purists, I go with what works. I try really hard to make it authentic, make it me. So if I'm posting something that's six years old, go ahead and tell people that's what it is and it works just fine.

Participant: Related - can we assume that social media influencers are ambidextrous across all channels? You used the example of email earlier - can we email influencers if we primarily communicate with them by Facebook, for instance?

Warren Whitlock:

The idea is you move it. Let's take you and me; we were both tweeting at the time because we were sitting in a conference. From there, we exchanged information and you're my friend on Facebook and I can send you an email. But most of the time when we talk, it's on Skype. Why? Because I found out you were on Skype a lot. So if I really needed to get ahold of you, I'd go on Skype. And I'd assume that's probably for business, daytime. And if I'm in San Diego and I want you to buy me a burger, then I might try Facebook.

Casey Markee:

Or just text me, man. I know, hard to believe...

Warren Whitlock:

And if you want to pick the one that's hardest to get me engaged, it's text. Because I'll answer text, but it'll annoy me because I'm probably be sitting at my computer doing it in the Google Voice app, and usually I write pretty well there. But if I get into a long conversation on text on my phone, guaranteed we're going to have words that don't make any sense at all, that my spell checker stuck in there. I'm just an old man with fat thumbs and can't see the screen. But for some reason, doing that on Twitter works... I don't know if the text is larger or what. I get away with it on Twitter and even Facebook now, with my...

Casey Markee:

Hashtag fat thumbs on that folks, that's what you can take away from this conversation.

Warren Whitlock:

So you find out where somebody is and you use the technology to get a hold of them. For instance, if I'm coming to San Diego, I'm going to call [Casey]. I'm not going to call [Casey] to tell you that I'm going to Tennessee and you might be at that party. It's possible you might be, but I'm going to go looking for you where you are. And if you use text, I know I can send you a text and you're going to answer.



Most people are reachable by text, I just happen to be anti-text. I call it tweeting to one person. Same with DMs, I want everything to be public to let the whole world know what we're doing. And that's me, but I found the relationship's more important than the platform.

So talk to your audience on what they want; I know that all the articles I post on Twitter... on LinkedIn, they're going to get a little bit of engagement. But even something I want to get a lot of engagement with, is a little bit of engagement on LinkedIn for me. And on Facebook, some things are going to get engagement; and then I think about that. I don't post something on Facebook that I'm not going to get a conversation going on, why bother?

The latest thing I've been playing with on Facebook, for the last 6 months or so, is giving up on any kind of ranking for me. I got rid of a couple thousand friends that were just there for contacts. I turned down 10,000 friend requests. I have about 3,200 friends; I don't go looking to make that number 5,000 so that I look like I'm a powerful influencer.

I don't post stuff to try to get engagement. What I do is I go and help somebody else out. So I post a thoughtful comment, sometimes three to four paragraphs in a comment because I think I can help. And I get deeper engagement there, because I'm adding to somebody else's conversation. Same with blog posts... my theory is, if I've got time to read your post, I've got time to leave a comment. So I'll just read less until I can get it down to a number that I can comment on everything.

I want to add to the conversation, and if I can help... like I've been talking about Bob Berg today... if I can help Bob, I will. I'll share anything I find from him. His stuff's always good and I know that he knows when I'm retweeting and talking about stuff and if I ever need a favor from Bob, it's there.

But I don't need to ask for a favor, I know Bob someplace, somewhere probably as we speak, is telling... the last time I did this and talked about Bob, I ended up contacting him and telling him I talked about him in a presentation, and he came back and said nice things about me publicly. And I know he's getting that all the time, it doesn't matter; I don't need to figure out a tactic to get Bob's attention. I'm doing it because Bob's a good friend and I really like what he does... I would do the same for you, Casey.

Casey Markee:

And I appreciate that, so on that note... one of the main things that we always get asked, whether it's here at SearchEngineNews or at conferences or many of the people on the call get asked by their clients, is just they want to grow their Twitter following and we've covered some of those tactics today. You're very big on tweeting several times a day, leaving valuable feedback, adding hashtags, scheduling retweets at the right time; people know that stuff. We all want to add value, but there's gotta be... if it was that easy, we'd all have 200,000 followers...

Warren Whitlock:

I've been at it a long time and I'm an old man without a life, so I do put a lot of time and effort... but it is people. And I know that you have a following, so when I become your friend, I'm getting the attention of your other friends.

There's one Twitter user (that I'm sure he'd love to hear from you), AlphabetSuccess... and his name is Tim Fargo. I've done a radio show with him and some other private stuff. He's a guy that sold a business for a healthy sum (I think 8 figures), and got married to somebody in (some Eastern European country) and lives there. And he travels the world, sometimes he's in the US and sometimes he's in other places. He's from New Jersey, an interesting and great guy, and he's really gone crazy with it... He has one of those share the quote services and I don't agree with that, with some of his practices; where somebody sticks their website label on everything they tweet for you. You become an advertiser for them... but I really like Tim and the way I got to know him is a mutual friend introduced me in a tweet. We started talking and I just found that this guy goes out of his way to do nice things.



Another one guy, big in creative real estate stuff, and I went to see him speak in the 80s. I thought, "This guy's a big wheel and he does huge things." Now he calls himself Ten Million Dollar Man or something like that. I don't know anything about his business, but I recognize his name. He started sharing a couple of my quote card things and so I engaged him in conversation. Next thing I know, I've got a friend. And I noticed that when he retweets something, I get conversations.

You know the people that have to pick apart the quote and say, "That's true, but..." There's a theory, anytime a tweet says, "It's true, but..." you know that they didn't mean the "it's true" part. Negate everything before the word "but", and I engage those people all the time because I find that conversation whimsical and fun. But I get so many more of those when he retweets something because his followers are very much looking at him as a hero.

And so, I engage with the people like that... Tamara McCleary is another one like that. Tamara McCleary... one of the most engaging people I've ever met. We're big time friends and it all came from mutual respect and saying nice things on each others... she was posting pictures for awhile of clouds. She's on a plane a lot and she likes to take pictures of the clouds. And I made a joke about it and I realized that wasn't the tone of the relationship I wanted, so I started thinking of nice things to say.

Next thing you know, we're like best friends... and then, for a while I was quoting something as my motto from last year which was: "Most people go through life asleep, those that wake up are in a state of total constant amazement." She's the only person in the hundreds of times I shared that, who I had a serious conversation about it. So anyway, we're very good friends; she lives on a farm with her husband and kid in Denver. I'm in Las Vegas; we have met up in person one time, where we were both at an IBM event.

Other than that, I just watch what she's doing, but yesterday out of the blue she retweeted something and put a comment on it, and made my day. Because this is somebody that's got 100,000 followers, who likes me. How could I not like? We want to do business with people we know, like, and trust.

So if you're on Twitter trying to figure out which tweets are going to win, stop! Just go in and be helpful to other people. I have a list that's private; I don't share it with anybody... I call it KP and I can't even remember what that's... maybe Key People or Klout... because it's years and years old. I went and saw people that had high Klout scores or a lot of followers.

There are some tools now that will do that for you. I'm using One Cube right now and contact me if you'd like to find out about that. It's great for real time stuff and some research and finding influencers; it's my favorite tool right now. It's in beta or private, so let me know if that's what you're looking for. I find people that are the superstars and top Twitter users, then I find reasons to help them... retweet, answer a question, and it goes way back to...

I had a keyword name when I started on Twitter. Guy Kawasaki asked a question and I answered it, and I felt so dumb putting my keywords as the person that was answering his question. He didn't mind, but it bothered me, so I changed to my real name. So I credit Guy for that, then I started answering every time he had a question. Today he handles his account different, but back then... a great author/speaker, Tom Peters (@tom_peters)... people that I've met and can help...

Brene Brown, one of the most famous TED Talks ever. I saw her TED Talk, bought her book, read it, wrote a review, stuck it up and she answered: why are you following me? So it didn't work out... but other ones, most of the time if I see a talk I like, a blog I like, I just go and reach out and start a conversation with the person.



Isn't that so cool? It used to be I'd go to the bookstore, buy a book, and think, "I'm never going to talk to the author." But today I can, and they're not talking to me because I'm famous or I'm somebody; no! They're talking to me because I actually pay attention and leave a thoughtful comment.

Participant: There is a lot of noise about stagnated growth on Twitter platform, leading the Henny Penny types to declare Twitter is dying. What is your response to them?

Warren Whitlock:

So here's what happens... you go and you use something and it's somewhat fad-ish. We get on these things, we try them for a while, and then we move onto the next thing. Right? People say the same thing about Facebook, they've even said it about Instagram (which I don't like it)... there are 300 million people using Twitter everyday, I have tons of conversations every day. It's not the same people it was five years ago; some come and go.

Some people... like I know you and I will talk when you're in Las Vegas, you're here for PubCon and we have a couple of conversations. I see you sharing stuff about the event, I retweet it, we do that, and I don't know if that constitutes as you using it a lot more because frankly, I can't pay attention to everything you tweet.

But it comes and goes in waves, so there's a whole lot of people... and it tends to be people who are speakers in the industry and things like that, if they use Twitter, it'll be when they're in the right town. And I'm just amazed that anybody who wants to become a thought leader isn't at least active enough on Twitter (that it's getting checked continually), and look for conversation.

I've had great leads and I've had customers come from Twitter. Most expensive time I've ever sold my time for was a guy that tweeted and said he wanted to pick my brain. And I laughed and told him to send me an email, the next thing you know... he paid me \$1,600 an hour for the hours I spent with him. He paid for me just being available and just talking to the guy.

It pays for itself... I would not be on social media, doing all the silly things that I do (as much as I enjoy it), I wouldn't be there if there wasn't a business. I could turn it off and have a good life just fine without it; I'm not addicted. I'm there because it's my bread and butter; it's how I make money.

Casey Markee:

And on that note, Warren if you could just give our audience one takeaway. There were so many, it's hard to nail it down. But if there was one thing you'd like everyone on the call to remember today, what would that be?

Warren Whitlock:

If you want to get more out of life, give more. It's never about what you need, and boy I live with this all the time. I'm a consultant; my income goes up and down. There are times when I think, "What was I thinking? I'm going to be totally out of money in two months. Will life go on?" And when I get in that kind of mood, I always remember - there is somebody out there who's very anxious to hear my message and what I have.

There's somebody I can help, there's somebody I can do a service for. And if just means I'm going to go take out the garbage when it's not my turn, there's always somebody you can help in some way. Karma works; do it, just keep giving. Expect that serendipity... do read that obliquity book. It'll change your life when you realize that all this planning, research, project management stuff that all good, but all nothing compared to the idea of just being open for opportunity and help other people.



Participant: Is there a Twitter hashtag for this conversation/presentation today?

Casey Markee:

There is no #hashtag for this presentation Heather. But if you want to use one we can start one on the fly. Use #MasterClass

Participant: Thanks Casey!

Casey Markee: NO GOLF. Brewery Tours please. The way to my heart is through my stomach!

Participant: No question but just a comment...most of my clients are word of mouth or because of a relationship we have built through networking or volunteering...good info...same reason I offer Lunch and Learns :-)

Participant: Thank you so much!

Participant: Thank you Warren!!!

Participant: Thank you so much!

Participant: Happy Spring!!

Participant: thanks Warren