



Twitter 101

Twitter is a micro-blogging social media tool that allows its users to engage in dialogue with other users from across the globe in short status updates. These updates must be 140 characters or less as they utilize SMS (short messaging system). Below are Twitter terms you'll need to know to become part of the "twitterati" (the Twitter elite).

@reply (noun) -- @ replies are integral to the Twitter conversation. If you'd like to respond to someone else's tweet, simply hit the reply arrow or manually type in the "@" symbol directly followed by their Twitter handle. Make sure that you do not put any spaces after the "@" symbol, otherwise your message won't reach your intended person. Example: If you are sending a message to Jane Doe, make sure to type "@JaneDoe" instead of "@ Jane Doe".

Another function of the "@"reply is to allow your followers to see who you talk to and link to that person's Twitter account. It also will allow the person you're responding to see your reply. You can also use the "@" symbol to refer to another Twitter member, even if you're not responding to them.

Example: If you just went to lunch with your friend Becky Smith who has a Twitter account named "BeckyS", you might say, "Just went to lunch with @BeckyS." This is a way to let those who follow you know that other people you interact with are also on Twitter. By seeing their names in your twitter stream, you are also promoting your friends' Twitter accounts to grow their follower base.

Direct message (noun) – this is a private message from one Twitter user to another. Only the two users sending/receiving the message can see it. In order to send a direct message to another user, the user must be following your account.

Hash tag (noun) – refers to the hash or pound symbol (#). Hash tags go directly in front of words (no space) to make the term searchable so users can find everyone on Twitter who is talking about a certain topic.

Example: If you were writing about an Indianapolis topic, you'd include the term "#Indianapolis" in your tweet. Then if any Twitter user searches the site for the word Indianapolis, your tweet will show up in the results.

Hash tags are also used to find the most popular topics on Twitter at any time. Utilizing sites like Twitterfall.com, TweetStats.com, or Hashtags.org, the top trends in Twitter may be checked. The top trending words indicate these terms are the most discussed topics on Twitter at the moment – making the trends page is a great accomplishment!

Retweet (verb) – this is when you repost someone else's noteworthy tweet, giving them credit for it. To retweet, simply write "RT," their Twitter handle and their original post. Example: If John_Doe wrote "Joe's Burger Shack is giving away free milkshakes today!" and you wished to re-tweet this, you would write, "RT @John_Doe Joe's Burger Shack is giving away free milkshakes today!"



Tweet (verb) – this refers to sending out a Twitter update.

Example: “Wow, what an interesting news story – you should tweet that!”

Twitter Tips

- List your organization’s Twitter account on twellow.com, a Twitter yellow pages. This allows people from across the globe to find you.
- Due to the tight character limit (140), abbreviations discouraged in more formal writing are okay. Feel free to shorten words and use symbols to convey your message.
- Follow people back unless they are obvious spam accounts or aren’t related to your audience somehow. Following those who follow you is a way to continue to grow your audience. Although, if you find some users to not be very interesting after following them for awhile, feel free to unfollow.
- Engage in the conversation – don’t just post from your end. Regularly respond to other people and re-tweet posts that are especially interesting or noteworthy.
- Participate in #FollowFriday. Every Friday, Twitter users recommend interesting people to follow – this is a fantastic way to build up your followers (if someone recommends you) and to help others build their followers. Simply write something like, “#FollowFriday – our recommendations are @JaneDoe @johnDoe.”
- Use bit.ly to shorten long links that take up too much space. By shortening the link you post in your tweet, you free up more characters to talk. Bit.ly also let’s you track how many times someone has clicked your link – a valuable metrics tool!
- Use www.twitpic.com to share a photo on Twitter. Simply upload the photo to TwitPic, add a caption/tweet and the site will automatically post the picture and caption/tweet to your account.
- Try out a Twitter application like Twitterfall or TweetDeck to help manage your account. These applications let you organize and track your followers, tweets, @ replies and direct messages in a more effective manner than Twitter’s current layout.
- Ask your followers questions. This a great way to involve them in your brand. Ask what they’d like to know about your organization, what their favorite SAP memory is, etc.



- Make it personal. Even business account should have a sense of fun and individuality to them! While most of the content you post will be work-related, it's okay to say something that isn't strictly business. This lets your followers know that a real person is behind the Twitter account and gives your company a friendly and relatable presence that others will be excited to follow and interact with. It could be something as simple as "The Spirit and Place staff is heading to Patachou for lunch – yum!" or "Does anyone else hate all of this rain, too?"
- To share a business account, visit Cotweet.com and sign up for the free service. This allows multiple people to log into the same account without sharing one password.
- Upload a profile picture. Logos are fine for businesses, but if your account is just for you individually, upload a good face shot.
- Promote your Twitter account on your website, other social media sites (Facebook, Myspace, etc.) and even business cards, email signatures and stationery. Businesses are now using Twitter as another way to communicate directly with the public, just like a FAX machine or email address.
- Consider creating special offers or deals for your followers. Some ideas: discounts, special invitations, coupon codes or freebies for those that mention your Twitter account or for the first few people that @reply or retweet the offer. This is a fantastic way to keep current followers interested and gain new followers as well.