

How to tweet like a marketer

Yesterday, about 1.1 million tweets were posted regarding President Barack Obama's Inauguration ceremony. That's a lot of tweets! People commented on everything from Michelle Obama's coat to Richard Blanco's poem to Beyonce's rendition of the National Anthem.

As I watched the Inauguration ceremonies and followed my Twitter stream (using the second screen), I noticed a social media "expert" tweeting out content management tips. Then I noticed another marketing/social media person promoting a blog post, which had absolutely nothing to do with politics, Martin Luther King or inauguration. It struck me as dissonant.

I tweeted out that I was ignoring anything not Inaugural-related, and I thought anything regarding other topics would most likely get lost. This led to an exchange with Kathy Dodd, a Washington, DC-based marketer. It went like this:



Deborah Brody @DBMC

People who are tweeting about non inauguration issues are getting ignored by me, and lost in the crowd.

Expand

20h



Kathy Dodd @kathydodd

@DBMC Same here!

Expand

20h



Deborah Brody @DBMC

@kathydodd Right? Seems so tone-deaf and ignorant of how to use social media.

Expand

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Kathy Dodd @kathydodd

@DBMC EXACTLY!!

Expand

20h



Deborah Brody @DBMC

@kathydodd You know what surprises me most? I am seeing them from supposed social media experts.

Expand

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Kathy Dodd @kathydodd

@DBMC Me too. Really sad that they don't seem to understand that "messaging" is also about timing & being aware of outside events.

20h

So it wasn't just me. What was happening was that those tweets were not following a main tenet of marketing communications: molding your message to the audience's needs. As Kathy said, **the people putting out these messages were not being aware of outside events or of the timing involved.**

In those tweets, there was nothing wrong with the message, but the message failed to have an impact. They came off as extraneous and irrelevant.

Twitter has often been described as one big cocktail party. Can you imagine if you were at a party where everyone was talking about the how much fun they were having at this event, and somebody crashed the party and announced that bananas were on sale across town. Everyone would shake their heads and continue talking about the party, *no matter how much they*

liked bananas because it was a message that wasn't suited to the occasion.

Perhaps the non-Inaugural tweets from yesterday were previously scheduled, we can't really know. But what we do know is that they failed to achieve their goal (selling bananas if they were the party-crashers above) for one simple reason: the people tweeting were not thinking like marketers. **Marketers want to make sure their messages get to the right people at the right time.**

Here are some tips to tweet like a marketer:

- Be aware of major events (some are scheduled and some are not) that will hold a majority of your target audience's attention.
- Time your tweets for when they are most likely to be well received. For example, if you are promoting your lunch specials, don't do it at dinner time.
- Be human, not an automaton. Remember it is *social media*.
- Don't talk at people; have a conversation with them.

What are your thoughts? Agree or disagree?