

Twitter King

CNN anchor Rick Sanchez champions micro-blogging as a valuable tool for busy execs | By Nicole D. Smith



“Companies spend millions of dollars on focus groups to find out what the public thinks of them. I get it for free every day (on Twitter), anytime I want it.”

Imagine having a daily focus group and inviting more than 50,000 clients and peers. Welcome to the life of Rick Sanchez, CNN Newsroom anchor, and his new-found communication tool: Twitter.

Twitter is the latest social media networking site, like MySpace or Facebook, allowing anyone to post comments that are up to 140 characters, and share thoughts

with any follower who wants to read.

“It’s a community of really smart people who are engaged, who care and who are willing to share what they know – and ask what they don’t know,” says Sanchez, while looking at his Twitter account. “What more could you ask for? It’s a wonderful relationship.”

That kinship can be intimate within a close circle, or a mass approach, such as

Sanchez (51,000 “followers,” and ranked as number four on a top 10 list of most popular Twittering celebrities, sandwiched between Britney Spears and Shaquille O’Neal). It was a concept first introduced to Sanchez by the president of CNN U.S., Jon Klein.

“One morning, I was having breakfast with Jon ... The first thing out of his mouth when he saw me was, ‘Hey, have you heard about Twitter?’” says Sanchez. “He said, ‘It’s this new thing where everybody checks in and tells each other what’s going on.’” What was a new concept to Sanchez is now a major business tool for him.

Sanchez sees social media as a mechanism that executives may find useful when trying to communicate with their employees or customers. “CEOs can connect, too. Our CEOs [at CNN] do. ... Companies spend millions of dollars on focus groups to find out what the public thinks of them. I get it for free every day, anytime I want it. Bottom line. It just makes sense.”

Sanchez also believes a shy executive would really benefit from Twitter. “I’m a communicator,” he says. “Someone who doesn’t speak for a living might find that it’s a lot more safe, and it’s a good environment – that they can be in a place where they can speak with other people.

“I like Twitter in particular because there’s brevity to it. There’s immediacy to it. There’s quickness to it,” he says. “There’s no question in my mind that you’ve got to look for the next thing. And the next thing seems to be a more connected world where people don’t trust people that want to give speeches. They only trust people that want to have conversations.” **B**

To read Nicole Smith’s ‘Twitter-view’ with Rick Sanchez and to find out more about Twitter, go to BtoBMagazine.com and click on our Current Issue.