

## Using Twitter To Strategically Market Your Business



*Thomas Fox is president of Tech Experts, south-east Michigan's leading small business computer support company.*

Seth Godin is one of the most widely read bloggers in the world. The success of his blog, which covers marketing and business development, fuels

his book sales and keeps his day planner filled with high-paying speaking engagements.

But Godin does not use Twitter. Or Flickr. Or even Facebook. Here he explains why: "My reasoning is simple ... I don't want to use a tool unless I'm going to use it really well. Doing any of these things half-way is worse than not at all. People don't want a mediocre interaction."

Secondly, Godin had to face time and money constraints, because "if you want to be in multiple social media and also have a day job, you're going to need a staff."

As you consider whether to use Twitter, Facebook or other social media as part of your marketing

strategy, think about Godin's reluctance as well as his high standards. **People don't want a mediocre interaction.**

### Social Media Requires A Commitment

Should your business commit to social media marketing (you must commit if it's to work at all), I suggest that you invest time upfront, before your first tweet or status update, to get to know the medium, outline your objectives and define what success looks like.

In 2009, amid the hype surrounding Twitter and Facebook, many businesses took a scattershot approach to social media.

To the extent that there has been a slight backlash against social media in business circles, much of it is attributable to poor planning and execution on the part of businesses themselves.

All of this is to say that social media can be a terrific waste of time and money if there isn't a solid strategy behind it.

A crucial part of that strategy is understanding your potential audience. One of the first Twitter stars

from the business world was Randy Crochet of Naked Pizza, a boutique pizzeria in New Orleans.

Crochet saw Twitter as an opportunity to maintain a presence among fans of his healthy pizza. It helped tremendously that Crochet had a passion that others could buy into - pizza made with fresh ingredients.

Most importantly, Crochet's personality had that certain x-factor that helped him retain and grow readers. (He's now partnered with the Kraft Group and has plans to go national with Naked Pizza.)

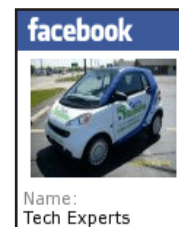
The majority of Twitter success stories come from businesses that have passionate customers.

Companies that produce less glamorous products have learned the hard way that tweeting their way to fame and fortune is a heavy lift.

That doesn't mean that social media can't work for less exciting industries, but a change in approach and expectations is required.

Blue Cross Blue Shield provides a good example. BCBS started

*"The majority of Twitter success stories come from businesses that have passionate customers."*



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## 4 Hidden Dangers Electricity Poses To Your Computer Network



*Ryan Seymour is a PC hardware specialist and the Tech Experts service manager.*

Believe it or not, electricity is one of the biggest threats to your computer network and the data it contains. Here are four

computer power problems you must know about and how to prevent them.

### Transients

Commonly known as surges and spikes, these are caused by lightning storms, wind, squirrels shorting out power lines, auto accidents, etc.

Several times each week these spikes can travel up the power cord into your computer, damaging everything from power supplies to motherboards. Conventional wisdom says use a power strip with a surge protector and you are safe. As usual, conventional wisdom is dead wrong.

After a few months, these surge protectors become useless since

they've been zapped by the surges they were designed to stop.

### Blackouts

Whether momentary or prolonged, the sudden loss of power can corrupt your PC to the point of not being able to start up again when the lights come back on.

### Sags

This is when the power drops below normal. Have you ever seen the fluorescent lights flicker for a moment? Then you've seen a sag.

Sags are more common than surges and are caused when equipment like air conditioners, water heaters or laser printers are turned on or come out of sleep mode. A typical small office will experience 30 or more sags each day.

Sags may cause many of the weird and unexplained problems computer users complain about every day.

### Noise

If you've ever seen a fuzzy picture or white lines on your TV when you turn on a blender or vacuum cleaner, you've seen electrical noise. While a fuzzy TV picture is annoyance, this electrical noise

causes many computer problems including loss of data.

So how do you protect yourself from electrical problems? The most simple and inexpensive solution to all four of these hazards is a battery backup, or uninterruptible power supply (UPS).

A UPS can sense when there are problems with the power and automatically switches to the battery, protecting you from computer damage and data loss.

Choosing the correct battery backup for your computer or server can be tricky. Having one with a battery too small is the same as having none at all.

For most desktop computers, a battery backup with a 500VA or larger rating should be sufficient to keep you going through momentary power problems.

Protecting your server requires detailed knowledge of the server functions and power consumption in order to pick the right battery backup. If you want help in determining the right protection for your specific network, give us a call: 734-457-5000.

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using Twitter as a customer service channel, and they defined success less in terms of revenue-per-tweet formula (the model the accountants understand) and more in terms of customer service-per-tweet formula.

And this gets to the heart of social media marketing: it can't just be about dollars and cents.

Sure, every business owner needs to keep an eye on the bottom line, but with social media, the key is to add as much value as you hope to take away. The less you give, the less you'll get.

With that, here are six best practices to keep in mind when getting into social media marketing:

1. Grow your readership by gaining the trust of your audience;
2. Produce content that plays to your readers' interests, not your own;
3. Provide transparency into your business;
4. Become a trusted resource to your readers;
5. Maintain the conversation - don't try to control it;
6. Retain valuable followers.



## Should Your Company Be Archiving Your E-Mail?

For companies under the jurisdiction of HIPAA, SEC, SOX, or any of the other alphabet soup regulations, email is considered “work product” and must be retained and protected from misuse or theft.

Even if you’re not under the government’s microscope via one of these regulations, you should still be concerned about e-mail archiving.

### E-mail archiving is now mandatory

FRCP – The Federal Rules of Civil Procedure are a set of recently revised rules for managing civil suits in all US District courts and in thirty-five state courts that require you to archive your e-mail (with no exceptions for company size, organizational structure or non-profit status).

The rules are specific, non-negotiable, and apply to e-mail generated and received by the business, its customers and vendors.

If you sue or get sued in civil court, you may win or lose your case based on compliance with the procedures regarding e-mail archiving.

HIPPA - Safeguarding the privacy and security of patient information is not limited to clinics and healthcare providers anymore.

Any organization that sends, receives or stores paper and electronic personal health information (PHI) must comply with this legislation.

A recent survey revealed that compliance failure is around 50%.

SOX - The Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 states that all public companies and their accounting firms must securely retain all business records, including electronic records and messages, for not less than five years. Failure results in fines and imprisonment.

### E-mail archiving keeps you up and running

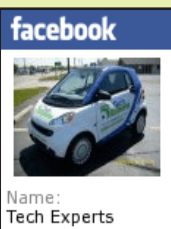
Just a few years ago, the average size of a user’s mail box was 10MB. Today the average size is 50x larger (500MB)! This causes many servers in small businesses to



overload, slowing down speed and performance dramatically. While a third of this bloat are messages that should be deleted, the rest need to be retained, searchable and available on demand. Most mail server software has built-in features that move “old” e-mail off the server, but doesn’t allow for easy access to the information.

You can also buy bigger server hard drives every year to prevent a bog-down, but this can be cost prohibitive. More often than not, e-mail archiving is the most effective and economical choice for retaining messages and staying compliant with regulations.

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Twitter is another great place to keep with everything going on at Tech Experts!

You can follow us at [www.Twitter.com/TechExperts](http://www.Twitter.com/TechExperts)



Tech Experts CEO Thomas Fox shares thoughts on small business computing and using technology to grow your business at [www.ExpertTechTips.com](http://www.ExpertTechTips.com)

The Tech Experts technical services team blogs about changes in the IT industry, tips on keeping your network safe, and other useful information at [www.ExpertsGuys.com](http://www.ExpertsGuys.com)



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Tel (734) 457-5000  
Fax (734) 457-4332  
info@MyTechExperts.com

## Triple Efficiency And Save Time With Templates



*Corey Bogedain is a network technician and web developer with Tech Experts.*

Imagine, a pre-made template created just for your need!

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your fingertips.

Using templates can speed up any job. Visit [www.office.microsoft.com/templates](http://www.office.microsoft.com/templates) to view, search and download hundreds of free templates ranging from inventory sheets, to schedules, and business cards. You can even find newsletter templates just like the one you are reading right now!

### Save time

Using a template can save you from those creative blocks that stall progress. Have you ever tried to create a brochure from scratch?

When you have a template handy, you can save countless hours of

trying to arrange the graphics to balance the page.

### Structure your workload

Creating presentations, invoices, diagrams, agendas, and other forms can become streamlined processes that anyone can help you complete.

With a template saved for each job, you literally have expert level graphic arts and designs incorporated right into your work, creating a more efficient way for you to complete your duties and improve the quality, too.

### Get great design ideas for nothing

Imagine if you had to sit down and structure every document for your company. It would take forever! Templates can cut preparation time and costs as well as provide a reliable and consistent format for your business reports, transactions, and other processes.

### What about a website

Are you considering a new website or makeover for your current one? While a template site doesn't com-

pare with a custom designed site, it can save time and money when you need to get your site updated. Take a look at the premade templates available at [www.templatemonster.com](http://www.templatemonster.com).

You can search through hundreds of website templates by style or category. You have the option to buy a copy for as little as \$62, or buy a "unique" copy for \$2,500+.

Plus, you will need a little help from a web designer to post the site on the Internet and make it work, but it is considerably less than an entirely custom website.

What's the difference? A unique copy removes the template from the company library so no one else can purchase or use that template. The downside is that if other people have already downloaded the template, they will still get to legally use their copy.

Don't wait another minute! I am sure in reading this article, you thought of at least three projects or processes in which you could use a template. Get started today!

## FBI: Rogue Antivirus Scammers Have Made \$150M

They're the scourge of the Internet right now and the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation says they've also raked in more than \$150 million for scammers. Security experts call them rogue antivirus programs.

The FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center (ICC) issued a warning over fake antivirus software, saying that Web surfers should be wary of sudden pop-up windows that report security problems on their computers.

This software can appear almost anywhere on the Web. Typically, the scam starts with an aggressive pop-up ad that looks like some sort of virus scan. Of course, the scan turns up problems, and the pop-up says the only way to get rid of them is to pay with a credit card.

This is always a bad idea. At best, the software is subpar. At worst, it could result in viruses, Trojans and/or keyloggers being installed on the computer. Identity thieves often use keyloggers to gain access to credit card numbers, bank account information, and computer users' social security numbers.

The tactics of the scareware have caused significant losses to users. The FBI is aware of an estimated loss to victims in excess of \$150 million.

The IC3 says that users who see these unexpected antivirus pop-up warnings should shut down their browsers or their computers immediately and then run an antivirus scan to see what's going on.

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