

University of Greenwich Sustainable Development Unit

The 'Twitterings' of the University of Greenwich

Summary

We at the Sustainable Development Unit (SDU) started our Twitter account [@Sust_Greenwich](#) in 2010. Twitter was a growing presence in social media and gave us a communications outlet to share, document and connect our work with others, whilst not having to actively manage an account like you would on other platforms such as Facebook. Social media is only interesting when it is being updated with regular interesting content and Twitter allows you post interesting content with one click through retweeting others or a few clicks with short, sharp updates.

The approach

Twitter was seen as an additional way to communicate with our stakeholders including, students, staff and organisations and people that make up the community around us. We hoped that it would be a platform in which student engagement was more successful however this has not been the case. Although we do have students follow us and receive our updates, two way communication tends to happen between ourselves and other Greenwich departments; external partners such as charities and NGOs that we are working with; projects that we are supporting; and sustainability professionals from within and outside our industry.

This Twitter 'relationship' with these groups has however been very useful from sharing best practice to getting quick answers to question; and it is in forming these relationships that has led to our growing following. Twitter should not just a platform to post what you have been doing, or what opportunities you have available. It should be a space where you can converse (albeit within a limited space), share things you like as well as things that you are not so pleased with; promote others; ask and answer questions; as well as share what you have been working on.

We have a very informal approach to engagement on twitter using it very much as you would a personal account. We share things we as individuals are interested in, we talk to people in informal language and we inject our own personalities into the tweets. We have been giving 'formal corporate' advice about Twitter and how to use it; however, we must admit that this has been largely ignored! Twitter is not the place for corporate identity we feel, rather it is a place for the real personality of the team and our work to shine through. Sustainability is exciting and innovative and our Twitter stream should reflect this.

Because of this informality we do not use Twitter as a metric of success e.g. how many retweets we got for a particular opportunity post, how many questions asked and answered etc... This is largely due to keeping



in mind what Twitter is there for: a platform for conversation, sharing and shout outs. It is the informality of our Twitter account that means we enjoy using it and as such need no prompting to share things on there. This keeps the stream interesting and hopefully dynamic. We are not afraid of letting others post on our account and happily give out the password to let student ambassadors and staff champions share their thoughts on the stream so a wider range of voices is heard.

Twitter now is just something that we do as part of modern communication and news sharing. It is a timeline of our activity going back five years and a place where we can spotlight the things we care about that others may also find interesting and want to share.

Further information

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