

## **PR Rules – Transcript**

### Introduction

Rhys: Hello and welcome to episode one of the PR Rules podcast. My name is Rhys Gregory and today I'm joined by my colleague Ciaran Hiscox who is Effective's videographer and we'll be talking about Twitter X. What's changed so far? What hasn't actually changed and why we think Twitter is being rebranded as X. And ultimately what does this mean for your business, and do you need to do anything right now?

[Music]

### Twitter and users

Rhys: So, we've obviously been talking about Twitter X and what this means for businesses.

Ciaran: Yeah, so I'm coming from this as like someone who has not used Twitter in like seven years so like all this is like brand new to me. I have no idea what's going on.

Rhys: But I think that's probably really good to get your perspective because I think, just like you have, I think lots of businesses as well have actually kind of left Twitter. I think there's that constant battle isn't there about number of active users.

Ciaran: Yeah.

Rhys: I can't remember how many millions Twitter last reported that have left but you know instead of being, I don't even think they're in the top three now are they? I mean it's still got loads, still got hundreds of millions of users.

Ciaran: Well, they used to be like the place to be really and now it's like, I don't know if it's because of, I think it was dropping before Elon came on anyway. Oh yeah. So...

Rhys: Absolutely.

Ciaran: It seemed like a poison chalice before but now it's like seems to be even worse and just, things are just, I think people are just jumping to other platforms they find more user-friendly.

Rhys: It's interesting, isn't it? Because I guess the whole point of what we're talking about here in terms of why Twitter is now X and so on is actually where you've said that you no longer use Twitter, I think all of these changes are designed in some way to try and attract users back to the platform. He's not doing it on purpose, is he? He's obviously a business man. He's not trying to destroy the site in any way and want less users using the site. I think they're just in this transition period, aren't they?

Ciaran: Despite people believe he is doing this on purpose to destroy whatever he's doing but obviously he's a businessman with a plan. I don't know what data he's got to change his name to X or limiting views or anything like that. I don't know the whole engine of it.

Rhys: Yeah, I think whenever a business gets taken over, like what's happened with Twitter, there's gonna be some change isn't there and I think the issue that people have, and with brands, people get kind of emotionally invested with them. That they see themselves as an extension of that brand so when somebody does come in and says 'right actually I'm just going to change the name of it overnight' then people obviously get a bit offended and there are going to be some users that will get put off and want to leave maybe because of some of these changes but ultimately I think he's obviously doing it to try and attract people back. I don't know what demographic he is trying to attract to the platform.

### The rebrand

Ciaran: Because it literally to me, from outside in, looked like it was literally overnight there was Twitter, the next X. There was no like, we're gonna be launching in like a couple of months so it's like a nice easy like period to ease in. It was just a, bam, an X and everyone was like what?

Rhys: So, if we roll back the clock ever so slightly...so this all kind of kicked off on July 23rd. Early hours I think UK time, which I think was a Sunday and it all just started with this series of tweets where Elon Musk was saying that, oh, I think he started talking about the bird disappearing.

Ciaran: Yeah.

Rhys: The iconic blue Twitter bird symbol that everybody kind of knows and I think he just kind of led this kind of trail of breadcrumbs to say 'oh, you know it might not always be the case' and that obviously sparked up a bit of a conversation. And then he started to reveal

'okay, well I might, if you post a good enough X logo we'll use that for Twitter and that'll be the new logo'.

Ciaran: What, so he asked people to design him the X logo?

Rhys: Yeah, he did. I'm not sure if he actually chose somebody's actual logo but he certainly kind of fuelled and sparked getting people to think about X and what it looked like. And as you can imagine there's loads of examples online where people have tried to put an x on the bird or...

Ciaran: Yeah, like WWF put the X over the bird as like a little marketing thing and I thought that was pretty genius.

Rhys: Yeah, and like I said there was this, I think it was over the course of an hour, it had gone from hinting that change could be on the way at some point to 'actually, if I get a good enough logo', he's just gonna change it.

Ciaran: Yeah, it seemed really impulsive like literally just like the next day there was this X thing because then threads launched relatively, yeah relatively, so like that sparked off a whole different like arms race in social. Yeah, like Mark Zuckerberg and their rivalry and whatever but it was like a weird time on the internet for like yeah two weeks.

### Marketing plans

Rhys: I'm pretty confident that, obviously as you said, these things don't happen overnight. There'd be a million conversations around these things. I guess what Elon Musk is really good at is his own marketing machine.

Ciaran: Oh yeah.

Rhys: You've seen it with Tesla SpaceX and so on that this could, this is just his marketing channel. This is what he's done to, in his own way, rather than one person saying 'I'm gonna change it.' There was a bigger...

Ciaran: Instead of spending all the money on a marketing team, he's just him. He's got like this weird fanbase as well of like all, like you know, I don't know if you can be fans of billionaires because I find that concept pretty weird but like this isn't the first time he's tried X as a company name because there's obviously SpaceX. I think he wanted to rename.

Rhys: So he's always had this, or from what we what we see online, he always seems to have had this kind of love affair with the X symbol. You obviously see it in the kind of the Tesla Model lineup as well and I believe it was being reported that a number of years ago he actually, oh he had I think his company was X, wasn't it? x.com?

Ciaran: Yeah.

Rhys: It then had this merger thing with PayPal and since leaving PayPal he's then bought the x.com domain back which now yeah redirects to Twitter of course.

Ciaran: Yeah, I don't know what his fascination with this is. You're just like trying to prove that it works but it's actually like really dumb.

Rhys: I don't know. I guess the difficult thing is, and again these things happen over time, it's like the first iPhone comes out or they change the iPhone name to X.

Ciaran: It's a theme.

Rhys: That everybody's like 'oh no, I can't picture, I'm never going to be able to, I'm never gonna be able to call a tweet an X'. How do you have a conversation go 'I'm gonna go post this on X'?

Ciaran: Or yeah 'I saw your exes' which is, yeah, what's that about?

Rhys: So I don't quite get it but then if you look at say Channel Four, and I think actually Channel Four tweeted them back like basically good luck with the rebrand, and that obviously stems from back in the days of 4od, four on demand.

Ciaran: I still call it 4od.

Rhys: Yeah right, yeah me too. That was the point they were trying to make whereas now it's, the official name is All4, but people will always call it... so I think that was, I can't remember how many years ago it was, six, seven years? Something like that.

Ciaran: Yeah, it's been a while.

Rhys: So, if it's been all those years and people still call it 4od then I can imagine in the future we're probably still going to call it a tweet or Twitter X. Maybe we'll just call it the two things: Twitter X.

Ciaran: I think because it's brand new, it's gonna, I think it's gonna be known as Twitter for a long long, until it probably collapses and just fades away because it might, who knows?

Rhys: Yeah, if you think about, you think about all, and again this stems from kind of what we've talked a little bit about, about kind of what actually happened and today not a lot has actually happened. He's changed the logo, fine. He'd been making some changes to the platform.

### Post limits

Ciaran: Yeah, the 600 limits, 600 tweets, because that includes when you're just scrolling?

Rhys: I think so yeah. I don't actually, yeah, that's my understanding of it.

Ciaran: So like 600 probably adds up quite quickly when you're just flicking through because well you see like 10 tweets every like swipe. You keep going and then all of a sudden.

Rhys: And they say there's again, I think many millions and millions of tweets posted every second of the day, but they must have data somewhere to say only on average the average person will only see 100 tweets or 200 tweets before logging off again. They must have something.

Ciaran: It must be born out of some type of idea; you would hope it is because otherwise it just seems like they've plucked the number - that seems like big enough really. Where they've actually gone 'oh, maybe it's not actually big enough'.

Rhys: I can't imagine they would really, because again they I think they would lose what, I think they would lose their existing active users and potentially lose whatever users they're trying to attract if people kept hitting that wall, and it didn't go past the point.

### Twitter Blue

Ciaran: Like I think there was a drop off with the whole lot of changes because you could buy, pay for Twitter blue.

Rhys: Yeah, which I have done on one of my accounts.

Ciaran: How was that, the process?

Rhys: Other than giving you, the process is really easy, you pay them a tenner a month, it gives you a Blue Tick. It's supposed to help boost the reach of your posts which again is just another problem. That's almost like an episode in itself.

Ciaran: It feels like Twitter's almost becoming like pay to win social media.

Rhys: Whereas I, again, I just find I pay 10 pounds a month and looking at my stats I don't notice any difference in terms of...

Ciaran: Interesting, yeah! [laughs]

Rhys: You get a Blue Tick. It shows you're kind of semi-verified. It's like when you get put on one of those suckers lists.

Ciaran: A what list?

Rhys: A suckers list. You know if you get scammed you kind of...

Ciaran: Okay.

Rhys: You can get labelled as 'this person's easy'.

Ciaran: Okay, yeah, yeah.

Rhys: Maybe that's just us putting our hands up to say 'I'm willing to pay a tenner for a blue badge.'

Ciaran: I'm a mug. I'm going to pay £10 for a blue tick.

Rhys: 'Who else wants to offer me a blue badge somewhere else for another tenner?'  
Yeah, I don't know but I think I guess, going back a little bit, he's obviously a very clever businessman.

## Software and business

Ciaran: Yeah, he's made a lot of money.

Rhys: Yeah, yeah, yeah. You know.

Ciaran: Clever slash being ruthless, I don't know but you become a billionaire for a reason, don't you?

Rhys: And he's obviously paid, maybe top whack for Twitter from again everything you see in the news and he obviously needs to make this into a profitable machine somehow. So again, we won't go into what he's done in terms of head count and everything else but I think where he sees this kind of Twitter or tweet X post limit, whatever we're going to call it, I think it's about stopping businesses so software businesses that pull in tweets from an API. So, know when you, it's like some of the tools that we use, know like media monitoring, social media monitoring tools, there's something as you know called like API where it's how that piece of software connects to say Twitter to take data from it. There's always been limits on the number of calls you can make to Twitter to say I need another piece of data, I need another piece of data, so I think what he's trying to do is he's potentially, in my opinion, he's probably just trying to clamp down on those instances and trying to, if you are going to use Twitter data in something commercial that you're doing, then he's trying to clamp on down on that to try and actually get some revenue from those businesses that are making money from.

Ciaran: So he just wants to sell it himself rather than giving it away freely? [laughs]

Rhys: Yeah, yeah potentially, so I think that's where we're seeing the Tweet X posts.

Ciaran: I think that's been, it was extended now to like a lot more, I don't know if it's scrapped because he said it was temporary for now but then sometimes they say that and it never goes away.

Rhys: Maybe he's trying to shut down a few businesses. I don't know. Or well actually um I said about, I may be picking unfairly there on businesses and software companies but you do get a lot of robots, a lot of fake accounts, which obviously Twitter is known for and I, actually, it's across all platforms but Twitter in particular seems to get picked on the most for these kind of robotic accounts so maybe that's part of it as well and the same for these blue badges. Yes, you're paying a tenner and they promise to kind of promote you or prioritise

some of your content over others which I guess is just an added benefit but I guess it all stems back down to verification. Although the verification only seems to be if you have a credit card, you seem to have a Blue Tick.

Ciaran: There's no cap.

Rhys: Without any sort of ID checks.

Ciaran: Because I remember early when you could buy, because you could change your name to anyone and I think people would like, change their names to like Barack Obama, buying a blue tick and just tweeting or replying to people as obviously a fake account but like some people might think it's real because you know some people don't look into like. Because they take it on fact value, Blue Tick, the name, which is really weird, but like so with all these changes, what does it mean for like businesses that want to use Twitter do you think?

#### Impact on business

Rhys: I guess at the moment not a lot has actually changed. I think if you're a business user using Twitter then other than seeing the logo change in the top corner of your screen, when you log on it's now an X and not a little bird, you probably won't have noticed any changes. Like I said I'm pretty sure that 600 X post Twitter post view limit, you're probably never going to hit anyway so I think nothing has changed. At some point you're gonna probably want to change the, if you've got social icons on your website, so you've got your little Facebook icons, you've got your LinkedIn icons, you've probably got one for Twitter, I imagine at some point you're going to be looking to...

Ciaran: Swap it to an X?

Rhys: Yeah, but I mean I think there's still plenty of pages on the X website, the Twitter website, that actually are still branded Twitter pages. So, we've looked at brand guidelines - are there any brand guidelines at the moment? In the last week I've not seen any. And I'm pretty sure the only brand guidelines I found are about this bird.

Ciaran: Yeah, they might just drop randomly on a Sunday one o'clock in the morning or something or randomly. Considering how the brand changed in like a short amount of time and it's probably evolving consistently.



Rhys: And that's what happens isn't it? The bird was never the bird that you have seen it until recently. That's evolved as well and I imagine they're probably working to, maybe they are trying to catch them a bit, maybe it did take people by surprise but maybe it wasn't planned. Who knows? I guess the bigger one will be, oh so talking about social icons, again, eventually you're going to want to change it to an X. It's probably not the only place it sits on. It's probably in your email signatures so it might be a good opportunity to kind of re-look at those. You may even have it on business cards. You may even have it on, think about when you see lots of vans and lorries going around and they've got their branding, their company branding on. Quite often you'll see a little Twitter icon here and there so at some point they're gonna need to change that but really if we're still talking about the whole kind of 4od thing and All4 thing, I think if people still see a little picture of a bird in your Twitter X username, I think they're gonna kind of know what platform you're on.

Ciaran: Yeah, so like designers ain't rubbing their hands together again, more work for just changing a bird to an X?

Rhys: No, not just yet anyway. The interesting thing will be of course where Elon Musk does own x.com and it currently redirects to twitter.com but twitter.com is still the actual site, I wonder if at some point they'll switch the address on that because if they do that's when you'll have to update your links.

Ciaran: Yeah.

Rhys: x.com forward slash EffcomPR doesn't quite have the same ring to it.

Ciaran: No, it's a bit shorter. Yeah, good for character count. Well, I don't think that matters anymore.

### Next steps

Rhys: No, exactly. Yeah, and at the moment, like the rest of the world, it is kind of wait, watch, see what happens next. We all seem to be on this roller coaster but what I would say is, as apprehensive as a lot of people are, like we've talked about here and you said you've already kind of left the platform anyway a number of years ago.

Ciaran: I've been off here for a while.

Rhys: Yeah and I'm sure you know as we do lots of kind of reporting for clients on social media activity and where we have seen this declining reach on lots of accounts. What he is doing may seem very disruptive but he is his own marketing machine and ultimately the idea will be to attract users back to the platform. Again, don't know quite what demographic that's going to look like but it is all kind of, I hate the phrase the greater good, but yeah he's obviously not doing this just to destroy the platform. It's just evolving as we know it so you know if you are a business on there, stick around, let's see what happens. I guess that the platform hasn't had many updates for some time.

Ciaran: Not to my knowledge. So like where do you see like Twitter in like a couple years' time? Like do you think it's just gonna be gone, it's gonna be on fire, everyone's jumped to like threads maybe? Because their users went up a lot, though I think it's kind of petered out and just levelled.

Rhys: I think people have obviously been looking for quite a while for this space to be filled, this kind of simplistic kind of short sentence, short phrase and a link or an image platform. And I think there's obviously been a lot of negativity in the press which hasn't helped keep users. So it's, it is difficult, but they're trying to fight. They're trying to evolve their space and if they're the first ones to have had this kind of type of social media content then I'm pretty sure with their knowledge and experience they're probably best placed to do it. We can perhaps, maybe if people want to know a little bit more about Threads, we cover it next time.

Ciaran: Yeah.

Rhys: There's some interesting things going on with some of the other platforms which we probably won't quite have enough time to cover it all in this but yeah there's lots of competition, lots of these platforms have, you know, probably stayed the same for quite a while. No big changes. I think Facebook's biggest change that I can remember years ago was changing the home feed.

Ciaran: Well, they changed to Meta as well. Yeah, again everyone still calls it, well I think it's still known as Facebook, like the company's changed.

Rhys: Yeah, the group company. I think there's probably lots we don't know what Elon Musk has planned for x.com and Twitter. Some things have been hinted online. I mean you look at

Facebook in their kind of e-commerce side, that is Elon's background that e-commerce payment side, so you just don't know. Maybe we'll just follow him on X.

Ciaran: And follow this journey through.

Rhys: Yeah, and you know, you never know in a couple of hours' time you might be seeing something else. I doubt he'll revert back to Twitter but he might make another change at some point.

Ciaran: We might look on our phones now and just see like everything's changed again or something but I mean...

Rhys: I'm just looking on, I'll just say like, it is weird when you see the X come up now that they've changed the icon.

Ciaran: Yeah, it made it look like a different site to be fair but like, all this thing, if it was supposed to bring people back or like trying to regain, like retain followers or get people... It's not got me back.

Rhys: But it's so, I mean at the moment as we said, I mean I'm just on there now, and it obviously doesn't look any different other than when you first log in, there's an X icon and I think that's the point, isn't it? At the moment all he has done is create this hype around a logo.

Ciaran: To be fair people are talking about it.

Rhys: I mean, we're talking about it now.

Ciaran: A lot of negativity. I've not seen a lot of positive but I think all the negativity would always rise above positive stuff because that's what gets clicks and attention and that's what makes people money so yeah it's...

Rhys: But I don't think he's done it to be negative either.

Ciaran: No, I think it's his changes but obviously people have reacted how they want to and, rightfully or wrongfully, but people are discussing it and like they always say there's no bad press or the saying whatever it is.

Rhys: Yeah, of course. But he's a marketing machine. I mean, I was just looking at our site not so long ago and I was thinking when was the last time we wrote a blog or something about new changes on Twitter? What's happening with Twitter? We haven't in years because there hasn't been any change but all of a sudden we've done a blog this week which obviously people can go off and read and I'm sure this will fit into the blog very nicely. Maybe they'll even listen to our chat here. But we've now created content. We're almost kind of doing the Twitter X marketing thing now for him and he's done this, based on his tweet. Yeah, so I think he's won by us talking about it today. He's done his job, hasn't he?

Ciaran: If he's trying to make money out of it then if this is the step he wants to try, then just let it be. Like at the end of the day it's only a logo change really.

Rhys: Yeah, and you think about all the times in the past he's, not being caught out, but been called out on some of his posts and what impact that's had maybe on the stock market. If a tweet, if an X, can make that sort of movement from one person's account, that is a true marketing channel and I think this is what we've seen in the last few weeks.

Ciaran: Cool.

Rhys: It's marketing.

Ciaran: I agree, I think it's, instead of paying loads of like to marketing companies, who you know you'd probably still be forking out a lot of money, it's just one guy tweeting out and just changing a logo and it's just caused all this.

Rhys: Absolutely.

Ciaran: It's like madness on, well on his site and others really.

### Conclusion

Rhys: So, to wrap this up then, so at the start of this you said that you're no longer on Twitter. At the moment the X logo obviously isn't enough to attract you back to that platform.

Ciaran: Yeah.

Rhys: But are you on Threads?

Ciaran: I am.

Rhys: Okay.

Ciaran: But I think what Threads did nicely, which I think a lot of social media sites should incorporate, it took everything from my Instagram and set it up so I have all the same followers, I'm following all the same people, it's just made the whole going into a new social media site seamless. So, like if I was to join Twitter now or X, I wouldn't know my old password. I would have to start again because I'm not going through all that. I would have to go follow everyone like...

Rhys: But that's their marketing. That's what they've done to get you to join.

Ciaran: I wouldn't say I'm super active but I am on there and I have 'threaded' certain stuff.

Rhys: So, I think we leave it here for today because you've raised a really interesting point. You're not a user of one but you're a user of the other.

Ciaran: Yes.

Rhys: A logo is obviously not enough to entice you back to another at the moment.

Ciaran: Weirdly I don't know if that should be your main selling point. 'Come back to us because we changed a logo a little bit.'

Rhys: Yeah, I mean it's the journey, isn't it? But next time maybe we do talk a bit more about Threads and maybe I'll have the questions for you. You're gonna use it, you're more active on it than me.

Ciaran: Well, there's other, like I think the original creator of Twitter has made his own competitor as well now and I think more people are trying to, where they've seen weakness in Twitter, are trying to fill the void now so yeah.

Rhys: There's that kind of social space is really heating up at the moment and, actually, we've probably not had this amount of, you know, activity in a while so watch this space.

[Music]