

Networking on Twitter

Social media is much more than swapping pictures with your friends – it has become a major outlet for networking. Twitter allows you to get instant updates from your friends, industry experts, and world events.

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Twitter is an online social networking and micro-blogging service used to you're your "followers" instant updates.

These updates are sent through short (up to 140 characters) text-based posts called "tweets."

Once you've set up an account on [Twitter](#), you're given the option of seeing if your friends are on Twitter. This is an easy way to building your following quickly. The site searches your email account and matches those contacts who have a Twitter account. You can choose to follow people they know and build your network through your friends and colleagues.

Twitter can serve as a valuable business-networking tool. You just have to know how to approach connections and build engagement in your followers. Here are some ways you can leverage your Twitter presence to build a powerful network.

Best foot forward

Once you've built your target network, it's time to show them who you really are. Even before they read one of your tweets, they should have an idea of what your interests are and why you're using Twitter. Build a good bio, one that showcases your talents and expertise; if you choose to use a profile picture, make sure it's a clear, and professional, headshot.

Choose influential people to follow

Networking starts with finding the right people. Twitter.com offers a directory of people whom you might like to follow in their "Who to Follow" tab. You'll find this along the top bar of Twitter.com when you sign in. From here, you can look through suggested accounts that are presented to you based on who you follow already.

You can also find a lot of quality accounts to follow simply by asking for suggestions from those you already follow. Or, by participating in events like "Follow Friday," services like [Just Tweet It](#) that offer keyword-based ways to find people in your niche, too.

NOTE: Removed Twollo since it's a service you have to pay for

Ask questions

Get your Twitter network talking by asking a general question. Stick to your specialty – you're more likely to hear from people who are interested in your niche, and if you've built a targeted network, they'll want to share their opinions. Let them

know you're listening to them by "re-tweeting" some or all of the answers, adding your own answer, or tallying them up and present them in poll form.

Retweet often

A re-tweet is when you re-publish something another [Twitter](#) user has written, to spread the word among your own Twitter followers. Retweeting is a compliment to another person – it tells them you really are interested in what they have to say.

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