



# Jelf

## Getting to grips with Twitter

Know your Tweet  
from your Follow

**Jelf.** SMALL  
BUSINESS

[jelfsmallbusiness.co.uk](http://jelfsmallbusiness.co.uk)  
01905 888397

---

# From presenting yourself as a modern company, to getting your message (and your product or service) out there, Twitter has so much to offer. But what's it all about?

---

## What is Twitter?

Twitter is an online social networking service that lets you write tweets (short messages) which anyone can read and other registered users can respond to.

Initially, the inventors imagined users sharing short announcements on what they were up to at that moment with a small group of people - a lot like Facebook's 'status updates'. But since its launch in 2006, Twitter has surpassed that vision; something perhaps most notable when you consider modern businesses' use of the service, as we will here.





## Why businesses should use Twitter

### To get close to your customers

At a basic (and business-minded) level, Twitter brings people (think: customers) closer to their interests (think: your business offering). Unlike Facebook, where people tend to 'Like' brands and businesses they already know in order to keep up with them, the tweets you post to Twitter can 'go viral' (spread at an unprecedented rate), sending your business name out there and encouraging **potential customers** to 'follow' you off the back of a clever, funny, or simply engaging tweet. This is unlike Facebook, where - although you will have more platforms on which to engage readers and build their relationship with your brand - you'll generally have to work harder to gain 'Likes' than you would to gain Twitter followers.

### Create real-time communications

People use Twitter on their phones and tablets as well as desktops, so information is shared instantly. If your business can create reactive tweets that jump on-board of-the-moment trends and public interest, you can connect with current and future customers instantly. Not only will this get your business name out there, it makes you look **up-to-date**, and (if you choose the events you react to and the way you react wisely) can establish your brand personality and values, making you memorable and helping customers connect with you.



## Is Twitter right for your business?

Are members of your target audience using Twitter? If so, it makes sense for you to take steps to engage with them on this platform. **Research your audience** thoroughly rather than making assumptions - you may be surprised by their habits. For example, if your business targets an older demographic, don't assume Twitter won't help you reach them: the 55-64 year age bracket is the fastest growing demographic on Twitter, and has grown 79 per cent since 2012.

An impressive Twitter account will regularly share **relevant material** that keeps followers interested and attracts new followers. If you don't have the time and resources to regularly post tweets and other engaging content on Twitter, there is little reason to create an account.



## More about tweeting

A tweet is a short message of 140 characters or less (Twitter imposes this limitation, which was originally defined by the character limit of a SMS text message on a phone). Tweets needn't just be text-based: you can upload images and videos or share links via a tweet too.

If you like what another Twitter user has said, you can either jump into the conversation by commenting on their tweet or by 'retweeting' it (reposting or forwarding the message to share it with your 'followers' - people who have subscribed to see your tweets.) **Remember that the messages you retweet can also represent your brand in the eyes of your followers, so retweet wisely.**

### What happens when you post a tweet?

It's out there, it's public, so tweet with caution! It'll appear on your Twitter profile, which users can follow to continue reading any tweets you post on future. Your stream of tweets is called a timeline, and when people follow you, your tweets will automatically appear in their timelines.

People can comment on, retweet and 'favourite' your tweets - marking them with a star icon to show you as the author that the tweet is liked.

If you press the "reply" button beside someone's tweet, your response will be visible to that person even if they are not following you. Your response will appear to them as @theirname followed by your message.

# 4

## How to use Twitter to grow your business

### Help people get to know you, and build your brand

First, decide on your username. This will normally be @YourCompanyName if that's still available, but whatever you choose, ensure it fits your business.

Your user profile is where potential Twitter followers (and potential customers) go to find out what they can expect from your tweets, and whether they want to follow you - so remember what they say about first impressions! Twitter allows you to add a photo, a large background image and a short description to your profile, so make sure they all represent what you do and who you are as a business. When writing your description, use keywords to make it easier for users to identify your industry. You can use Google's Keyword Planner to help you tap into existing traffic you can then become part of.

### Decide what your business needs from Twitter

If you want Twitter to help **build and raise awareness** of your brand, make sure everything you tweet and retweet adds something to that brand image. Your business's online identity is in your hands. We'll go into further detail about what to tweet below.

If you want Twitter to help you **connect with your customers or find out how your customers see you**, filtering tools such as Twitter Lists and hashtags can help you do so. Mashable provide a very handy guide to getting to grips with the latter.

If your aim is to build your good name (or clear a bad reputation) by **delivering better customer service**, Twitter can help: If a customer (or anyone) criticises you online, Twitter provides you with a platform from which to reply and resolve the issue.

# 5

## What to tweet

The 140-character limit will force you to think carefully about what you are trying to communicate. Twitter advises: "You are what you say... and how you say it," so we'll examine both.

### What to say

In their '31 Twitter Tips' article, Forbes reminds its readers not to jump on any and all Twitter subjects but to focus on tweets surrounding their passion - their businesses. Not only will your messages be stronger and more meaningful, they will attract followers who have a real interest in your area, rather than "meaningless followers" or none at all.

Originality is key, so say something new. Perhaps give behind-the-scenes information about your company or industry, and keep abreast of research and developments in your field so you can tweet about them, providing an original expert comment.

Respond when people mention you in a tweet - whether good or bad. You could retweet and favourite positive messages, but if you see critical

tweets, do more than apologise: Bloomberg Businessweek recently discussed a study revealing that while only ten percent of apologies from individuals on Twitter included an offer to make amends, 30 percent of corporate apologies did so. Follow suit for happier customers and a better image.

### How to say it

**Be true to your brand:** Twitter is the perfect place to be fun, witty and informal - if that's your brand's personality. If not, build your expert image with concise, professional-sounding tweets. It all comes down to expressing your business in an authentic way, so don't try and be something you're not - people will see through it.

**But know when to adapt:** Don't be so preoccupied with your brand's image that you forget to adjust your tone to suit the situation. For example, a company who has a fun and jokey Twitter voice should still adopt a more respectful tone when responding to a concerned customer.



## What not to tweet

**It's not all sell, sell, sell.** Don't just use twitter to market your products or services. People will tire of it quickly.

**Don't hold extensive or overly-specific exchanges** on Twitter. If a customer or another business wants an in-depth exchange, take it offline by asking them to send you a direct message providing their email address or phone number.

**Be careful with hashtags!** It's no spaces allowed, so make sure the words don't merge together to create new - perhaps less flattering - words! Also, don't stuff your tweets with hashtags; two is the recommended maximum per tweet.



## When to tweet

As a business on Twitter, you're sure to wonder when your target followers are most likely to read and retweet your posts. As Forbes notes, social media scientist **Dan Zarrella** concluded that the best time to tweet if you want to be retweeted is at 4pm on a Friday. But (of course there's a but, it couldn't be that simple!) the

right time for you to tweet will depend on your industry, among other factors, and one of the best ways to find that time is to carry out your own test, scheduling tweets for several different times in the day. You can read more about this test (and other methods) [here](#).

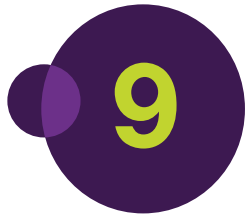


## How to push your Twitter presence

**Publish your Twitter ID** (your name on Twitter) in other media (on and offline) to spread the word and encourage new followers.

**Follow others**, or 'favourite' their tweet, and they will be more likely to follow you. Make sure they are relevant, meaningful followers by scoping out their profile and past tweets first.

**You could tempt followers in with a giveaway**, but as Forbes reminds us, make it relevant to your company and therefore the right followers' interests.



## How to monitor your success

Because you'll want to make sure it's been worth it!

### Monitor success online

There are tools you can use to help measure the ROI of any time and effort you have put into Twitter:

**HootSuite** is a popular, free program used to monitor keywords and analyse follower growth, track mentions of your brand and analyse the type of sentiment your brand inspires on Twitter.

**Social Mention** enables you to track what Twitter users are saying about your brand - or any other topic - in real time. It also measures the likelihood of your brand being discussed, the ratio of positive mentions to negative, the likelihood that people currently talking about your brand will keep doing so, and your business's reach, in terms of Twitter. The Public Relations and Marketing Group goes into further detail here, or check out Twitter's list of certified partners.

Twitter suggests you set goals before you do anything else; this will help you decide what you want from Twitter - whether it's more in-store transactions, to improve how people see your brand, or something else. That way you can target your Twitter activity, but also use these goals as measures of success.

### ...and offline

Why not ask your customers if they follow you on Twitter, and if so, what they think of the content you share? You may gain some really valuable insights.



# 10

## Advertising on Twitter

There are two main forms of advertising available to small businesses on Twitter. These are Promoted Accounts, and Promoted Tweets. There is technically a third option, Promoted Trends, but at over \$200,000 a day, this is out of the reach of many businesses, so won't be discussed here.

**A Promoted Account** is where you pay for your account to appear in the "Who to follow" section of Twitter – see below:



A Promoted Tweet is where you pay for one of your tweets to appear at the top of users' timelines – see below:



These are paid for using a pay-per-click model. That is, you pay for every click or piece of engagement you get on your ad.

**For Promoted Tweets**, you pay every time a user clicks on your link, replies, retweets or favourites the tweet you have promoted. That amount is set by you in your budgeting settings, where you set your bid amount. Your bid amount is then measured against other businesses that are targeting similar users, to enable Twitter to decide which ad should be displayed to users.

You can target users who have mentioned certain **keywords** in their tweets or by their interests. You can also target followers of certain accounts or even people watching a particular TV show. Another avenue is to upload a number of email addresses at one time and target users attached to those emails (this is called 'Tailored Audiences').

**For Promoted Accounts**, you only pay when someone follows your account, but you tend to pay more per follow than you would pay per engagement on a Promoted Tweet. You can also only choose between interest-based targeting and Tailored Audiences.

Along with the specific targeting methods, you can choose to target users **by their device** (desktop, iOS and Android devices), location (country and city) and gender.

# 10

## Glossary - Twitter terms, at a glance.

**Favourite, or favouriting a tweet.** To mark a tweet with a star, showing it is liked. A good way to show your appreciation when someone shares your content.

**Follow** (to become a follower of another user on Twitter) - means you have subscribed to their tweets and their updates will appear in your 'Home' tab. That user will also be able to send you direct messages.

**Hashtag** - a word or phrase without spaces preceded by the hash (#) sign. Used to help categorise tweets by topic and to help them show up in Twitter Search.

**Retweet** - Also known as RT - reposting or forwarding another Twitter user's message to share it with your own followers.

**Viral** - when something 'goes viral' it spreads rapidly to the online masses in a short space of time.