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How to make money online: Do It Yourself E-Commerce

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NEVER store your customers financial details.

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For Valerie...

How to make money online.

Why I wrote this book

This guide was inspired by the worsening treatment and wages of employees all around the globe. I am a regular guy. I was working in a supermarket and I'd simply had enough of being pushed around by a boss who cared very little and paid even less. In 2007 I decided enough was enough. I started an ecommerce business. I don't need a job any more.

I am not an IT expert! I was not what you might consider 'a business man'. If you are looking for in depth business theory or professional analysis of web technologies; this guide is NOT for you. If you want a step by step, click by click, guide on how to set up and run an online business, that actually makes money and provides genuine goods and services, then How to make money online IS for you.

Now is the perfect time to start your own e-commerce business. With the big names struggling with financial turbulence and bloated infrastructure, the home/small office business is perfectly placed to take a huge chunk of the market away from the 'big boys'.

This guide is designed for ANYBODY who aspires to running their own internet business. It is not a get rich quick scheme and genuine hard work and business discipline is required to make this work for you.

It is especially useful for people with little or no e-commerce experience as it takes a step by step approach.

All you need to succeed with this guide is a little experience with a web browser and Windows and a truck load of desire to be the boss!

Achieve your business dreams!

Social Media Marketing



Including

- Introduction to social media
- Facebook
- MySpace
- Twitter
- Social media conclusion

*"Its not what you know,
but who you know!"*

Unknown?!

Introduction to social media marketing

What is social media and does it matter?

Social media is a very broad term that covers anything that can be considered media, for example, video, music, images, even textual information. What makes it social is the way, by whom and for whom it is created. So much of the web can be considered social media. However we tend to consider the social media web sites, which specifically facilitate and encourage the production, distribution and consumption of social media to be the 'real' social media. And quite right to if you consider the meaning of social.

The web sites I am referring to are the likes of YouTube, FaceBook, MySpace, Twitter and more. We will specifically look at 3 of the 4 above mentioned sites. Why? We will not cover YouTube because although there are marketing opportunities on the worlds biggest video sharing web site the means to utilising these opportunities are very simple and the knowledge and experience you gain from learning about the other 3 will stand you in good stead for promoting your business on YouTube. In fact, as you will see they are, to an extent, interlinked.

What is social media marketing and why does it need its own section?

So to answer the question above, social media marketing is simply the marketing of goods, services or brand using social media. We will take a whirlwind introduction to the top 3 web sites. We will find out about the type of people on these sites, how to interact with them, create a lasting credible presence and sell to them! As with so many topics in this book it is impossible to give a 100% complete coverage to any of these web sites. However you should certainly be able to get your business onto them and interacting in a profitable way by the end of each individual websites section.

You will then be able to decide how much time, if any, you devote in your schedule to ongoing activity and interaction on each of the sites. Also you may just find that you enjoy your time spent socialising in cyberspace! If that happens, then almost certainly you HAVE found a perfect marketing channel for your business.

The different social media platforms

All the social media sites compete for users. They offer and adapt to demand as well as developing new ideas that they hope will bring them a bigger audience. The bigger their user base the more they can charge their advertisers. So all the social networking sites WANT YOU. But! And it is a big but. Don't spoil their user experience, which upsets their advertising. More later. And in case the word *advertisers* has sent you scurrying to hide your chequebooks, don't worry. 99% of everything we discuss in this section is about marketing for free! We will briefly look at the paid advertising opportunities on 2 of the 3 major social media sites however.

The top 3 social media sites, as previously mentioned are Facebook, MySpace and Twitter. I will now make some extremely sweeping generalisations in order to approximately define and differentiate between them.

The 'biggest' is MySpace. MySpace is probably the most visual of the 3. You can quickly and easily upload, videos, music, fancy backgrounds and adverts you *YourSpace*. You can also blog and interact in other ways as well. The key, as with all of these web sites is building a connected community, referred to with different terminology on each site, who you can expose to your space and other marketing antics. The nature of the site makes it perfect for very visual campaigns. There are lots of bands, movie makers and similar on

MySpace.

FaceBook is arguably the most refined. It involves a much more subtle user interface, much less in-your-face and is probably the most interactive. I say this because just about anything you do, say or add to Facebook is broadcast to your network of friends. This is great from a marketing perspective but has significant potential drawbacks as well. FaceBook user base, like MySpace is extremely varied but because of it's roots as a campus networking site has a dominant graduate/post-graduate community. Of course just because you have or have tried to get a college qualification doesn't necessarily put you in a particular box. It does have a big influence on the overall demographics as a whole however. I am guessing there is a very small minority of senior citizens and most of them are probably old professors.

Twitter is very different from both of the other 2. You do have a personal space where you can choose the colour, style and background to promote your business but it is very limited and the method of interacting is very simple, succinct and subtle. Twitter, like the others involves building a network. In this case you have followers and you can follow people. You can also send short text messages known as tweets. These are broadcast to all your followers. No video, music, big banner ads etc. Don't be put off by this. In my opinion Twitter has the biggest potential for a rapid, successful and ongoing campaign. The demographic is less clear than the other social sites but it is widely thought to contain a significant population of adult professionals. People who are NOT easily fooled, NOT easily sold to but who have the ability, when the right product and offer is put in front of them in the right way to spend plenty. The population on Twitter is the smallest of the 3 but it still runs into millions. I have refrained from stating population statistics because they vary so much and change so quickly.

Anyway. On with the show. First up is FaceBook.

Facebook

What is Facebook?

FaceBook is a social networking site. You can join for free and then use the FaceBook interfaces to communicate 1-1 or broadcast to your network of FaceBook friends. Obviously you have to create your network first but FaceBook makes this nice and easy.

Getting on to Facebook?

First things first. You need to sign up for a FaceBook account. Go to www.facebook.com and fill in the required information where indicated in the next screen shot and click the sign up button. There are 3 steps to getting started I suggest you skip the step titled “Are any of your friends already on FaceBook”. The reason for this is we are not ready yet to have people contacting us and viewing our information. So click **Skip this step** and move on. We want to skip the next step as well. So just click **Save and continue**. Last but not least skip the location request. The reason we have done this is so we can prepare you for visitors. When people view your FaceBook information we want then to see a professional business. Not a blank page. We will revisit the information we have skipped later.

Now you need to check your email to confirm your new account.

facebook

☐ Remember Me [Forgot your password?](#)

Email

Facebook helps you connect and share with the people in your life.

Sign Up
It's free and anyone can join

Full Name:

Your Email:

New Password:

I am:

Birthday: Month: Day: Year:

[Why do I need to provide this?](#)

[To create a page for a celebrity, band or business, click here.](#)

Social media marketing - The FaceBook sign up page

Your profile

Now we will fill out a few elements of your profile. Sign into FaceBook with your new account. In the top menu click on **Profile**. This is how people will see you. So obviously there is some work to be done.

Privacy

Obviously you want as many people as possible to find out about you and your business. However, you might not want everybody to see your age, email or something else you might consider personal. Click on **Edit my profile** underneath the space reserved for you picture. Here you can choose if you want to make public information like your age, sex and birthday. Click on **Contact information** and you can click the padlock graphic next to individual bits of information and choose if you want to keep them private. I keep things like my email private from everyone, including friends. FaceBook, as we will soon see, provides a multitude of ways for people to get in touch. There is no need for anyone to have my personal email. You decide what is best for you. At the bottom of this page is the website section. Here I would enter the URL for your website and make it visible to everyone. After all, that is why we are doing this.

On the Edit My Profile page you will see lots of other options for you to give information about yourself. Anything you fill out will give visitors to your profile some more information about you. So I would suggest filling in any of the sections relevant to your specific business. So for example you might want to fill in something for “about me” and “interests” but most likely leave the “TV shows”, “Music” and “Movies” sections blank. You decide what is relevant to you. On the “Contact Information” tab you need to decide if it is advisable or necessary for FaceBook contacts to have things like phone number or address. I leave them all blank because I want all contact to be through my website. You decide what will work for you. If you are unsure, leave it blank. You can always change your mind later and fill it in.

The one thing you should certainly do is put a main profile photo on. Ideally this should be your actual photo because this can help build trust with your new friends but a logo or caricature will do if your shy. Like me. Hover over the picture and click on change picture. Then browse to the image of your choice and your done.

What can you do on Facebook?

Quick profile 'tabs' features summary

Wall – If you look on your profile page you will see the 'wall' tab. This can be considered the cyberspace equivalent of a real wall where anybody who knows where the wall is can post messages on it. As we will see however unlike a real wall, because it is your wall you have some control over what and who can read it and and write to it. Click the wall tab now.

Click into the box labelled 'whats on your mind'. Very simply you can write exactly what you want here. And it will appear on your wall for all to see. Notice also that when you clicked into the box you are given the option to add a link, perhaps to a specific web page that relates to your comment, a photo or a video. With the photo and video options you are asked to choose between uploading a one or making/taking one right there and then with a web cam. There are more options for your wall which are quite interesting. So take a look at the next screen shot and then read on.

The screenshot shows the Facebook 'What's on your mind?' section and the 'Profile Story Comments' settings. Numbered annotations are placed as follows:

- 1**: Points to the text input box for 'What's on your mind?'.
- 2**: Points to the 'Add:' section with icons for Link, Photos, and Video.
- 3**: Points to the 'Available Sites' list under 'Imported Stories:'.
- 4**: Points to the 'Auto-Expand Comments:' checkbox, which is checked.
- 5**: Points to the 'Who can see posts made by friends?' dropdown menu, which is set to 'Only Friends'.

Other visible elements include the 'Share' button, 'John + Friends', 'Just John', 'Just Friends', 'Settings', 'Stories Posted by You', 'Profile Story Comments', 'Stories Posted by Friends', 'Posting Ability', 'Combine Posts', and 'Application settings'.

Social Media Marketing – FaceBook 'Wall' options

Above I have labelled parts of the screen shot to be able to quickly explain the options you have here.

1. Where you type your content for your wall.
2. Options to add links, photos and video.
3. Facebook can import your content automatically as it is added on other websites or even your own blog RSS feed.
4. When friends comment on your wall you can choose if their comments are automatically displayed or if readers will need to click and expand the view to show comments. I would wait and see how your wall shapes up and decide what looks best.
5. Here you can choose to allow or not, friends to post comments on your wall, if anybody, or only friends can view those comments and, if viewable the format they will appear in.

So as you can see the wall is a great place to communicate, chat and get your message across. You can also get valuable feedback but potentially criticism and negativity. However, as you can see you can control the ability to leave these messages and also the ability of others to read them. The wall is a major feature and focal point of all FaceBook profiles and needs to be cared for like a real wall. With well planned and stylish graffiti and occasional re-painting. Lets move on.

Info- We covered this tab previously. You can edit and make private certain elements of personal information.

Events- Your first thought might be, where is my Events tab. All the rest of the tabs explained here need to be added in the way described next. Click the + button on the tabs menu and add the Events tab. Now lets take a look at it. Here you will see a blank page asking if you want to create an event. Events are just that. Events you can advertise yourself or go along to other peoples. In the next section we will learn how to find and subscribe to other peoples events and the final section on marketing on FaceBook I will show you how to create and organise your very own event. Should you wish to. An event can be anything from a picnic at the park to a special discount day on your website.

Notes- Add the notes tab in the usual way and read on. They are called notes because that's what they are in their simplest form. However as we will see in a moment you have the options to turn them into quite advanced, formatted documents. Click on the **write a new note** button. You can now type a title for your new note and of course the note itself. At the underneath where you type your note there is a drop down box where you can specify the visibility of your new note. You can specify that only friends see it, friends and friends of friends, everyone or you can click **customize** and choose just you. There is another option here as well. You can choose any of the previous settings and in addition block specific FaceBook users by name.

Underneath the main body of your note there is a 'customize your note' option. Click on it to see simple instructions for producing a more stylish web page style note by adding HTML code. Even easier than this would be to refer back to the instructions for creating your first simple web site and use NVU to create the HTML for you.

Video- Upload, or record live a video.

Finding other peoples stuff on FaceBook

There is millions of pages on FaceBook and they can be approximately divided into a few distinct types or areas. Have a look at the types of information and their format below.

Browsing groups- Have a look at the menu bar which FaceBook neatly locks at the bottom of your browser window. Hover your mouse over the icons to the left. We will now explore some of these. Groups is first up. Click on the **groups icon** now. There is a group (or 50) for just about everything on FaceBook. You can use the search by typing in a keyword and looking for a very specific group or click on 'browse groups' to see the huge range, volume and diversity of groups. Click on **browse groups** and we will explore a little.

How to make money online - Do it yourself e-commerce

The screenshot displays the Facebook 'Browse Groups' interface. At the top, the navigation bar includes 'facebook', 'Home', 'Profile', 'Friends', 'Inbox', and a search bar. Below the navigation bar, there's a 'Back to Groups' link and a 'Help' link. The main section is titled 'Browse Groups' and shows a list of groups. The first group is 'TROVA IL TUO SOSIA GRAZIE FACEBOOK...cerca tra le foto a chi somigli' with 1,724,614 members. The second group is 'Hz. Muhammed (SAV) Ümmeti 5.000.000 kişi aranyor! Lütfen Arkdaş Listele Gel' with 497,280 members. To the right of the group list is a 'Filter groups by:' section with dropdowns for 'Network' (Global) and 'Type' (Common Interest), and a list of 'Subtype' categories. On the far right, there are advertisements for 'Free Bingo - Real Cash' and 'Windows Live'.

Social Media Marketing – Exploring FaceBook groups.

Down the left hand side you can see the most popular groups and in the column before the right hand advertising you will see the group categories. Click on one that has some relevance to your business and see the way the category is sub-divided. Click about for a bit explore some groups and then read on.

Anybody can create a group (more later). When a group is created its creator defines certain criteria. Including if the group open, closed or secret. If a group is open, you guessed it, you can join. If it is closed you have to request to join and if it is secret you will know nothing about it. Secret groups are all cool and funky for conversing with college buddies but probably have limited use in the world of marketing so we will say no more about them. When you visit a group page you will quickly see what they are all about and if you want to join. Here is a description of a typical groups page.

Right at the top is the groups name and network. Global means it is open to

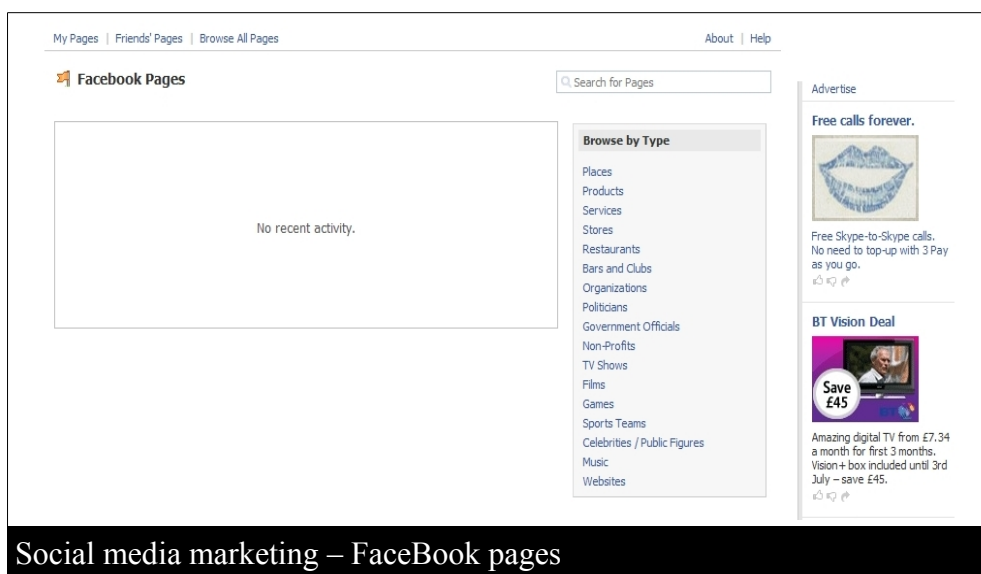
everybody anywhere. A more specific network specification means it is only open to people from that network. Next on the page is the groups recent news followed by images and links to the groups most recent members. Below that is links to the most recent discussion board topics. Click on a link to view all of that topic or click on **see all** to be taken to a list of all discussion topics for this group. Next on the page is the groups 'wall' which works in the same way as your wall except it is relevant to the group and similarly for photos and videos.

Really interesting, want to get to know some people in the group, want to tell them about you and your business? Yes, click on **join this group** just underneath the groups photo at the top of the groups page. A link to the group is added to your profile page and any friends browsing groups will have the group suggested to them. No, move on a look for more appropriate groups. Trust me there are some groups relevant to your business. More on groups and how to market to them soon.

Pages- Pages, as the name implies are web pages you can visit or create within the Facebook site. They, like any other web page can be about almost anything. We will now see how to search and explore pages and later we will look at creating pages to add to your marketing presence on Facebook.

When you find a page you like you can click a button to become a fan. You can also 'share' page with a friend to give them the opportunity to view and become a fan of the page. When you, or anyone else for that matter, is a fan of a page the page's image appears fairly prominently on your profile page. This gives further visibility to the page when people are visiting their friends profiles, as you do on Facebook. So where are all these pages.

You could start by visiting some friends profiles and seeing if they have become a fan of any pages. But what if you have no friends or your friends are not fans of the pages you want to visit. Type www.facebook.com/pages in your web browser and you should see the screen similar to the next screen shot.




Social media marketing – FaceBook pages

As you can see you have a 'recent activity' section that shows you where you have been recently in case you forget to bookmark that gem. You can browse by page type or, as you would expect you can search by key word. Have a browse or a search now, find a page you are interested in and then come back and see me.

OK. On the top left of the page you will notice an image, or at least a space for one. You will also see tabs across the top like, wall, info, photos and maybe some more. You will see, underneath the pages image there are links to the profiles of some of the pages fans. Familiar? Yes a page is simply another format, and a similar one to the others that can be used to get your message across. Like your profile you can add and remove tabs depending upon what messages you want to get across and set can set permissions in the same way to control (or not) the level input other Facebook users can have over the page. We will look at this in more detail when we create your page soon. For now, just notice that you can become a fan of a page by clicking **become a fan** next to the page title, top centre. You can also share a page with a friend or friends by clicking suggest to a friend in the left hand column. This is how the presence of a good page can spread around the Facebook community and of course should be the objective for your pages. More later.

Events- Events are exactly what they say. Anybody can create an event page. The event page can then be visited by Facebook members and they can interact with it. They can learn about the event, register attendance or put themselves down as a maybe. The manner and amount of interaction is determined by the creator of the event page. Event pages like regular pages turn up on the profiles of people who have registered an interest in the event as well on the profile of the person who created the event. Events can be anything from a presidential election to a walk in the park or a special discount day on a web site. You are beginning to see the potential here? Anyway lets browse a few events to understand them a bit more and we will look to create one a bit later.

Type anything in the search bar to bring up the Facebook search page and then click the 'events' tab to see all events. You can refine your search of course to search for events relating to a specific keyword. If there is not an event tab when you refine your search that is because there are no matching events. Broaden your keyword and try again. When you find an event it might look something like this.

**Hound Dog Homecoming**
A carnival-like event for dogs and dog lovers!

Host: CMHS
Type: Causes - Fundraiser
Network: Global

Date: Sunday, June 28, 2009
Time: 11:00am - 2:00pm
Location: The Central Missouri Humane Society
Street: 616 Big Bear Blvd.
City/Town: Columbia, MO
[View Map](#)

Phone: 5734433893
Email: VOLUNTEER@CMHSPETS.ORG

Description


Please join the Central Missouri Humane Society June 28th from 11-2 p.m. at 616 Big Bear Blvd. for Hound Dog Homecoming, a carnival-like event for dogs and dog lovers! We invite you and all of your friends for a day of fun and games including: bobbing for hot dogs, musical sit, Paivassio paintings, kissing booth, Microchips/nail clips

Contests including:
Best Dressed
Biggest Shedder
Most Unique
Best Trick

...And loads more!...

Do you think that your dog has what it takes to be crowned King, Queen or member of the 2009 Royal Court? We are calling all Dashing Dogs and Divas! The competition begins... This year CMHS is seeking our 2009 Hound Dog Homecoming King, Queen and Royal Court. Interested in how to win? It's easy. Each dollar is a vote so collect the most money on behalf of CMHS and your dog will be crowned King or Queen! Winners announced at our event on June 28th at 616 Big Bear Blvd.

For more information, and event registration, please visit www.cmhs pets.org.



[Share](#) [Export](#)

Your RSVP




☐ Attending
☐ Maybe Attending
☐ Not Attending

Other Information

• Guests are allowed to bring friends to this event.



Other Invites

Maybe Attending (11) [See All](#)



Julie Schultz Celeste Miller Nicole Barkley

Not Attending (2)




Advertise

Advertise on Facebook

Facebook Ads


Reach over 200 million active users on Facebook. Learn how to connect your business to real customers through Facebook Ads.

Broadband and Free Laptop



Free laptop with mobile broadband from £20 per month. Compare deals from Vodafone, 3, O2, Orange and T-Mobile.

Vue at Home Summer Sale



Products from £1.50 when you spend £25 or more on cosmetics, jewellery or homeware

Hopefully the organisers of the 'hound dog homecoming' event will not object to me using there event page as an example. It aptly demonstrates how literally any event can be publicised on Facebook.

Here are your main options once you have chosen an event. Remember that the precise options will vary depending upon how the organiser has configured their event. More on that later. In the top section of the page you can see the event title, date and location. On the right top is the event picture. In this case a couple of cute fluffy dogs. Underneath the fluffy dogs you can see you have the option to share the event with other Facebook users. Under that you can see you have the option to say if you are attending, or not. And below this is a brief summary of links to Facebook profiles of people attending and otherwise. To the left is the event description and below that the other features of the event page. In this case a 'wall' and 'photos' section.

I am sure you can see the potential of Facebook events for almost any business. What about a big discount day for your web site? More later. Lets quickly cover 2 more Facebook features to finish familiarizing with exactly what can be done and then we will move on to actually how to use all these features we have, up until now only been looking at.

Applications- We have already looked at applications. That is all the default tabs on your Facebook profile, wall, photos, video etc are applications. What is cool is you can add applications to your profile and your Facebook pages, but not groups. In the bottom left of your Facebook page click the **applications** button and select **browse applications** then we will explore further. WOW. There is loads here. You can get an application to advertise and remind you about friends birthdays, play music or games and much more. In the next section we will track down some genuinely useful applications and use them. Just have a browse now and click on some of the different categories to get an idea of the huge range of Facebook applications available.

How to market your business on Facebook

Introduction

Now you have had a good look at all the significant features on Facebook it is time to start utilizing them in order to make money. You have probably noticed that there is no checkout or place order facility on Facebook. Therefore it is probably obvious that to successfully market to Facebook users we need to convince them to visit our web site in order to make a profit. We do this by using all the profile features, wall, photos, videos etc. As well as the Facebook features like groups, pages and events. By creating content that interests people at the same time as directing them to your web site where you can actively sell them your wares. Be aware that I said “content that interests people.”

It is no good churning out uncomplaining announcements, photos, pages and events. You have to target and capture your audience. Then provide something worthwhile for them. This could be entertainment, advice or just compelling information but it must be of genuine interest.

Spam warning

Simple. Just about anything you say on Facebook which is broadcast to someone else can be reported, at the click of a button to Facebook. If Facebook agrees and deems it necessary they will delete your account. If you were new to Facebook and made this mistake you could quite simply start another profile and learn from your mistakes. But if you had spent weeks building your contacts and pages as well as promoting events this would be a disastrous waste of time. Before you send messages make sure they are not unsolicited or blatant advertising. We will work our way through your profile facilities and Facebook features using each of them to generate friends and marketing material in non spam manner. But it is important to know from the start what a simple, over zealous slip of the mouse could do.

Using your profile features

Here goes. Lets build up a bit of content on your profile so that when you get your first friends they have something to read and get their teeth into. Log into your Facebook account. In the text box under the message 'What's on your mind' type, well, whatever you want. Think about what your future friends are going to see. Keep it focussed on your goals but not blatant advertising and

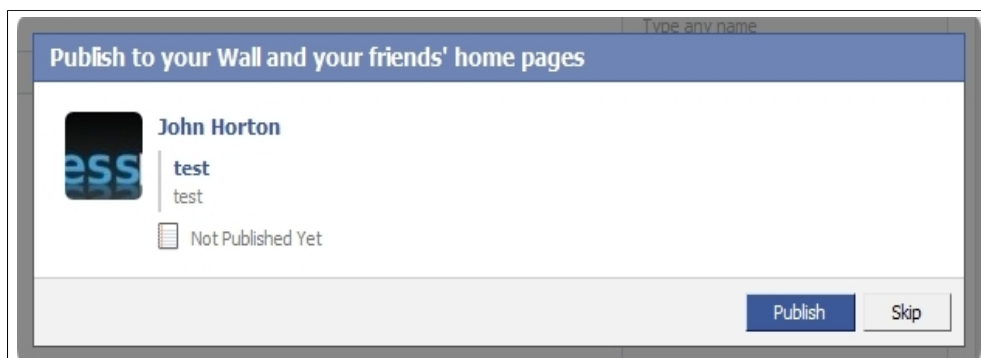
unless you are supremely confident in your Facebook networking abilities I would try and be humble. Here is what a business selling fluffy teddies might write.

This is my first comment after joining Facebook. I am an enthusiast for everything to do with toys. Especially teddy bears and the like. I hope to be joining up with anybody who is into or appreciates our fluffy friends and even if your not I am interested in making friends.

Then click on the link button and type the URL of your website. The Facebook system will suggest a thumbnail image from your site to accompany your message. Hit **share** and your done.

Now to add some photos. These could be product photos or anything relevant to your business. Click on **profile > photos > create album** and follow the simple steps to upload as many photos as you like. Set who has access and save your album.

Now we will add a note. Click the notes tab. Remember the advanced formatting options we mentioned previously. Why not create something pretty in NVU and then copy and paste the html code. Decide who should be able to read your note, usually everyone if your trying to get noticed and click publish. Notice the pop up message below.



Social media marketing – Facebook Notes pop-up message.

Simply this is asking you if you want to have your new note on your wall and your friends as well. Everything on Facebook is viral, that is, it spreads like a virus. This is good news from a marketing perspective but stop and ponder this for one moment. Is your note a shameless advert or a thoughtful piece of information. When you click publish your friends will see your new note on their pages! Will they think it is just spam? If too many people think so this is a problem. The real essence of marketing on Facebook is to make your content decent.

Ask yourself if you would want someone else to leave that message on your wall. If your not sure you can press skip. The note is still published in your notes tab and people visiting your profile can see it there. If other people will think its great share it, if not, but you still want to make the information available skip and just leave the note on your profile.

Click on videos to add videos. What I like about this is you can record direct from your web cam to Facebook. No messing with video cables, movie software and different recording formats. Just click record and save.

So now you have a nice looking profile with a photo, some wall content of different types what you need now is some friends to share it with.

Building your network of friends

First up you might already know some people who are on Facebook who you want to be your friends. That s great click on **invite friends to join Facebook** on the right hand side of your main page. You can then enter a comma separated list of email addresses and a message. Think carefully before you invite all your personal contacts. Do you want them all as friends to your business? Yes? Go ahead. If you use web mail by one of the main providers you can import your entire contacts list by clicking on the appropriate icon to the right. If you use Outlook Express, try this.

Open Outlook Express. Select **File >Export > Address Book > Text File (CSV)**. Now enter a name for a new text file, 'list' or similar and browse to a

location on your PC where you want the file to be made. Click **Next** and un-check every single box except 'email address'. Click **next**, open up the newly created file, copy and paste it into the box on Face book. Remember to type something in the message box and click **Invite**.

Facebook automatically determines if that person is already on Facebook. If they are it sends a friend request. If they are not it sends them an invitation to join Facebook. Now sit back and wait for the replies. If somebody accepts your friend request or joins and accepts, whichever is appropriate then they will be sent to your profile page for a quick look. You will also receive an email confirming that a friend request has been accepted. Now log into your Facebook account and you can see on your page that you have a friend. You can now visit your new friends page and nose around (to the extent they allow).

If you click on the friends link in the top menu bar you can manage your friends into lists. Quite handy when you have thousands of them. And you will.

Seeking out new friends

Next we are going to look at 2 great ways to make friends with people we don't know yet. We will use everything we have learned about the features on Facebook. Pages, groups etc. At this stage we will not be creating our own pages, groups etc but we will soon. And for sure, when you create quality content using these features you will get friend requests. But what we are going to do now is target other peoples content and interact with it.

The 2 ways we will make friends is passively and actively. Passively is we will simply put our face about in places appropriate to our business and wait for the friend requests to come rolling in and actively we will seek out users in appropriate places and therefore (hopefully) with appropriate interests and send them a friend request.

Try something like this. Do a search for something related to your industry on Facebook. If you get hundreds of results then make your search more specific. As an example I did a search for 'Zen Cart'. Up popped several groups and pages. I also did a search for "Teddy Bears" and found hundreds of every type

of Facebook content. Including several pages of events, dozens of groups and pages and even users and applications. Start to explore all these possibilities and anything that's relevant, interact with it. Become a fan of pages, join (or request to join) groups, subscribe to events etc. Your profile picture will magically spring up everywhere you interact giving lots of focus to your Facebook content. That covers passive now active.

On each of these pages, groups and events there will be lists of fans, members etc. Click on 1 or 2 and send a friend request. Don't do thousands all at once, just do 1 or 2 to gauge if you get a warm response. If you do do some more. I can't stress enough that the objective is to get quality not quantity. If you manage to get 1000 new friends who aren't really interested in your content and report you for spam every time you post to your wall you have achieved nothing. But if you make 10 friends over the course of a week and they genuinely have the same interests as you and 1000's of friends who will be snooping your pages and sending you friend requests then you have pulled off a marketing coup!

The process of seeking out new friends for your network, like SEO, PPC etc should be a gradual ongoing process. Not a one off blast. Do a bit now and then add social networking to your list of weekly or monthly jobs. Now we will look at creating your own groups, pages and events. All of which, if done right will bring you new friends. And when someone voluntarily interacts with your group, page or event it is a good sign they are genuinely interested in your message. On with the show.

Creating Facebook groups

You already know what a group is, have probably joined a few, now its time to make your own. Here is how. Click on the **groups** icon on the bottom menu bar of your Facebook page. Then click the **create new group button**. Next there is a self explanatory form to be filled in. Be as specific as you can especially in the description box to make it clear exactly what your new group is for. If you don't want to fill out the email and address fields that is fine. Click **Create Group** when your done. Next you need to configure your new group.

First off you need to choose and upload a graphic to represent your group. Then you need to configure the permissions new members will have. Obviously consider all the options carefully but I would start with having the options as open as possible to encourage participation. You can always restrict what is allowed if it becomes necessary later. And don't forget to add your web site URL in the box provided. That is why we are here after all. When your ready click **Save**.

The final option before your group made is to decide, as we did with notes earlier if you want all group activity to be posted on your friends walls. Yes equals maximum exposure but the risk of offending and being reported for spam, skip to play safe. Group members will still receive updates. Any doubts click skip but if you are confident your group is going to be of interest to the exact same people who will be your friends then go for it and click publish. You decide.

You now have the option to invite people to your new group with exactly the same options as when you where inviting people to friends previously. If you have a list of people to invite, great, do so. If not don't worry your group can be found in searches and from the Facebook pages of yourself and any future members.

Before we move on look at the tabs at the top of the screen. Group info, officers, members, invite. Those tabs are self explanatory (except officers) and allow you to revisit any of the options you previously configured. Officers allows you to appoint a member to have administrative functions for your group.

Now when you click on the groups icon in the bottom menu bar you will see your group listed. If you click on it you will see the group page and on the right hand side all your options for managing your group. Be sure to add a little content to your group page so that anybody who stumbles upon it can see what you are all about. Especially notice a really powerful feature. "Message All Members". This can be used to send relevant and occasionally promotional messages to your groups members. Remember if somebody voluntarily joined your group and your group description was clear, full and accurate there is a very good chance these people will be open to your marketing messages. You still have to make sure your offers are relevant and not spammy however.

Notice there is a link to “Create a related event”. Events can be stand alone but it almost always makes sense to make an event related to a group. So click click **Create related event** and read on.

Creating Facebook events

So what could your event be? Most likely a special offer day, or week on your web site. A word of warning. If you do this make it genuinely special or you will likely be criticised. It doesn't have to be anything to do with your website it could be a local thing like a product demonstration day. What your event is is only limited by your imagination.

One word about timing. If you have none or very few friends or group members there is obviously no point creating an event for a weeks time. Plan something in the future to give you time to register lots of attendees.

Fill out the self-explanatory form. When it comes to location, this can be your web site url, perhaps a specific url www.mydomain/specialevent. Or similar. Again, you don't need to give a physical address if you don't want to. Make the description as clear and specific as possible and your done.

Click **Create Event**. The next page is much the same as when you configured your group. And I suggest leaving it as open as possible to encourage involvement. You can always tighten up later if you need to. The only default setting you will probably want to change is the check-box labelled “publicise”. I am guessing you do want your event to turn up in the Facebook search results. If you do, check the box. Click **Save** when done.

Once again you have to decide if the updates for your event should appear on all your friends walls. I would probably say no this one unless you are sure everybody will want regular updates. Next you have the option to invite friends. When your ready click the tab, **finish and view**.

On the left of the event page you have all your management options including

cancelling or amending the details and the all powerful “messaging guests”. Good luck with your first event.

Creating Facebook pages

You already know what a page is, have probably become a fan of a few, now its time to make your own. Here is how. In the bottom left corner click on the **Pages Icon**. From the options select **Create FaceBook page**. Next check the box labelled **Brand, Product or Organization**. Go through the really simple set up process and create your page. The content should be unique and related to your business or main service/product.

You can now promote your page amongst your friends, update and add to your page and collect 'fans' of your page who can be marketed to in the same way as with your regular Facebook content.

Advertising

Facebook also offers you the opportunity to advertise. You have probably noticed the adverts that accompany every single Facebook page on the right hand side? You can create and pay for adverts that specifically target a demographic on Facebook. I never use them, because so far I haven't had a business I would consider appropriate for these adverts. All the methods we have talked about so far for marketing on Facebook are about seeking out and attracting a very specific interest group for our business.

In my view the Facebook advertising system does not allow this to a refined enough extent to make them worthwhile. Advertising on Facebook might be worthwhile for your business if you have a product or service which appeals to a very wide range of a specific demographic. Does your product appeal to a large majority of people a specific age range. Yes? Give the advertising a trial. No? I think you are better off with Google Adwords targeting people by keyword. If you do give it a try it is very simple and intuitive to set up. Just remember to set a small budget to test things out first. Click on ads and pages

icon in the bottom menu bar to get started.

Applications

There are thousands of Facebook applications. They can be added to a profile or page. What is best for your business can only be discovered by searching. However, here I will show you how to locate and install an application that hopefully you will agree has a benefit to most businesses. This will demonstrate how to search for applications and show how quick and simple they are to install. OK lets do it.

Click on the **applications** button, bottom left and select **browse more applications**. In the search apps box type “Visual Bookshelf” and press **enter**. Check out the description and if you want to install it click **Go to application** and then **Allow access**. No go to your profile and click on the **add tab**. Choose **books** and your almost done. Now click on **start new topic** and type the name of a book relevant to your business or industry into the search box at the top of the page. Click on the book, type a quick review and click **save**.

You now have a book review forum linked to your Facebook profile. People interested in these books on Facebook can see your reviews and suggestions. Could be useful.

Facebook Summary & ideas

The key thing as I have already said is developing a presence and it is an ongoing task. Once you have spent a little bit of time setting up you only need to devote a very small amount of time but on a regular basis developing and expanding your network.

MySpace

What is MySpace?

MySpace is probably the most straightforward of the 3 sites covered in this book. That is not to say there isn't loads of depth and possibilities. With MySpace there are lots of different types of content you can create to interest people, get friends and sell your products but there is much less in the way of nuances and etiquette associated with Twitter and Facebook.

So this is a much briefer account than the other two. I will run through the main content types and how to use them followed by a marketer's perspective of all the relevant features.

What can you do on MySpace

Below is a brief summary of the main possibilities on MySpace. Just a brief introduction, not necessarily a marketer's perspective.

Friends

As with the other social networking sites request and accept friend requests.

blogs

You can create your own blogs on MySpace. Blogs on MySpace like any other blog can attract visitors. This gives you the opportunity to inform, entertain and of course, sell to your readers. Your blog can promote your profile and your profile can promote your blog.

videos

This is very big on MySpace. As mentioned previously MySpace is by far the most reliant on media. At the very least I would have a web cam recorded video of you introducing yourself.

forums

This is one of the strengths of MySpace over Facebook. Facebook has the equivalent of forums. Facebook has a forum of sorts attached to every event, group etc. The effect of this is that the discussions can be quite disparate. They need to be searched for, joined and engaged individually. In some ways this makes Facebook more targeted than MySpace but the BIG upside for MySpace is that you can browse for the forum of your choice and immediately engage with everybody from that forum. Its very fast and very powerful but less accurately targeted.

Marketing on MySpace

As with all the social networking sites, what you say to people is the key. However success on MySpace is probably the most dependent on the quality of your initial content. What I mean is this. Twitter to a very large extent and Facebook to a lesser but still significant extent is highly dependent on your wall posts, tweets(messages) and the like. On MySpace it is probably most important to focus on your 'Space' and get that the best it can be. So that when people visit your space they get a full, professional experience along with all the information and links they need to find out more, visit your website or make a purchase.

Preparing your MySpace profile

Get on over to www.myspace.com and follow the simple sign up procedure. Unless you have good reason don't let MySpace send out friend requests to your contacts. The reason for this is you probably don't want regular friends and family as friends for a business marketing venture. Now log in to your new account.

It is really important to have a neat, personal image for your profile. If you have already set up a Twitter or Facebook account you probably have an image to hand. If not find a photo or use your business logo and follow these instructions.

Just underneath the blank photo top left click **Upload** and browse to your

logo/photo. Now go to **Profile > Edit Profile > Basic Info**. Scroll to the photos and make sure your 'default' photo is your logo or image.

Next you need to fill in the blanks about you, so people can see what you are all about. From the top menu bar select **Profile > Edit Profile**. Here you will see lots of tabs of different information. Don't panic you don't need to fill it all in. Here is a basic rule of thumb. Fill in anything relevant to your business. So you can probably leave favourite music and movies, unless of course that is what your business is about. For things like general and books, why not put in some industry topics and industry classics(that you have read).

Building a big network of friends

The temptation is to add thousands of friends. This type of activity is almost certain to get your account deleted. Much better is to search and browse the site for profiles that suggest an interest similar to yours and send out highly targeted friend requests. As usual this requires an ongoing time commitment. You do not need to spend hours at a time you do need to spend a few minutes on a regular basis.

Creating a great blog

This is nice and easy. You can post a new article to your blog with any frequency you like. You can keep it simple by making your blog a log of events related to you or your industry. Alternatively you could re-work articles from your web site or go all out and create brand new specially crafted articles for MySpace. Here is how to start your blog.

Select **Profile > My Blog > Post New Blog**. And your off. You can type and edit your new blog in the space provided or you can click on the **HTML** button and paste in a visual masterpiece direct from NVU in the usual way.

Adding music & videos

Select **Profile > My Videos** (music) and then in the top right click **Upload**. Obviously you need to have a video or a piece of music to hand. If your business is not about music you can upload an audio commentary or tutorial

instead. If your not Stephen Spielberg then just make an introductory video on your web cam.

Status and mood updates

This is where MySpace meets Twitter, so to speak. Bulletins are the instant element of MySpace and are your portal for reaching your friends with topical information. Here is how to use bulletins.

In the top centre of your homepage, in the box labelled, “What are you doing right now” type in a message to all your friends. You could simply answer the aforementioned question but you can say anything you like, to entertain, interest or just say hi.

The only thing to be wary of is not to spam people. If you constantly send sales messages you will lose friends and run the risk of having your account deleted. Build a network of friends by being friendly and let your 'space' do the selling.

MySpace summary & ideas

OK I admit it. That really was a whirlwind tour. The truth is that the MySpace interface is exceptionally intuitive, it doesn't really warrant a click by click tutorial. It doesn't have any of the subtle nuances of Twitter or Facebook and you already know how to do all the things you need to do.

Write great posts for your forum (see writing for the web). Send informative messages (see tweeting). Creating great content and images for your profile (see selling to customers and creating quality images with Gimp). In truth however, none of these are the really important issues. The important thing to remember and to do is build (steadily) a quality network of targeted friends and let your content (not your updates) do the selling. Good luck on MySpace.

Twitter

Twitter is my favourite because it is so quick and easy. The very nature and way that Twitter works makes it really easy to build your network. On Twitter you build a team of 'followers'. You can also be a follower of other Twitter users. If you want significant, fast results Twitter could be for you. However, as with all social media relationships, quality informational content (called tweets in this case) is still vital to lasting success.

What is Twitter?

Twitter has been described in various ways. The one that I think fits best is a 'micro-blogging' site. That is your content is very much like a blog where you 'post' regular updates which are then displayed in order from newest to oldest. Where the blogging similarities end is when you consider that each post has a maximum length and does not contain any pictures or other media, although you can link to other media and web sites. The maximum message length is 140 characters. This seems very restrictive at first but actually the 'bite-sized' posts probably make Twitter work so well.

Setting up your Twitter profile

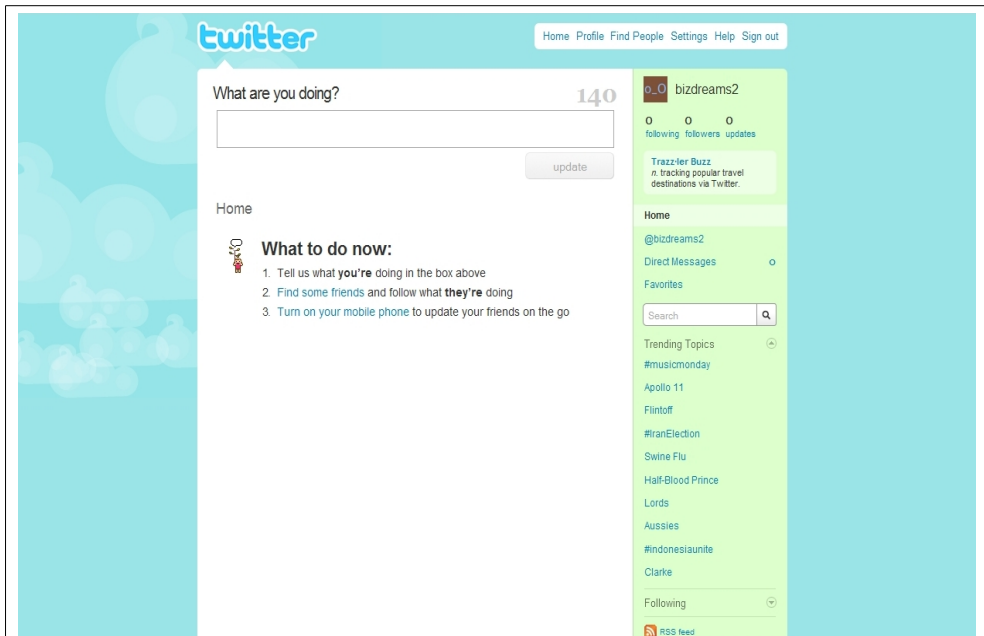
Let's get going. Go to www.twitter.com. Click on the big **Get Started** button. Fill out the brief information as requested but pay special consideration to the username. This is the name that is most visible to your future followers and the people you follow. It needs to be as close as possible to your business/domain name but it can't contain dots '.' or spaces. A couple of examples are as follows. For Business Dreams I used 'bizdreams'. The publishers www.lulu.com used 'luludotcom'. Choose a variation on your business name/domain name that suits your business and sounds cool. When you are done click **Create my account**.

Next up you are given the option to search for your friends on Twitter. If you think this is appropriate then fine but consider if you want the people in your email address book following you? If they are friends and family you might not. So search for contacts or click **Skip this step**. Whatever is best for you.

Next you are given a list of people you might like to follow. It is highly unlikely any of them will have content you are interested in and as we shall

see soon we don't want to follow or be followed by just anyone. So uncheck the boxes by clicking the select all box and then press **Finnish**.

You should now see something a bit like the next screen shot.



Social media marketing – New Twitter user home page.

A quick explanation of the main features. The message, "What are you doing?". This is prompting you to Tweet (type) a message up to 140 characters long to the Twitter community. You don't have to say what you are doing now. You could say what you were doing yesterday or what special offers there are on your web site but by being current, interesting, up to date and generally non-commercial you are more likely to get lots of loyal followers. Don't tweet yet we have a bit of preparation first.

Under this you will see you have 3 self explanatory options. Tell us what your doing now is asking you to start tweeting, Find some friends is suggesting you let Twitter use your address book to find friends and Turn on your mobile phone is prompting you to follow a simple process to start sending and

receiving tweets on your mobile. More on Twitter and mobile phones later.

The main menu bar top right is a repeat of the previously mentioned options, some more self explanatory links and an important one we will cover very shortly, 'Settings.'

Below the main menu is your Twitter image and username. Below this you can see how many people are following you, how many people you are following and how many tweets (messages) you have sent. Immediately below this there is an advert.

Carrying on downwards in the right hand column you can see 'home' to go to your homepage and your previous tweets. Under that the @ sign followed by your username. Click this to see who has mentioned you in their tweets. There will most likely be none there now but this is what you are aiming for. Other people spreading your information, talking about you and pointing people towards your Twitter home page. Next is 'Direct Messages' where you can send messages to other people on Twitter and view messages that have been sent to you. Favourites displays any favourites you might have.

Then there is a search box for searching Twitter. This is how you can be found initially because people search for terms in a tweet and if your tweets contain these terms you will be in the search results. Much better than this is to have people follow you and refer their followers to you in their tweets. Next is a list of trending topics. Words or phrases that are hot on Twitter at the moment. Click on one to see the search results for that topic.

That's a whirlwind tour of your Twitter page completed now it is time to go back to the Settings link in the main menu at the top. What we are going to do is make your Twitter homepage match your branding as well as promote your website.

Branding your Twitter profile

Click on **Settings** and look at the options available. Here is what we are going to do.

We will upload a photo for your profile. Giving a face to the tweets makes you appear more trustworthy and your tweets more meaningful. You could use a logo instead but it is much better to use a small smart photo of yourself. A good alternative if you are a bit shy is to use a home made caricature. Have a look at the 'oil painting', 'emboss', 'tile', 'mosaic' and other effects in Gimp. You can then keep the image personal and friendly at the same time as keeping your incredible good looks private.

We will then go through all the Twitter customisation options to make sure your profile is unique and perfectly suited to your business.

Then we will create a custom background of your Twitter homepage so that anyone who visits it, however briefly, will get an instant idea about your company and web site.

OK. Here is how to upload your photo. Make sure the photo is approximately square. Try to create an image with only a small empty background because Twitter 'enhances' the profile images with a bit of zoom. And, as usual make sure the image has been saved at the smallest file size possible that still looks good. Now click on **Settings** > **Picture** > **Browse**. Browse to the picture you want to use on your hard drive. Finally press **Save** and your new Twitter profile picture is done.

Now let's look at some more customization options. Click on **Settings** again. In the box labelled 'More info URL:' type full address of your web site. I.e. [Http://www.yourdomain.xxx](http://www.yourdomain.xxx). Next you need to write something in the box labelled 'One line bio'. Think very carefully about the most important aspect(s) of your business. And within that consider the keywords you want associated with your profile. For example. "Hi I am John, I sell the fluffiest, cuddliest most child friendly teddy bears in the world. Please follow me or visit my web site".

If you want to get more information about your business across you don't have to bother saying about visiting your website or "following me" that is obvious anyway. But be sure to make the bio personal in some way about you and not just an advert. Subtle is best. Twitter users are smart, they know people have goods and services to sell, they don't mind people advertising the fact but don't force it on people. Too much.

When you have written your bio and entered your web address click **Save** at the bottom of the page.

Lastly we will change the whole look of the page. Of course, in the unlikely event you like duck shaped clouds and they fit your business image then you could skip this step. Perhaps if you sold bath toys (the children's variety) then the default Twitter image would be appropriate. You have too options to customise your look.

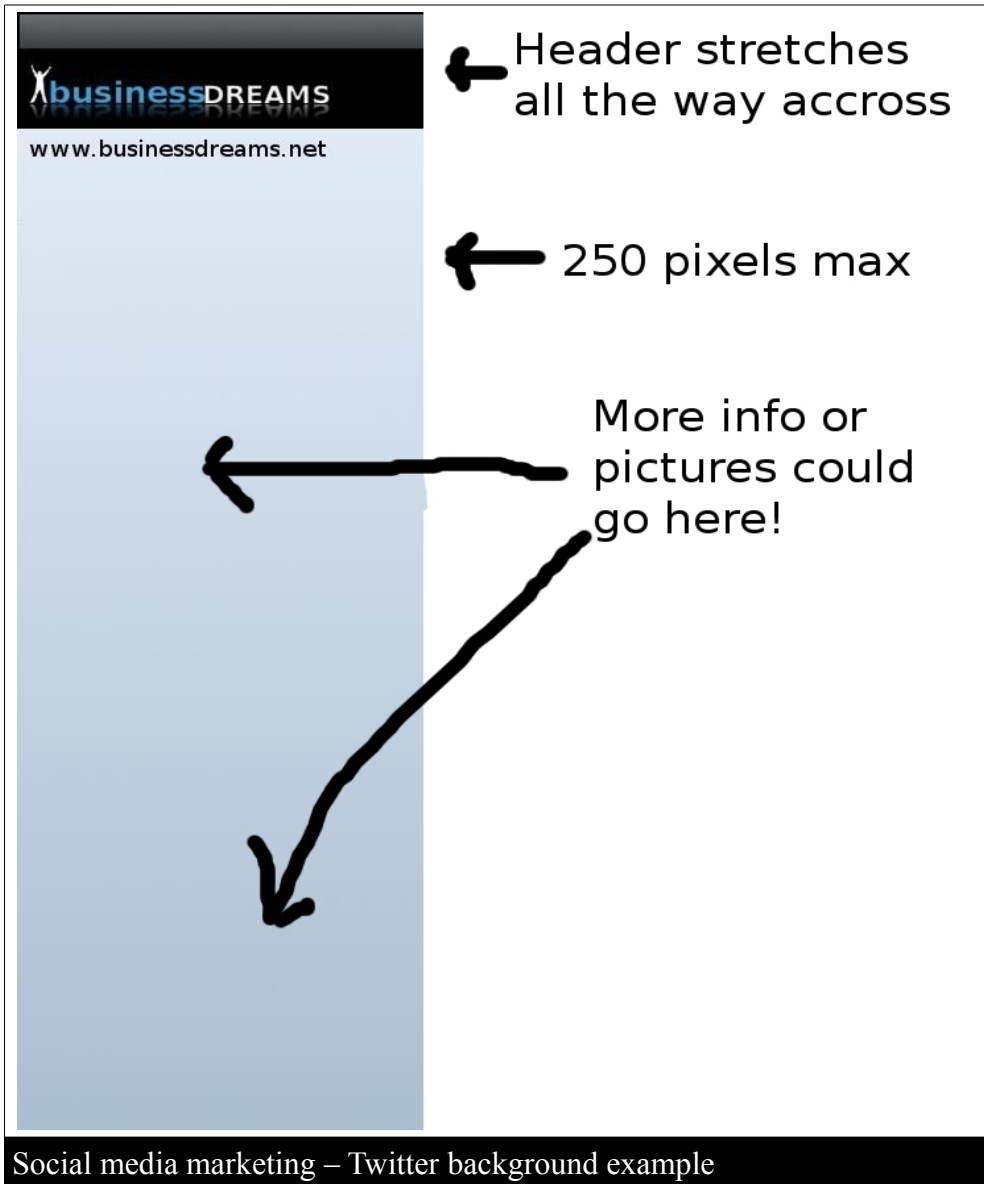
The very quick but less probably less professional way is to choose another stock Twitter design and then perhaps modify some of the colours as well. To do this click on Design then on your favourite background and finally click on Colours where you can choose the individual colour of a number of the elements of your home page.

The best thing to do is create your very own custom background. Then you can incorporate anything you want to. Company colour scheme, logo, big bold web address even a product picture or two.

There are a few considerations before you fire up Gimp and get started. As with any web site people view Twitter through different browsers and screen resolutions. The browser issue is taken care of through the Twitter design itself but screen resolution must be considered carefully. I think the best way to make a simple professional design is to keep all the information on the left hand side. The reason being is that it doesn't matter what screen resolution people have they will see your information. You just need to make sure that the lowest common denominator you want to cater for fits nicely.

I found that creating a new image in Gimp at 1440 x 900 pixels and then making sure that everything started on the left with a slim margin and not extending beyond 250 pixels from the left made the background fit well on anything from 800 x 600 up. You can try and be clever and fit information on the right hand side as well but it will start to look shabby on either the high or the low resolutions. What you can do beyond the 250 pixels that still looks OK is to have a continuous bar of colour. Like the header bar in the example below. The Twitter logo and content is automatically placed on top of any background (obviously) so it can look quite good.

A really simple example is shown below. You could spice yours up allot with product pictures or other pertinent information. As long as it is on the left within the first 250 pixels it should look good. Obviously put the most important information at the top. I.e. Business name/logo and web address. The example has been cut off on the right to show more of the important part (the left) of the image.



Create a 1440 x 900 Gimp image. **File > New Image**. You can then fill the background with the bucket tool or make a smart gradient with the Gradient tool. Then just add your design features like logo and web address using the text tool. Voila!

To upload your new image click on **Design > Change background image > Browse** and browse to your new masterpiece on your hard drive. Click **Save** and your done. Now you have a professional presence that reflects and promotes your business, lets find out a bit more about what we can do and of course, how to do it.

What can you do on Twitter, a 'normal' users perspective.

Following and being followed

As previously mentioned you can follow and be followed. This is the essence of a network on Twitter. If you want people to read your information and follow your links in your Tweets then you need people to follow you. However there are many advantages to following others.

For example you can get really fantastic, really topical information by following people interested and knowledgeable about your industry. In the unlikely event there is nobody on Twitter who fits the bill then you have a massive opportunity to become that person. Another advantage of following a respected and popular user is you can comment on their tweets. This along with the fact you appear in their list of followers means more people have a chance of finding you. The holy grail of this type of relationship is when the respected user decides to follow you! And when they start replying to your Tweets it will bring even more viewers and potential new followers to your Twitter homepage.

Here is how to choose who to follow and then how to follow them. In the Twitter search box, type key words and phrases relating to the most important aspects of your industry. You will see a page of results. Of course you might

like to read the results but for the purposes of this exercise we are only interested in tracking down some great Twitterers from your industry.

Click on the top user icon from the search results. Look at the top right of their page and note how many followers they have and how many people they follow as well. Look at how many tweets they have made and look at the dates of their most recent tweets on their homepage. The final thing to look for is the actual content of their tweets. Do the vast majority of their tweets contain affiliate links or adverts? Are their tweets interesting or informative to you? How do you rate the quality of the information they have created?

Now click back to the search page and do the same analysis for at least a few more. At the bottom of the search page you can click to see older results. Do the same analysis for some more people going back a day a week and a month.

You are probably starting to get a feel for the type of people tweeting, whats hot and whats not. You need to do the same experiment for other words and phrases in your industry and after a bit of research we can start to draw some initial conclusions.

Who produces consistently accurate and interesting/topical information? Who tweets regularly but not all day everyday? Who has lots of followers relative to others in your industry? Who has many more followers than people they are following? 2:1 followers: following is good. These last couple of questions will help you identify people to follow. To do so click on their profile image. In the top left of their home page underneath there image you can click the **follow** link. Congratulations.

You are now following them and their tweets will appear (to you) on your home page. If you have chosen well you might get good information. At the very least, if you have chosen well you will start to see how others operate and what they say.

If you like your new relationship then great. If not simply click on the **following** link on your homepage and then click on **Do not follow**. Their gone!

Tweeting

Now the basic types of tweeting.

Regular tweets – Are you ready! Its time to bite the bullet and send your first tweet. Its not as hard as you think, I promise. You could start by introducing yourself. You are less likely to attract any criticism compared to a bold statement about your industry for example. Your tweet will appear in search results as well as on your homepage. This means you might get a reply or even your first follower.

Compose a simple introductory message. Maybe, “Hi to all Twitterers in the toy industry – I will be tweeting about fluffy teddies and all things cuddly. It would be nice to talk.” Just make sure it is under 140 characters and hit **Update**.

You can also include links in your tweets and Twitter will shorten/encode them before displaying them. However the initial full length needs to fit into the 140 character limit. There is a way to shorten them yourself for those occasions when you need as much space as possible for your message we will look at this a bit later.

Replying & Re-tweeting @ - Now visit the page of the person that you followed. Find a tweet you feel you have something to say about. At this stage it is probably best just to comment or add to the persons tweet. I would advise against correcting or criticising. You might know your industry and you might be right but it might be detrimental to make an enemy this early on in your Twitter campaigning. When you have thought of something to say hover your mouse over the tweet and on the right hand side you will see the 'reply' link. Click it, type your message and hit reply.

Your reply will appear in your homepage time-line for all to see and will appear to the person you replied to in their @xxxxx link on their home page. If somebody replies to your tweet the same will happen. Their reply will appear to you in the @yourprofile link and to all on the persons homepage in their time-line. This could clearly be of benefit to you as people who follow this person will get a link to you in the tweet.

At first the manner and place that tweets and links appear can be confusing. Send a few simple tweets and reply to a few as well. Note what appears where and the presence of the @someprofile link at the beginning of replies. And if your really stuck just re-tweet (copy) someone's message. Be sure to give credit to the other person. You can do this by adding an 'RT @otherpersonstwittername' to the beginning of the message. When your getting the hang of it move on.

Direct messaging

This is nice and simple. You can send and receive private messages. Just click on the Direct Messages link the interface is self explanatory. If you feel it is beneficial to direct message someone then do so. Just remember your message can't be seen by others but the recipient might decide to tweet its contents! Twitter sends you an email to let you know when you have a new message. They also let you know when somebody new decides to follow you.

Twitter on your mobile

Nothing technical here but well worth talking about. Getting and sending tweets from your mobile is so simple it doesn't deserve a tutorial. Just click on **Settings > Devices** and follow the instructions. However, if like I used to you found your job a huge obstacle to pursuing your business dreams then this feature is wonderful. You can build your Twitter following while on a break, at lunch, on the bus even in the toilet if you must.

Marketing on Twitter

Now we get to the nitty gritty. You have a good idea of what makes Twitter tick and how to use it. But what do you say, how do you say it and most importantly, how do you get people to listen?

Building a following

If nobody is following you nobody is listening. Getting followers is not as hard as you might think. You might have even got lucky and picked up few followers from your activity so far. The best way to build a following is to

tweet. And make sure your tweets are genuinely interesting, topical and varied. This way you will get followers interested in many aspects of your business or industry.

What happens when you send a tweet is your tweet stands the chance of being found in the Twitter search results. Then when somebody likes the sound of one of your tweets they click to visit your Twitter page. Then maybe they think you are interesting enough to follow. So they follow you and receive all your updates to their homepage. Now you have more exposure.

Every time you tweet it turns up in search results increasing your chances of being found again, especially if each tweet is varied in the keywords used and the target audience. Not only that but there is now a link to you on the Twitter page of the person who followed you. All this increases the odds of another person finding and following you.

Now eventually 1 or more of your followers might reply to one of your tweets. This means that not only does a direct link (@yourusername) appears on their time-line next to their reply but the reply along with the link is broadcast to all their followers as well! Who might decide to reply or follow you. Again increasing the exposure of your Twitter page and/or your actual tweets.

I am guessing that you see the enormous networking potential. Ever heard the popular school-yard trick saying. Would you rather have a £1000 or a penny doubled every day for a month. If you start with a penny then after day 1 you have 2p, day 2 you have 4p. Day 10 you have 1024p, day 20 524288p and day 30 you 536870912p that is more than 5 million pounds!

The potential to multiply the value of your work on Twitter is incredible. Probably obviously there is a limit. The limit is how many people are on Twitter interested in your industry, business and products. But that's fine we knew from the start this was a niche business.

Here is the big but which might be less obvious. And it is a really big but! If your tweets are not interesting to your followers in some way, you will lose followers, they will click a button, as you can, to stop following you. So what

follows is a guide to writing quality varied tweets to keep the new followers coming and the old followers keen.

First a bit of advice about following other people.

Becoming a follower

Some ill informed twitterers adopt the policy of following anyone and everyone in the knowledge that a small percentage of those people will follow them back. I have had mixed results during experiments but typically if you follow 10 unrelated people 1 will follow you back. I strongly suggest you do NOT adopt this type of recruitment policy. The reasons are 2 fold. Firstly the 1 in 10 who do follow you are un-targeted and very unlikely to be very interested in you. Therefore the exercise is something of a waste of time. Much more importantly a Twitter profile with a ratio of 10:1 following to followers looks cheap to even the casual observer. What does it say about your Tweets if you are following 1000 people but only 100 are following you?

However that does not mean you should avoid following worthwhile users. And if there are lots of them then great! The potential benefit of being associated, replied to by and receiving tweets from such people greatly outweighs any downside. But here are a couple of tips for building your following at the same time as becoming a follower of more people.

Look back to the research advice given previously. Search for key phrases, regular and quality tweets, good followed to following ratio and ideally a large following relative to others in your industry. Listen in on conversations for a while before making a decision to follow them.

Secondly as with all Internet marketing, do it in a phased and perpetual manner. Do some tweeting, write some replies, get more followers. Then do some research to find someone to follow. Then go back to tweeting, replying... You get the idea. You should always have more followers than people you are following.

If you find that your interactions on Twitter become more diverse than your business and you want to follow loads of people, great, but create a separate

Twitter account to do so.

Anyway now you know the process lets get into much more detail about the practice of Tweeting.

Quality, varied Tweets

Every tweet should be meaningful on its own or add something to the conversation. Just remember that everything you say is public. If you send a direct message, then even that could be repeated publicly. Don't reveal anything private about yourself and if you want to be popular on Twitter don't spoil anybody else's day by revealing private information about them.

Regular Tweets – Easy. Just answer the question. “What are you doing now”. Make sure you are tweeting relevant industry information. “I am considering a new range of teddy bears for my shop... Do I want the giant golden teddy? Or is small best”. A quick glance at almost any twitterer and you will see that they tweet a lot more than just answering the question, “What are you doing now”.

Make up your own questions and answer them. “What is the very latest innovation in your industry”. Answer the question and most importantly give your opinion about it, in 1 tweet. It takes some refining of your text but it almost always can be done. “What is the biggest upcoming event in your industry and what do you think about it”. “looking forward to the teddy bears annual convention this Fall – No way I am going to miss it – Anyone else coming?” Asking a question begs a reply. And as we know replies are good for business.

There is no end of topics that can be thought up for even the smallest niche. Sometimes the topic could be an ongoing one that could justify many tweets over time. “Just looking in to how these wonderful Russian teddy bears are manufactured. Did you know they start with stuffing made from Siberian wool?” Then, “The lining is hand stitched blah blah blah... “ etc. You get the

idea.

Never lose focus on making it relevant to your audience. Be consistent but not too frequent and keep it non commercial. (See Sales tweets). What tweeting frequency is right for you will depend upon how frequently things change and how dynamic your industry is. Test out different frequencies and look at what popular people in your industry are doing.

What you can do quite legitimately is link (see section on tinyurl.com) to a very closely related article on your web site. This is perfectly acceptable and would not put off followers. Just make sure the article you link to IS entirely relevant and not a sales page or people will feel cheated or “sold to”.

Broadcasting – All your regular tweets should be relevant and personal, from you. So even when talking about an event, for example, the focus is about you and how the event relates to you. The exception to this rule is when you just want to broadcast something really significant. “Fire at Siberian stuffing plant kills 3 and puts teddy production back 6 months”. It is something that people might be interested in but something that is not personal. And if the timing is right broadcast tweets will get you lots of attention. But they should not be the standard format of your tweeting. impersonal all the time is un-interesting. Pick your broadcast tweets carefully and make sure they are relevant and topical even more so than your regular tweets.

Humour – If you've got it flaunt it. Jokes are great and there is plenty on Twitter. A good joke can keep your followers keen. But if you haven't got it probably best to leave the jokes to someone else.

Questions – Questions are great. Asking for peoples opinion often provokes a reply and an appearance on someone else's time-line. By all means ask for help but keep it occasional. The best type of question is asking for opinions. If you ask for an opinion you can get responses without being socially indebted. Also, if you are lucky (or smart) you might provoke a discussion, lots of replies and the publicity that goes with it. The sort of opinions you can ask for are almost limitless.

Ask about industry, business, products events, personalities, organisations or

anything else relevant. Ask for feedback on a new article, product or site layout. Almost anything is valid.

Achievements & Events – Done something great, new, interesting? Think your followers will care? Then tweet it. Attending an industry event, visited a competitors store/site, had a nice lunch? Tweet it. Anything is valid. Just remember the guidelines that it must be worth reading. So if you regularly tweet valid information about your field of expertise then the occasional, informal nicety is cool. But don't overdo the trivial.

Replying & Re-tweeting – Can't think of anything to say? No problem. Find somebody who can. Search for the phrases you are interested in and find something relevant to post a reply to. This will tell all your followers what you are looking at. And who knows, the other persons tweet might inspire something original from you. And if your really stuck just re-tweet (copy) someone's message. Be sure to give credit to the other person. You can do this by adding an 'RT @otherpersonstwitterusername' to the beginning of the message.

Sales tweets – The simplest most subtle way of promoting your site is to add a link to your homepage with occasional tweets. The tweet does not have to suggest a purchase or promote a product it simply says what you want to say and links to your homepage so people can click and see what you are all about.

More direct but still fairly subtle is to ask peoples opinion on a very specific aspect of a product or service. Ask for feed-back on the product itself, the way you have described or photographed it. Perhaps ask for peoples suggestion for a selling price or just say “How much would you pay for this teddy”. You can do this with an existing range or use the same process to get feed-back on potential new ranges before you purchase stock. This could generate some useful feedback and even some pre-orders.

Make some genuine free gift offers. For example offer something for free if they sign up to your newsletter or make a purchase today. You can mention a tempting offer and then link to the main newsletter sign up/product page.

Offer a free download and link to a page with a related purchasable product. Don't forget to include the free download as well on the page! Think hard about you products, business and industry. What would be really useful? If you are selling an information/music/video product its easy. A sample chapter, song, application or video.

If not why not create a downloadable PDF or a short video made on a web cam of the most compelling and useful information related to your products, business or industry? Here is another idea that might work for almost any business. Offer a free software download. Revisit the chapter about sourcing free applications and find something that might benefit or be of interest to your audience. You can then direct people to the download links in a tweet and include purchasable products on the same page. Easy and free! If your really stuck for incentives offer a discount voucher. Consider this very carefully before doing it because it needs to be viable financially.

Special offers. Be careful here. If you send out a tweet to a group of trusting followers be absolutely sure it is genuinely and undeniably SPECIAL! If it isn't you will lose credibility and probably followers as well. There are loads of people on Twitter sending out 'special offer' tweets to rubbish, spam or porn. Don't get tarred with the same brush.

Tweeting summary

So basically you can tweet anything you like as long as it is in some way of value to your followers. The above suggestions are just that, suggestions. Try and develop a style and character that fits you and your business. Remember, as I have said many times this should be an ongoing project. A few minutes per day or even per week, you decide. Don't try and rule Twitter in an afternoon. It doesn't work like that.

Twitter analysis & tools

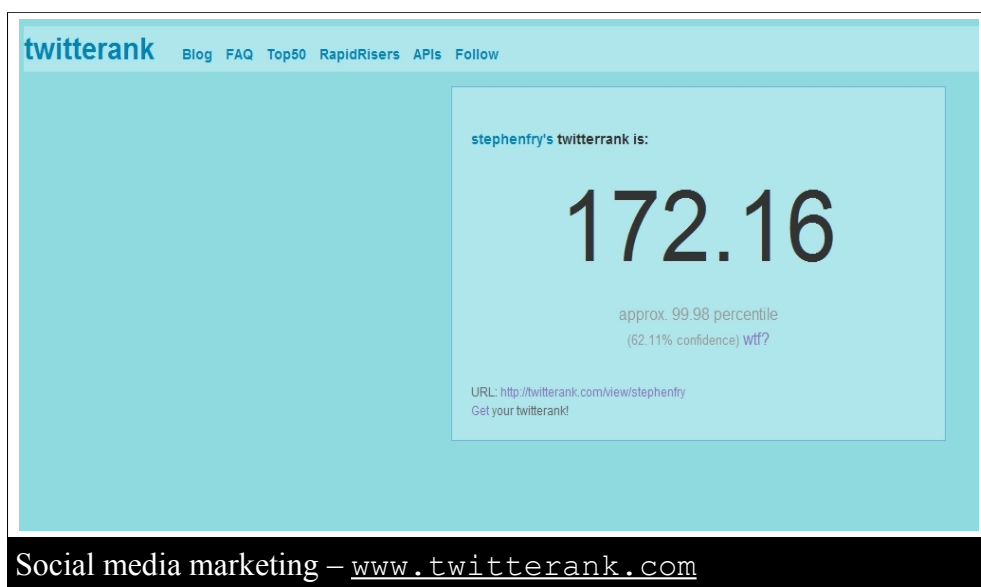
Here is a range of great tools and web sites to enhance and manage your Twitter marketing campaign. There are dozens more. These are selection of the ones I found most useful.

How popular are you? - Twitterrank

Really cool especially if you are as vain as I am. Visit

www.twitterrank.com

type in your Twitter url and press **enter**. You get an interesting result as shown below.



Keyword research and tracking – Tweetbeep

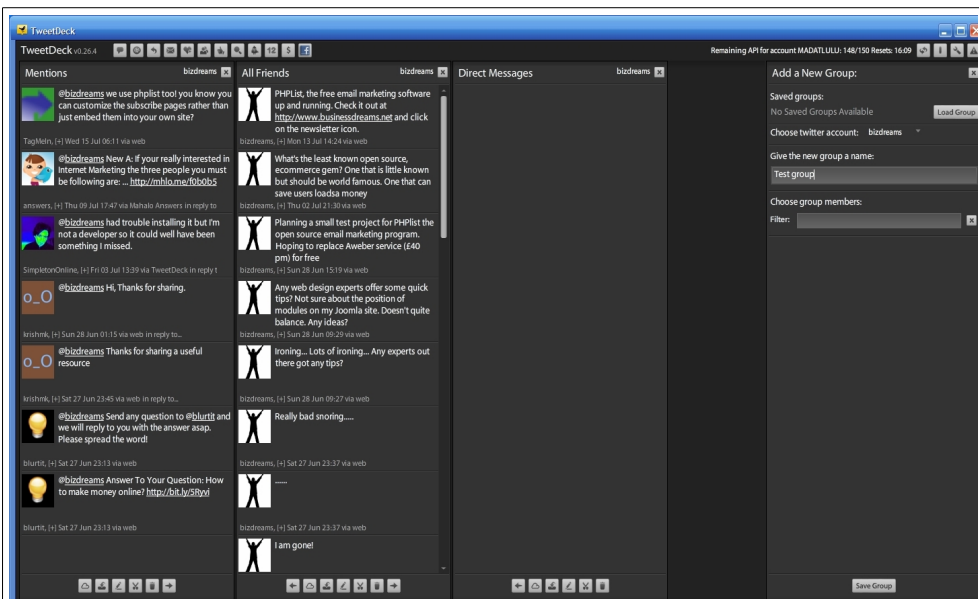
A great idea. Want to know every time someone mentions you, your company or a specific phrase? Just visit www.tweetbeep.com, register and they will email you every time somebody on Twitter mentions you.

Working smart – Tweetlater

The potential here is huge. Think about what you do on Twitter. A few messages a day maybe a few more. You need to remember to login and send them. Then think about what to say and then type them in. What if you could compose as many tweets as you wanted and then say when you wanted them sent. You could do a day, a week or a months worth of twittering in an hour and then forget about it. Of course this is not the true spirit of topicality and interactivity intended but if you also use Tweetbeep to monitor responses then you could get notifications of relevant replies that might need your attention. You could tweet while away for the weekend. Check out www.tweetlater.com. There is also a pro version of Tweetlater that does some really advanced stuff.

Organising your tweets – tweetdeck.com

Tweetdeck is one of my favourites. Ever get confused about who said what first and which tweet a particular reply is related to? Tweetdeck organises all the tweets you are interested in into logical, tidy console. You can create groups, share links and photos and follow trends. Actually Tweetdeck can replace some of the tools already mentioned but because of its flexibility needs to be installed and requires your Twitter username and password. Look at the cool screen shot then get over to www.tweetdeck.com and download your free copy.



Social media marketing - Tweetdeck

Shortening your links(urls) – tinyurl.com

Got lots to say and link that needs to go with it? Having trouble fitting it all into a tweet? No problem. Tinyurl will shorten your urls. So

http://www.businessdreams.net/tutorials/a_tutorial

becomes

tinyurl.com/kjuua4

or similar. Visit www.tinyurl.com and get your links shortened so you have more room to Tweet.

Other Twitter uses

Customer service/help desk – Create a separate account and give the details to all your customers. They can congratulate, complain and ask for advice without clogging up your main Twitter account.

Team working – Create a separate Twitter account and use it for staff communication. Twitter can be much better than email or instant messaging because the broadcast nature of Twitter makes the process much more collaborative.

Recruiting freelancers etc. – Search for professionals, spy on them for a bit and then contact them for work you might need done.

Twitter summary

As usual we have only scratched the surface of the potential of Twitter. You should easily know enough now to get started building a big group of followers and promoting your business. I know I keep saying it but an ongoing commitment is required to get really great results from Twitter. But if you use the tips and tools you do NOT need a significant time commitment compared to the potential rewards. Happy twittering.

Social media conclusion

Some of the social media channels might not be for you. Give them a try to find out which if any works for your business. Just as you use social media to promote your web site you can use your web site to promote your Twitter, Facebook and MySpace presence. Be sure to log into your appropriate account and get badges for your website. If a social media fan sees you use their preferred site and decides to join your network that's as good as a subscription to your newsletter.

The End?

Absolutely not! Just the beginning. I hope you have the confidence to know that you can achieve a great living through your very own, ideal, e-commerce empire.

I hope you are kind enough to share your expertise, your highs and your lows with the Business Dreams community.

Have a look on www.businessdreams.net for more tutorials and guides. And I hope you achieve your business dreams.