

How to do a Twitterstorm!



Twitterstorm definition: A **Twitterstorm** is a sudden spike in activity surrounding a certain topic on **Twitter**. Using a certain and ideally an original hashtag, the tweet quickly spreads as people are notified of the message and then reuse the hashtag with subsequent retweets and tweets. The goal is to trend (at least locally) to gain attention. (Source = *Techopedia*.)

Step 1 - PLANNING!

Gather your team (perhaps a month in advance) and decide on the following:

- **Pick your target(s) and prepare to share the Twitter handle(s)** with the team, so they can tag the target in posts. Targets may be utilities, CEOs, elected officials, committee members, anyone creating policy that impacts your campaign, etc. When you tag (*include their handle in tweet*) your target, they will receive a notification for every tweet, encouraging them to respond.
- **Pick a unique Hashtag -**
 - Do some research to make certain it hasn't been used by anyone (particularly with different intent). Just search on Twitter.
 - Keep it short and simple (easy to type). You can use the number 4 instead of "for", for example. Remember punctuation marks cannot be used in a hashtag (they break it).
 - Consider making it humorous.
 - It should be clear what your campaign is about from the hashtag.
 - Try to prevent people from using it before the storm - might impact trending.
- **Pick a dedicated day and time** for your Twitterstorm to take place.
 - Ideally a 2-3 hour timeframe is best, but 1 hour might be ideal.
 - If you do it in a concentrated time period, you will be more likely to trend.
 - Pick a time that works for your participants (i.e. lunch) and your message.
 - Can you tie it into a milestone in your campaign?
- **Pick one or more images to share with the tweets.** Pictures and video have more reach on Twitter. You can create a meme with Picmonkey.com, for example, adding your call to action text over a photo for maximum impact. Use the best quality image you can and include your logo on the meme in case it gets shared without accompanying text.

- If you are coordinating the tweetstorm with a **live event**, be sure to coordinate people live tweeting from the event with pictures and especially video, and of course, including the hashtag and tagging any targets.
- **Create a web page** to house all the information anyone needs to join the storm to be easily shared out.
 - **Start with a STRONG introduction** which explains **WHY** people will want to participate. Tell people who you are, why you are coordinating the Storm and how their participation can make the change you want to achieve.
 - **Explain the goal** of the Twitter Storm:
 - provide a list of sample tweets (Use free wp Clicktoretweet.com to create clickable links for auto retweeting.)
 - Provide relevant links
 - Provide your target(s)' twitter handles to use and the hashtag.
 - Include some background information if appropriate.
 - **Specify the day, time and length** that everyone should start tweeting – and **stress that the hashtag should not be used before that time**. Using the hashtag beforehand may keep it off of the top trending list.
 - **Thank allies and friends** for any contributions.

Step 2: RECRUIT!

- Recruit friends, supporters and allies ahead of time to join in the Twitterstorm. Set up meetings and phone/conference calls to ensure participation.
- Direct message allies and your followers on Twitter to gather their support (and you know they're already on Twitter.) Look for influencers (accounts with lots of followers) or journalists who tweet on your issue and engage them.
- If you have a main Twitter page representing your campaign, be sure to share the handle, so participants can tag your account and you will receive notifications.
- Send your recruits the web page link with all your campaign info so they can prepare in advance (but remind them not to start early.)
- Follow all the participants' Twitter accounts.
- Consider creating a Twitter direct message group to keep all your volunteers informed leading up to, during and after the storm.
- Send email or message reminders to everyone 3 days before the storm and be prepared to answer questions. It might be a good time to hold a quick check in meeting as well if possible.
- Remind everyone what the hashtag is in all communications.

Step 3: **STORM!**

- Tweet/Post your campaign webpage widely right at the beginning to solicit support.
- **Get on Twitter and start tweeting and retweeting** every message you see with your hashtag. Everyone on the team should be doing that at the same time.
 - In case people forget to tag your account, search on the hashtag by itself to make sure you catch all tweets.
- Check the local @Trends[your city] page for trending patterns. The page will send you a tweet if your handle is trending. (Example: [@TrendsBoston](#).)
- Monitor your feed to catch any responses from the target and retweet/quote widely, adding any comments with your campaign language.
- When replying to tweets, remember to put a period (.) or word before any names/handles to keep your tweets public.
- Remember: Gratitude and recognizing collaboration are strong currency on Twitter. People will share positive messages before they will share negative ones.
- HAVE FUN!
- Share your success at the end - how many tweets, did the target notice or answer, what kind of impact did you have?
- THANK EVERYONE WHO PARTICIPATED! They'll be more likely to join in next time.

