



# How to Use Twitter: 14 Basics



# By Ellie Becker

President, E.R. Becker Company, Inc.  
Inbound Marketing Consultant



Ellie Becker has three decades of experience in marketing and PR. She owns E.R. Becker Company, Inc., a consultancy specializing in Inbound Marketing -- using your Internet presence to grow your business. Her blog, inbound-I, is on her website, [www.erbeckercompany.com](http://www.erbeckercompany.com).

Ellie's writing about online marketing has been featured on influential blogs and in regional and national business media. E.R. Becker Company is a HubSpot partner agency serving small and mid-sized companies throughout the U.S. and in Europe.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS:

Why a Twitter Ebook?.....	4
What is Twitter? Basics 1 to 3 .....	6
Getting Started. Basics 4 to 8.....	8
Building Communities. Basics 9 to 14.....	11
Photo Credits.....	15

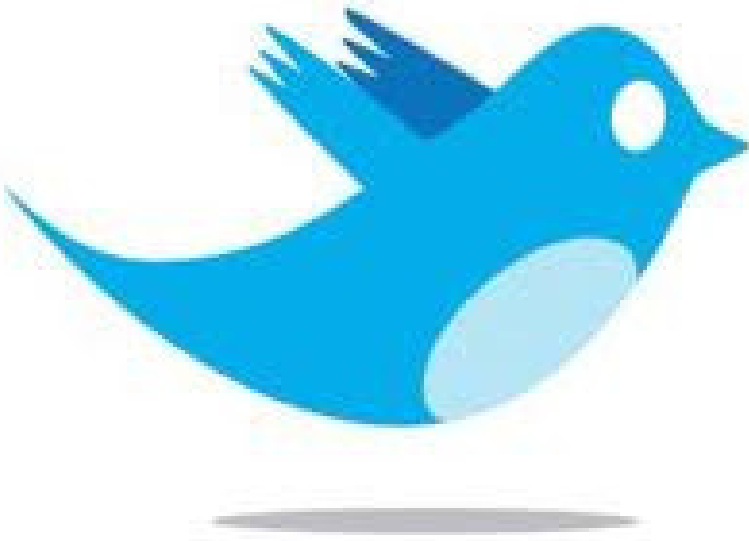
# CHAPTER 1: Why a Twitter Ebook?



Twitter was launched on July 15, 2006. Today it has more than [500 million active](#) users generating over 340 million tweets daily and handling over 1.6 billion search queries per day. Twitter's been at the heart of movements and revolutions. Yet many companies we speak with – large and small – still don't understand how it works, where it fits in an [Inbound Marketing strategy](#), or how it can help their businesses; thus, this Twitter Basics Ebook.

# CHAPTER 2:

## What is Twitter? Basics 1 to 3.



## How to Use Twitter: 14 Basics

**1.** Twitter is a mini blog – each post limited to 140 characters. What that means is that it is findable by search engines and it is interactive. You can reply to and share Twitter posts. You can also share links on Twitter to your blog posts and other content that your Twitter community will appreciate. And you have to be creative to stay within the 140.

**2.** Each 140-character post is called a Tweet. A tweet must get your message across & leave room for other info discussed later in this book. (By the way, the previous two sentences in this tip total exactly 140 characters.)

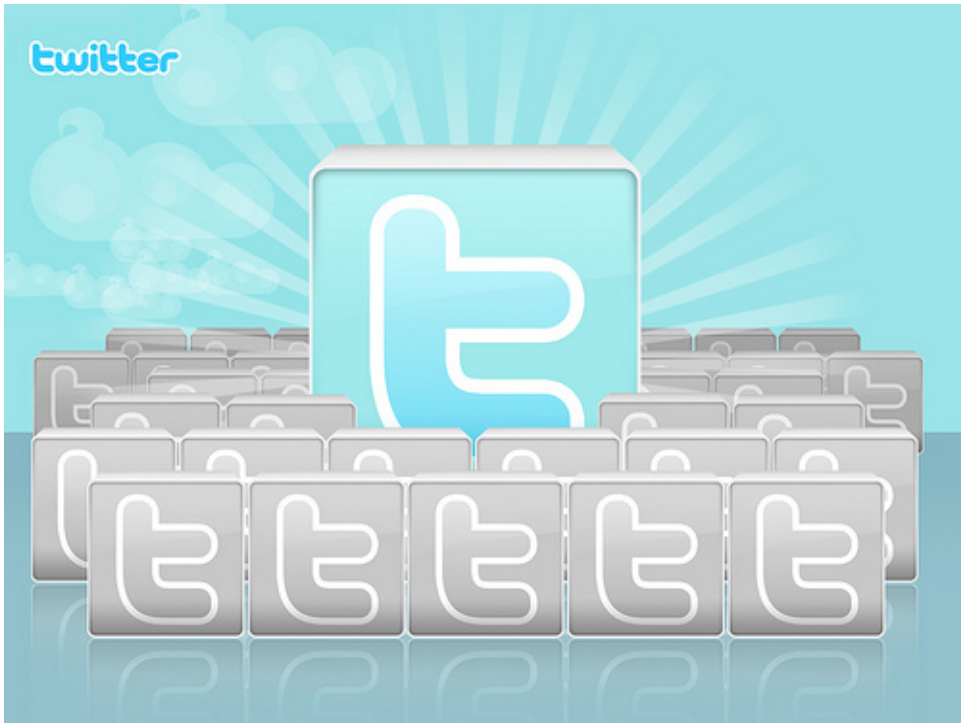
**3.** A Twitter best practice is to share other people's info more than your own. It's 'social' after all, so politeness counts. 60-40 is a good rule of thumb.



# CHAPTER 3:

## Getting Started.

### Basics 4 to 8





- 4.** When you join Twitter – it's free, by the way – you will choose a user name. When Twitter members refer to one another they put an @ sign in front of their user names. For example my Twitter handle is [@elliebpr](#). Follow me!
- 5.** After joining, you'll first want to find some people to follow. Twitter is a great source for both industry trend information and prospect interaction. I use it to keep on top of marketing trends and to interact with potential clients. So I've built a couple of different Twitter communities.
- 6.** Since all web interaction is based on keywords and search terms, you will start by going to [www.search.twitter.com](http://www.search.twitter.com) and use the search field on Twitter to plug in popular keywords for your industry or for the audience that you want to connect with.

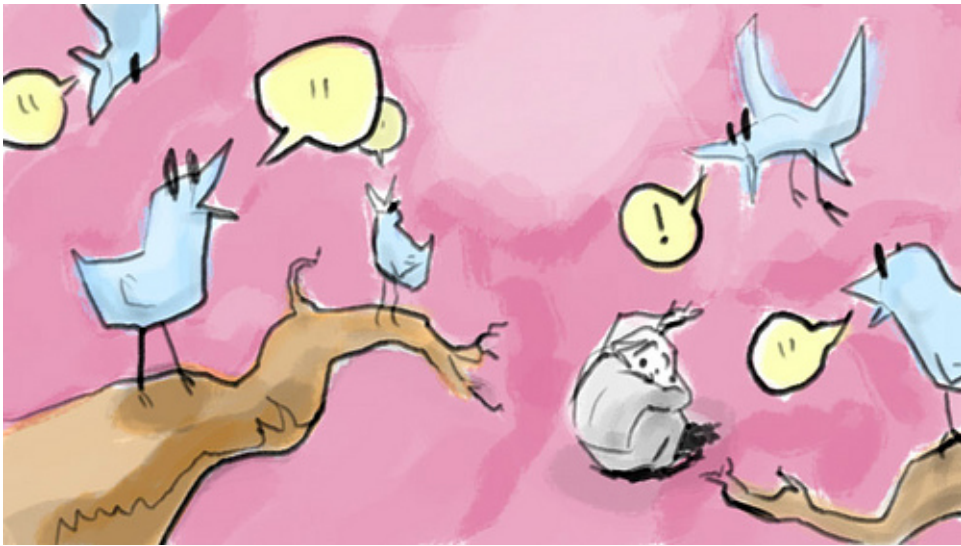
For example, for my business I would try typing in search terms like 'Small Business' or 'Small Business Marketing'. Twitter will offer up a stream of tweets from people interested in those keywords – the beginning of a Twitter community that I would want to interact with.

- 7.** Among the stream of tweets you search for, you'll see some that are interesting and some that are irrelevant to you and your business. (It's like a river. You jump in and out and see who's swimming with you at any given moment.)
- 8.** Watch the conversation. When someone is tweeting about a topic of interest, you can click on their user name to see their profile and what else they have to say. If you have a comment to make on their tweet, click 'Reply' and add your thoughts – keeping it to 140 characters, of course. Twitter counts it down for you right below the field where you compose your tweets.

# CHAPTER 4:

## Building Communities.

### Basics 9 to 14



- 9.** If you follow people and reply to their tweets, chances are they'll follow you back. Once you and another member are following each other, you'll see each other's tweets and you will be able to send one another direct messages or DMs. Be careful with direct messages. There's an etiquette on Twitter as on all social media sites. You're building trusting relationships so don't be self serving or overuse DMs.
  
- 10.** If you want to reach an audience beyond those who are following you and can see your tweets, use hashtags. What are hashtags? They are keywords with a # sign in front of them. Twitter members use hashtags to follow conversations on particular topics.
  
- 11.** When I want a tweet to reach anyone interested in information for small business, I'll use the hashtags #smallbusiness or #smallbiz. When you find a community, their tweets will include hashtags in popular use by that community. For example, I recently did a Twitter search on 'employment law' for a client and found that people interested in this topic use the hashtags #employmentlaw and #emplaw.

- 12.** You can enter a possible hashtag into Twitter search to see if it already exists. Or you can create a hashtag for a particular promotion or event and publicize it in your tweets.
  
- 13.** Hashtags have many uses. For instance, they can help you find fellow attendees in advance of a conference. Each year I attend the Inbound Marketing Summit, which this year carries the hashtag #Inbound12 – the event and the year. Connecting with others who follow this hashtag prior to the event helps me make the best use of my time, set up meetings, find evening activities and arrive at the event with a group of new online friends to connect with in person.
  
- 14.** Sharing links to interesting information – including your own content in moderation -- is a key Twitter activity. Some links are, themselves, longer than 140 characters, so you have to shorten them. Go to [www.bit.ly](http://www.bit.ly) and download a free url shortener, which can reside in your web browser. Paste in a long link, click 'Shorten' and you'll end up with a short link that can fit into a tweet.

## 14. Continued...

There are other shorteners, but bit.ly also allows you to track where your links are being shared. So do the ow.ly and ht.ly shorteners included in [Hootsuite](#), a software that helps you organize your communities and searches and schedule your tweets, as well as other social media postings. (For disclosure, we use and recommend Hootsuite. E.R. Becker Company is a Hootsuite partner.)

**Conclusion:** So now you have some Twitter basics. If you spend a few minutes a day with your Twitter communities, you'll soon make friends and find opportunities to build your business.

# Appendix: Photo Credits.



Photos are from the Flickr Photostreams of the following contributors under Creative Commons license.

Ebook Cover (Sand Sculpture) and Chapter 3 Cover (Twitter Profile): Rosanna Ochoa

Chapter 1 Cover (Twitter Time): JefferyTurner

Chapter 2 Cover (Twitter Bird Logo): Photologue\_np

Chapter 2, Page 7 (Twitter Logo Applique): Coletivo Mambembe

Chapter 4 Cover (Tweeter Community): petersimon

This Page (Twitter Bird on Branch): CreativeTools

# What's your online marketing grade?

Get your complementary report.

<http://bit.ly/PImUc0>

If you're interested in improving your lead generation processes, start with an [analysis and benchmark](#) of your online marketing efforts. Once you know how you're doing, you'll know how to improve.