

Effectiveness of Promoted Tweets

What is a Promoted Tweet?

Promoted tweets, along with a few other paid Twitter services, are advertising resources that twitter.com offers. Staying within the limits of 140 characters, Twitter offers businesses exposure to the users of their choice on a CPE (Cost-per-Engagement) basis. Businesses have the opportunity to make their promoted tweets "keyword targeted" (based on what a user searches for) or "interest targeted" (based pre determined user interests).



OPEN Forum @OPENForum

21 Feb

Amex Cardmembers/merchants who register for #TwitterSmallBiz ads get \$100 in free ads if among first 10K eligible ow.ly/9c9Kc

 Promoted by OPEN Forum

Cost-per-Engagement Overview

Some of the most popular online advertising companies, like Google and Facebook, use a "Pay-per-Click" method. This way whether a consumer spends 30 seconds, or all-day, on your website, you pay for the click to get them there. Businesses can bid on each click, which they are normally priced between 20 cents and 5 dollars per click. The higher the bid, the better placement and more impressions received.

Twitter uses the same process but tweaks it to fit their format. Advertisers will use their 140 characters to tweet something like the above graphic.

Open Forum, associated with American Express, used a hashtag and a link within their tweet. Twitter uses the number of clicks on the link, the number of tweets using the hashtag, the number of mentions and the number of retweets to calculate engagement.

Average Engagement

Twitter advertises that the usual promoted tweet will engage 3%-5% of users. In other words, only 3%-5% of people who see the promoted tweet will actually interact with it.

Even in "Pay-per-Click" advertising scenarios, like Google AdWords, the percentage of people that actually click a link is estimated to be around 1%-4%. Google has never released these numbers, but campaign managers normally report statistics in this area. The difference with Twitter is you can interact with the user who retweeted, mentioned, or used your hashtag. With services like AdWords you can grab an audience from thousands of websites, but never put a "face to the click."

Also, Twitter does not charge for what they call "earned engagements," which is a retweet of an engagement they already paid for. Advertisers end up only paying for the original engagement.

Effective Tweets

Last year Twitter released some of the top promoted tweets to adage.com, an advertising industry news site, which gave advertisers the first real look into the makeup of a successful promoted tweet.

The following pages are an indepth look at individual effective tweets.

Papa John's

Papa John's, the primary Domino's competitor, released a tweet that received an engagement percentage of 34%. Their tweet used a hash tag, a link to order, and a twitpic of the product they were promoting. It just happened to be a Valentine's Day heart shaped pizza. The link delivered customers directly to their website to order and the hashtag sparked a conversation even from people who didn't or couldn't order along with those tweeting a picture of what they just purchased.



Papa John's Pizza @PapaJohns

Happy Valentine's Day!! Show some love for your Valentine with a #HeartShapedPizza. Order at <http://bit.ly/ff00c0>
<http://twitpic.com/3z47p>

 Hide photo



 TwitPic

[Flag this media](#)

Papa John's (continued)

Creating the hashtag #heartshapedpizza encouraged customers to converse and share images of their pizza. This social element helped to drive engagement along with their creativity and utilization of the holiday.

Google

With the amount of tech-savvy or tech-interested, social media users, Twitter normally explodes with excitement over exclusive product offerings. Another successfully engaging tweet was by Google with the launch of Google Instant (foot note). They racked up a 38% engagement rating on this product launch. The tweet itself was extremely simple; it included a short statement about searching faster and then a link directly to Google's blog entry with all the details.



Google has used twitter to announce other products like NexusOne and their browser, Chrome.

Volkswagen

Volkswagen turned in high engagement at 52% with their promoted tweet about the newly redesigned Beetle. The unveiling was teased with a Super Bowl commercial and the link brought people directly to the VW website for the new car. They also included the hashtag #VWbeetle, which still gets a few mentions per day according to hashtracking.com.



The screenshot shows a tweet from Volkswagen USA (@VW) with the text: "The 21st Century #VWBeetle was just revealed. Check out the revolutionary new take on the iconic design at <http://vwoa.us/hZdaLm>". The tweet has 50+ retweets and 50+ favorites. The interface includes a "Follow" button and a user menu icon. The tweet is dated 8:44 AM - 18 Apr 11 via HootSuite and includes options to Reply, Retweet, and Favorite.

Timing and their exclusive product launch created an atmosphere that was conducive to engagement. The element that sets them apart is their tease on a Super Bowl commercial. This goes to show that starting the conversation, appealing to the user looking for an "exclusive", and building hype for your upcoming launch can be developed into a successful campaign.

Ford

Ford, more specifically Ford Mustang, promoted a tweet in 2010 that engaged 34% of its impressions. The simple, straight forward tweet said that the new 2012 BOSS Mustang was revealed and included a link to spy photos of the car. Ford was able to catch people with the exclusivity of their release, even without a hashtag it engaged users.



Revealing a car or a new product on Twitter is a popular way of increasing engagement. What Ford did with a simple straight forward tweet is what companies like TMZ do every day. Ford allowed themselves to release their own exclusive, and in turn they started the conversation. The other strategy used is to link users to another social network. The photo was uploaded to their photo bucket account, this not only allowed them to start a conversation, but grab users on multiple platforms.

Old Spice

Old Spice grabbed 36% engaged consumers with their promoted tweet that brought the "Old Spice Guy" out of retirement. The tweet itself was similar to the Ford tweet, but also included a hashtag. The link brought users to the Old Spice YouTube page where they could watch any of the Old Spice commercials.



They used the response to the promotion and the conversation that ensued to create a series of response videos on YouTube. In these videos the Old Spice Guy would respond to user comments from Twitter, creating a cross platform experience for the social media user.

Dissecting an Effective Tweet

Timing

A solid theme in most of these tweets is timing. Whether it be the timing of a specialty product or the correct timing within another media campaign, when the company tweets has great effect on overall engagement.

Subway used timing for a promoted tweet on February 29th, 2012 which included their hashtag #FreeCookieDay. The entire campaign was estimated to have reached over 737,000 users. While it's impossible to calculate engagement without numbers that are exclusive to Subway and Twitter, it shows that a successful conversation was

Audience

Encouraging user participation is one common denominator of all these tweets. This way a company can leverage earned engagement through retweets and users passing along a link externally.

Creating hype to the right people is where the battle for engagement begins. While we can't tell which keywords were bid on in each campaign we do know that they were properly targeted and their bids were correct.

Dissecting an Effective Tweet (continued)

Exclusivity

As noted before, media outlets no longer hold the key to exclusivity. A business can be its own media outlet and break internal news whenever it feels just. Ford, VW, Google and Papa John's controlled their own exclusivity around their product release.

It is human nature that users want to be the first to know about new events, products and services. You allow them to be the first to retweet your work; one click is all it takes. This exclusivity draws even the most relaxed consumer into the need to be first. started about Free Cookie Day.

What Else?

Mobile

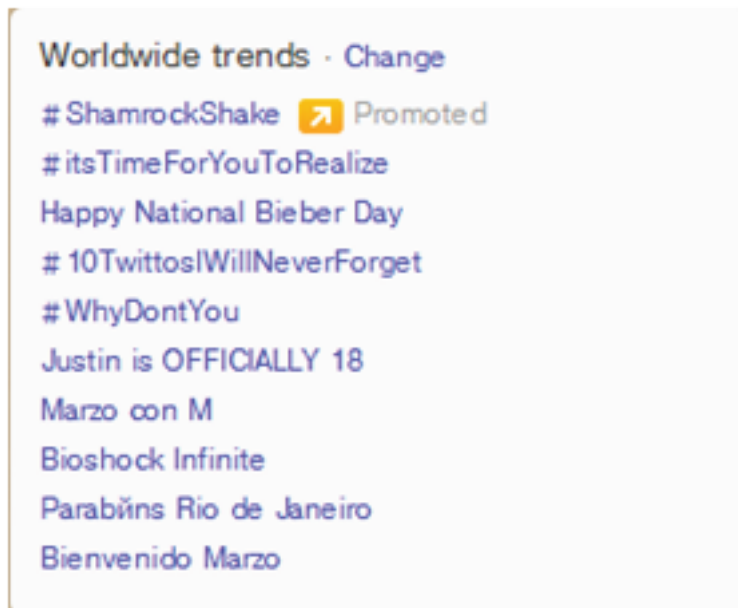
Twitter has just recently announced, via their company blog, that promoted tweets, trends, and accounts will soon be coming to the Twitter's mobile applications. The mobile user is a demographic companies have been missing out on from the beginning. While mobile users could still be engaged, most of their engagement is earned engagement. Soon enough the mobile users who are following a big game or event via Twitter will be exposed to promoted tweets as well. This will open up the amount of impressions and allow an average engagement to net much more than before.

What Else? (continued)

Promoted Trends

Promoted Trends are sometimes linked to Promoted Tweets, some companies will promote a trend using a hashtag and promote a tweet with that hashtag. Promoted trends are purchased at a flat fee price depending on the geographic region targeted.


McDonalds promoted the hashtag #ShamrockShake, to create buzz for their annual St. Patrick's Day milkshake. They also have promoted a tweet using their hashtag, drawing in users from both angles. HashTracking.com estimates that during the first 16 hours of their campaign they generated close to 1.2 million impressions



McDonald's @McDonalds

16h

For the 1st time in history, the #ShamrockShake is available nationwide! That's something to celebrate yfrog.com/g0w2fnjj

 Promoted by McDonald's

 View photo

What Else? (continued)

Promoted Accounts

Promoted accounts are used to gain followers, by using the "Who to Follow" box on twitter. This promotion is also paid for on a Pay-per-follow basis. Businesses opting for this route are able to bid on interest based keywords.



This example shows a user being promoted based on an interest in travel. This user follows or interacts with many different travel options on Twitter. U.S. Travel would pay for a user to follow based on these interests.

Top Tweets

Top Tweets are a way that Twitter promotes users who are active or tweets that many people have engaged or interacted with. They appear at the top of a users timeline just below any promoted tweets for the specific keywords searched.

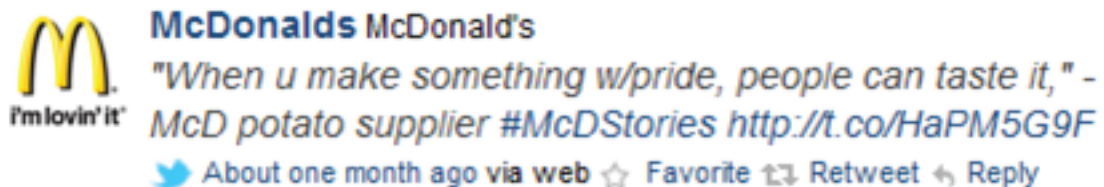
What Else? (continued)



This tweet from @TheFakeESPN makes light of a driver using social media during a race this weekend. Users have retweeted it 422 times. In turn Twitter generated it as a top tweet based on the keywords "social media" and their algorithm for that process. Getting users engaged can result in promotion through free avenues like a top tweet.

Negative Responses

While most campaigns are going to generate some negative responses the majority will be neutral or positive. The most recent failure to control the conversation was McDonald's use of the promoted hashtag #McDStories. This was accompanied by a promoted tweet as well.



The tweet was meant to be a way to generate familiarity with the farmers who produce McDonald's food. However it turned into a way for people to tell negative stories. The promotion lasted only two hours and was switched back to their #MeetTheFarmers hashtag.

What Else? (continued)

Completing a social media audit before these campaigns are enacted can reduce the number of negative responses. Doing a simple search for McDonalds before January 18th would have produced numerous neutral check-ins and statements, along with a few negative posts. The reason for the campaign was to improve their image and prove that they are using fresh beef, chicken, potatoes, and other farm fresh products. Knowing their image was tainted should have kept them from creating any sort of promotion that could be construed as an outlet for negative comments. It's easy to see how #MeetTheFarmers didn't result in negativity, but #McDStories did.

Promoted Tweets start a conversation; most conversations include negative and positive responses. That is just the nature of the business.

The Numbers

According to a study cited in Lab42's company blog on August 20, 2011, social media users are engaged in promoted content. Respondents to the survey showed 21% of them have retweeted a promoted tweet. 41% have discovered a new brand because of a promoted tweet, and 42% have received discounts from promoted tweets. These numbers show that keywords and interest based promoted tweets can return high rates of engagement.