

Some meetings employ a live twitter feed to help discussion along. But beware: it's an awkward bird to cage. ROB SPALDING eavesdrops on a MeCo (Meetings Community) website conversation

TO TWEET OR NOT TO TWEET

"I have just attended a session where the presenter gave an example of a live Twitter feed gone wrong -- a high-level executive was giving a speech while the live Twitter traffic displayed behind her was bashing her and saying how horrible she was."

Michelle J. Taunton, CMP
Independent Meeting Planner
Reston, VA

"Wow! That really makes me nervous about trying a live Twitter feed.

Right now we are onsite at a conference and are going to tweet highlights as it unfolds over the next two days."



Karen Close, CMP
Senior Events Manager
BNP Media

"That's a real concern. I wonder if the kinds of Tweets depend upon the kind of conference and/or audience. I have a feeling that a negative tweet might come from a virtual attendee and not a person in the room."



Pat Ahaesy, CMP, CSEP
P&V Enterprises

"There are tools you can use to decide what to show on the screen."

Jim Louis
Co-Founder of the
Meetings Community (MeCo)
Best Meetings Inc.



"I should be able to shed some light on this from a couple of angles. I was the host for MPI's MeetDifferent in Cancun and had to design the best way to integrate the Twitter feed into the general sessions. Since the sessions were broadcast live on the web, we needed to include the virtual audience during the Q & A.

"For the general session:

"I believe it is a bad idea to have a live Twitter feed on the screens. It's distracting for the audience and the speaker. Hence, no Twitter feed on screen for MD10. A member of MPI's content team was backstage, monitoring the Twitter feed. Then, she would post comments and questions from the feed that were relevant to the conversation I was having with the keynote speaker directly to the confidence monitors. I was able to acknowledge the virtual audience and respond to their questions in addition to those from the face-to-face attendees.

"For the hybrid meeting breakout:

"We still did not have a Twitter feed on screen. However, as the tech moderator, I monitored the feed and would chime in during the presentation with relevant comments or questions from our virtual and face-to-face audience (I had a microphone as well). Many in the F2F audience still used Twitter to comment and ask questions. I felt that Twitter

enabled attendees to ask more questions because they didn't need to speak into the microphone to ask them.

"A couple of notes:

"If the session is being broadcast live over the web, you will definitely want to have someone moderating the Twitter feed and sending pertinent comments and questions to the speaker via the confidence monitors. This is especially true if your speakers are having any type of interaction with the audience. It allows your virtual audience to be part of the action.

"If the session is not being broadcast, and there is not going to be any interaction between the speaker and the audience, there's no reason to have a feed. Just keep an eye out for comments about the session.

"If you broadcast to your attendees that there is a hashtag for the event, you have signalled that the Twitter feeds will be monitored and interaction via Twitter is encouraged. Make sure your entire team (and executive leadership) is on board.

"I do not recommend using Twitter in private corporate conferences. You wouldn't want to have attendees losing their jobs because they are 'accidentally' tweeting about an upcoming product launch (beware of confidentiality and trade secrets).

"That's my \$.02!"

Glenn Thayer
The Voice Of Meetings and Events



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