Do you have a Twitter strategy?

I follow more than 1,300 accounts on Twitter. Some of them are purely news sources and some are people I know “in real life.” Some are journalists and others “social media experts.”

Sand sculpture by Rosaura Ochoa via Flckr

Since I spend a good amount of my day on Twitter, I see a lot of tweets. Many of those tweets are interesting or funny or offer good advice. However, some tweets make me wonder if the person/account has ever considered why he/she is on Twitter. I see constant check-ins and bitter complaints about spouses. I see random quotes and people earning points for some action (usually checking in). I see people obviously brown-nosing (“Store X is the best, super customer service). And just today I saw a tweet about someone’s menstrual cycle (I wish I were kidding).

Get strategic.

Big brands probably have a written and codified Twitter strategy that is part of their larger content strategy. But if you are a freelancer, small business owner or just you, you may not have a “content strategy” much less a Twitter strategy? But should you?

If you want to get more out of Twitter, yes, you should develop a simple but effective strategy.

Here's how to develop a Twitter strategy:

1. **Decide what you want to achieve on Twitter.** This is also the answer to "why am I here?" Perhaps you want to make business contacts or you want to learn more about a subject or you want to promote your writing. Whatever it is, write it down.
2. **Now, figure out your audience.** What kinds of people or accounts are likely to have the type of information you are interested in? Who on Twitter would be interested in your stuff? Can you describe a group or groups of people that would be your audience? For example, if you are a knitter and sell stuff on Etsy, your audience would be other knitters, people interested in crafts and so forth.
3. **What defines success for you on Twitter?** Do you want to have a large following? Do you want to be an influencer? Do you want to meet like-minded folks in person?

By thinking about these issues, you will start being more focused or purposeful in your tweeting.

Now, get tactical

Tactics are what puts your strategy in motion.

1. **Engage.** See someone asking a question? Respond! Find somebody's tweet useful/inspiring/interesting? Retweet!
2. **Become a content curator.** Find sources (Twitter accounts, blogs, websites) and follow them. Collect and share the most relevant information for your audience (see above).
3. **Join/follow selected Twitter chats.** There are so many on a variety of topics, and folks that participate in those are folks that are interested in the same stuff as you are.

4. **Use lists**. Twitter gives you the ability to put accounts into lists, and then, when you use a Twitter client such as Hootsuite, you can put those lists into their own column. This way if you have a list of “Fiendish knitters” you can make sure to see what those crafters are up to.

What am I trying to accomplish?

Of course you will have the occasional “not on message” tweet. You are a person with a life and you want to share your interests or things that happen to you. But if this is all you tweet, you have a problem, and you are probably not seeing any results from Twitter.

So, perhaps before you tweet anything, you should ask yourself : What am I trying to accomplish by sharing this?

Let me know: do you have a Twitter strategy? Can you share it?