Improve Your Marketing with Hashtags
by Patrick Zuluaga, **PMZ Marketing**

What is a hashtag anyway?

A hashtag is defined as a useful word or phrase preceded by a hash sign '#'. It is most commonly used on social media sites to link messages or content to the specific word or phrase identified by the hashtag. Hashtags make it possible to group messages or posts linked to the hashtag. The power of a hashtag is in the ability to search for the hashtag and to generate a set of messages or posts that contain the hashtag.

Why use a Hashtag?

From a marketing prospective the use of hashtags will:

- Increase your promotional reach
- Amplify your brand or company awareness
- Focus your message on your target market
- Boost the likelihood of people finding your content
- Improve your search engine optimisation results

How can you use a hashtag?

You first need to determine the objective of your marketing message and identify who you are targeting with the content. Once you have defined these requirements, now consider the following types of uses for hashtags;

- **Company or Branding** – this is normally unique to your company or product brands. Likewise, you can also create this type of hashtag with your company's slogan or brand tagline. A couple of simple rules for any type of hashtag is KISS - keep it simple and short. An example could be #PMZMarketing for a company name or #BetterMarketingResults for a tagline. Remember no spaces between words in a hashtag.

- **Campaign or Promotional** – select a unique phrase that best defines your promotional campaign for memory retention purposes. Your chosen hashtag must support the promotional campaign and must be used in all your marketing messages during the promotional campaign. You must engage using your hashtag and encourage your target audience to likewise use the hashtag in their own communications and posts. Telstra's #ThanksThursdays and Air New Zealand's #NoLagToLondon are examples for campaign or promotional hashtags.

- **Informational or Content** – generally the use of these types of hashtags are not unique to your company but refer to words or phrases that are normally used by your target audience in searching the Internet for content related to your business. Business to business (B2B) oriented examples are #SEOTips and #ContentMarketing. Consumer focused businesses will utilise lifestyle oriented hashtags like #fitness and #fashionista.

- **Event or Activities** – common usage are for business events like conferences, exhibitions or seminars while community gatherings or celebrations also attract the use of hashtags. #CeBIT2014 was recently used by CeBIT Australia's IT Conference with #AdobeSummit used at the Adobe Digital Marketing Summit.

- **Geographic or Location** – for a geographically based business targeting local clientele or a larger corporation with various geographic locations the use of geographic or location hashtags is very relevant in focusing their messages with potential customers within these geographic locations of the business.

Your success in getting #BetterMarketingResults with the use of hashtags will result from keeping these hashtags simple, easy to remember and relevant to your target market. In addition, making sure you use the hashtags in your marketing messages and promotional content while at the same time encouraging and engaging with your recipients using your hashtags.

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I appreciate your feedback and would like to hear from you on how you are handling these marketing challenges, send your comments to patrick@pmzmarketing.com.au

About the Author
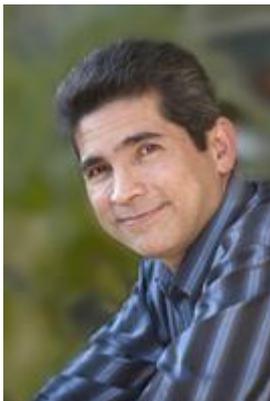
Patrick Zuluaga has more than 20 years experience in marketing and business development roles with Australian and international companies. He is Director of PMZ Marketing, a consultancy focused on Small and Medium Enterprises to **help you succeed in business with better marketing results**.

Hashtags: #PMZMarketing, #BetterMarketingResults

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