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Twitter conversations lead to new business

By Eva Abreu

I was explaining about Twitter to a colleague in the audio-visual business and he asked, "So would I tweet that I'm standing here with Eva, wrapping cables? Why would anyone care about that?"

As it turns out, people do care. They look for reasons to connect, and Twitter messages are packed with information to help start conversations and even new business deals.

Twitter is a free social networking platform that asks, "What's happening?" Tweets are short, 140-character message replies, sent via Internet or mobile-phone texting and posted on your user profile. You can choose to "follow" (i.e. subscribe to) other Twitter users so you can receive their tweets in real-time. Twitter users send tweets to each another by referencing a user name, which always begins with the @ symbol (e.g. @Eva_Abreu or @mycentraljersey).

I recently posted a query asking my "followers" for Twitter business success stories for this column. I exchanged tweets with those who responded and followed up with DMs (direct messages, a private messaging service through Twitter), email and phone.

Leora Wenger (@leoraw), a Highland Park-based freelance web designer, met Kacy Campion Renna (@NJInsuranceGirl), owner of CCW Insurance Company, Belmar, on Twitter through another user, Deborah Smith (@jerseybites), a Social Media consultant in Ocean County. After about four months of exchanging informal tweets, Kacy needed emergency help with her website. They connected by phone, and Leora solved the initial problem, which then led to their business relationship.

Amy Boroff (@njdevmgr), development manger for Junior Achievement of NJ in Princeton, discovered one of her new Twitter followers was Kate Specchio (@ecsfoundation), co-founder of Morris County-based The Emily C. Specchio Foundation. Through their tweets, Amy recognized the potential for working together. They continued to communicate on Twitter in real-time, after working hours, to learn more about each respective organization. After several weeks, JANJ submitted a proposal to ECS for funding for an inaugural event: the Women's Future Leadership Forum. The ECS Foundation accepted the proposal and granted funds to help support aspiring female high school students become future leaders.

Additional Twitter interviews will be featured in my Feb. 10 column.
