The Success Center Presents



The Entrepreneur's Guide to Twitter Success

How to Grow Your Business, Blog, or Brand with Twitter

By Rod Kirby

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Introduction

Twitter is one of the most popular social networking sites in the world with over 26 million users. It's an excellent marketing platform for entrepreneurs to grow their business, blog, or brand.



In this guide you're going to learn what Twitter is, why it's popular, how to find followers, how it works, tools to help you do your best tweeting, my secret weapon to marketing on the platform, tips on growing your network, and more.

Table of Contents

Part 1 – The Basics

- 1. What is Twitter?
- 2. How Do People Use Twitter?
- 3. Why is it so Popular?
- 4. How Does Twitter Work?
- 5. What's the Best Way to Get Followers?
- 6. Twitter 101 Profile Dissection
- 7. Top Tools to Help You Do Your Best Tweeting

Part 2 - Grow Your Blog, Brand, or Business with Twitter

- 1. What is Twitter *Really* About?
- 2. What is Your Twitter Voice?
- 3. Consistency is the Key to Success
- 4. Twitter Activities the secret to Growing Community
- Convert Followers into Fans by Sharing
- 6. It's Called **Social** Media for a Reason!
- 7. My Personal Quick Tips on Getting More Followers, Traffic, & Business

Part 3 – My Twitter Success Story

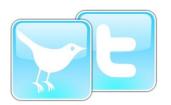
- 1. What's a Quality Twitter Community?
- 2. How Do You Cultivate a Quality Twitter Community?
- 3. Twitter Community Voices
- 4. Final Thought





Part 1 – The Basics (Back to the Table of Contents)

What is twitter?



First and foremost, twitter is considered a micro-blogging social network. When you update your blog, that's all the information you give your readers until the next time you create a new post. Twitter is what you're doing in-between the blog posts. That's essentially the essence of twitter. To keep your network of "followers" updated throughout the day. However, Twitter has

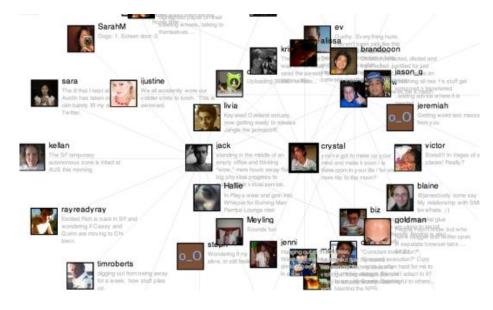
evolved into much more than just status updates. It's now a global communication platform.

How People Use Twitter

- **Typical Users** Give short status updates throughout the day.
- **Bloggers** Share new blog posts, links to other blogs, and other helpful information.
- **Media Outlets** Share breaking news as it happens.
- Retail Stores Update customers on products, share special deals, and discounts.
- Service Companies Use it for customer service and sales.



Why is it so Popular? (Back to the Table of Contents)



- 1. **Direct Connection** A few years ago you would go through a middle-man and the "middle-man's middle-man" to get to the CEO of a major corporation. With Twitter, you have direct access to celebrities, CEOs, politicians, gurus, and decision-makers.
- 2. **Flow of Information** Getting the latest information on an event, breaking news, or latest happening is easy and fast! For example, the news of Michael Jackson's death hit Twitter an hour before any live television coverage.
- 3. **Real Time Search Results** Searching for anything with Twitter brings real-time results from millions of people who can give you first hand information. It's extremely valuable to tap "human resources" in such a timely manner.
- 4. **Viral Nature** Like a branch in a rushing river flowing down stream, anything can go viral on Twitter. Sharing articles, pictures, videos, and other useful links can be shared and redistributed amongst your followers. This ecosystem of

sharing can spread your message, product announcement, coupon, or any other marketing material faster than any 60 second radio spot.



How Does Twitter Work? (Back to the Table of Contents)

You can update your status via the <u>twitter website</u>, desktop, or mobile applications. It's easy to get overwhelmed with the myriad of options available. Updates are restricted to only 140 characters so it really gets down to the "meat" of the conversation.

Note: We'll review the best applications to use later on. For now, let's just start with the Twitter website.

Once you sign-up with the site you can find friends that are already using twitter via email and "follow" their updates. When you "follow" someone you are saying, "I want to hear what you have to say and be connected with you." And when someone follows you they're "saying" the same thing. The more followers you have the more people you'll have to share information, news, resources, and the world around you. Think of it as your very own Television network broadcasting, "all you all the time."

What's the Best Way to Get Followers?



Unless you're a celebrity, public official, or very well known you won't amass thousands of followers just by joining. You'll have to find people to follow and start building your network. Here are a few tips:

• **Don't Follow Everyone** – you'll notice many people with 2000 followers and they follow around the same amount of people. It's really hard to keep up with that amount of people and get the best value out of the service.

- Find Quality Followers –Take your time and seek out people who share your common interests, work in your industry, or whom you would like to connect with. Search for topics that interest you and follow the people whose conversations relate to that topic. You can easily do this with <u>Twitter Search</u>.
- Search Your Current Network Check with your friends on Facebook, Groups on Linkedin, or other social networks you're a part of. Chances are they're on Twitter as well.
- Use Websites Great websites like <u>WeFollow.com</u> allows you to search for people by type and industry. You can even add yourself to the directory to be found. <u>Mr Tweet</u> is a great service for finding new people to follow as well.
- Use Applications <u>Twitter Local</u> lets you see real-time tweets from people
 within specific locations and distances. It's great for connecting with people in
 your own backyard. Best part of all, it's an application that runs on any windows
 or Mac computer.





Above you'll see a snapshot of <u>my profile on twitter</u>. This is the homepage which allows me to update my status, shows my timeline (remember, Twitter is a real-time

communication platform), displays my network information, and a few other useful items. Let's break it down and take a closer look.

Note: Like my background? Read this article from Mashable to see how I did it.



(Back to the Table of Contents)

Profile Info Box – This displays how many tweets (or updates) you've posted, your follower count, how many times you are listed (we'll discuss that in a moment), and more.

Under the "Home" heading you'll notice, @rodkirby. Clicking this displays messages that are "at" or sent to you. These messages can be viewed publicly.

The service sends messages to specific people by assigning the @ symbol before the person's username. For instance, if you sent me a message it would look like this:

@RodKirby What's up, how you doin bud?

Fortunately, the website makes it easy to send messages so you don't have to type the person's username with the @ symbol in front of it.

A **Direct Message** is one sent to you in private. If you want to send direct messages and receive direct messages you and the receiver have to follow each other.

You can also make specific tweets (updates) a part of your **Favorites**. Clicking this link will display all of your favorite tweets. This is handy for bookmarking useful links people share, saving an event that was tweeted, or strengthening your brand by keeping the good things people say about you.

Notice the **Retweets** link. A retweet is redistributed message. It's a great way to share information from people that you find useful. You can also show your appreciation to someone by retweeting. It's a fantastic way to share content and watch the viral attributes of Twitter in action.



The last column of your homepage displays your **Lists**, who you're following, and trending topics. Trending topics are essentially the most "talked about" topics on Twitter.



If you want to organize specific groups of followers you can do so in a **List**. Lists are great for:

- Organizing followers into your own categories.
- Promoting the people you follow.
- Following groups of people all at once instead of one at a time.

Remember the "Listed" count in the profile info box above? This displays how many lists people have added you to. As you can see in the picture to the left, I've got a list for different people.



Twitter Tools Galore! (Back to the Table of Contents)

One of the great things about Twitter is the sheer amount of options you have in using the service. Here is a rundown of the best tools and how to maximize each:

 <u>Tweetdeck</u> – This is one of the most popular desktop applications for Twitter. It allows you to update and manage your Twitter, Facebook, and Linkedin account at the same time.

- <u>Seesmic</u> Similar to Tweetdeck, however, Seesmic also has Twitter applications for the Iphone, Blackberry, and your desktop computer.
- Hootsuite Browser based updating of your Facebook, Twitter, and Linkedin accounts. Plus, it lets you schedule tweets for later. As a bonus, you can even update all your accounts at once from any web page with the Hootlet browser plugin.
- <u>Co-Tweet</u> Professional Twitter client for organizations with more than one account. It lets you create assignments, schedule tweets, and be more productive with your Twitter account.

Need to Tweet on the go? Try these mobile apps

- <u>UberTwitter</u> My personal favorite Blackberry Twitter client. It gives you just about all of the functionality the Twitter website and more.
- <u>Hootsuite for Iphone</u> By far, one of the best Twitter apps for Iphone. It gives
 you access to the same features as the browser version and even allows you to
 schedule tweets. How neat is that?
- <u>Twitdroid</u> A powerful Twitter app for Android devices. Fully featured and even gives you more with a pro version.

Now that you have an understanding of what Twitter is and its mechanics, let's explore how you can maximize it for your business. What follows is a guide for advanced users, people who are ready to take their blog, business, or brand to the next level with Twitter.



PART 2 – Grow Your Blog, Brand, or Business with Twitter (Back to the Table of Contents)

You'll find plenty of social media marketing gurus that want to sell you a system to get 500 new followers a day, make zillions of dollars in referrals, and increase your blog traffic by 2000% in 30 minutes. However, I've got an ultimate weapon that will guarantee you long-term business success on Twitter.

"Giving-to-get" is my secret weapon when it comes to marketing on Twitter. I touched on this concept in my article, "The Biggest Marketing Secret – Ever, Finally Revealed" Below, we'll explore how to maximize this to grow your following and business but first;

What's Twitter Really About?

One thing to note about Twitter is that it's a platform for engagement, sharing, and connecting – not just for marketing. Using it for marketing alone would dub it as a tool.

"A tool is typically used once and discarded (in other words, something useful but not valuable). A platform is something solid and used to stand on. Something sturdy you can build something on top of." – Myself in an interview with @latarahamying for her blog. Check out the full interview here: Savvy Marketing Moments With Rod "the Success Coach" Kirby

If you want to successfully generate traffic to your blog, grow your business and build a brand people can trust, there are a few things you've got to do;



Find Your Voice

Your Twitter voice is equal to what you share and how you brand yourself. If you've been on Twitter for a while, it's easiest to figure out your voice by how people list you (or, how they categorize you). You can read more about Twitter lists from Twitter's official blog. If you're new to Twitter or aren't listed then you need to find your voice.

It's important to know exactly *how* you're going to represent yourself on Twitter – this determines *if* people will relate to you and your Tweets. Take a look at the graphic on the left. From it we can see that "I am the voice of **Business, Marketing**, **Social Media**, and the **Life Coach**."

What's Your Twitter Voice? How do the lists you show up on describe you?



Tips for Finding Your Voice

- Know who you are
- Know what you want to achieve on Twitter
- Look within your industry
- Look at the popular people you follow



Update Consistently (Back to the Table of Contents)

Ever follow someone only to realize that they update maybe once a month? And when they update it's never anything useful or cool, it's just random like;

"Just woke up, about to get some breakfast . . ."

If this is you, please, quietly excuse yourself from Twitter . . . you're hogging up my stream. Consistency will breed followers and traffic. The key is to find the right balance and not post too much or too little, but get into the sweet spot of your flow.

Tips on Updating Consistently;

- At Home find the best time of day when there are the least amount of distractions and go for it.
- On the Go Use tools like, Ping.fm to update, especially if you're a busy person.
- **Make it a Priority** Set a schedule for yourself to spend at least an hour networking, sharing, and updating.

Organize or Participate in Twitter Activities

Remember, Twitter is a platform for connecting with like-minded people, so **CONNECT!** Get into Tweet chats whether they're live streams or standard chats. I organized a short-lived event called the "Monday Morning Rockstar Challenge"



The idea was to kill the Monday blues by encouraging productivity. I would give the winner a shout-out in a "winner announcement" blog post which made people feel all warm and fuzzy inside. Plenty of people participated, but we just couldn't keep the momentum going. It was definitely fun while it lasted.

Organize your own games or events on Twitter by using <u>Tweetgrid</u> for chats or <u>Tweetchat</u> for a live Q&A. By taking the initiative you'll position yourself as a leader and people will flock to you when they have a need.

Share Useful links (Back to the Table of Contents)



Twitter is a platform for sharing which is critical to getting quality traffic, leads, and followers. When you jump into the ecosystem of sharing that's when your level of success will rise. I share articles that I find on marketing, blogging, success, tech news, and more. Whatever I think someone will find useful I share and promote my Twitter voice/brand.

Here are a few tools you can use to share good stuff with good people on Twitter:

• Google Reader – I always shout this tool out because it's such a big part of my social media

strategy. Use it to follow, read, comment, and share your favorite blogs across multiple networks. You can find a bunch of the articles I share on Twitter on my Google Reader Shared Page.

- <u>Feedly for Google Reader</u> This is an awesome plugin (compatible for Firefox and Chrome) for Google Reader that gives it a magazine-like interface. Best part of all, when you're logged into feedly and visiting a website in another tab, you can save, favorite, or share that article while you're browsing.
- Google Blog Search This is by far the best way to look for content, discover new blogs, and share it with your network.
- <u>AllTop</u> This service indexes the top headlines from different websites and blogs. It's great for finding "what's happening" in your industry.





Share Multimedia Content (Back to the Table of Contents)



Another great thing about Twitter is the amount of diverse content you can find. Don't just settle for 140 characters, show people the world around you, videos you find on the web, or other things of interest. I do this through my Tumblr blog which is nothing more than great multimedia content that I find and share from around the web. I've got it to share on Twitter whenever I create a new post automatically so I don't have to "double post."

You can easily share multimedia content by using these services;

- Twitpic Great for photo sharing from your PC or mobile device.
- <u>Twitvid</u> Excellent for sharing videos from your computer, mobile device, or even a webcam.
- Many of your favorite websites like <u>Youtube</u>, <u>Flickr</u>, and <u>Digg</u> support sharing to Twitter (links take you to my profiles on each). It's all a matter of finding quality content to share!

Don't Talk to Yourself

The first thing I look at when deciding on who to follow is whether or not they actually engage in conversations or if they just talk to themselves. You've seen him/her before, they spew out link after link promoting their projects and never talk to anyone. Remember, it's called, **SOCIAL** media for a reason. Don't be afraid to start conversations, re-tweet, and engage with others.



BrendaClayson @RodKirby engage with people, have discussions. It's not about "sell, sell, sell" (if you're selling), it's about connecting & sharing.:)



The Secret to Sales Success on Twitter (Back to the Table of Contents)

"Give, Give, Give, ask for the Sale, and Repeat!" This is the secret to sales success on Twitter.

If you've done all of the above in some capacity then you will have earned the trust, loyalty, and admiration of those that follow you. You will have added value to their streams and they'll love you for it. If this sounds like you then you have earned the opportunity to make an offer.

Lightning Round – Here are a few things that I do, personally, to get more traffic, followers, and business;

- Schedule Tweets During Peak Usage Times I use <u>Hootsuite</u> to schedule quotes, new blog post announcements, calls to action, etc. Just be sure to check in and engage everyone once in a while!
- Address People by Their Real Name Make your conversations more personable and direct. This reinforces trust and builds a genuine relationship between you and the other person.
- Offer Your Best Advice I regularly give out information that I would typically charge people to get in my coaching sessions. However, giving your best advice puts you on people's mind when a need arises.
- Accept Quality Followers, Not All I have a low follow to follower ratio by choice. With my 200 followers I have a stream of people I can count on and that's valuable to me. I'm more capable of focusing on a few hundred than a few

thousand.

- **Be a Tease** Got a blog post you're working on? Give out teasers throughout the day until you finish it. You'll grow anticipation and people are more willing to share it if they've been waiting on it.
- **Be Original** Sharing links is all fine and dandy, but don't forget to share original wisdom, knowledge, or information that people can't get anywhere else. It solidifies you as a quality person to follow.
- Answer Questions If you search for topics related to your industry, products, or services you'll find people asking lots of questions. Take the time to answer those questions and demonstrate your expertise. You'll only strengthen your brand and position yourself as an expert in your field.
- Tweet often but not too often The more I tweet the more likely it is that
 people searching for something you're talking about will find you. However,
 tweeting too much can turn current followers off. Find a rhythm to sharing,
 updating, and engaging that you're comfortable with and you'll gain new followers
 easily.



PART 3 – My Twitter Success Story (Back to the Table of Contents)

My blog, <u>The Success Center</u> has grown tremendously since I re-launched it on June 15, 2009 (it was originally a Wordpress.com blog). Take a look at its stats according to <u>Alexa</u> (the web information company) below.



Other than my hard work, blood, sweat, and tears I owe a part of the site's success to my Twitter community. I actually joined Twitter in January 2009 and didn't use it much until I started my blog. Since then the traffic, readership, community, and relationships built have been incredible.

According to my Google Analytics account, Twitter is my #2 referrer of traffic second to Stumbleupon. However, I know for a fact that Twitter is my #1 referrer of *quality traffic*. Look at the screenshot below and let's break it down.



First, you'll notice Stumbleupon as sending me the most visits with 1,599. However, look at the average time those visitors spent on my site, only 8 seconds! With a bounce rate of almost 87% (a bounce rate is how frequently people leave your site or when they "bounce" on to their next web destination).

Visits ↓	Pages/Visit	Avg. Time on Site	% New Visits	Bounce Rate
1,599	1.15	00:00:08	97.69%	86.99%
754	2.85	00:05:55	47.88%	55.70%
441	1.94	00:03:16	48.75%	60.32%

Now, look at the average time people from Twitter stayed on my site and how low the bounce rate is in the screenshot above. See the difference?

"A quality Twitter community will generate quality traffic to your blog or website."





What's a quality Twitter community? (Back to the Table of Contents)

These are the people that consistently retweet you, answer your questions, share your posts, participate in your Twitter activities, and present the most value to your Twitter stream.

Out of the 200 or so people that I follow, I know that all of them are a part of my quality Twitter community. I don't follow them just for the heck of it and they don't follow me just because I followed them back.

How Do You Cultivate a Quality Community?

 First, you have to understand why your followers follow you. Do you present something valuable to them in their stream? Are they actively following or just following in the hopes of getting you to follow back?



- Second, you have to create a valuable Twitter
 presence. Do so by engaging with others, sharing good content, and by being
 personable (that means you are approachable and down-to-earth).
- Third, you have to be consistent in the presence you portray. Don't share for a straight week and then fall off for a month. Don't hold Twitter church only to let curse words fly out of your stream on your off days. Stay consistent!

Create your own Twitter success story by sharing the stories of your followers. Every tweet in your stream is only a part a story your followers are trying to tell. By engaging with them you can better assist them in telling that story. This is the ultimate key in cultivating a quality community on Twitter.



Twitter Community Voices (Back to the Table of Contents)

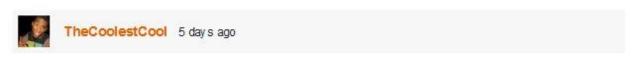
Here are a few "nuggets of gold" dug up in the comments section of the original article this guide is based on, <u>The Entrepreneur's Guide to Twitter Success</u>. Take these comments to heart and apply them to your own Twittering.



I like your point about scheduling tweets, but I like even more how you emphasize checking in and engaging with others. I try to do the same thing - I don't feel like I've earned my own promotional tweet until I've retweeted someone else's content.

Right now, I'm in the unfortunate process of "unfollowing" those people who only seem to appear when they want to sell something...:)

Thanks for sharing this.



Well said Rod, I love your point about Addressing People by Their Real Names. The first time someone said my real name on twitter I was a bit taken back but in a good way. It makes your message more memorable and ultimately more personal. Twitter has been a key part of my businesses success in regards to not only gaining leads but also just learning about the industry. Great post, very valuable information.

The Entrepreneur's Guide to Twitter Success by Rod Kirby Learn the best tips, methods, and techniques to help you take your blog, business, or brand to the next level. For more social media & marketing help visit The Success Center: www.rodkirby.com Search Sign up now



LaTosha Johnson 5 days ago

Whether you are new or a veteran to Twitter this is great advice! I can't stress enough how important it is to give your best advice. I have made connections that would never have happened otherwise had I not been willing to share information that many would charge for. I absolutely LOVE Twitter because it has allowed me to meet so many wonderful people (you're one of them!). You don't have to wait for someone to accept your friend request or allow you into their network. You can talk without all the barriers.

I use a variety of different Twitter applications in addition to Hootsuite such as Tweetlater and Tweetminer (I have quite a few that I like to use-in case you were interested I wrote a blog post on my favorite Twitter applications). I don't think there is anything wrong with scheduling what I like to refer to as "timeless" tweets such as quotes or tips but you have to remember to be around to check in because you don't want to miss out on the conversation.



steveborgman 3 days ago

Great information as always, Rod. One of the key things you mentioned is to engage with your followers. I have to improve on this one. The more you engage, the better your return on investment with Twitter will be, because it's all about building that community. By the way, I will have to check out Tumblr. Yet another social networking blog!



LOVE LOVE LOVE what you are saying here. Twitter is a communication platform; not a link or list building resource. Now while you can use it to do either, if your communication skills lack then you only hurt yourself.

I find myself unfollowing folks who don't speak back, only spit out links, or never reply to anyone.

As far as followers go here is my criteria: 1. Do they have an outside link? 2. What is their follower ratio, 3. What are they tweeting?, 4. Do they have an image?, 5. Who are they following, 6. What is their conversation like?

When I first started using Twitter it made up about 85% of my business referrals, so I can say that it works. It really works if you use it the right way and Rod shared those ways perfectly in this post!

Final Thought (Back to the Table of Contents)

Remember, Twitter is more than a marketing tool – it's a platform for building, engaging, and sharing. If you take the time to maximize the tools presented in this guide you'll get more followers, blog traffic, and business.

About the Author

Rod is the Editor-in-Chief of <u>The Success Center</u> and a Success Coach. For more information, tips, and advice on being a successful Christian-preneur subscribe to Rod's <u>"Success Tips!" weekly newsletter.</u>

Follow Rod on Twitter or E-mail Him if you need help in maximizing social media for your business.

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- How to Use Social Media to Build Your Brand Locally
- The Used Car Salesman's Guide to Social Media Marketing
- Top 3 Social Media Tools for Business
- Are you a Twitter Newbie or Power User?
- 5 Tips on Managing Social Media for Entrepreneurs
- 8 Magazine Strategies that add Value to Your Blog
- 3 Magazine Advertising Strategies for Blogging Success
- How to Create an Editorial Calendar for Your Blog
- 5 Keys to Blogging Success
- How to Grow Your Blog's Community in 3 Easy Steps