Twitter for Non-Profits: a guide to #doingitright

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MediaCause

INTRODUCTION

"Twitter is not a technology. It's a conversation. And it's happening with or without you." -@charleneli

Are you ready to join the conversation? The following pages will prepare you with the basics to be successful in the fast-paced, hyper-engaged world of Twitter. Beyond the basics of Twitter language and convention, you will learn how to effectively grow and manage your audience. This guide is by no means an exhaustive handbook of everything you need to know. As you will quickly learn, Twitter as a technology, and as a social platform, morphs and changes without regard for the learning curve. It is important to ground yourself in the basics of this guide and then continue your learning as an active member of the Twitter community. Now…deep breath and welcome to Twitter.

In addition to definitions, step-by-step instructions, and answers to frequently-asked-questions, you'll find the following resources to help make Twitter most effective for your organization:

Key Points & Things To Note

Facts and Stats

Best Practices

Additional Tools & Resources

Twitiquette Rules

Trouble Shooting

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PART 1

TWITTER 101: THE BASICS

Start at the beginning - Learn what Twitter is all about and how non-profits are using this platform to benefit their organization.

Welcome to the Twitterverse.

What is Twitter?

Twitter describes itself as **"a real-time information network that connects you to the latest stories, ideas, opinions and news about what you find interesting."**

Users share this information through posting "tweets" of **140 characters or less** - this rapid fire, short-form messaging is what distinguishes Twitter most from other social media platforms, and should be an important factor you consider when developing your communication strategy.

Twitter is a public medium...

Anyone can see any tweet, but only followers will see them directly in their news feed.

what Twitter is <u>not</u>...

...is just another place to solely promote your own content.

In order to get value out of Twitter, you need to create a two-way conversation. This means building a community by connecting, sharing and engaging with Twitter users.

Non-profits on Twitter

Many non-profits are effectively leveraging Twitter to raise awareness, increase donations, gain new volunteers, encourage action, and boost support for their cause.

By tweeting blog posts, photos, stories from volunteers and the people they've served, Twitter has become an ideal social platform for non-profits to build a personal identity with its followers - and when people can personally identify with you, they are more likely to participate in your cause.

HOW TO: Use Twitter To Your Advantage

- **Call to Actions.** Consider tweeting for legislative Action Alerts, fundraising calls, petitions, etc...
- **Promote your recent content.** Keep people up-to-date on your campaigns, events, and work by using Twitter to post links to blog posts, news articles, photos, and reports.
- **Create a buzz.** Build awareness and get people excited about upcoming events and campaigns.
- **Remote participation.** Use hashtags to give real-time updates at conferences and events.
- **Gain Insight.** Track what people are saying about your organization and causes.
- **Become part of a larger conversation.** Interact with volunteers, donors, advocates, and potential supporters.

REMEMBER: Twitter is not a "one size fits all" kind of medium...

The way one organization uses Twitter can be completely different than the way another organization uses the platform. Goals, content resources, and capacity will impact the strategy that is best for your @handle.

Learning the language.

In order to effectively reach and engage with your tweeps, you gotta learn to speak their lingo.

The Essentials.

Twitter Handle: Also referred to as a username, this is the name you select to represent yourself on Twitter.

To Follow: To subscribe to someone's updates on Twitter. When you follow someone, their updates will be displayed on your Twitter homepage so you know what they are doing.

To Follow Back: To subscribe to the updates of someone who has recently started following you.

Follower: A person who has subscribed to receive your updates. You can view your total number of followers on your Twitter profile page.

Update: Also known as a tweet. Each update can be no longer than 140 characters.

@Reply: A public message sent from one Twitter user to another by putting @USERNAME anywhere within the body of the tweet.

Direct Message (or DM): A private message sent from one Twitter user to another by either clicking the "message" link on their profile or typing D USERNAME.

Twitter Stream: A list of a person's real-time updates. Every time you post an update, it goes into your Twitter stream, which is found on your account page and at http://twitter.com/USERNAME.

Twitter Timeline: A timeline is a Twitter term used to describe a collected stream of Tweets listed in real-time order.

Tweet-Up: An event specifically organized for Twitter users to meet up and network, usually informally.

Hashtag (#): A Twitter tagging system used to aggregate the conversation surrounding an event, topic, or theme. Hashtags can easily be created by combining a # with a word, acronym, or phrase and used as a tag within tweets.

Retweet (or RT): To repeat what someone else has already tweeted. People do this if someone has said something especially valuable and they want their own network to see the information too.

Twitter Lists: Public lists that any Twitter user can create. Twitter Lists generate Twitter streams that include specific Twitter users.

Trending Topics: Displayed on the left-hand side of your Twitter homepage, trending topics are words, phrases, or hashtags that are popular on Twitter at a given time. These can be organized by location and are updated in real time.

Promoted Tweets: Tweets that have been supported and promoted by paid marketing efforts.

PART 2

GETTING STARTED:
Setting Up & Optimizing Your Account

Learn how to create a customized profile that effectively attracts followers and further promotes your branding.

Step 1: Signing Up For Twitter

When creating your new Twitter account, the first thing you will need to do is decide on your username. Your username is very important to branding and building your online presence - this is how people will refer to your organization when mentioning or retweeting you on Twitter.

HOW TO: CHOOSE AN EFFECTIVE USERNAME

DO keep it as close to your organization's name as possible. This is most effective for building your online brand - It makes it easier for people to find you on Twitter and lends authenticity and credibility to your account. Ex: @MediaCause

DO keep it short and sweet. With only 140 characters, space is a precious commodity and each character counts. The longer your Twitter ID, the more space it takes up, thus limiting your interactions - Twitter users won't mention you as much because it takes up too much space.

DO make it usable year round. You want something that represents your organization, not a single event or campaign. It's not effective to have multiple Twitter account for the same organization - Instead, use hashtags to increase buzz around topical events and issues.

DO NOT use underscores or numbers. Adding numbers makes your account look juvenile and unprofessional (think back to AOL chat room days) and including an underscore is not normally done, which could make you look unaware of the Twitter "social norms."

Step 2: Personalize Your Profile

Your profile will play an important role in helping grow your community on Twitter - It is an essential piece to gaining followers, encouraging interactions, and branding your online presence.

Make sure you complete each of the sections listed below before you begin using Twitter:

- Profile Basics - Profile & Header Photo, Name, Location, and Website
- Bio
- Background

Profile Basics

PHOTO - DO use your logo. You want something with the most brand recognition, so that users immediately connect your Twitter account to your organization.

NAME - DO use your organization's official name when possible. This will help people find and identify you in search. Keep in mind the max. character limit is 20. And remember, this is different from your username, which is how people will refer to you in Tweets.

LOCATION - DO add your organization's location if relevant.

WEBSITE - DO include a link to your organization's website. This gives your account credibility and allows your supporters to learn more about your mission.

FACT: Users with a link have over 7.5 times as many followers as users without.

Bio - Your 160 characters or less "elevator pitch"

FACT: Your bio is just as important as the visual elements - Users with a bio have over 8 times more followers on average than users without a bio

This is your opportunity to convince Twitter users to follow you.

Your bio should accomplish 3 things:

- Tell users what they can expect to hear from you on Twitter
- Set you apart from others
- Make it easier for people to find you on search and add you to Twitter lists

So, how do you do this all in 160 characters or less?

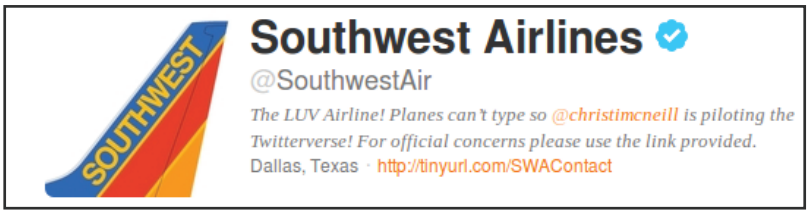
HOW TO: WRITE A GOOD BIO

DO make your bio consistent with your branding. Look at your website and any other social media profiles before hand to get an idea of what to write. Your bio should reflect your organization's mission, passion, and goals.

DO keep it simple and easy for anyone to understand. Don't include any technical jargon or other language that might alienate potential followers.

DO make it searchable. Use relevant keywords related to your cause.

DO tell them your names. People want to be able to talk to "real" people, not just the organization - Think about including the names of the people who will be tweeting from the account.



DO NOT just use your slogan. Be creative - Write a bio that is creative and stands apart from other similar non-profits on Twitter.

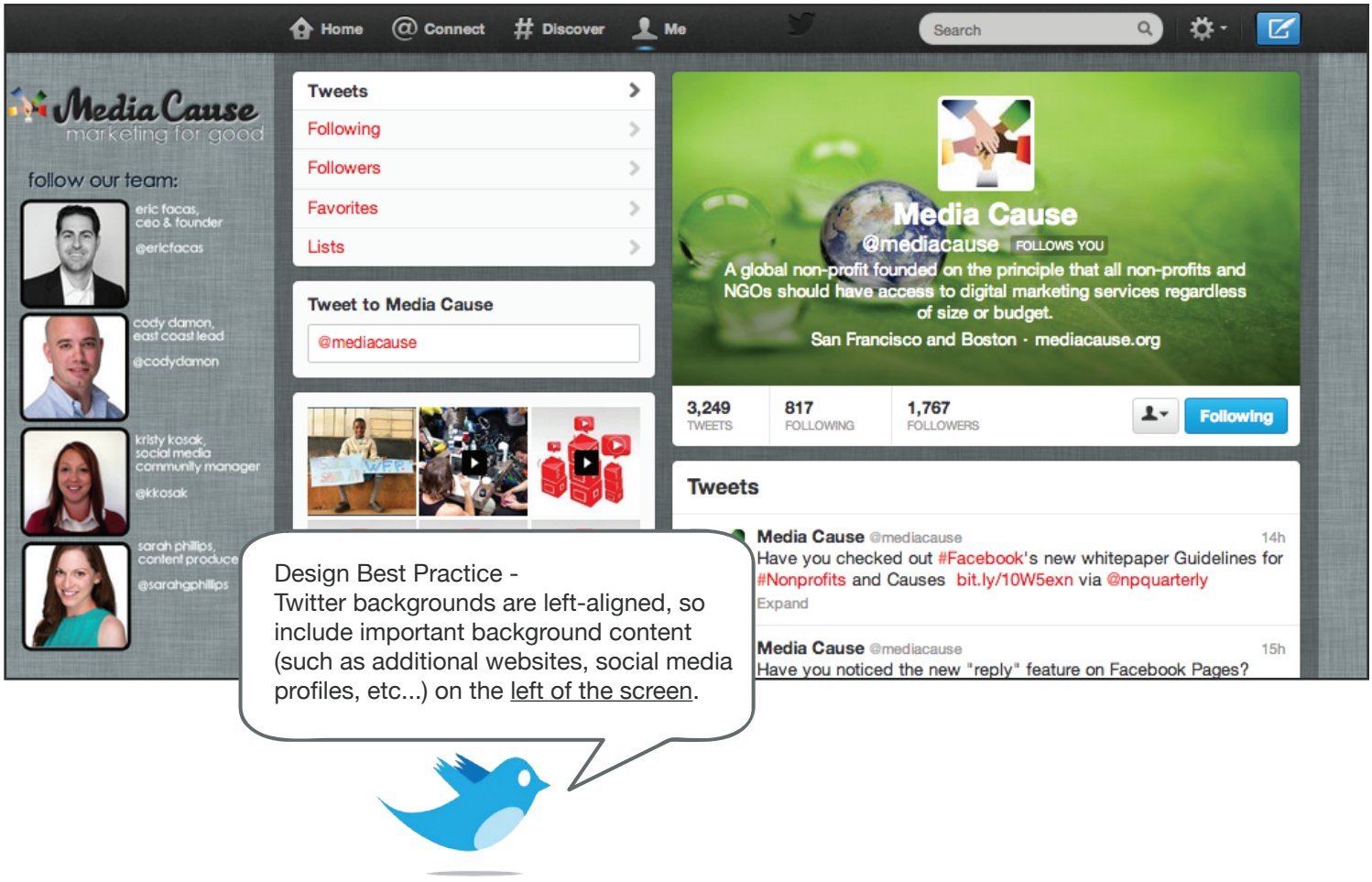
Background

Customizing your background presents a great branding opportunity by letting you communicate your organization's image, as well as provide additional information about your organization and causes.

HOW TO: Design an Effective Twitter Background

DO make your background consistent with your branding. The goal is to create a cohesive brand presence both on and offline - Create a background that resembles any colors, format, and logos already in place on your website and social profiles.

DO include additional information that isn't already on your profile. Add details, such as more websites, contact information, or important information about your organization's work.



DO keep in mind your space limitations. How your background appears to a user is dependent on how large of a screen they are viewing your profile on. To reach most users, use between 66px-194px wide for the left side of your Twitter Profile background.

FACT: How many people will see your background?
99% of visitors see 66px
82% of visitors see 194px
56% of visitors see 238px
42% of visitors see between 238-520px

DO save your background image as a .PNG. The JPG image format sacrifices picture quality to save file size. PNG files will help keep your details in-tact, which will be especially important if you are using small text in your background.

DO NOT tile backgrounds. Due to the columns layout, background images should be one image instead of tiled. One core image is better at handling the transitions from the columns on the page.

Congrats, now that your profile is 100% completed, you're ready to start tweeting!

Continue reading to get the details on using Twitter.

PART 3

USING TWITTER:
Types of Tweets

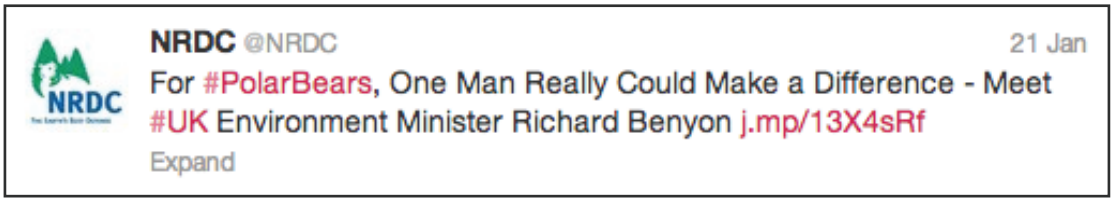
Examples, definitions, & step-by-step instructions for posting all types of tweets.

Normal Tweet

Any message with fewer than 140 characters posted to Twitter.

Where it appears for the sender: On the sender's profile page and Home timeline.
Where it appears for the recipient: In the Home timeline of anyone who is following the sender.
Places it will never appear: On anyone else's profile page, unless they retweeted the message.

Example:



HOW TO: Post a tweet

• Log in to your Twitter account.
• Type your Tweet into the box at the top of your screen, or click the blue compose new Tweet button at the top of your screen - it looks like this:
• Make sure your update is fewer than 140 characters. Twitter will count the characters for you, the amount of characters remaining will show up as a number below the box.
• Click the Tweet button to post the Tweet to your profile.
• You will immediately see your Tweet in the timeline on your homepage.

HOW TO: Delete a tweet

• Log in to your Twitter account and go to your Profile page.
• Locate the Tweet you want to delete.
• Hover your mouse over the message and click Delete.
• There is no bulk-ediiting, so to delete multiple Tweets, you must delete each one by one.

THINGS TO NOTE:

Deleted Tweets sometimes hang out in Twitter search, they will clear with time.
You may only delete tweets which you posted yourself from your account. You may not delete tweets which were posted by other accounts. Instead, you can unfollow or block users whose tweets you do not want to receive.

Mentions

A tweet containing another user's Twitter username, preceded by the "@" symbol, like this: Hello @MediaCause

Where it appears for the sender: On the sender's profile page of public Tweets.
Where it appears for the recipient: In the recepient's Mentions and Interactions tabs, which are accessible only to them. Additionally, mentions will appear in the recipient's Home timeline (not on their profile) if they are following the sender. Note: Anyone on Twitter who is following the sender of a mention will see the Tweet in their Home timeline.
Places it will never appear: On anyone's profile page, unless they wrote the message.

Example:

HOW TO: Post a mention on Twitter

- Type your Tweet as you normally would, but replace any names you include with that person's @username.
- Click Tweet to post it.
- Twitter will recognize and link to the @username in the Tweet.

THINGS TO NOTE:
- **Visiting another user's profile page on Twitter will not display Tweets that mention them. However, you can search for all Tweets mentioning their username in the search box. Search for "@username" to view results.**
- **People will see any mentions posted by someone they follow (all mentions are treated like regular Tweets).**
- **If you include more than one person's name in your Tweet and you use the @username format, all of those people will see the Tweet in their Mentions tab.**

@Replies

A Tweet that begins with another user's username and is in reply to one of their Tweets.

Where it appears for the sender: On the sender's Profile page.
Where it appears for the recipient: In the recipient's Mentions and Interactions tabs. Like mentions, @replies will also appear in the recipient's Home timeline if they are following the sender. Anyone following the sender and the recipient of an @reply will see it in their Home timeline.
Places it will never appear: On anyone's profile page, unless they wrote/sent the message.

Example:

HOW TO: Post @replies on Twitter

- Find the Tweet you want to @reply to.
- Hover over the Tweet and click on Reply.
- A Tweet box will pop up with the @username of the account you are replying to already added at the beginning of the Tweet.
- Complete your @reply and click Tweet to post it.

THINGS TO NOTE:
- **People will only see others' @replies in their home timeline if they are following both the sender and recipient of the @reply.**
- **People with protected Tweets can only send @replies to their approved followers.**
- **If someone sends you an @reply and you are not following the user, the reply will not appear on your Tweets timeline. Instead, the reply will appear in your Mentions tab.**

@Replies: FAQ's

If I see an @reply in my timeline, how do I know what Tweet they replied to?

• Click on the Tweet and it will expand to display the Tweet they @replied to.

• You'll also see other content related to the Tweet.

Why don't @replies sent from accounts with protected Tweets show up anywhere?

By protecting your Tweets (making them private), you're telling Twitter that you don't want anyone to see any of your Tweets unless you've given them the right to follow you. If your Tweets are protected and you send an @reply or mention, only those you've approved to view your Tweets will ever be able to see them. If you want to send messages such as mentions or @replies to people who are not following you, un-protect your Tweets to make them public.

Where do people's @replies appear for other users?

• If you're not the sender or recipient of an @reply, you may still see an @reply to someone else in your timeline.

• Users will see @replies in their Home timeline if they are following both the sender and recipient of the update. Otherwise, they won't see the @reply unless they visit the sender's Profile page.

• If you send a reply to someone, it does not show on their profile page. Only replies that person has sent will show on their profile.

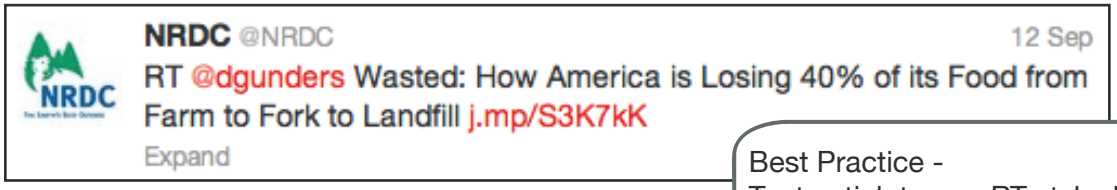
Retweets

A retweet is someone else's Tweet that you chose to share with all of your followers. You can either use Twitter's built-in retweet feature, or you can manually retweet content by typing RT at the beginning of a Tweet to indicate that you are re-posting someone else's content.

Where Tweets retweeted by other people appear: You can see retweets your followers have retweeted in your home timeline. Retweets, like regular Tweets, will not show up from people you've blocked.
Where Tweets you have retweeted appear: If you retweet someone you follow, it will be visible on your profile timeline. If you retweet someone you do not follow, it will be visible on both your home and profile timelines.
Where Your Tweets that others have retweeted appear: Go to Connect in the top navigation bar. In the Interactions section you will see all activity concerning your Tweets — including which Tweets have recently been retweeted and by whom.

Example of using Twitter's retweet feature:

Example of manually retweeting by typing "RT":



Best Practice -
Try to stick to one RT style. If you decide to type "RT", keep in mind that it's common practice to add your comment before, not after, the "RT".

HOW TO: Retweet a Tweet

How to retweet without adding your own commentary:
• Hover over a Tweet.
• Click the Retweet link.
• A pop-up will show you the Tweet you're about to retweet and will ask you to confirm.
• Click the blue Retweet button, and now the tweet will be shared with your followers.

How to retweet and add your own comments (RT):
• Copy the content of the Tweet you'd like to share.
• Open a new Tweet box and paste the content into the message.
• Add the letters “RT” and the Tweet author's @username to show that it's a retweet and isn't your own content.
• Add your comment at the beginning of the message.
• Click Tweet to post the message to your followers.

THINGS TO NOTE:
Using the “RT” method to retweet and add your own comments only works well if the tweet is much shorter than 140 characters. If you want to add a comment to a longer tweet, shorten the original tweet and type “MT” (modified tweet) instead.

Retweets: FAQ’s

How can I undo or delete a retweet that I've done?

You can undo a retweet you've made by clicking on Retweeted in the Tweet. This will remove the retweet from your timeline, but will not delete the original Tweet.

Why can't some Tweets be retweeted?

If another user's Tweets are protected, you will not be able to retweet their content. If you see the lock icon next to the user's name and information on their profile page or on their Tweets, their Tweets are protected and you will not be able to share their Tweets on your timeline through Twitter's retweet feature.
You can see their Tweets in your timeline because they have accepted your follow request, but because they have chosen not to share their Tweets publicly, their Tweets cannot be retweeted by you or anyone else.
You cannot retweet your own Tweet. However, if your Tweets are public, others will be able to retweet you.

Favorites

Favorites, represented by a small star icon next to a Tweet, are most often used when users like a Tweet. Favoriting a Tweet can let the original poster know that you liked their Tweet, or you can save the Tweet for later.

Where can I see favorites?

In your timeline: In the upper right hand corner of the Tweet you favorited.
On your Profile: Click on Favorites in the left hand column. You will see a scrolling list of Tweets you've favorited.

Where can I see my Tweets that have been favorited?

When someone favorites one of your Tweets, it will appear under the Connect tab in Interactions.

Where can I see other users' favorites?

On their profile, click on Favorites in the left hand column - you will see a scrolling list of Tweets they've favorited.

HOW TO: Favorite a Tweet

- Log in to your Twitter account.
- From your home timeline, hover over the Tweet you'd like to favorite.
- Click on Favorite, a gold star will appear in the upper right hand corner of the Tweet to confirm that you've favorited the Tweet.
- You can also favorite a Tweet from a user's profile page and a Tweet's permalink page.

Direct Messages

A direct message (DM) is a private message sent via Twitter to one of your followers.

Where it appears for the sender: In the sender's direct messages folder (accessible by clicking on the person icon in the top navigation bar). A direct message will disappear completely if either the sender or the recipient deletes it.
Where it appears for the recipient: In the recipient's direct messages. It will disappear if the sender deletes it.
Places it will never appear: In any public timeline or public search.

THINGS TO NOTE:
You can only send a direct message to a user who is following you and you can only receive direct messages from users you follow.

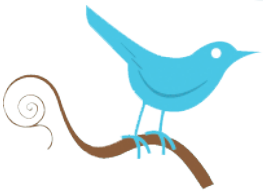
HOW TO: Send a direct message

• Log in to your Twitter account.
• Click on the person icon in the top right and select Direct messages from the drop down menu - You'll see a pop up showing your direct message history.
• Click the New message button.
• In the address box, type the name or username of the person you wish to send a message to.
• Enter your message and click Send message.

HOW TO: Delete a direct message

• Click on the person icon and select Direct messages from the drop down menu - You'll see a pop-up showing your direct message history.
• Click the conversation containing the message you'd like to delete.
• Locate the desired message and hover your mouse over it. A trash can icon will appear. Click it.
• A message will show at the bottom of the DM inbox asking "Are you sure you want to delete this message?"
• Click Delete message.

THINGS TO NOTE:
Deleted DMs disappear from both the sender and the recipient's history. If you are missing DMs, check with the person you messaged to verify that they deleted the DMs you are missing.



Twitiquette: DM vs. “@”

When to use a direct message instead of an @mention or reply...

DO use a DM when sending personal information, such as a phone number or email address.

DO use a DM if you are asking multiple questions to the same person, or asking the same question to multiple people.

DO use a DM if you are correcting a mistake you’ve identified in someone’s blog, tweet, etc...

DO NOT send an auto-DM to greet new followers.

TROUBLE SHOOTING

If you are receiving DMs (direct messages) from yourself:

Try the following - While logged in, visit your Apps tab in your Settings. Revoke access for any third party application that you don't recognize. If you're still experiencing this problem after you've revoked unwanted applications, or if you weren't expecting this behavior when you approved this connection, contact Twitter support at http://support.twitter.com/forms.

If you are not seeing all of your direct messages:

Twitter shows only your 100 most recent messages. Remember, your old DMs are not gone, they're just stored in the platform’s database. Twitter is working to make more DMs available in the future.

HOW TO: Post links in Tweets

All links (URLs) posted in Tweets are shortened by Twitter's t.co service. When viewing the Tweet on twitter.com, the original URL (or shortened version of the original URL) will be displayed. Below are instructions on how to post a link in a Tweet on the web.

To post a link in a Tweet on the web:
• Type or paste the URL into the Tweet box on twitter.com.
• As you begin typing the URL, a message will appear at the bottom of the Tweet box letting you know that the "link will appear shortened." A URL of any length will be altered to 20 characters, even if the link itself is less than 20 characters long. Your character count will reflect this.

HOW TO: Post Videos on Twitter

Twitter does not host video files. Most of the sites listed below will allow you the option to post your video directly to Twitter, with the option to add a message if you want. Alternately, you can copy and paste the link to your video into your Tweet on twitter.com.

Links to videos from the sites listed here will display your media when a Tweet is expanded so that your followers can see your video without leaving their timeline.

Videos shared via the following sites will play in expanded Tweets:

- YouTube
- Vimeo
- Ustream
- Justin.tv
- Twitlens

HOW TO: Post photos on Twitter

To include a picture in your Tweet:
• Begin a new Tweet on twitter.com.
• Click on the camera icon.
• Locate the image you want to upload on your computer when prompted.
• After you select an image, you'll see the image thumbnail and the camera icon highlighted in blue at the bottom of the Tweet box.
• Your character count will update to include the image's shortened URL. Type your message and click Tweet.
• If you selected the wrong image, or no longer wish to share that image, just click the “x” in the thumbnail or next to the filename to delete the current image.

Posting Photos: FAQ’s

How large can my image be?
You can upload any image that is 3MB or smaller. Twitter scales the image for you to fit into the media display on your expanded Tweet.

What type of file can I upload?
Twitter accepts .gif, .jpeg, and .png files. It does NOT accept .bmp, .tiff, and animated .gif files.

How many images can I upload in one Tweet?
Twitter allows users to upload one image per Tweet. Additionally, it will only display one image from third party apps, though you can include as many links to third-party app photos in a Tweet as you like.

How do I delete an image?
You can delete an image by deleting the Tweet containing the image. Once a Tweet is deleted, the image will be unavailable. It may still be cached in some browsers and servers, but the image will no longer be available from Twitter.

PART 4

BUILDING YOUR COMMUNITY: Connecting, Sharing & Engaging

Discover how to expand your network and share interesting and compelling content that encourages interaction.

Making Connections

Finding and adding followers is just as important to building your Twitter community as gaining your own followers.

By following people, you will be able to view their updates in your Twitter stream. This can make Twitter a very valuable learning space - Seeing what kind of blog posts users are reading, what links they like to share, and the people they interact with, provides insight into the values and beliefs of your audience.

HOW TO: Find people to follow

There are a variety of ways to locate users you would be interested in following, as well as handful of helpful online tools. These are some good places to start:

DO use Twitter's "Who to Follow" feature.

DO use Twitter Search.

DO check out people your followers are following.

DO follow thought leaders and bloggers.

DO NOT follow too many people at once. It's better add followers gradually.

Here are a few online tools that can also help you find relevant accounts to follow:

Twellow
TwitDir
TweetGrader

HOW TO: Get people to follow you

In order to have a two-way conversation going, you want people to start following you back. This is another reason why having your profile 100% completed is important - if people don't recognize your organization's name right away, they will rely on the information in your profile to decide whether or not to follow you.

DO make your organization's Twitter usernames easy to find.

DO pimp out your Twitter handle.

- Place "Follow" buttons on your blog and various pages of your website.
- Have employees of your organization add your Twitter handle to their email signature
- Add your Twitter handle to your other social media profiles (i.e., Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, Pinterest, etc...)

DO place a Twitter widget on your blog.

DO make your tweets useful resources so people need you.

DO interact with those people you follow who don't yet follow you back.

DO engage with your network.

DO participate in Follow Friday.

Every Friday, twitter users recommend their followers or favorite people by using the hashtag #ff or #followfriday. #FF (Follow Friday) is a great opportunity to cultivate relationships inside and outside of your base. #FF acknowledges your hard-working free agents, and you can use it to show influencers that you are courting, you know they are tweeting and you are paying attention.

Example:

DO be supportive - promote others and share your best information.

The Twitter community is all about karma - Follow back like minded users, retweet liberally, and link to interesting news stories about your partners or sector.

DO NOT promote only your own content.

DO NOT use an auto-DM to greet new followers.

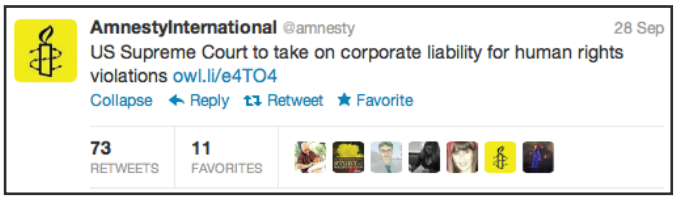
DO NOT focus solely on the number of followers - it's about quality, not just quantity.

HOW TO: Engage with your followers

Share compelling content that encourages interactions and become part of the conversation.

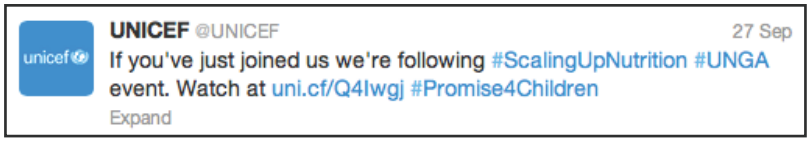
DO tweet about things people care about.

Link to newsworthy events that people are already talking about and relate it to your cause.



DO tweet in the moment.

During an event or conference, don't be afraid to live tweet as it's happening.



DO follow the 60-30-10 rule.

60% retweets and pointers to promote items from other users or sites, 30% conversation and responses, and 10% announcements and events. If all you ever talk about is you, no one is going to pay attention after a while.

DO use hashtags and pay attention to trending topics.

Join in relevant Twitter conversations and trending topics by using #hashtags. Use existing ones or create your own. Check out trending topics - if one fits with your topic, using it could open your message up to a wider and more diverse audience.

DO include links.

FACT: Tweets containing URLs are three times more likely to be retweeted.

DO know who @replies to you.

Use tools such as TweetDeck and Google Alerts to keep up with the conversation.

DO get into a groove.

Be consistent - Consider having a regular, daily tweet, such as “Photo of the Day” or “Tip of the Day,” which also gives you a chance to link back to your website or blog.

DO rephrase and repeat.

It’s okay to promote an event or CTA with the same tweet - just spread them out by a few hours and reword it.

DO ask questions and thank your supporters.

Use Twitter to conduct research, to solicit ideas, to identify experts, to thank donors, and to ask questions of your followers.

DO use calls to action.

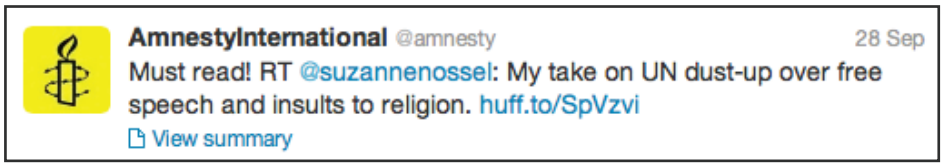
It's okay to say "Please RT" or "Check out our new report" - just don't abuse it.

DO be gracious.

Respond to people when they mention you. Reply when people ask questions. Follow back people who follow you.

DO learn the social etiquette.

"Tweet others like you would like to be tweeted" - Retweet interesting articles that other people post and give credit to the content source.



DO NOT overcomplicate it.

Be authentic - Use your own voice, be honest, be real and be human. Tweet like you would talk. People want to know that behind the curtain a real person exists who authentically cares about your cause. And don't be afraid to put out the occasionally silly tweet that will make your followers laugh or an inspiring quote that makes people think.

DO NOT use all 140 characters - this will limit your potential interactions.

Try to leave enough characters at the end of your tweet to enable people to manually reweet it, and to include their own comments.

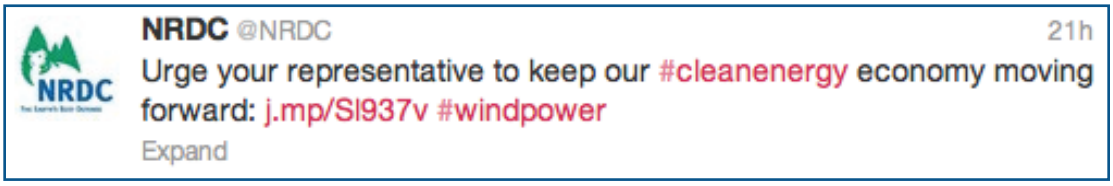
#hashtags

hashtags help spread and organize information on Twitter

What is a hashtag? The "#" symbol, called a hashtag, is used to mark keywords or Topics in a Tweet.

- People include the hashtag symbol "#" before a relevant keyword or phrase (no spaces).
- Clicking on a hashtagged word in any message shows you all other Tweets marked with that keyword.
- Hashtags can occur anywhere in the Tweet – at the beginning, middle, or end.
- Hashtagged words that become very popular are often Trending Topics.

Example:



Why use hashtags?

To join in relevant Twitter conversations and trending topics - Using hashtags, both existing and ones you create, help categorize tweets by keyword and help your tweets show more easily in Twitter search.

HOW TO: Use hashtags to your advantage

IDENTIFYING HASHTAGS - DO use popular hashtags relevant to your organization and topic of your Tweets.

Popular hashtags show up in trending topics, so including these in your tweets will make you show up when people search for this topic and could help you reach new users.

Here are some popular hashtags around social good (list created by socialbrite.org):

Non-profits & foundations
#nonprofit
#nfp
#philanthropy
#charity
#charitytuesday
#nptech
#foundation
#crisiscommons

Social good & activism
#socialgood
#cause
#volunteer
#4change
#video4change
#giveback
#dogood
#changemakers

Social businesses
#socent (social entrepreneurship)
#impinv (impact investing)
#crowdfunding
#crowdsourcing
#socialbusiness
#entrepreneurs
#csr (Corporate Social Responsibility)
#microfinance
#socialenterprise
#socap (social capital)
#sofinance
#neweconomy

Environment, social justice & human rights
#poverty
#hunger
#disabilities
#diversity
#sustainability
#aid
#health
#green
#earthtweet
#humanrights
#eco
#climate
#solar
#fairtrade
#humantrafficking

There are also a handful of free tools online to help you find trending hashtags.

Here's just a few to check out:
- http://www.hashtags.org
- http://twubs.com
- http://whatthetrend.com

CREATING HASHTAGS - DO use hashtags to promote an event or campaign.

"During the event, people often use the hashtag while live-tweeting. The hashtag will tag and aggregate the event's tweets, building an online conversation around the event." ("How to Use Twitter for Business," Hubspot)

Best Practices -
- Decide on one hashtag to use and make sure that everyone who manages the Twitter account is aware.
- Choose a simple and short hashtag that represents your event or brand. (ex: #CFC2012)
- Remind attendees of the hashtag frequently - Remind people on your website, on your Twitter feed, and at the event to use your hashtag and then track the conversation through it.

TRACKING HASHTAGS - DO track hashtags to see how far your messages reach and to learn what becomes most popular.

Here are some free online tools that can help you track hashtags:

- http://monitter.com
- http://twitterfall.com
- http://www.hashtags.org

USING - DO use hashtags correctly.

Twitiquette

Don't #spam #with #hashtags. Include no more than 2 hashtags per tweet and use hashtags only on Tweets relevant to the topic.

Lists

lists help grow your network, organize your news feed and establish your influence on Twitter

What is a list?

A list is a curated group of Twitter users. You can create your own lists or subscribe to lists created by others. Viewing a list timeline will show you a stream of Tweets from only the users on that list.

Things to Note: Lists are used for reading Tweets only. You cannot send or direct a Tweet to members of a list, for only those list members to see.

Why use lists?

Using lists can be beneficial to both you and your followers...

Lists are a way to organize followers whose tweets you don't want to overlook. While at the beginning it's relatively easy to sift through your Twitter feed, this will become more and more difficult as the number of people you follow grows from tens, to hundreds, to even thousands. Twitter Lists allow you the opportunity to be generous in the number of people and organizations you follow, without worrying about cluttering your timeline.

Lists are a way to create more value for your followers. Lists make it very convenient for your followers to add new followers they will appreciate. Thus, creating lists that you think your followers would be interested in provides an addition resource for the people that follow you.

Lists are a way to grow your network and establish your organization in certain subjects/areas of expertise. Putting together quality lists around your scope of work helps to encourage and attract new followers, as well as position your organization as a leading voice in your field., This in turn also makes your organization more likely to be listed - serving to further attract new followers and solidify your organization's credibility and weight as an expert source.

Lists are a way of measuring your influence. Keeping track of the lists your organization is included on can be another helpful factor in identifying your online reach.

Other people's Twitter lists are also a way to find like-minded folks on topics that matter to you.

HOW TO: Find lists to follow

- Go to people you already follow and check out their lists.
- Look at prominent and important people and see what lists they have already been placed on.
- Visit Listorious (http://listorious.com) and look through lists tagged under topics you're interested in.

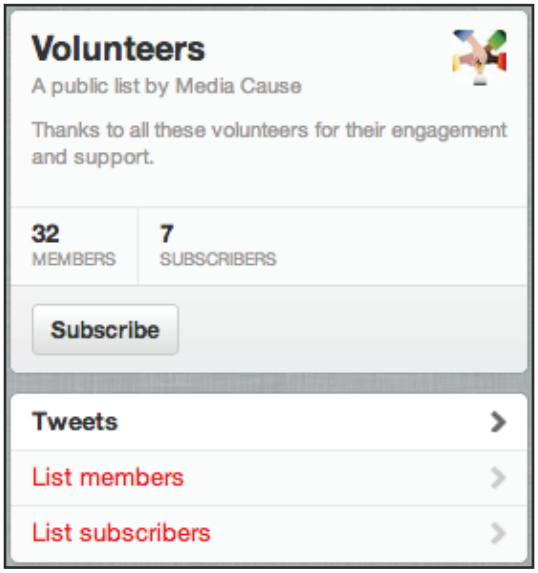
HOW TO: Use lists to your advantage

DO recognize supporters. Create a list of your volunteers, corporate partners, advocates and supporters. Not only will this help you keep tabs on what they're saying, but inclusion in the list will enable your supporters to easily connect with each other.

DO identify the people that work within your organization. If you have a number of employees on Twitter, create a "staff" list to help followers easily connect with the brains of your operation.

DO be a resource. If your issues deal with homelessness, put together a list of thought-leading tweeters helping to eradicate this problem. Similarly, if you're passionate about AIDS in Africa, assemble a list of people making a difference in this area.

DO create event/campaign lists. Build lists for the people attending, and for the collaborators and speakers, of a project or upcoming event. As people pre-register for upcoming events, ask them to share their Twitter handle. Before the event, share a list of expected attendees to help people connect before meeting in real life. In addition to facilitating pre-event connections, this kind of list will provide a live snapshot of the event for those unable to make an appearance.



DO create localized Lists. Creating lists for your organization's local chapters and campaigns is a great way to connect those individuals and make sure your message gets to the right people.

DO connect with other activists. Assemble lists of social entrepreneurs, nonprofit leaders, researchers and consultants #doingitright. Monitor what they're tweeting about. Think of this as a tool to monitor best practices, keep tabs on what's going on in your field and to develop relationships with like-minded people.

DO be selective. Only create lists around groups that you really care to follow. Remember, one of the main reasons to use lists is that it allows you to follow thousands of people without missing important tweets - So, only include those voices you want to make sure your routinely hear. If you dilute your lists with people you're pseudo interested in, the list loses value as a whole.

The Logistics.

HOW TO: Create, edit and use Twitter Lists

To create a list:

• Go to your Lists page. This can be done via the gear icon drop-down menu in the top right navigation bar or by going to your profile page and clicking on Lists.
• Click Create list.
• Enter the name of your list, a short description of the list, and select if you want the list to be private (only accessible to you) or public (anyone can subscribe to the list).
• Click Save list.

Note: List names cannot exceed 25 characters, nor can they begin with a number.

To add or remove people from your lists:

• Click the gear icon drop-down menu on a user's profile.
• Select Add or remove from lists. (You don't need to be following a user to add them to your list.)
• A pop-up will appear displaying your created lists. Check the lists you would like to add the user to, or uncheck the lists you'd like to remove the user from.
• To check to see if the user you wanted to add was successfully included in that list, navigate to the Lists tab on your profile page. Click the desired list, then click Members. The person will appear in the list of members.

Note: You cannot add yourself, or a user who has blocked you, to a list.

To see lists that you are on:

On your Lists page, click on Member of. This will show you what lists you are on.

To remove yourself from a list:

You can remove yourself from a list by blocking the creator of the list.

To find a list's URL to share:

- Go to the list you'd like to share.
- Copy the URL that shows up in your browser's address bar. It will look something like this: https://twitter.com/i/#!/username/listname
- Paste the URL into a message to anyone with whom you want to share the list.

To view Tweets from a list:

- Go to your profile page.
- Click on the Lists tab.
- Click on the list you'd like to view.
- You'll see a timeline of Tweets from the users included in that list.

To edit or delete lists:

- Go to your profile page.
- Click on the Lists tab.
- You will see lists you've created and other people's lists you follow under Subscribed to.
- Select which list you'd like to edit or delete from the lists you've created. Click Edit to update your list details or click Delete to remove the list entirely.
- You cannot add or remove people from your list on this page — you must do that from the profile pages of each individual you wish to add or remove.

To subscribe to/follow other people's lists:

- Click on Lists when viewing someone's profile.
- Select which list you'd like to subscribe to.
- From the list page, click Subscribe to follow the list. You can follow lists without following the individual users in that list.

Note: If the owner of a list that you're following includes a public user that you've blocked, you will still see the updates of the blocked user.

Recap

Maintaining the Feed: Content

1. Give updates on everything relevant to your organization.

- What have the staff and volunteers been up to?
  Ex: This week @JoeSmith is representing Marion Institute at the #WhiteHouse, check back for updates!
- Quick updates on accomplishments, big and small.
- Public thank-you's and recognition.

2. Share important and relevant articles, blogs, links, photos, etc...

3. Retweet information that is relevant to your organization or its affiliates, as well as anything supporters may find valuable.

Maintaining the Feed: Finding Relevant Content

1. Lists - organize your own news feed or find other to follow.

Create your own Twitter lists to find relevant news easily by clicking on the “Lists” tab underneath your photo on your profile page. Add a list name, a description, and make it public or private. You can add members to your lists at any time by clicking the drop-down menu on the top right of their profile.

2. Hashtags - Sift through relevant content.

Utilize the search window at the top of the screen to search for keywords or hashtags.
Click on relevant hashtags to discover what others are talking about.

PART 5

WRAP UP

Final questions to ask before you begin and recommendations for moving forward.

5 final questions to ask before you dive in...

1. Who is responsible for maintaining your Twitter presence?

There might be multiple people maintaining your @handle, but it is essential to have one person in charge and making sure everyone is on the same page. Name a point person who can dedicate the time necessary to be successful.

2. How much time does staff have allocated to Twitter?

Being successful on Twitter means being active on the platform. There is no secret sauce that makes you "good" on Twitter. Everything in this guide highlights how to be effective, but it takes time. Make sure you allocate time for your staff or yourself to manage this new communication stream.

3. How many tweets are you planning a day? A week?

• There might not be an exact answer, but remember the 60-30-10 rule as a guide - 60% retweets and pointers to promote other users and sites, 30% conversations and response, 10% announcements and events.
• You should have a rough idea based off of your own communication pipeline.

4. What is the approval process for tweets?

• If you want to see all tweets before your staff sends them, be sure to plan that time into the process. The same goes for if tweets need to go by Legal or any other department.
• Double check all copy, including correct links, before hitting the Tweet button. While you can delete posts, nothing is ever totally deleted on the Internet.

5. What is your expectation for Twitter?

• Set a realistic expectation based on the amount of resources you can devote to the platform.
• Track your progress - Worry more about engagement metrics like retweets and @mentions, than how many followers your @handle has.

You made it!

But the conversation is never over on Twitter.

What you've learned in this booklet is just the beginning - By now you have sent some tweets, maybe some with @mentions and joined some conversations through #hashtags. You might have noticed you picked up some new followers along the way. You are a part of the conversation now. It is important to keep the momentum going and continue to follow the foundation laid out in this guide.

What did we miss? As you become more familiar with Twitter as a communication platform, you will come across many things not included in this guide. In a way, this is the purpose of Twitter - As soon as you look at one message, you realize there is a much larger conversation going on. There is always more to discover and more conversations to be had. #enjoy

GET TO KNOW MEDIA CAUSE

Media Cause

Media Cause is a non-profit marketing company that offers search marketing and social media support to all non-profits regardless of size or budget. We offer world-class digital marketing services to non-profits and causes with funds to invest in growing support for their organizations online.

As a non-profit ourselves, we are a mission driven organization. We believe the world would be a better place, if non-profits, large and small, were able to increase awareness for their programs, raise more money online, and better engage with supporters. The money that we make from selling our marketing services to larger non-profits is poured back into growing our team of "marketing for good" experts as well as building our community of marketing volunteers to ensure that all non-profits can take advantage of great programs, tools, and social platforms like Google Grants, Facebook, and Twitter. Learn more at www.mediacause.org.

Let's be friends! Join our online communities to check out our work and get the latest in non-profit social media news:

facebook.com/mediacause

twitter.com/mediacause