

How to Grow your Following on Twitter

Twitter for Business Step-By-Step Guides – Advanced

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How to Grow your Following on Twitter

The number one rule of growing your following on Twitter – one that nobody seems to talk about – is this: If you want quality followers, follow quality people. And don't just follow...Interact.



What hooks people is conversations – interesting comments and fascinating, wise, witty or provocative responses. No matter how excellent your content, if your feed is nothing but a one-way tweet, with you posting and never bothering to respond to people who reply to your posts or retweet them, you will make the very people who are trying to engage with you feel invisible (and slightly silly, if they're very sensitive).

Nothing turns people off more than being ignored (it can be embarrassing and annoying).

Granted, we're all so used to Twitter feeds now that we're not exactly crushed if someone misses one of our responses. In fact, if we're honest, most of us will admit to forgetting our own tweets to the point where we have to view the "conversation" to remember what our follower is replying to. But here's a tried-and-true rule of thumb:

- The newer followers are to the web or to a niche, the more likely they are to be put off by being ignored

Another one for you:

- If you have tweeted about an emotionally-charged issue (emotionally-charged for your follower, that is) and ignore their response, the more likely you will alienate them

And even the most confident person on the planet isn't going to waste their valuable time if they respond to your tweets and all they get back is...empty air.

Consistently.

Actively initiating, joining and maintaining conversations is the best way to get started in growing a valuable, active following.

Every other technique is just icing on the cake.



Step 1. Decide on Your Objectives

But don't just fire off shots at random: First make some conscious decisions.

- What do you want your Twitter feed and profile to do for you? For your followers?
- How can Twitter improve your branding?
- What is your "identity"? Your unique persona and "voice"?



- What do you want your followers to do? (E.g. visit your website, buy a product, listen to your talk radio show, etc.)
- What can you do for your followers? How can you help them?
- What do you love about your business? Your followers? Your niche?
- What do your followers love about your niche? Your business? You?

- What do your followers care about? Have problems with?
- What makes them sign up?
- What makes them share and retweet?



- What makes them buy?

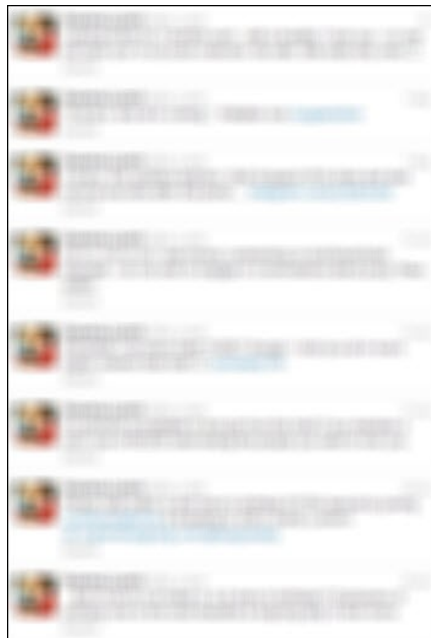
Taking time to answer these questions carefully and thoughtfully will automatically help focus your own Twitter posts, retweets and responses.

Step 2. Top Ten Eleven Twitter Mistakes

Before we look at ways to grow your following, it's important to know what mistakes to avoid. The reason?

Most people make them. It's as simple as that, so let's start with the biggie that we've just discussed...

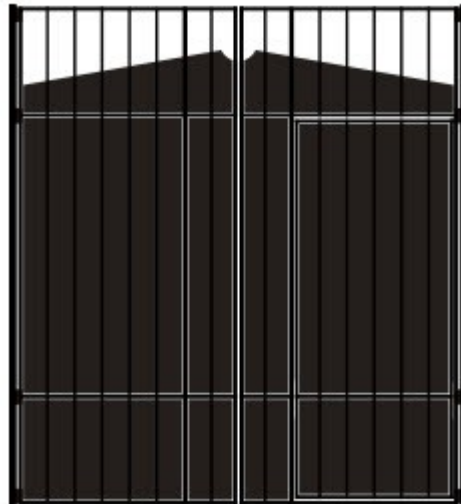
1. **Not acknowledging mentions, replies, tweets addressed directly to you or retweets.** (It's called "self-absorbed tweeting" when you consistently never respond.)
2. Posting too many tweets in one day (or even in one hour) so that you jam up your followers' feeds.



3. **Making inconsistent appearances** – People soon give up on tweeters who are there one day and absent for several weeks.
4. **Going dormant.** When you disappear off the Twitter grid, people simply forget you.
5. **Not realizing that a portion of your audience most likely prefers Twitter** to the point of not using other social networks (especially if they are mobile addicts)



6. **Retweeting the first vaguely acceptable tweet or link you come across**, usually just for the sake of posting something
7. **Auto-posting 100% of the time** via a social media manager or app
8. **Not remaining on Twitter for at least ten minutes after you post something**, retweet or reply to something



9. **Not varying your tweet types or media.** For example, always posting links to blog posts. Never posting photographs or infographics

10. Not leaving room in your tweets for retweets and comments

11. Not making your posts interactive enough. (That includes using calls-to-action.)

In order to capture a follower's attention and make them want to respond (or at least check out your profile), it has to trigger that follower to respond.

In the next step, we'll talk about effective ways to motivate them in engaging.

Step 3. Top Ten Twitter Tactics for Making Friends



As a famous starship captain once said: "Engage!" That's a word that's become somewhat overused in the last couple of years, but it doesn't make the principle any less true.

We've spoken about the importance of taking part in the conversation and being present on a consistent basis in the Twitter stream: Now let's look at some specific techniques to increase follows.

1. Vary your tweet media, types and content. Your Twitter feed will feel more natural if you mix photos with the odd blog post link with the odd question or offer.
2. Decide in advance what response you want from viewers. Then actively invite it.
3. Ask irresistible questions.
4. Always answer questions. This is one of the most effective steps you can take – and it really will set you apart from the Twitter horde.
5. Share information your followers will find priceless generously.

And do it for free.

6. Make it social and friendly.



7. Never swear or use coarse language. That includes giving yourself permission to have a day "off" from always being polite – after all, the person saying "#\$(%*" is you, right?
8. Use events to generate extra interest in your Twitter profile even while you are using Twitter to generate extra interest in your event. (But remember to seamlessly **keep up the connection** after the event is over!)
9. Use tools like [Social Oomph](#) to track keywords, create an extended Twitter profile, create a personal Tweet stream in either RSS, XML or JavaScript format, and more

Base Features	Free	Professional
Schedule tweets — Plan, set & forget [more]	✓	✓
Track keywords — Empower yourself [more]	✓	✓
Extended Twitter profiles — Promote yourself [more]	✓	✓

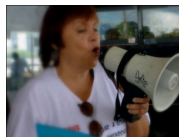
10. Be positive. Negativity leads to self-absorption (or vice-versa). Either way, negativity kills engagement and triggers Unfollows.

Step 4. Spread the Word

Here's another point that's frequently missed: Who do you want to spread the word to? Potential customers or clients, right?

If that's your objective, make sure you **follow**:

- Potential customers and clients
- Positive, enthusiastic competitors (they will share your tweets, if you share theirs)
- Focused, relevant peers
- Industry or niche experts
- Fun, fascinating people
- Accredited authority sources



The old maxim is true: Like attracts like.

Once you have everyone in the same room, **actively encourage** them to spread the word about you to their friends, clients, customers and peers.

Do this by:

- **Being irresistibly re-tweetable.**

If it's a tip you're sharing, make sure it's one they won't be able to resist passing on (and gaining glory for sharing)

- **Make your followers look like heroes.**

Recognize and applaud their accomplishments. Give them credit, when credit is due. Thank them for tips or services. Recommend them (and say why) on #FF ("Follow Friday" – a Twitter tradition of giving shout-outs about your favorite Twitter people, to help each other grow traffic).



- **Write for the press.**

News media people are more active on Twitter than you might think. (Just look at some of your own radio or TV news channels and take note of how often they lift news from Twitter accounts).



So at least once in every six tweets, sit down and ask yourself the same question you ask whenever you write a press release: "Is it newsworthy?"

No, you may not get your profile promoted on the national news: But you *could* get your tweet shared on an authority blog or online magazine.

- **Integrate and share your content.**

Another way to attract followers and spread the word: Ensure they see your Twitter tweets (and know you're available to follow) by integrating your twitter badges, icons, buttons and widgets on other site profiles and especially on your blog or website itself.

- **Use graphic media to increase shares**

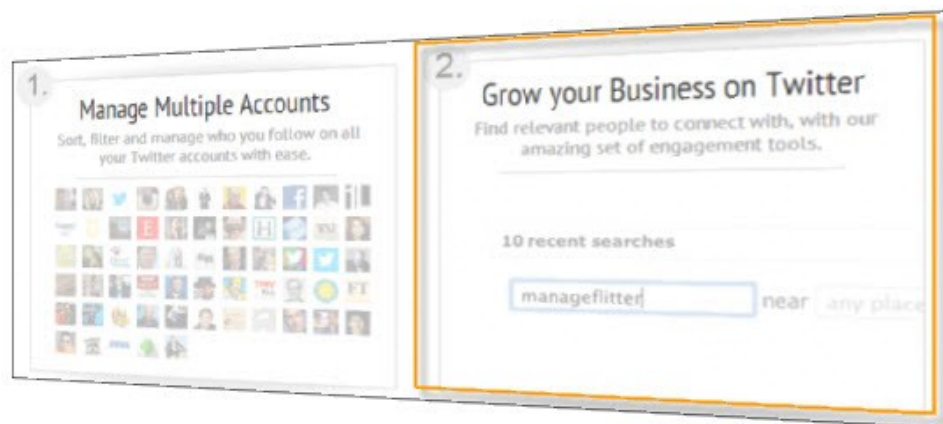
Twitter has noted the advantage Pinterest and Facebook provided with their graphics-sharing capabilities, and has gone out of its way to ensure that Twitter users can now easily share graphics and even video too.



Graphics catch attention and create more engagement, so make sure you include a healthy dose of graphic media in your Twitter feed.

- **Find more followers using apps and online tools**

Using tools like [Twtrland](#) and [ManageFlitter](#) can streamline and fast-track finding targeted people to follow – and potential followers.



Don't rush finding more followers. And above all, don't blindly follow or encourage spammers. Twitter is not about the numbers, and the only people who really care about how many followers you actually have are statisticians and spammers.

Go for quality, post quality tweets, share and use tools wisely – and your following will grow at a healthy pace.