

EBOOK

Social Media Survival

A Guide for Small Businesses



As a business owner and entrepreneur, you are busy driving the business forward. Any extra time and resources you may have are spent on high-value activities that will have the biggest impact on your bottom line.

According to [Twitter's Small Business Customer Insights Study](#), 85% of Twitter users feel more connected to small and medium-sized businesses after following them. Beyond feeling connected, 60% of respondents say they've purchased from businesses based on something they saw on Twitter—and 43% plan to make multiple purchases from businesses they follow on Twitter.

We've spoken to many business owners who are driving business and seeing success with social media—from increased brand recognition, sales, and customer loyalty, to [reduced marketing spend](#).

From these discussions, we've uncovered trends in how entrepreneurs use social media and Hootsuite to grow their business, manage time and resources, and stay competitive.

What to expect from this content bundle:

Page 5

Make the most of your limited time and resources

- Where to start on social media and tips to get you started
- Three features that will help save you time and resources
- Success story: How one food truck owner uses Hootsuite to improve daily communications

Page 10

Grow your business and drive sales

- How social media can help grow your business
- Three features that will help you drive new sales and leads
- Success story: How Five Guys burger restaurant uses Hootsuite to reach customers and expand into new markets

Page 15

Stay competitive and manage your reputation

- How to listen and learn from your customers, competitors, and industry
- Three features that will help your small business stay competitive
- Success story: How Fairware uses Hootsuite to enhance their brand reputation and maintain transparent conversations



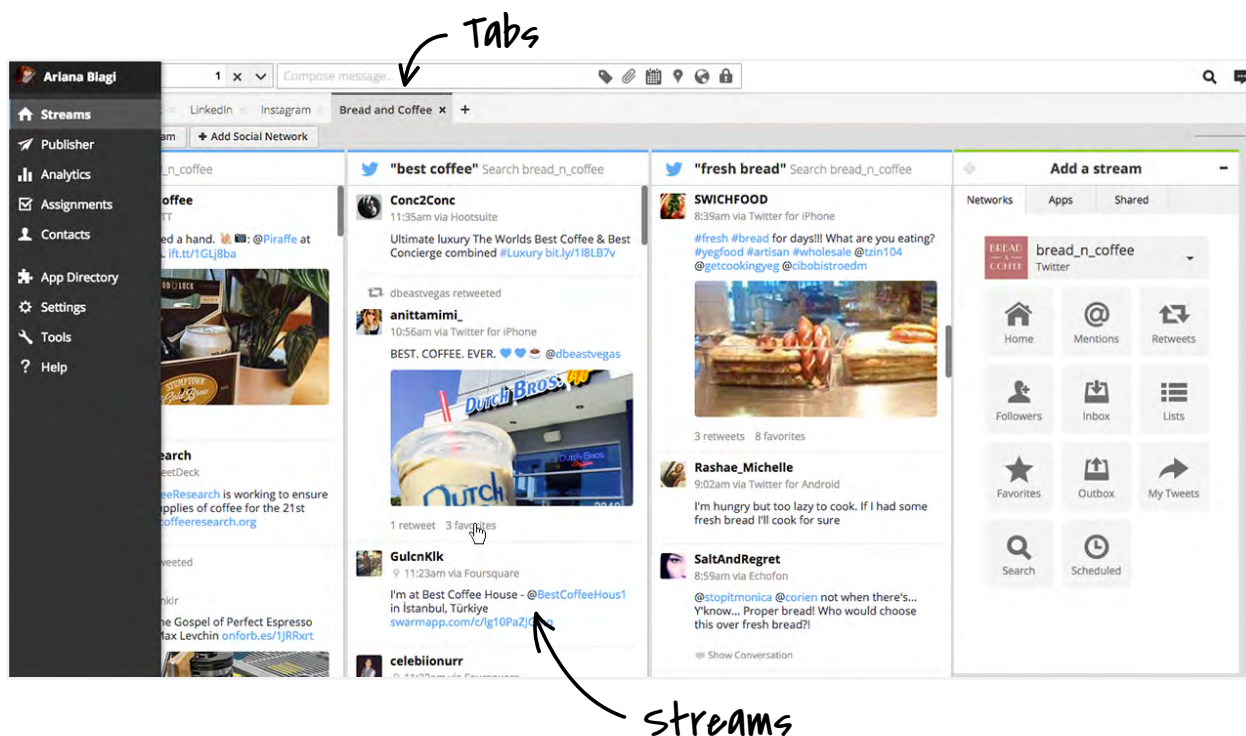
Saving time managing social

When used correctly, social media can be an easy to implement and cost effective way to improve your sales and marketing. Start small and be strategic about what you take on, learn with each success. By establishing an efficient social media management strategy right away, you'll have a stronger, more organized foundation upon which to scale.

Consider:

- What do you know about your audience? Who are they, what social networks are they using, what are they interested in, and how do they interact with businesses and brands they like?
- Why use social media for your business—and how can social media help you meet your business goals?
- What is your audience interested in and what can you share that they will find relevant and engaging?

Read on for recommendations and Hootsuite features that will help keep you organized and efficient while managing social.



Organize your social media

To better understand your customers, it's important to listen to your audience across social networks. Pay attention to the differences for each social network before developing individual engagement strategies so your efforts get the most traction. For example, if your target audience is most active on Facebook and Twitter, start there. Once you've created accounts, add them to your Hootsuite dashboard so that you only have to log in to one place, rather than into each individual social network. This will also help you stay organized and oversee everything all at once.

There are several ways to keep your accounts organized. As a best practice, tabs in Hootsuite are similar to folders on your computer and can help categorize and separate each social network or application, for instance. To further organize these broad categories into easily readable groups, add streams to your tabs. Streams allow you to visualize the activity on all your social networks at a glance. Within a Twitter tab, for example, use streams to give you a side-by-side view of your Twitter Home Feed, Mentions, Direct Mentions, keyword and hashtag searches, and so on.

"Once I found out about Hootsuite for combining all of my social media accounts to stay organized, everything just took off."

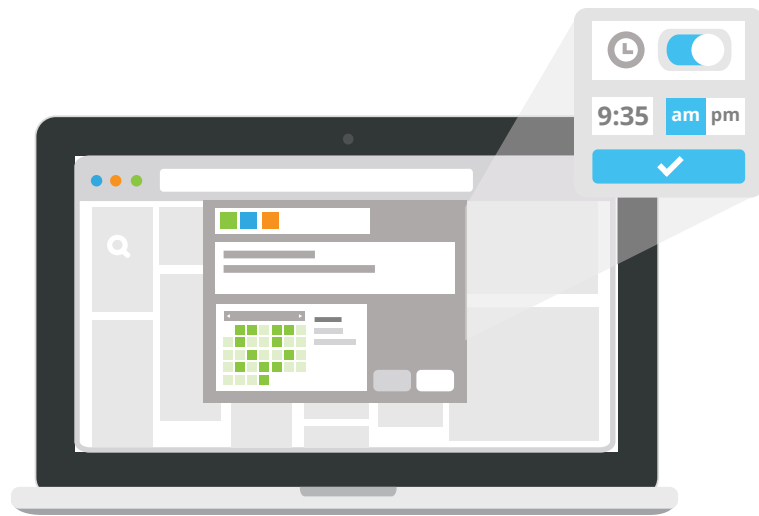
Axel Koster, General Manager, Manhattan Group



How to set up Hootsuite streams and tabs



How to use hashtag search streams

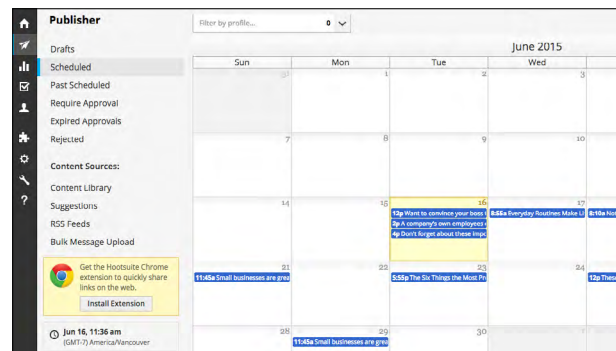


Compose, publish, and schedule

Now that you're set up to listen to your audience, it's time to engage with them. It's easy to publish a message from Hootsuite, select the "Compose message..." box, type your message, select the social profile you'd like to share from, and select "Send Now." If you don't want to publish your message right away, there are further options from here to either save a draft for later or schedule messages to publish at specific times.

Scheduling messages for the entire week, or month, provides you with more control over the publishing process. You can optimize the time you spend interacting with your audience, and even schedule in the time to do "sentiment checks" on how your messages are being received. There are three ways that you can schedule your social media messages with Hootsuite.

1. **AutoSchedule** at optimal times based on when your Tweets perform the best
2. **Manually** schedule your messages for the exact time you would like to publish
3. **Bulk** scheduling allows you to create and schedule future publishing times for up to 350 messages at once, from a single spreadsheet



Use Hootsuite's calendar view for an overview of your content calendar and the ability to edit, delete, or adjust the messages.



Schedule messages in Hootsuite



How to save a draft a message in Hootsuite



View and edit scheduled posts easily

Discover and share content

You've been starting to listen to what people who are interested in your company are saying and have built up an engaged audience. In order to maintain those levels of interaction with your audience, and stay top-of-mind on relevant topics, now is a good time to start sharing useful and interesting content. Content Suggestions within Hootsuite Publisher allows you to discover, create, and schedule material that can keep your followers engaged, and attract new ones. This feature saves you time by sourcing and suggesting articles based on relevant keywords that you select. You have the option of publishing the content immediately or scheduling it for a later date.

Another way to discover sharable content from external sources—industry news sites, expert blogs, relevant content aggregators, for example—is through RSS and Atom feeds. Hootsuite Syndicator allows you to set up streams for one or more RSS feeds from websites and sources you're interested in. Subscribing to an RSS feed allows you to receive new content as it's published, similar to a magazine that is delivered to you periodically. Rather than receiving a physical copy, your feed sends you the newly published content so you can browse, then choose what to share with your audience.



Consider: Based on your audience's preference for consuming content, and how you'd like to portray your brand through content marketing, we recommend following the "Social Media Rule of Thirds":

1/3 of your social content promotes your business, converts readers, and generates profit.

1/3 of your social content should surface and share ideas and stories from thought leaders in your industry or like-minded businesses.

1/3 of your social content should be based on personal interactions and build your personal brand.



How to implement the Social Media Rule of Thirds



How to use Hootsuite Syndicator



How the owner and chef behind “The Grilled Cheese Trucks” does it all

Meet Dave Danhi. As the CEO, founder, and chef at “The Grilled Cheese Truck”—and with more than seven locations across America—it’s safe to say that he’s extremely busy. Once named the “third most influential ‘Tweeter’ in LA” and the most-followed food truck on Facebook, we were curious as to how he did it all.

“For the truck’s first three years, I did all of the social ‘à la minute’ meaning ‘live,’” says Dahnhi. “That took 4 to 6 hours a day and consumed my life, making it harder to run my business. Since [adopting] Hootsuite, we schedule our Tweets and posts beforehand. We have expanded to include several cities and Hootsuite helps manage multiple cities and social profiles. Doing this separately would be laborious and ineffective.”

[Read more about how other food truck owners are using social media](#)

Some extra tips to save you time on social

Try this now:

- ☐ [Add multiple social profiles](#)
- ☐ [Learn how to schedule, AutoSchedule, view and edit a pending post](#)

Do this later:

- ☐ [Add additional small business tools via the Hootsuite app directory](#)
- ☐ [Prioritize your time by filtering messages by keywords](#)

Further reading:

- ☐ [Effective social media management: Tips for small businesses](#)
- ☐ [Daily 18-minute social media plan for small businesses](#)



Growing your business with social media

Businesses now have the opportunity to reach and connect with customers—and potential customers—on a more personal level. This means that business owners can develop loyal fans, build brand awareness and increase exposure to new markets, improve search ranking, and improve sales with greater insight into the customer journey.

There are so many ways to use social media to grow your business.

Consider:

- Learn from your customers—through listening and analytics—and use that social media data and those conversations to inform future business, product, and service decisions
- Share product and service updates and gauge customer sentiment
- Provide proactive customer service and ask for feedback
- Build brand awareness and customer loyalty through engaging content marketing, social ads, and advocacy programs
- Generate leads and traffic back to your website, blog, podcast, or e-newsletters

Read on for recommendations and Hootsuite features that will help you start growing your business on social media by driving new sales and leads, learning from your customers and competitors, and targeting customers.



Discover potential customers

Geo-Search Checklist

- Create a search stream with the keyword you want to monitor.
- Click the geocode button.
- Adjust the radius of your coordinates.
- If the location you want to monitor is not where you are physically located, find the location's coordinates in Google Maps.
- Save your new keyword search stream.

Beyond helping you manage your time and resources, setting up the right Hootsuite Streams allows you to find potential customers who might not have been aware of your business. Broadening your scope of social media listening widens your sales funnel.

For example, let's say you own a bakery. Set up keyword listening streams to find people talking about your bakery, baked goods in your area, and even other bakeries nearby, these people are all potential customers. Make it easy for your customers to find you online. Promote your Twitter or Facebook account throughout your bakery—on signage or sandwich boards, for example. This helps customers easily follow your business online and, when you follow them back and stay connected with you on Twitter.

Take Hootsuite Streams a step further and listen for people nearby your business—through geo-targeted listening—who are hungry or discussing business-related keywords like bread or treats.



How to set up geo-search listening



How to set up Lists in your Hootsuite dashboard

Learn how to set up your geo-search stream.



Build a community of loyal customers

Establishing a customer loyalty program or ambassador program is a great way to:

- Encourage advocates to spread the word about your business
- Gather honest customer feedback
- Get to know your customers better
- Establish a lasting bond between your brand and your customers
- Stay top of mind with customers

Vega, for example, started off as a small business that provided plant-based nutrition to consumers. Vega's dedication to building a loyal following of ambassadors and educators was important for their marketing success—and helped launch them into exponential growth. The ambassadors partnered with influential bloggers, online media, and health industry leaders to become brand advocates and review Vega products, share product knowledge online, and collaborate in creative ways. This not only fueled educational conversations and content, but also greatly improved Vega's reach.

[Read more about how Vega builds an engaged community through education and partnerships](#)

“When we look at growth strategy, it comes down to finding the best way to inspire, educate and engage with people who see clean nutrition as a support for healthy living.”

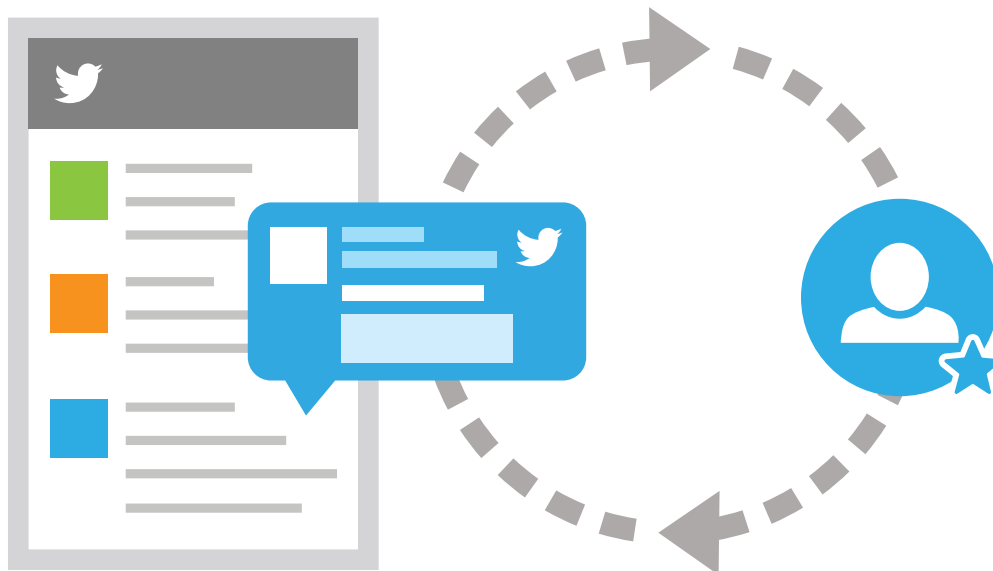
Cristina Pagnucco, Social Media Manager, Vega



Prioritize your customer leads through keyword and Klout searches



Learn how to maintain relationships with your loyal customers



Find leads on Twitter

There is significant business value in combining your social media strategy with other digital marketing strategies such as lead generation. Recognizing this, the Hootsuite App Directory is a collection of extensions and applications to help you create a customizable experience.

One app in particular surfaces qualified leads for your business by mining publicly available social media data. LeadSift app integration automatically scans all Twitter conversations for specific keywords related to your business and then organizes them by direct and indirect leads. Now you can easily find potential leads—and make sense of millions of Twitter conversations—and classify their intent, whether they're looking to buy or want more information.

Once you've found people who are looking for your business, track them as leads with this app. Then, when they're ready to buy, engage them right from your Hootsuite dashboard.



Learn more about LeadSift and how it can help you



Learn how to add an app to your Hootsuite dashboard



How Five Guys burger restaurant targets customers in new markets

Five Guys opened its first family-run burger restaurant in Arlington, Virginia in 1986. Today, they have over 1,200 franchises across the US, Canada, England, and Scotland. To support this growth, Five Guys needed a better understanding of what works for local markets, globally.

Using Hootsuite, they [set up a solid listening strategy](#) and then broke it down by franchise locations to gauge sentiment and conversations locally. Part of this strategy used the geo-targeting functionality within Hootsuite, which became crucial before opening a new location.

Before opening their first UK location, they used Hootsuite to search for potential customers within a certain mile radius of London. Capturing anyone who was talking about their business (or even burgers), they could then reach out directly to customers to let them know that they were coming.

[Hungry for more? Read the full Five Guys case study](#)

Some extra tips for growing your business

Try this now:

- ☐ [Discover how to promote your business on social media](#)
- ☐ [Measure the impact of your social media activity on your business](#)

Do this later:

- ☐ [Develop a social media content calendar](#)
- ☐ [Learn how to build social media reports](#)

Further reading:

- ☐ [Learn how to build a social media campaign strategy](#)
- ☐ [Learn how to show the ROI of social media](#)



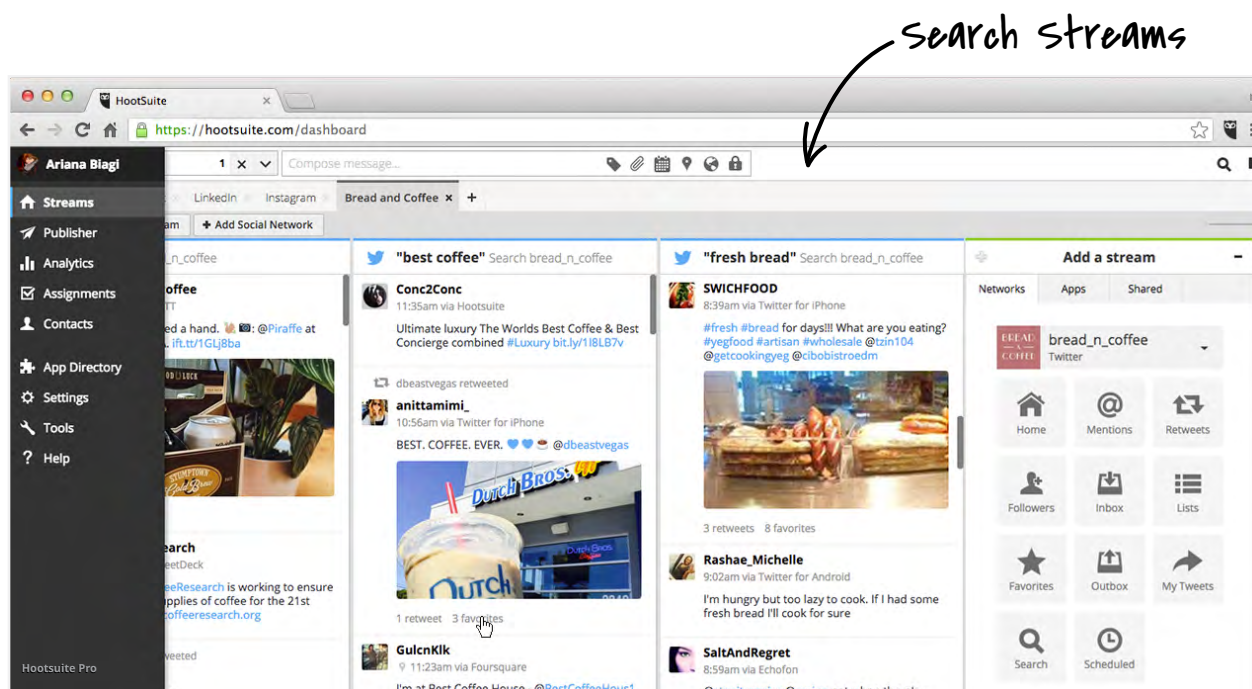
Enhancing your brand reputation

With information shared so openly across social media, the opportunity to listen to and learn from competitors has never been greater. Be inspired by or learn from the successful campaigns of others and discover what isn't working among audiences similar to yours.

Consider

- Listen and learn from your competitors. Are any of them running successful campaigns or can you learn anything from what isn't working?
- Follow your competitors' business updates—are there any new products, services, offerings, or locations that you should be aware of?
- Manage your brand sentiment. Find out what your customers really think of your business and be proactive about nipping issues in the bud

Read on for our three recommendations that will help you keep track of competitors and focus in on what your customers really think of your product and services.



Use keyword search streams to listen in on conversations related to your industry

Follow conversations to stay well-informed

By now, it's clear that Hootsuite Streams helps you organize your social media efforts and listen to your customers. It also opens up channels for listening to your competitors, partners, industry influencers, and even your competitors' customers.

We recommend using your Hootsuite tabs strategically. You can, for example, set one up specifically for competitive listening. In this tab, have listening streams for each of your competitors by searching for keywords, @mentions, and any hashtags they may use. This way, if one of your competitors launches a new product or service, you have the opportunity to tune in and learn more—not only about how they've chosen to do it, but also to see how the market and their customers react to it.

Find your target audience through what they're sharing

A unique way to discover people relevant to your business is through the content they're interested in. If you understand the content topics related to your business, then finding people who are reading and sharing that content can lead you to your target market.

Resonance, a free app for Hootsuite Pro and Enterprise in the Hootsuite App Directory customers, analyzes content and the people sharing it as it relates to your business. Resonance continuously sifts through and categorizes millions of articles, posts, Pins, and Tweets to find content that people are reading and sharing. This is great for lead generation, audience analysis, and real-time marketing.



Learn more about how the Resonance app can work for you



Track and measure your success on social

When investing time and effort into building a social media following and sharing engaging content, you want visibility into what's actually working. Reports help you track and measure what content and channels are high performers. Think back to your original objectives and targets for social media—whether you were focusing on driving engagement, converting leads, building trust, or boosting brand awareness. With the right metrics, you can tie the performance of your content directly back to these original objectives, and change course if necessary.

We recommend first including Hootsuite's built-in URL shortener, Ow.ly, whenever including a link in your messaging to convert a regular URL into a more condensed format. Basically, you can easily change a long URL into a shorter one, and track how many clicks you receive on that URL. Adding Ow.ly or a vanity URL to social messages will provide you with valuable information later—how many people clicked your links, how many retweets your message got, which demographic or region clicked on the links, and which messages were the most popular.

A vanity URL is a web address that is branded for marketing purposes—and Hootsuite Pro customers have the option to add one to their account. This custom-branded URL replaces a regular URL shortener to reflect your company's branding. Vanity URLs provide the same information as shortened ones, but instead of showing up as ow.ly or a bit.ly, you can choose something like Time Inc.'s vanity URL "ti.me", for example, to maintain your company's public image.

Hootsuite Analytics reports are easily customizable to support your unique objectives. Not only will social data help inform what resonates best with your audience, but you can start to optimize your content to perform better.

Useful Hootsuite Analytics reports:

- Twitter follower growth within specific date ranges, for example around campaigns
- Top 10 Facebook Page posts
- Ow.ly clicks to see popular links
- Daily click summary from all Ow.ly links sent via Twitter during a specific date range
- Keyword over time—track various keywords related to your business, customers, industry, or even competitors



Learn more about Hootsuite and analytics best practices for your business



How Fairware uses social media listening to safeguard their brand reputation

Fairware is the leading provider of eco-friendly and sustainable promotional products and merchandise for companies across North America. As a small business with nearly a dozen employees, they have to be strategic about their approach to communications. With Hootsuite set up as a listening and engagement center, they're notified of any brand-related messages and can respond quickly.

During an event, the team picked up on a Tweet asking why they had supplied glass water bottles that were not made locally, but in China. The message implied that Fairware may not have made the most responsible manufacturing choice, leaving the business in a potentially damaging situation. The team responded quickly and wrote a blog post with more information on why the glass water bottles were chosen.

This started a conversation, which avoided further controversy. Fairware received positive feedback about their openness around the difficulties in sourcing certain sustainable products locally—and a new fan, as the person who initially tweeted appreciated the response.

[Read more about how Fairware uses Hootsuite engage customers who share their values.](#)

Some extra tips and tricks for growing your business

Try this now:

- ☐ [Create search streams for keywords, brand names, and hashtags](#)
- ☐ [Create geo-targeted listening streams](#)

Do this later:

- ☐ [Choose social media monitoring tools that are right for you](#)
- ☐ [Learn how to effectively monitor all your social networks](#)

Further reading:

- ☐ [Discover best practices in our Customer and Competitor Intelligence Guide](#)



Take the first step.
Try Hootsuite Pro today.



Have any questions or comments about what you've learned in this guide?
We'd love to hear from you! Tweet us [@HootSmallBiz](https://twitter.com/HootSmallBiz)