

So many people we meet through our training find it very difficult to understand what Twitter can offer them, as well as how to use it. We know how valuable it is for a business, and we want you to love it as much as we do. So let us talk you through it, right from the beginning.

What is Twitter?

Twitter is a real-time social network with over 284 million monthly active users and 500 million tweets sent every day.

It was launched in 2006, and allows people to discover what is happening all over the globe right now, to share information and to connect with others wherever they are and whatever they are doing.

80% of tweets are accessed from a mobile site, and this is only set to increase. 83% of businesses would recommend Twitter to other small or medium sized businesses.

Therefore the power that Twitter has to reach your potential customers and increase awareness for your business is enormous. But don't be scared – we're here to help you.

What is a tweet?

A tweet is a message, posted on Twitter, containing 140 characters or less. It can include text, photos, links or videos. However, if you are adding any of these they will automatically take up 22 characters on your allotted amount.



What is a Twitter handle (@)?

Every account begins with an @. To tag (or include) someone else in your tweet you use '@username' and they will get notified that you have

mentioned them and therefore you can start a conversation. It is useful to note that if you use the @ at the beginning of the tweet, that tweet can only be seen by both yours and the recipients followers. This means it is more private, but cannot be seen by a wider audience.

If you are tweeting as a marketing tool, then use the @ in the middle of the text, or add a simple full stop before your tweet.



How about a hashtag, what does that mean?

A hashtag is a way of getting involved in a wider conversation. A hashtag can be any word or phrase, which cannot include punctuation, that starts with the # symbol. This word or phrase can be used to communicate with others talking about the same subject – you may have seen on television whilst watching your favourite programme a phrase in the corner with the symbol. If you search this hashtag you find tweeters all over the world tweeting about that subject. It is a very powerful tool which we will explore in detail later on.

Why do I click 'follow'?

By following a user, this means that every tweet they send will appear in your newsfeed.



What does RT mean?

RT stands for 'retweet'. A retweet is when you copy someone else's tweet to your own followers. You can directly RT the tweet, or you can add some of your own comments to the RT before you press send. This is useful for any relevant information that you have seen on Twitter that your own followers may be interested in.

If you get retweeted, remember to thank people – they have just sent your information to a potential huge audience that you may not be able to contact.

What is 'favourite'?

Clicking on the star underneath the tweet 'favourites' it. Favouriting a tweet is an acknowledgement that you are grateful for a tweet that you may have been mentioned in, but it also serves as a bookmark, enabling you to find that tweet later on with ease.

Why do we love Twitter?

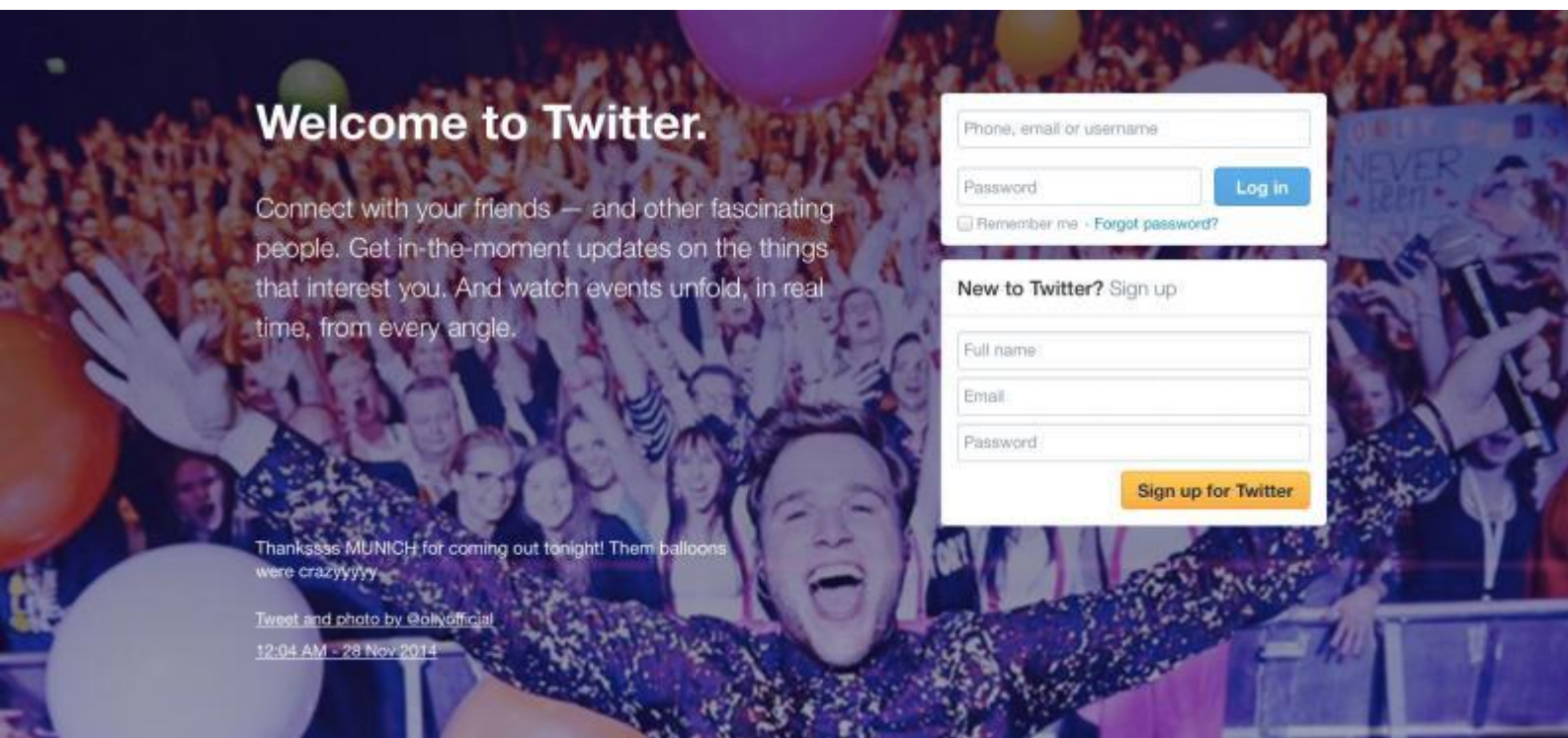
Twitter enables us insight into a huge world that we wouldn't otherwise be able to access. We can communicate with others throughout the globe. We can reach so many people about our business. It breaks down barriers and allows you to connect with everyone and anyone. It doesn't take long to tweet, RT or interact any you can do it wherever you are!

Getting started

So, now you have a bit of knowledge you need to choose a username. This should include your business name as this will raise your profile with every tweet sent. Check that your business name is available, but if it isn't, aim to include it in your name. Make sure your username is easy to spell and if you can, keep it short.

It is easy to sign up – just log into twitter.com and register your details. You will need your full name, email and a password. It will then talk you through the process.

Choose a good profile picture (avatar) and get rid of the egg that is there initially when you sign up. This is usually a logo if you are tweeting as a business. Write a short profile about you/your business. Make sure it describes you well and keep it short and interesting. You can also include keywords that people may search for it looking for a business such as yours. You can update your profile at another time, so nothing is set in stone – you may want to add awards or accomplishments further down the line. Your avatar can also be changed when needed; it may be that you want it to be seasonal depending on your business.

A screenshot of the Twitter website's login and sign-up interface. The background is a vibrant photograph of a crowd of people at a concert or event, with many people raising their hands and holding up phones. The interface is overlaid on the right side of the image. It includes a "Welcome to Twitter." heading, a brief description of the service, a tweet from a user named @ollyofficial, and two main forms: a login form with fields for "Phone, email or username" and "Password", and a sign-up form with fields for "Full name", "Email", and "Password". A "Log in" button is next to the password field, and a "Sign up for Twitter" button is at the bottom of the sign-up form. There are also links for "Remember me" and "Forgot password?".

Welcome to Twitter.

Connect with your friends — and other fascinating people. Get in-the-moment updates on the things that interest you. And watch events unfold, in real time, from every angle.

Thanksssss MUNICH for coming out tonight! Them balloons were crazyyyyyy

[Tweet and photo by @ollyofficial](#)
12:04 AM · 28 Nov 2014

Phone, email or username

Password [Log in](#)

Remember me · [Forgot password?](#)

New to Twitter? [Sign up](#)

Full name:

Email:

Password:

[Sign up for Twitter](#)

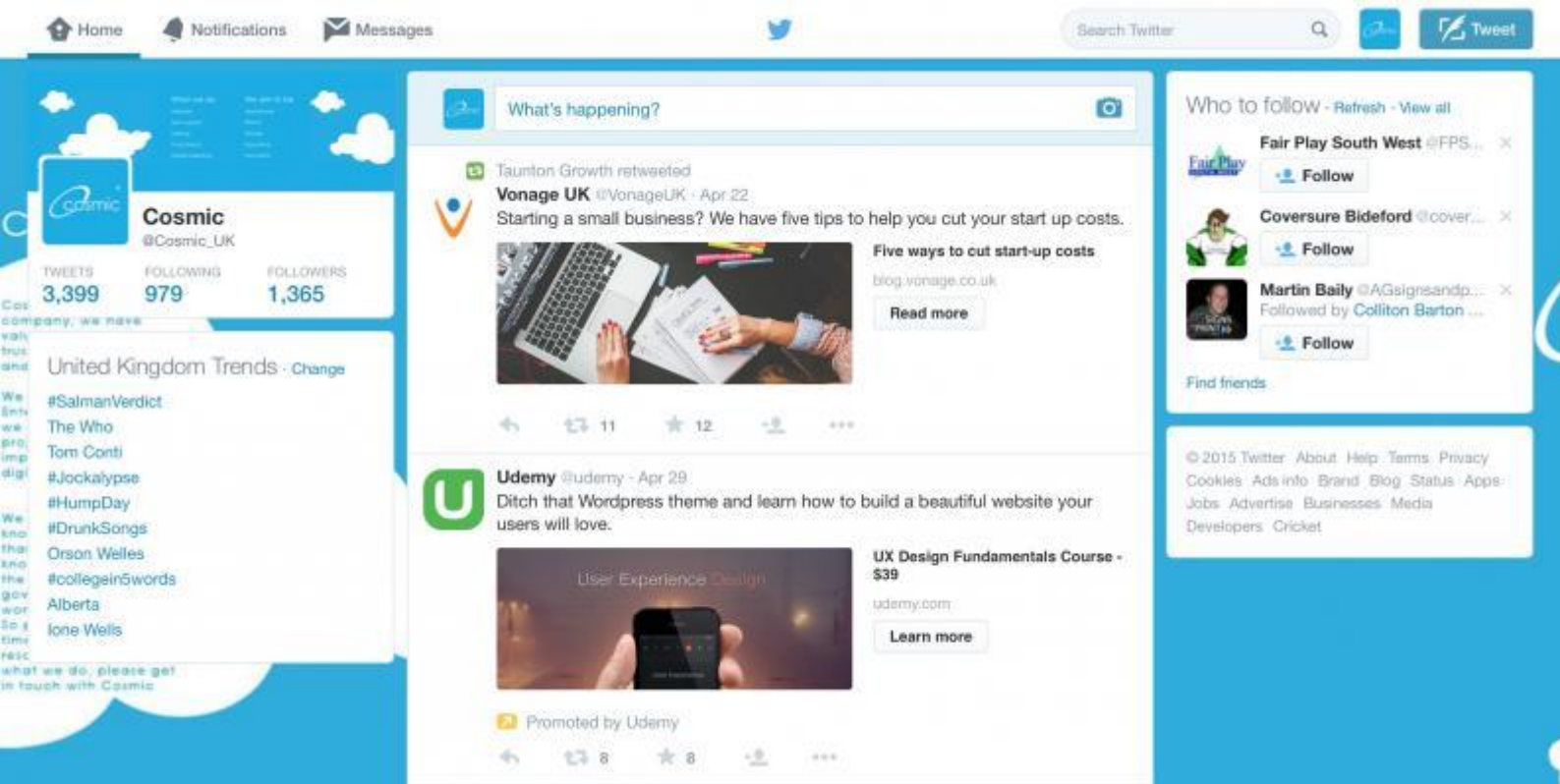
Now what?

So the first thing to do once registered is to start following people. Search in the top right hand corner for names of businesses or people you are already in contact with through other channels, or click on 'who to follow' just underneath the search box on the right hand side. You can add a category and twitter will recommend people to follow based on your suggestions. You can also find your friends who are already using twitter.

All you need to do is go onto the account and click 'follow' and that's it! It is likely that those you follow will return the favour and therefore you are now starting to get a following. Once you start following an account you are interested in, you can find out who they follow, or who follows them and start following them too. You can already see how easy it is to build up a wider database of contacts.

Ideas of who to follow:

- Journalists– local and national
- Local organisations and businesses relevant to your own
- Charities
- Retailers
- Colleagues & clients
- Local councillors
- Events and attractions



Once you have started following accounts, your newsfeed will start scrolling through with all those tweets that the accounts are writing. You can now get an insight into what they are talking about that may be relevant to you – you will be amazed at the wealth of information that is now at your fingertips! Now is the time to start retweeting anything you find interesting, and replying to tweets that you want to find out more about. Building up a conversation with your peers is now easy!

And now start tweeting yourself – whatever you may be involved in, start letting your followers know. Don't be shy, start talking!

Adding images or videos is a great way to bring interest to a newsfeed, so if it is relevant do include these in your tweet. Links can also be added. If you are using a Twitter management Tool (more of these to follow in another 'how to') it will automatically reduce your link for you, however if not then you will need to update your link to bitly.com to get a shortened URL.

Using Hashtags

Once you are getting the hang of tweeting you can start bringing hashtags into your tweets. It may be a hashtag that you have seen during conversations or one you have searched for. This will enable you to be seen by far more people than those who follow you.

Useful hashtags to follow can be industry based, interest based, or media based. There are also a huge number of 'hashtag hours' such as #DevonHour which can help introduce you to other businesses within your location. If you search these then you can find out when they run. #Journorequest is also a useful hashtag to follow if you have newsworthy material. You may see a request that is applicable to you!



The screenshot shows the Twitter profile for Cosmic (@Cosmic_UK). The profile banner features the Cosmic logo and the text: "training", "Consultancy", "Digital marketing", "Priority", "Supportive", and "Innovative". The profile statistics are: TWEETS 3,399, FOLLOWING 979, FOLLOWERS 1,365, FAVORITES 219, and LISTS 4. The bio states: "Cosmic is an award winning ethical I.T. company, a social enterprise, housing web development, tech support, training & consultancy under one friendly roof". The location is "Devon, England" and the website is "cosmic.org.uk". The profile was joined in February 2009 and has 234 photos and videos. The tweets section shows three tweets from Cosmic, each with a link and a "View summary" button. The "Who to follow" section lists three accounts: Fair Play South West, Coversure Bideford, and Martin Baily. The "United Kingdom Trends" section shows "#SalmanVerdict" and "The Who".

Profile

You can see our profile in the above image. This is what you will see if you click on to a user's profile, which can help you decide whether you want to follow them. The profile picture is our logo. There is a brief description of who we are below that, and the long image along the top allows us to reveal more information about ourselves.

You can see that we have 1,365 followers and are following 979 accounts. We have sent 3,399 tweets.

In the top left hand corner you will see three icons – this is where you will see if you have received any notifications or messages, and you can click on these to read and respond.



The screenshot shows a Twitter newsfeed with the Cosmic profile on the left. The newsfeed contains several tweets, including one from Workango, a retweet by Ian Watoop, a tweet by Jon Snow, a tweet by Colyton Grammar, a tweet by Katharine Bourke, and a tweet by Children's HospiceSW. On the right side, blue annotations explain specific features of the tweets: the 'bit.ly' link, retweet counts, hashtags, and retweets with comments.

Annotations on the right side:

- The 'bit.ly' is a shortened link. A hashtag has also been used.
- This tweet has been retweeted 276 times and favoured 149 times. It is in our newsfeed because we follow IanWatoop who has retweeted it.
- An informative post about a food fair which includes 4 other accounts. It also includes the hashtag #EastDevonHour so you would see this tweet if you follow the hashtag.
- This is a retweet that has an additional comment. The RT is in the box.

Above is a screenshot of a typical newsfeed. We have highlighted on the right hand side what is individual about each tweet, which hopefully explains it clearer for you.

What to do and what not to do on Twitter

Like all social media, twitter works best when you are interacting with your followers. Build up trust and a rapport with them, retweet their tweets, answer their questions and show interest in what they are doing.

If someone retweets you or mentions you, acknowledge this – thank them. Try to do it relatively soon after the tweet has been sent (if you can.)



Always show your personality, let people appreciate the human behind the brand. You want your customers to know you, and then they will buy into what you are selling. Act as if you are chatting face-to-face - be friendly and authentic. People love a bit of humour too, if it is appropriate. Be YOU!



As a business, you have so much content to share with your followers that you should never be short of things to be tweeting about. Use Twitter as a tool to direct people to your blog, your shop, your website. Tell your followers about your motivations, inspirations and interests. Tell them about local events, news stories and attractions. It may seem like every day details to you, but it is of huge interest to them.

We tell our clients not to 'sell' your business or your product – yes this may seem strange at first but try to use the 80/20 principle. 80% of your tweets should be interaction with others and then once that trust has been built you can start letting them know what is on offer with your business (the other 20%.) You may want to let them know about new



products or services, offers or promotions. Your followers will then show interest and RT your tweets as you have been doing for them.

Don't tweet too much, and try not to link from other accounts. Think about what would make you 'unfollow' an account, and learn not to do that. Don't clog up people's newsfeeds with spam, or unlimited links from other pages. There is nothing worse than seeing a newsfeed clogged up with links that are irrelevant or unexplained.

Don't get into arguments or debates on Twitter. If you have an unhappy client or customer who contacts you through Twitter, respond and apologise online but take the conversation offline. But don't think that negative feedback is always negative – how you respond to it can also be extremely positive for your business.

Take a look at this article: [Retailer follow up on negative reviews pays off](#)

Don't get upset if you aren't followed back, or if you get unfollowed. It may be that your content isn't relevant at that time. Concentrate on the people who *are* following you and give them what they want to hear! And try to remember correct spelling and grammar. Take a second to read through the tweet before sending to make sure.

And the question we get asked all the time...

How often should you tweet?

There really is no definite answer to this, but you should be tweeting daily, even if it is just once. Make sure the content you are tweeting about is good quality and relevant. It is good to try tweeting at different times of the day to get a good variety of response.

And that's it! Hopefully you now have the confidence to go out there and do it yourself. Just remember when you are starting out – everyone else was in exactly the same position as you once. Don't be shy; log on, sign up and Tweet. Come follow us [@Cosmic_UK](#) and let us know we've helped you conquer your fear!