

MARKETING

## What Twitter's character count expansion means for marketers

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*Twitter allows more flexibility with character count*

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Twitter's recent update in which image links and tags no longer count towards a post's character limit allows for brands to be more expressive with consumers, including with photos and videos, but marketers need to make sure their message is relevant and useful.

With Twitter's update allowing users to include more media and text in their posts, it is important that brands find a positive balance between over posting and contextual, relevant experiences. The expansion only counts for images currently, meaning links will still matter towards the character count, signifying there will be a jump in brands leveraging Twitter Cards to bring in traffic.

"Even with the changes, it is still important to ensure your tweets are informative, timely, useful and engaging," said Carrie McIlveen, US director of marketing at [Metia](#). "Also the use of hashtags and URLs will still be included in the 140-character limit.

"Brands will want to consider using Twitter Cards for URLs to provide additional character usage," she said. "Also when tweeting, it is still important to not overuse or abuse hashtags in your message.

"You want to continue to consider positioning and relevance when using hashtags."

### Sourcing social media

Social media is growing strong as a source for brands to showcase their products and engage with consumers, and Twitter is still a key place for this. But as with any social platform, consumers are there for enjoyment so marketers have to be highly relevant and beneficial so as to not intrude on the user experience.

With this new change, brands are likely to want to pack as much content as possible to engage consumers but this may do more damage than good. Marketers have to consider their content carefully and consider whether or not the media post is beneficial to users or annoying.

Jam-packing a tweet with useless content and information can easily garner an unfollow from users. While Twitter is expanding the capability of its character count, it still maintains the 140 limitation and for good reason.

## Less is more

The mantra of less is more is key here, especially with Twitter as it is known for short and sweet content.

Twitter's recent focus on photos and video will help maintain its status as a major social media player. Millennials and younger consumers are flocking more and more to platforms that value images and media content, forcing the social media channel that was known for its focus on text to shift towards a wider range of media.

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"The limited characters allowed in a Twitter post makes it difficult to add links to a message especially if it is not a short URL - but the strategy of less is more deployed and being retained by Twitter is not a bad thing, it helps with the fast flow of the feeds and creates a uniqueness to other social media outlets that millennials especially use more often," said Marci Troutman, CEO of [SiteMinis](#). "Photos and short videos are available on Twitter now and also help the message in a shortened form.

"With the ability to add more characters to a tweet, although the link characters will still be counted in that number, brands will be able to add a better message in addition to an image or video and still include an actionable click," she said. "Brands are currently using Twitter quite successfully to discuss their products with consumers and given the limited space to discuss allows them to be quick and concise with their feedback.

"Brands also use Twitter to create buzz surrounding new product launches and are able to gain feedback and discussions that help the SEO of the product and brand names."

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