

Often, people you follow, mention or retweet will follow you back, because you'll be seen as someone who cares and contributes in your Twitter exchanges. And so your Twitter followers will grow. And, of course, a sizable following of people who are your target customers and spread the word about your store is ultimately what you need. Which brings us to the next big "don't."

**MISTAKE #4:**

**Forgetting to tell anyone that your store is on Twitter.**

Every single marketing piece—ads, flyers, e-mail blast, direct mail, shopping bag, even your sales receipt—should include your Twitter handle. Make sure you have "follow" and "share" buttons for Twitter on your website, blog and Facebook page. On your website, you might even include a widget (available from Twitter) that displays your feed. Kraus suggests putting your Twitter handle on a sign at the cash wrap and on your store hours sign. "That way, even when you're closed, a customer, or potential customer, can still engage with you," he says.

**MISTAKE #5:**


**Not tweeting often enough.**

There's nothing sadder than a Twitter account without tweets. Like an abandoned website, it makes your business look dusty. Kraus recommends tweeting at least two or three times a day, Askanase at least five. "Think of how tweets fly by on your phone," says Kraus. People rarely go back once the stream of messages has gone by. "You need to tweet often enough to have a chance of registering with your followers," says Askanase.

Yikes, you're thinking, who has the time? Luckily tools such as HootSuite, TweetDeck and Twitterific can help you manage tweeting. They provide a dashboard for gathering all your social media accounts in one place where you can tweet, schedule posts for later, track replies and so on. Making a plan helps, too. Decide on two or three times of day you'll try to tweet, and the categories of subjects you'll hit. (How about one to inspire, one to educate, one to inform?) Make it a habit, like brushing your teeth after a meal. Some of your tweets will be replies and retweets, so that's just a matter of monitoring and passing on or responding.

**MISTAKE #6:**

**Not tracking results.**

Like any aspect of your business, you need feedback to know if what you're doing is helping your business. The number of followers is one metric but not enough. What you really want to know is how many people are *engaging* with your content—sharing it through retweets or mentions, and clicking through on your links. HootSuite is one program that provides this kind of analytics. 

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LAUREL'S LEADS



## Practical Promotions to Put Your Best Foot Forward

It's not hard to get dancers to think about shoes. But in an uncertain economy it can be challenging to win their business. To make sure your sales soar during recital season, try these promotions.

**1. Reflexologists Rock!**

Many people find the short, dark days of winter stressful. Brighten things up by bringing in a reflexologist to give a talk and a demo about how massaging different parts of the feet creates health and vibrancy throughout the body.

**2. Host a Pamper Party**

Happy feet are comfortable feet. So make an arrangement with a pedicurist and host a mani-pedi day at your store. Or work out an offer for shoe purchasers, giving them a free or discounted pedicure at a time that best fits their schedule.

**3. Make It Valentine's Day All Month Long**

February is a great month to show your customers how much you love doing business with them. Give shoe purchasers a bottle of free nail polish. Make it pay off for your business by pasting a QR code near the label. You can use it to offer general information about your business, or to entice customers back with a sale notice, discount coupon or special offer.

**4. Combine Shoe Business with Show Business**

Take a tip from Grauman's Chinese Theatre in Hollywood, where important celebrities have left their hand and footprints in cement. Make your own version of this famous sidewalk by inviting your VIP customers to trace their feet, in their dance shoes, and have them autograph the swatches of fabric or paper. Display these in your store—dancers will want to return to see their names. It will make a great event, as well as a fabulous picture story for your website, e-newsletter, social media outlets and your store's wall.

**5. Join Soles4Souls**

Bring attention to your shoe business by getting involved with Soles4Souls. Created in 2004 after the tsunami in Asia, the charity collects and distributes new and gently worn shoes to people in need around the world. You can get involved by sponsoring a fundraiser in your store, or by offering to collect shoes.

Get the word out about your charitable efforts through social media sites, your own and others' blogs, your e-mail list and your website. Keep in mind, too, that dealing with a charity offers increased opportunities to get media exposure. Make sure to let all of the mainstream media in your area—print and on-air—know about your work.

**6. Sponsor a Contest on Foot and Pointe Shoe Care**

Ask customers to send you their best advice for keeping their feet in top shape for pointe class. Include information on pointe shoe care and maintenance and exercises for sore feet. Turn the tips into an e-book, crediting everyone who participated.



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**Got a marketing question for Laurel?**

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