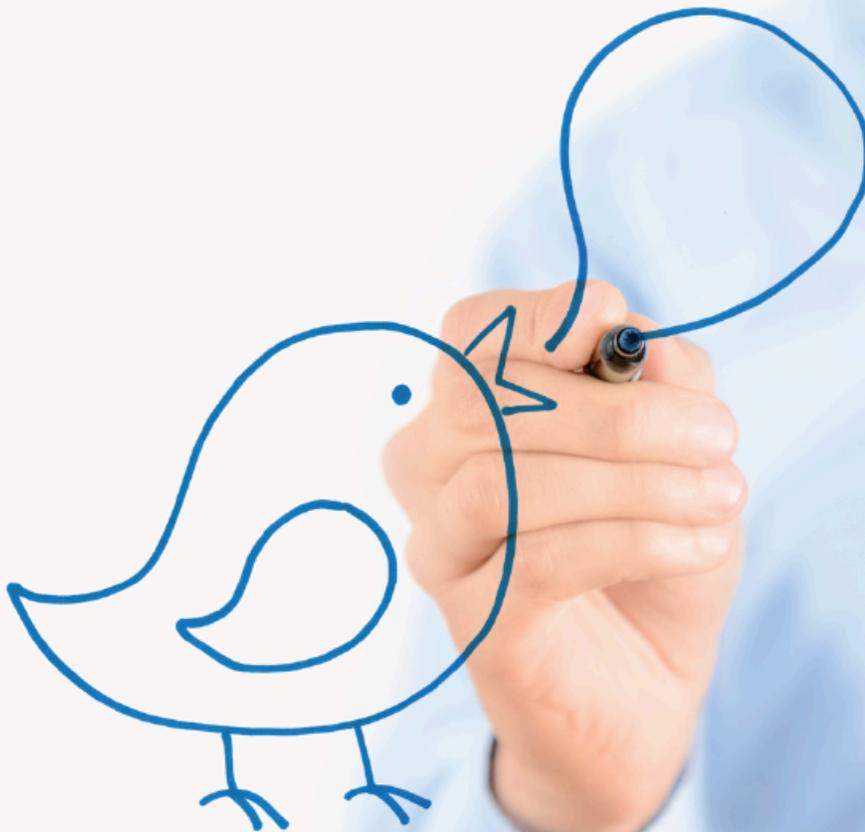


STAKING OUT TERRITORY

Top 100 Brands and Their Twitter Presence



October 2013 | A FairWinds Study



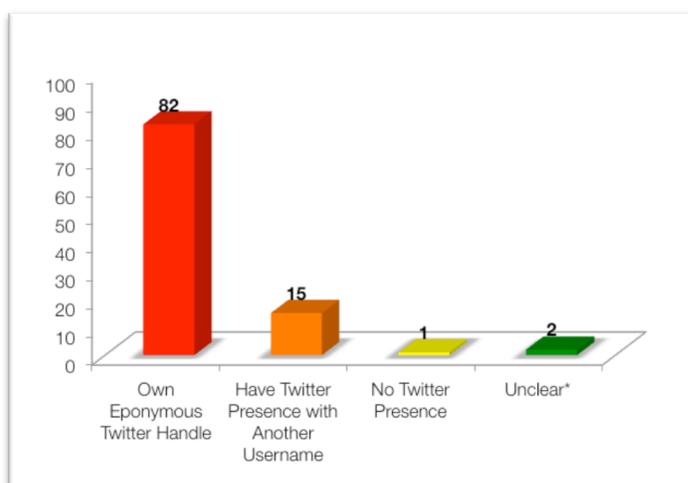
INTRODUCTION

Of the top 100 global brand name companies, 83 percent own their eponymous Twitter handles and only one has no presence at all on the popular social media platform. And some of the 83 brands with eponymous handles draw more followers on handles specifically tailored to customers rather than the company's trademarked name.

These are among the findings of a FairWinds Partners study of how the world's biggest brands use Twitter.

FairWinds looked at the official name of the brand, whether the brand owns its eponymous handle, and, if not, what other handles it uses; how many followers it has; the number of tweets to date, and the frequency of tweets. The study was based on Interbrand's list of Top 100 brands.

- 83/100 own their eponymous handle
- 15/100 don't own their eponymous handle, but do have a Twitter presence with another username
- Only 1/100 didn't have a presence at all
- The ownership of the remaining 1/100 is unclear*
- 66 tweet daily or at least twice per week



The survey results reflect what the smartest companies know: social media is free, immediate, and cannot be topped if a company wants to convey information to its customers quickly.

FairWinds' advice to clients about social media usernames is the same as its advice about Internet domain names: consumers must feel confident they can find your content where they look for it and they're usually looking for it on usernames that mirror a brand name. The 83 firms that own their eponymous handle know that gives them the best overall chance of reaching their target audience.

So why is it that Hermes has no Twitter presence at all? As with any strategy, Twitter username strategies will vary for each brand, taking into account a company's entire digital presence, online business goals, and overall approach to business. Staking a claim in popular social media platforms keeps options open for brands. It's possible Hermes, which is a luxury brand, opted to extend its exclusivity by staying clear of Twitter.

The FairWinds study found that some companies that own and use their eponymous Twitter handle actually have larger followings on other handles they own: handles that have geographic regions in the username, for example, or handles that indicate specialized information will be provided, such as "PR" or "News".

Why do these companies have greater success drawing followers to handles other than their brand names, especially since we know Internet users expect to find brands on eponymous domain names and handles?

* @apple is registered, but ownership is unclear – the profile has not been developed, with no information, or clearly branded content. There are no tweets on this handle.



GLOBAL PLATFORM, REGIONAL FOCUS

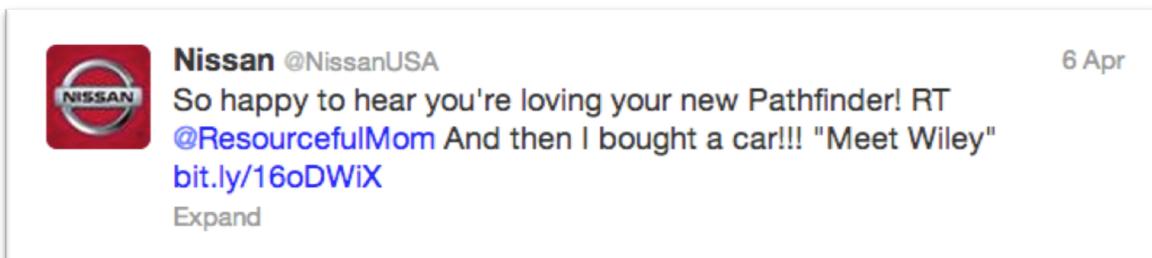
While Twitter has the power to reach global audiences, some brands register handles that correspond to regional markets. For example, Samsung owns the @Samsung handle, but uses it specifically to tweet in Korean. Content aimed at the U.S. market is pushed out, in English, through its @SamsungMobileUS handle, which has more followers than @Samsung:



Consumer electronics company Nintendo similarly uses @Nintendo to tweet in Japanese, while @NintendoAmerica (which is more active and has more followers than @Nintendo) engages with its U.S. markets, in English, using relevant regional information:



The pattern also holds true for auto manufacturer Nissan, which uses @NissanUSA to talk to its U.S. consumers, such as Washington DC-based @ResourcefulMom:



Sometimes, savvy companies are able to use their regional names to good effect by tapping into topics that are trending in specific markets. For example, Nissan capitalized on the highly anticipated return of the TV series Mad Men by tweeting about two of its main characters, advertising creative writers Don Draper and Peggy Olson:



Beauty company L'Oréal uses @LOrealParisUSA as its "Official Twitter Account of L'Oréal Paris USA" based out of New York City. That handle has more than four times as many followers as @LOreal, based in Paris, France. Eponymous @LOreal reflects the parent company, L'Oréal SA, and is used for corporate purposes, focusing on topics like #HR, #finance, and #research. @LOrealParisUSA converses with U.S. consumers.



Many companies' domain name strategies also rely on country code domains (such as .co.uk for the UK) to build a presence in local markets. With the expected 2013 launch of geographic extensions like .PARIS and non-Latin script extensions, brands will have to consider extending their strategy to every relevant .OPTION.



CONNECT PERSONALLY

Some brands are unable to use their eponymous handles. Italian-based luxury car manufacturer Ferrari does not own @Ferrari. Its holder has never tweeted, nevertheless @Ferrari has 1,051 followers who most likely assume the handle belongs to the luxury Italian car company. The same is true for @BMW, which is owned by Broadcast Tech Reporter Brian M. Westbrook. Some of his followers also likely think they are following the German auto maker. For example, among @BMW's 4,675 followers are @CarNewDeal and @BMW_Montreal.

These followers represent lost opportunities for companies, but in many cases, brands find new ways to connect to audiences through usernames. The best of them understand that connecting to an audience on a personal, seemingly one-to-one level is a good business strategy.

While Ferrari doesn't own @Ferrari, it does own and use @InsideFerrari, perhaps to give users a sense that they're getting an intimate look at the brand. The handles used by quick-service restaurant chain KFC, @KFC_Colonel, and cosmetics company Avon, @AvonInsider, also give the customer a sense they are making a real connection. Check out the personal, conversational feel of these tweets from @AvonInsider:



Other companies' Twitter handles signal the type of communications audiences can expect, such as official corporate communications. Some do this even when they have other options.

Lifestyle, healthcare, and electronics company Philips owns @Philips as the "official Twitter account of Philips" but has no tweets, and the page directs visitors to @PhilipsPR for the latest news around Philips. The company uses @PhilipsPR to send out corporate communications.





Philips Corp Comms @PhilipsPR 7h

More than 100 years ago Anton #Philips travelled to St.Petersburg; the 15-day travel won him a lighting contract for Winter Palace/Hermitage

PHILIPS

Expand

Healthcare company Johnson & Johnson does not own "JNJ", can't own "JohnsonandJohnson" because of character limits, and can't register @J&J because symbols are not allowed. So, the brand uses @JNJNews, among others like @JNJCare and @JNJParents, instead. The company's @JNJNews Twitter feed, for example, shows the sort of content consumers can expect from that handle - press-release worthy content about the brand:



Johnson & Johnson @JNJNews 29 Mar

View our first-ever all-digital Annual Report for 2012 here: #JNJ
[\\$JNJ jnj.me/X20p4q](http://$JNJ.jnj.me/X20p4q)

Expand Reply Retweet Favorite More



Johnson & Johnson @JNJNews 1 Apr

#JNJ is proud to be named one of @NaVOBA's 10 Best Corporations for Veteran-Owned Businesses in 2013:
navoba.com/article/10-bes...

Expand

Delivering the content that audiences expect to find, where they expect to find it is one way for brands to build a trusting relationship with their audiences. Brands like Avon, Johnson & Johnson, and Philips have built that type of relationship with Twitter handles that set expectations for the tone and tenor that audiences can expect.



CONCLUSION

A creative social media strategy that includes an appropriate and imaginative portfolio of Twitter handles can strengthen an existing digital strategy or launch a new, innovative one the same way the right portfolio of domain names in the right extensions can. Some brands will adapt to new platforms early enough to secure prime online real estate; some may need to be more creative if they've been beaten to the punch; and some will develop new naming conventions entirely. These variations are reflected in the New gTLD Program: some brands applied for .BRAND and/or a .GENERIC, while others did not, and all have to consider which domain names to register in the geographic- and industry-term gTLDs that will begin launching this year.

Online platforms can be powerful marketing and communications tools that require experimentation and time to get it right. However, a strategic vision about which handles, domain names, and extensions to use as platforms for creative outreach – and how they all tie together - creates a foundation for a solid digital strategy that can grow and adapt as the Internet and business goals change.

FairWinds' Social Media Strategy & Portfolio Services leverage our understanding of online consumer behavior and digital marketing and branding to help clients optimize their businesses across various social media platforms. Our strategic advice is designed to help clients reach consumers to achieve profit and build trust.

