

Ethics in Social Marketing Management

B2E Case Study 12 “Follow the Twitter?”

Tina Biggs is a junior member of the B2E marketing staff. She has established a Twitter account as Tina Biggs. She tweets several times a day on current industry topics and company interests and concerns as a part of B2E’s Social Media Marketing strategy. Because she is knowledgeable in the field, she has a huge following of customers and colleagues in the business. She follows a number of other Twitter accounts that discuss similar topics as well.

She stops by to visit with Terry Tate, the Graphic Designer. Tina excitedly tells Terry that she’s heard of a great new Twitter strategy she plans to adopt. She explains to Terry that if she *un-follows* 90 percent of her Twitter accounts, but retains her high number of *followers*, her “follower ratio” will spike up to 1:10, making her look like an industry expert that many people are eager to follow. This will also give B2E a lot of social credibility.

Tina also mentions that she will be attending a week-long trade show soon where she will be very busy at the company booth, meeting and greeting potential new clients. She says she is passionately devoted to her followers, and determined to continue her current twitter rate to her followers during the show. She is concerned though that she will be so busy that she won’t have time and will then disappoint her followers.

As Tina is leaving she asks Terry to tweet in her place posing as Tina. Tina tells Terry that she is just as knowledgeable about the industry, so Terry will sound just like her and no one will know the difference.

Terry is concerned with the ethics of what she has heard. She shares this information with Mora Compass, the Marketing Director. Mora ponders the situation. She is not familiar with social media marketing, but is aware that it has become a common marketing tool in the industry. She has allowed Tina full charge of spearheading this marketing effort for this reason. Now she wonders if it was wise to allow B2E to jump into a new marketing venue without a full understanding of its use and the unintended consequences to B2E.

What would you say? What would you do? How could you be most effective?