e-biz

Social Media Marketing: Twitter

Intro to Twitter

Twitter is a short message communication application that allows you to **send messages (tweets)** up to 140 characters to others who follow you. This micro-blogging tool is similar to other social media, but is unique in that short messages appear as a customized, continuously flowing, steady stream of news. These quick exchanges of information and real-time conversations are viewed on your computer or mobile device (more than 60% of Twitter users login via mobile devices). There are 200+ million active users on Twitter, posting an average of 400+ million tweets every day (2013).

As an interactive direct marketing tool, the benefits of Twitter include driving traffic to your website and finding new customers (HubSpot); influencing public opinion (Rojas, Bollen & DiGrazia, 2013); listening (CEO.com); getting instant feedback and providing customer support (Social Media Examiner).

Quick Tip

To improve your search engine optimization, be sure to include key words in your bio that reflect your business. A few keywords positioned in an accurate way will help improve your business's search visibility.

www.hubspot.com

Getting Started

Set-up your Twitter account at https://business.twitter.com

- Select your username (also referred to as a Twitter handle), which will appear next to all of your tweets. This is how people will identify you on Twitter. If your exact business name is not available, choose a similar name for consistency, but avoid using punctuation and keep it short. Twitter limits your username to 15 characters. Your account will appear as https://twitter.com/username. Start with one account and create additional handles after you become familiar with the basic Twitter features and functions.
- Upload images
    - In the profile section of your account settings, your photo is a square image (**company logo or your headshot)** appears next to every tweet you send. The second image in the profile section is the header photo that appears at the top of your profile page.
    - In the design section of your account settings, upload a background image that people see when they visit your Twitter account. You can change this seasonally if you'd like, as long you keep with consistent branding.
- Complete your profile with a brief bio or business summary, website and any elements that create and reinforce your consistent online presence.
- Choose whether you want to keep your Tweets public (the default account setting) or to protect your Tweets (manually approving each person who may view your Tweets).

Things to Know

- Tweets are limited to **140 characters**. Ideally, keep tweets under 100 characters. It makes re-tweeting easier.
- **Timeline, Twitter feed or Twitter stream** are terms referring to tweets as they appear.
- The **Home symbol** is where you view tweets from the people you follow.
- The **@Connect symbol** is the place to see the interactions with those who have followed or mentioned you, retweeted or favorited one of your tweets.
- The **#Discover symbol** provides tweets that reflect your interests—based on your current location, what you follow and what's happening in the world.
- The **Me profile** section includes quick access to your tweets, photos, followers, those who you follow, your lists, your settings and more. The **Me tab** is also where you can stay current on your direct message conversations.
- **Hashtags** - The symbol # on Twitter is a hashtag used to aggregate the conversation surrounding a topic or event. Create a hashtag by combining the symbol # with a short word or acronym to use as a tag within tweets. Before creating a hashtag, use the search function in Twitter to make sure #yourtopic has not already been used. Within a tweet, the hashtag you created will appear in blue, allowing anyone to scroll over it, click on it and see a page for the hashtag. If you have really created a brand new hashtag, your tweet should be the only one on the page. Now, every time you or someone else includes your hashtag in a tweet, it will be added to the page. Although hashtags started with Twitter, they can now be used across multiple social media programs.
- **Favorites** is a feature that you could use to collect positive tweets about your company.

- Links shared on Twitter are automatically shortened with a http://t.co link which is neither private nor public; **anyone with the link will be able to view the content on Twitter. You could also use resources such as** http://goo.gl, https://bitly.com**, or** http://tinyurl.com to share your links through email and many social media programs.
- If you want to selectively **include your location** information with your Tweets, you can enable this feature, https://support.twitter.com/articles/122236#.
- Twitter added the **Tweetdeck app**, for you to better manage, filter and keep up with the topics and accounts that matter most to you, https://support.twitter.com/articles/20169620-getting-started-with-tweetdeck#. This puts Tweets into columns and allows you to schedule Tweets.
- Twitter added the **Vine app**, Vine.co (not vine.com) to create and share short 6 second looping videos on Twitter and Facebook, https://support.twitter.com/articles/20170317-faqs-about-vine#.
- An **"in-tweet"** report abuse button was added in 2013. For a complete list of Twitter rules, visit https://support.twitter.com/articles/18311-the-twitter-rules
- **Additional tools** you may choose to use include Hootsuite.com, www.statuspeople.com and other Twitter-certified partners, https://business.twitter.com/twitter-certified-partners.
- Social media continues to **incorporate new technologies, features and benefits.** Work with others in your company, industry and network to make the most of your owned, earned, and paid marketing communications. To stay current with Twitter, review their blog, https://blog.twitter.com and follow Twitter or specific hashtags.

Getting Started (Continued)

Start following others, such as your business partners, suppliers and customers; industry media and organizations; other businesses in your neighborhood; your competition; your professional network; and other influencers with whom you want to be affiliated. Following means you subscribe to receive their tweets in your timeline.
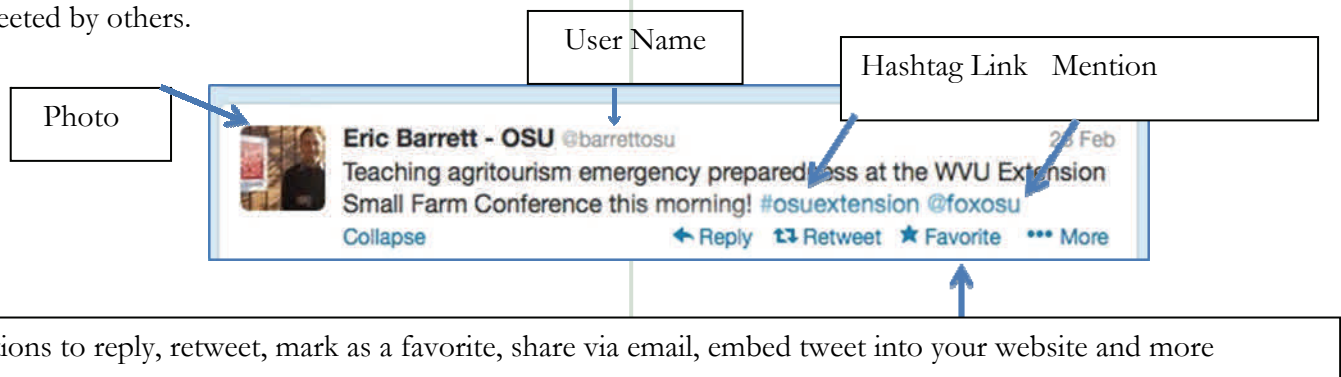
- Follow leaders in your industry and community. Many include a Twitter link on their websites and blogs.
- Go to search.twitter.com (or the magnifying glass image on the mobile app) and use keywords associated with your business to look for related hashtags (#) and topics that are associated with similar businesses. You can also explore through advanced search. https://twitter.com/search-advanced
- Use the Who To Follow suggestions from Twitter.
- On the mobile app, click on the Me feature and scroll down to see those who are similar to you. Click on the + to add those you want to follow.
- Review your lists of followers and look at who is following them and who they mention in their tweets.
- Follow hashtags at events. Who is tweeting using the hashtag and who else are they mentioning?
- To segment users by specific groups, create your own lists or subscribe to lists created by others. Go to your Lists page via the **gear icon** drop down menu in the top right navigation bar or by going to your profile page and clicking on **Lists**. You cannot send or direct a tweet to members of a list, for only those list members to see. Lists are used for **reading tweets only,** https://support.twitter.com/articles/76460-using-twitter-lists#.
- Become familiar with the types of information tweeted by others.

Start tweeting messages to those who follow you.

- To tweet, click on the ✏ symbol and type your message (tweet) in the white box, "What's Happening?" Tweet content should be valued by your followers. This can include timely news; helpful tips or fun facts; special offers; interesting photos or short videos; links to special resources; spotlights on customers, employees, or suppliers; unique insights or quotes; a question with a link to the answer; short video clips providing a glimpse into 'behind the scenes' business activity or invitations to join a discussion or event.
- You can **include a link to any web content**, photograph, or video. You can take a photo with your phone and instantly upload it to Twitter. Tweets with photos get twice the response. https://business.twitter.com/photos-videos-content You can use the Vine to record a short video loop or link to your videos on YouTube or vimeo.
- @Reply is a public message that shows your response in the tweet stream (timeline) of everyone who follows you and the person who tweeted. It also appears on the @connect (mentions) page of the Twitter user.
- A Retweet (RT) is a message created and sent by someone else that you **share publically with the people who follow you**.
- A Direct Message (DM) is a private message you **send to another Twitter user who follows you**. You can click on the envelope icon to send and view Direct Messages.

User Name

Hashtag Link   Mention

Photo

Eric Barrett - OSU @barrettosu   23 Feb
Teaching agritourism emergency preparedness at the WVU Extension Small Farm Conference this morning! #osuextension @foxosu
Collapse   ← Reply ⇄ Retweet ★ Favorite ••• More

Options to reply, retweet, mark as a favorite, share via email, embed tweet into your website and more

Getting Started (Continued)

Create a following

- In addition to tweeting great content that others retweet and mark as favorites, build a strong following by:
    - Incorporating Twitter into your online and offline marketing.
    - Adding Twitter buttons to your website to help your visitors share content and connect with you on Twitter. https://twitter.com/about/resources/buttons#tweet
    - Embedding a Twitter timeline on your website or blog. https://dev.twitter.com/docs/embedded-timelines
    - Adding your Twitter @username in your printed promotions, packaging and signage.
    - Recognizing and thanking others in your tweets by using @mention to reference other Twitter users.
    - Creating hashtags around a topic or event (see more in "things to know" below).
    - Hosting a Tweetchat (also referred to as Tweetup), a public conversation on Twitter which allows you and others to follow the discussion about a one-time event or ongoing topic (hashtag). For example, #agchat is a weekly Twitter chat. (http://agchat.org/agchat-foodchat) Participate in one before hosting your own.
    - Launching a contest that asks followers to contribute so that your Twitter feed becomes a mix of Tweets you've created, as well as replies and retweets. https://support.twitter.com/articles/68877-guidelines-for-contests-on-twitter#
    - Exploring Twitter Ads. https://business.twitter.com/products/twitter-ads-self-service Use Promoted Tweets for targeted communications. Use Promoted Accounts to be featured in search results and within the Who To Follow section.

Resources

Twitter for Business, https://business.twitter.com/twitter-smaller-businesses & https://business.twitter.com

CEO.com, www.ceo.com/social-ceo-report-2013-download

Hashtags, http://www.hashtags.org

Ohio State University Direct Marketing Maps & Apps program, http://go.osu.edu/mapsandapps

Social Media Examiner, www.socialmediaexaminer.com/tag/twitter-marketing & http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/how-to-use-twitter-for-business-and-marketing

About the Author

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As an Ohio State University (OSU) research and Extension state specialist with the College of Food, Agricultural & Environmental Sciences, Dr. Julie Fox focuses on working with food and agricultural entrepreneurs interested in improving their marketing practices and community leaders interested in improving market conditions.