

**Your customers are talking about you
online. Shouldn't you join the
conversation?**

Alan Heymann

Chief of External Affairs
District of Columbia Water
and Sewer Authority (DC Water)

October 23, 2012

Why is Alan Heymann standing in front of us while we're eating lunch?



To make a special, urgent plea.

**Now is the time for water utilities
to rise up from the shadows!**



**An essential service that supports every job,
business and life.**

Meanwhile...

- Infrastructure is crumbling.
- Consumption is declining.
- Rates are increasing.
- Bottled water sales are at an all-time high.
(In 2011: 9.1 billion gallons, or four bottles a week for every man,
woman and child)

Tap water is what connects us to our customers emotionally and physically. At DC Water, we deliver it and sell it.



Tap It™



DC Water's social media program is part of an expanded focus on interacting with our customers.

- Tap water marketing
- Rebranding (June 2010)
- Town hall meetings
- Outreach in schools



It takes money to do this, but you can't afford not to do it!



Facebook

- News articles about us, other water utilities and issues
- Event listing
- Photos
- Customers write on our Wall for help



Jason W. West

No water on the 3000 block of Wisconsin again. I know there is water main work being done in the area, any word on when it will be done?

December 8, 2010 at 8:44am · Like · Comment



DC Water and Sewer Authority We are waiting on an oversize pipe for that location. Hopeful for a little later this morning.

December 8, 2010 at 9:00am · Like



Jason W. West Thanks for the update, please keep us posted.

December 8, 2010 at 9:18am · Like

Write a comment...



DC Water and Sewer Authority

http://wamu.org/news/11/05/17/dc_wastewater_treatment_plant_to_make_electricity_from_waste.php



D.C. Wastewater Treatment Plant To Make Electricity From Waste - News - WAMU 88.5 FM - American Univ
wamu.org

The District's Wastewater Treatment Plant, one of the largest in the world, is getting new technology to generate electricity from waste and cut the plant's nitrogen pollution in half.

677 Impressions · 0.59% Feedback

May 18 at 7:23am · Like · Comment · Share

3 people like this.



Neil Williams When Barry proposed that years ago, they thought he was crazy.

May 18 at 9:25am · Like

Write a comment...



DC Water and Sewer Authority



DC Water to become DC's largest green energy producer
www.tbd.com

D.C. Water is taking the first step toward becoming the District's largest green energy producer.

619 Impressions · 0.16% Feedback

May 18 at 7:23am · Like · Comment · Share

Sara Loveland likes this.

Write a comment...



Alexandria Sanitation Authority

Some of us attended the groundbreaking today at DC Water and Sewer Authority for their new thermal hydrolysis and nutrient removal facilities. Congrats on the exciting day from all of us here at ASA!



DC Water Breaks Ground on \$1.4 Billion in Environmental Projects at Blue Plains Plant
multivu.prnewswire.com

DC Water first in North America to use thermal hydrolysis for wastewater treatment

May 17 at 6:51pm · View Post



Twitter: By the Numbers



February 2010:	14 followers
June 2010:	194 followers
August 2010:	373 followers
May 2011:	1,202 followers
October 2012:	3,355 followers



Twitter: By the Numbers

System	Followers	2010 Population	Handle
NYC Dept. of Environmental Protection	4,200	8,175,000	nycwater
LA Dept. of Water and Power	4,974	3,792,000	ladwp
Chicago Department of Water Management	0	2,695,000	N/A
City of Houston Water	0	2,099,000	N/A
Philadelphia Water	323	1,526,000	phillyh2o
City of Phoenix Water	493	1,446,000	phxwater
San Antonio Water System	1,933	1,327,000	mysaws
San Diego County Water Authority	64	1,307,000	sdcwa
Dallas Water Utility	0	1,198,000	N/A
San Jose Water Company	0	946,000	N/A
JEA (Jacksonville, Florida)	230	822,000	newsfromjea
Citizens Water (Indianapolis)	306	820,000	citizensenergy
SF Water Power Sewer	4,634	805,000	sfwater
Austin	185	790,000	austinwater
Columbus, Ohio Public Utilities	0	787,000	N/A
Fort Worth Water Department	0	741,000	N/A
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Utilities	0	731,000	N/A
Detroit Water and Sewerage Department	0	714,000	N/A
El Paso Water Utilities	238	649,000	epwater
Memphis Light, Gas and Water	6,736	647,000	mlgw
Baltimore Bureau of Water and Wastewater	0	621,000	N/A
Boston Water and Sewer Commission	0	618,000	N/A
Seattle Public Utilities	844	609,000	seattlespu
DC Water	3,355	602,000	dcwater
Nashville Metro Water Services	0	601,000	N/A



Twitter: Why is it Useful?

The mechanical.

Customers can report problems. With photos!

Here is a closeup of the loose sewer
@[dcwater](#) in front of 1638 U street SE!
Update please-Thanks



Another distribution channel for work zones, press releases, etc.

Workzone update: 5743 26th Street NW
[http://www.dewater.com/workzones/listings/
workzone2539.cfm](http://www.dewater.com/workzones/listings/workzone2539.cfm)



Twitter: Why is it Useful?

The discursive.

Customers will react to something mechanical.

- Press release about switch to chlorine.
- Service outages

Customers will complain about water quality.

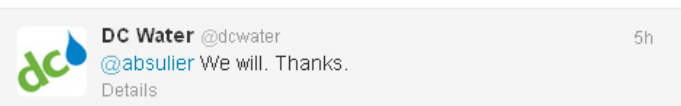
- Legitimate water quality concerns.
- Just plain complaining.



Something is bubbling up from underneath the pavement at 19th and F st NW. Someone might want to look into that. @dcwater

[Reply](#) [Retweet](#) [Favorite](#)

5:35 PM - 21 Oct 12 [from Washington, DC](#) · [Embed this Tweet](#)



MsCheedah A.A

I can't stand how **DC water** treats my skin. Ughhhh! Feelings & Emotions: sad and dissatisfied.

20 May [Favorite](#) [Retweet](#) [Reply](#)



Twitter: Why is it Useful?

Twitter will tell you things you don't know, before your customers start to call you!

- The Bloomingdale neighborhood.





Twitter: Tips for Handling.

Twitter.

Never.

Stops.



Twitter: Tips for Handling.

Who handles the feed?

1. External Affairs or Communications office.
2. Customer Service.
3. What about hours? DC Water has recently limited them.
4. Clients: desktop and mobile.





Twitter: Tips for Handling.

When to jump into a conversation?


1. When someone mentions you or asks you a question directly. (@dcwater)
2. When they're talking about your agency or your product.





"The real reason DC water is poison."





Twitter: Tips for Handling.

 **Allison Rockey** @AllisonRockey 14 Oct
Anyone else noticed bad egg smell in DC water lately? Is there a sulfur problem?
Expand

 **DC Water** @dcwater 14 Oct
[@AllisonRockey](#) Some info on our FAQ at bit.ly/KOBvgt or feel free to give us a call at 202-612-3400 anytime to discuss.
Expand

 **Allison Rockey** @AllisonRockey 14 Oct
After I thought water smelled like rotten eggs and that we might have sulfur problem [@dcwater](#) reached out with FAQ and phone number. Nice.
Expand

 **DC Water** @dcwater 14 Oct
[@AllisonRockey](#) Hey, happy to be of service!
[Hide conversation](#) [Reply](#) [Retweet](#) [Favorite](#)
1:52 PM - 14 Oct 12 · Details

 **Allison Rockey** @AllisonRockey 14 Oct
[@dcwater](#) thanks!
Expand



Twitter: Tips for Handling.

Expediency beats completeness, if only one is possible.

- We're looking into that and will get back to you.
- It looks like _____ is happening. Stay tuned.

Respond back with more complete information.

- We'll have an investigation crew out tomorrow. Service order number is 11-46311.

You must have complete buy-in from the parts of the agency that will provide the information. Nine to five, or the next business day, isn't enough in the Twitter world.



Twitter: Tips for Handling.

Tone: Always friendly, usually apologetic even if it's not your fault.



Feel free to be humorous and edgy, a contrast to the automated posts.





Twitter: The Greatest Hits.

 **DC Water** @dcwater 6m
Reminder: Don't flush your drugs! National Take-Back for unwanted meds is this weekend. dcwater.com/news/listings/...
Expand

 **Elizabeth Lyttleton** @elizqueenmama 3m
[@dcwater](#) Hm. Perhaps "don't flush your meds" would have been a better way to put it?
Expand

 **DC Water** @dcwater 3m
[@elizqueenmama](#) A fair point, but we don't want the other kind in the sewers either...
Expand

 **Elizabeth Lyttleton** @elizqueenmama 2m
[@dcwater](#) ha! Well, yes, true :)
[Hide conversation](#) [Reply](#) [Retweet](#) [Favorite](#)

11:59 AM - 28 Sep 12 · Details



Twitter: The Greatest Hits.

Need to give it up for @dcwater. Finished lead pipe replacement faster than planned and repaired our front walk perfectly. THANKS!

.@dcwater Your service truck is already on the scene. Great response time.

Thanks to @dcwater for the quick response this morning. Stellar customer service on the phone and really impressive response time.

DC Water e-mailed us to say there was an increase in our usage and possibly a leak. We found the split hose already, but pretty cool, right?





Twitter: The Greatest Hits.


1. If I'm not mistaken, DC Water is giving out water bottles at this ANC training. Your ratepayer dollars at work.
2. @meitweet We believe encouraging the public, including elected officials, to choose tap over bottled is a great use of ratepayer dollars.
3. Civic engagement win. RT @dcwater: @meitweet We believe encouraging the public to choose tap over bottled is great use of ratepayer \$.



Twitter: The Greatest Hits.

 **Jennifer Stapleton** @jenniferstaple 13m
@dcwater What's up with the low water pressure on the east side of #Cheverly?
Expand

 **DC Water** @dcwater 8m
@jenniferstaple Sorry, our water service doesn't extend past the District of Columbia's borders. You want @WSSCWaterNews at (301) 206-4002.
Expand

 **Jennifer Stapleton** @jenniferstaple 4m
@dcwater That's some amazing customer service any way! Nice use of twitter. Give this tweet to your boss!
Expand

 **DC Water** @dcwater 22s
@jenniferstaple Hey, thanks. We will do as you ask, and good luck with the pressure issue. That's not a fun way to start the day.
[Hide conversation](#) [Reply](#) [Delete](#) [Favorite](#)

8:11 AM - 2 May 12 via TweetDeck · Details



Twitter: The Greatest Hits.



Jesse Barney Barney

13h

Thank you, [@dcwater](#) for leaving me and my 3yo daughter without water overnight. You are truly truly horrible.



DC Water @dcwater

13h

[@jesse](#) Barney Sorry to hear that, please explain?
twitter@dcwater.com

← In reply to Jesse Barney



Jesse Barney Barney

12h

[@dcwater](#) Came home to find water off. Checked bill for phone # and saw bill (which had been autopaid) hadn't been paid in months. (cont)

← In reply to DC Water



Jesse Barney Barney

12h

[@dcwater](#) That's my fault but I had NO warning water would be turned off. I paid bill in full immediately. Called emerg services (cont)

← In reply to DC Water



Twitter: The Greatest Hits.



Jesse jesse

12h

@dcwater Called emerg services and was told no one could come tonight to turn on water. Insane that there is no way to have water turned on.

← In reply to DC Water



DC Water @dcwater

12h

@jesse Would you email us your service address and phone number? Be glad to investigate, can't make any promises though.

← In reply to Jesse



Jesse jesse

← Reply ↻ Retweet ★ Favorite · Open

@dcwater done.

← In reply to DC Water



Twitter: The Greatest Hits.

What actually happened here?

1. Tweets were from the evening of 3/21.
2. Attempted automated phone calls: 1/24, 1/27, 2/27, 3/01 – no phone number listed.
3. Messages on water bills: 12/15, 1/18, 2/15, 3/15.
4. Separate letters of reminder: 12/21, 1/20, 2/23.
5. Formal notice of intent to disconnect: 3/5, giving until 3/19 to make payment arrangements.
6. Automatic payments ceased in November, at the request of customer's credit card company.
7. Customer's water was restored the next morning, and he walked back his assertion on Twitter that we are truly, truly horrible.



Twitter: The Greatest Hits.

DC tap water tastes like kitty
litter & broken hearts

DC water smells like my
bottom lip.

See! DC water IS really brown!
This is disgusting.



When your city's municipal water has their
own Twitter account...that water nasty.

Questions?

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