Hatching Twitter Summary

"Some people are destined for greatness; others fall up a hill to get there."

– Nick Bilton

1-Sentence-Summary: *details the story and human drama behind the creation and meteoric rise of Twitter, the social media platform that's changed how we communicate over the past ten years.*

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When did you sign up for Twitter? How long did it take you to get the memo? I feel like I'm one of the last to catch the Twitter train, having signed up in 2013, 7 years after its creation. For the longest time, I found it almost impossible to see the value within all the noise on the platform, and sometimes I still do, so that's why I hesitated.

But by now, I understand that it's very much possible to use Twitter in infinitely valuable ways. Spreading news, good or bad, engaging with people in little, but meaningful ways, that take just seconds, not hours and sharing what moves you and others are the core of Twitter's message.

While that message hasn't changed much, the team trying to shout it into the world has. A lot. The company's a decade old now, but it feels like they've run through a lifetime worth of employees (especially CEOs) already.

Twitter's history is messy. It's human. And there's a whole lot to learn from it.

1. Never hire your friends.
2. Always hire your friends.
3. Make better mistakes tomorrow.

Ready to learn from a backstage tour of one of the world's most valuable and popular companies? Time to tweet away!

Lesson 1: Never hire your friends.

There are four people, who majorly shaped the creation of Twitter both on the idea and implementation-end and should be considered as its founders: Ev Williams, Jack Dorsey, Biz Stone and Noah Glass.

Ev Williams created Blogger (yes, the one owned by Google), after the sale of which he befriended Noah Glass, his neighbor at the time. Ev eventually funded and advised Noah in starting Odeo, an early podcasting startup, in 2005. Biz was hired because he was a former employee of Ev's at Blogger and Jack because of his creativity.

All four of them become really good friends, but work and friendship don't mix, which lead to multiple fallouts. Noah's chaotic work habits led to Ev taking over the CEO position of Odeo, with Noah getting kicked out entirely after blabbing about Twitter before it was even launched.

Once it picked up steam in 2007, and it was clear that Odeo would lose the podcasting game to Apple, the power struggles about Twitter got even worse. Since Jack originally proposed the status update idea, and he and Biz built the first prototype, he was the first CEO, again being replaced – and fired – by Ev in 2008 due to internal fights.

Jack never revealed this publicly, instead using his silent board seat to secretly recruit allies and oust Ev in 2011, to put his friend Dick Costolo in the CEO seat – until taking it back for himself in 2015.

As a result, Twitter has struggled for years to become a) profitable and b) sustain its growth. **If you're trying to build a successful business, never hire your friends**. It's a huge mess.

Lesson 2: Always hire your friends.

Wait, didn't I just say the opposite? Yes, and this is the crux of the matter: both of these statements are true. You'd think that it's amazing that Twitter has gotten so big despite all of these friendship quarrels. But it's not despite that they all were friends.

It's *because of it.*

Had Twitter been invented by one guy who then would've just hired strangers to build it, it might've been a bigger financial success a lot sooner. But if what you're building is important enough, the idea will outlive any human failure. It will make it into the world regardless, and once it's gotten past that initial stage its history will continue to be written – with or without you.

The only way for Twitter to take its first breath (and make its) though, was for these four people to work together. Ev had the money and the experience, Jack the idea, Biz the calm resolve needed to get it out the door and Noah the kind of crazy passion that gave it its name (he looked through tons of dictionary to find "twitter – give a call consisting of repeated light tremulous sounds – the sound certain birds make").

Therefore, you should *always* hire your friends, because **it's a good indicator that what you're building is so important that it's impossible for you to do it alone or with strangers**. Great ideas will always entail great risk and that includes the risk of losing your best friend.

Lesson 3: Make better mistakes tomorrow.

When Dick Costolo set Twitter straight for revenue growth, taking it to the stock market, and turning it into a "proper" company, that included a move to a bigger, more professional office.

One of the souvenirs he sadly left behind (on purpose) was a big sign that read "Let's make better mistakes tomorrow." It had hung upside down inside Twitter's office and had been one of Ev's favorites. Twitter's worldly success did grow significantly under Dick's lead, but right now, this kind of commitment to creativity is exactly what Twitter is missing (let's hope Jack brings it back).

Ironing out all of your mistakes is impossible. Intolerance of mistakes is a futile effort that'll only get you frustrated. Humans will always make mistakes. **You don't have to make them on purpose, but promising to make better mistakes tomorrow is a commitment to improvement over perfection**. Acknowledge mistakes as part of the deal, but also never stop making progress.

Sounds like the attitude of four friends building a company. We need more of that.

In-sight-ful. That's how I'd like to describe . Fascinating. I don't think there's a single company with an "easy" history, but the bigger it gets, the more twisted the story. Twitter sure seems like an extreme outlier, but maybe power struggles like these are a lot more common than you think.

An interesting read.

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What else can you learn from the blinks?

- What Ev's first business was

- The role a hacker named Rabble played in Twitter's launch
- When Twitter first started growing and what event helped with that
- Who Twitter got its first few rounds of capital from
- The massive lie Jack spun after getting fired
- The defining moment of Ev's lay-off
- What Dick Costolo did to make Twitter more financially stable

Who would I recommend the Hatching Twitter summary to?

The 14 year old who's working on a side project with a few friends that could be a business someday, the 48 year old who's bitter about his business partner betraying him 12 years ago, and anyone who thinks they have to get it right the first time.