## **Making Friends in the Twittersphere**

KRYSTAL GABER, Editor, Food Manufacturing



By KRYSTAL GABER, Editor, Food Manufacturing

Social networking can be a giant waste of time.

I say that as someone charged with the task of maintaining Food Manufacturing [1]'s presence on several social networking platforms. Don't get me wrong: connecting with readers in the food industry on Twitter has been a valuable experience, allowing me to keep up, in real time, with what you guys are concerned about in your day-to-day operations. Having that information has helped me to better tailor our news and features — both in print and in our daily e-newsletter — to your tastes.

Having said that, it's difficult to quantify the number of tweets — about Justin Bieber or whatever so-and-so just ate for breakfast — that I comb through before I find one useful reference to a topic relevant to the food manufacturing industry. While Twitter has provided us a unique look at our readers, *Food Manufacturing* has long been devoted to a give-and-take relationship with you.

Before Facebook was a glimmer in Mark Zuckerberg's eye, FM has been running a Market Update section in each print issue, collecting and distributing data collected from you, our readers. Beyond the benefit this survey provides to you, processing its results allow us at FM to pinpoint the exact topics that are of value to our readers ... no Justin-Bieber-dodging required.

My crankiness aside, the complaint I'm issuing here is a pretty general one: doing anything on the Internet requires more sifting. Finding news, getting opinions, networking, shopping. In some ways, these things are simplified online — I just bought myself some pretty excellent presents that I found online and have never seen in stores — but in other ways, living online can be more difficult — the din of unfiltered, competing voices can be deafening. And no place is that online din

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louder than in the world of social networking.

Confusing, frustrating, time-wasting or whatever "kids, get off my lawn!" adjective I want to attach to social networking, there's one more important label I'm leaving out: Unavoidable. We recently ran <u>an article</u> [2] on <u>foodmanufacturing.com</u> [1] which discussed the role of social media in effectively containing food safety hysteria. The author said, in part,

Social networking makes the unfiltered voice of the consumer more accessible and immediate than ever before — which means that any response by food processors must be both fast and effective if it is to have any hope of limiting adverse consumer sentiment and the resulting impact on business.

Just as social media is helping us connect with you, it can help you to connect to consumers and make sure that your voice and your message are among those they hear every day.

Food Manufacturing has started a new Facebook page [3] (as has Chem.Info [4] as you already know), and we'd love for you to join us. We'll continue, as always, to keep you informed, and we hope you'll find the news and features we provide helpful when communicating with your own clients. We envision the page as a place for you to communicate directly with us and with others in the industry. So come waste some time with us [3]. Maybe you'll make some valuable connections in the process.

What do you think of Twitter? Let me know via e-mail at <a href="mailto:krystal.gabert@advantagemedia.com">krystal.gabert@advantagemedia.com</a> [5].

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## Links:

- [1] http://www.foodmanufacturing.com/
- [2] http://www.foodmanufacturing.com/Scripts/Products-Preparing-For-The-Perfect-Storm.asp
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