

What I've Learned from a Year of 22 Tweets

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This week marks the one-year anniversary of 22 Tweets. It's been a great first year. I've learned a lot from the interviews, about the lawyers I've interviewed, about the practice of law, about how what I hope is a representative slice of the Web 2.0 legal crowd markets themselves and their practices. And I've also learned a great deal about communication and communicating, about messages and crafting them, about stories and articulating them. While it would be hard to sum up everything I've learned in a single blog post, a few lessons stand out:



- **Everybody has a great story to tell.** Most of the lawyers I've met over the past 20 years have interesting and engaging stories to tell, the kind that convey their passion, intelligence and conviction, the kind that draw you in and keep you on the edge of your seat and make you glad you heard them, the kind that make clients want to hire them. They tell great stories (when they're not so busy trying to pitch their services that they forget how powerful their own stories are), just like each and every lawyer I interviewed for 22 Tweets.
- **The medium is not the message.** Whether you're tweeting or blogging or meeting with a client or giving a presentation to an auditorium full of your peers, the medium is not the message. The message is the message. And lawyers need to understand and use the full range of communications channels their audiences are using – with a common message, one that conveys their strengths, their differences, their story – if they want to be heard.
- **The message received is the message.** Not the message sent. There are few "do-overs" in real life, and even fewer in communication: what you mean is irrelevant if your audience doesn't understand what you are trying to say. Not because you can't recover from miscommunication, but because when neither of you are aware that you aren't talking about the same thing, you're not going to know it.
- **Effective communication is hard work.** Part of the challenge (and I hope the fun) of being interviewed on 22 Tweets is responding in 140 characters. Finding a way to say who you are, or what you do, or why you do it, in a single tweet takes time and effort and work. And although life doesn't place the same constraints on communication as Twitter does (though many days I wish it would), the people who communicate most effectively apply the same rigor to all their words across all channels.
- **Value is king.** Whatever your message, whatever the channels you use to communicate it, whatever the content you provide, unless it adds value to your audience, unless it helps them do their jobs better, make more money, get smarter or sleep better at night, then it probably doesn't hold a lot of value for them. Lawyers are in the business of providing value. Shouldn't your tweets, your blog, your website, your brochures and your speeches provide the same value as your legal work?

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It's been a great first year. Thank you all, readers and interviewees alike, for making it possible.



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