

SIMPLY MEASURED Q4 2014  
**TWITTER BENCHMARK REPORT**



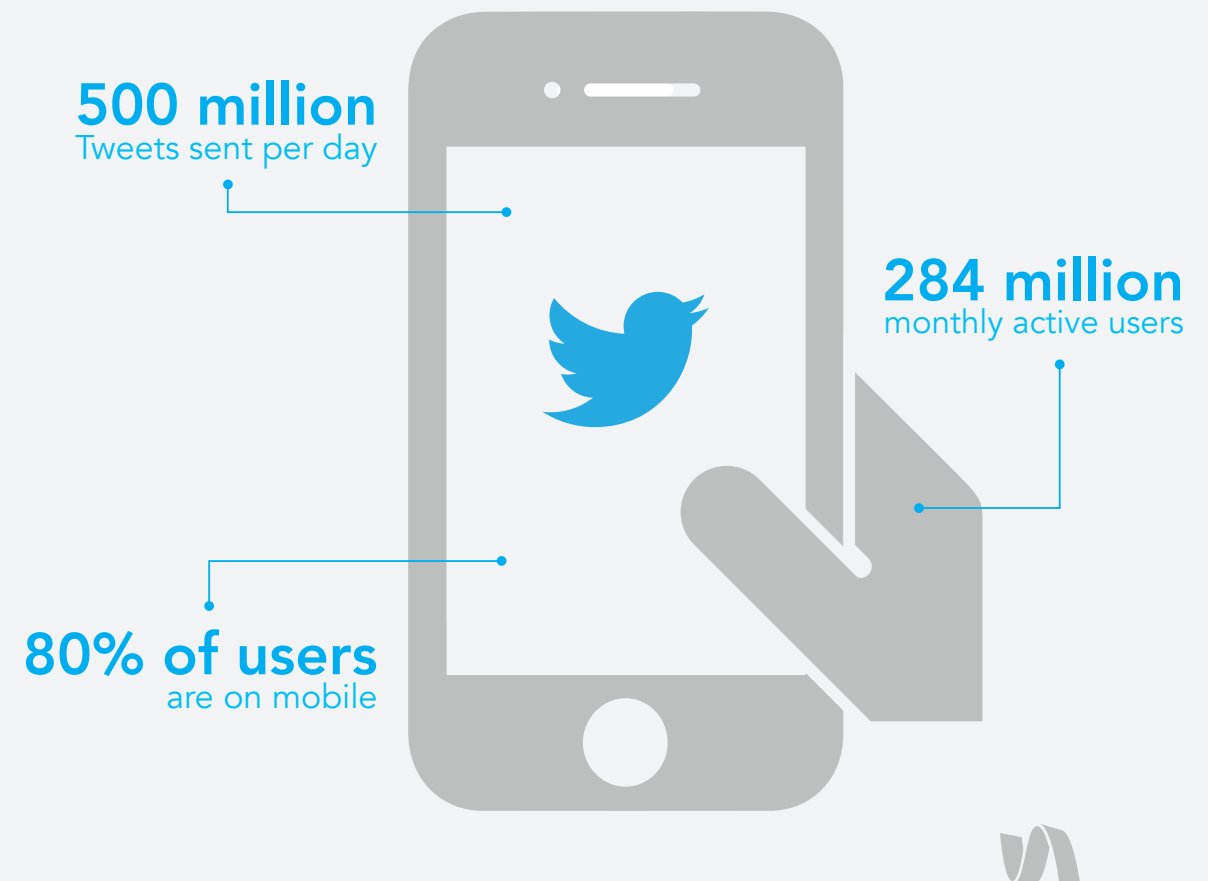
## Introduction

Twitter exited 2014 with 284 million monthly active users and 500 million Tweets sent per day—not bad for a company that’s been public for just over a year.

Twitter is a premiere social hub for news, entertainment, and conversation, 140-characters at a time. Recent video additions and brand acquisitions have made the company even more relevant and profitable.

Twitter’s success is largely due to mobile usage, and the global nature of its brand. Eighty percent (80%) of active Twitter users are on mobile, and 77% of accounts are outside the U.S.

In this study, we’ll analyze the top brands in the world and see how they use Twitter to build awareness and interact with consumers. We’ll identify the tactics that these brands use, the results they’re seeing, and lessons to be learned.



# Methodology

This study looks at the Twitter activity of the Interbrand 2014 Best 100 Global Brands.

At the end of each year, Interbrand ranks the top 100 global brands based on several factors, including market, brand, competitor, and financial data. In 2014, Interbrand included Twitter data as part of their ranking process for the first time.

The Interbrand 100 is an industry standard, and a standard for our Simply Measured network studies. We analyze this list because these companies are the best in the world at building and maintaining a brand, which is a prerequisite to a successful social media strategy.

Statistics cited in this study are based on data from Q4 2014 (10/1/14 - 12/31/14).

All data was analyzed using Simply Measured’s industry-leading social media analytics and reporting solution.

THIS STUDY ENCOMPASSES:



145,828 Tweets by 98 brands



117,324,590 followers



23,729,301 Retweets, @replies, mentions, and favorites



65,049 links



58,997 hashtags

CONTENT CREATION

Brands Are Creating More Effective Content

While top brands on Twitter didn’t increase posting frequency or audience size dramatically year-over-year in Q4, per-post engagement rose greatly. This suggests that brands are creating better, more engaging content to connect with current audiences.

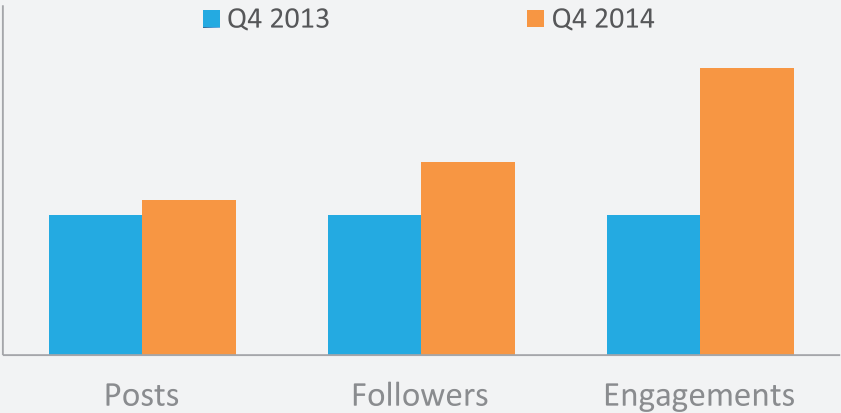
Key Findings

- Top companies have increased brand posting by 11% year-over-year
- On average, Interbrand 100 brands grew their audience size by 38% year-over-year
- Per-post engagement has risen by 85% year-over-year

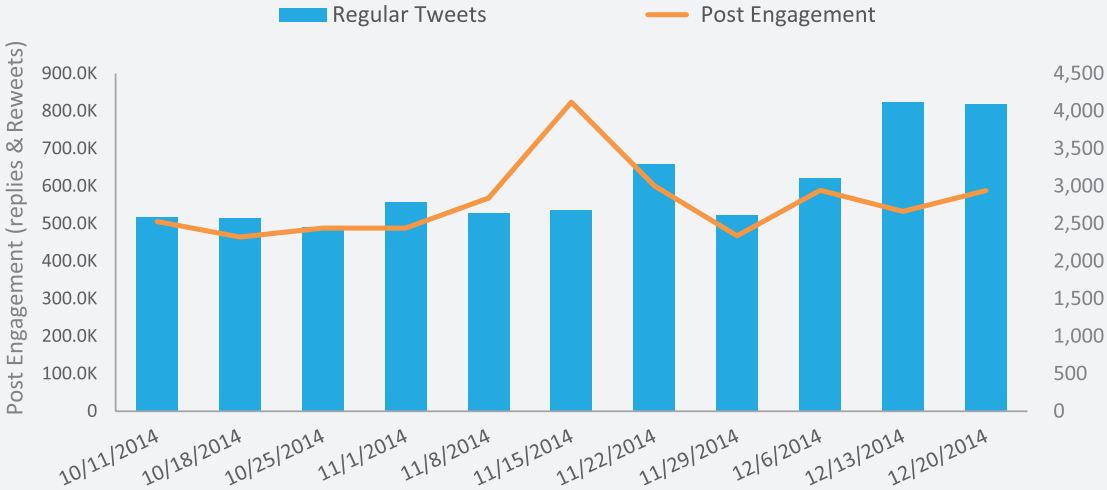
Takeaway

Brands have been active on Twitter for longer than many other social networks, and are really starting to hit the mark with the content they offer up to their followers.

Indexed Metric Growth Q4 2013 to Q4 2014



Trended Brand Activity & Engagement with Tweets



ACTIVITY: POSTING FREQUENCY

Brand Activity Is Strong and Increasing

Brands active on the network are posting typically multiple times a day. The number of active brands is increasing modestly.

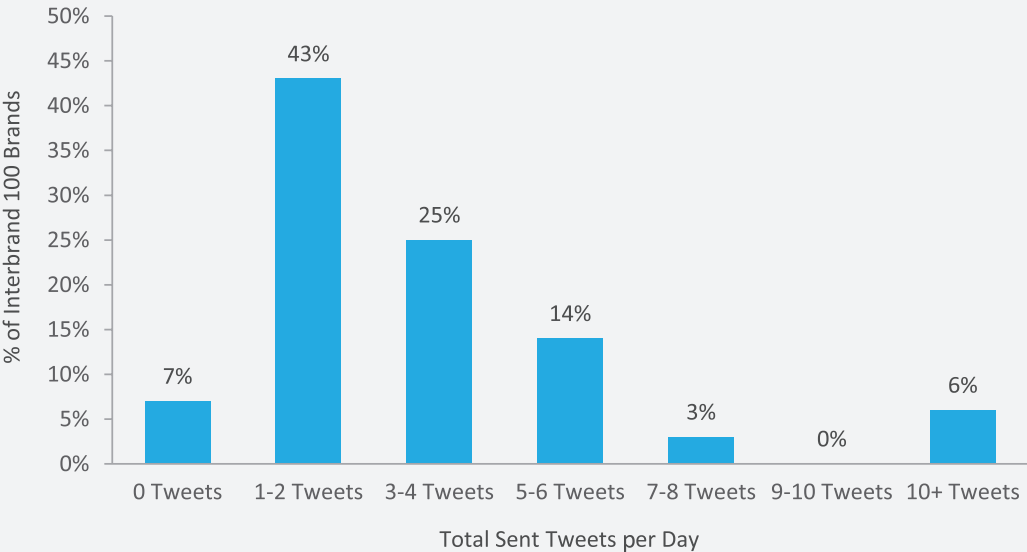
Key Findings

- The percentage of brands that Tweet at least once a day has increased from 92% to 95% since Q4 2013
- 82% of brands tweet 1-6 times per day, excluding @replies and Retweets
- Only 6% of brands tweeted 10+ times per day, excluding @replies and Retweets. This is even with Q4 2013

Takeaway

An increasing daily posting cadence among brands highlights a more serious approach to Twitter. Only 7% of brands tweet less than once a day. Brands are, however, simultaneously wary of oversaturation, and the number of companies tweeting more than six times per day is also low, with a 9% total. Eighty-two percent (82%) of brands live in the “sweet spot” when it comes to posting frequency, between 1-6 Tweets per day.

Daily Tweet Frequency of Top Brands (No RTs or @replies)



ACTIVITY: TWEET HABITS

Brands Interact with Users More

The breakdown of Tweet types has changed in the last year as brands invest more in direct interaction with users.

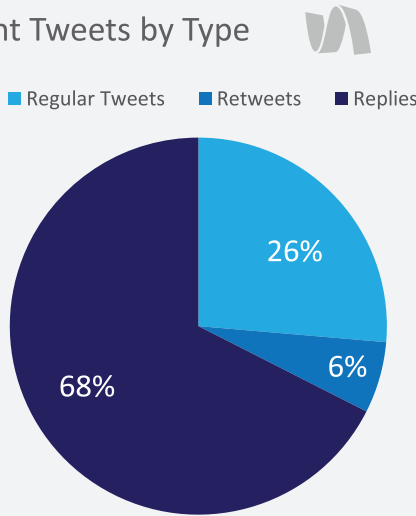
Key Findings

- The Interbrand 100 posted 145,828 Tweets in Q4 2014, up 25% over Q4 2013
- @Replies accounted for 68% of brand Tweets
- 48% of brands replied to at least one Tweet per day
- 91% of brands replied to users at least once during Q4 2014

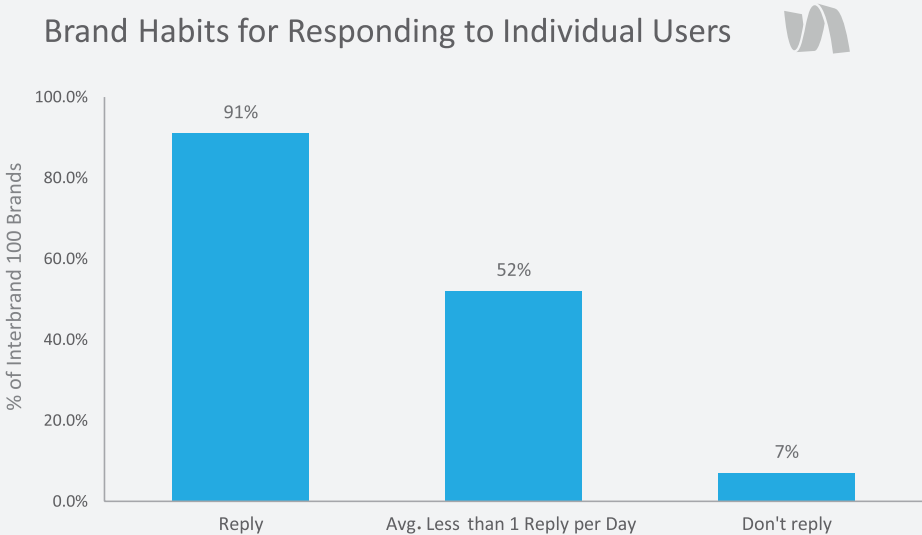
Takeaway

Brands are tweeting more, and a greater percentage of these Tweets are coming in the form of @replies to individual users. This shows a growing focus by brands to engage and interact with their Twitter audiences.

Sent Tweets by Type



Brand Habits for Responding to Individual Users



CONTENT TYPES AND ENGAGEMENT

Photos Drive the Most Engagement

Photos were the most common type of Tweet, up 10% from Q3 2014, and caused the highest share of engagement.

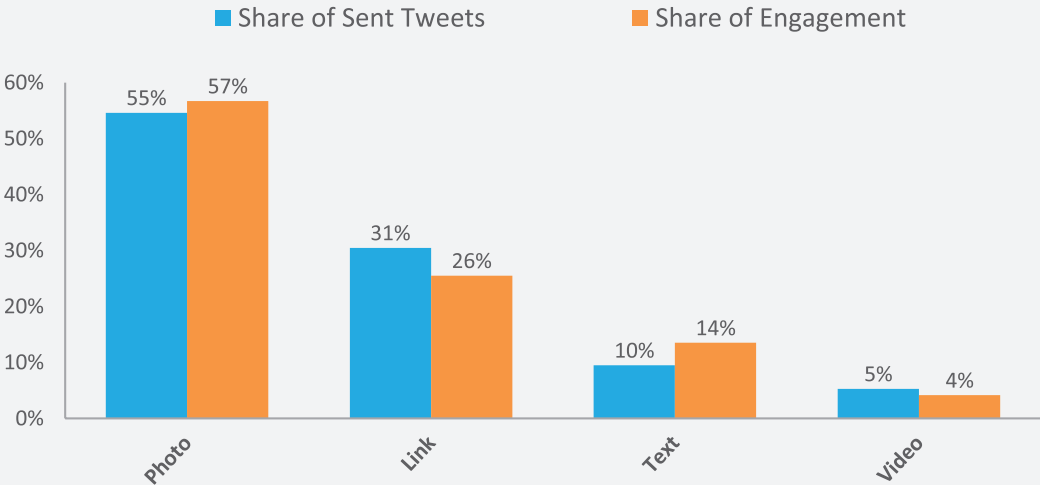
Key Findings

- Photos made up 55% of sent Tweets, but accounted for 57% of all engagement
- Links accounted for 31% of sent Tweets, but were only responsible for 26% of @replies, Retweets, and Favorites from brands

Takeaway

People are more likely to interact with visual content than standalone links on Twitter. Top brands are capitalizing on this. While links underperform in sparking @replies and Retweets, it's important to note that this statistic doesn't factor in clicks.

Share of Twitter Activity and Engagement by Tweet Type





TOP LINK TYPES AND ENGAGEMENT

Brands See Success with Visual Content

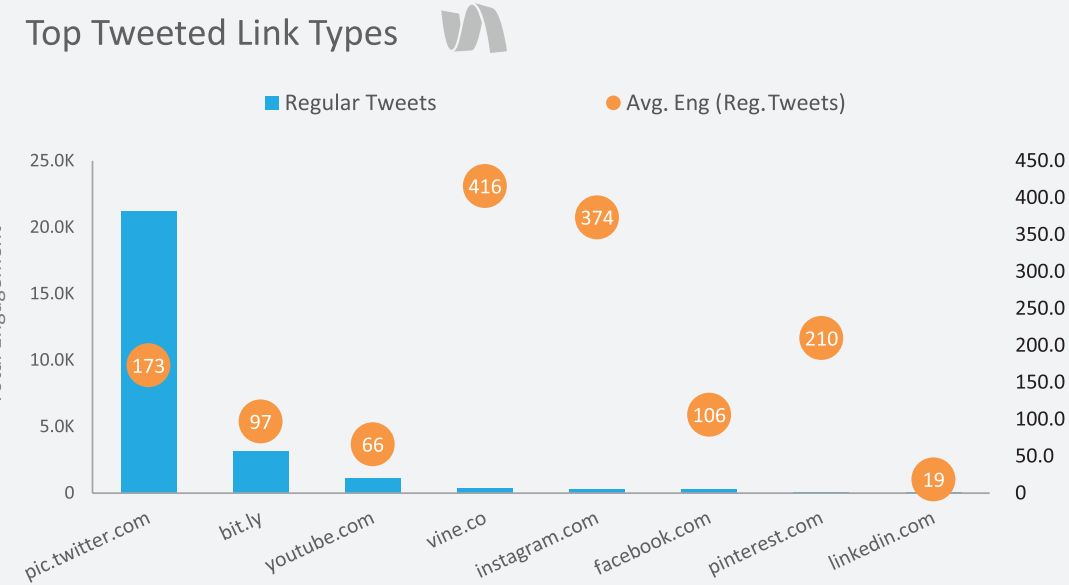
Native photos and videos (links that Twitter auto-embeds in Tweets) accounted for the majority of links posted by brands, and saw some of the highest engagement, with Vine.co links and Instagram links coming in second and third, respectively.

Key Findings

- 82,127 links were tweeted in Q4 2014, up 72% from Q4 2013
- Pic.twitter.com links were the most popular, accounting for 21,182 Tweets and 17% of all links. This percentage was up from 10% in Q4 2013
- Vine.co links saw the highest engagement per Tweet, with 416 @replies, Retweets, and favorites per Tweet, but accounted for less than 1% of the sent links
- Instagram links accounted for 465 brand posts, and saw the second highest engagement at 374 @replies, Retweets, and favorites per Tweet

Takeaway

Visual content is a successful way to occupy more real estate without increasing post volume. Brands have recognized this, which is why the three most engaging link types are visual mediums. Bit.ly links are the second most used link type on the network, and while engagement is lower than other link types, it should be noted that this calculation doesn't include click volume.





HASHTAGS

# Using Hashtags Drives Engagement

Top brands saw success by including hashtags in Tweets.

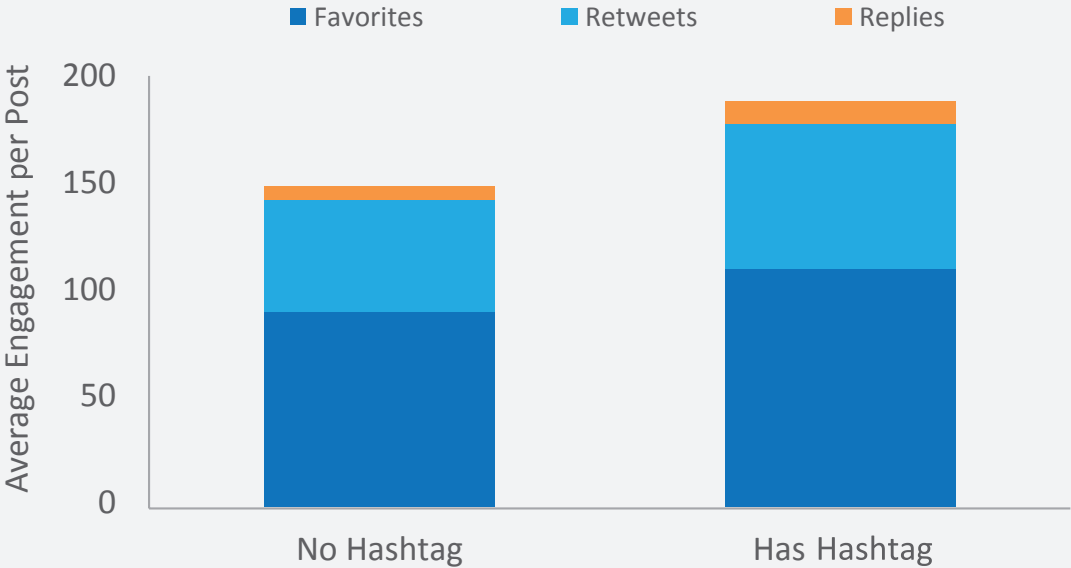
## Key Findings

- 82,127 Tweets included hashtags in Q4 2014. This was up 58% from Q4 2013, when only 52,741 Tweets included hashtags
- 30% of Tweets have one or more hashtags, down from 34% in Q4 2013
- Tweets with hashtags averaged 184 @replies and Retweets each, while Tweets with no hashtag only averaged 146 total per Tweet

## Takeaway

The number of top brands using hashtags more than doubled in the past year, showing that these brands are becoming more educated and sophisticated in how they put together Twitter content.

Impact of Hashtag Use on Engagement



INDUSTRY

# Media Brands Drive Engagement on Twitter

While automotive is the most represented sector on Twitter, with 14 brands actively using Twitter, the four media brands represented drove the most engagement of any industry.

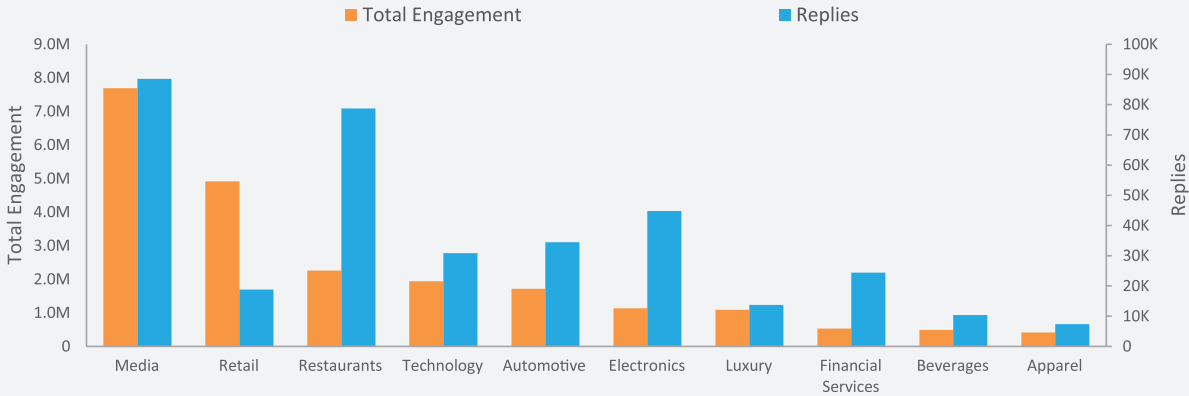
## Key Findings

- Media brands accounted for 7,690,937 engagements during Q4 2014. This was 56% more than the engagement driven by the next most active sector, retail
- Restaurant brands engaged on a 1-to-1 basis more than any other industry. The four brands in that category sent 49,421 @replies during Q4 2014. This was more than five times as many @replies as any other industry sent during the quarter. Pizza Hut led the pack with 28,687 @replies

## Takeaway

Media companies like MTV and Disney drove massive engagement on Twitter with large followings and well-targeted content in Q4 2014, while the four Interbrand 100 restaurant companies Pizza Hut, Starbucks, McDonalds, and KFC put forth a successful, focused effort on one-to-one communication with followers.

Top 10 Industries by Engagement

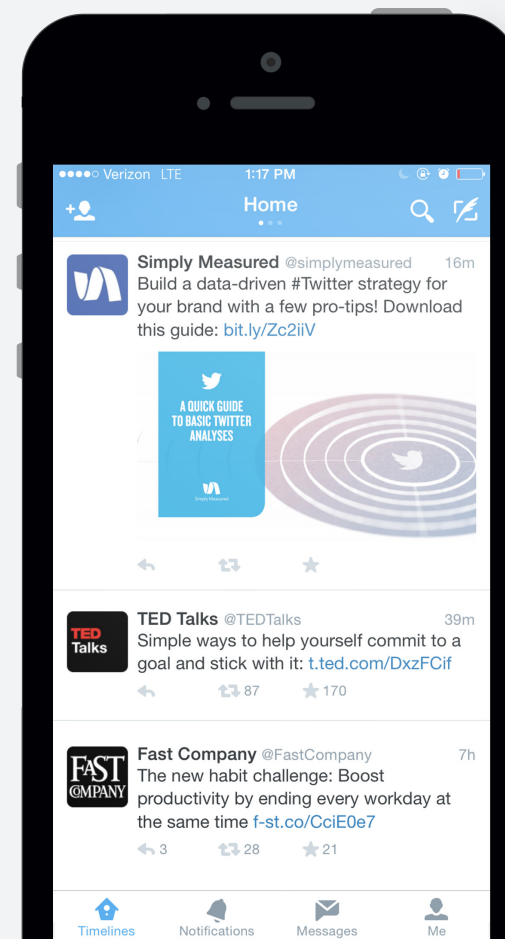


## Conclusion

Brand marketers on Twitter are creating more effective content and engaging with their audience on the network at ever-higher levels. Several tactics have contributed to brand success:

- Regular tweeting is key to brand success. 74% of brands tweeted at least three times per day
- Tweeting out links is becoming the social standard. The number of links tweeted by brands increased 72% from Q4 2013 to Q4 2014
- Brands are interacting more with individual users, especially in the restaurant industry. @Replies made up 68% of all brand Tweets
- The opportunity to connect with consumers is ripe on Twitter. Engagement with brand Tweets was up 105% since Q4 2013
- Visual content works. Photos inspired 57% of all engagement with brand Tweets—a 6% increase from just the previous quarter
- Tweets with hashtags drive more engagement than Tweets without them, but overuse causes followers to disengage

Growing an engaged audience on Twitter requires serious work, patience, and vigilance to trends, but the more time and resources companies devote to the network, the more benefit they see. The stellar engagement growth that successful Interbrand companies have experienced as they progress speaks to the importance of a dedicated presence on the network.



# Twitter Benchmarks - Interbrand 100 Top Global Companies



OVERVIEW	TOTAL FOR STUDY	AVERAGE PER BRAND	AVERAGE PER BRAND PER DAY
TOTAL ENGAGEMENT	6,449,613	65,812	715
FOLLOWERS	117,324,590	1,197,190	-
POTENTIAL IMPRESSIONS	73,817,666,672	753,241,497	8,187,408
BRAND TWEETS	38,441	392	4.3

ENGAGEMENT WITH BRAND TWEETS	TOTAL FOR STUDY	AVERAGE PER BRAND	AVERAGE PER BRAND TWEET
TOTAL ENGAGEMENT	6,449,613	65,812	167.8
RETWEETS	2,296,208	23,431	59.7
REPLIES	327,477	3,342	8.5
FAVORITES	3,825,928	39,040	99.5
AVG. ENGAGEMENT / BRAND TWEET	167.8	167.8	167.8
MENTIONS	16,145,258	164,748	-

AUDIENCE	TOTAL FOR STUDY	AVERAGE PER BRAND
TOTAL FOLLOWERS	117,324,590	1,197,190
NEW FOLLOWERS	8,565,294	87,401
AUDIENCE GROWTH PER DAY	93,101	950