

# SOCIAL MEDIA QUICK START



## 4. Twitter



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## Week Four: Twitter for Business

Now we come to the fastest and most immediate social platform on the net -- Twitter.

Millions of people use this platform with little thought or originality. It's deceptively easy to simply log in, post a thought or two, check the posts displayed above the fold -- and fly out again.

Yet people who do that are missing Twitter's incredible power. The ways in which it can help you maximize your social reach can be huge!

### Step One: Analyze What Works... and What Doesn't

Everyone tends to use Twitter the same ways. You see the following types of posters...

1. **The "Quick Linker"** -- This tweeter hastily finds an article from their news aggregator and posts the link -- often without even bothering to read it. ("Hey, it's a tweet, right?") They then congratulate themselves for doing their duty.
2. **The Serial Re-Tweeter** -- This person can't even be bothered to look for an article link. Instead, they pick the most acceptable post above the fold in their Twitter feed and re-tweet it.
3. **The Quickie Quoter** -- You either get bible verses or inspirational quotes by New Age gurus, famous salesmen or millionaires
4. **The Initial Capsman** -- You've Seen These Incredible Posts--All With Initial Caps!: [andalinkfrombit.ly](http://andalinkfrombit.ly)
5. **The Compulsive Sharer** -- Tells you he's now doing his laundry... two minutes after he tweeted he's finished his jog.
6. **The Gimmick Tweeter** -- Latches on to a content form (such as recipes) that has nothing to do with their business or services, and bombards you with them because they've got nothing else to say "and it's fast...")
7. **The Weatherman** -- Gives you updates on the temperature ("It's 35 degrees -- Hot!")... but forgets to tell you (a) where he is (b) why that should be interesting
8. **The Ranter** -- Says something inflammatory (usually followed by a link to his latest blog rant)
9. **The Dreary Repeater** -- Like yesterday's bean and raw onion burrito, you see the same tweet from this guy twenty times in one day

Most likely you've been guilty of resorting to one or more of these types of tweets when you're overwhelmed with work. (I know I have.)

And note that all of these tweet types can be both interesting and acceptable, providing:

- You mix them up with other types of tweets
- They really *are* going to interest your followers
- You're revealing an incredible, valuable secret
- It's 35 degrees in Anchorage... on Christmas Day
- You're funny and original
- All your business clients reading your recipe tweets are also appreciative food junkies or other moms looking for supper ideas... and you know it
- The link you're providing is truly shocking, entertaining or helpful to your followers

But the surfeit of these annoying types of tweets that we are deluged with every day all boil down to one persistent cause: The tweeter is "doing her duty" and tweeting for the sake of having tweeted. Because someone has said you have to do it for your business.

Your tweets are on autopilot. And they're putting people to sleep (when they're not feeling irritated by you, that is.)

And the biggest problem with Twitter -- what should be properly called 'the Unforgivable Sin'?

**Everybody talks, but nobody listens.** Responses to tweets are rarer than ice cubes in the desert.

## **Step Two: Analysis and Conscious Tweeting**

If that sounds like you, resolve that you're not going to fall into that pattern any more. Instead, you're going to:

- 1.** Determine whether or not your interaction on Twitter affects your traffic or ROI
- 2.** Analyze your followers (referring back to the psychological tips in our Week One lesson)
- 3.** Put more thought into why you're tweeting -- and how you could do it better
- 4.** Analyze what really works on Twitter...

But the problem with this is... you won't usually find powerful viral posts among fellow business users (who often seem to Tweet as if it's a chore). So let's return to the Wonderful World of Celebrities to see what makes Twitter *really* tick...

Well, first of all, let's face one obvious fact: Simply being a celebrity means that your most inane utterance is followed avidly.

Let's look at former "Star Trek" alumni to demonstrate this point...

Jeri Ryan (Star Trek Voyager: "Seven of Nine") has a modest collection of only **75,233** followers and brazenly (and accurately) describes herself as a "binge tweeter". Here's a sampling of typical Jeri Ryan tweets...



At first glance, you may find yourself spluttering: "THAT'S a good example of effective tweeting?"

Hardly earth shattering content... but highly personal tweets. Celebrity status and inane content aside, Jeri Ryan is doing **three things that make for effective engagement** and **"hooked" followers**:

1. She's ***participating in actual conversation*** with her followers (and she doesn't care what the rest of the world thinks or understands is going on between them).
2. She's ***acknowledging their tweets***, making them feel important (either on a personal or on a fan level)
3. Her Twitter activity is ***habitual, consistent*** -- and ***daily***

The most important part of her tweet, to the person she calls by their Twitter names... is ***seeing their @name*** in her tweet.

Now let's take a look at Wil Wheaton (Star Trek: TNG's "Wesley Crusher"), who has a healthy **1,888, 697** followers at time of writing...

Compared to Jeri Ryan, he's downright voluble!



Can you figure out what Wil Wheaton is doing right?

Yes. He's...

1. **Mixing types of tweets** -- we're not seeing all the same thing (all quotes or all recipes, etc.)
2. **Personally responding to followers** -- Like Jeri Ryan, he's engaging in obvious conversation -- one on one
3. **Using their names and acknowledging people** who tweet directly to him.
4. **Providing links of mutual interest that really resonate with readers**. Note his tweet about dog adoption: We know at least one of his followers cares deeply about dogs from his reply to @sarahpalmer, obviously mourning a dog.
5. **Personally and emotionally commenting on the link he provided**. He starts his dog adoption tweet with his own emotional reaction with "This is awful."
6. **Including a relevant call-to-action**. ("Please read this and RT:") Notice he doesn't ask followers to retweet every post.



7. **Providing wit, original thinking and insight.** His point about people who get upset at spending \$2 on an app after dropping \$500 on a SmartPhone is all of these. It's more interesting than the average marketing tweet.

Finally, let's switch gears and take a look at a teen celebrity, Selena Gomez. She takes the crown with a whopping **8,885,479** followers at time of writing.

And this is a typical sampling of her tweets...



Here's what Selena Gomez does right on these five tweets:

1. **She personally praises and acknowledges a fan** who made a video
2. **She shares something that touches her emotionally** (a movie trailer)
3. **She has a personal conversation** with "Jakey", taking the time to remember his or her birthday
4. **She promotes a public appearance and provides a link.** (Highly relevant to her fans)
5. **She shares a photo...** using an intriguing comment as "bait" to make people click through

6. Like Wil Wheaton, *she mixes her post types*

And she does all this without committing the cardinal sin of all chatty people -- *giving too much personal detail away*.

These three celebrities keep it personal but appropriate; and it's obvious they're doing their own tweeting. No pre-scheduled, impersonal, repetitive tweets in sight. They could easily hire PR reps like other celebs... but they don't. No tweeting because they "ought" to -- it's obvious these three celebrities tweet because *they like to hang out on Twitter*.

And so do their followers.

There are other reasons people like to follow celebrities -- voyeurism, seeing how the rich and famous live, etc. -- but that doesn't detract from what our three celebrity examples are doing right.

MORAL: If you want to go on tweeting the same boring old way, keep buying guides that say the same thing, over and over.

If you want to become a power tweeter, *start analyzing for yourself* what's really working on Twitter. Don't be afraid to be original and try things your peers haven't clued on to, yet.

### Step Three: Follow Twitter Best Practices

We've already seen some Twitter best practices in action with our celebrity examples. Now let's help ourselves to more proven tips...

1. **Make sure you have a foolproof password.** When you're a celebrity, you're likely to get hacked like Miley Cyrus or Barack Obama!
2. **Find out when your best audience likes to frequent Twitter.** Select some of your followers and follow their tweets back over a few days. See if there's a time they consistently appear (e.g. every morning after 8 a.m.)
3. **Tweet daily and consistently.**
4. **Be sincere.** Don't just tweet for the sake of tweeting
5. **Find a core group of real Twitter buddies.** Carry on real conversations -- and don't worry that your "fans" won't understand your cryptic utterances. It's proof you really do interact with those on the "inside" of your personal circle.



6. **Don't worry about how you "appear"**. Yes, there's a fine line between making sure your tweets support your professional image and business goals... and being yourself. (Practice makes perfect!)
7. **Acknowledge and answer people who tweet directly "@ you"**. Use their Twitter call signs to respond (and so you can track the conversation, if you need to)
8. **Don't acknowledge abusive or rude tweets**. Attention is what this type of tweeter is hoping for. (And do report them!)
9. **Track your results**. See what works. (At the very least, use your bit.ly links to see how many people clicked through on links you provided in your tweets. Monitor your website or blog traffic to see if it's consistent with particular tweets or heavier Twitter engagement on your part
10. **Make notes**. Keep track of what works well.. And what garnered zero response.

#### Step Four: Know Your Twitter Tools

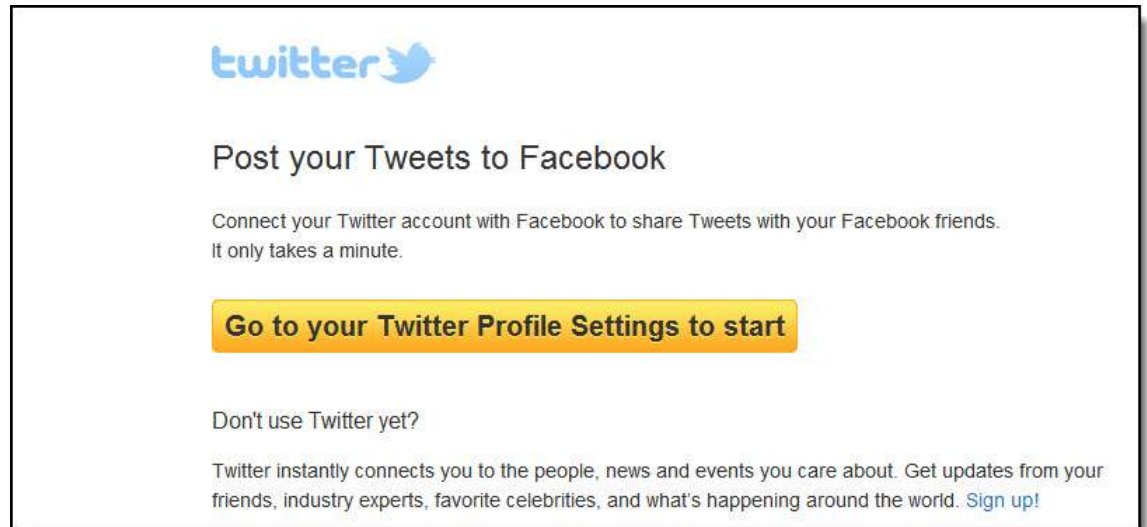
There are a few tools that can shave time off your Twitter posting and make it easier to engage. Let's take a look at these, right now...

1. **Facebook Twitter app** -- this Facebook app lets you post your own tweets to your Facebook Page (or profile, if you prefer). It also provides a call to action for your Facebook friends to "follow me on Twitter", as well as helping you find those friends who tweet in the first place.

To locate it, log into Facebook and type "Twitter" into your search box. It will come up first in the search result drop-down:



Click on the icon, and then when the Twitter app page opens up, the "Go to your Twitter Profile Settings to start" button...



Fill in your information to post tweets to your Facebook Page or Feed or "share your Twitter profile with your friends on Facebook." (Don't worry -- you can choose where on Facebook Twitter should post your tweets.)

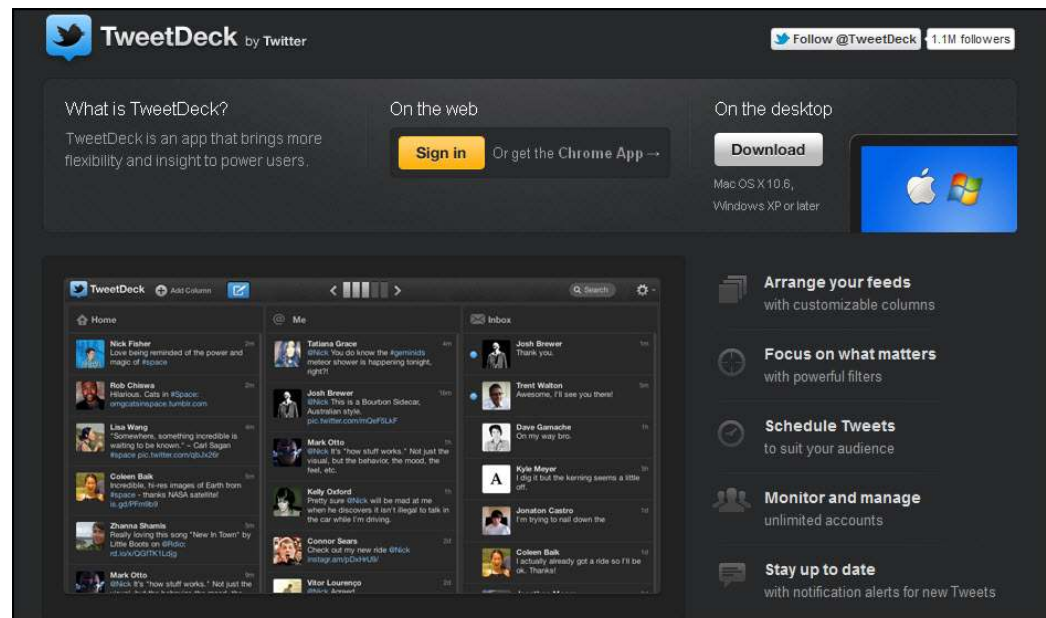
2. **Use a tweet manager/dashboard such as HootSuite or TweetDeck.** This is a great option if you have multiple Twitter accounts.

Both of these allow you to preschedule tweets or see all of your Twitter content at a glance, so that you don't have to keep clicking through to locate replies, conversations or Retweets you've made (or your own tweets others have Retweeted)

[TweetDeck](#) allows you to:

- Compose a message by clicking on an icon
- Add multiple Twitter accounts
- Add accounts for Facebook, MySpace and LinkedIn
- Manage your Twitter Lists
- Add or delete columns containing your Twitter feeds
- Sync your columns with TweetDeck on the iPhone
- Search, using the "add columns" button to create a search column
- Decide if you'd like pop-ups every time a new message arrives in your Twitter feed

You can also choose which columns to display - for example, "Mentions", "Direct Messages", "Trending", etc. -- as well as download TweetDeck to your desktop.

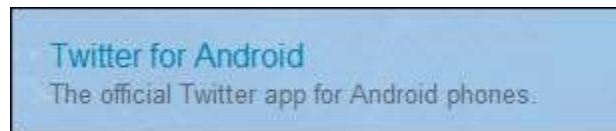


[HootSuite](#) is built much along the same lines, and offers both free and paid options.



It's simply a matter of which platform feels more comfortable to you. It's very easy to keep an overview and save time with a Twitter dashboard like TweetDeck or HootSuite -- and great for visual learners.

3. **Badges and Feed Plugins** -- Be sure to set up and use your Twitter feed plugin, if you'd like to your blog readers to see your latest tweets scrolling on your blog page. Install your Twitter badge on your blog and invite people to "Join me on Twitter".
4. **Remember to check authority sources** such as tech RSS feeds you've subscribed to... such as Mashable's video announcement about [Twitter launching a major redesign](#) -- you'll be ahead of the crowd in learning about new features and changes.
5. **Twitter for Android** -- If your mobile device is an Android or Blackberry, install this app right from your Twitter feed page. You'll find this and other tips you can follow on the right hand side (simply click on it to start the set up process):



6. **#Hashtags** -- Use relevant hashtags to join trending conversations and present your tweets to potential followers who otherwise might not find you.

A Hashtag is simply any word you like with a "#" in front of it. Including a hashtag in your tweet means that anyone on Twitter using the same hashtag will be served your tweet:



Twitter will automatically serve up a bunch of currently-trending hashtags in the right-hand sidebar of your Twitter feed. You can pick one up from existing Twitter friends tweeting about that subject -- for example, you could write a post that says: "*Crosses in nature - black and white photos: [ow.ly/1aBa2](#): #ArtPhoto*" and have your tweet seen by everyone following the #ArtPhoto hashtag.

Or you can start your own and call on others to re-tweet it.

Hashtags can be a powerful tool when you're:

- Promoting a webinar or other event for your business
- Focusing on a specific topic you'd like your followers to see

- Positioning yourself to align with a certain group
  - Looking for followers (or people to follow) with the same narrow focus
7. **URL shorteners** -- since a tweet cannot be any longer than 140 characters, it's necessary to use URL shorteners such as [bit.ly](http://bit.ly).

Another strong reason to use it? Bit.ly allows you to easily **track your tweets** and view a timeline of how many clickthroughs your tweets are individually gathering.



You can also use HootSuite's [Ow.ly](http://ow.ly) to upload your photographs and provide short links.



Find your own best uses for Twitter. Mix up the types of tweets you send, share photographs, and use hashtags.

Always thank people for Retweeting your content and reply to direct mentions, if you want to make people feel important.

But, above all, if your followers or potential customers prove to be strong Twitter users, get into the habit of tweeting daily -- and engage them in active conversation.

## WEEKLY ASSIGNMENT:

1. Identify any Twitter bad habits you may have picked up
2. Identify the reason you allowed yourself to adopt them:  
    "All the books told me to do this:" \_\_\_\_\_  
    "Social networking is a chore:" \_\_\_\_\_  
    "I'm simply too busy to hang out!" \_\_\_\_\_  
    "Others were doing it:" \_\_\_\_\_  
    Other: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Study the celebrity examples again. If you have time, identify three other well-known Tweeters who genuinely engage their followers, and try the same sort of analysis
4. Familiarize yourself with your Twitter account settings and tools. Install any tools you think will help your business goals
5. Find out what time of day (or night) your best audience and/or favorite people like to hang out on Twitter -- and join them
6. Make a plan for daily tweeting -- and stick to it!



## **Social Media in Business Checklist: Week Four (Twitter)**

- \* I have familiarized my self with the nine types of annoying Twitter poster
- \* I understand they are annoying, not because of their choice of material, but because they are not posting naturally and responsively. They are posting out of context without reference to the community and conversation
- \* I have identified occasions when I, myself, have fallen prey to some of these habits
- \* I realize the Unforgivable Twitter Sin is that everybody talks and nobody listens.
- \* That is not going to be me! I am committed to conscious tweeting.
- \* I am going to habitually:
  - \* Determine whether or not my interaction on Twitter affects my traffic or ROI
  - \* Analyze my followers, referring back to what I learned in Week One
  - \* Put more thought into why and what I am tweeting -- and how I can do it better
  - \* Analyze what really works on Twitter
- \* I have studied the three celebrity examples -- and taken note of the things they are doing right
- \* I understand fully it is not just their celebrity status that keeps their accounts alive and thriving: It is because they are interactive and genuinely engage their followers
- \* I have begun to analyze what really works on Twitter:
  - \* Among those I am following
  - \* Generally, through trends and hashtags
  - \* In followers who engage with me (and others)
  - \* In tweets I am drawn to respond to
  - \* Other \_\_\_\_\_
- \* I have begun to observe Twitter Best Practices (if I am not doing that already) by:
  - \* Making sure I have a foolproof password (or use a Password Manager like Roboform or iPassword)

- ✱ Finding out when my best audience likes to frequent Twitter.
- ✱ Tweeting daily and consistently
- ✱ Be sincere
- ✱ Finding a core group of real Twitter buddies and carrying on real (if short) conversations
- ✱ Being myself
- ✱ Acknowledging/answering those who directly tweet "@" me (excluding obvious spammers!)
- ✱ Tracking my results and seeing what works
- ✱ Signing up with bit.ly, if I haven't already done so
- ✱ Using any bit.ly links I include to track click-throughs on my tweets
- ✱ Monitoring my blog/website traffic to see if my tweeting has affected it
- ✱ Keeping notes of:
  - ✱ Which type of tweets worked well
  - ✱ Which ones resulted in zero response
- ✱ I have made the acquaintance of the Facebook Twitter app and have:
  - ✱ Decided to install it
  - ✱ Decided to skip it for now -- I am satisfied with my current routine
- ✱ I am using/have signed up for a tweet manager:
  - ✱ HootSuite
  - ✱ TweetDeck
  - ✱ Other \_\_\_\_\_
- ✱ I have familiarized myself with and started using my chosen tweet manager
- ✱ I have created my Twitter badges and installed them on my sites and blogs
- ✱ I have checked out Twitter plugins and installed the ones I feel would be beneficial for my business goals

- ✳ I am now regularly checking authority sources such as Mashable where I'll find reliable, up-to-the-minute news about Twitter changes
- ✳ I have installed a mobile Twitter app, if there is one available to suit my particular mobile device
- ✳ I am aware of and using Hashtags (when relevant)
- ✳ I am aware Hashtags can be a powerful tool when I want to:
  - Promote a webinar or other event for my business (and get others to spread my Hashtag)
  - Focus attention on a specific topic I'd like my followers to see
  - Position myself to align with a certain group
  - Look for followers (or people to follow) with the same narrow focus
- ✳ I have signed up with Bitly.com: I am also aware of Owly.com for photograph uploading -- and I have signed up there too
- ✳ I plan to upload photos to my Twitter account (ones that will interest, intrigue or entertain my followers)
- ✳ I have completed my weekly assignment!