

Chapter 2: Communing with Like-Minded People

In This Chapter

- ✓ **Creating a Twitter marketing strategy**
- ✓ **Mastering the Twitter search engine**
- ✓ **Communing with locals who use Twitter**
- ✓ **Tweeting like a pro**

You've decided that Twitter is a good fit for your social media marketing campaign and you've set up your Twitter account. Now what? Well, now would be an ideal time to find out how to use Twitter for the best possible return on your time investment. First, you create a strategy for your campaign. Then you break the ice and start searching for people to follow. After following some people, you develop an idea of what to do and what not to do on Twitter. Now comes the fun part: communing with your *tweeple* (Twitterspeak for *followers*). Then you become truly profound and send out useful information.

With a bit of luck and an equal dose of skill topped off by a heaping portion of persistence, you start picking up followers. In fact, you may soon have a *twibe* (Twitterspeak for *lots of followers*). When you reach this lofty plateau, you're well on your way to adding additional income to your bottom line. In this chapter, we show you how to get started with Twitter.

Creating a Tweet Strategy for Your Business

In Book IV, Chapter 1, we get you started on your way to Twitter success. Now it's time to roll up your sleeves and come up with a Twitter marketing strategy.

Conventional methods of marketing such as telemarketing, TV ads, e-mail promotions that you did not opt in (can you say spam?), and the like are known as methods of *interruption marketing* — you're interrupting the end user's day with your message.

When you market on Twitter, people follow you because they like what you have to say. Because you have their permission to send them tweets, it's known as *permission marketing*.



However, if you send the wrong type of message on Twitter, your followers can revoke their permission and you lose them.

When you create your campaign, the goal is to do some viable marketing to a warm audience without overstepping the bounds and making your messages sound like blatant advertisements.

Here are some ideas on how to start marketing on Twitter:

- ◆ **Create an account using your business name as well as your own name (see Book IV, Chapter 1).** Twitter limits you to a username of fewer than 15 characters. If your business name is longer than 15 characters, get creative. For example, the name Technical Gadgets for Less might become techstuff4less.
- ◆ **When creating an account for your business, use your company logo as your Twitter avatar.** When you use your logo, you're consistent with your other forms of marketing that also use your logo, such as printed materials and other online marketing endeavors.
- ◆ **If you have multiple accounts for your business, personalize them.** Use related names, such as socialmktgjan and socialmktgdoug.
- ◆ **Follow the right people.** Follow leaders in your industry, and follow competitors. When you make your first foray into Twitter, you don't know what to tweet about. Following the right people quickly educates you about the topics the heavy hitters are talking about. We provide more information on finding the right people to follow in later sections.
- ◆ **Don't send your first tweet until you know the lay of the land.** After following people in your industry for a couple of days, you can get the ball rolling by retweeting messages written by others that you think are useful. When you start retweeting, people notice you and you start to pick up followers. We show you the ins and outs of tweeting in the later section "Tweeting Like a Pro."
- ◆ **Continuously monitor your company on Twitter.** Perform a Twitter search (see the next section) for your company name to find out what people are saying about you. If you catch bad press from a Twitter user, you can respond to him quickly and nip the problem in the bud. When people say good things about your company, retweet the message.



If the person who left good vibes about your product seems to be a good writer, ask her for a testimonial, or if she's not a great writer, ask whether you can reword her tweet into a testimonial.

- ◆ **Monitor your competitors.** It's nice to know what type of feedback they're getting. If you run across dissatisfied customers, you may be able to convert them to your company by offering a solution to the problem that the tweet author experienced with the other company. If you can't offer a solution, follow the disgruntled user, and he may follow you in return and eventually become a customer. See the later section "Searching on Twitter" for more information.

- ◆ **Use industry buzzwords.** When you write a tweet, use words that people will associate with your industry. This strategy makes your Twitter posts easier to find when people use the Twitter search engine. Yes, you could say it's SEO (search engine optimization) for tweets.
- ◆ **Send tweets from your wireless phone at conferences.** Update followers about what your company is doing and describe any special events happening at your booth. Publicize the event on Twitter well in advance.
- ◆ **Dedicate part of the day to the majority of your Twitter activity.** After spending a week or so analyzing the habits of your followers, you know at which time of day your followers see your message. That's when you should be on Twitter, spreading your words of wisdom.
- ◆ **Give away samples of your product or e-books about your services.** If your product is expensive, offer a discount. Send a message to followers announcing your giveaway for the first ten followers who send you a direct message.
- ◆ **Create a contest or competition involving your industry.** For example, if your company sells camera accessories, launch a photography contest on Twitter and give away some products to the prize winners.
- ◆ **Promote online events such as webinars on Twitter.** Promote your local events as well. We show you how to hook up with local Twitter users in the later section "Getting in touch with local tweeple."
- ◆ **Announce new products.** You can also provide tips on the proper use of your product.
- ◆ **Allow potential customers to ask questions about your product or service before the sale.** After you establish yourself as an expert, you're bound to field questions about who you are or what you do.
- ◆ **Give your customers a way to get service by way of Twitter.** When you establish a relationship and turn a Twitter follower into a customer, it's only fair that the customer should have access to you or a member of your company for service after the sale.
- ◆ **Be a real person.** Don't come across as a zombie from your company who has been given the job of being "the Twitter person." Have fun and enjoy the interaction. If you have a chance to interject humor, by all means do so. People love to laugh, especially in a down economy. If you present yourself as a warm, likeable human being and they see your smiling face on the Twitter avatar, you're one step closer to turning a Twitter follower into a loyal customer.
- ◆ **Talk to people about their interests.** This strategy doesn't sell product, but it makes you seem more human. If one of your followers is interested in learning to play the guitar and you're a guitar player, send the person a direct message offering information. Your follower will be pleasantly surprised and will definitely show more interest in your tweets.

- ◆ **Ask questions about your industry.** Twitter is a helpful way to get opinions. You may even learn something you can add to your product or service to get a leg up on your competition.
- ◆ **Spend time looking for interesting online content about your product or industry.** You can find many interesting articles about your business using social media bookmarking sites such as Digg (www.digg.com), StumbleUpon (www.stumbleupon.com), or Technorati (www.technorati.com). Turn the URL into a short URL (at www.tinyurl.com or www.bit.ly) and send the link with a short description to your followers. When you shorten a URL at www.bit.ly, you can track how many people clicked the link.

Searching on Twitter

Twitter is a vast community. And, even if it were only half as large as it is, it wouldn't be half-vast. When faced with such a large community and hundreds and hundreds of tweets per minute, finding what you want on Twitter can be like searching for a needle in the proverbial haystack. Fortunately, you don't have to sift through hundreds of tweets to find the right people or to find tweets about your product, service, or profession, thanks to Twitter Search (<http://search.twitter.com>). We show you how to use Twitter Search in the following sections.

Searching for the right tweeples (Twitter people)

Finding people to follow is one of the first steps when you begin a Twitter campaign. You found a few people to follow when you created your Twitter account (see Book IV, Chapter 1). Now it's time to do some power searching and find the right people to follow. What constitutes the right people for your business depends on the type of service or product you sell. You're sure to find leaders in your industry or product and some of your competitors on Twitter. You have Twitter Search at your disposal.

Follow these steps to use Twitter Search:

1. **Launch your favorite Web browser and navigate to <http://search.twitter.com>.**

The Twitter search engine — looking suspiciously similar to the Google search engine — appears, as shown in Figure 2-1.

2. **Click Advanced Search.**

Advanced options for the Twitter search engine appear, as shown in Figure 2-2. You can search by entering keywords about your product or service, or you can search for people who market your product or service.



Figure 2-1:
The Twitter
search
engine.

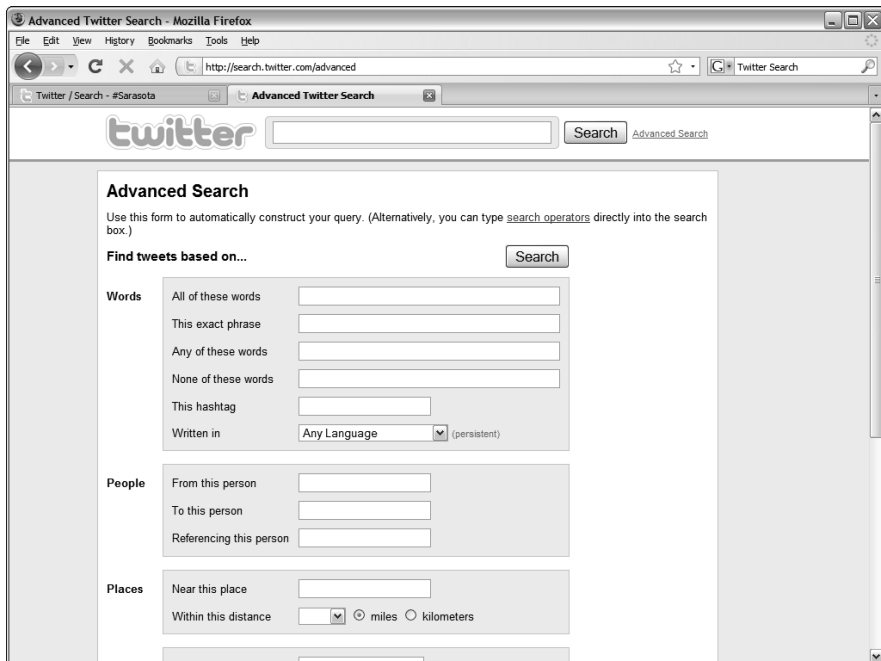


Figure 2-2:
Advanced
search
options.

- 3. In the This Exact Phrase text box, enter the name of a person or company you think may be on Twitter.**

If the person or company is on Twitter, you see all tweets that mention the person or company. The tweets might be authored by industry professionals you want to follow.

- 4. Click Search.**

The page refreshes and shows tweets that contain the name of the person you entered in Step 3.

- 5. Review the tweets and click the avatar to the left of any tweet that captures your attention.**

The person's Twitter page appears in another window.

- 6. Review the person's tweets.**

- 7. If the tweets look like the right stuff, follow the person.**

- 8. Review the rest of the search results.**

- 9. Repeat Steps 2 through 7 using the text fields in the People section.**

You can find tweets sent from a person, to a person, or about a person. Of course, you can do the same thing for the name of a company.

Now you should have a number of people you're following. Following people in your industry gives you a solid background to build on. If you do nothing more than read the tweets of these people, you learn proper Twitter protocol. You also see some bad examples of Twitter use. Eventually, you interact with the people you're following by sending them direct messages or responding to their tweets. You can also look at the person's Twitter home page to see whom they're following.

But Twitter isn't all about connecting with your peers. You've got to forge a connection with Twitter users who may be potential clients, which incidentally is the subject of the next section.

Searching for Twitter activity for your type of business

Searching for people associated with your trade or profession is all well and good, but you also want to find people who are looking for information about your product or service. You can do this by using the Twitter search engine:

- 1. Navigate to <http://search.twitter.com> and then click Advanced Search.**

The advanced search options appear.

- 2. Enter the name of your profession in the All These Words text box.**



If your profession has a specific title, you can try the This Exact Phrase box as an option.

3. Click Search.

Twitter returns all tweets that match the phrase you entered in Step 2.

Figure 2-3 shows the results of a search for the term *wedding photographer*.



Figure 2-3: Searching for tweets about your profession.

4. Review the tweets.

Remember that you're looking for potential clients. Finding tweets from Twitter users in your profession is useful because they may be people you want to follow.

5. When someone's tweet piques your curiosity, click the author's avatar.

The user's Twitter page appears in another window, which is wonderful because you still see the results of your search in another window.

6. Browse the person's tweets.

You're looking for useful information. Imagine that you're one of your clients on Twitter, or a potential client on Twitter, and ask yourself whether this person's tweets would be of interest to you.

7. If you find the person's information useful, click Follow.

You're now following the person.

8. Review the rest of the results from your search.

Follow as many people as you want. You can always unfollow someone if you find that his information isn't useful.

9. Repeat Steps 2 through 8 with other keywords relevant to your trade or profession.

For example, if you're a wedding photographer, you might enter a phrase such as *bridal photography* or *wedding planner*. Repeat this process until you've found lots of potential clients.



Search for people who are in professions similar to yours. For example, if you're a wedding photographer, search for disc jockeys, event coordinators, and caterers. When you start networking with people in your industry, you can refer clients to each other.

Getting in touch with local tweeple

If you have a bricks-and-mortar business, you must communicate with local people. Although people from around the world are on Twitter, you can find local people to follow. Here's how to create a local twibe:

1. Launch your favorite Web browser, navigate to `http://search.twitter.com`, and then type the hashtag symbol (#) followed by the name of your town. Then click Search.

After you click Search, you see a list of tweets that contain the hashtag and the town, as shown in Figure 2-4. You may end up with tweets about towns with the same name as yours in other parts of the world.



Use the hashtag when you perform a Twitter search. When a Twitter user puts a hashtag in front of a word, she is tweeting information regarding that word rather than it's just randomly appearing in a tweet. Find out more about hashtags in the "Using the hashtag" section of this chapter.

2. Review the tweets.

Look for interesting people to follow based on the information they tweet. If the Twitter user looks like a potential candidate for your product or service, follow him. If you find tweets from companies offering similar products or services, follow them as well. You may also find companies offering companion products or services. These people are excellent people to network with as well, and their followers are probably excellent candidates for your products or services. Note that you can reply to a tweet or view the full tweet on the Twitter user's page.

3. Click the avatar of a person whose tweet piques your curiosity.

The person's Twitter page opens in another browser window.



Figure 2-4:
Finding local tweeple.

4. Review the person's tweets and follow the person if you think she's a potential candidate for your project or service or is someone with whom you want to network.
5. Click the Search browser window and repeat Steps 3 and 4 for other tweets that look interesting.
6. Repeat Steps 1 through 5 using the names of nearby towns and the county in which you live.

You should find lots of new people to follow, who may eventually follow you and use your product or service.



You can fine-tune any Twitter search by clicking the Advanced Search button. In an advanced search, you can exclude words, search by hashtag, find tweets from one person to another, or find tweets referencing a person. You can also search for a word or phrase and then limit the search to a given distance from your hometown. For example, if you're a wedding photographer and you want to find conversations about wedding photography within 25 miles of New York City, your advanced search might look like the one show in like Figure 2-5.

Another option for you to try searching from is <http://nearbytweets.com>. You can search for tweets nearby your hometown about anything or about a specific topic. Figure 2-6 shows tweets near Sarasota, Florida, about photography. This site updates in real time.

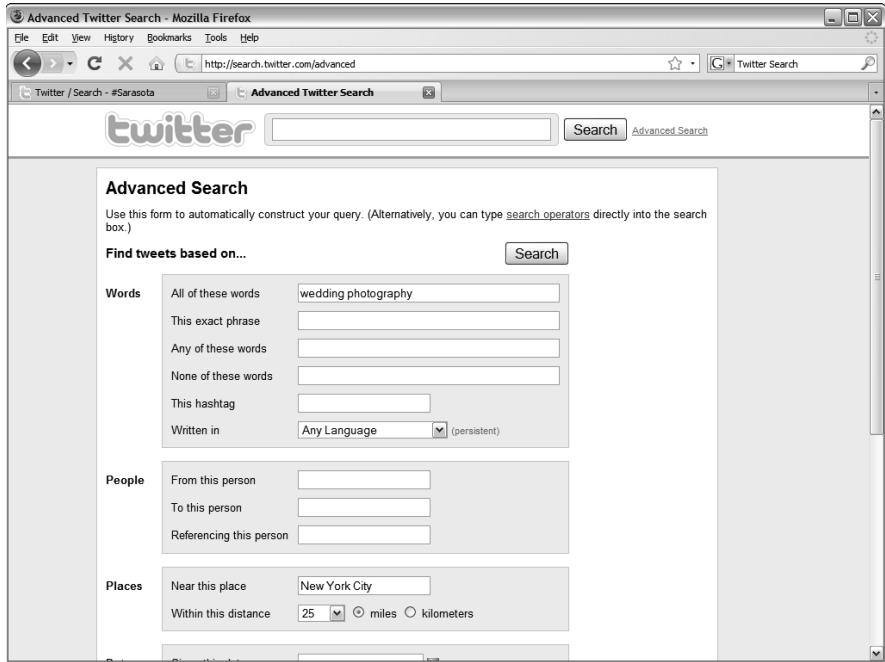


Figure 2-5:
Using the
Advanced
Search
feature.

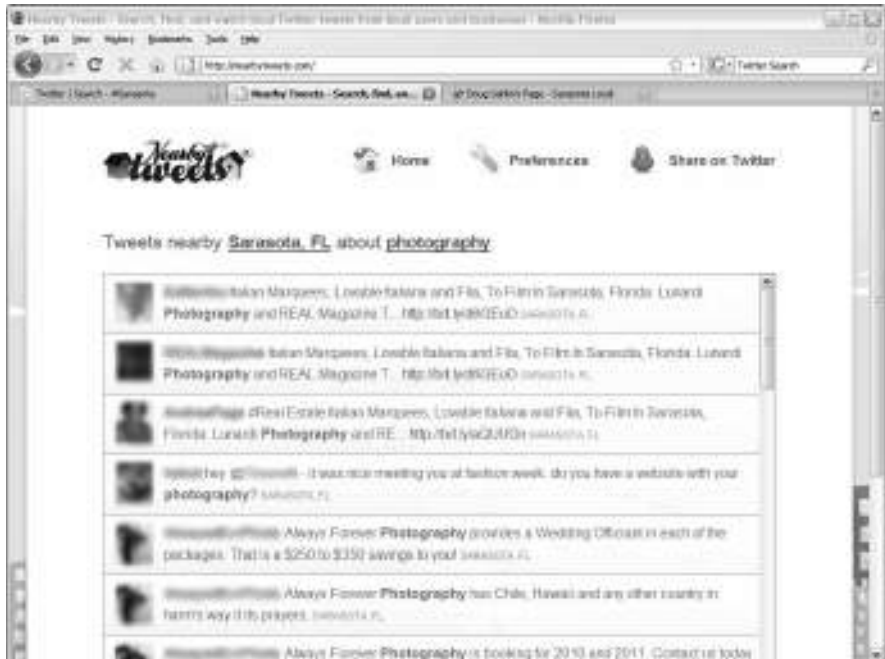


Figure 2-6:
Finding
tweets
near your
hometown.

The last application we want to talk about is the TwitterLocal desktop application. You can download and install this free, cross-platform application from www.twitterlocal.net. You can then search for tweeps within a given area from your zip code, as shown in Figure 2-7.



Figure 2-7: Using the TwitterLocal application.

Tweeting Like a Pro

Before you get involved in any serious tweeting, it's imperative to know what you're doing. Some conversations need to stay open to the public, and others need to be kept between yourself and one recipient. You also have ways to grab the attention of people who are interested in what you're tweeting about but are not following you. You can also hang on the coattail of someone else and regurgitate her tweet after adding your own secret sauce.

To get noticed on Twitter, you have to send some compelling tweets. Your goal is to establish yourself as an expert in your industry, by creating thoughtful informative tweets that are read by your followers. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, your followers may retweet the message, which is seen by their followers — people who may not be following you. When you start sending the right stuff, the number of people following you increases exponentially.



Ask questions on Twitter. When you ask questions, you involve users in a conversation. You can ask for information about the type of products you use or the type of information they want about your product or services. Twitter is also a great place to take an opinion poll.

You need to know lots of other information to tweet like a pro. We share this information with you in later sections of this chapter.

Catching on to Twitter lingo

When you become serious about tweeting, you have to make Twitter your second language. You can do lots of things to condense your messages. You find creative ways to condense your messages into 140 characters or fewer.



When you're creating your tweets, a space also counts as a character.

Here's an example of a message written in plain English:

I look forward to seeing your information later.

The sentence has 48 characters, including spaces.

Here's how to convert it into Twitterese:

I look 4ward 2 seeing ur info later.

This sentence has 29 characters, a net savings of 19 characters. Notice that we didn't change *later* to *L8R*. It would save two characters but would make followers think you're 12 years old.



To learn Twitterese, review the tweets of other users to see how they're condensing messages. Just remember to turn off Twitterese when you send an e-mail to someone or compose a letter.

Something else you need to condense is long URLs. At lots of different Web sites, you can condense a long URL into one that still gets the end user to the Web site without gobbling up lots of characters. Consider this URL:

www.dougplusrox.com/?p=200

This URL opens a blog post. It occupies a whopping 33 characters of the 140 you're allotted for a tweet.

When you need to say a lot and still have a URL in your message, launch your favorite Web browser and navigate to www.tinyurl.com — one of the many URL shortening services we cover in Book II, Chapter 1. After you enter your long URL in the text box and click Make TinyURL, you see the following line, for example:

<http://tinyurl.com/yaknyeo>

This line creates a perfectly functional URL and uses only 26 characters, a net savings of 7 characters, enough to type a short tweet and still have one character left. Here's an example of a tweet that includes a tiny URL:

<http://tinyurl.com/yaknyeo> A blog post about being creative w/ur digital camera

This example uses 79 characters, leaving plenty of room for your followers to add a note when they retweet the information about your brilliant blog post.



Never use the entire 140 characters you're allowed. When you leave room for more characters, your followers can retweet your message and still have room for a message of their own.

Twitterspeak

Twitter has its own language. After you use Twitter for a while, you get to know its lingo. To lessen your learning curve, we've created this miniglossary:

direct message: A message sent directly to another twitter user that isn't visible to any of your other followers.

Follow Friday: A hashtag (#FF or #followfriday) used to recommend people that your followers should follow.

hashtag: A symbol (#) used to categorize tweets. For example, if you're sending a tweet for photographers, a popular hashtag is

#togs or #photography. A useful resource for hashtags is <http://tagdef.com>.

retweet: A message authored by another Twitter user that you forward to your Twitter followers.

tweet: A twitter post.

tweeple, tweeps: People who use Twitter.

tweetup: A face-to-face social gathering of local tweeple.

twibe: The people who are following you.

Twitterati: Twitter celebrities or people who have a huge amount of followers.

Using the hashtag

If you want to draw attention to specific words in a post, or ensure that the post is noticed by a specific group, use the hashtag symbol (#). When people search for specific information on Twitter and want to make sure the word they're searching for is the main subject of the post and not just randomly added, they place the hashtag symbol before the word.

As an astute author of Twitter posts, you can draw attention to a specific topic. For example, if you're a photographer and you want to draw attention to your work with a wedding planner, send a tweet using `#wedding planner`. People who search for that topic will see your tweet. Come to think of it, you should send multiple tweets with the hashtag followed by the topic. Just make sure that the tweets aren't all the same. Mix it up, which is one key to success on Twitter.

Before you decide to send tweets with a hashtag, perform a search using the hashtag and your topic. This task shows you current conversations about the topic. You know whether the tweeters are your competition or potential clients. Used properly, the hashtag is quite powerful.

Replying to a Twitter user

When you see a message that's interesting, you may want to reply to the sender. When you reply to the sender, other people who are following him see it. If you send a compelling reply, his followers may end up following you. It pays to get involved in the conversation.

To reply to a message, follow these steps:

- 1. Pause the cursor over a message to which you want to reply.**

The options to reply or retweet the message appear, as shown in Figure 2-8.

- 2. Click Reply.**

A text field opens at the top of the Twitter page, shown in Figure 2-9.

- 3. Enter your reply.**

Be sure to leave the @ symbol and the username in the message. If you remove them, the message is seen by your followers and never reaches its intended user.

- 4. Click Reply.**

The reply is sent to the end user. Users can see the reply and any other messages sent to him by clicking the @ symbol and his username from his Twitter page.

Figure 2-8:
Get involved
in the
conversation.



Figure 2-9:
Tell him
what you
think.



Retweeting a message

When you first set up your Twitter account, you may have no earthly idea of what you want to say. However, you can get the ball rolling by retweeting messages from other Twitter users that you're following, or from messages you found in a Twitter search. A retweet is similar to forwarding an e-mail. You may even pick up followers when people see the brilliant tweets you retweet.



As you gain more experience with Twitter, mix plenty of original information in your tweets in addition to retweet tweets.

To retweet a message you think is profound, stimulating, or interesting, follow these steps:

1. **Pause the cursor over a message to which you want to reply.**

The options to reply or retweet the message appear (refer to Figure 2-5).

2. **Click Retweet.**

A dialog box appears underneath the tweet, asking whether you want to retweet to your followers, as shown in Figure 2-10.



Figure 2-10: Sending a retweet to your followers.

3. Click Yes.

The message is retweeted to your followers. Note that if the message contains close to 140 characters, the original author's username and your username may push the message over the character limit.



If the message is short enough, you can add your own words of wisdom to the retweet. You can also modify the original tweet and cut what you think is superfluous text, or you can condense the original tweet as outlined in the “Catching on to Twitter lingo” section, earlier in this chapter.

Sending direct messages

Everything you do on Twitter is public. It's seen by search engines, and every Twitter user who follows you or uses Twitter Search to look for tweets containing a word that appears in your message.



Don't send messages that contain confidential or personal information, because everything on Twitter is public.

However, sometimes you need to carry on a conversation with a Twitter user and keep it private from the rest of the world. When you need to do this, you send a *direct message* to the intended recipient.

To send a direct message, follow these steps:

1. From your Twitter home page, click Direct Messages.

The page refreshes and the number of direct messages you've received and sent are displayed, as shown in Figure 2-11.

2. Choose a user from the Send a Direct Message drop-down menu.

All the people who are following you and whom you are following appear on the list.

3. Enter a message in the text field and click Send.

The message is sent to the recipient you selected in Step 2.

To see your direct messages, click the Direct Message link on your Twitter page. If you use TweetDeck, you can display direct messages in a separate column.



Figure 2-11:
What's
written
between
us stays
between us.

Blocking people

Twitter is all about getting your message to the right people. You do your best to follow the right people and attract the right followers. Your goal is to find a friendly twibe of Twitter folks who hang on your every syllable and eventually become clients. But sometimes in spite of your best efforts, a few bad eggs end up in the basket.

Sometimes the bad eggs latch on to you after you get a good start. They see that you're gaining headway and want to grab your coattails and tag along for the ride. Admittedly, it's flattering when you receive an e-mail from Twitter saying that you have a new follower. But before you follow her, you need to be a bit of a detective and make sure that the person's on the up-and-up. Your first clue is the message that Twitter sends you. If the person has sent only a few tweets, has only a few followers, and is following everybody, his little brother, and their next of kin, something's decidedly smelling foul in Denmark. That type of person may be trying to sell something that neither you nor any of the other thousand or more people he's following particularly want to buy.

If the e-mail from Twitter raises your suspicions, click the link to view the person's profile. Look at the tweets he has sent. Do the tweets look like pure, unadulterated spam? If so, you have the option to block the user and report him as being a spammer from the user's Twitter page. Nobody likes a spammer in the works.

Log into your Twitter account, find that person's Twitter page, and click the little icon that looks like a gear to the right of their avatar, and then click Block User.



Wait a couple of days to see what the person is up to. Waiting often tells you whether the person is legitimate or a flash in the pan. Often, you find that a person's profile has been blocked after a couple of days because that person was spamming people.

Another problem you may have with followers is that they abuse the relationship. They may pick your brain and offer nothing in return. You can unfollow the person. Log into your Twitter account, clicking the gear to the right of the person's avatar, and then click Unfollow.

Starting Your Twitter Campaign

Twitter isn't your full-time job, and it shouldn't become one. Like everything else in a normal life (except for a writer's life on a deadline), you must create a balance. Create a balance between the amount of time you spend marketing your business on Twitter with your other activities, such as selling and stopping for the occasional cup of designer decaf — which costs almost as much as a cab ride in some cities — at your favorite coffee emporium.



Make sure to schedule Twitter time into your Social Media Marketing plan (see Book I, Chapter 2).

Make no mistake about it: You have to dedicate some time to Twitter if you're going to reap benefits. Here are some suggestions for getting your Twitter campaign rolling:

- ◆ **Spend some time researching new and interesting things about your industry or the products you sell.** You can find this information on the Internet or from the marketing material you receive from your vendors. Keep a folder on your desktop as a tickler file of interesting material you can use for future tweets.
- ◆ **Find out what time your followers are active.** Schedule this time for sending tweets.
- ◆ **Identify some followers who retweet your messages.** If you don't have many, search as outlined previously and find people who follow the type of content you post in your tweets and follow them. Many people will follow you in return, and your retweet machine will be primed. When you have a loyal band of retweeters, you're ready to take it to the next level.

After you know what time your followers are active and you have a tickler file, you're ready to start spreading your words of wisdom.

Becoming a Resource for Your Twibe

Your goal when marketing yourself or your company on Twitter is to establish yourself as a friendly resource for the type of product or service you represent. Notice that we didn't say your product or your service. If you're a Realtor and you send useful information about searching for new homes and information about finding the best mortgage, for example, Twitter followers will recognize you as a valuable resource on real estate. Your local tweeple will take notice. If you do your job right, they'll come to you when they need a new home or they'll recommend you to a friend who's buying or selling a home or to a distant relative who's thinking of moving into the area.

How do you become a resource for your twibe? Follow these guidelines:

- ◆ **Become a sponge.** Assimilate as much information as you can about your product or service. After you find the information, share it with your followers. They appreciate it.
- ◆ **Initiate two-way conversations.** Put some information out there and invite people to respond to you. Or, simply ask a question. If legislation has been issued that adversely affects your industry or users of your product or service, ask fellow Twitter users what they think about it. Engaging in lively banter about topics that people are interested in and offering solutions is an excellent way to establish yourself as an expert.
- ◆ **Mix it up.** Don't make every tweet about the business. Give followers an idea what happens behind the scenes. If you're a photographer, tell people what's involved in setting up a portrait shoot or in coordinating a makeup artist with a photo shoot.



Don't give away any trade secrets; your competitors may be following you.

- ◆ **Be open and friendly.** After you have a few dozen tweets under your belt, your followers will know that you're an expert. At that point, tell people you're available for questions, and be sure not to limit question topics to your business. Call yourself a guru if the shoe fits; just make sure that your followers know you're open to questions and not afraid to share your expertise. Eventually, one of your solutions will be in the form of a product or a part of your service.
- ◆ **If you hold online events, such as webinars, make sure to extend several invites to your Twitter followers.** When you tell them about the event, give a clear description of what is happening. Tell them exactly what will be discussed, and include a link to the Web page from which they can sign up for your event.
- ◆ **Be consistent.** Send informative tweets regularly.
- ◆ **Your Twitter followers will depend on you.** If you cannot tweet for a while, find someone else to fill your shoes and let your followers know

that you have a stand-in. Lots of people are on Twitter and vying for new followers. Missing a couple of days gives your followers a reason to forget about you and bail ship.

- ◆ **Tweet when you're on the road.** If you're going to be out of town for a couple of days on business, use your laptop to tweet from your hotel room. You can also tweet from your mobile phone. You can use lots of apps to tweet from your mobile device, which we discuss in Book IV, Chapter 3. When you tweet from a remote location, tell your followers. They appreciate your level of commitment.
- ◆ **At the risk of being redundant, don't promote your business blatantly on Twitter.** Cater to the needs of potential clients and you'll make friends and be recognized as a valuable resource. You cater to the needs of your clients every day. Your Twitter followers have the same needs, which makes it easy for you to fulfill them.
- ◆ **Follow Twitter users in industries or professions closely related to yours.** If you don't have the answer, you can ask your Twitter colleague for it or recommend her to your follower. Take a look at their followers as well. They may be potential clients for you. People in industries related to yours can also be helpful referral sources.

Following Twitter Rules of Etiquette (Twittiquette)

Twitter is like any other form of social interaction: You can do it the right way or the wrong way. People who conform to the rules — Twitter etiquette, if you will — are accepted by the community. The community doesn't accept people who break the rules. That doesn't mean you can't add your own creativity and humor to your tweets, however — it just means that you should stay within certain guidelines to be accepted by the majority of the community.



Here are some guidelines to consider:

- ◆ **You don't have to follow everyone who follows you.** You may think it's rude not to return the love, but as a businessperson, you have only so many hours in the day. Follow the people who interest you and who you think will benefit your business.
- ◆ **Don't be offended if someone doesn't return your follow or decides to unfollow you.** If the relationship isn't reciprocal, it isn't worth it.
- ◆ **Don't be misleading.** Make perfectly clear that you represent a business and are there to market your company — but also make sure that followers know you will provide useful information about your product and services, not an endless stream of invites to go to your Web site or visit your online store.
- ◆ **Don't be a robot.** Mix it up and show your personal side. People tend to shy away from Twitter users who don't show a sense of humor.

- ◆ **Keep the personal stuff private.** Create a direct message when you only need to speak with one person. Twitter is crowded. Adding tweets that have no meaning to your followers clogs up their timelines.
- ◆ **Keep the boring tweets to yourself.** If you need to tell someone what you had for lunch, create a personal Twitter account or send the interested party a direct message. After all, only your mother and maybe your significant other care what you had for lunch.
- ◆ **Use the @username rather than a direct message to reply to a conversation thread.** This strategy injects your opinion into the thread.
- ◆ **Don't be argumentative.** Feel free to voice an opinion in response to a general conversation, but keep it polite and low key.
- ◆ **Don't use direct messages to ask the opinions of followers you don't know well.** Post a general message to all of your followers and ask their opinion.
- ◆ **Don't use all caps when you send tweets.** This style is considered shouting and is in poor taste.
- ◆ **Respond to important messages.** Replying to every direct message or mention can be difficult. However, responding to important messages keeps your tribe of followers intact.
- ◆ **When you create a tweet that you want to be retweeted, keep it to no more than 120 characters.** Followers then have a chance to retweet your message and add a comment without truncating the tweet.
- ◆ **If you set up a customer service Twitter account for your business, follow everyone who follows you.** If you don't follow someone who follows you, this could be taken as a sign that you're not interested in doing business with them.
- ◆ **Don't use foul language.** It's the equivalent of cursing loudly in a public place.
- ◆ **Make sure that your links work before you include them in a tweet.** We recommend cutting and pasting the URL (including any short URLs) into your browser to ensure that the right Web page appears.
- ◆ **Don't send tweets when you're under the influence.** One tweet while you're tipsy may be amusing, but it's not a good idea.
- ◆ **Make sure that your complete words are spelled correctly and use proper punctuation.** Using abbreviations and contractions is okay, but your goal is to leave a good impression with your followers.

Giving and Getting Recommendations on Follow Friday

Follow Friday is a time-honored Twitter tradition. Every Friday, Twitter users send a tweet with the hashtag `followfriday`. The tweet lists the names of the Twitter followers the sender is recommending to his followers. When a Follow Friday message is sent that recommends you, it's considered good form to add the sender to your Follow Friday list. This is a great way to get more followers and interact with the community.

If you have valuable resources on Twitter or faithful followers who you know can be knowledgeable resources for your Twitter followers, you get a chance to sing their praises once a week using a time-honored tradition known as Follow Friday. On any Friday, simply use the at-symbol (@) followed by the username you want to recognize. Separate with a space each follower you want to recommend. End the message with the hashtag symbol (#) and `followfriday`.

Here's a sample of a Follow Friday tweet:

```
@curlyHoward @moeHoward @larryFine #followfriday
```

Advertising on Twitter

If you decide that your writing isn't persuasive enough and you need some help to toot your horn, consider advertising on Twitter. Advertising takes the form of sponsored tweets or ads. If you decide to invest in advertising on Twitter, mix in some real tweets with the sponsored stuff. If you rely solely on ads, your followers will see it as spam and unfollow you. Here's a list of advertising sources for you to investigate:

- ◆ **adCause:** <http://adcause.com>
- ◆ **Magpie:** <http://be-a-magpie.com/en>
- ◆ **SocialSpark:** <http://socialspark.com>
- ◆ **Sponsored Tweets:** <http://sponsoredtweets.com>