# A Practical Guide To

**twitter**

presented by

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# The Basics

## Introduction

Twitter is a simple yet incredibly powerful tool that has unique use cases for businesses of all sizes. Use this guide to get the most out of your Twitter account and quickly get up and running in less than an hour. Don't be fooled by it's simplicity. Twitter can be a powerful tool you can use to reach an audience of millions of users. If used correctly, you can reach the right members of that audience and leverage Twitter to grow your business.

## Signing up for an account

The first step to becoming a Twitter pro is signing up for an account. It's super fast and really simple. You'll see.

STEP 1.
Open a web browser and go to
[www.twitter.com](www.twitter.com)

STEP 2.
Enter your first and last name, email, and pick a password. Be aware that you should NOT enter your desired *username* in the name box. You'll get to choose a username in the next step. If you are a business owner and the account is for a business then enter the full name of the business as you'd want it to appear if someone looked you up. Here at Clever our name field says "Clever Web Design" but our *username* is "ChooseClever".
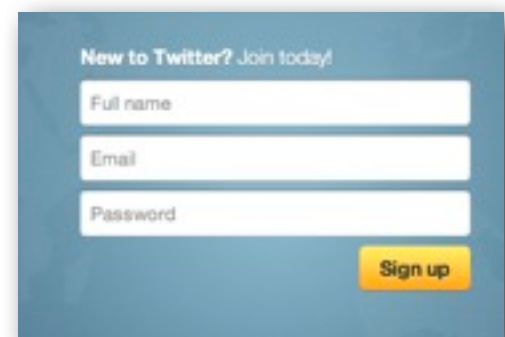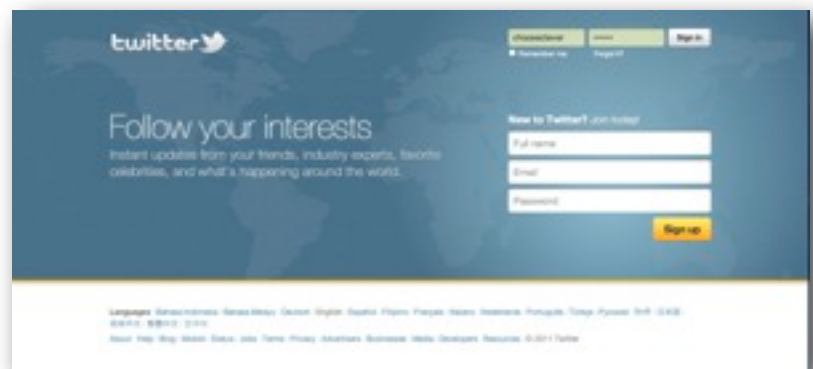
STEP 3.

Now pick a username. You won't always get your first pick so sometimes you have to be a little clever (like us) to get something that fits with your brand. You should make sure to pick a the shortest name possible. On Twitter your messages cannot exceed 140 characters including letters, numbers, spaces, and special characters like *# $ % % ^ !*,  etc. Having a long username means that people who want to communicate with you will have to write much shorter messages. You'll see why later. For now try not to exceed 20 letters for your username. Fill out the rest of the required information and you're in!

REMEMBER! Twitter will send you an email verification. Be sure to look for it and click the link in the message. If you don't verify your account there will be certain restrictions placed on your account.

# Logging in

STEP 1.

Go to twitter.com and click the "Sign in" button at the top. Fill in your info and the rest is pretty self explanatory.

# Fill out your profile info

Your Twitter profile is your face to the world. Having an incomplete or inaccurate profile detracts from your credibility and makes you look like an amateur. The profile and settings aren't as involved as Facebook but they're still important.

This is what people see when they look up your Twitter profile:

It isn't much but it's just enough to get a short message across. Your profile tells people who you are, what you do, and your most recent tweets and followers suggests whether you are worthy of following. Be sure to get a decent logo as your profile picture. This is a critical branding opportunity you don't want to miss.

Let's go through your settings tab by tab. Most of them are very self explanatory so we'll only be pointing out the settings you'll want to pay extra attention to.

*Account Tab*
This is your basic information like your email address and username. The following settings should be checked on for businesses in order to be most secure and as visible as possible:

- *Let others find me by my email address* - You want people to find you. Be sure this is on and that you've signed up with an email address that is public.
- *Add a location to your Tweets* - If you include location information people will know if you're in their area and if you're relevant to their interests. It also helps when people search for you. We recommend you keep this on unless you have a good reason for people not to know the town you're in.
- *Always use HTTPS* - This will ensure you connect to Twitter over a secure SSL encrypted connection. It's generally safer but there isn't as much of a threat to use Twitter without it as some may say. This won't affect your followers and is only used if a secure connection is available.

*Password Tab*
You can change your password here.

*Mobile Tab*
This tab allows you to send Tweets without a mobile app. You can send Tweets via text and people can find you through your business' phone number. This only works for mobile phones with text messaging. The service is free and you'll only pay whatever your cell carrier charges for texting. In our case we have unlimited texting so we never pay, for example.

*Notifications Tab*
You'll definitely want to know when someone new follows you or if someone has mentioned you. You can adjust these settings to get more or less messages over time. We recommend using the defaults then tweaking them as your needs change.

*Profile Tab*
You'll want to completely fill this one out. Make sure to add your logo, the preferred city you'd like to be associated with (though we're located in Joliet we chose Chicago in an effort to communicate that we serve the general Chicago metro area - your location choice depends on your goals. Are you strictly local

or are you looking to be found beyond a 50 mile radius of your location?), your website, and a short bio. Your bio should be short and to the point. Don't write the company history, just let people know your name, what you do, and one special thing about you in that exact order. Your bio should be no more than 3 or 4 sentences at most.

*Design Tab*
The design tab allows you to choose the colors and background image for your profile page. People will see this when visiting your profile. We recommend going with a default setting here or having a professional customize it. Please do not attempt to create a custom theme unless you know exactly what you are doing and even if you believe you have a good eye for design. We're a company that can customize these sorts of things and even we decided to go with one of the default options. They're actually all very fetching and we like them!

*Applications Tab*
As a new user you probably won't know what to do with this. Don't worry. This tab only comes into play if you've authorized certain smartphone or web applications to access your profile. We discuss some of these tools later on in this guide.

# Tweeting

This is what you've signed up for! It's the entire premise behind Twitter. Before we go any further let's talk about Tweeting in terms of what it is exactly.

A Tweet is simply a short message. It's almost exactly like a Status Update on Facebook. You can Tweet a picture, a link, a video, or just text. On Twitter every message you put out there is available for the entire world to see. There is no such thing as a "Friends Only" Tweet when it comes to Twitter. And that's a good thing! That means you are more conscious of brand building and the messages you send. It's also great because it opens up your Tweets to an audience of millions instead of only those who have decided to Like or "Friend" you.

Tweeting is easy! All you have to do is begin typing into the box on your homepage and click Tweet! It looks like this:

**What's happening?**

Hi! We're taking a screenshot of this tweet for a new (free!) guide to Twitter! It'll be on our website along with other Social Guides soon!

0    Tweet

If this box doesn't appear on the page you're on you can always click on the write [✎] button.

**Things to Keep in Mind Whilst Tweeting:**

• You can Tweet a picture by pressing the little camera icon. Your photo will appear as a Tweet in everyone else's stream (the stream is like Facebook's News Feed)

• Your location information can be added by clicking the crosshair icon. This is useful especially if you're Tweeting about something location specific. For example, we might send a tweet about The Taste of Chicago which happens here every year. Since the tweet is about the event we want others to know where we are so we can make friends!

• What do you do about links? Twitter knows that links can be long and take up your entire 140 characters. That's why they've recently integrated a link shortener into their service. Any link you post will be shortened in realtime as you type it, saving you valuable character to add a description. Don't be upset when the link doesn't look anything like the original - that's how link shorteners work and why it's important you let people know where the link will take them.

# Be Social!

Tweeting is no fun if you're doing it alone. That's why Twitter makes it really easy to communicate with others. Before you start @mentioning people (no, that's not a typo) you should make sure you're following the right people and know a few rules of Twitter etiquette.

## Twitter Etiquette (The Short Version)

- Don't spam people or send the same Tweet to large groups of people at once. That's spam and you won't be taken seriously
- Always personalize all messages. Don't just send a message telling someone you're having a 50% off sale. Let them know why you think they'd be interested. The only exception is if this is a person who is very obviously needing your services.
- Don't be stiff! Just because you're a business doesn't mean you have to sound stuffy. Here at Clever we're total pros but we know how to communicate in a way that speaks to you. Notice we said "*to you*" not "*at you*". You can be professional without using big words you've never use in casual conversation.
- Remember that when you Tweet for a company profile you are showing off your company's personality to the world. What kind of personality does your company have? Some really are stuffy and uptight but most are some form of casual. You don't want to come off as a stiff but you also don't want to seem like you're trying too hard to be a young hipster. Just be yourself and everything will work out.

# Being Social (Following and 2-way Communication)

Before you start sending out Tweets you should follow some people. When you sign up for Twitter they will recommend people to follow and, if you let them, will try to find people you already know using your Hotmail, Gmail, or Yahoo email account.

We recommend you only follow people that meet one of the following criteria:

- They are relevant to your business (we follow a ton of programmers and digital media companies)
- They reflect the brand personality (we follow Peewee Herman. Yep, *that* Peewee Herman. It makes sense for us but might not for you. Again, it depends on your brand personality. Kim Kardashian might make sense for you! You never know)
- They aren't spammy or annoying. You know how your mother always told you that you were only as good as the people you surround yourself with? Well, its the same way when you're building a following on Twitter. Eventually you'll be following everyone but we recommend you be choosy in the beginning.

# Messaging and Communication

You may be wondering at this point how you can communicate with others. Well, it's as easy as sending out a tweet! In order to send a message to someone or give them credit for something you do what is called on Twitter, a @mention.

Here's the format for doing it:



The previous image is of us mentioning Sean Parker (yep, the guy from Napster and Facebook) in a Tweet. Once we hit Tweet it will be public and...



... and now Sean Parker will see that we mentioned him on Twitter. He'll get an alert just like you would if someone mentioned you. You'd be surprised at how often celebrities will actually respond to you. Sean can now reply back or send us a DM or Direct Message.

Before we go any further we'll talk about some terminology:

*@mention* - This is how you talk to someone or mention them. You can say "I'm over in Millennium Park with @myFriend" and that is considered a mention.

*@reply* - This is when you prefix a username with the '@' symbol either to send a message or reply to a message. If Sean Parker replies to us then it will considered a reply. In practice there really is no difference in *how* you @mention or @reply. The only difference is context. We (and others) use the terms interchangeably so please don't be confused if you see it used differently elsewhere.

Direct Messaging
DMs are different than @replies or @mentions. The biggest difference is that you can only send Direct Messages to people who are following you. All other messaging except DMs  are totally public and between anyone regardless of whether they follow you or not. Direct Messages are also private, between you and the recipient.

Sending a DM

1. Log in to your account
2. Click on "Messages"
3. Click "New Message"
4. Type the person's name you'd like to message, type your message (you're still limited to 140 characters), and click the button to send!

# Get Followed

Unlike in real life, on Twitter you *want* to be followed. Being followed means that people are subscribing to your tweets. Every one of your tweets will show up in their streams. The hard part is getting followed.

The first thing you'll need to do is follow people as we talked about before. Often times people will follow you back simply for following *them*!

The second way to get a few followers is to tell people about your Twitter account. Make sure you link to your Twitter profile on your business cards, your email signature, your website, and everywhere else you possibly can. Often times people choose to simply use their username instead of a link to their Twitter page. The format is as follows: "@ChooseClever". Simply prefixing the username with the @ symbol lets people know automatically that you're talking about your Twitter account. Putting this on printed material and in email signatures as a link to your Twitter profile are a few of the best places to use this format.

Using the @mention and @reply functionality of Twitter is a great way to make new followers! Follow the people you want to know you and send them a personalized message. Remember the message we sent Sean Parker? That's the kind of thing we want to send to others! It's personal, it isn't soliciting, and it's friendly!

We mentioned it before but it bears repeating. Tell people about your Twitter profile! Shout it from the rooftops! Or at least make sure you link to it on your website, email signature, and on every other profile you have on the web. You can connect your Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter accounts together so that you can cross-post to all 3! This is great for getting people who are your friends on Facebook or LinkedIn but not on Twitter to become followers.

# Getting Noticed

## Best Practices

Every social network has it's unspoken rules for success. In general there are a few principles you need to follow in order to succeed. These are those best practices.

Tweet early, Tweet often
Twitter is great for sharing small amounts of information quickly. Use that functionality to your advantage. Share small things when it makes sense. Did you just land a new client? Tweet about it! Did you just read an article your customers would be interested in? Tweet about it! Are you having a sale?

Tweet about it! Is there a new traffic camera that's set to be much too sensitive in your town? Well, if your business is local then what do you do? You Tweet about it!

Make sure you're tweeting consistently. If you're on Twitter 5 times a day one day then disappear for a month that makes you look erratic and unreliable and people don't want to follow you. Being consistent about when and what you tweet about is one of the most important ways to ensure you steadily increase your following over time.

In addition, the following this next simple set of rules will do wonders for building your business using Twitter:

Share. Share photos and behind the scenes info about your business. Even better, give a glimpse of developing projects and events. Users come to Twitter to get and share the latest, so give it to them! Listen. Regularly monitor the comments about your company, brand, and products.

Ask. Ask questions of your followers to glean valuable insights and show that you are listening.

Respond. Respond to compliments and feedback in real time

Reward. Tweet updates about special offers, discounts and time-sensitive deals.

Demonstrate wider leadership and know-how. Reference articles and links about the bigger picture as it relates to your business.

Champion your stakeholders. Retweet and reply publicly to great tweets posted by your followers and customers.

Establish the right voice. Twitter users tend to prefer a direct, genuine, and of course, a likable tone from your business, but think about your voice as you Tweet. How do you want your business to appear to the Twitter community?

# What Not to Do

Most of the time knowing what not to do is common sense but you'd be amazed at how many people forget common sense online.

• Don't assume people care. You have to give people a reason to care about what you're saying and that means knowing your audience.
• You are not your audience. Remember to give them what *they like* not what *you like*.
• Don't spam. Don't send out a million non-personal messages that people won't care about. For example, "Check OuT OUr 1DaY ONLY SALLEEEE on Matresses! Go to our SpammY WEBSiTe at spam.my/2384". You'll never get a follower again that way.
• Never ignore people. You're a business trying to get more customers. You want to engage with people especially if they try to get in touch with you!
• Don't have all 1-way conversations. It's okay to post some one sided things but you should always be actively trying to get people to contact you. Ask questions and engage with others above all else.

# Tools for Efficiency

## Twitter for Business

Twitter offers a great set of tools for businesses who want to raise brand or product awareness. There are a variety ways they let you advertise but in all honesty, these are not usually suitable for small businesses. If you want to start using Twitter's paid business tools be prepared to spend a minimum of $5,000 (monthly!) for these services. They're certainly well worth it but for the same price you could be running an amazing online advertising campaign complete with social media optimization, SEO, a brand new website, and more! Just in case you're curious we'll go over the basics real quick here.

Promoted Tweets
A promoted tweet is, well, a tweet that is promoted above all others. In essence its like any other tweet you'd send out except twitter shoves it into everyone's feed whether they're following you or not. You'd

better have a damn good tweet for $5,000. The idea is that whatever you promote through that tweet gets a lot of attention. This would work best for a link or some sort of media tweet such as a video or photo.

Promoted Trends
We didn't really cover trends in this document so here's a quick definition: a trend on Twitter is simply a topic that people are talking about – a lot. It's usually prefixed by a # (hash) symbol. This kind of trend is called a hash tag and it looks like this: "#someTrend". If you promote a trend it would most likely have something to do with your business. Let's say you sell snow blowers. You could promote a "#iHateShoveling" trend in January. Everyone hates shoveling, your trend will pick up steam, and you get lots of attention and followers.

Promoted Accounts
If you purchase a promoted account Twitter puts you at the top of the list of people they recommend to follow for new or already established Twitterers. You will also appear on various profile pages and throughout the site as someone people should follow. The danger with this, as with all Twitter for Business advertising, is that you run the risk of seeming lame to others on Facebook. You see, Twitter was, from the beginning, known for being able to spontaneously make people, trends, and tweets popular virally. People would voluntarily share profiles, tweets, and trends with others. Paying for promotions means that there is a special symbol next to your promoted tweet, trend, or account that shows that you are paying for the promotion. Many purists despise anything or anyone becoming popular through advertising rather than organically. Despite these purists promoted tweets, accounts, and trends still do very well. We only mention the purists for full discloser and so that you know what you're getting into before you shell out all that money.

# On the Go

The Twittersphere is a fast-paced world where thousands of tweets are broadcast every second. You can't be at your computer every second nor can you be on Twitter constantly. That said, there are ways to be connected to Twitter when you're on the go and you should take full advantage of them as they can actually be a quicker, more efficient way to tweet.

Twitter for iPhone and Android

The official Twitter app for iOS (iPhone, iPod, iPad) and Android are a great way to keep up with Twitter on the go. You already know you can tweet by text but these apps allow you to check notifications when someone mentions or DMs you in a visual way. You have all the facilities of Twitter's website right on your phone.

Other Apps
TweetDeck and HootSuite are two very popular apps by independent developers. TweetDeck is a paid app while HootSuite is free. We personally prefer HootSuite over any other app with the official Twitter app being a close second. HootSuite and TweetDeck both allow you to check multiple accounts, post to Facebook simultaneously, and even schedule tweets for certain times. We recommend you play with these apps yourself to find the best fit for you and don't forget that Twitter's site is also optimized for mobile browser in case you'd rather not install any apps at all.

# Tools of the Twade

Besides the mobile apps there are a variety of other applications that work along with Twitter to help you make the experience more convenient. We'll only show you a couple but there are hundreds more out there.

Brizzly
Brizzly is a web application that allows you to combine your Facebook and Twitter feeds into one manageable application. Brizzly's strength is its ability to let you put certain people on "mute". This means that you won't see a certain overzealous Tweeter or Facebooker's posts for a while once they begin to get annoying. You define what qualifies as "annoying".

Buffer

Buffer is a great app that lets you submit as many Tweets as you'd like and have them spread out of scheduled at any time you specify. Buffer is great for planners. If you're the type who'd like to write an entire week's worth of posts in a single night then Buffer is your new best friend. Just submit your week's (or month's or even year's) worth of Tweets to Buffer, set the buffer or schedule, and your Tweets go on autopilot.

# The End

If you need help using Twitter or have questions about something we haven't covered here, feel free to get in touch any time. Contact information is located in the footer of each page.