

## 7 Twitter Basics for Businesses

### **Step One – Setup a Twitter Account**

Visit Twitter.com and click the bright green button named “Sign up now”. On the following form, fill out your information: your business information (instead of the full name), a user name (try to pick something short and representative of your business), a password, your email, and you’re set! Welcome to Twitter.

### **Step Two – Brand Your Twitter Account**

Now that you have an account, you’ll want to customize it to set you apart. At the top of the page, there’s a small link-based menu. One of those links says “Settings”. Click it. Here, you’ll want to fill out your website URL, a short “about us”, and your location. You’ll also want to setup your picture (usually your company logo) and your design (you can go with the company colors, or setup a custom design just for your company’s twitter page).

### **Step Three – Start Tweeting!**

Your account is now setup and branded, but you haven’t produced any content yet! Now’s the time to start tweeting. But what to tweet? Here are some tips:

- You don’t have to always answer Twitter’s question, *What are you doing?*, but instead answer the question, *What are you thinking about?*
- Don’t advertise your business. Provide compelling content that people can use instead. The content you create will drive them to the services you provide.
- Think about having more than one person at your company tweet. Different perspectives produce different content, which attracts different people. Diversification leads to a wide open market.
- Ask more questions than you provide answers. People not only want to read your tweets, they want to *respond* to them.
- Build community with your fellow Twitter users. Re-tweet what they have said. Reply to their tweets. It makes you seem more like someone who is genuinely concerned rather than someone with a sales pitch.

## **Step Four – Follow People**

Now you're set. You've got an account that's producing content. After you have sent out a few tweets (2-5), you'll want to start following people. Use Twitter's search tool to search for people in your area, in your industry, or existing customers. Follow them, and thank them publicly if they follow you back.

## **Step Five – Don't Lose It!**

Once you get up and running, it's so easy to feel like you're drinking from a fire hydrant. So how to manage the information flow? Don't feel like you have to stay connected to Twitter 24-7-365. You don't have to read every tweet from every person you follow. You don't have to reply to every tweet directed at you, or even every direct message sent your way. Use various tools like Twitter Search ([search.twitter.com](http://search.twitter.com)), TweetDeck ([tweetdeck.com](http://tweetdeck.com)), and TweetGrid ([tweetgrid.com](http://tweetgrid.com)) to manage what you see at any given time. Don't overwhelm yourself to the point of giving up!

## **Step Six – Invest in Your Twitter Account**

Now what? I would suggest investing some cash into your twitter account, whether this means buying solid Twitter tools and services (like iPhone apps [which cost] or corporate Twitter services like CoTweet or Hootsuite [which are free]). Also, finding a solid social media consultant to spend a couple of hours with you in person or via remote can definitely be worth the investment.

## **Step Seven – Have Fun!**

Go tweet and be merry. Business can be fun. Seriously.