



Twitter

Attracting Customers

About the Author:

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70% of all small businesses are on Twitter. What are they doing there? They're not wasting their time. They are engaging with customers and potential business partners. They are pushing their content to their followers, who are commenting, retweeting, and favoriting to their heart's content. In short, they are growing their brand on the cheap through social media.

But is Twitter right for your business? While Twitter is notorious for not producing sales—actually [ranking below “other” at 5%](#) in terms of influence on buying behavior in a 2012 study by Edison Research (fyi, Facebook was the most influential with almost ½ of respondents saying it had the greatest impact on buying decisions; for more check out our [Facebook Guide](#))—there is some business gold on this platform. You just have to know where to look. And that's where we come in. In this guide, we'll go over the what, the why, and the how of Twitter for business. After reading, you'll understand why you need to get your business on Twitter and how to do it.

What Is Twitter?

@Twitter is a #socialmedia sharing site allowing users to follow brands and other individuals to share and engage. That's not a bad working definition (and under 140 characters, too). There are more than 500,000,000 active Twitter accounts, with well



over 400,000 accounts being added every day. In the time it took me to write this sentence, which was roughly 10 seconds, there were 91,000 tweets posted worldwide.

We've seen the viability of Twitter in many areas, from sports to concerts to presidential campaigns and yes, even business.

Why Should I Give a Tweet?

Twitter can be used for a variety of business purposes. Don't believe me? Want some facts? Oh, I've got facts. Let's look at these Twitter stats compiled by [Rival IQ](#):

33% of Twitter users follow a brand. That's 33% of 500,000,000plus, which roughly breaks down to 150,000,000 people who are connecting with brands online. Remember, too, Twitter can be used for absolutely free. The same report found that 67% of Twitter users are more likely to buy from brands that they follow.

79% of Twitter users are more likely to recommend brands they follow. The value of this to your business is obvious. A 2012 study by marketing outfit Bazaarvoice found that over half of 1834 year olds [trust a stranger's opinion](#) online over those of their own friends and family. Unsolicited free advertising for your business through sources not connected to your brand other than by the fact that they follow you on Twitter? Yes, please!



There you have it. Twitter gives you a chance to connect with potential fans who may 1) connect with your business, 2) recommend your business, and 3) purchase from your business.

How Can I Use Twitter for My Business?

I know what you're saying. Stats, theories, and opinions are great, but are there any practical uses for Twitter in my business? I say yes. Brands are using Twitter every day to promote their products, resolve customer issues, and allow followers and non-followers alike to get to know them. They are driving traffic to their websites, blogs, and other social media sites. They are monitoring their brand's reputation. They are developing relationships with people in a way that is not possible in a corporate environment. And again, while Twitter may not have as large of a direct influence on buying behavior as sites like Facebook, there is something to be said for allowing people to get to know your business—people will tend to do business with those they know, like, and trust.

How Can I Get Started?

Of all the social networks, Twitter is one of the least laborintensive to start. Here's how.



Before you create your account, consider your goals, as there are two types of accounts that you can create: personal accounts or business accounts.

Personal accounts are great to let people get to know your employees and see the more human side of your business. If done well, personal accounts can be useful to establish expertise in a given area that will ultimately lend more credibility to your business.

Business accounts can be used to update followers about promotions or customer service issues, provide support to customers, notify followers of new blogs or articles, and much more.

Either of these account types can be beneficial to your company, and we recommend that you create both—a business account for your entity and personal accounts for leadership within the company.

For the purpose of this guide, we'll create a business account. To get started, go to www.twitter.com and click Sign Up for Twitter. Don't worry, it's free.



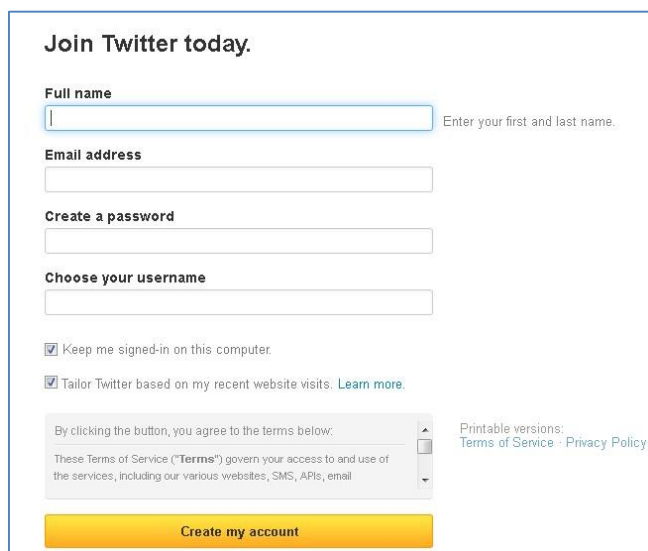
You'll then be asked for your full name, email address, password, and username.

A screenshot of the Twitter sign-up form. At the top, it says "New to Twitter? Sign up". Below this are three input fields: "Full name", "Email", and "Password". At the bottom right of the form is a yellow button with the text "Sign up for Twitter".

- Full name: You can enter up to 20 characters in the full name field. If possible, enter the entire name of your business. If that won't fit, enter an easily understandable abbreviation.
- Email address: Enter an email address for the account. This email address will receive notifications from Twitter, so enter an email that will be checked regularly.
- Create a password: Pretty self-explanatory, create a password for your account.
- Choose your username: Your username, aka handle, will be your calling card on Twitter. You've got 15 characters here, so use them wisely. Try and keep it as simple and intuitive as you can. If possible, enter your full brand name.

Note: While you will want to show some personality on Twitter, the full name and the username are not the places to do it. These are opportunities to further your brand recognition. Don't waste it by entering a handle of @Ilovewaffles (unless, of course, that is the name of your business). When you are completing these fields, think convenience and common sense, because this is how people will find you.

Once you're done, click Create my account. Boom, step 1, done.



The image shows the 'Join Twitter today' registration form. It includes input fields for 'Full name', 'Email address', 'Create a password', and 'Choose your username'. There are two checked checkboxes: 'Keep me signed-in on this computer.' and 'Tailor Twitter based on my recent website visits. Learn more.' Below these is a scrollable area for terms of service, and a yellow 'Create my account' button at the bottom.

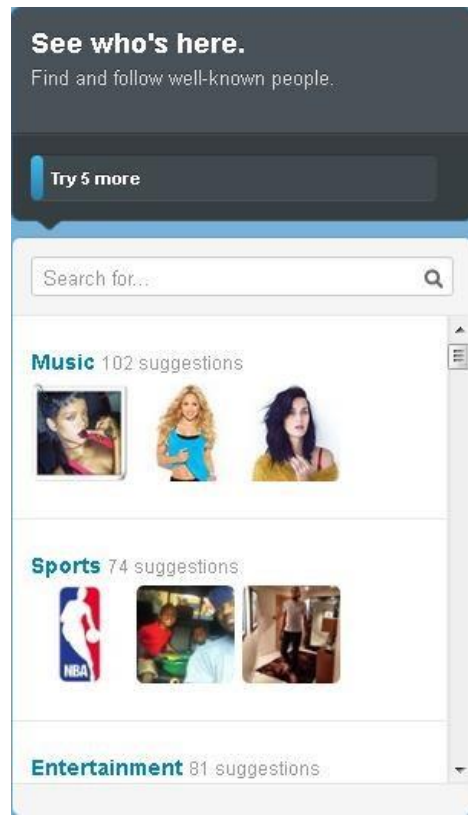
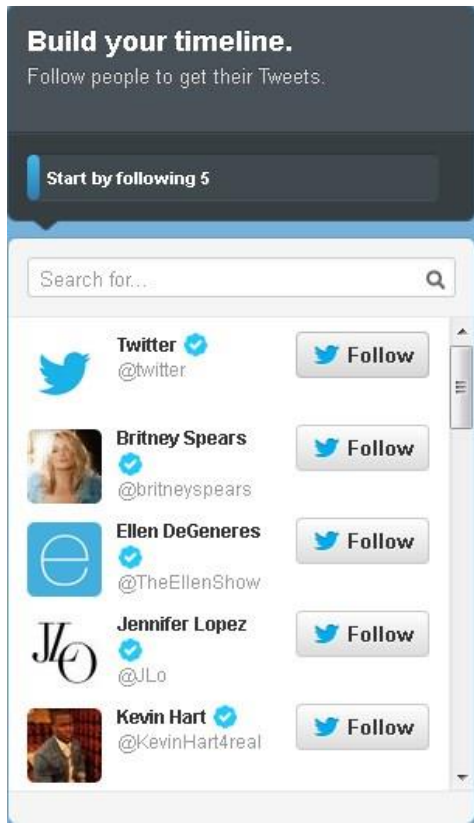
After clicking Create my account, Twitter will walk you through a short tutorial with the Twitter Teacher.



The image shows a tutorial interface with a dark blue sidebar on the left and a main content area on the right. The sidebar contains the text 'Welcome, Get started in less than 60 seconds.' and a 'Next' button. The main area is titled 'Preview' and shows a tweet from 'The Twitter Teacher' with a profile picture and a text description: 'This is a Tweet. Tweets are short messages that have up to 140 characters and can contain links like http://twitter.com.'

Twitter will then prompt you to follow a few folks in the next couple of steps, so you can see how it all will work. Do what Twitter wants here, but don't follow too many people yet. You will want to complete the build of your profile before you really start to engage.



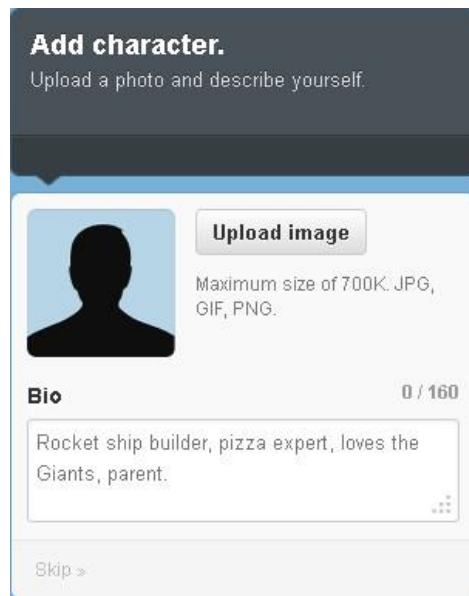


Lastly in Twitter's search for people for you to follow, you will be prompted to check your email address books to see who is available. We wouldn't recommend doing this until you have completed your profile, because you only get one chance at a first impression. If you would like to invite contacts, though, click Search Contacts on the appropriate network. You can also skip to the next step at the bottom of this dialogue box.

The next step in the account creation process will prompt you to add an image and a 160 character bio. **DO NOT LEAVE THESE SECTIONS BLANK.** If your profile is blank, it will appear to be inactive and, even worse, may be flagged for spam. Find an image that represents your company. Since this is a company page, a logo makes the most sense here. The size of this image is 80 x 80 pixels.

The bio is a quick-hitting description of your business. Include information on your industry, your products, your culture, your values, etc. You only have 160 characters here, but this is one of the most important parts of your Twitter account. This is your chance to let people know who you are, what you're about, and why they should pay attention. Take some time to write a great bio.

After you enter this information, you will be taken to your Timeline.



The image shows a Twitter profile page with three callout boxes:

- 1. Profile information:** Points to the top navigation area showing '0 TWEETS', '1 FOLLOWING', and '0 FOLLOWERS', along with a 'Compose new Tweet...' input field.
- 2. Trending topics:** Points to the 'Trends' section on the left sidebar, which lists various hashtags like #6SecondsFlat, #ARTPOPquestion, and #50CosasQueMeGustan.
- 3. Your timeline:** Points to the main content area below the 'Tweets' header, which currently displays a message: 'Your timeline is currently empty. Follow people and topics you find interesting to see their Tweets in your timeline.'

The timeline is your home base on Twitter. Here you can find the following information.

1. **Profile information:** This section will show you what account you are currently signed in under and will list your total number of Tweets, the number of people you are following, and the number of followers you have.
2. **Trending topics:** These are the topics and hashtags that are popular on Twitter right now. Be sure to check these often. When you see something trending that is relevant to your business, be ready to tweet relevant content.
3. **Your timeline:** Your timeline will show you all activity within your Twitter network. This is where your tweets and any



tweets from those you follow will appear. Monitor the timeline to see what people are talking about and join in when it is appropriate.

Next Steps

You've taken the basic steps to complete your profile, but there's still a bit more to do. To finish your profile you will need to complete your profile information and add header and background images. To do this, click the settings wheel in the top right corner of the page and select Edit Profile.

You'll be brought to the profile information area. Here you can edit your profile photo, change your header image, enter the name of your business, your location, and your website. If you don't have a header image right now, that's OK. You can always come back and add one later, but go ahead and complete the other information, as this will be shown on your profile. See below for an overview of the difference between a profile photo, a header image, and a background image.



Profile

This information appears on your public profile, search results, and beyond.

Photo



Change photo ▾

This photo is your identity on Twitter and appears with your Tweets.

Header



Change header ▾

Recommended dimensions of 1500x500
Maximum file size of 5MB

Need help? [Learn more.](#)

Name

GoSmallBiz



Enter your real name, so people you know can recognize you.

Location

Atlanta, GA

Where in the world are you?

Website

<http://gosmallbiz.com/core-service/>

Have a homepage or a blog? Put the address here.

Better Decisions. More Customers.

Header image



Profile photo



TWEETS
3,669

PHOTOS/VIDEOS
235

FOLLOWING
4,875

FOLLOWERS
9,264

FAVORITES
106

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- **Profile image:** This is the image that will be shown on your profile and on other user's timelines when your tweets appear. For a business, it makes sense to use a logo here. For a personal account, a professional headshot is a good idea. Dimensions of this image should be **400 x 400 pixels**.
- **Header image:** This is the large hero image at the top of your profile page. Choose an interesting image that is not too busy and distracting. Recommended dimensions for this image are **1500 x 500 pixels**.
- **Background image:** The background image will be seen by people who visit your timeline. Twitter backgrounds display differently on different sized screens, so there is no one perfect size. However, creating an image that is **2500 x 1600 pixels** should accommodate most screen sizes. I would recommend to test the look of your background on as many differently sized screens as you can find to make sure it displays properly. To edit your background image, select the Design tab on the left side of the Edit Profile menu and then click Change Background, and please – don't tile it.

Note: It is a common practice to link your Twitter account with your Facebook profile so that any tweets will automatically be posted to Facebook. While this may seem convenient, I don't recommend that you do this. People connect with



your brand on social media to engage with you, not read robot posts. In fact, in 2012 the Digital Post Blog found that auto-posting to Facebook [decreased likes and comments by 70%](#).

A Time for Tweeting and a Time for Following

You may already be following a few people, but we would still recommend to put out a few tweets before you really ramp up your efforts to build your network. When you follow someone, many times they will follow you back. If they don't know you or your brand, they will most likely visit your timeline to see who you are and what you are all about. So before you start following others, completely fill out your profile and tweet a few times.

After you're set up, following others in your field is a great way to build your network. While you may be tempted to follow a thousand people off the bat to build your following, you have to remember that not everyone will follow you back, and it will take time for those that do follow you back to log in to their accounts and click that follow button. A Twitter profile that is following 5,000 people but only has 50 followers tells others that of the 5,000 people you followed, 4,950 didn't think what you have to say is valuable enough to follow. Obviously, this does not create a great first impression. A good number of people to follow when building your network is between 20 and 40 per day.



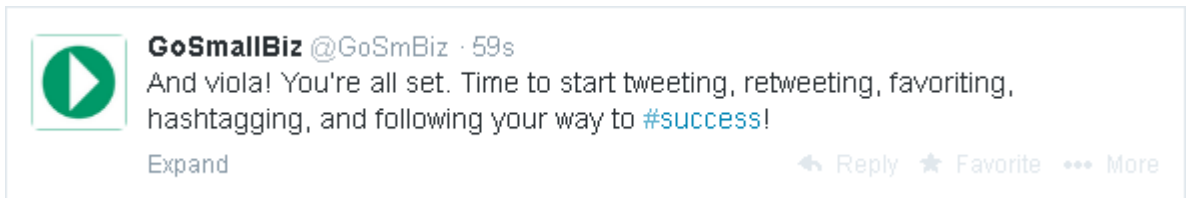
But What Do I Say?

For some, tweeting is a language of love — others may associate it with other 4 letter words. Despite your take on it, Twitter can be a great marketing tool. When it comes to being a successful tweeter, fundamentals matter. Like Jim Rohn said, “success is the natural consequence of consistently applying the basic fundamentals.” Here are 5 to keep in mind:

1. **Tweet every day.** When you are building your following you will want to post frequently. Based on our experience, we have seen substantial profile growth when we tweet between 7 and 15 times per day. Of course, monitor those tweets and respond to your followers when appropriate.
2. **Be consistent.** There is value in persistency, especially on social media. Building a following is not something that is going to happen overnight. However, if you consistently share good content over the long term, you will eventually gain momentum and grow your base.
3. **Share content from others.** Don't be afraid to share content from other publishers that you think may be beneficial to your readers. This shows your followers that your ultimate goal is to provide them with the best information, whether it comes from you or someone else. This is also a great way to establish relationships with others in your space.



- 4. Start a conversation.** This is social media. Tweet questions and ask for feedback. Try to start conversations. This is why companies use social media, and you'll be surprised at the sheer amount of information you can get from your followers just by asking. Then, monitor the tweet and respond when you can.
- 5. Join bigger conversations.** Hashtags (like #business, #smallbiz, #entrepreneur, #etc) will drop your tweets into larger conversations with others who are using the same hashtags. How do you know what hashtags are popular? Use hashtags.org (it's free) to monitor how often a hashtag is being used and when it is being used the most. Also, monitor your timeline and the trending topics and join in on relevant conversations.



Of course, if you have any questions along the way, you can always [ask the social media specialists](http://askthesocialmediaspecialists.gosmallbiz.com) at GoSmallBiz.com.

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