

Are you lacking social media manners or best practices?

When I first started using Twitter in 2008, I had no idea what an “RT” was or how to check “@” messages. I didn’t know Tweetdeck from Hootsuite. So I asked a couple millennial friends of mine, and over lunch, they explained how Twitter worked and how to use it.

Since then, I believe I have become fairly adept at using Twitter and use it quite heavily as a place to learn, share and interact with people. I’ve also used Twitter to promote my blog posts and workshops, and by extension, my business.

One of the most gratifying aspects of Twitter is how many personal relationships I have developed. Some people whom I met through Twitter have become friends IRL (“in real life”) and some have become trusted online colleagues.

Developing best practices for social media use

In order to make life on Twitter more manageable, I follow certain “best practices.” Up to now, they’ve been in my head, but here’s a more formal list:

- Use a client such as Hootsuite to make managing @ replies, streams easier
- Group people in lists to include as a stream to follow (this way, I know what my friends/colleagues are up to)
- Respond to @ replies ASAP
- Thank people for sharing tweets, posts, etc.
- Avoid obscenities/expletives and unfollow those who favor this type of communication
- Follow selectively (and don’t follow back automatically)
- Don’t engage with trolls, and block whenever possible
- Block followers who are obviously spammers or bots or who are only following to get me to follow back

- Be conscious of what I am sharing
- Take personal conversations offline or DM if appropriate
- Avoid unproductive complaining
- Don't tweet everything on my mind or share mundane stuff
- Be personal without providing too much personal information
- Don't use tools that do your tweeting for you

To me, it's about common sense and having manners

They say good manners exist so that your behavior make others comfortable. That's why it is not good manners to use expletives (because some people may be offended and thus uncomfortable). That's why we say please and thank you (because we want to acknowledge that we are not owed anything, and that we appreciate kind gestures). That's why we don't chew with our mouth open (no comment needed right?).

And yet, some people just don't get that in order to be on social media, and get along with others, you need to mind your manners and your behavior. Perhaps they don't really understand how Twitter works and that whatever you post on Twitter is visible to the public. Perhaps they think you won't notice if they ignore your messages. Perhaps they feel entitled. Or perhaps they are always rude in person too.

Perhaps the best practice is to not take it personally

Who knows why people behave the way they do. Truth is you just don't know. It could be they are going through a hard time or just got busy with other things. Some people like to offend and want to argue (trolls are everywhere on social media). Context and tone are hard to convey on social media, and on Twitter, you only have 140 characters to express yourself.

Do you have best practices for Twitter? Do you behave differently on different social networks?

