THE **Small Business** BLUEPRINT:

Marketing on Twitter
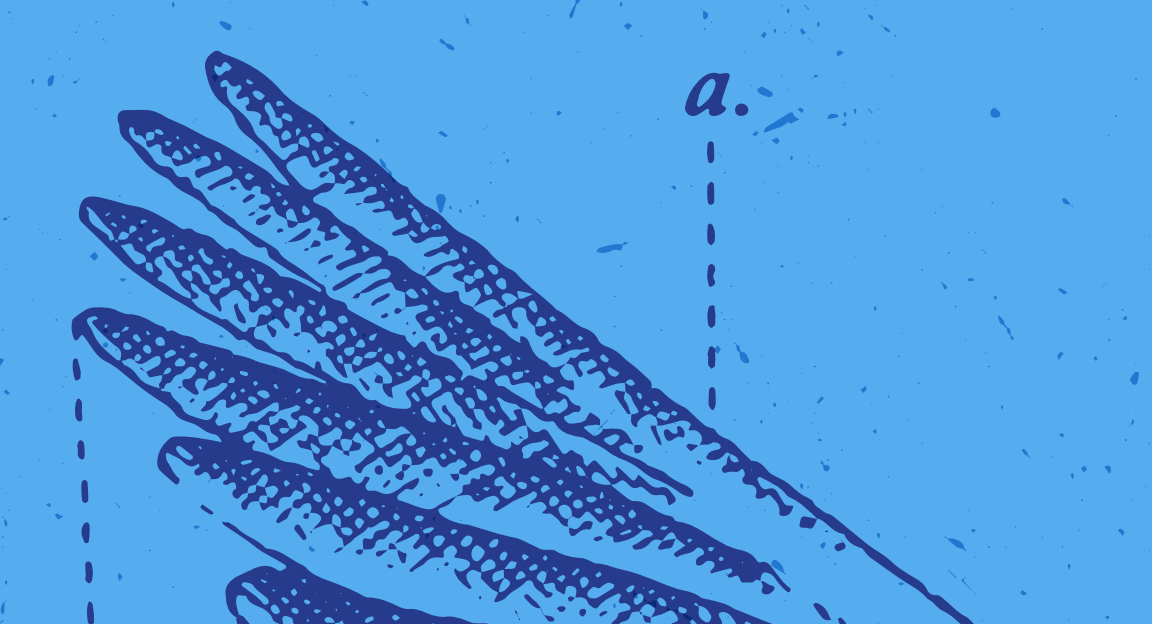
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Introduction

Twitter for Business

Originally conceived of as a microblogging platform in 2006, Twitter has evolved into a global ecosystem where people and organizations can easily connect, discover and engage. With its 140-character limit, Twitter offers a unique, fast-paced, real-time experience for users.

Due to its real-time nature, Twitter has changed how people communicate, how news breaks and how companies grow. The reach of the platform goes far beyond its active user base too. Anyone who has watched a newscast or read an online article in the past five years has surely seen Tweets embedded into the story, either as a quote or real-time reaction. In 2016, over 332

million active users were Tweeting at a rate of 6,000 Tweets per second. According to Twitter, that adds up to 11 billion Tweet views everyday. It's important to remember that while there are "only" 332 million active users, a massive audience for the social network exists.
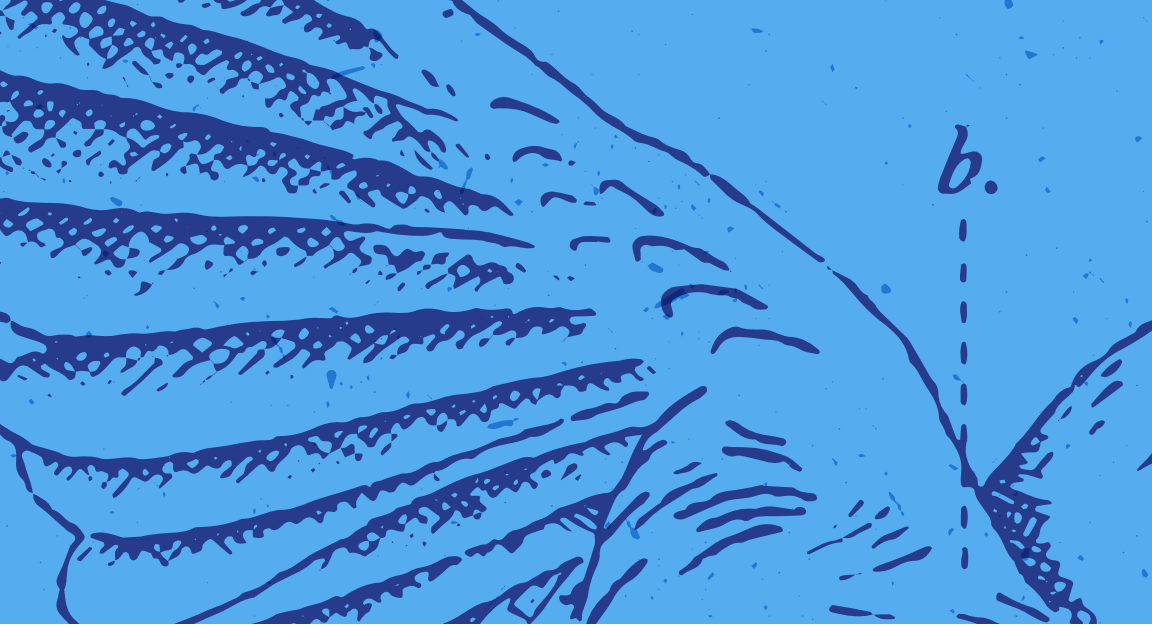
Twitter attracts a lot of negative press due to its comparison with other social networks, most notably Facebook. Those analyses however, fail to recognize the weight and impact Twitter has on information shared through the platform. CNN, famous for its ability to break news on television, now often refers to Tweets from witnesses and key sources in order to develop a story. Twitter has long been the platform of choice for brief, important announcements too, from the Phoenix Mars Lander **discovering ice on Mars** to Marshawn Lynch's **wordless retirement Tweet**. Those, and countless others have sparked conversations that carry on around the world with replies, mentions, retweets and likes.

Brands around the world have picked up on Twitter's ability to start conversations, address issues in real-time and ultimately act as a brand voice. Companies like Denny's, Taco Bell and Oreo have seen great success building an audience on Twitter; however, small companies and new brands shouldn't feel intimidated. The power of Twitter also lies in a company's ability to find its audience which we'll explore in greater depth later on. There's no need to compete with massive, global brands when you have a dedicated and engaged community of your own.

Twitter is a social network and a business tool that takes time. You get out of it what you put in. This is a long term brand exercise that will help you build your audience and generate positive sentiment towards your company. In time, you will leverage the power and flexibility of the network in order to sell directly to your followers through Twitter. But first, let's start with the basics.

ALREADY ON TWITTER?

Twitter is a popular social network so there's a decent chance you know and use Twitter. If your profile is up and running and you understand the basics of the platform, read *Chapter 2: Identifying Objectives*, then skip ahead and start reading at *Chapter 5: Engaging on Twitter*. That's where you're going to get into more details around optimizing marketing efforts and monetizing your strategy.

Identifying Objectives

Before jumping into Twitter, outline your objectives. Obviously, as a business owner, your priority is to sell but you should attempt to dive a bit deeper. You won't see Oreo pushing sales, nor will you see Gap linking back to their clothing collection very often. These companies are all motivated by the bottom line but they're driving sales in a multitude of ways from providing everything from comical entertainment to engaging 1-on-1 conversations with customers.

Ask yourself these questions first:

Why do my customers love me? No customers yet? Take a guess at what it is about your brand audiences will love. We'll see if you're right and you can always change that answer later.

How do my customers engage with me? Do they visit your retail location? Have you been writing a blog that sees frequent readers? It's important to understand how your audience currently engages with you so that we can build on that later on. Rather than simply trying to pull people towards you, it's important to participate in (physical and digital) spaces they're already familiar with. This will also be explored more so that you can expand your audience by finding new customers similar to your existing audience.

With these questions asked, you have some key information to build your Twitter strategy. Understanding your relationship with your customers and what they value is paramount in creating a long lasting brand and one that will succeed on Twitter.

These questions aren't easily answered and you might need to start digging around a bit to understand your audience. Here are a couple research methods to get you started.

Advanced Twitter Search

The search box in the top right of the navigation bar allows you to search for Tweets, people, photos, videos, news, and timelines (Twitter lists and collections) that relate to a particular keyword.

You can use the **Advanced Search** option to get more specific in your search efforts. Advanced Search allows you to search for Tweets that include or exclude specific keywords, were sent from users in a particular location, or using any criteria as shown below:

Utilizing Twitter search can help you find potential customers and jump into conversation with them. Twitter also incorporates basic sentiment analysis to see if people are Tweeting positive or negative statements, or if they're asking questions.

OPTIMIZATION TIP: *Search your keywords closely associated with your business. Take note of influential users who are active on topics important to your brand. These users can be added to a private list of influencers who you can reach out to in the future.*


Competitor Research

Inevitably, there is someone else already running a business somewhat similar to yours. Choose five to ten competitors to start. While combing through their Tweets, observe the following:

1   How often do they Tweet? Aside from replies to others, how often do they post unique content?

2   When do they Tweet? Are their Tweets spread out all day or only between set hours?

3   What do they Tweet about? Do they always Tweet about their own products and services? Do they talk about your industry? Is everything just random?

4   What types of Tweets do they share? Quotes, questions, and links to content are typical.

5   What types of media do they use? Are your competitors including images, videos, and presentations with their Tweets, or are they typically text only?

6   How effective are their Tweets at engaging their audience? As you scroll through their Tweets, you can see the number of retweets and favorites for each Tweet. Note the popular ones.

You can do this research manually, or you use **Rival IQ** to help. This tool will allow you to enter your business's Twitter account, along with your competitors', to see a direct comparison of your activity.

Once you've conducted this research with several of your competitors, you'll likely have a good idea of where to start when answering the same questions for your own strategy. Once you've researched multiple competitors, you'll be able to combine the best Twitter strategy for your own business.
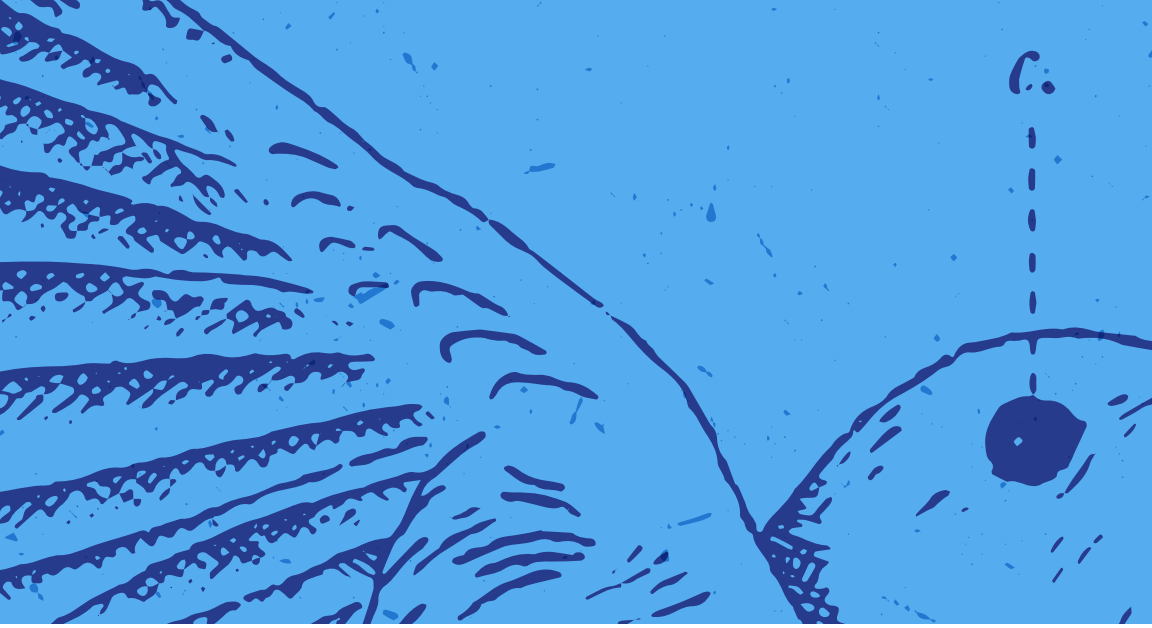
Setting Up Your Account

Optimizing your profile makes it easier for Twitter users to discover and interact with your business. In conjunction with other optimized social media pages, it can also help establish a professional and consistent brand image.

Setting up a standard Twitter profile is easy, but optimizing it for business takes some expertise. Whether you've just joined Twitter or have been active for years, these tips can help you make the most of your profile.

Your Username

Your username, sometimes referred to as your handle, is the unique identifier that starts with an @ symbol. This is how other users will mention and address you on Twitter. While there are over 332 million monthly active users, over a billion people have signed up for Twitter meaning there are over a billion different usernames out there. That means you'll have to get creative when coming up with the right username because chances are, your ideal username is already taken.

The ideal scenario would be to have the same username across all of your social profiles for consistency and branding purposes, like this:

- http://twitter.com/shopify
- http://facebook.com/shopify
- http://instagram.com/shopify
- http://pinterest.com/shopify
- http://linkedin.com/company/shopify
- http://plus.google.com/+shopify
- http://youtube.com/user/shopify

For common names that may already be taken, like Beyonce's activewear line Ivy Park, consider adding a unique identifier (@WeAreIvyPark). Other options might have been @GetIvyPark or @WearIvyPark. Keep in mind, the ideal is to have a consistent username across all social networks; do your best!

A few tips to consider:

- Make it relevant to your brand. Customers might actively search for you so you'll want to make it ease. @Aldo is owned by a private account with no association to the brand. Aldo, the company, created @Aldo_Shoes instead. Simple, relevant and easy to find.

- Shorten irrelevant words and generic words into an initial. Social Media Examiner probably could have landed @SocialMediaExaminer; however, they went with @SMExaminer instead making it clear and concise.

Twitter has recognized that a distinct username isn't the one, single way users can find each other. With hundreds of millions of users, Twitter offers a powerful search tool that combines brand names and keywords. Lebron

James' Twitter username is @KingJames but his 30 million users didn't seem to have trouble finding him. Because Twitter's search tool is that good, it's not the end of the world if you don't get your perfect username. Keep in mind that you can always switch your username in your Twitter Settings.

OPTIMIZATION TIP: *For those just starting out with creating their social media presence, KnowEm can be used to verify username availability across a number of popular sites and social networks.*

Profile Photo

Your profile photo is the square photo that appears on your profile and next to your Tweets throughout Twitter. It's one of the quickest ways to identify an account, so use your company logo or something tied very closely to your brand. Recommended dimensions are 400x400 pixels.

OPTIMIZATION TIP: *To build strong branding and consistency, use the same profile photo on all of your social networks.*

Bio

Your bio is the 160-character description of your business on Twitter. It appears beneath your profile photo, and in Twitter and Google search results.

Your Twitter bio should include the main **keyword phrase you optimize your business with**, plus links to your website or @mentions to other Twitter accounts related to your business. This approach will provide additional exposure in areas where only your bio is shown (like Twitter's search results). You can also add a hashtag to help yourself get noticed. More on #hashtags later.

Twitter bios help customers find your profile and encourage them to click through to your website. Craft yours carefully.

OPTIMIZATION TIP: *If you're not sure what to include in your Twitter bio, take a look at your competitors. Tools like* **Rival IQ** *can provide a quick glance at other company bios and updates when they change. Try modifying some quirky bio ideas to better match your business using the* **Twitter Bio Generator***. Simply copy and paste the bios you like, merge a few together, and enter your business's keywords to make it your own.*

Photos and Videos

The Photos and Videos box in the left sidebar of your profile displays the latest photos and videos you've shared in your Tweets. Desktop users can click on the Photos and Videos link for the full gallery.

OPTIMIZATION TIP: *Sharing photos and videos in your Tweets will help them stand out in your timeline, your followers' main timelines, and in Twitter search results. If you're Tweeting big news or a special announcement, try incorporating it into an image.*

Header Photo

Your header photo is the large graphic at the top of your Twitter profile. Recommended dimensions are 1500x500 pixels.

You can use your header photo to promote your newest products or draw attention to new promotions and deals. Be sure to review your header photo on both desktop and mobile browsers to ensure it scales properly.

OPTIMIZATION TIP: *If you don't have graphic design skills, you can use free tools like Canva to upload your own background image (or use a stock photo provided by Canva) and overlay it with text.*

Design

Your Design settings will allow you to modify your Twitter profile background image, color and link colors. You can also use these settings to coordinate your background color with your header image, and to change the link color on your profile to something that matches your company branding.

Navigating Twitter

Understanding Twitter Features

While Twitter isn't the most complex social network, there are a few features and functions you need to know about. Here's where we run through the basics. More than a glossary but still just a starting point. We encourage you to explore and come up with some other creative ways to use these features.

Feature	What It Is	What It's Good For
Home or Feed	A chronological collection of Tweets made by Twitter users you follow.	Catch up on the day and see what people are saying. Find interesting, timely conversations and jump in.
Notifications	A list of activity related to your Twitter account including mentions, newest followers, retweets, likes, and additions to public lists.	See who is listening to what you have to say. Say hi, acknowledge them, and keep them in mind when you're deciding relevant content for your followers.
Messages	This is your inbox for direct messages. Direct messages are 140 characters long and can be sent privately to Twitter users who are following your account. Think of them as private Tweets.	It's a great way to follow up with someone if they have a question or concern about your company that doesn't need the whole world watching.
Following	This is the list of Twitter users you follow. Clicking on the Follow button on another user's profile is a bit like subscribing. Every time they Tweet, you'll see it in your Feed.	Find influential people in your industry and keep tabs on what they have to say. When you follow them, they might be interested in following you too.
Followers	This is the list of people who follow you. While your Tweets are public for everyone to find, your followers will see your Tweets in their feed.	This is your core Twitter audience. If they like what they see from you, they'll engage and retweet you spreading your messages and brand.
Likes	This shows all the Tweets you have liked. You like a Tweet by click the small heart icon.	Liking a Tweet is a great way to acknowledge another user's message. It's also a great way to get noticed by potential followers. When you constantly Like their Tweets, they'll notice and may take an interest in learning more about you.

Feature	What It Is	What It's Good For
Retweets	A retweet is a reshare of the original Tweet. Clicking the small cycle icon will re-share that tweet to your followers.	This is a great way to endorse another user's idea or message. It pretty much says: "I agree and I think more people should see this." This feature is the power behind Twitter's ability to spread information around the world in seconds. Keep in mind you're operating as a brand and anything you endorse or retweet will (forever) be associated with your brand.
Tweets	These are your 140 character posts and updates you make. You'll also see there is an archive of every Tweet you've ever made. You can see both your own Tweets and other users' Tweets.	Scanning through another user's recent Tweets will give you a good sense of what they spend their time on and what they value.
Pinned Tweets	Pin one of your Tweets to the top of your profile so it stays visible, even as you post new Tweets.	Pin the Tweets that people need to see. Maybe it's a time-sensitive offer, maybe it's a link to your latest blog post, maybe it's just a great thought you want to share.

Here are a few examples of how you can take advantage of Likes:

- **Testimonial list:** You can Like mentions or compliments to your business for future reference.

- **To-do list:** You can Like Tweets that you need to reply to once you've gotten back to your desktop or gathered more information.

- **Read-later list:** If you see a news item that you want to read later, you can Like the Tweet.

TAKING A MOMENT FOR LISTS

We're going to pause here and take a second to appreciate one of Twitter's hidden gems: Lists. Currently, Lists are a grossly underutilized aspect of the social network as the feature provides a way of segmenting and identifying interest-based groups among a sea of millions of users. Twitter lists can be used to follow the updates of a group of Twitter users organized by topic, category, or other commonality. You can create public or private Twitter lists with up to 500 Twitter users.

You can create your own lists or you can subscribe to someone else's list.

To add someone to a Twitter list, go to their profile and click on the settings wheel icon next to their Follow button. Then, click the Add or Remove From Lists link. You will then be able to add the user to an existing list, or create a new list from scratch.
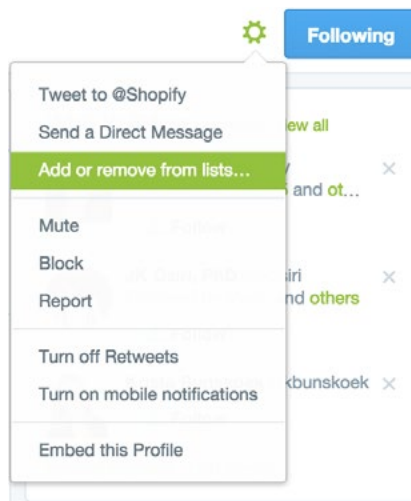
Others can add you to Twitter lists as well. When people visit your profile, they can click on your Lists link to see the lists you follow, and the lists to which you have been added.

Here are a few more ways to optimize Twitter lists:

- Create a private list of your competitors on Twitter to follow and monitor their updates without it being public knowledge.

- Create a private list of the top influencers in your niche or industry and engage with them to get the word out about your business.

- Create a private list of existing customers so you can easily connect and engage with them.

- Create a public list of brands your business carries to stay up to date on their latest news and products.

- Create a public list of stores that carry your brand to learn about new locations or policies.

- Use tools like Audiense to automate Twitter list creation. We'll talk more about advanced Twitter tools later on.
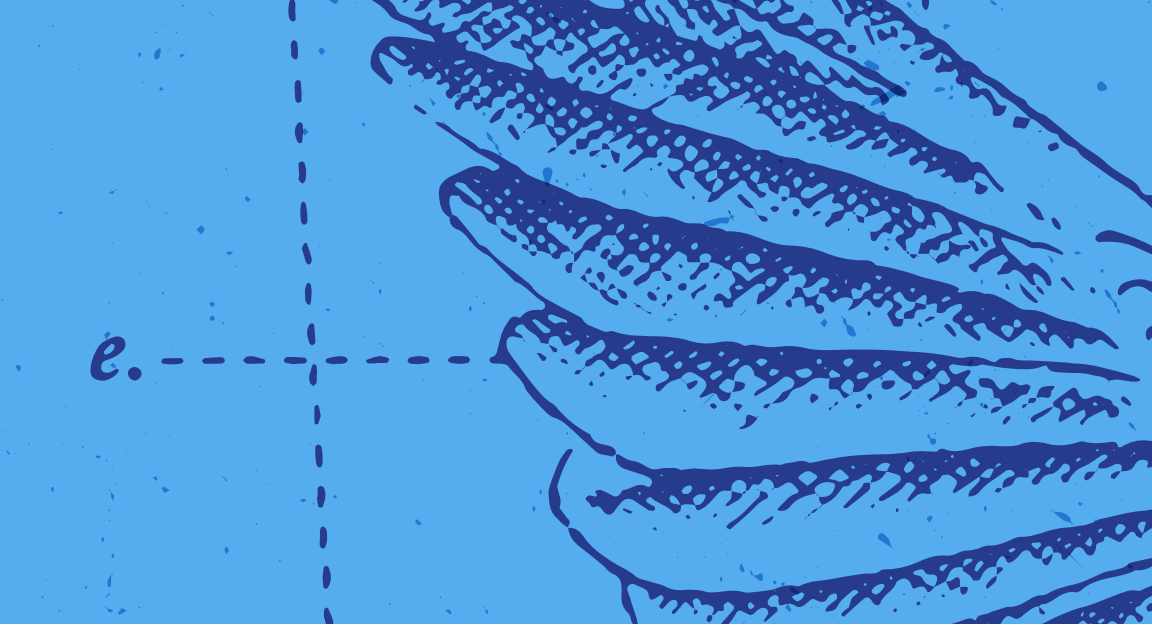
Engaging on Twitter

Once you've gained a basic understanding of Twitter, you'll soon begin wondering how to take it to the next level.

The Anatomy of a Tweet

The idea was simple: send a text to one phone number and that text would be broadcast to all of your friends. This was the founding of Twittr in 2006 - and no - that's not a spelling mistake, that was the original name.

As described in the first version of its website, "Twitter is a service for friends, family and co-workers to communicate and stay connected through the exchange of quick, frequent answers to one simple question: What are you doing?" The status update was born. These Tweets can include links to web pages, photos, videos, slideshows, and more. Some users will use Twitter as a way to reflect on their ideas, others will converse and some will simply use it to distribute information and reach an audience.

Occasionally, you may see additional information and functionality appear below the icons. These are Twitter Cards, which we'll cover later in the guide. In short, Twitter Cards deliver additional information whenever a web page is linked to it.

Hashtags

Within a Tweet, you may also see linked words preceded by a pound sign. These are called hashtags. It all started with this Tweet from 2007:

As an early Twitter user, Chris Messina was attempting to organize a highly decentralized conversation. From the outside, it was difficult to see what users were commenting on or talking about, especially if they were in mid-conversation. The hashtag is a way of categorizing and organizing comments and messages. The hashtag convention was so effective that other social networks have since adopted it.

The hashtag is a powerful way to discover and reach different communities. Here are just a few examples:

- #marketingprofs is where you can find marketing professionals discussing relevant topics

- #edtech is where you'll find teachers talking about technology in the classroom

- #streetwear is where you'll find fashion-forward individuals looking for the next big trend

Hashtags can be anything and everything from a brand name to a location so take the time to do some research and see what's popular with your audience. As you build your marketing strategy and adopt new platforms like Facebook and Instagram, you'll notice these hashtags are likely used there too.

Content Marketing: Curation vs. Creation

As mentioned earlier, your content strategy is how often you plan to Tweet and what types of Tweets you want to share with your audience. These are the Tweets that will keep your profile active, engage your audience, and help you attract new followers.

You can take two approaches: content curation and content creation.

Content curation involves finding content your audience will love and sharing it with them. Examples of content curation include finding videos, blog posts, news articles, memes, quotes, and similar content created by others, and sharing it with your Twitter audience.

The benefit to a curation strategy is that your brand is regarded as an information source for relevant industry news. At the same time, it's simple to find relevant information and share it with your audience. The drawback to this strategy however is that you are driving traffic away from your website. With so much information bombarding your audience, they may forget about you and move on.

Content creation means creating videos, blog posts, news articles, memes, and similar content yourself and sharing it with your Twitter audience. Over time, you'll be providing your audience with valuable content and driving traffic to your site. This strategy however, requires long-term creative investment in developing original resources and will take time to build your audience and see the return on investment.

The route you take will likely depend on the amount of time you have to devote to your content strategy. You can also provide a mix of curation and creation to let your audience know that your goal is to inform them, whether it's through your content or others'. Whichever route you decide to take, the content you share on Twitter should be relevant and useful to your target audience.

For example, if your ideal customers are automotive enthusiasts, then your content strategy could include the following:

- Tweets about new concept cars introduced at a popular auto show, the latest episodes of shows related to cars like Top Gear or Counting Cars, or the winner of the most recent Formula One or Nascar race.

- Sharing content you have written on your automotive-focused blog.

- Engaging your audience by asking them questions related to cars, like "what would be your dream car?" or "what was the worst vehicle you ever drove and why?".

- Sharing fun facts about automobiles, such as how **Volkswagen produced the most passenger cars in 2013**.

- Promotion of your latest products or services for automotive enthusiasts.

The rule of thumb when it comes to valuable **content sharing and self-promotion** is 80/20. 80% of your updates should be interesting to your audience to help it grow and promote engagement, and 20% of your updates should be self-promotional for your business.

Customer Service: Be (seen as) a Hero

67% of consumers go to social media for customer service. **33% prefer using social media** over traditional customer service channels like email or the phone. This means that you need to be looking for customer service opportunities on Twitter.

When customers Tweet you with a customer service issue, they expect a timely response. In some cases, it might be something you can work on without needing any additional information. In other cases, you might need to invite the customer to contact you for additional details, including sensitive data they shouldn't share with the public.

Either way, the goal is to respond quickly and create a solution that helps them avoid other support channels. For example, if you need them to email you, give them a personal email address as opposed to your general support email. Or, if you do give them the general support email, let them know that you are standing by to give them a fast answer. Your potential customers will love seeing you take care of your existing customers so be fast, be empathetic and make their day.

Reputation Monitoring: Keep an Ear to the Ground

One study shows that less than 3% of customer service Tweets actually mention a business' Twitter username when Tweeting about their products or services. So in addition to monitoring the mentions of your Twitter username, you need to also monitor mentions of your full business name, unique product names, or unique service names.

Not all of the results will be relevant to your business, but at least a few will require a response of thanks or customer support. By responding to these mentions, you may just surprise some people with your great brand management and customers service skills.

You can use tools like **TweetDeck** and **HootSuite** to search for your business name and unique keywords related to your business, products, and services. **Mention** can be used to monitor mentions of your business, products, and services on Twitter and other social platforms. These tools

make it easier to find people talking about your business and respond to them quickly.

Use Automation Wisely

The point of social media is to be social. People expect to connect with businesses and brands to engage with the people behind the scenes.

There are many, many tools that can help you automate your Twitter presence. While it isn't necessarily bad to schedule certain types of Tweets to your account, like sharing great content that you know your audience will love, you shouldn't rely solely on automation tools to keep your account active.

Any automation you use on your Twitter profile should be for the purpose of allowing you to have more time to interact with people on Twitter. Be sure to spend time answering people's questions, thanking those that mention your business, helping those that need customer service, and so on. The more personal you make your Twitter account, the more meaningful of an experience you will have on Twitter.

Direct messages, as mentioned earlier in the guide, are private messages you can send to Twitter users that follow you. Many tools suggest automating direct messages to new followers, but Twitter users can often find this action spammy and unfollow you for it.

If you've decided to send automated direct messages, make them non-promotional as possible. Thank the person for following you, and maybe ask them a question to get the conversation started. Do not, under any circumstances, try to sell them, get them to click to your website, ask them to follow you or connect elsewhere.

TWITTER ETIQUETTE

There are "rules" to Twitter you won't find in the Support section of Twitter's website. Here are a few things to keep in mind if you want to be loved in the Twittersphere.

Don't Overshare
Oversharing happens in real life and it can happen on Twitter. You might be talking about something inappropriate or just something your audience

doesn't need to know. It may also have to do with your frequency. Try and avoid Twitter rants, people usually tune out or start trying to diagnose. If you walked into your favorite clothing store tomorrow, would you want the owner to come up to you and start talking about their lunch for 20 minutes? Probably not. Stay on topic. Yes, being real and personal can be endearing but there is a line to what your audience does and doesn't need to know.

Beware the TUI

Tweeting under the influence, it's real and it's dangerous. Not only does it hurt you, it can hurt those around you. Out for a big night out? Leave social media out of it. Your inspired joke might seem funny now but giving it a sober second thought is a real thing. And just because you think you're Tweeting from your personal account doesn't mean you actually are. Be safe.

#Don't #Hashtag #Everything

Isn't that title annoying to read? Twitter amateurs will hashtag way too many words in their Tweet with the hope of getting noticed. Stick to 1-3 hashtags in your 140-character Tweet. No hashtags is totally cool too; not every thought needs a hashtag. Also, keep your hashtags simple. The goal is for them to be short and unique. #RememberEveryCharacterCounts.

Repeating a Sales Pitch

Sometimes you come across someone you know would be perfect for your product or service. Be cool. It's okay to pitch someone on Twitter. It actually feels kind of nice for someone to be approached individually by a brand. The next thing a user will do when they get that message is look at your profile and see all your Tweets. Too often, you'll see companies with the exact same 140-character pitch to a hundred other Twitter users. This practice comes across as a blind, money-driven sales pitch that is quickly ignored and leaves a bad taste.
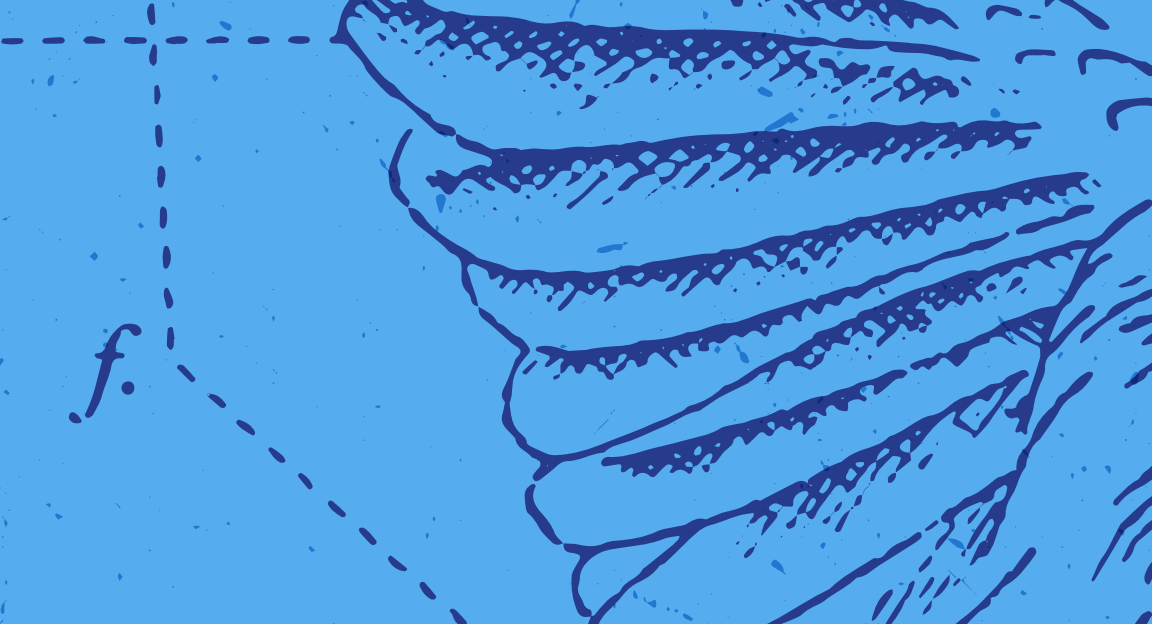
Building Your Audience

Once you've established your Twitter marketing plan and made a handful of Tweets, you'll be ready to promote your Twitter account and start growing your audience. First, we're going to focus on unpaid audience building. Afterwards, we'll explore paid strategies, most notably Twitter Advertising. Aside from the following strategies, you should, above all else, focus on creating value for your audience. Share thoughtful ideas, start conversations and be consistent. As a resource and trusted voice, your audience will naturally grow. That said, there are still some steps you can take to accelerate that growth.

Add the Follow Button to Your Website

Your first step should be to add the **Twitter follow button** to your website. Twitter users can click this button to follow you on Twitter without ever leaving your website. Simple, fast and a great way to learn who is visiting your website too.

Add the Share a Link Button to Content Pages

You should also add the **Twitter share a link button** to your content and product listings. In addition to encouraging Twitter users to share your content and your products, the button will also recommend that they follow you. Here's how to configure it:

Users who click the button to share your link will see the following after they Tweet:

If you only have one Twitter username, including it in the Via field will ensure that it's recommended to the user who sent the Tweet. Add an additional username in the Recommend field to provide a second recommendation.

Share on Other Profiles & Listings

If you have a large following on Instagram, Facebook or Google+, share an update that lets your audience know about your Twitter account.

In general, take any opportunity to link to your Twitter profile - business listings, local review sites, etc. This also includes author bylines for articles you write, forum profiles, forum signatures, and any other place you can get exposure.

Add a Link in Your Emails

Include links to your social profiles in your newsletters, order confirmations, or other automated emails. You can do this within the main email itself, or subtly in the footer, as shown below:
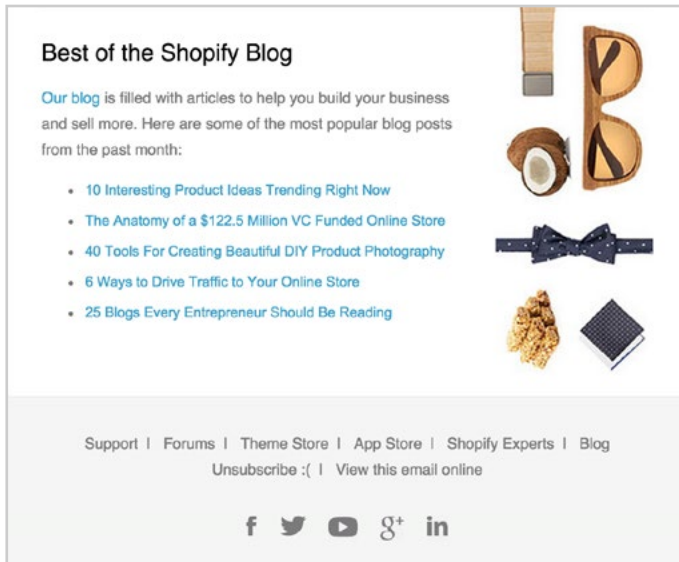
For direct emails sent from services like Gmail, **WiseStamp** can create professional email signatures with links to your social media networks. You can even have your latest Tweet automatically included in your email.

Connect with Your Target Audience

Another way to grow your followers is to follow others. For example, you can use **Followerwonk** to find people with specific keywords in their bios, or who live in specific locations.

Follow them and send them a friendly hello Tweet, or respond to one of their most recent Tweets. If they haven't engaged with or followed your account after a week or two, you can unfollow them. You can see who has followed you by going to your profile, clicking on the number of people you are following, and looking for the Follows You notation.

Tools like **TwitNerd** can simplify the process of finding people who are not following you. **Commun.it** is another valuable tool that can help you discover new customers to follow and engage with, as well as people you follow that do not engage with or follow you.

In addition to using Twitter search tools like Followerwonk, you can also visit the profiles of people whose following would match your desired audience. A good place to start would be to look at your competitors' audiences as well as industry influencers.

The key to this strategy is to not overdo it; Twitter has specific rules about aggressive following and limits following based on follows-per-day and specific account ratios. You can learn more in documentation for **Twitter limits** and **following rules**.

Engage with Others

The best way to gain a Twitter following is to simply engage with others. If you're regularly having conversations on Twitter with potential customers, partners, peers, and influencers, then you'll naturally begin to build your audience. Remember those hashtags and influencers you took note of earlier. It's time to start talking with them.

Don't try to sell someone your products or services during casual engagement. By being helpful in your interactions, people will naturally want to learn more about your business and will check out your profile to do so.

Participate in Twitter Chats

One way to gain exposure for your business, grow your Twitter audience, and meet potential customers is through Twitter chats. These chats are organized through a hashtag used at a specific time.

Many Twitter chats follow a Q&A format with a guest expert. The host of the Twitter chat will ask a question to an expert in their industry, and the expert will provide an answer. Anyone participating in the chat can also answer the question or discuss the answer posted by the expert.

Fashion sellers can participate #StyleChat, makeup sellers can participate in #beautychat, and booksellers can participate in #bookchat. Just find chats that match your products, and you'll find chats in which your ideal customers are likely participating. Better yet, you'll also find bloggers who might be open to reviewing your products.

You can use Twitter itself, social media management tools like HootSuite, or tools like **TweetChat** to participate in a Twitter chat. TweetChat will simply allow you to concentrate on Tweets specific to the Twitter chat hashtag. It will also automatically append the hashtag to your Tweets and allow you to pause the flow of incoming Tweets so you can read and respond to them at your own pace.

If you are a regular participant in specific Twitter chats, you'll likely find opportunities to promote your business. You should look for times where your products are the answer to someone's question. For example, someone in #beautychat may ask about natural makeup products. If you sell natural makeup products, you can chime in and promote yourself. Just don't throw in a promotion Tweet with a Twitter chat hashtag out of the blue.

If you can't find a Twitter chat that matches your business, you may want to consider creating your own. To host a chat, you'll need to do the following:

1   Choose a weekly, biweekly, or monthly date and time. Make sure that it doesn't conflict with another Twitter chat that your target audience will already be participating in. Better yet, make sure yours is right after so you can market it with a Tweet like "Hey #stylechat fans! Join #ourstylechat about fashion coming up in 10 minutes." Make sure you're a participant of #stylechat so your promotion doesn't seem as spammy.

2   Create a dedicated page on your website that includes what the chat is about, a list of topics that will be covered, and what guests will be participating. This page should explain the basics of what a Twitter chat is, and how Twitter users can participate. It should also include a contact form for people who would like to join the chat as a guest, or businesses who would like to advertise during the chat (if you want to allow that).

3   Reach out to well-known people and experts in your industry to schedule them to participate in your Twitter chat. Once they're

scheduled, make sure you send reminders a week prior, and then a day prior, to the chat to ensure they're still on board. Have backup participants in mind in case of emergency.

4 Send a list of questions to your guest in advance so they have time to prepare thought out, meaningful answers.

5 Send reminder Tweets about the chat to your Twitter followers. Cross post these reminders to your Facebook and Instagram audiences.

6 Be prepared to do the following during the Twitter chat.
   - Introduce the chat topic.
   - Introduce the guest and thank them for coming.
   - Welcome chat participants after they Tweet the chat hashtag.
   - Ask the main questions at a steady pace.
   - Retweet your guest's answers and good answers from participants.
   - Retweet good questions and related comments from participants.
   - Ask your guest follow-up questions as needed for clarification.
   - Close by thanking your guest and letting participants know about the next Twitter chat topic and guest.
   - For a boost in sales, you may also want to create a promotional offer for your products, such as a discount code that matches your Twitter chat hashtag that participants can use.

7 Create a new blog post with a recap of your Twitter chat or update the announcement post with your recap of best Tweets, top participants, and other statistics.

Note that since a Twitter chat and its hashtag are public, anyone can jump into the conversation. This includes spammers who might be there to just promote themselves, their products, or spread unrelated information. You can Tweet spammers to let them know that their Tweets are not relevant to the chat - some may leave you alone, but others may be using automated tools and not notice.
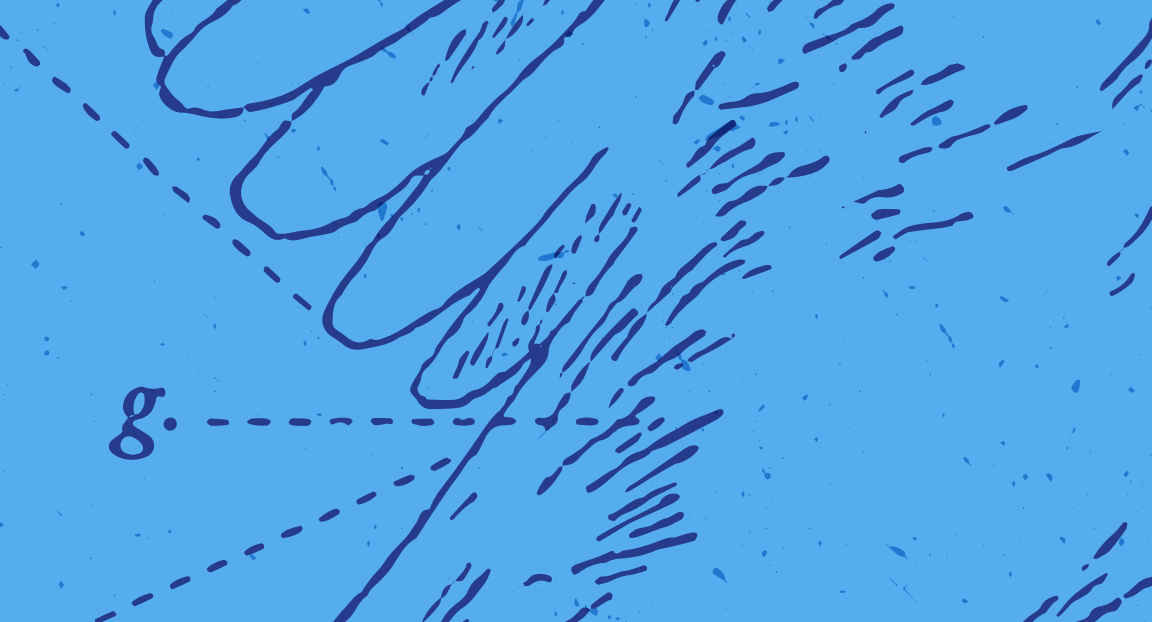
Twitter Advertising 101

If you'd like to grow your following as quickly as possible, you can also leverage Twitter's advertising platform. Twitter Advertising allows you to promote Tweets, accounts, and even trends to bring your message to a larger audience.

Another tool you'll come across is the Twitter Card. A card allows you to enhance the way that content from your website is shared on Twitter. Some content automatically triggers cards to appear while other cards are paid of advertisements. For example, when people share content (simply the URL pasted in their Tweets) from the Shopify Blog, their Tweets will contain

additional details beyond the Tweet they created thanks to the Twitter Summary Card, pictured below:

Cards like this are free and can be enabled in just a few minutes. Twitter offers a number of different **types of cards** to choose from:

- The Summary Card is mostly used for articles. This card enhances Tweets with the title, description, thumbnail photo, and Twitter account attribution.

- The Photo Card enhances Tweets with a large photo. You'll find that most Tweets from the popular photo sharing website **Flickr** are set to use the Photo Card.

- The Gallery Card enhances Tweets with a gallery of photos.

- The App Card enhances Tweets for mobile users by directing them to specific mobile apps.

- The Player Card enhances Tweets with a media player for videos, slideshows, and other rich content. You will find that most Tweets from the popular video sharing website **Vimeo** are set to use the Player Card.

Twitter Cards offer a much richer experience for your audience and prompts different actions beyond liking and retweeting. Cards are also central to Twitter's advertising offering.

Setting Up Your Twitter Advertising Campaign

To get started with Twitter advertising, sign up on the **Twitter advertising page**. If it's your first time there, you'll be asked to login to your Twitter account, select your country from a dropdown list, and set your time zone.

Next, you'll be asked to choose an objective for your first campaign. You can choose from the following:

You'll need to answer a few simple questions while setting up your Twitter Advertising campaign. The following steps apply to every advertising campaign objective:

1 Name your advertising campaign and give it a start date.

2 Define the advertising campaign based on the objective you have chosen.

3 Define your target audience by location, gender, language, device, keyword, followers, interests, and behavior. Tailored audiences are those you have chosen by uploading a list of emails (such as your current customer database) or by **adding tracking code to your website** so that you can target Twitter users who have previously viewed your website.

4 Set your advertising campaign budget and choose whether to allow Twitter to automate your bidding amount or choose a fixed maximum amount per bid.

Your campaign will begin shortly after completing these steps. Now, let's look at the specifics for each advertising objective.

OBJECTIVE 1: TWEET ENGAGEMENTS

You can use the Tweet Engagements objective to push your Tweets to a wider audience.

The Tweet Engagements setup page will allow you promote existing Tweets or create new promoted Tweets from scratch. The new Tweet you create can be published on your Twitter profile, or only displayed to those defined in your target audience.
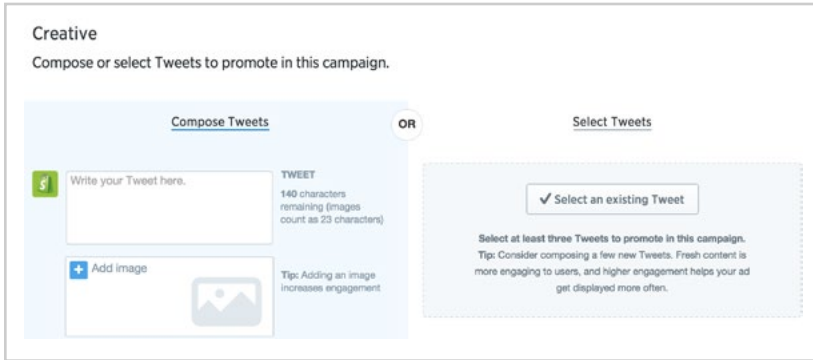
Promoted Tweets are priced on a cost-per-engagement (CPE) basis, meaning you'll only pay when someone retweets, likes, expands, clicks on, replies to, or follows you from your Tweet.

OBJECTIVE 2: WEBSITE CLICKS

You can use the Website Clicks objective to push a Tweet including a Website Card to a wider audience.

The Website Card encourages more clicks by providing additional details about your website, plus a call-to-action button to make it easier to visit.

Calls-to-action include: read more, shop now, view now, visit now, book now, learn more, play now, bet now, donate, apply here, quote here, order now, and book tickets.

The Website Clicks objective will allow you to promote existing Tweets mentioning your website or create new promoted Tweets from scratch. The new Tweet you create can be published on your Twitter profile, or only displayed to those defined in your target audience. Your budget will go towards clicks to your website from the Tweet or Website Card.

OBJECTIVE 3: APP INSTALLS

You can use the App Installs objective to create a Twitter Card that encourages people to install your app.

To use the App Installs objective, you will specify the app you want to promote by providing its URL from the app store it's hosted on (e.g. the App Store or Google Play Store).

Once you have selected your app, you can either select existing Tweets to pair it with or create a new Tweet from scratch. Calls to action include open, play, shop, book, connect, and order. Your budget will be allocated towards clicks to your app install page.

OBJECTIVE 4: VIDEO VIEWS

Post a short video and get as many people to watch it as possible. While you may not be driving traffic to your website, video attracts attention and is often retweeted and liked.

OBJECTIVE 5: FOLLOWERS OBJECTIVE

You can use the Followers objective to grow your community by encouraging Twitter users to follow you.

To do so, you'll need to tell people why they should follow your account. It's good practice to only enter a single short sentence - no hashtags, links or anything that might distract your target audience from clicking the Follow button.

Since obtaining a follower is the sole objective for this type of campaign, your budget should be based on the worth of a follower for your business. For reference, in 2013, Sumall did a **study of 900 accounts** that showed the value of a Twitter follower for brands was $25.62.

OBJECTIVE 6: LEADS ON TWITTER

You can use the Leads on Twitter objective to create a Twitter Card that encourages Twitter users to provide their email address, helping you grow newsletter distribution and potential-customer lists.

Your call-to-action text will vary based on how you are attracting your leads. For example, if you want them to sign up for your newsletter, you could say Sign Up Now. If you are offering a free ebook, you could say Download Now. Once completed, Twitter users will then be able to submit their email address to you through the Lead Generation Card.
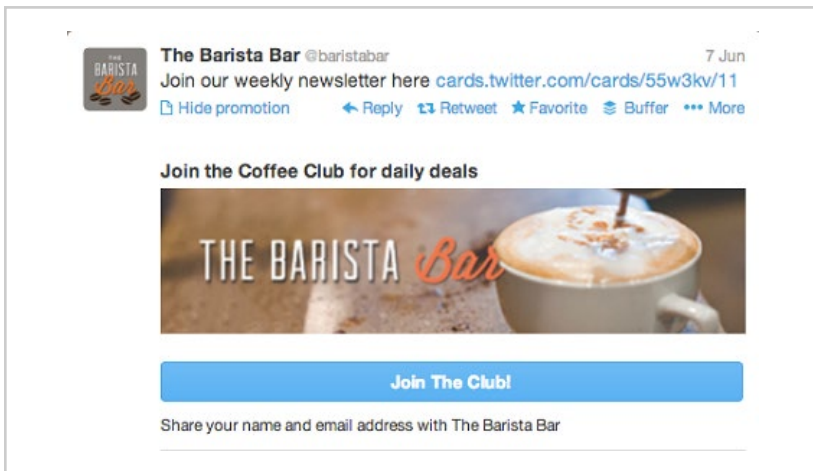
When adding your call-to-action, you'll be asked to provide additional details like a link to your privacy policy and fallback webpage for Twitter users using unsupported devices.

Since obtaining a lead is the sole objective for this type of campaign, your budget should be based on the worth of a lead for your business.

Twitter Ad Targeting

Along with a variety of objectives and actions, Twitter offers powerful targeting capabilities to make sure you're reaching the right audience.

With Twitter, you have 8 core targeting strategies:

1 **Geography and Language** - target users in one of Twitter's 200 markets based on regions, subregions, languages and dialects.

2 **Gender** - limit ads to a specific gender.

3 **Interest** - target users whose interests align with your business. Twitter offers over 350 interest topics to choose from but be sure to focus your campaign on maximum 10 of these interests per campaign.

4 **Follower** - target users based on who they follow; this is a great option for targeting competitors' followers, complimentary brands and industry media and influencers.

5 **Device** - reach audiences based on mobile carrier, phone type, operating system and other technical details.

6 **Behavior** - target users based on how the behave online and offline, outside of Twitter (currently available to US and UK only).

7 **Keyword** - target users based on words they Tweeted or searched.

8 **Tailored Audience** - integrate your existing lists with Twitter so people who visit your site are then exposed to ads inviting them back to your site.

A wide variety of targeting options gives even the most novice user an opportunity to reach new audiences. For first timers, focus on geography (if you have shipping constraints), interests and keywords. As your audience grows, work towards using tailored audiences as a way of creating multiple brand touchpoints across the web.

Advertising Analytics

After running your first Twitter advertising campaigns, analytics details will be available through your Twitter advertising dashboard. Here, you'll find additional details about each campaign's performance.
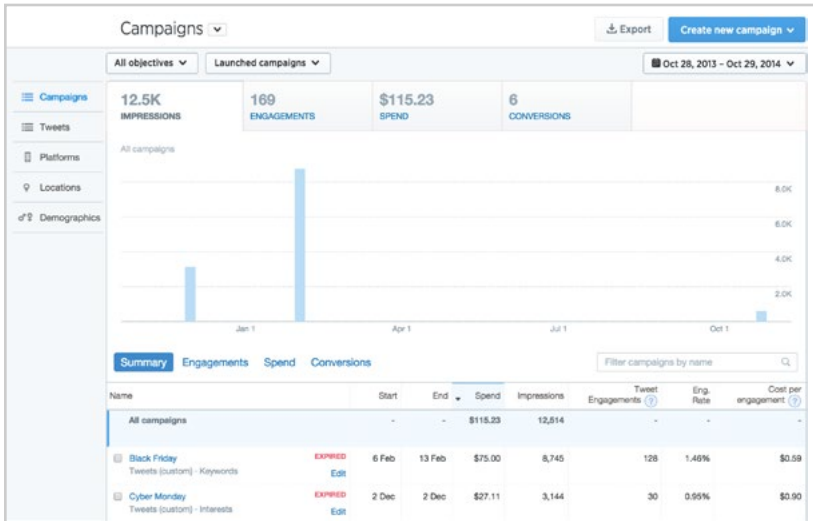
Be sure to monitor your campaign analytics closely to ensure that your advertising budget is well spent and gaining more engagement, clicks to your website, app installs, followers, or leads.

In a 2016 earnings report, Twitter reported that it had a logged-out user base of 500 million. There's no way to know if that's actual Twitter users who just happened to be logged out or if they're visiting Twitter without signing up. Of that logged out group, 65% of people who saw ads correctly recalled the ad; that's 50% higher than a control group and quite valuable to your brand too.
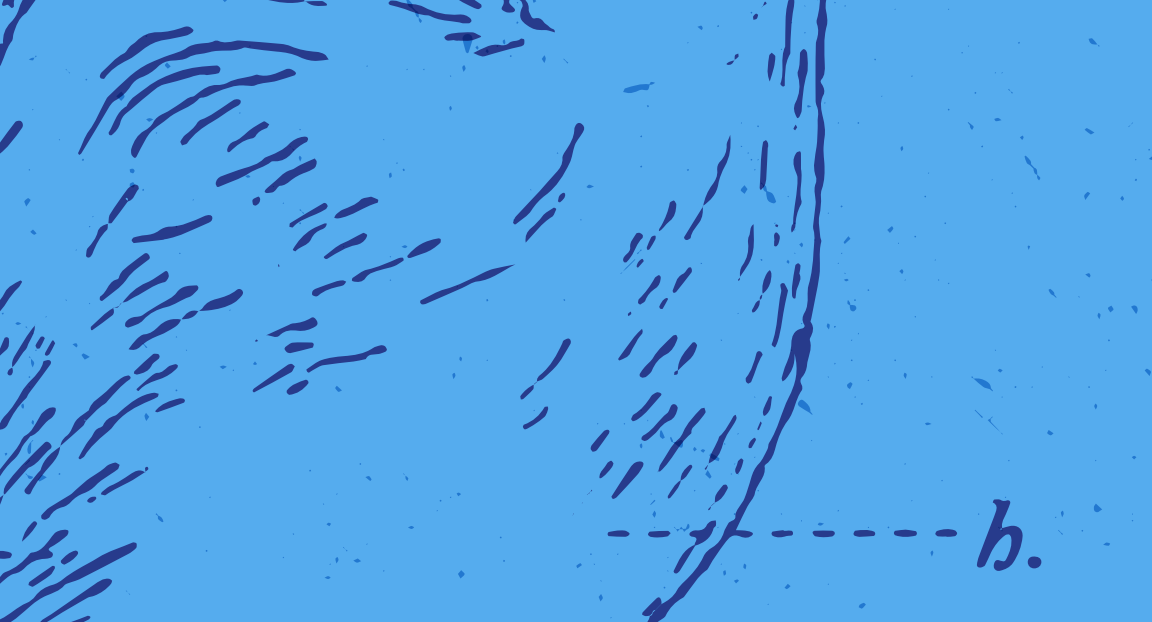
Selling with Twitter

While we've discussed different ways to grow your audience on Twitter, both unpaid and paid, we're now going to take a look at Twitter as a sales tool, a place where you can make a deal. During this exciting, money-loving chapter, keep in mind the 80/20 rule discussed earlier. Make sure only 20% of your Twitter activity is product-driven. The rest should be about providing value to your audience.

Customer Acquisition

Depending on your business and the products or services you have to offer, you may find direct opportunities to put your business in front of people

ready to buy. One way to do this is by using Twitter's search functionality to find people who are looking for the products or services you offer.

Try different variations of searches like the following:

- recommendations for [your product or service]
- looking for a new [your product or service]
- need a [your product or service]
- your favorite [your product or service]

Modify these searches until you find people who are looking for the products or services you offer. Save the searches in Twitter or in a Twitter management tool like **TweetDeck** so you can continually monitor them and respond to inquiries quickly.

If you can't find Tweets to reply to, then your next best option is to engage with your ideal customers. For example, let's say that your ideal customer is a CEO in the finance industry. You can use tools like **Followerwonk** to find them on Twitter.

You can click on each ideal customers' profiles, follow them, or add them to a private Twitter list, and then engage with them on Twitter through casual conversation.

Alternatively, you can use **Audiense** to automate the creation of Twitter lists based on criteria that matches your ideal customers. With tools like Audiense, you can create reports on users who have engaged with you providing an opportunity to gather possible future customers.

Install Twitter Cards

If you have a Shopify store, you can view instructions on **how to implement Twitter Cards on your website**. Otherwise, you will want to review the code specified in the **Twitter Developers documentation section** for the type of Twitter card you want to install on your website.

The Product Card for your products and the Summary Card for your content should be all you need to get more visibility on Twitter when you or your website visitors share your pages on Twitter.

Add a Buy Button to Your Tweet

With a strong brand voice and a growing audience, you can use Twitter to sell directly to your followers and other Twitter users. After a simple setup process, your Tweets will feature a "Buy Now" button that will accompany a product image and brief description and price. Using Twitter as a sales channel not only offers new opportunities for exposure but also a great way to increase conversions.
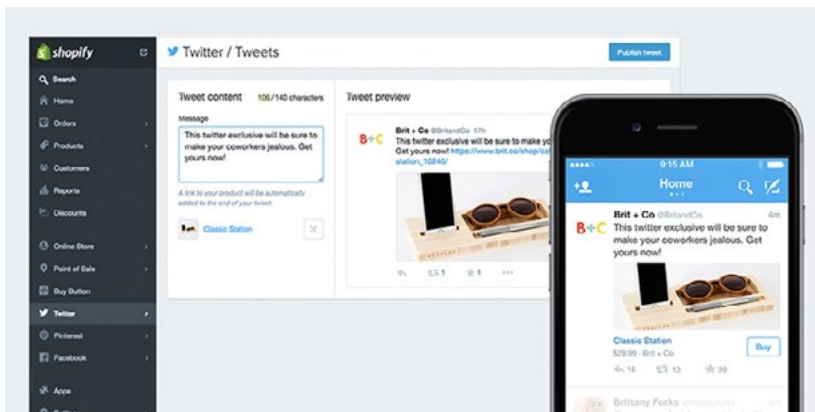
Often, a product is discussed on Twitter, then a link directs the user to the website, they have to search the site for the product, and go through the checkout process. At the same time, there's a very good chance the prospective customer might become distracted or want to go back to their original activity on Twitter. By introducing a buy button on Twitter, users are able to complete their purchasing action without having to leave Twitter.
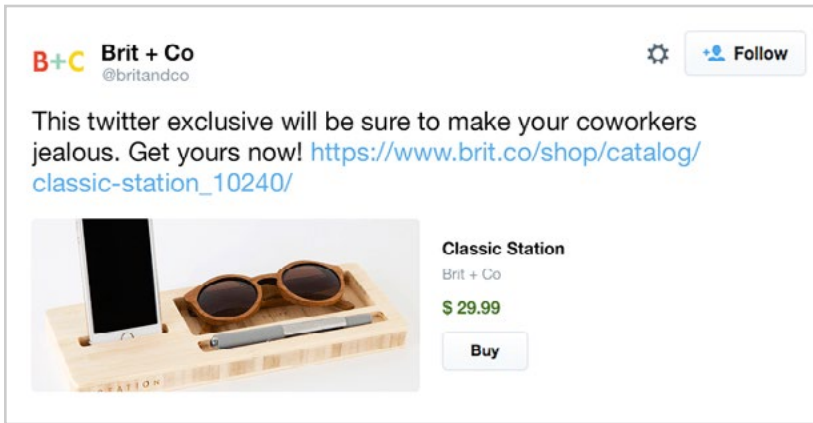
Currently, only users in the United States can add buy buttons to their Tweets while everyone else will be redirected to the product via URL. If your business operates and sells within the US, using Twitter as a sales channel is a huge opportunity. Any Tweets seen internationally will still direct clicks to your website too.

To sell on Twitter, you need to enable the channel through your Shopify store. For more details on the process, check out **shopify.com/twitter**.

Despite reports in 2016 that Twitter would cease development of the Buy Button, the option remains available and Twitter insists more focus will be put on delivering high quality advertisements that will include a purchase option. With over 332 million users, the Buy Button offers massive potential with less competition than other social advertising options.

Reviewing Twitter Analytics

Twitter offers their own analytics platform that provides valuable information about your audience and engagement on Twitter.

On the home screen, you'll find a summary of your Twitter audience growth and engagement over the last 28 days:

28 day summary with change over previous period

Tweets	Tweet impressions	Profile visits	Mentions	Followers	Tweets linking to you
579 ↑116.0%	195K ↓15.7%	6,858 ↑0.7%	1,161 ↑39.7%	61.1K ↑641	599 ↓20.6%

Next, you'll see a monthly breakdown of highlights:

On the Tweets screen, you'll find more detailed analytics about your most recent Tweets:

On the Followers screen, you'll find detailed analytics about your
Twitter audience:
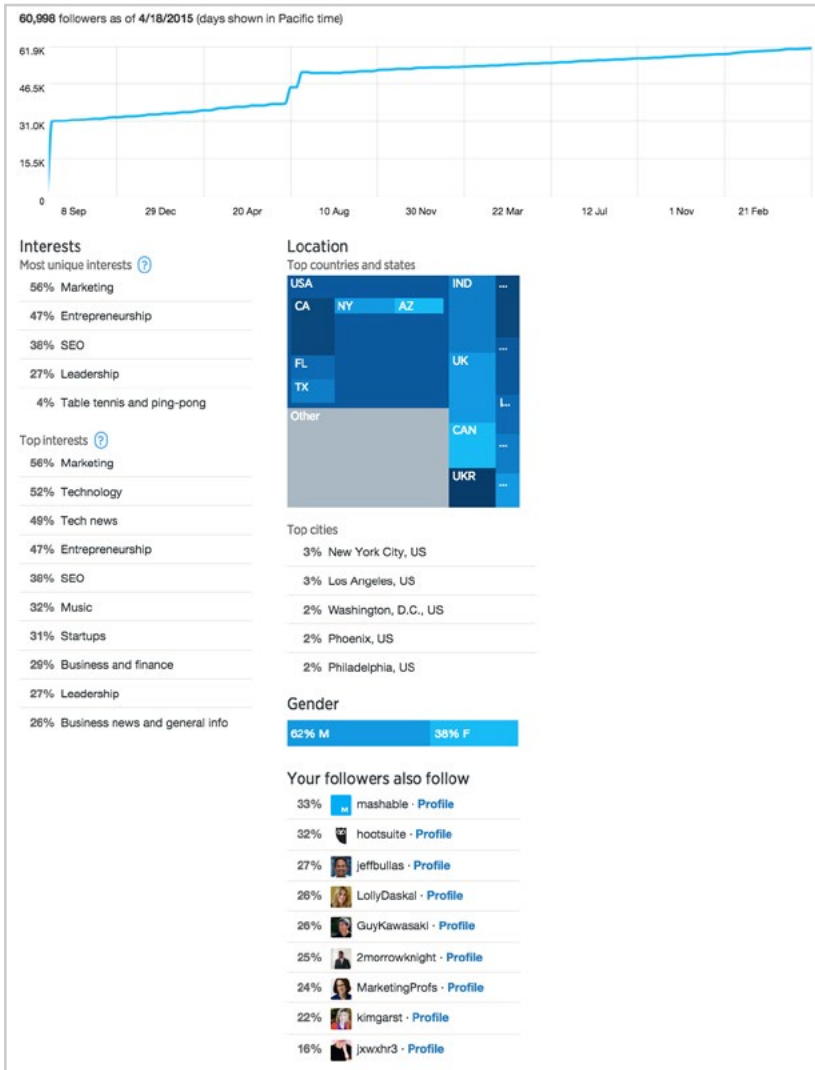
For those that have Twitter Cards installed on their website, detailed metrics
will be available on the Twitter Cards screen. We'll discuss Twitter Cards
further in the Advanced Twitter Strategies section.
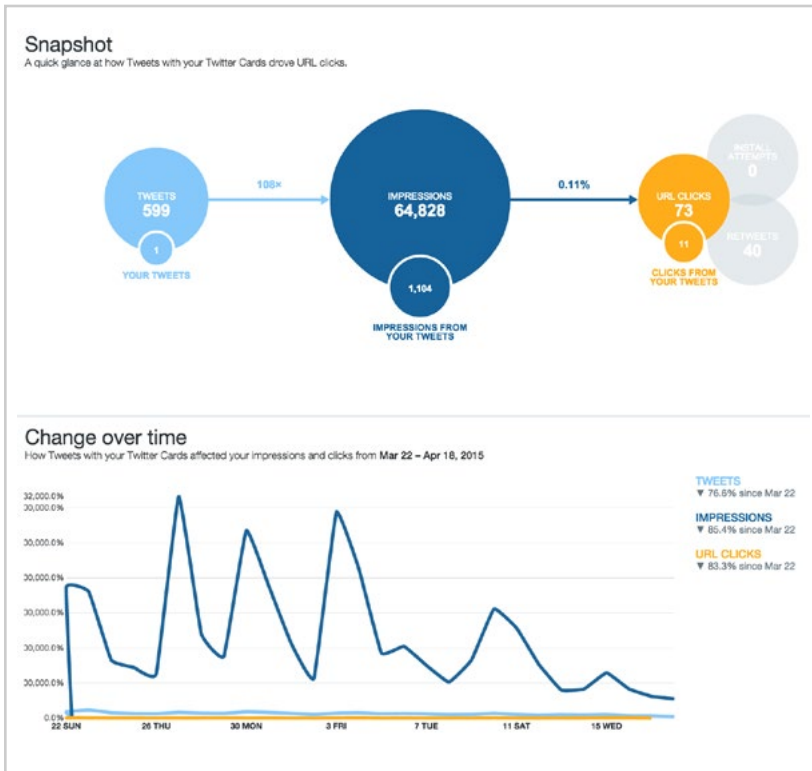
You'll also find details on your most effective Twitter Cards and links, plus influencers that drove the most traffic to your website through their Tweets.

Be sure to review your Twitter analytics regularly to stay up-to-date on the audience and engagement growth for your account.

Discover Twitter Conversions

Want to find out if your organic or paid Twitter activity is leading to conversions (sales or leads) on your website? Find out using Google Analytics. If you have a Shopify store, you can setup **Google Analytics conversion tracking**. For everyone else, you can follow the instructions on the **Google Analytics Help Center**.

Once you've set up conversion tracking with Google Analytics, you can go to your website's Google Analytics profile and click on the Social Conversions report under the Acquisitions section in the left sidebar menu.

This report will show you the conversions (sales and leads) you receive from your social media traffic, broken down by network. The conversions from Twitter will be clearly marked, but other conversions from Twitter that happen through social media management tools like HootSuite will be harder to identify.

This report can help you determine whether your time is best spent on Twitter or another social network. If Twitter isn't the leader on your conversions report, you may wish to choose to focus more of your energy on the networks that do lead to more conversions, or you may wish to re-analyze your Twitter marketing strategy to see if there are ways you can improve your conversions.
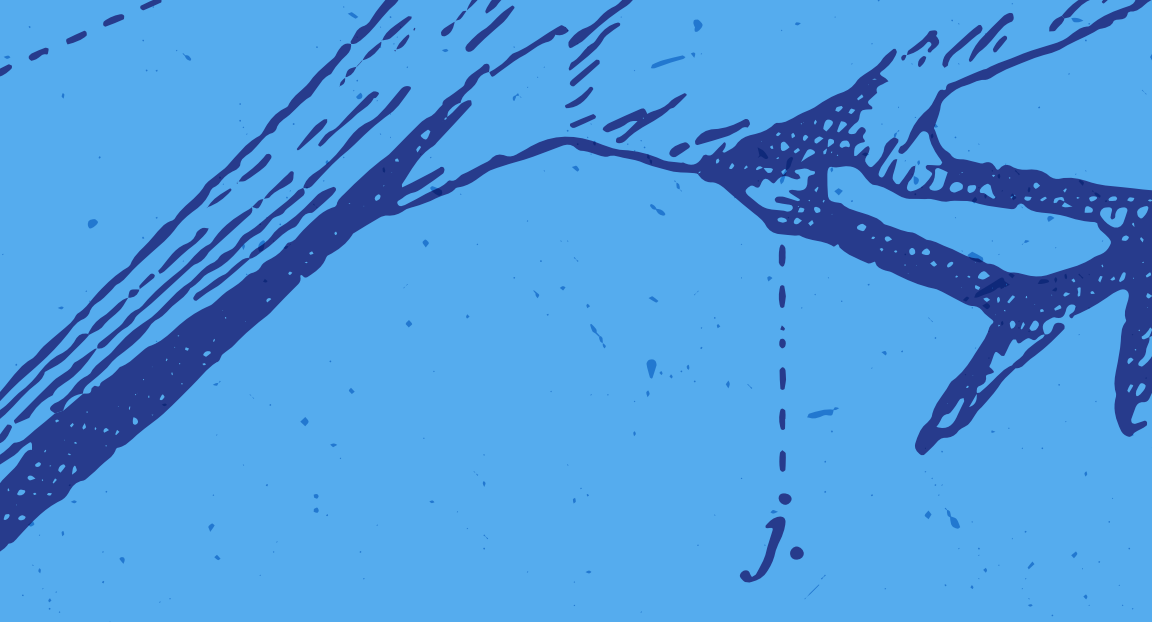
Helpful Twitter Tools

There are hundreds of online tools, programs and smartphone apps designed to help manage your social media presence. Some focus specifically on Twitter, but many work with Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+ and more. It would be impossible to cover every tool within this guide, so we've chosen a small sampling of some our favorites.

TweetDeck

TweetDeck is a social media dashboard originally developed by an independent team but later acquired by Twitter. Its key feature is the ability to organize Twitter feeds from multiple Twitter accounts into convenient, auto-scrolling columns.
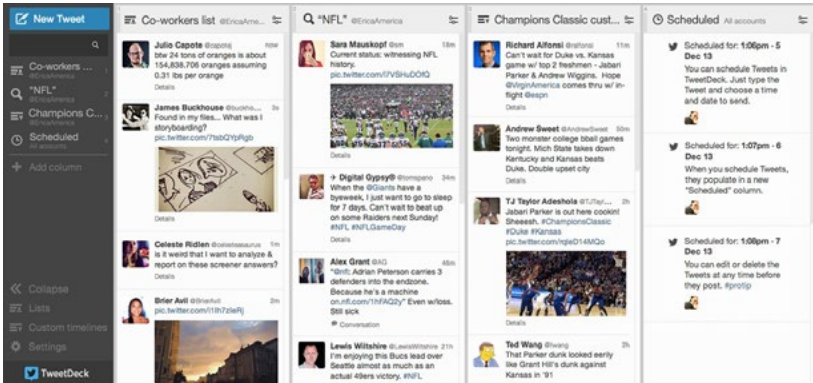
You can use these columns to stay up-to-date with the newsfeeds of those you follow, Tweets that match search queries, mentions of your Twitter username, your direct messages, latest activity, your favorited Tweets, Tweets from those in specific Twitter lists, and more.

You can also perform some of Twitter's more basic tasks without needing to sign-in to multiple accounts on the web. This includes Tweeting, retweeting, favoriting Tweets, and more.

Essentially, TweetDeck allows you to do and see everything on Twitter, without having to navigate the website itself. Best of all, it's entirely free!
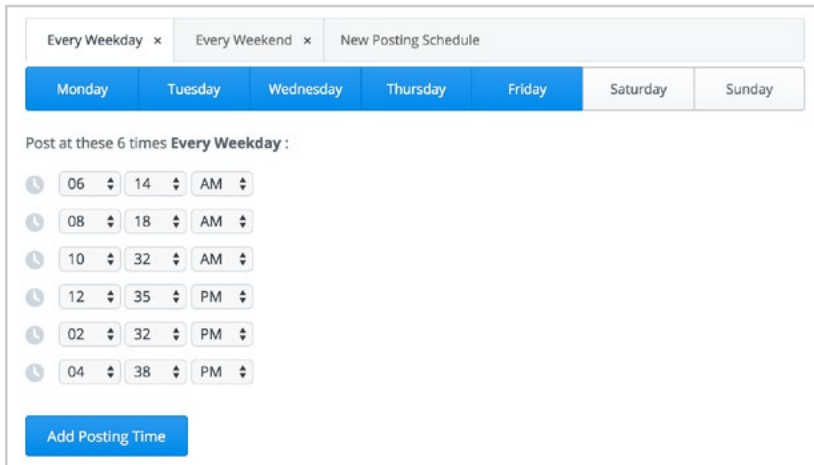
For users interest in taking advantage of features like these on additional networks, HootSuite is as good alternative. It's free for up to five social profiles, and plans for those that need more start at $9.99 per month.

Buffer

Buffer allows users to schedule updates to their Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Google+ accounts.

The difference between scheduling Tweets in Buffer compared to TweetDeck is that Buffer allows users to create a posting schedule, where any Tweets you add to your queue are shared during the next available slot in your schedule.

This allows you to pre-load several updates and stagger them during the time of day you know your audience is most engaged.


Buffer was designed to keep social media accounts active and consistent with scheduled updates. As a result, it doesn't have the same social monitoring tools as TweetDeck. It does, however, feature some helpful analytics for the Tweets you send.

Pricing for Buffer starts at $10 per month. Business and enterprise accounts are also available.

Audiense

Audiense is a Twitter management tool for businesses that provides deeper insight into your audience and engagement.
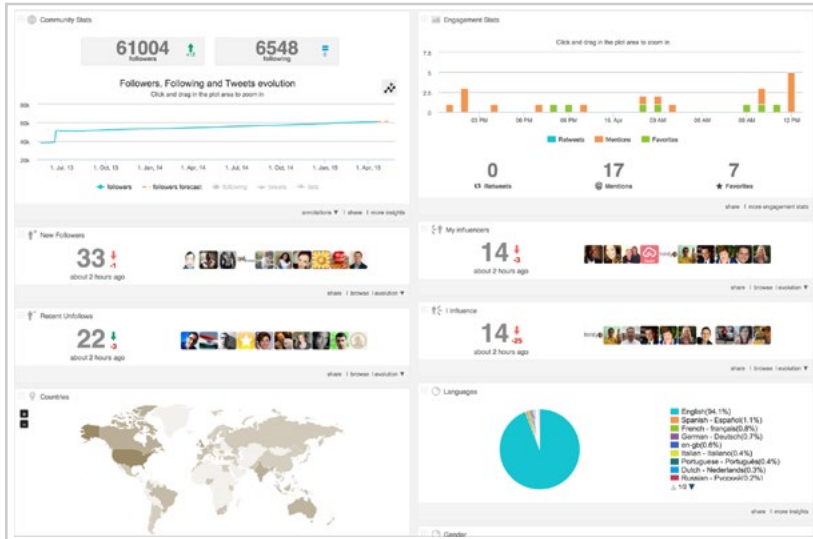
Audiense's main features are broken into four categories:

1 Fine-tune your target audience to those who have a real interest
   in your business. You can discover new followers, segment your
   followers, import your email database to find with leads and
   customers on Twitter, target influencers, and geo-target your
   Twitter community.

2 Customize, optimize, and personalize your engagement. Audiense
   makes it possible to discover the best time to Tweet, find users most
   engaged with your Tweets, formulate direct messaging campaigns,
   and tailor content based on your audience's interests.

3 Unlock in-depth insights about your Twitter community and
   content by analyzing your statistics, Tweet analytics, performance
   benchmarks, competitor analysis, and follower retention.

4 Create customized campaigns to monitor, automate, search,
   filter, manage lists, and follow or unfollow members of your
   Twitter community.

Pricing for Audiense depends on your number of contacts and the features
you need. The features mentioned above, with a 50,000 contact (follower)

limit, are included in the $39/month plan. Agency and enterprise plans are also available.

IFTTT

For those interested in automating their social media presence, there's **IFTTT (If This, Then That)**. IFTTT is a free service that allows users to automate activities using "recipes" in the following format: If [TRIGGER HAPPENS] then [ACTION HAPPENS].

You can create recipes for Twitter to post a new Tweet, send a direct message to yourself, update your profile picture, and more when triggered by specific events.

Here are a couple of examples of recipes only involving Twitter triggers and actions:

- Add a user that mentions your username or a specific keyword to a list.
- Tweet a specific message to new people that follow you on Twitter.
- Sends a thank you Tweet to anyone who Tweets a link from your website.
- Retweet a user that compliments your business on Twitter preceded with "thanks!".

You can also create recipes involving Twitter and any of the other 150+ channels (apps, tools, social networks, devices, etc.) IFTTT supports. Here are few examples:

- Email yourself when a user mentions you or a specific keyword in a Tweet.
- Update your Twitter profile photo when you update your Facebook profile picture.
- Log all of your Tweets in a Google spreadsheet.
- Tweet new items from an RSS feed to your Twitter account.

You can browse the **Twitter channel** to see examples of great IFTTT recipes you can create with your Twitter account. You can also check out **Zapier** as a premium alternative to IFTTT. They offer additional business tools and networks to connect to with your Twitter account.

More Advanced Twitter Tools

The previously mentioned tools, along with the following all range from free access to paid professional services. You're encouraged to try them out and see what works best for you!

- **Zapier** is similar to IFTTT in that you can trigger different actions between apps.

- **Keyhole** is great for tracking keywords and hashtags on Twitter (and Instagram too).

- **Twitonomy** offers similar analytics to Twitter's on tool; however, there are a few features and functions that take your data crunching to the next level.

- **Hootsuite** makes it easy for your to publish and track Tweets on Twitter. Over time, as you add more social channels, you can use Hootsuite for them too.

- **Sprout Social** is also a great tool for tracking conversations and engaging with your audience.

- **Followerwonk**, **Crowdfire**, **Buzzsumo**, and **Tagboard** offer powerful trend-tracking and monitoring tools.

Conclusion

Twitter is a massive social network and powerful tool for the modern business. Never before has it been so easy for a company to control its brand voice and image and remained so close to its audience. As the go-to social network for real-time information and conversation, you should consider a Twitter strategy as a key component to your brand strategy and business building. With a growing audience, Twitter will become a source of revenue through focused campaigns and integration with your existing online store.

For more information about getting started with Twitter, check out **business.twitter.com/basics**

To see how you can integrate Twitter with your Shopify store, go to **shopify.com/twitter**

Elaisha Green

Elaisha Green is a seasoned digital strategist and currently social media specialist at Shopify. A sucker for romantic comedies and #puppiesoftwitter, Elaisha strives to help businesses create remarkable experiences for their audiences.