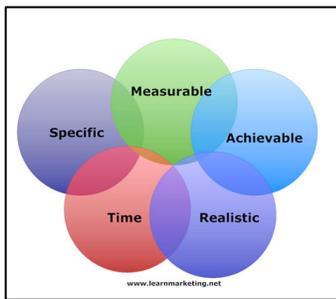


5 Steps to Build Your Twitter Presence

INTRODUCTION

Twitter is a microblogging service that allows users to “tweet” brief messages of 140 characters or less. It’s the social network of choice for advocacy groups, reporters, opinion leaders and decision makers looking to find or share news in real-time. Below are five simple steps to increase your presence within Twitter’s sustainable ag and food community.

FIVE STEPS TO BUILD YOUR TWITTER PRESENCE



Step One: Define Your Goals and Set SMART Objectives

Before you invest time in developing a presence on any social media community, you’ll want to articulate clear goals and identify the audience you want to reach and the actions you’ll ask them to take. Setting SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely) objectives for each goal will help you achieve success. For example, your overall goal might be to reform regional or state policies to provide consumers with better access to local and affordable organic food. Your SMART objectives for that goal might be to first get five key ag policy makers, reporters or influencers to follow you on Twitter within the next three weeks. Your second step could be to have two of those five retweet or respond favorably to your policy reform tweets within the next 60 days.

Step Two: Get the Lay of the Land

Next, you’ll want to get properly oriented. For example, what’s the hot topic in your specific farm/food space? What language do they use? Who’s driving the conversations and what questions or concerns dominate? A simple [keyword search](#) will provide a quick snapshot of conversation trends. You can find top influencers by starting with known opinion leaders like [@SlowfoodUSA](#) or [@tomphilpott](#) and reviewing Twitter’s [list of similar users](#). You can also search for relevant hashtags (keywords marked with a # symbol that categorize the tweet). Popular

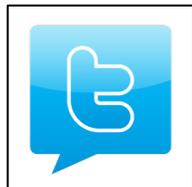
Similar to Slow Food USA

	Chez Panisse @chezpanisse
	Serious Eats @seriouseats <i>Find it. Watch it. Eat it. Talk it.</i>
	Fabio Viviani @fabioviviani <i>Italian 100%, Professional Homecook, Nutella slave, Cilantro freak me out... follow me, is good time. Thanks to all of you #TeamFabio. Im Blessed.</i>

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hashtags currently used in farm/food space include one or a combination of: #ag, #agchat, #food #farm. #Farmbill is also one to watch.



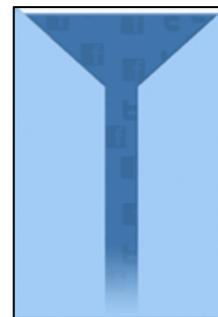
Step Three: Participate in the Conversation and Add Value

Twitter is all about what’s happening NOW. As an active player in the sustainable ag space, you can add value by tweeting live during hearings, sharing breaking science or policy news and participating in issue-focused Twitter events. In addition to timeliness, reciprocity is a key part of the Twitter culture and will help you build relationships.

Retweet relevant tweets from other users, ask and address questions about #sustag and #food, and be sure to credit the sources of great content you share via Twitter (example: “Interesting article on #Farmbill and #climate from #ewgorg: ow.ly/8GoyO.”) Hootsuite won’t always tell you who retweeted your comments, but you can learn that on Twitter. Go to the [Connect section](#) in your Twitter account to get a quick update on who’s following and interacting with you.

Step Four: Manage Your Stream

According to Wikipedia, as of late 2011 Twitter had over 300 million users, generated over 300 million tweets and handed over 1.6 billion search queries a day – that’s a lot of activity to keep track of! Use a free tool like [Hootsuite](#) to post and schedule tweets, track conversations by keyword, and research or monitor influential individuals or groups. [RowFeeder](#) is another free tool that enables you to track tweets by keyword and evaluate your progress towards SMART objectives.



Step Five: Promote Yourself as an Expert

Twitter is a great vehicle to keep supporters informed, connect with decision makers, and help frame issues. Make it easy for people to find you by tagging your content with hashtags target audiences follow, and registering your account within popular databases like [WeFollow](#). Visit the “lists” tab directly within your Twitter account to create your own expert lists – and see who else has recommended you as an expert.

Lists	Subscribed to / Member of
Environment	by Philip Brasher 32 members
nextEdgeExpanded-2	by 100% Solutions 493 members
Environmental Analysis	by Thermo Scientific Water, soil, and air 57 members