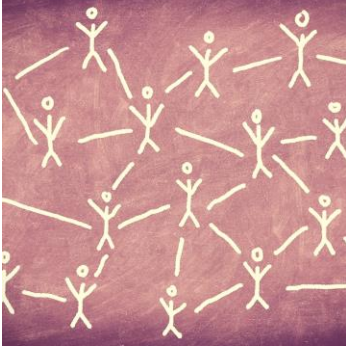


Twitter for Business!

By Nancy Alexander - Ladybug Wreaths



10 Things to Do When Getting Started on Twitter

Whether it's the anxiety of not knowing what to do, or the fear of possibly looking dumb—it's easy to put off signing up for Facebook, Twitter, or Pinterest until tomorrow ... or next week ... or next month...

Getting started on Twitter doesn't need to be scary.

Follow this step-by-step guide to get started. Here's a list of the first 10 things you should do to get started on Twitter.

1. Choose the right username

The first step in getting started on Twitter is creating your account. When creating your account, it's important to remember that your username—or as it's called on Twitter: your “handle,” is outward facing and will be what the public uses to identify your business.

Hopefully, your business name will be available like LadybugWreaths.com was for me, but if not; you'll want to come up with something that will still make sense to your followers

2. Create a bio that captures your business

Twitter is widely recognized as one of the most open social networks, in that, most of the communication on the site takes place in front of people in the news stream (rather than on individual pages or groups). Keep in mind when creating your bio, more people will find you on Twitter that have no previous knowledge of who you are or what you do than on any other network.

If you had just a few seconds (or in this case 160 characters) to explain your business to a complete stranger, what would you say? That will be your bio.

3. Upload a photo or image that makes you stand out

Don't underestimate the importance of picking the right picture or image for your profile (and please, please, please don't send a tweet until you have uploaded one). For businesses, the perfect profile image will be one that your customers already know and associate with your business—like your company logo.

For individuals, you'll want to use a close-up head shot and make sure you are the only person in the photo. (You do have the option to change your profile picture in the future, but I don't recommend it, at least until you've established yourself.)

4. Introduce yourself by sending your first tweet

Some people may disagree with me here, but I think now is the perfect time to send your first tweet. It's not going to be anything earth shattering, and you won't have any followers (yet) to see it, but it will let people know you are a real person or business and not a robot or spammer. Make the tweet something simple; your introduction to the Twitter world.

I recommend something like this:

"Hey! I'm Nancy Alexander of Ladybug Wreaths... I'm on Twitter! I'm setting up my profile and am looking forward to engaging with all my new followers!" Nancy A.

5. Find the right people to follow

Who you follow on Twitter will dictate the type of content you have access to and the quality of the relationships you're able to establish. For this reason, you'll want to set up some criteria, based on your experience, what you create and sell, and what goals you have for yourself and your business. People you want to follow could include: friends, other wreath-makers like you, other businesses, colleagues, and even current or potential customers.

When you're starting out, the key is to follow businesses, similar to yours that are doing it well—don't mimic everything they tweet, but pay attention to how they are engaging and the type of content they share.

6. Tell your network you're on Twitter

Before we go any further, I need to tell you something you need to know: growing your following on Twitter is not easy—especially if you're starting from scratch. You are lucky if your business already has a following of people who already know you and shop with you.

7. Get the tools you need

Like anything else, if you want to be successful on Twitter you want to make sure you have the right tools. There are a number of tools out there including three you'll want to have access to from day one.

- Monitor your profile on the go with the Twitter mobile app
- For ease of use, you can schedule tweets and track your reach with HootSuite

8. Create your first Twitter List

Twitter lists are a cool feature provided by Twitter to let users organize the people they follow into specific groups based on industry, relationship, expertise, etc. When you're first starting out, Lists won't need to be a top priority because you'll still be growing your community, but I do recommend creating at least one List to let yourself get accustomed to using them. It's much easier to keep your contacts organized from the beginning than to try to organize them when you really need them.

9. Save some searches

Similar to Lists, saved searches help users organize their content, but do it based on a specific topic rather than on specific users. Saved searches work exactly like they sound. You find a topic of interest or relevance to your business, search for it in Twitter's "Discover" tab, and then save it for future reference. After saving it, you can easily go back and see results as they appear in real-time.

10. Connect your touch points

A recent study found that 80% of small business websites do not link to social media! Can you believe that? I'd like to think if there is one thing I've taught you is how necessary social media is for you to grow your business!

If you have a website, connecting your website to your Twitter profile will help drive traffic and organically build your social following. You'll also want to make sure you're inserting a link into your email newsletter with a strong call-to-action.

Don't forget to have a plan!

Think about when you first decided to sign up and log on to Twitter.

What were you trying to accomplish? Were you looking to drive more business? Increase brand awareness? Establish yourself as an expert in your industry?

Just being on Twitter won't be enough to accomplish those goals—even if you follow these 10 steps to getting started. What will allow you to achieve those goals is having a social strategy about the way you plan to engage on Twitter, the type of content you want to share, and the milestones you hope to achieve.

Your strategy probably *will* change once you get started, but without having one before you launch your first tweet, you won't make it much further than these first 10 steps.