

Twitter can be a powerful tool to bolster your personal brand and establish you as an industry thought leader. Although it has nowhere near as many users as Facebook or Instagram, Twitter is the best social network for sharing ideas and news with a large group of people, as opposed to interacting with friends and family. As a result, it offers the greatest opportunity for connecting with journalists, bloggers and other influencers.

Unless you're already famous, however, attracting a major following on Twitter isn't easy. Getting people to follow you and pay attention to your content isn't just about tweeting interesting stuff, although that is certainly important as well. It's also a matter of understanding how to get other people's attention by interacting with them and sharing their content.

Who is this for? Executives and company founders who may have a presence on Twitter but are struggling to gain traction or use it to convey a coherent personal brand that, in turn, supports the main corporate brand.

What should your profile look like?

The rules for your profile picture and bio are pretty loose. A professionally-shot photo is preferable, whether or not it is a picture of you in a casual or business setting. You only have 160 characters for your bio, so make sure that at least part of that mentions your company and what you do. Feel free to add some light-hearted details about yourself (Yankees fan, proud poodle owner, mediocre cook) if you'd like, but only if it comes naturally. If you're hoping to elicit interview requests from journalists, make sure to include your email address.

What should you be tweeting about?

If you're using Twitter to develop thought leadership cred, you should be posting regularly about the subjects that you're hoping to establish yourself as an authority on. However, by no means should you shy away from posting content relating to other, unrelated interests or events, particularly those going on in your own life. While your central offering to the Twittersphere is your expertise, people prefer experts they can relate to, so a photo of yourself on a rollercoaster or your thoughts on current events to show your personal side may in fact be a very effective way of boosting your brand. The key is for all of your content to convey a coherent identity and personality that is aligned with a certain set of values that are consistent with, and authentic to, both you and your corporate brand. You can communicate those values — whether that is a belief in gender equality or a commitment to innovation — through both your work-related and personal content.

What should your content look like?

There are three distinct categories of Twitter content. An effective content campaign will feature a mix of all three. However, you should strive to put a personal touch on as many of your tweets as possible. Retweeting another person's content will often be noticed, appreciated and reciprocated by the content creator, but for the most part that serves their brand, not your own.

Content category	Actions to undertake on Twitter
Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Writing an original tweet• Replying to somebody with an original message (whether you make that reply one-on-one or one-to-many)
Curation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Retweeting with a comment• Tweeting a link to content written by somebody else, with a comment• Tweeting a link to content you published somewhere else (the company blog for example), with a comment
Aggregation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Retweeting without a comment• Liking somebody else's tweet• Tweeting a link to content written by somebody else, without a comment• Running an automated content aggregation tool such as paper.li• Tweeting a link to content you published somewhere else (the company blog for example), without a comment

How do you grow your audience?

Broadly speaking, there are two ways to get more followers. One way is to create valuable, interesting content, which can be seeded organically or through a sponsored tweet. The other is by interacting with people and making online friends.

So, how do you make friends?

- **Follow people.** Why? For one, people you follow will often follow you back. But don't go overboard. It looks bad if the number of people you're following greatly exceeds the number of people following you. As a general rule, try to keep it as even as possible.
- **Give credit.** Did somebody draw your attention to something interesting? Tweet a link to the content and credit your source of inspiration (typically done through "H/T" for hat tip). People like people who praise them. They will often reciprocate.
- **Mention people.** You should always be looking for excuses to mention people that you want to raise your profile with, whether they already follow you or not. Did a journalist just write an article about your industry? Tweet their article and mention them.
- **Answer questions.** Did somebody who you'd like to be followed by shout out a question that you can (help) answer? Pay it forward and never hesitate to provide value to others.

Sometimes people will have a hard time finding interesting people they should be following and connecting with. Here are a couple of tips to grow a high-quality pool of people to follow:

- **Look up people in your professional network.** Most people can be found on Twitter through a simple name search. Follow them and they'll probably follow you back.
- **Who are the people you're following following?** The people who matter to you are likely to follow people that are of interest to you. Take a peek at the people a key journalist is following and you're bound to find dozens of other players in the field. Many times when you follow a new person or brand Twitter will suggest other profiles with a similar background, making it a breeze to find and follow new, interesting people.
- **Watch conversations carefully.** The people you follow are busy interacting with people who might deserve your attention. Spend time watching (and participating in!) conversations to discover who should be on your radar screen.

Manzer Communications Services

What you just read was a summary of Twitter basics. The ease with which you'll be able to put that advice into action will no doubt vary on your experience and social media instincts. For a more in-depth understanding of how to effectively market on Twitter, Manzer Communications offers the **C-suite Twitter Training Module**, a two hour (in-person or remote) training session aimed at teaching you how to make an impact with your tweets.

Not sure you're ready to tackle Twitter on your own? Manzer Communications can help you set up a professional Twitter account and assist you in operating the account, which includes growing your list of followers, planning and executing a content-rich stream of tweets and expanding your influence on Twitter.

These services are part of our Social Media Services portfolio designed to grow your brand's reach, deepen customer engagement and drive interest in your company's products and/or services.

Contact us today if you would like to learn more!

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Jo Detavernier, APR is a partner and VP with Manzer Communications. He has counseled both in Europe and the United States CEO's on how to build and manage their personal brands both online and offline.