

# Twitter

Twitter is a social network which revolves around “tweets” and “following.” It is a two-way communication based on the 140 characters or less Twitter character limit. Thus, tweets can be used to update others quickly on the latest news from your business or center, or the latest helpful tips or links to a new blog post. Tweets can also be used for sharing inspiring photos, quotes, photo-quotes (a combination of the two).

“The creative idea plus a fresh network is the best way to go from zero to millions.”  
—Jonah Peretti, Co-founder of Huffington Post

Here are some basic definitions and functions to know about Twitter:

- To follow someone means that you subscribe to his or her tweets, which will then show up on your home tweet feed.
- The more followers you gain, the further your reach on the social media network. (The Facebook equivalent to “friends” or “likes.”)
- The greater your number of followers, the greater your ability to reach new people (for businesses this might mean an increase in the number of new customers) and to create relationships with those who follow you.
- Great way to connect with people in your field of interest.

Did you know that 85% of Twitter users feel more connected to a small or medium sized business after they begin following them?

Here are some tips for increasing the number of followers on your Twitter network:

Social media is based on the same social rules we use in daily life to build relationships. So act as you would with friends—respectful, personable and kind—to encourage friendship and trust. For example, in your settings, you can select to send personalized thank you’s when people follow you. Or, when you do see that someone has liked or commented on a tweet, engage with them, start a conversation, or return the favor and retweet their content. When someone retweets your tweet, it’s nice to say thank you and to follow.

Start thinking about what niche or network you will fit into (bloggers versus sustainability groups, for example) as you build your Twitter account. It is best to choose a high quality picture of your logo or yourself that serves as an easy way to identify you or your organization. It should match your website in order to have cohesive branding. Upload both a profile badge and a cover photo that fit the image or brand. Your profile picture and description is the first place people get the impression of whether they want to follow you or not. Practice using your marketing messaging and branding images (from your marketing plan).

To begin building your network, think about what websites you go to frequently, what articles you read, and what mentors or leaders are in the field, and follow similar pages. You may

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also want to do keyword searches on the top organizations in your field. See who comes up, visit their pages, and connect to their social media sites directly from there.

Build your network based on people with like-minded users on Twitter that are sharing content similar to what you would be sharing, or who would be interested in what you are sharing. Follow their pages. It is likely they will return the energy by following you back. They are also more likely to retweet your content with their network. If they have large networks, they present opportunities to reach out to potential new followers whenever you participate on their twitter post threads.

You can tag users by using the @ symbol in front of their username in a tweet (for example: xx @ForJoyWeLive) and they will see your tweet on their account when they sign in. You can also hold chats to share expertise with your community, which are indicated and joined by people in hashtag (#) conversations so be sure to do something fun, funny, and creative! #Yay! The hashtag indicates a search-engine-friendly topic or conversation, which can be product related as well.

In addition, automatic recommendations provided by Twitter are based on the current following and connections you have in your field, grouped by shared interests. So you can start showing up by association with other big names in your field. You can also creatively change your about description on your profile to include hashtags that connect you with those names or topics.

Share valuable content when you tweet. Consistence and persistence in doing so will grow in value to followers and appear more often across Twitter. People post and engage in real-time, so it takes some involvement to be a part of the “conversation.” The more unique and sincere your content, the more valuable you will be to your followers.

