

How to Host a Tweetup

by Jeff Cutler

A Tweetup is defined, in my mind, as a face-to-face gathering of people organized through the use of social media tools...specifically Twitter.

The history of Tweetups is blurry, as are most things in social media. My best guess is that the first Tweetup was the result of the first tweet (or status update). Perhaps, like Alexander Graham Bell, the first status update may have said, "Mr. Watson. Come here. I need you."

I would guess that it more likely something like, "Starbucks in five minutes? Meet in the lobby."

Regardless, after that first Tweetup, these gatherings became more frequent and well organized. From the occasional Burritup (a Tweetup based on the consumption and enjoyment of Burritos), to parties at SXSW in Austin, TX, to my own favorite and brainchild, the NogUp.

The Nogup is widely recognized as one of the longest-running Boston Tweetups. In fact, in late 2011, we celebrated the fourth annual Nogup.

That said, here's all you need to do to have a successful Tweetup...

A pulse.

An idea for a fun gathering of people. This can be as few as two to as many as one billion. Considerations should be given to venue size if you get closer to the billion number.

A venue. Mentioned above, Tweetups are often set in bars, restaurants, technology centers and even open spaces. The venue you choose is only limited by your imagination or by the theme you choose. You cannot have a burritup in a place that doesn't have burritos.

A date. If you don't choose a date, you can't very well get people to attend your Tweetup. I like to check the calendar to ensure my events don't interfere with national holidays or other social media events.

An audience. That's where Twitter and Facebook and Google+ come in. If you have some followers on these social networks, you can reach out to them and invite them to your Tweetup. The more intricately organized Tweetups use Meetup, Eventbrite, assorted groups and forums to publicize and organize attendance.

Money and sponsors. The best Tweetups are the free ones or the ones organized around a charity. To defray costs, a Tweetup organizer can often turn to the management of the venue for support, free food and maybe some prizes. Further, schwag and other gifts for attendees can be garnered by reaching out to groups that are desperate to reach the people who like Tweetups.

How to start.

Use the following checklist to organize and kick off your first Tweetup.

1. Idea

2. Venue

3. Date

4. Calendar Tool

5. Publicity (share info on the Tweetup via social networks)

6. Sponsors/Charity (if needed)

That's it! You now have all you need to host your a Tweetup. Also, realize that the social media community prides itself on inclusion. It's against the unwritten code of Tweetups to exclude anyone from your event.

So go forth and host a Tweetup. Let me know how it goes.
You can find me @jeffcutler on Twitter.