

# Tweeting from the top

Australian business leaders paving the way on social



**Featuring insights from Twitter** 

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Many of Australia's business leaders still grapple with the question: should I be active on social media? Whether it be failing to understand the commercial benefits of the medium, a reluctance to be seen as self-promoting, or fear of the risks involved – there are barriers to overcome.

The communications landscape for businesses and corporate leaders has dramatically changed. The speed, reach and inter-dependence of social and traditional media has led to an increase in the importance of clear, concise and direct interactions between stakeholders and corporate leaders.

The World Economic Forum lists 'hyper-connectivity' as one of the key risks facing corporations¹. However, with our reliance on a networked economy, and the speed at which information now flows, there is in fact more risk from *not* being involved in social media than being involved.

Business leaders need to lead the way with a social presence, acting as ambassadors for the brand they represent. This KPMG Australia report, Tweeting from the top:

Australian business leaders paving the way on social, identifies the top 20 Australian business leaders who have demonstrated consistent leadership in using social media. It focuses on their use of Twitter, however we could have profiled their use of LinkedIn, Instagram or Facebook.

This list demonstrates how corporate and business leaders are using Twitter to support the aims and purpose of their organisations. These exemplars of good practice help to dispel the myth that the commercial benefits of leaders using social media are still unclear.

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### How to lead the way - tips from Twitter

### Four ways executives can effectively leverage Twitter



### Share your voice

You are the first and last voice of your business. Allow people to hear it.



### **Humanise**

Give the public insight into the person behind the position. Share passions and hobbies.



### Add your perspective

Add your point of view to a conversation about your company or industry. People care about what leaders and decision makers think.



### **Shoutout**

Don't underestimate the power of a public shoutout to an employee, business, partner or client.

### Get your bio right



Describe what you do and your values define your mission

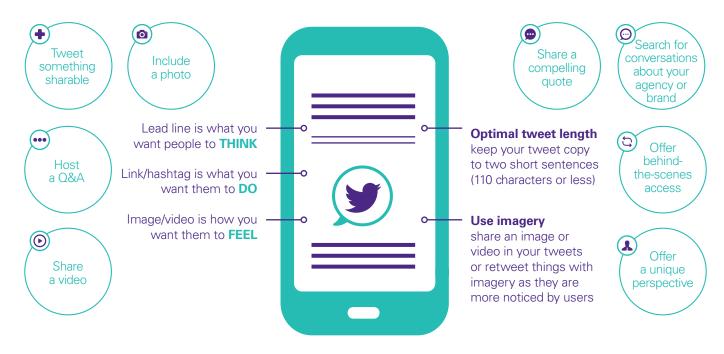


**Tell your followers** what to expect from following you



**Explain your product** or service

### **Anatomy of tweets**



### Build your network: who to follow



Media that interest you



**Employees** and colleagues



Customers



Industry leaders, partners and peers



Investors and analysts





Entrepreneurs



Journalists in your field



Relevant thought leaders



Friends and family



Organisations

### Create a content calendar



What are you reading?



Behind the scenes – a glimpse of everyday life



Inspiration and motivation



News from your company or industry (from you or retweet)



Connect with your customers



What are your weekend plans?



What's ahead for the week?

### **DOs and DON'Ts**

### DOs:

- Interact and share as well as broadcast
- Be authentic in your tone
- Consider whether you're happy with the tweet ending up on a front page
- Onnect with key stakeholders

### DON'Ts:

- Continually share your press releases
- 8 Ignore legitimate customer or stakeholder issues
- Confuse the private versus public nature of the medium
- Seel the need to be on the platform every day

### The medium is the message



### Twitter is...



Live: Twitter is in the moment



**Conversational:** Twitter is the global town square



**Public:** Twitter is open



Distributed: Twitter can live anywhere Whatever your level of familiarity is with Twitter, it is likely you have experienced the impact of it in some form. Exposure could vary from reading a 'tweet' embedded in a traditional media story, or a local community event could have been organised and promoted through Twitter.

Twitter drives outcomes in the both the digital and physical world, often by setting off a chain of events resulting in action. These actions could be setting the agenda of a discussion, connecting people, influencing perception, breaking news, or more.

It's when you explore the relationship between Twitter and events in our world that you begin to unearth the real implications of the communications platform and its influence on multiple aspects of society, including business.

A key impediment that social media has faced on its journey towards acceptance across the business community is the fact it was called 'social media'. It is a misnomer, conjuring up images of a light-hearted digital world full of cat memes. While humour is a part of the digital environment, the discussion and uses of social media platforms are vast.

For business leaders, the benefits of social media continue to increase.

## About KPMG's report: Tweeting from the top

### 侶侶

Most people who criticise Twitter are often not on it. I love this place. Best source of info. Great way to stay tuned and communicate.

Alex Stubbs – Finnish Minister for Finance @AlexStubbs

Three social networks – Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn – are all in the top 20 most visited websites by Australians per month<sup>2</sup>. This reflects the pervasiveness of social media across all demographics.

In the professional sphere, the number of social media platforms available to corporate leaders continues to increase. These include, but are not limited to, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and Snapchat, depending on the intended audience and use.

In 2016, connecting via LinkedIn is as common as an exchange of business cards, with LinkedIn's Influencer Program demonstrating the ability of the professional platform to increase the reach and communications of leaders.

For the purpose of this report, we chose to identify 'best practice' by corporate leaders on Twitter because of its very public and dynamic nature. The 140 character limit on Twitter, its playful name and the bird logo mask the true impact that this communications platform commands. The top 20 have demonstrated the platform's ability to amplify their messages and create meaningful connections between organisations and individuals.

We also witnessed a number of 'only-on-Twitter moments' which are increasing as more respected leaders and influencers use it.



The list raises questions about what role social media will play in the evolution of corporate leaders and their public presence. Twitter has given a 'mega-phone' to business leaders, a platform that previously did not exist for them to express their point of view. Conversely, it has also placed the leaders at the coal face of customer discussions, giving a completely unvarnished (and in some instances painful) direct perspective on how their organisation is faring in the eyes of the customer.

The report highlights some of the real benefits that these Australian corporate leaders and their businesses are reaping from the effective use of social media.

### **Twitter in numbers**



of Twitter users are mobile



of video views on Twitter are mobile





of executives use Twitter daily<sup>3</sup>

### **Age of Twitter users**









### Methodology

The inaugural KPMG Australia *Tweeting from the top* report is based on a review of quantitative and qualitative data from the Twitter accounts of Australian corporate leaders between 1 January 2016 and 10 May 2016.

### In order to qualify for the list:



The person must 'selfnominate' as a CEO, an MD or a Chairperson – politicians were not considered



The person must be either an Australian-based user or at an Australian-headquartered company, business, national division, leading advocacy group or peak body



The account must be solely for an individual



Have at least 2,500 followers



Generate eight engagements (likes/shares) per post



Have posted at least 10 new tweets in 2016



The account must be relevant to their business (i.e. not purely personal in nature)

From this basis, we examined publicly available qualitative and quantitative activities of Australian corporate leaders' Twitter accounts across criteria including:



Does it drive important and valuable conversations?



Does it demonstrate thought leadership (both individual and corporate)?



Does it show community leadership?



Does it engage in stakeholder management?



Does it position the organisation as an entity someone would want to work for?



Is the user conversational and do they respond directly to others' tweets?

### KPMG's top 20 Twitter power list

Our research identified the 20 'top' Australian business leaders on Twitter, as well as a number of 'honourable mentions' for accounts that displayed leading qualities but did not score enough across our criteria to make the top 20. Each are using a multitude of Twitter styles and frequency of tweets to achieve success.

	PERSON	TWITTER HANDLE	POSITION	COMPANY
1	Andy Penn	@andy_penn	CEO	Telstra
2	Jason Killens	<u>@jasonkillens</u>	CEO	SA Ambulance
3	Holly Ransom	<u>@hollyransom</u>	CEO	Emergent
4	Kon Karapanagiotidis	<u>@kon_k</u>	CEO	Asylum Seeker Resource Centre
5	Mark Woodland	@markawoodland	CEO	Myxplor
6	Brendon Gale	@brendongale25	CEO	Richmond Football Club (AFL)
7	Frank Quinlan	<u>@frankgquinlan</u>	CEO	Mental Health Australia
8	Pip Marlow	<u>@pipms</u>	MD	Microsoft Australia
9	Michael Ebeid	@michaelebeid	MD	SBS
10	Andrew Fagan	<u>@fages1</u>	CEO	Adelaide Football Club (ALF)
11	Todd Greenberg	@todd_greenberg	CEO	NRL
12	Michael Carr-Gregg	<u>@mcg58</u>	MD	The Young and Well Cooperative Research Centre
13	Mark Bouris	@markbouris	Chair	Yellow Brick Road
14	Tony Pignata	<u>@tpignata9</u>	CEO	Sydney Football Club (A-League)
15	Martin Dougiamas	<u>@moodler</u>	CEO	Moodle
16	Deidre Willmott	@cci_ceo	CEO	Chamber of Commerce & Industry WA
17	Tim Costello	<u>@timcostello</u>	CEO	World Vision Australia
18	Cassandra Goldie	@cassandragoldie	CEO	ACOSS
19	Jan Owen	@JanOwenAM	CEO	Foundation for Young Australians
20	Julian Plummer	@julian plummer	MD	Midwinter



### Andy Penn

CEO -Telstra

### 37,961 FOLLOWERS

### WHY DOES ANDY MAKETHE LIST?

Andy Penn has continued the legacy of his predecessor David Thodey by embracing and leveraging Twitter. Andy has used Twitter to clarify and promote important public affairs statements, as well as to manage and effectively respond to operational difficulties. He also uses Twitter to publicise Telstra's positive contributions in the community.



### **Holly Ransom**

CEO - Emergent

### 91,574 FOLLOWERS

### WHY DOES HOLLY MAKETHE LIST?

As a rising corporate leader, Holly Ransom's Twitter account has been a key driver of her public profile. Holly uses the platform to position herself as an innovative thinker who challenges norms in business and society. She also uses Twitter to set the agenda for public debate on the topic of gender diversity across society.



### Mark Woodland

CEO - Myxplor

### 167,741 FOLLOWERS

### WHY DOES MARK MAKETHE LIST?

With a sizeable following and engagement rate, Mark Woodland effectively uses Twitter to promote and manage key business relationships for Myxplor, a childcare software provider. Mark gives strong insight into the product development process and day-to-day happenings at Myxplor, generating positive exposure and brand reach. A great example of social media providing marketing and growth opportunities for businesses of all sizes.



### Jason Killens

CEO - SA Ambulance Service

### 3,003 FOLLOWERS

### WHY DOES JASON MAKETHE LIST?

Jason Killens uses Twitter to spread important messages about public health and to highlight the role of the ambulance service within the health system. Killens' tone is insightful and inclusive. He regularly discusses global emergency health technology developments and uses Twitter to acknowledge the efforts and talents of staff at the SA Ambulance Service.



### Kon Karapanagiotidis

CEO - Asylum Seeker Resource Centre

### 25,424 FOLLOWERS

### WHY DOES KON MAKETHE LIST?

As an advocate for Asylum seekers, and leader of the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre, Kon is a regular user of Twitter and has cultivated a large online community. Kon encourages political engagement and is a key influencer in the national discussion on asylum seekers and other social issues – due in no small part to his activities and reach through Twitter.



### Brendan Gale

CEO - Richmond Football Club

### 6,142 FOLLOWERS

### WHY DOES BRENDAN MAKETHE LIST?

Brendan Gale is a leading user of Twitter from the sports administration sector. A former AFL player with Richmond, Brendan regularly pushes the envelope in terms of raising and commenting on key issues in the game. He also provides fans and stakeholders with direct input from the club's CEO. As his bio succinctly says, "My Twitter, my views".



### Frank Quinlan

CEO - Mental Health Australia

### 2.975 FOLLOWERS

### WHY DOES FRANK MAKETHE LIST?

Frank Quinlan is a key digital influencer in the mental health space. His tweets often promote important discussions about mental health and seek to help reduce the stigma around the issue. Frank often tweets about industry publications and events and regularly engages with other Twitter users to drive and discuss important conversations about mental health.



### Michael Ebeid

Managing Director - SBS

### 9.565 FOLLOWERS

### WHY DOES MICHAEL MAKETHE LIST?

Michael Ebeid uses his account to promote SBS programs and talent, and provide an insight into his role. His re-tweets deliver value to his followers by sharing information and articles - a great balance of authenticity and promotion of SBS.



### **Todd Greenberg**

CEO - National Rugby League

### 17,743 FOLLOWERS

### WHY DOESTODD MAKETHE LIST?

Todd Greenberg has cleverly used Twitter to manage key NRL stakeholder relationships and speak directly to the media. Todd has been active in promoting the new video referee 'bunker'; a key change to the game. Importantly, he often responds directly to questions from fans of his football code.



### **Mark Bouris**

Chairperson - Yellow Brick Road

### 27.782 FOLLOWERS

### WHY DOES MARK MAKETHE LIST?

Brief and to the point, Mark Bouris is an occasional but highly effective user of Twitter. Mark posts industry information and insight, making his account a great source of financial information. He also directly addresses questions and comments from customers and fans. His content is on-message and relevant, contributing to the Yellow Brick Road brand.



### 8 Pip Marlow

Managing Director - Microsoft Australia

### 17,985 FOLLOWERS

### WHY DOES PIP MAKETHE LIST?

Pip Marlow's Twitter account is a reflection of the multiple roles and organisations she is involved in, from Rugby Union to Microsoft. With a particular focus on women in the workplace, her Twitter account helps to elevate discussions about gender equality and the importance it holds for corporate Australia.



### **Andrew Fagan**

CEO - Adelaide Football Club

### 6,653 FOLLOWERS

### WHY DOES ANDREW MAKETHE LIST?

The second former AFL player on this list, Andrew Fagan uses his Twitter account to manage key player and external relationships, as well as to promote Adelaide Football Club. Andrew supports ticket sales and promotes viewership of matches via match-focused content.



### 12 Michael Carr-Gregg

Managing Director - Young and Well Cooperative Research Centre

### 12,576 FOLLOWERS

### WHY DOES MICHAEL MAKETHE LIST?

As a leading public figure commenting on youth psychology, Michael Carr-Gregg extends his thoughtleadership on Twitter. Through his expert commentary and professional insight, Michael helps set an agenda for youth and mental health discussions, as well as promoting his research centre.



### Tony Pignata

CEO - Sydney Football Club

### 7,117 FOLLOWERS

### WHY DOES TONY MAKETHE LIST?

Tony Pignata has a very authentic presence on Twitter. His account features an open and frank assessment of football and his club, and he effectively engages his fans, players and industry peers. Tony regularly connects with people who are club supporters and raises the profile of Sydney FC and the sport through his interactions on Twitter.



### 16 Deidre Willmott

CEO - Chamber of Commerce and Industry WA

### 5,278 FOLLOWERS

### WHY DOES DEIDRE MAKETHE LIST?

Presenting a powerful voice for commerce and industry in Western Australia, Deidre Willmott operates a Twitter account that engages key stakeholders across Australia. Her account gives an insight into the daily life of a CEO of one of Australia's largest Chambers of Commerce.



### Cassandra Goldie

CEO - Australian Council of Social Service

### 3.538 FOLLOWERS

### WHY DOES CASSANDRA MAKETHE LIST?

Cassandra Goldie tweets as the CEO of peak body group ACOSS and is a key advocate in the debate around unemployment, particularly youth unemployment. She regularly retweets and shares ACOSS tweets and often tweets from events, driving industry discussions and promoting new perspectives about unemployment.



### **Julian Plummer**

MD - Midwinter

### 2,999 FOLLOWERS

### WHY DOES JULIAN MAKETHE LIST?

Julian Plummer uses Twitter to connect with customers, key stakeholders and fintech industry leaders. He provides insights into important and interesting financial news.



### 15 Martin Dougiamas

CFO - Moodle

### 8 884 FOLLOWERS

### WHY DOES MARTIN MAKETHE LIST?

As founder of open source education provider, Moodle, Martin Dougiamas uses Twitter to build the Moodle brand and profile the global reach of his product. Martin also regularly acknowledges the efforts of key stakeholders and people he meets via Twitter, completing the loop for real-world and online interactions.



### Tim Costello

CEO - World Vision Australia

### 191,355 FOLLOWERS

### WHY DOESTIM MAKETHE LIST?

Tim Costello uses his Twitter account to promote the works of World Vision Australia and intersperses his tweets with his personal perspective on a number of related and important matters. His tweets attract a large amount of engagement and demonstrate a passionate following.



### 19 Jan Owen

CEO - Foundation for Young Australians

### 12,070 FOLLOWERS

### WHY DOES JAN MAKETHE LIST?

Jan Owen uses Twitter to drive important discussions about Australian Youth issues. Using Twitter to regularly put forward and share perspectives on important legislation and policy that impacts young Australian's, she reaches a large and diverse group of stakeholders through her account.

### Breakdown of the top 20



### Who do the top 20 follow?

Twitter is first and foremost a social medium, so it is interesting to see who the Tweeting from the top list follows. Here are the most followed accounts amongst the top 20 leaders:

15 FOLLOWERS

12 FOLLOWERS

12 FOLLOWERS

12 FOLLOWERS

12 FOLLOWERS

11 FOLLOWERS

11 FOLLOWERS

10 FOLLOWERS

10 FOLLOWERS

10 FOLLOWERS

### Honourable mentions

Many other leaders display sophisticated use of Twitter, and deserve honourable mentions, but did not score enough across our criteria to make the top 20.

### **Michael Fullilove**

Executive Director - The Lowy Institute

### 12,046 FOLLOWERS

### WHY DOES MICHAEL MAKETHE LIST?

Michael Fullilove supports The Lowy Institute's reach, publications and advocacy through Twitter by regularly engaging in online foreign policy opinion and publicising important global studies.

### John McGrath CEO – McGrath

CEO – McGrath Estate Agents

### 9,658 FOLLOWERS

### WHY DOES JOHN MAKETHE LIST?

John McGrath uses Twitter to communicate important information about his company and the property landscape. He uses the platform to position himself as a leading property expert.

### Jon Sutton

CEO - Bank of Queensland

### 29,796 FOLLOWERS

### WHY DOES JON MAKETHE LIST?

Jon Sutton uses Twitter occasionally to help present a vision of BOQ that is innovative, progressive and personal. Jon uses the Twitter account to bring key aspects of the company to his broad follower base.

### **Ann Sherry**

CEO - Carnival Australia

### 14,720 FOLLOWERS

### WHY DOES ANN MAKETHE LIST?

Ann Sherry is an active CEO on Twitter leading discussions about women in the workplace, recognising companies and people that exemplify good practice. Ann uses Twitter to publicly profile Carnival's commitment to gender equality.

### Diane Smith-Gander

Chairman - Broadspectrum

### 2,197 FOLLOWERS

### WHY DOES DIANE MAKETHE LIST?

As president of Chief Executive Women, non-executive director of Wesfarmers Limited, Diane Smith-Gander has a busy and effective Twitter account. Whether it be connecting like-minded women or championing a variety of causes, her profile is a case study in Twitter advocacy.

### **Tim Reed**

CEO - MYOB

### 8,213 FOLLOWERS

### WHY DOES TIM MAKETHE LIST?

Focusing on industry-specific content, Tim Reed is an effective occasional Twitter user who uses the platform to support key business relationships. Tim's Twitter activity contributes to discussions about the small business national agenda, and reaffirms MYOB as being led by a progressive and critical thinking CEO.

### **Ahmed Fahour**

CEO – Australia Post

### 11,048 FOLLOWERS

### WHY DOES AHMED MAKETHE LIST?

Ahmed Fahour is an active user of Twitter, using the platform to advance Australia Post's innovation activities, and making meaningful and leading comments on various Australian public affairs.

### Nicholas Gray

CEO – The Australian

### 2.835 FOLLOWERS

### WHY DOES NICHOLAS MAKETHE LIST?

Nicholas Gray supports *The Australian* newspaper by introducing key content at relevant times and to relevant audiences, and recognising and supporting his reporters. Nicholas is also active in conversations about the key issues impacting the Australian media landscape.



### What can we learn from the Tweeting from the top list



When it comes to the effective use of Twitter by business leaders, the diverse approaches of the top 20 show there is no one-size-fits-all prescription.

For some, dealing with media issues was an obvious use and didn't require the user to be active on Twitter every day. Others infrequently use the platform but still have impact. This debunks the misconception that if you are going to use Twitter, you need to use it every day.

Consistent throughout the *Tweeting from* the top list was their ability to use Twitter to set the agenda for discussions and raise the profile of either their organisation or industry more broadly.

The days of Twitter being seen as a place for uneventful or meaningless discussions are over. The data demonstrated that the majority of discussions taking place across the Twitter accounts of the top 20 were incredibly complex and reflective of the variety of issues that were front of mind for these leaders and their businesses or sectors.



### Hallmarks of good use

The top 20 leaders used Twitter as an extension of their own personal brand, while also representing their company. Key points that distinguished these accounts included:

### Using the platform to address 'the elephant in the room'

Rarely did top 20 accounts communicate in a vacuum. When key issues were impacting their business, they were proactive in dealing with these using their Twitter presence, deferring their usual tweets to concentrate on the issue at hand. The best CEO Twitter users know that standard marketing lines are not sufficient. Their willingness to state their personal view in public, and put a human face to their organisation, sets their accounts apart.

### Making meaningful statements

Retweeting or sharing content does not provide enough value for followers. The best accounts went on record with a degree of insight and commentary that was often candid and always authentic.

### **Acknowledging staff**

The public forum of Twitter presented many leaders with an opportunity to openly acknowledge their staff and workforce at large.

### Responding

The traditional barriers that once existed between leaders of all types and the general public have slowly eroded through social media. The leaders that responded directly to people who had tweeted to them demonstrated the true ability of social media to connect customers with the business leader – on positive and negative issues.

### **Creating mutual connections**

Being mutual followers on Twitter is both a courteous gesture and allows for direct messaging and private conversations to take place.

### Two myths about Twitter use



### You don't need to bombard Twitter to do a good job

Many on the list would submit only a handful of new comments a week. There is no right or wrong answer about frequency of use. There is no requirement for corporate leaders to be prolific creators of content, nor be responding to tweets around the clock. Rather, considered authentic use is preferred.

### You don't need to always produce visually impressive content

While visual content is a general expectation for brands, this does not translate to corporate leaders' use. Sometimes, grainy images or video convey a sense of authenticity.

### Managing risk: insight from KPMG Social Media Intelligence Group

Authenticity is welcomed and rewarded in twitter posts, as evidenced by the top 20. Their accounts showed that a genuine voice correlated in higher follower numbers and higher engagement rates. This poses a quandary for corporate communications teams across Australia as they navigate a balance between appropriate authenticity and risk management for their leaders.

There remains a level of uncertainty or reluctance by some leaders to embrace social media as a means of communication, either in a professional capacity as an organisational leader, or for their organisation as a whole. Typically this uncertainty comes from examples and instances where people have caused a significant risk (often reputational) to their organisation by misusing social media (either on purpose or inadvertently).

However, the benefits and opportunities presented by social media far outweigh the risks. Indeed, there is an increasing risk of not participating in the social media

discussion. Whether it be creating a vacuum for competitors to fill, being unable to respond to issues with speed, or simply not hearing what customers and key stakeholders have to say, there are compelling reasons to have a social media presence.

Balancing appropriate risk management with empowering leaders to use social media requires a considered approach that incorporates policies, processes and platforms.

Policies: What changes need to be made to policies that govern social media use, changing it from a discussion about 'what cannot be done' to 'what can be done'?

Processes: Consider issues such as how content is published, what monitoring is in place, how is success measured? How does social media use support overarching communications goals and objectives?

Platforms: What does social media presence look like? What social media platforms will be used? Simple things like; how do we deal with angry customers or media enquiries?

The leading users of social media in business see the medium as a means to an end, as a tool that can support broader business objectives. But social media requires appropriate levels of investment and risk management, just as other investments. A support system to sit behind an executive's account can help mitigate the risks, and can include:

- general guidelines for content
- technology capability and support
- a framework to address regulatory, operational and reputation risks.

We often see a level of risk management for corporate social media that does not reflect the significant investment that has been put into developing the presence. Often, organisations dedicate a large amount of resources and investment to proactive social media activities with little or no thought towards risk management.

### Conclusion



The evolution of Twitter in Australia is a strong indication of how social media will continue to embed itself in various areas of society. As demonstrated by KPMG Australia's inaugural *Tweeting from the top* report, many Australian business leaders are using social media with great impact.

Australian corporate leaders operate in increasingly complex business environments, where every move is watched and the market is hungry for information. Twitter has given these leaders a direct channel through which they can interact with their customers and stakeholders, while also creating important networks for themselves and their organisations. The most impressive users of Twitter mix authenticity alongside activities that support and enhance their business.

As social platforms become increasingly ubiquitous in how people and organisations communicate, the commercial benefits will rise. For business leaders, the need to be present and aware of the opportunities and risks of social is no longer a 'nice to have', but a 'mission critical' part of their role.

Over the past decade, we have witnessed the explosive growth of mobile devices connected to the internet and in turn, social media sites. This has led to a more informed and connected society bringing with it significant opportunity and risk. The impact this connectivity has had on relationships between business. politics and important stakeholder groups, as well as the evolving dynamic of the financial markets and the use of social media data, demonstrates the value of corporate leaders not only having a strong awareness of social media but being present on one of the many platforms.

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The authors and KPMG Australia would like to thank Twitter Australia for their support in preparing this report.

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