



A Guide to Getting the Most out of Twitter Networking Hours

by Hannah Stephen

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Introduction

As Twitter networking hours become more and more popular and useful for businesses, HeadRed have put this guide together to make sure you can get the most out of engaging in the Twitter hashtag hours.

What are Twitter networking hours?

Twitter hashtag hours (e.g. #MidlandsHour) are a great way to network with other businesses and promote your own business in your local area. Basically most areas, towns, cities now have a dedicated hour slot each week where businesses in that area can interact on Twitter using the dedicated hashtag.

Who is this guide for?

Whether you're already engaging in Twitter hours on a regular basis, or have no experience or knowledge of Twitter or social media at all, this guide is aimed at those looking to promote their business and grow their social presence through Twitter networking hours. This is by no means a technical guide, but more a list of tips to consider when tweeting during the hours so should suit various levels of expertise.

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Why should you engage in Twitter hours?

- Promote your business to local people and businesses in your area
- Network with other businesses
- Gain more followers on Twitter
- Find more relevant users to follow on Twitter
- Promote a special offer you're running
- Showcase your business achievements or news
- Portray yourself as a local expert in your industry

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Top Tips for Networking on Twitter Hours

Follow our tips below to get the most out of your efforts during the Twitter hours.

Be organised

Treat Twitter hours like business networking events – it's always better to be organised for networking and turn up with business cards and have an idea of what you want to get out of the event such as who you want to meet and what you want to talk about if you have some exciting news or developments going on with your business.

First things first with Twitter hours – make sure you decide which hours you want to engage in and then check which times and day they are on so you can be ready to sit with your mobile/tablet/computer/laptop and give your full attention.

HeadRed have created a handy calendar for the days and times of the Twitter hours in the Midlands area. See the full, printable version [here](#).

TWITTER NAME	HASHTAG	FOLLOWERS	TIME
@LeamHour	#LeamHour	900+	Monday 4-5pm
@WorcesterHour	#WorcestershireHour	4400+	Monday 8-9pm
@eastmidshour	#EastMidsHour	1400+	Monday 9-10pm
@LeamTweetup	#LeamTalks	2400+	Tues 7-8pm
@solihullhour	#solihullhour	2100+	Tues 7-8pm
@WestMidsHour	#WestMidsHour	7500+	Tues 8-9pm
@Hinckleyhour	#hinckleyhour	1300+	Tues 8-9pm
@MidlandsHour	#MidlandsHour	13000+	Weds 8-9pm
@ShropshireHour	#shropshirehour	2000+	Weds 8-9pm
@Leicester_Hour	#LeicesterHour	1900+	Weds 8-9pm
@WolvesHour	#WolverhamptonHour	1300+	Weds 8-9pm
@nuneatonhour	#nuneatonhour	1000+	Weds 8-9pm
@Alcesterhour	#Alcesterhour	300+	Thurs 7-9pm
@NetworkBritain	#NetworkBritain	5500+	Thurs 8-9pm
@WarksHour	#WarksHour	2400+	Thurs 8-9pm
@Covhour	#covhour	2200+	Thurs 8-9pm
@LeicsHour	#LeicestershireHour	1200+	Thurs 8-9pm
@RugbyHour	#RugbyHour	1200+	Thurs 8.30-9.30pm
@BumHour	#BumHour	2100+	Sunday 8-9pm

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Fix up, look sharp

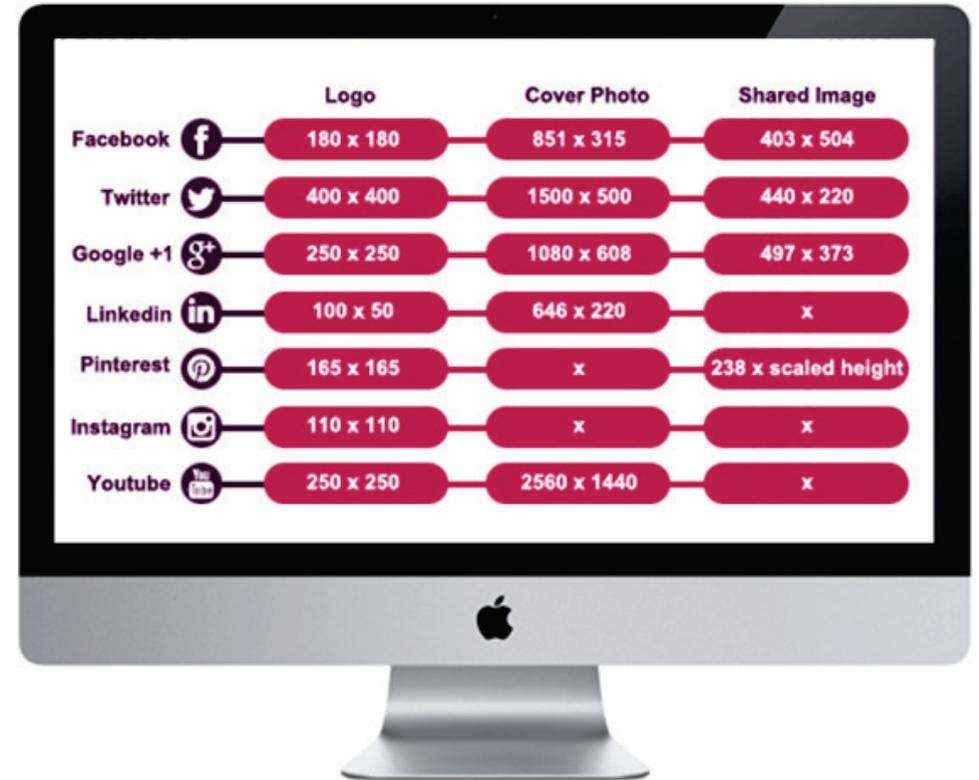


You wouldn't want to turn up to a networking event with crumpled, poorly printed flyers whilst wearing a coffee-stained, un-ironed shirt so review your Twitter profile and think about how it appears to others – does your bio explain who you are and what you do?

Is your profile picture clear and does it represent you or your business in the way you want it to? Have you used the right sized graphic for your cover image so that it isn't stretched or blurry?

Check out HeadRed's social graphic dimensions guide on the right for sizes.

If you are on Twitter as a person then it is usually best to have a clear headshot as your profile picture as people like to interact with faces. If you're using a business account on the other hand, you might want to ensure your logo or business name is in the profile picture so that it stands out in the timeline.



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Use social management tools

When you participate in Twitter hours, there can be a lot going on at once – you need to monitor the activity on the hashtag itself, as well as your mentions and notifications. If you decide to participate in more than one hour that happens at the same time, you'll want to monitor them separately too and all this can be quite tricky on the normal Twitter interface.

Social management tools like Tweetdeck, Hootsuite and Sprout Social can make your life a lot easier when trying to monitor the activity of more than one Twitter hour and your own notifications. Simply download Tweetdeck and set up a new search column for your #hour and network like a pro!

Have something valuable to share

Interacting with other businesses can be valuable during the Twitter hours, but if you really want to stand out and attract others to follow you, you can share something that others should find interesting, useful or entertaining.

For example, if you're an electrician you could share tips on how to save energy. If you struggle to come up with something, try looking for something

relevant in the local news that could spark conversation, or talk about a local business event you might be attending.

Hint: this guide could be useful to your peers and can be shared by using this link: <http://bit.ly/twitterhours>

Schedule tweets



Once the Twitter hours kick off it can feel a bit like everyone rushing through the gates of a concert with lots of tweets flying in from every direction and it can take a moment to take it all in and decide what to compose in your first tweet. Be organised beforehand and schedule which tweets you're going to start off with using a tool like Tweetdeck, Hootsuite or Sprout Social. This will give you a bit of time to compose your tweet which could be enhanced with an image or link if you have more time to set it up.

Don't be tempted just to schedule tweets for all the hours and then not participate actively during the hours, make sure you do actually watch it live so you can engage with people in real-time too. If you can't make the time of an

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hour but really want to tweet your presence, let your followers know that your tweet is scheduled because you're tied up this week.

EG "This is a scheduled tweet but I'll catch up on the #hour tomorrow morning. If anyone needs a plumber in the area, feel free to call me!"

Balance promotion with conversation

“ Twitter hours are all about promoting your business locally and letting people know what you do best, but as Twitter is a social network, it's key to remember that networking is about having a conversation and getting to know and trust people personally so you know if you want to business with them.

So by all means, promote your business and any offers that you have going but also remember to engage with people who are active, or ask questions to spark a conversation.

Share posts from others

The benefit of interacting in a Twitter hour is that businesses promote each other which means your tweet can be seen by another user's followers if they retweet

you. To make sure others to retweet you, make sure you retweet, favourite and mention others so that they are more inclined to return the favour. Try being selective in what you do favourite/retweet though, so you're still keeping your tweets fairly relevant and not annoying your existing followers too much.

Ask for help or recommendations

Use the Twitter hours as a way to gain personal recommendations. For example, if you're looking to exhibit at a business show and you want to be recommended a good exhibition stand designer to use, ask those on the Twitter hours if they know of any local companies that do a good job. Social media is word of mouth on steroids, and you can sometimes gain recommendations a lot faster through Twitter than you would by going down to your local pub.

Offer your help and expertise

A good way to promote your business is to show that you are an expert in your field. Do this by giving tips and offering advice on your subject. For example, if you're an accountant you might offer to answer any questions anyone has about completing tax returns. This could kick off a conversation and turn the hour into a Q&A session which could really gain you attention from other businesses.

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Want to chat?

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About HeadRed

Established in 1999, HeadRed have been providing bespoke web design, development and marketing solutions for over 14 years. Based in the Midlands, HeadRed have a team of 12 experienced in-house designers, developers and digital marketers who are dedicated to working with SME's looking to grow their business online with innovative strategies and sustainable techniques.

HeadRed's solutions:

- Search Engine Optimisation SEO
- Local SEO
- Pay-Per-Click PPC
- Social Media
- Conversion Rate Optimisation CRO
- Web Analytics
- Email Marketing
- Web Design
- Branding
- E-commerce Websites
- Content Management System CMS

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