

twitter



BK Twitter Guide

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1. Introduction and what is Twitter?	3
Benefits of setting up a Twitter account?	3
What sort of Twitter account is best for the BKs?	4
What could your Twitter messages ('tweets') include?.....	4
2. Tweeting: Examples	5
Inspirational thoughts.....	5
Sharing content.....	5
LIVE event updates.....	6
3. Before setting up - considerations	6
4. Tweeting – best practise guidelines	7
General.....	7
Second Checking	7
Length.....	8
Frequency.....	8
Re-Tweeting	9
Following Other Accounts and search function.....	10
Use of hashtags (#)	10
Responding to messages.....	11
Dealing with Spam or Nuisance Accounts.....	12
5. Account set-up	12
Naming convention.....	12
6. APPENDIX	13
Types of Twitter accounts	13
References and additional reading.....	15



INTRODUCTION

This best practise guide on using Twitter is aimed at BK centres who wish to setup a centre Twitter account for their area/region. For general queries or questions about the BK social media policies, you can email: socialmedia@brahmakumaris.org

1. What is Twitter?

Twitter is a free social networking and micro-blogging service that enables its users to send and read messages known as tweets. Tweets are text-based posts of up to 140 characters displayed on the author's profile page and delivered to the author's subscribers who are known as followers.

“What we have to do is deliver to people the best and freshest most relevant information possible. We think of Twitter not as social network, but an information network. It tells people what they care about as it is happening in the world.”

—Evan Williams, Twitter co-founder

Benefits of setting up a Twitter account?

There are several benefits you might want to take advantage of by starting a BK-related Twitter account:

- To publicise your best content (eg public programmes, talks, events)
- To share news
- To build awareness of your centre and its activities
- To tap into potential new audiences/members of the public that haven't been reached before
- To build a community and/or be part of an existing community
- As a means of getting feedback on your activities
- Some or all of the above



What sort of Twitter account is best for the BKs?

There are several different models of the type of Twitter account you could setup. It is worth looking at good examples of each one and seeing how they operate. This will give you an idea of the appropriate tone, personality and engagement that they have. They are also useful guides to help you understand how much work it might take to sustain such accounts. See separate document in Appendix 'Twitter Account Types' which contains some examples.

What could your Twitter messages ('tweets') include?

Examples of messages/tweets could include:

- News updates
- Links to audio/ video/ website content
- Event invitations/ updates
- Thought for the day/inspirational quotes
- Season's greetings
- Promoting new literature/ newsletter
- Crowd-sourcing ideas (getting your audience to come up with ideas you can use, e.g. titles for talks they would be interested in).
- Live Tweeting - Tweets providing periodic updates for any Live/ Major event (this should be limited in the first 3 months of an account being setup)
- Feedback for events - Tweets sharing feedback by participants in general or from specific events (this should be limited in the first 3 months of an account being set up)

* It's important that all the above includes – and is restricted to – the remit of the Twitter account (e.g. local Twitter accounts shouldn't include content that is better sent out from national Twitter accounts and vice versa).



** You should also not engage in sending out tweets or engaging in conversations which relate to controversial topics or topical news stories for which there is no clear official BK position (if in doubt, speak to the Media representative or RC office for your country/region or email: socialmedia@brahmakumaris.com for advice).

1. Tweeting: Examples

Inspirational thoughts

Brahma Kumaris inspiration: Only talent filled with humility is of real use to humanity. #workinglife

Sharing content

How can you have a shift to happiness within? New video featuring Dadi Janki and eminent psychiatrist Dr Peter Fenwick: <http://is.gd/cL8DD>

8:36 AM Jun 11th via web

New photos of our remarkable Kitchen Angels :) <http://bit.ly/KitchenAngels> #meditation #spirituality #spiritual

4:40 PM Jun 13th via web



LIVE event updates (sending out tweets about an event that is happening at that moment)

Dadi Janki says, don't just realize, instead open your 'real eyes'. Keep them wide open. #FeelingGreat

Thu Aug 12 21:04:35 2010 via TweetDeck

Glimpse of Dadi Janki, Sis. Jayanti and the enthralled audience #FeelingGreat <http://twitpic.com/2e2stb>

Thu Aug 12 20:51:40 2010 via TweetDeck

2. Before setting up - considerations

Before setting up an account, try and answer the checklist of questions which will help you focus on your requirements and help you decide if setting up a Twitter account is worthwhile for you (If you require further assistance, you can contact your national/regional social media rep or RC office, or you can email:

socialmedia@brahmakumaris.org):

- Why do you want to start a Twitter account - what is the purpose?
- Could you achieve the same effect or better through your existing BK website?
- Is this the right site to engage with your potential audience/community, bearing in mind the demographics of your area?
- Does a similar BK account already exist? What added value would your Twitter account have if so?
- What level of commitment are you or those at your centre willing and able to make to manage the account and sustain it beyond setup?
- How will you measure success and value of the account (IE, how will you know the time and energy needed to maintain the account is worth it?)



- Do you have a clear idea who will be responsible for updating and maintaining the account?
- Are you aware of the areas of compliance that the account will have to meet (see below)?

3. Tweeting – best practise guidelines

General

Unless it's just an RSS feed (which automatically notifies of any new content on a website or webpage) that is being imported into the account, try and ensure your account has a 'human voice' (to help with this, it's a good idea for the person who is tweeting to identify themselves with a first name in the first tweet they do – although this is not essential). Avoid official-speak, but remember that if it is an official BK account, it still has to fall within compliance issues in terms of what should and shouldn't be tweeted (see separate note below). Even though it may be on an third-party site, you should still consider a tweet from an official BK Twitter account to carry the same equivalency as an item posted on your official BK website, so appropriate considerations should be made (e.g., in terms of terminology used). Try and be moderate in self-promotion as this can lead to criticism if overdone.

Second Checking

If there is an official national BK Twitter account already in existence, make sure it is following the centre account you are setting up – this is good editorial practise to ensure compliance. If you have others at the centre with personal Twitter accounts, it's a good idea for them to follow your centre account too as they can be used as an extra pairs of eyes to check for errors.

Provision in your team should be made to ensure tweets are second-checked whenever possible before being posted on official BK accounts. If that is



possible, ensure that a second pair of eyes is keeping a close eye on tweets. A good way to do this is to subscribe to get all tweets sent to you or a second-checker as a text alert. This can be done via the settings tab. If you are unsure how to do this, speak to your regional social media rep. Remember that once you have published a tweet, it cannot be deleted completely from the web (you can delete it from your Twitter timeline, but it will not necessarily be deleted in the feeds of your followers and it could remain searchable through search engines). If you do make a mistake, admit it and send out a correction/clarification in a fresh tweet.

Length

Try and limit your tweets to 132 characters – thus making it easier for the message to be ‘re-tweeted’ (copied and sent out again) by other followers (as a re-tweet will also have to include the account name of the person doing the re-tweeting).

Frequency

Try and limit your tweets to a maximum of 10 a day (try and do at least one a day) to prevent irritating followers by flooding their news streams. This does not include @ messages (messages sent to your account) or coverage of live events. (If you are sending an @ message, it’s best to begin with ‘@’ at the start of your message, so it doesn’t show up in the news streams of your other followers as unwanted and irrelevant spam). Any @ messages should be limited in use for the first three months of setting up an account. The policy on engagement through use of @ messages can then be reviewed with the help of your national/regional social media rep. If you want to post a website URL, Twitter will automatically shorten it for you, so you don’t need to use a separate URL shortening service.



Re-Tweeting

The act of re-tweeting (sharing to your followers a tweet from someone else) can imply that you have endorsed that tweet and potentially the user too. This can lead to difficulties for the Brahma Kumaris if retweeting a political organisation or an individual with a financial/political agenda. In general, it's best to avoid re-tweeting unless it is to point to other BK content or re-publish tweets from other BK accounts or those accounts which share similar values to the BKs.

It may also be appropriate to re-tweet when it is thought it would add value to your followers, based on their expectations of the BK account. For example, if you retweet a link to an interesting Youtube video.

On occasions, you may also wish to re-tweet a comment which adds positively to the profile of your account. Avoid over-doing this sort of re-tweeting however, as it can annoy your followers and attract criticism.

Be aware that others who retweet your messages may change the context of your original tweet and potentially lead to damaging the BK's reputation. It is worth monitoring this by checking your @ messages. If you spot an instance where this has happened and there is a danger of this spreading further, you may need to make clear what you originally said with a new tweet.

Following Other Accounts and search function

If you pro-actively decide to follow accounts, be clear why you want to do so. This can imply an endorsement of the account, so you need to be aware of who exactly you are following. Quite often there are spam accounts that follow thousands of people - if they start following you, don't just follow-back automatically but look at their profile and see what they generally tweet about. If it is totally irrelevant to your account, then you shouldn't follow them back. It is also worthwhile doing a



regular check of the accounts that are following you – and delete/block any spam accounts you spot.

It's worth remembering that if you follow-back a user, it will enable you to send them direct messages (which may be useful as a means of communicating directly - and privately - with them).

The search functionality in Twitter is also a good way of finding individuals who may be interested in your activities. You can search by location and subject (eg 'meditation+london'). If you find individuals that you think might be interested in an event, you can start following them - this will alert them to your Twitter presence and they may look at your account profile and decide to follow you back. This will then mean they will receive future tweets you send out.

For more detailed advanced searching on Twitter (including searching by key terms + location), use this link: <https://twitter.com/search-advanced>

Use of hashtags

On major stories, events or subject areas, hashtags are a very useful way of being able to ensure you are part of the wider conversation on Twitter. Hashtags are used to help people find tweets on certain topics by marking them with a '#' ahead of the word (eg #cop15, #meditation). By searching using these hashtags, you can filter all the tweets that have it included. This can be a great way of being able to find individuals talking about that subject. But remember that the number of people tweeting on a subject and using a hashtag for it is still quite small (it's generally about 10% of people tweeting about that subject matter) so it is still worth doing wider searches without using a hashtag if you want a more detailed look.

Equally, if you are tweeting about a topic, by including a hashtag in your tweet will ensure it reaches a potentially wider audience than just your followers (which also increases the chances of being re-tweeted more widely too). It's good



practise to try and include '#meditation' at the end of your tweets where it is appropriate and relevant.

Responding to messages

You will know when someone has responded to you because their tweet will include your username preceded by the @ symbol, normally at the start of the tweet. You can find all interactions involving your account by clicking on the @Connect tab at the top of your Twitter page. It's important you respond to as many such message as you can. For example...

Original tweet by correspondent John Smith, Twitter username JohnSmith: Hi @BrahmaKumarisUK, do you run meditation courses?

Response from BrahmaKumarisUK: @JohnSmith Yes! You can find out more by visiting our website: www.brahmakumaris.org/uk

Response from John Smith: @BrahmaKumarisUK Great, thanks, I'll give it a go.

You can also view direct messages to you (DM) by clicking on 'Direct Messages'. This is the Twitter equivalent of email – where only the people sending and receiving the direct message will be able to view it. Direct Messages don't appear on your public timeline and are not searchable on Twitter. You will only be able to respond/communicate with people via a direct message if you are both following eachother's accounts. You may need to @ message someone requesting they follow you back if you want to send them a private message through the DM function.

Dealing with Spam or Nuisance Accounts

If you come across an account that is spamming you or if you wish to block a user, you can do so by clicking on their account profile and then select 'block user' from the drop-down arrow alongside their name. This will mean they will no longer be able to follow your feed or send you messages. If you wish to report the



person for spam, you can also click on 'report for spam'. For further help and advice, contact your regional social media rep or email: socialmedia@brahmakumaris.org

4. Account set-up

Naming convention

Where possible, all official BK accounts names should have 'BrahmaKumaris' as the prefix and a short location indicator as well, eg "BrahmaKumarisUK" or "BrahmaKumarisLeeds". The account name shouldn't be longer than 18 characters, so abbreviations may be needed for the locations as an alternative. If unsure, speak to your national/regional social media rep or email socialmedia@brahmakumaris.org for advice. Always ensure that "Brahma Kumaris" and the location is included in the separate account profile field when setting up (this isn't limited by character length).

Make sure you include the official Brahma Kumaris logo (whichever is relevant for your country/region) and a couple of lines in the bio that explains who you are and what you do. You also have the opportunity to upload a suitable background image – the colour schemes for this should be consistent to the colour scheme of your official BK website. You can also find pictures and logos on the Global Functioning portal <https://gf.brahmakumaris.org> For additional queries or assistance on branding, you can email: socialmedia@brahmakumaris.org

It is important to understand that any official BK account that is setup is owned by the Brahma Kumaris and not individuals. Therefore, passwords and usernames must be held in a document which is accessible by at least two members of the centre, including a senior. Passwords should be changed regularly (ideally monthly) and be robust (contain lower case and upper case letters, plus numbers).

When you have setup an account, please email



socialmedia@brahmakumaris.org with the details so that the central log of official BK social media accounts can be updated.

5. APPENDIX

Types of Twitter accounts

There are a number of different types, or styles, of accounts that can be setup – each with their own user experiences. Among the main types are:

1. Fully automated accounts driven by RSS Feeds

These are accounts that do not require manual input. Each message, or tweet, is automatically generated by setting up a RSS rule which will post a link to any new content on a related website. For example, www.twitter.com/brahmakumaris (the majority of messages on this page are generated automatically, through this service: www.twitterfeed.com – which picks up any new entries on the BK website via an RSS feed and automatically tweets the headline, together with a shortened weblink). Fully automated feeds can be useful for ensuring new content is posted regularly, but can be limited in their use as they may not be as engaging as other models below.

2. Corporate branded accounts, without a human voice

These are accounts which issue official news releases and corporate information, with no interaction with those people who are following the account. An example is: www.twitter.com/McAfeeNews



3. Corporate with persona

These are accounts that have mostly official news, but also 'human' interaction and conversation between the account manager/s and the followers of the account. The tone is more informal and is likely to increase loyalty among followers and increase the chances of them spreading your content more widely. An example: www.twitter.com/Cisco

4. Employee/individual with corporate/organisational affiliation

These are accounts which are primarily personal in nature but in their profiles also indicate their corporate/organisational affiliation. The breakdown in 'tweets' or content posted might be approximately 80% personal and 20% corporate/organisational related. For example: www.twitter.com/BWdumars

5. Purely personal accounts

These are accounts that are purely personal in nature and contain no references or content that has any connection to corporate/organisational affiliation (the majority of Twitter accounts).

For the purposes of the official BK social media strategy, these guidelines refer to accounts in types 1-3 above.



6. REFERNCES AND ADDITIONAL READING

UK Government Twitter Strategy:

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/17313280/Template-Twitter-Strategy-for-Government-Departments>

Microsoft's social media guidelines:

http://socialmediagovernance.com/MSFT_Social_Media_Policy.pdf

BBC's social media guidelines:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/guidelines/editorialguidelines/page/guidance-blogs-bbc-summary>

ENDS

