

When is Rebranding a \$4 Billion Mistake? Time Will Tell With Twitter's Decline

October 5, 2023 – The TMCA

by Lindsey Sadler

The small blue bird adorning nearly every company's social media section. The verbiage "tweet" and "retweet" working their way into the fabric of modern language. The creation of character-limited, short-form posts as a new method of communication used by presidents, dignitaries, celebrities, and everyday people alike. Even with the ubiquitous rise of social media over the last few decades, it is difficult to find a company and brand that has had more of an impact on society as a whole than Twitter.

Its roots date back to 2006 when a group of friends and coworkers conjured a new version of sending text messages. Instead of the one-to-one nature of text messages, Twitter allows people to share thoughts, ideas, and messages with larger groups of people all at once via the Internet. On July 15, 2006, this idea—originally called "twtr," but soon after expanded to "Twitter"—was released to the public, and transmitted roughly 20,000 posts, or the now infamous "tweets", per day. When Twitter was showcased at the South by Southwest Interactive Conference in 2007, up to 60,000 tweets were posted each day. By early 2010, a short four years after its public launch, Twitter was up to 50 million tweets per day.

Not only did Twitter revolutionize a new way of communication, but it gave new meaning to otherwise standard, infrequently used symbols. The pound symbol, #, has long been used in information technology systems to denote specific pieces of text—used after a number to denote "weight," or used in front of a number to denote "number." Twitter gave this symbol new meaning, redefining it as the "hashtag," a systematic way of categorizing groups of information, wherein users can find specific content relevant to the mentioned hashtag. In 2014, the word "hashtag" was added to the Oxford English Dictionary, meaning "a word or phrase with the symbol # in front of it, used on social media websites and apps so that you can search for all messages with the same subject." In addition, Twitter user handles, used to identify the account owner, begin with the @ symbol, which has now expanded into a common form of electronic speech to direct attention at a specific person, whether on Twitter or elsewhere. This is similar to the @ symbol as it was first introduced in 1972 as part of the first electronic message communication—now known as email—to indicate the location or institution of the email recipient.

In nearly twenty years, Twitter has changed how humans communicate, whether they use the social media service or not. And it is difficult to quantify this level of impact on society as a whole. Most small business owners and entrepreneurs may start their companies with the lofty goal of someday owning a regionally, or even nationally, successful and recognized brand. But the vast majority of these new companies never reach global status, and never reach a billion-dollar valuation. Twitter did.

By 2023, Twitter reached 500 million tweets per day and a market cap valuation of over \$40 billion. Valuation experts value just the Twitter brand—not the company itself, but the TWITTER trademark, the TWEET and RETWEET marks, and the blue bird—anywhere from \$4 billion to \$20 billion. Most companies in the world will never achieve a trademark brand valuation anywhere near this number, and it is, without a doubt, an impressive feat.

Which is why, in July 2023, Twitter users, social media and tech companies, the

Related People

- Lindsey Sadler

Related Capabilities

- Trademark, Copyright + Advertising
- Intellectual Property Litigation

