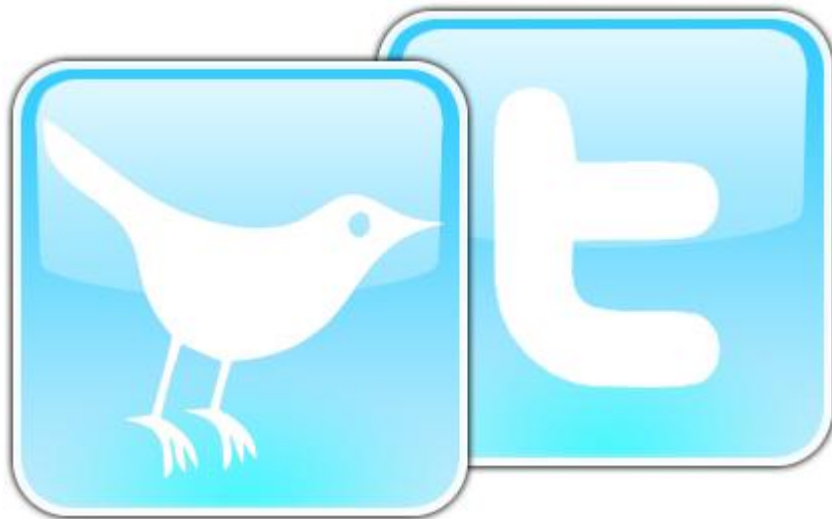


# ▶ **Twitter mastery for business**

How to master Twitter to grow your business and make more sales

Lee Hopkins ▶ Better Communication Results ▶ May 2009



## Acknowledgements

No business communicator is an island, and there are plenty of people who contributed to this report.

I would like to thank Alex Manchester, Trevor Young, Stephen Collins, Ben Hamilton, Chris Barron, Chris Abraham, Jay Berkowitz, Neville Hobson, and Ike Pigott, for without their individual and combined wisdom this report would not have been anywhere as good as it (hopefully) is.

All of the errors or omissions are nothing to do with them, but are entirely my fault.

Lee Hopkins

Adelaide hills, May 2009

“This report is a MUST for those who are infatuated by the intuitive, far-reaching and anarchic nature of twitter – but would secretly love to be comforted by a linear, step-by-step, hand-holding friend who gives you lots of squeezes on the way. Well done Lee.”

**Catriona Byrne**

Director, SageCo.com.au

“Lee’s insights into the vast new world of social media/Twitter are brilliant and dynamic. When the next hottest thing comes along, I know where I’ll be looking first for a straightforward explanation.”

**Chris Barron**

Director - Marketing & Strategy, Viva9.com

“Another valuable and super-practical report from Lee Hopkins and Better Communication Results. With clear cases and step-by-step explanations, this report provides an easy-to-navigate portal into Twitter, whether you’re looking to use the service yourself, or need a ready-made business case to hand to your colleague who is wondering what all the fuss is about.”

**Alex Manchester**

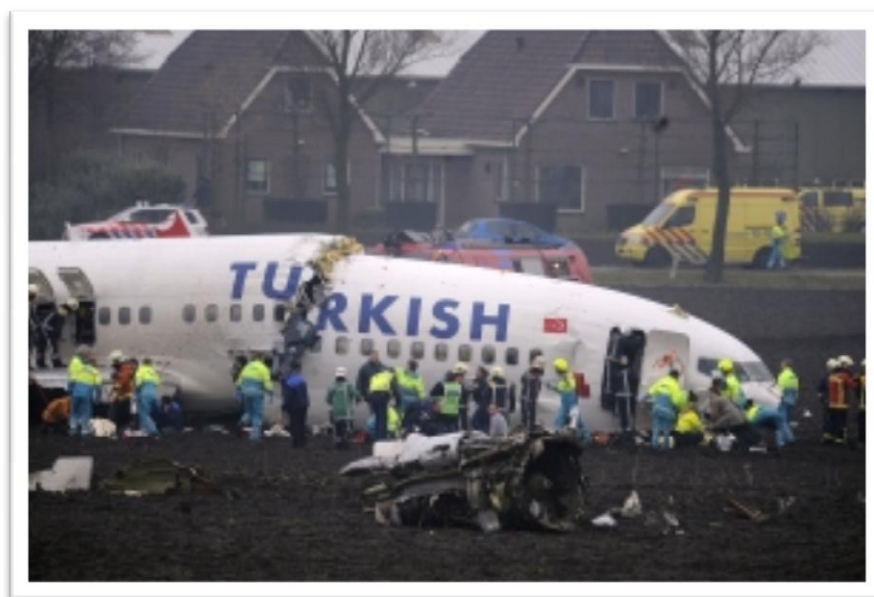
Senior Consultant, AlexManchester.com

## Table of Contents

THE GROWTH OF TWITTER AND 'TWEETING'	5
TWITTER'S USER DEMOGRAPHIC	6
USES OF TWITTER	6
WHY WOULD ANYONE DO THAT?	8
THE 12-STEP PATH TO TWITTER MASTERY	10
THE 12 STEPS IN GREATER DETAIL	11
1. DEVELOP YOUR TWITTER MARKETING STRATEGY	11
2. CREATE A NEW TWITTER ACCOUNT IF YOU DON'T ALREADY HAVE ONE	12
3. CONFIGURE YOUR TWITTER ACCOUNT	13
4. BRAND YOUR TWITTER PAGE	14
5. SET UP A FOLLOWER INCENTIVE	15
6. PROMOTE YOUR PROFILE	17
7. IMPLEMENT TWEET STRATEGY	19
8. BUILD YOUR FOLLOWER LIST	21
9. MANAGE FOLLOWERS AND FOLLOWINGS	22
10. SET UP AUTO FOLLOW/REPLY	24
11. TRACK EFFECTIVENESS	25
12. IMPLEMENT STREAM ADVERTISING	27
FINAL THOUGHTS	28
ABOUT THE AUTHOR	29
CONTACT LEE	29
PUBLISHED WORKS	30



However, we're often reminded of the power of citizen journalism when delivered through a fast, democratised medium such as Twitter. This morning we were alerted to the crash of a Turkish Boeing 747 at Schiphol airport through Twitter way before the media cottoned on to it.



I have a huge flatscreen in front of me on constant news rotation, (hey, we're pretty plugged-in here in the city). Twitter reported the crash so quickly that, by the time I saw the first report on BBC One planes were already taking off again. Jeez Louise – CNN and the BBC even stole the Twitter mobile phone picture<sup>1</sup>.

### **Where the real news is at or just another delivery medium? – Twitter and the Schiphol Boeing 737 crash**

PutSimply blog<sup>2</sup>:

---

<sup>1</sup> Twitter mobile phone picture

<sup>2</sup> <http://putsimply.wordpress.com/2009/02/25/where-the-real-news-is-at-or-just-another-delivery-medium-twitter-and-the-schiphol-boeing-737-crash/>

---

# Twitter mastery for business

How to master Twitter to grow your business and make more sales

If one platform or social network has generated the most media attention in 2009, then Twitter is it.

But many people quite rightly ask, “What *IS* Twitter?” The answer is as diverse as there are users of Twitter, because everyone has a different reason for using it and how they use it. More on that in a moment...

## The growth of Twitter and ‘tweeting’

Nielsen Online recently reported<sup>3</sup> that Twitter’s year-on-year growth was nothing short of astounding: 1,382 percent, from 475,000 unique visitors to the site in February 2008 to **seven million** in February 2009.

Many analysts consider that final number to be vastly under-reported, citing for evidence that calls from Twitter-focused software clients like Twhirl ([twhirl.com](http://twhirl.com)) and TweetDeck ([tweetdeck.com](http://tweetdeck.com)) are

seemingly not reported as unique site visits. Most of the engaged and prolific so-called ‘power tweeters’ use applications like the two above, plus dedicated applications on their mobile phones, to access and post to Twitter.

UK blogger and business communicator at the forefront of new communications technologies, Neville Hobson, for example, feels that the total number of visitors to Twitter’s website is closer to **60 million**<sup>4</sup> as of April 2009.

Comscore recently reported<sup>5</sup> that Twitter.com received **17 million** visitors in April – **from the US alone!**

As they report, “Its 17 million U.S. visitors in April represents an 83% gain vs. March and a 3,000% gain vs. year ago. In fact, the past two months have seen such a flood of traffic to Twitter.com that it has more than **quadrupled** its audience during that brief period of time, literally unprecedented growth for a site whose audience already numbers in the millions.”

---

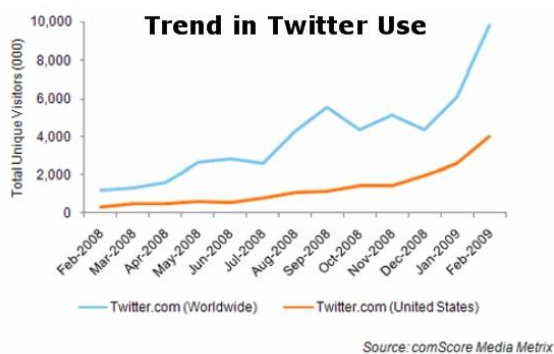
<sup>3</sup> <http://www.nielsen-online.com/blog/2009/03/20/keep-on-tweetn/>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.nevillehobson.com/2009/04/25/twitters-real-number-is-closer-to-60-million/>

<sup>5</sup> [http://blog.comscore.com/2009/05/twitter\\_traffic\\_quadruples.html](http://blog.comscore.com/2009/05/twitter_traffic_quadruples.html)

## Twitter's user demographic

Intuitively one would think that Twitter's main demographic would be teens and tertiary-level students. But just as with *Second Life*, Nielsen found that the primary user group appears to be the 35-49 age group, which comprises almost 42 percent of the site's audience. Additionally, two-thirds of Twitterers tweet from work, rather than from home.



The majority of Twitter users worldwide are age 35 or older, and young adults ages 18-24 make up only 10.6% of the Twitter population in the US and are less likely than the average user to Tweet, according to an analysis of February 2009 data by comScore blogger Sarah Radwanick.

This skew toward middle-aged demographics early in Twitter's life cycle suggests that—in contrast to other social networking applications—younger users are not driving popularity of the microblogging application, and the traditional “early adopter” model may

need to be reconsidered in light of Twitter's popularity among older adults, Radwanick said.

However, Radwanick's conclusions may not hold water when you ask those aged 16-24 whether they use Twitter or not.

As one colleague's teenage daughter pointed out to me, she and her friends were using Twitter a couple of years ago (and Facebook before that) when no one had heard of it. Now that the rest of the world has caught up, they've already moved on to somewhere else.

## Uses of Twitter

Twitter is a phenomenon that is resisting being ‘put in a box’ by analysts, because it can be used in so many different ways. For example,

Comcast, Network Solutions, JetBlue, H&R Block and Zappos use Twitter as a way of creating and sustaining customer loyalty and satisfaction;

Dell uses it as an ‘early warning radar’ for customer service issues that need attending to before the customer becomes ‘heated’;

A local public radio station in Melbourne, Australia, used Twitter to keep the public

aware of what was happening during the disastrous Victorian bushfires;

Californians are kept similarly informed during their own fire seasons;

Mzinga uses Twitter to offer user promotions and to enter into real conversations with its customers;

British Telecom, recently having purchased two major businesses in the security industry, uses Twitter to engage with the security industry about future trends;

Evernote used Twitter to invite people into a private beta of their software, continuing to use Twitter as a bug reporting and feedback channel;

General Motors uses Twitter to connect with its customers. “We usually try to Tweet some sort of question for our followers every day. These questions can be vehicle-related (i.e. What’s your favorite convertible?) or just for fun (i.e. What’s your favorite roadside diner). This two-way approach continues to work well for us and we’ve seen a number of people tweeting more about GM because of our presence there,” says Adam Denison, GM Social Media Communications;

EMC uses Twitter to not only push out press releases about new products and services, but has also created a separate Twitter profile in order to communicate to participants at their conferences. EMC use

it to send people to different on-site podcasts, blog posts by attendees and Flickr photos, as well as direct people to contest areas, keynote speeches, and so on;

The Home Depot uses Twitter to promote the ‘out-of-store’ lives of their employees, helping create a ‘family’ feel to the store;

Baskin-Robbins use Twitter to promote ‘feel-good’ offers such as this one, “Join us for 31 Cent Scoop Night at Baskin-Robbins and help us honor America’s firefighters. Participating stores will reduce prices of small ice cream scoops to 31 cents”;

Publishers John Wiley & Sons have several employees who use Twitter to find new authors, talk with existing authors and customers and use it for market research: “Would you buy a book on X?” and “What cover would make you more likely to buy this book?”;

FreshBooks uses Twitter to handle small support issues, update friends and fans of new developments, and listen to its customers;

Plaxo use Twitter to engage with its members and potential members, as well use Twitter’s search capabilities to see what is being said about Plaxo in the Twittersphere. That way, says John McCrea, Plaxo’s head of marketing, he can reach out to answer questions, help solve problems, and correct any misperceptions;

The uses, as you see, are only limited by one's imagination.

Chris Brogan offers 50 ideas on using Twitter for business<sup>6</sup> and is an ideal *aide-de-memoire* for those rainy days when inspiration is finding it hard to break through the brain's fog.

Just remember to, as Steven Covey reminds us, to 'seek first to understand, before seeking to be understood', which translates to 'listen first, *then* enter into the conversation with something valid to add'.

But I know from personal experience that trying to explain in simple-to-understand terms what Twitter is... well, let's just say that herding cats would be an easier task!

At one extreme it is akin to a text messaging service, allowing anyone with a free Twitter account up to 140 characters at a time to 'say something'. Every time a message is sent (a 'tweet' as the 'Twitterati' call it; don't worry, the (ab)use of the English language with 'twit' as a prefix knows no bounds and shows no sign of stopping), it is stored in a database, wherein it can be searched by Google and other search robots, including Twitter's own search engine. Each person's message stream is RSS-enabled, allowing anyone to subscribe to their feed.

---

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.chrisbrogan.com/50-ideas-on-using-twitter-for-business/>

---

These RSS feeds can either be read in traditional RSS readers (such as Google Reader, FeedDemon, GreatNews, *inter alia*) or in a dedicated Twitter-centric tool such as TweetDeck or Twhirl (the two current favourites) for your desktop/laptop, or ceTwit, Jitter, Hahlo, or PocketTweets amongst many for your smart phone/iPhone.

### **Why would anyone DO that?**

Upon first seeing Twitter I was not alone in asking, "Why would anyone DO that?" However, it only took a short while to become enamoured with it.

Here are just some of the many uses to which Twitter can be put:

- Advertising a business;
- Appointment reminders;
- Complaining about a business;
- Complaining about a job;
- Crowdsourcing for resources;
- Disaster alerting and response;
- Emergency response team management;
- Environmental alerts: pollen counts, pollution levels, heat waves, severe weather alerts;
- Exercise management and encouragement;
- Getting feedback;



Hazardous materials communication;  
Issuing alerts for missing nursing home residents;  
Issuing asthma alerts;  
Launching a business;  
Live coverage;  
Looking for a job;  
Networking for a job;  
Notifying customers;  
Office staff to patients about appointment reminders;  
Personal branding;  
Physician to Physician communication for general medical questions and 'curbside consults';  
Physician-to-team member about non-urgent matters;  
Posting a job;  
Psychiatric 'check-ins' for patients;  
Advertising your blog;  
Networking with friends;  
Finding like-minded people;  
Debating;  
Making 'To-do' lists;  
Tweet a poll or survey;  
Following or contributing to election campaigns;  
Conducting structured interviews;  
Showcasing your photographic/graphic skills via [tweetpic.com](http://tweetpic.com);

Showcasing useful product 'how-to' videos you have released on YouTube;  
Providing or requesting customer support;  
Searching for industry contacts, other industry members and industry news via <http://search.twitter.com>;  
Customer/supplier Q&A sessions;  
Brainstorming amongst your customers, clients, suppliers and evangelists;  
Providing weather forecasts for events you are running;  
Running promotions and contests;  
Alerting colleagues of changing flight times;  
Tracking your company's standing on the US Stock Exchange: [stocktwits.com](http://stocktwits.com);  
Offering BETAS of your company's software;  
Outsourcing tasks;  
Reading breaking news;  
Setting up meetings;  
Taking notes;  
Tracking disease-specific trends;  
Updates/changes at events (e.g., speakers, venues); and  
Watering your plants - you can buy a kit that hooks up to the soil of a plant and have it tweet when it needs watering or is overwatered!

## The 12-step path to Twitter mastery

There are twelve steps to Twitter greatness, and the following list outlines the steps:

1. Develop Strategy	•Without a clear strategy Twitter will be a productivity-reducing activity
2. Create Twitter account	•Go to Twitter.com and create a profile — be careful when picking your profile name
3. Configure Twitter account	•Spend a few minutes configuring and personalising your account
4. Brand Twitter page	•Change the colour scheme, change the theme to a custom-designed one
5. Set up follower incentive	•Offer an incentive to potential followers — add value, build credibility and trust
6. Promote profile	•Work to increase the awareness and exposure of your Twitter profile
7. Implement tweet strategy	•Tweeting is easy, but be careful to follow Twitiquette lest you annoy
8. Build follower list	•Interact, Engage, Follow-up, develop relationships
9. Manage followers and followings	•Do you unfollow those who unfollow you, or only follow those who follow you?
10. Set up auto follow/reply	•Implement an automatic follow tactic
11. Track effectiveness	•Set up tracking mechanisms for monitoring and decision-making
12. Implement stream advertising	•Will you advertise on the streams of others? Sell ad space on yours?

## The 12 steps in greater detail

Over the next 14 pages I will break down each step into greater detail and show you how to maximise your investment in each step.

### 1. Develop your Twitter marketing strategy

Consider why you are looking to set up a Twitter profile, as Twitter may not be the best use of available resources for you.

As a management team, think through the following questions:

- Which of our brands are we going to promote?
- Should we also consider promoting our key individuals/leaders?
- Should we secure the twitter profile names of every one of our brands and leaders/key individuals? (Yes, you should! Otherwise you risk them being hijacked by others)
- What are our key marketing objectives?
- Brand development
- Relationship development
- List building
- Traffic generation
- Product support
- Reputation management

- Network development
- How many Twitter accounts are we actually going to manage? Because your answer to the above question may require you to set up more than one profile to achieve those objectives (e.g. an account for your team leader, an account for green initiatives, an account for product support, *et alia*)
- Who will be responsible for managing each Twitter profile? (If you have more than one Twitter profile to manage you may want to invest in a Twitter Manager – either outsourced or delegated in-house; either way they will spend the majority of their time on Twitter. Ensure that whether in-house or outsourced, they have both the responsibility and the authority to rapidly get to Subject Matter Experts for answers to questions they cannot personally respond to)

**Congratulations, you have completed your Twitter marketing strategy!**

2. Create a new Twitter account if you don't already have one

Creating a new Twitter account is quite easy: just complete the following steps:

- Type [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com) into your browser
- Click 'Join the conversation'
- Enter the desired username (Consider this carefully as you cannot change this later – choose a name that is easy to remember, easy to type and ties in with your brand, products or individuals, depending on what purpose the Twitter account is to serve – see 1. *Develop your Twitter marketing strategy* on page 11)
- Is that name available? If yes, carry on to the next step; if not consider what other profile names you can use
- Enter a password (Please don't forget this; you'd be surprised how many businesses do. Whilst it is easy to reset the password, it is a time-consuming distraction)
- Enter your email address (If you are setting up multiple Twitter profiles, you may want to consider setting up a Gmail account, or different Gmail accounts for each twitter profile if more than one person will be managing the profiles)
- Enter the 'captcha' code
- Click on the 'Create my account' button
- Invite 'friends' (If you decide to skip this step at this time, you can always invite your friends later by logging into your Twitter account)
- When ready to invite 'friends', enter the email address of your main email account where your contacts are stored
- Enter that account's password (Don't worry, Twitter doesn't store it for their later use)
- Select and deselect contacts, depending on whether you wish to invite them to be 'friends' or not
- Send out the invite.

**Congratulations, your Twitter account setup process is complete.**

### 3. Configure your Twitter account

Creating an account on Twitter is easy, but configuring your account for maximising your productivity and return on investment is more complex.

Here are the steps you need to follow:

- Visit [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com) and enter your username and password
- Click on 'Settings'
- Customise your account settings, including adding in a link to your company blog, website home page, landing page for a specific product, service or key individual (Take your time to complete each item under your account settings; make sure that the 'Protect My Updates' checkbox is not selected)
- Click on the 'Save' button
- Click on the 'Picture' tab
- Upload a picture (I cannot stress how important it is to add a picture to your account! It is the picture—or 'avatar' as it is known in the Twittersphere—that distinguishes you from everyone else and helps promote your brand, product, service or key individual. You can upload a .jpg, a .gif, or a .png file that is less than 700k in file size)

- Click on the 'Save' button
- Decide whether you'd like to receive updates on your mobile/cellphone (Note: this service is only available in some countries)
- If 'Yes' select the 'Devices' tab and decide whether to turn on/off notifications or just receive Direct Messages (aka DMs). Click on the 'Save' button
- Select the 'Notices' tab
- Customise the 'Notices' settings
- Click the 'Save' button

**Congratulations, your configuration process is complete!**

#### 4. Brand your Twitter page

Having a Twitter.com page that is different from everyone else's is important – it helps you stand out from the crowd and also allows you additional promotion for your brand, product, service or key individual.

Here are the steps you need to follow:

- Visit [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com) and enter your username and password
- If you haven't already, please upload a picture!
- Click on the 'Design' tab near the top of the page
- Choose a theme (You can either select one of the several themes offered, or have your design team create a customised theme)
- If you chose a standard theme, click 'Save Changes'
- If you intend – **and you should!** – to use a purpose-designed theme, click 'Change Background Image'
- Assuming you are going to use a purpose-designed theme (**good!**), browse for the image on your computer or network, select it and click 'Save Changes'

- If you are comfortable changing colour schemes, and you have a good working knowledge of hex colour codes, or your design team have supplied you with the hex codes for the colours of the design, click 'Change Design Colors', enter the hex codes and click on 'Save Changes'.

**Congratulations, your Twitter page branding process is complete!**

## 5. Set up a follower incentive

If at the outset you offer the Twitter community something of value, you will probably begin to build a list of ‘followers’ quite quickly. As word spreads, and as the followers ‘retweet’ your tweets (publish *your* message to *their* followers), you begin to leverage the evangelism of others.

It’s now time to take it to the next level.

Do you have valuable information, such as an ebook or video or product, that you could give away as an incentive for people to follow you?

Creating such a free giveaway is easy; write a short ebook or record a video on your area of expertise. Make sure that you are genuinely giving away something that will be of value to the reader, not something that is only of value to the company!

Here are some examples of what you could give away for free:

- An ebook
- An informational video
- A CD or DVD
- Free access to your membership site
- Existing product

Here’s a **secret method** to increase the perceived value of your giveaway: customise the product, the packaging, the

offer and download pages to say something along the lines of ‘thank you for following me on Twitter!’

**Note:** A lot of people on Twitter (‘Twitterers’) don’t like having to opt-in to receive your free giveaway; some will even go so far as to opt-in then tweet the ‘download’ page to their followers, which allows them to bypass the sign-up process. There’s not much you can do to stop them, either, unless you start getting really technical with your sign-up process and sending each person to a one-time-only or time-limited URL. Talk to your IT folks or webmaster to see if such a configuration is possible.

Irrespective of whether people like to opt-in to receive information or not, your goal in your Twitter strategy should be to ‘build your list’; that is, build an ever-growing list of people who have put their hands up and requested information from you and at the same time give you permission to continue a dialog.

So the higher the perceived value of your giveaway (without offering something ridiculous) the better chance you have of maintaining a good sign-up conversion rate.

If you don’t feel it appropriate for your business to require an opt-in to receive the free giveaway, point your Twitter profile URL to the giveaway by logging into your Twitter account, clicking on ‘Settings’ and

modifying the field labelled 'More Info URL'.

If you don't already have an account at an auto-responder service, then scoot over immediately to the following providers and make a choice as to who you sign up with... but sign up with someone—once set up, a sequential auto-responder will be the biggest boon to your online marketing, offering you more productivity than you could imagine!

**Recommended providers:**

- [AWeber.com](http://AWeber.com)
- [GetResponse.com](http://GetResponse.com)
- [iContact.com](http://iContact.com)
- [Listping.com](http://Listping.com)

**Note:** Your webmaster may confuse the auto-responder that comes standard with some hosting packages with a sequential auto-responder. The former is for one-off responses when someone emails you, the other is a full email contact management system that takes the stress of keeping in contact with people away from you.

Your webmaster may also want to install sequential auto-responder software on the company's servers. If you are a large company with a 24/7 IT support team behind you, then this may be an option,

---

but for my own peace of mind I much prefer to leave such processes to the experts at this, rather than trying to do everything myself on my already busy server. It is usually better to outsource work to the professionals—and for the few \$ each month they charge it is money from your marketing budget exceptionally well invested.

Be sure to set up a Twitter auto-reply Direct Message that drives people to your free giveaway and opt-in sign-up page. Create your compelling offer message, then visit either

- [TweetLater.com](http://TweetLater.com), or
- [SocialToo.com](http://SocialToo.com)

and set up an account with them to organise your auto-replies to those who follow you.

**Congratulations, your Twitter follower incentive process is complete!**



## 6. Promote your profile

There's little use in having a Twitter profile if you are not actively marketing it via other channels. Add the link to your profile on your email signatures: your personal one, the personal email signatures of those in your team, and all auto-responder emails.

Do you have an email list of willing recipients of information from you already?

- **No?** Revisit 5. *Set up a follower incentive* on page 15 and get your act together!
- **Yes?** Then send an email to your list announcing your presence on Twitter, as well as encouraging them to create a Twitter profile themselves and follow you

Next comes the fun part: **integration!**

Did you know that you can integrate your tweets into your Facebook Pages or groups, your MySpace site, your blog site(s) and your existing websites? This way you can deliver one message across many platforms, saving you considerable time, as well as helping you to attract curiosity and additional visitors to your Twitter profile.

- Login to your Twitter account and click on 'Settings'
- On the 'Account' page (the first page you now see) look under the 'More Info URL' label for the URL link, "(You can also add Twitter to your site here)". That link offers you a range of widgets that can be imported into and used in your various other web properties to show your tweets.
- You can even integrate your tweets into the signature of your emails if you send html-formatted, rather than text-formatted emails. On the page of Twitter widgets, click on 'Other' and then 'Continue' (you'll find it at the bottom right of the page)
- Select either the Flash widget or the HTML widget (my own recommendation is for HTML, but it very much depends on how big a file you are happy to have your email become, remembering that the larger the email file size, the longer it will take to open up at the reader's end)
- Add the HTML code into the coding of your signature (see your software provider or friendly IT guru for help with this)
- Integrate your Twitter profile onto all of your 'thank you' pages on your web properties, as well, directing them to your Twitter profile page.

And don't forget to add it to any 'contact' pages and 'about us' pages as appropriate

- Record a short video that introduces yourself, your brand, product, service or key individual and that encourages viewers to find out more about you on Twitter
- Distribute your video on the major video sites ([YouTube.com](https://www.youtube.com), [DailyMotion.com](https://www.dailymotion.com), [Vimeo.com](https://www.vimeo.com), *et al.*) all at once by tapping into the power of the superb free site [TubeMogul.com](https://www.tubemogul.com) or paid services such as at [TrafficGeyser.com](https://www.trafficgeyser.com)

one of their point of views, or offering information in answer to their question, is a great way of encouraging them to follow you before you offer to cross-promote each other's profile

- Offer to cross-promote their profile if they do the same—the more this is done with more partners, the quicker each partner's list of followers will grow
- Continue to search out suitable reciprocal tweet partners and offer them the same cross-promotional opportunity

Now we get to yet another exciting component of promotion: **finding like-minded souls!**

- Go to [search.twitter.com](https://search.twitter.com) and search for profiles of people with similar objectives as you, or who are interested in the same sort of industry as yours, and keep a note of their profile names. Make sure they have roughly the same amount of current followers as you do
- Follow them and make contact by either a reply ([@JohnSmith](https://twitter.com/JohnSmith)) or a DM ([D JohnSmith](https://twitter.com/JohnSmith)) — note: you cannot DM them if they aren't already following you, which is why a reply to one of their tweets agreeing with

**Congratulations, the promotion of your Twitter profile is complete!**

## 7. Implement tweet strategy

Conversations move thick and fast in the Twittersphere; take even one single day off, or nip out for a meeting, and you could miss something BIG.

However, if you monitor the Twittersphere you can stay abreast of what your market is saying and what your industry's thought leaders are thinking, allowing you to plan and write your tweets so that you establish you or your company as the expert within your niche.

You could, for example, comment about a current popular or controversial topic; or you could offer helpful advice.

Ensure that you are also tracking what time of the day is the best for your tweets. For example, many Twitterers find that early-mid morning and evening are the best times for generating responses, but if the people that you want to reach are in a different time zone you will need to take that into account.

For example, I quite often have to get up at all sorts of hours of the day and night to take part in Skype conferences with friends, colleagues and business partners around the world. Because I am based in Australia, I find the best time to connect with my North American and European peers is well after midnight in Adelaide.

But irrespective of what time of the day or night you are tweeting, your tweets should be focused around either or both of these two key objectives:

- Building a network, or
- Building awareness of your personal profile or that of the company, brand, service or key individual in a way that results in more followers

### **Building a network**

Let's assume that you want to build your network of key individuals who will interact with you via Twitter. You will want to:

- Conduct some research (via Google, industry magazines, and so on) and make a list of suitable key people that you'd like to connect with. Naturally, they are going to be 'warmer' to you if you have something to offer them of value, something that will assist them in their work
- Determine whether these key people have a Twitter account by searching for their name and 'Twitter' in Google (for example, type [Lee Hopkins Twitter](#) into the Google search box)
- Once you have found the people that *do* have a Twitter profile, search for posts that they have made by typing

the keyword *@theirusername* into the search box at [search.twitter.com](https://search.twitter.com)

- Determine to either engage in direct contact (by a reply to one of their tweets) or tweet something that is of interest to them with the aim of getting their attention

### **Building awareness**

- Search for tweets that contain appropriate keywords or keyphrases at [search.twitter.com](https://search.twitter.com)
- Tweet a reply that provides value to the conversation, in order to attract new followers.

Whether tweeting to build awareness or build a network, this evergreen instruction applies:

- Rinse, repeat

**Congratulations, the implementation of your tweet strategy is complete!**

## 8. Build your follower list

As discussed in 6. *Promote your profile* on page 17, you want to cross-promote your Twitter profile on as many other web properties as possible; this includes any blogs you have, any Facebook Pages or groups, Flickr profiles, other traditional websites, and so on.

You will also want to identify other influential **and relevant** Twitterers that are engaging in conversation in your marketplace.

You can tell how influential they are by the number of followers they have—the higher the number of followers, the more ‘weight’ they carry in their conversational niche or ‘sphere’.

Once you have identified them, ensure that you ‘follow’ them by firstly logging into your Twitter profile, then visiting their profile and clicking on the ‘Follow’ button. Engage in conversation with them *only* when you have something of value to add to the conversations they are taking part in.

Yet you don’t need to stick relentlessly to following only those who are obviously a part of your industry or marketplace. By following Twitterers who ‘auto-follow’ those who follow them, you can rapidly increase your own number of followers, thereby increasing the ‘weight’ of your own profile.

However, be careful in implementing this tactic; Twitter doesn’t take kindly to people who too rapidly explode in follower numbers—it smells ‘fishy’ to them and they are likely to take your profile ‘off air’ while they investigate further.

What’s a good rule of thumb for the number of ‘auto-followers’ to follow each day? I’d stop at ten to twelve per day, with one day spending time following people, one day not. In this way you are less likely to wake the Twitter hounds.

You will find that if you submit tweets at the appropriate times in conversations, making sure that you always add value rather than just shouting, “Hey! We are here! We are wonderful! Our Widgy-Thingy is ace!” you will gain the exposure necessary to gain additional followers.

Remember, tweet to others as you would be tweeted to yourself.

**Congratulations, the most effective way to build your follower list is complete!**

## 9. Manage followers and followings

Twitter will watch over your followers and those you are following; if it feels that you are being too aggressive in your following activities it will put a 24 hour 'hold' on your account—people will still be able to follow you, but you won't be able to follow anyone else for another 24 hours.

Here's what Twitter itself says<sup>7</sup>:

We do not limit the number of people who can follow you, but we have put limits in place to stop people from aggressively following others. Everyone is allowed to follow 2000 people. After that, follow limits are based on the number of people who are following you.

If you've reached a follow limit, you can help yourself by reducing your following number until it resembles your followers number. Since the follow limit is based on followers/following ratio rather than time, you'll have to un-follow people before you're able to follow again.

However, lest you are concerned that you don't have the time to manage all of this 'following and unfollowing' activity, be calmed by the knowledge that Twitter-friendly geeks have already solved the problem for you.

There are many websites that are able to help auto-follow and auto-unfollow. I personally use [SocialToo.com](http://SocialToo.com) to keep a tab on how many new followers I have each day on Twitter, and they offer several

\$5 services to auto-follow and auto-unfollow.

[TweetLater.com](http://TweetLater.com), in addition to allowing you to pre-write your tweets and send them out at a future time of your choosing, also allows you to automatically send a new message to new followers (read 5. Set up a follower incentive on page 15 to see why this is important).

In addition, TweetLater lets you rotate your welcome messages (a good idea, as it allows you to A/B test your messages for opt-in conversion rates).

It also offers the opportunity to unfollow.

Another site that offers similar options is [www.dossy.org/twitter/karma](http://www.dossy.org/twitter/karma), a Flash-driven interface that allows you to quickly unfollow those who aren't following you.

Here's how:

- Visit Twitter Karma  
[www.dossy.org/twitter/karma](http://www.dossy.org/twitter/karma)
- Enter your Twitter username and password, then click on the big 'Whack' button
- At the top of the page, in the 'Sort by:' drop-down box select 'Last Updated'; select 'Only Following' in the drop-down 'Show:' box
- This allows you to see who has recently tweeted and who has left the Twittersphere, perhaps never to

<sup>7</sup> <http://twitter.zendesk.com/forums/10713/entries/14959>

return. You definitely don't want to be wasting valuable 'follows' on these folk!

- Scroll down to the bottom of the page and click on 'Check All'
- Un-check any people you still want to follow (perhaps they are thought leaders) despite the fact that they don't (yet) follow you (Be aware that news services are 'robots' and therefore don't auto-follow people back)
- Click on 'Bulk Unfollow'

**Congratulations! You are now successfully managing your followings and followers!**

## 10. Set up auto follow/reply

TweetLater and SocialToo are the kings of auto following and auto replying, but if I were to place my hand on my heart, TweetLater would just sneak into the lead.

But SocialToo's daily email of new followers/ un-followers is invaluable to me and I strongly suggest you set up a profile at both sites!

Here's how to set up an auto-follow/auto-reply system at [TweetLater.com](https://tweetlater.com):

- Assuming that you have set up your account at TweetLater, add your Twitter account by clicking on the 'Add Twitter Account' button and entering your username and password
- In the 'Optional Twitter Account Automation' box, ensure you tick the 'Automatically send a welcome message to new followers' and 'Automatically follow people (new followers) who follow me from this point forward' boxes
- Create several welcome messages and enter one of them in the message text box.

On the point of messages, it is worth taking note of what TweetLater themselves say:

**Best Practise: The message should not be about you, it should be about your follower and your future interaction with your follower.**

Write a very simple welcome message. If you really want folks to unfollow you, then try and sell them something with this first welcome message. Very few people like that.

Be careful even if you're giving away something for free. The purpose of this message is to say hello and welcome. Most people take a dim view of you when you do any kind of self-promotion with this message.

If your message smells remotely like, "Hi, thanks for the follow, now buy my stuff or do something that will benefit me or check out how cool I am," then you really are misusing this welcome message. Don't send what you wouldn't like to receive from others.

So, whilst your message needs to get across a warm welcome and a value-add in the form of a giveaway you have on your site somewhere, you still need to craft your message so that it doesn't come across as 'sales-y' in tone.

No, it's not easy, but that's why good business communicators like you and I get paid so much, isn't it? {smile}.

**Congratulations, you have successfully completed setting up your auto-follow/auto-reply process!**



## 11. Track effectiveness

Of course, all of the activity you have just completed is great, but of little interest to senior management if you cannot show what ROI you are generating.

One effective ROI measurement is counting how many clicks a particular message delivered. This can be achieved in two ways: the 'Basic' way or the 'Advanced' way.

### Basic Twitter Tracking

- Go to [snipurl.com](http://snipurl.com) and register for a free account (the 'Register' link is situated top right of the home page)
- Click on the 'Create Snips' tab
- Paste in the URL of the landing page for this particular URL (for example, a specific page for your opt-in request)
- Add a 'title' to the snip in the 'Optional' box to the right of the page—this will allow you to quickly recognise which URL and page the link refers to when you are viewing tracking statistics a little later
- Log in to your [snipurl.com](http://snipurl.com) account when you are ready to review the specific tracking information for each of your tracking urls

### Advanced Twitter Tracking

- Google Analytics is the recommended tool for advanced tracking. It allows you to not only track basic URL information but also set up sales funnels with goal tracking. *Huh?* Keep reading...
- Go to [www.google.com/analytics](http://www.google.com/analytics) and sign up for a free account
- Create trackable URL links that you can place wherever needed, including in your Twitter replies
- Enter the full-length URL that you want to track
- Enter any campaign information, such as where the link is going to be placed (i.e. the 'Source'; e.g. Twitter profile URL, or your personal email signature, or email message number three going out to your audience in your auto-responder seven-email sequence)
- Enter any details that will remind you later of where the visitors will access that link (e.g. a banner, an email message, a pay-per-click advert)
- Enter a name for the campaign that will enable easy identification later, differentiating it from other campaigns you will run

- Click the 'Generate URL' button
- Place the links in the places you have said you would (e.g. on your Twitter profile, in your email signature, a pay-per-click advert, and so on)
- Regularly review the statistics to track each campaign's success against its goals

**Congratulations, you have successfully set up your Twitter Effectiveness tracking process!**

## 12. Implement stream advertising

**BEWARE:** This last step is not for the faint-hearted and should only be used if you are prepared to either sell ad space to another advertiser in your Twitter stream, or else purchase ad space on other Twitter user's stream.

- Go to [adcause.com](https://adcause.com) and create an account

Done? Good – now you have to decide whether you are going to be an advertiser or a publisher of other people's ads.

### Advertiser

- Click on 'Buy Ads'
- Search open ad spots. This allows you to search for Twitterers who are selling ad space. You can search by name, tag, their follower/following numbers and their location
- If the price, frequency and duration of their space is agreeable to you, click 'Purchase', otherwise make an offer to them by clicking on the 'Make Offer' link
- Select an existing advert you've already written or create a new one
- Make your payment to the publisher via PayPal.

### Publisher

- Click on 'Publisher View'
- Create an ad spot, which requires you to describe the duration you are offering, the frequency and the price point
- Monitor/accept ads. You can monitor and accept, reject and remove ads in order to control what ads your twitter audience sees (remember, they are going to believe they are coming from you, even if the advert clearly says it's not)
- Monitor your own un-follower numbers and the Twittersphere to see what, if any, damage the ads are doing to your profile and reputation. If no apparent damage is being done, try increasing the frequency of the adverts until you start noticing a negative impact.

**Congratulations, you have successfully set up your Twitter advertising process!**

## Final thoughts

**T**he Internet has proven one adage time and time again: “Content is King.”

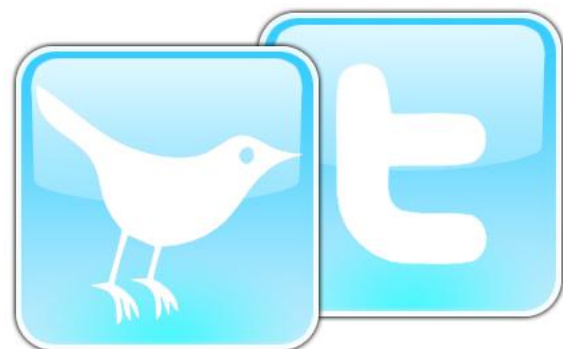
It matters not whether you are writing articles for other websites, for your own website, for your blog; it doesn't make a difference whether your content is text, video, pictorial, audio, Facebook status update, Twitter tweet or any combination thereof—the same rule applies:

**Produce content that is interesting, fun and valuable to the reader!**

Ben Hamilton offers sage advice on Twitter etiquette and your private life: "if you don't want it public, don't tweet it!"

The only other piece of advice I could give you is a rule that works well in any sphere of life:

**Give back more than you take.**



### About the author

Lee Hopkins is a management psychologist with nearly 30 years experience of helping businesses and individuals communicate better for better business results.

An internationally sought-after speaker, Lee combines his passion for employee and online business communication with his dynamic presentation skills to create 'once seen, never forgotten' live experiences.

His clients range from medium-sized enterprises to major corporations, and include the following:

ANZ, Ark Group Publishing, Melcrum Publishing, BT Financial Services, Powerlink Queensland, Supreme Education Council–Dohar Qatar, SageCo, UniSA, Walkleys, Public Relations Institute of Australia, Dymocks, Clements HR and Management, Addeco, the RSPCA of SA, Effective Consulting and Rehabilitation, Whittle & Skok Financial Services, Fusion Design Consultants, myebusiness.com.au, moneybags.com.au, yourwealthinc.com, Invisage, Michael Lenthall & Associates, Clusters Asia Pacific, River Strategy & Design, AdviserWorks.com.au, ANETS NEIS Eastside SA Inc., Stirling Family Church; and The Source Church, Stirling.

### Contact Lee

Lee is available for speaking engagements, keynote addresses and private consultations, and can be approached through several channels:

Via Twitter: LeeHopkins  
[twitter.com/leehopkins](https://twitter.com/leehopkins)

Via his blog at [LeeHopkins.net](http://LeeHopkins.net)

Via his article website (with over 200 articles on business communication) at [LeeHopkins.com](http://LeeHopkins.com)

Via email: [Lee@LeeHopkins.com](mailto:Lee@LeeHopkins.com)

Via his mobile/cell phone:  
+61 (0)410 642 052

Via his office phone:  
+61 8 8121 4444

Via Facebook: LeeHopkins  
<http://profile.to/leehopkins>

Via LinkedIn: LeeHopkins  
[linkedin.com/in/leehopkins](https://linkedin.com/in/leehopkins)

Via Skype: leehopkins-adelaide

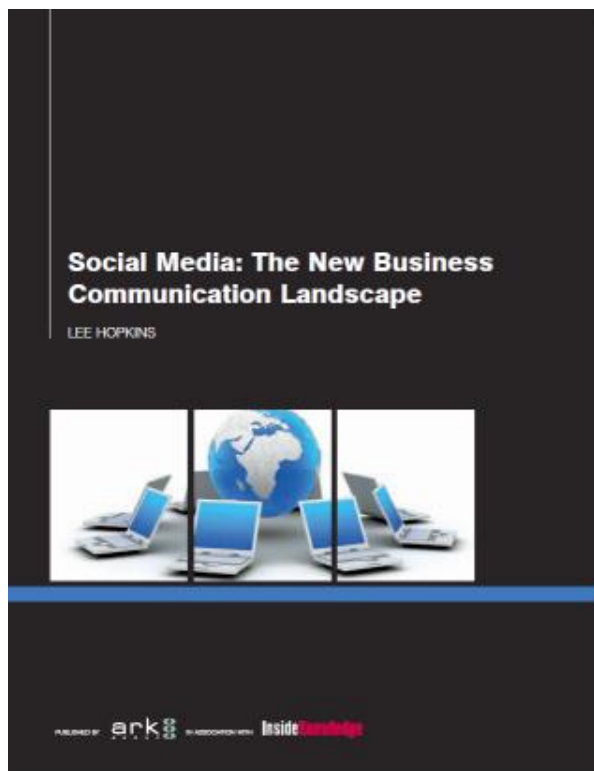
View his presentations at Slideshare:  
[slideshare.net/leehopkins](https://slideshare.net/leehopkins)

Sign up for his free email newsletter, full of ideas to help your business communicate more effectively, at [LeeHopkins.com](http://LeeHopkins.com) or [LeeHopkins.net](http://LeeHopkins.net).

Published works

He has published in many industry and academic journals, and spoken at many prestigious conferences, including the following:

Hopkins, L. (2009). *Social Media: The new business communication landscape*. Ark Group Publishing, London.



The report can be ordered direct from Ark Group Publishing at:  
[arkgroupaustralia.com.au/  
report-socialmedia.htm](http://arkgroupaustralia.com.au/report-socialmedia.htm)

Hopkins, L. (2009). Using social media to communicate with hard-to-reach groups. In Melcrum, *Transforming your intranet*. Melcrum, London, pp. 114-116.

Hopkins, L. (2009). 3 D virtual worlds: A waste of time or a wasted opportunity? *International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) World Conference*, San Francisco, 7 June.

Hopkins, L. (2009). Social Media and Affiliate Marketing. *Affiliate Marketing Conference*, Sydney, 13 May.

Wood, D. & Hopkins, L. (2008). 3D virtual environments: Businesses are ready but are our 'digital natives' prepared for changing landscapes? *25<sup>th</sup> Annual Ascilite Conference*, Melbourne, Nov 30 – Dec 3.

Hopkins, L. (2008). Social Media for the Events Industry. Presentation at Exhibition & Event Association of Australasia Conference; Melbourne , 2 Dec.

Hopkins, L. (2008). The virtual society: collaborative, 3-dimensional and full of furry foxes. Invited presentation and paper, *History and Future of Social Innovation Conference*, Adelaide, 19-21 June.

Hopkins, L. (2008). Using social media to communicate with hard-to-reach groups. In Melcrum, *Melcrum's top 50 internal communication case studies*. Melcrum, London, pp. 151-153.

Hopkins, L. (2008). Using social media to communicate with hard-to-reach groups. In Melcrum, *How to communicate with hard-to-reach employees: How the world's leading organizations*

engage their virtual and non-wired teams.

Melcrum, London, pp. 26-28, 119-120.

Hopkins, L. (2008). Building relationships using the 3D web. In Melcrum, *How to use social media to engage employees*. Melcrum, London, p. 119.

Cook, T. and Hopkins, L. (2008). *Social Media Report (3rd Ed.): How we stopped worrying and learned to love communication*. Self-published pdf report - available at [LeeHopkins.net/downloads/cook-hopkins-social-media-white-paper.pdf](http://LeeHopkins.net/downloads/cook-hopkins-social-media-white-paper.pdf)

Hopkins, L. (2007). *How to get started with podcasting in your organization*. Melcrum, London.

Hopkins, L. (2007). Enhancing Communication with Social Media. Presentation at *PRIA WA State Conference*, Perth, August 4.

Hopkins, L. (2007). What makes Australians click? Presentation at *8th Annual Public Affairs Convention*, Sydney, May 10-11.

Cook, T. and Hopkins, L. (2007). *Social Media Report/White Paper (2nd Ed.): How I stopped worrying and learned to love communication*. Self-published pdf report.

Hopkins, L. (2007). Social Media and the evolution of communication. *Journal of Employee Communication Management*. Jan/Feb, 23-25

Hopkins, L. (2006). Communication that can lead to conflict. In Wood, Zeffane, Fromholtz & Fitzgerald, *Organisational Behaviour: core concepts and applications*, Wiley, Sydney, pp.462-463

Hopkins, L. (2006). Oral Vs Written Communication. Audio presentation in Buch, Elsing & Steveling, *Focussing on Real Estate*, Hammonia, Hamburg

Cook, T. and Hopkins, L. (2006). *Social Media Report/White Paper(1st Ed.): How I stopped worrying and learned to love communication*. Self-published pdf report.

Millward, L.J., & Hopkins, L.J. (1998). Organizational Commitment and the Psychological Contract. *Journal of Social and Applied Psychology*. 28(16) 16-31

Millward, L.J. & Hopkins, L.J. (1997). A psychological contract and identification model of risk ownership. *International Journal of Project and Business Risk Management*. July, 111-120.

A full list of his publications can be found at [LeeHopkins.net/doctoral-research-2/](http://LeeHopkins.net/doctoral-research-2/) where you can find out more about his doctoral research into 3D virtual worlds.