

Introduction

Many companies and organizations have used their Twitter accounts to host “Twitter Chats.” These virtual events allow knowledgeable individuals to share their experiences, opinions and views on topics that the hosting organization chooses. Typically, these chats last for an hour, and focus on ten questions. The hosting organization posts a question every six minutes, allows participants to answer the question, and moves on. The tweets gained provide unique, positive perspectives that aid the company’s credibility and visibility.

Before The Chat

In preparation for the chat, the organization must decide on a date and time, choose questions and a hashtag pertinent to their intended participants, choose featured guest “speakers” that will lead participation, post the questions and instructions for the public, contact potential participants and publicize the event (highlighting the speakers and the hashtag used).

Guest speakers and participants are welcome to draft their answers before the chat begins, to make sure they are appropriate and fit the 280 character limit. The organization can work with the guest speakers ahead of time to set up their Twitter accounts and review posting instructions. When the guest speaker is a prominent public figure, it provides the organization with the opportunity to increase chat participants by releasing a media alert about the event.

Directly before the chat, the organization will introduce the guest speakers, and briefly state their job and qualifications, as well as retweet any participant introductions from the general participants.

During The Chat

During the chat, the organization will post the questions in a timely manner, closely follow the chosen hashtag using TweetDeck, like and retweet answers, moderate participant interactions and react as needed. (Ideally, participants will react to each other's posts and ideas - this can be outlined in the instructions posted before the chat.)

After The Chat

Directly after the chat, the organization will thank the participants for contributing, like and retweet any remaining answers.

After the chat, the organization will summarize the answers participants have given, post the summary to the public, individually thank participants via email and gather analytics for the event.

Proposed Timeline

Six Weeks Prior to Event:

- Confirm date and time of event
- Secure guests
- Confirm moderator (person running Go Global NC Twitter account during the event)

Five Weeks Prior to Chat:

- Draft questions and instructions
- Select hashtag (Ex. #GoGlobalChat)
- Set up Twitter accounts for guests if needed

One Month Prior to Event:

- Initial promotion of event to emphasize importance of guest speakers and their value to intended participants
 - Advertise across social media accounts
 - Email potential participants and request RSVP

- Identify special guest location for event
- Send questions to guests
- Draft responses with guests if necessary
- Ask guests for introduction verbiage

Three Weeks Prior to Event:

- Continue to advertise across social media
- Identify equipment to be used
- Secure equipment to be used

Two Weeks Prior to Event:

- Continue to advertise across social media
 - Encourage intended participants to extend invitations to stakeholders (Ex. a teacher could ask their class to participate)
- Post questions to the public
- Email questions and invitations to interested parties
- Confirm guest responses

One Week Prior to Event:

- Advertise heavily on social media
- Secure “thank you” gift bags for guests
- Draft “thank you” email for participants

Day Prior to Event:

- “Don’t forget!” post on Twitter
- Confirm guests
- Confirm number of intended participants
- Review Q & A

- Test equipment
- Use TweetDeck to schedule questions from GGNC Twitter account
 - If guest speakers would like to have a high level of interaction during the event, their tweet responses could be scheduled as well.

Day of Event:

- Confirm all guests are available
- Test equipment / back up equipment
- Host event
- Thank participants virtually
- Distribute “thank you” gift bags

Day After Event:

- Send “thank you” email
- Assemble and post summary of chat
- Gather analytics

Go Global NC Sample

One Twitter Chat that Go Global NC could host would be one for the Global Teachers program. Participants invited would be past alumni, grantors and funders and stakeholders (ex. school administrators, community members, students - informed by past alumni). The hashtag used would be: #GlobalTeachersChat. Featured guests would include Meredith Henderson, Senior Director of Programs; Nicholas Rau, Director of Education and Training; Lisa Yanke, Director of Communications; and Mark Johnson, NC Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Listed are a few example questions:

Q1: How do you define global education? #GlobalTeachersChat

Q2: Why is global citizenship important? #GlobalTeachersChat

Q3: What tools do you use to stay globally connected, even past your experience?

#GlobalTeachersChat

Q4: How did you (plan to) implement what you learned abroad into your classroom / school / community? #GlobalTeachersChat

Q5: What's your most important takeaway from your #GoGlobalINC experience?

#GlobalTeachersChat

Risks

There are a few potential risks with a Twitter Chat. The first risk would be a low-rate of participation. In order to prevent it, the organization could publicize the virtual event ahead of time and reach out to potential participants via email. With the sample above, the event would take place soon after teachers meet for the first time following their trip, and presented to the teachers at that time. Regardless, with at least four guest speakers, there will be a high volume of positive content being shared. A second risk is that, due to Twitter being a public forum, a participant from outside (or even inside) a program could use the hashtag for inappropriate content. However, since our organization has a niche nature and only hosts the best of the best for our programs, it is highly unlikely that the hashtag chosen will see any unsavory behavior. A third risk would be the coordination, but with timely advertising, outreach and scheduling, navigating this would not be an issue.

Benefits

The primary benefit to a Twitter Chat is its ease and cost-effectiveness. Without having to spend money on even printed materials, we will receive several positive, public messages from multiple perspectives in a short amount of time. The second benefit would be the increased visibility from the event. All of the participants have their own followers who will in turn be

exposed to our content, brand and work. Our total number of media impressions will increase. Further publicity could come from a prominent public figure serving as our guest speaker for a chat. The third benefit is the opportunity to reconnect with past alumni and connect program alumni from different delegations to each other. The excitement and energy coming from this chat will surely encourage alumni to act as advocates for their program. One of the many other additional benefits is the ability to easily replicate and scale the format with several Go Global NC programs. At one time, the organization could hold a Twitter chat for the Latino Initiative program surrounding the topic of law enforcement, with a chat a few months later for Global Leaders on the topic of international business and public policy. Every Twitter Chat could be repeated on a yearly or monthly basis.