

Practical Success

Cordell M. Parvin

How Would I Use Twitter?



What is Twitter? According to Wikipedia, “Twitter is an online social networking service and microblogging service that enables its users to send and read text-based messages of up to 140 characters, known as ‘tweets.’” When I talk about Twitter, “experienced” lawyers ask me if, were I still practicing law, would I use Twitter, and, if so, how would I use it?

When I was first asked that question a few years ago, I wasn’t sure I would be using Twitter if I were still practicing law. None of the CEOs or General Counsels’ of my largest clients were on Twitter. Now, several years later, they are still not on Twitter. Even though my clients’ CEOs and GCs are not on Twitter, I know I actually would use Twitter and here are the ways I would use it.

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1. Establish goals. I would begin by identifying my goals using Twitter. Essentially, my first goal would be to demonstrate I am the “go-to

lawyer” for transportation construction companies. My second goal would be to demonstrate my knowledge and expertise of both construction law and the construction industry. My third goal would be to keep up with the news and connect and engage with industry professionals. With those goals in mind, I would sign up for Twitter and begin.

2. Create a detailed profile. After signing up for Twitter, my next step would be to create my Twitter profile. I would make sure to create a well-done profile that includes my photo, and I would use my real name.

3. To get news. Once I have a profile, I would want to figure out who to follow on Twitter. I would begin by following the national news outlets. The day of the Boston Marathon bombing I was on an airplane with Internet service headed for Vancouver, BC. That day I got minute-by-minute reports on Twitter. There are many news outlets to follow on Twitter. I follow Reuters, Wall Street Journal, USA Today, CNN, Fox News, New York Times. I check for news when I have the time during the day.

Cordell M. Parvin built a national construction practice during his 35 years of practicing law. In 2005, Mr. Parvin left the firm and started Cordell Parvin LLC. He now works with lawyers and law firms on career development, planning, and client development. You can subscribe to his Blog at <http://www.cordellblog.com/>, connect with him on LinkedIn at <http://www.linkedin.com/in/cordellparvin>, join his Facebook Fan Page at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Cordell-Parvin-Lawyer-Coaching/222291473905?ref=ts>, and follow him on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/cordellparvin>.

4. **To keep up with industry news.** Once I started to follow news outlets, I would then start following construction industry news outlets. There are many construction industry and construction associations on Twitter. I would follow the ones most relevant to my clients. When they posted something I believed would be valuable for my construction industry clients, I would send the link in an email.
5. **To keep up with my clients and my clients' competitors.** I am still using Twitter to learn and listen to what is going on. After following construction industry news, I would start following specific contractors. Some of my former clients have Twitter pages and some of their competitors have Twitter pages. I would want to know what clients and competitors are saying about themselves on Twitter. I would also want to know what others on Twitter are saying about my clients and their competitors. I can do that with the search tool on Tweetdeck.
6. **To share construction industry news.** I would want to share what I learn with construction industry professionals. As described above, I would find that news on Twitter itself, but I would also find news from my Google alerts, my reader, Flipboard, and Zite.
7. **To get blog and article ideas.** I would use Twitter as one of the tools to find blog and article topics. I also would use Flipboard and Zite to find topics.
8. **To share my construction magazine column, blog posts, and presentations.** My *Roads and Bridges* columns are now available electronically so I can link to them on Twitter. I would likely have a transportation construction law blog that I would share on Twitter and I would share links for my presentations that I would have uploaded to Slideshare.net.
9. **To announce presentations and webinars.** If I was speaking to a construction association or if I were giving a webinar, I would use Twitter to announce or let people know about the presentation or webinar.
10. **To connect with people when I travel.** When I practiced law, I traveled frequently. When traveling I could let people know I would be visiting their city and would like to connect with them while there.
11. **To connect with and teach/mentor young lawyers.** I have met many lawyers on Twitter before I ever met them in person. Some of those lawyers have been construction lawyers. I would share ideas with them and answer their questions.
12. **To create and build new relationships.** I would use Twitter to allow people to get to know me. I would not just have business tweets. I would share appropriate things about my interests outside of construction law, and I would follow people outside of the construction industry.
13. **To research people before I meet them.** Twitter is one tool I would use to research construction industry professionals before meeting them in person.
14. **To send direct messages.** I was surprised at first when I started receiving direct messages from Twitter users who also had my email. It seems Twitter direct messages are somewhat like text messages. I receive and send direct messages now.
15. **To communicate throughout the day.** I would want to spread tweets throughout the day. I have learned that more of my followers are on Twitter in the afternoon than in the morning. I do not have to actually be on Twitter during these times. I can use Tweetdeck, Hootsuite, or Buffer to time my tweets.
If you would like to learn more about how you can use Twitter, take a look at: *How to Get More Twitter Followers (The Ultimate Twitter Tips Guide)*.