

Twitter Training for Real Estate Agents

An introduction to the fastest growing social media platform in the world, and how you can use it to help build your real estate business.



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What is Twitter?

Twitter (<http://www.twitter.com>) is a micro-blogging communications platform intended for the quick sharing of information. It was originally inspired by the idea of an away-message, melded with the simplicity and mobility of SMS. Beginning as an experiment, Twitter, Inc. was founded in San Francisco in 2007.

twitter



Twitter allows users to read and write brief, public messages (of up to 140 characters, including all punctuation and spaces). A singular aspect is that the network is recipient-driven... you decide what sort of messages, and from whom, you want to receive.

The network is named Twitter after the sound that birds make when they communicate with each other. It also imitates the seamless way a flock of birds can move together, because of Twitter's unique real-time group conversation and information. For example, street vendors who have to place their cart or truck in a different location each day can now use Twitter, and "tweet" to their "followers" the exact street or lot they're at on a given day. Or a small, family-owned market can tweet specials to its customers/followers, for example that all summer stone fruit is on special this week.

Twitter can send and receive messages, or "tweets," just as easily from mobile phones and devices as from desktop computers, increasing the immediate, pertinent, public communication possibilities.

A Key Twitter Benefit

The informal, conversational mode of communication on Twitter allows for relaxed and natural interaction, encouraging relationships to grow and deepen, between friends as well as between customers and businesses. This is a unique feature of Twitter, and something most real estate agents would be hard-pressed to find in another medium.

Because it's recipient-driven and real-time, Twitter shrinks the emotional distance between a real estate agent and his or her clients. It lets you, the agent, engage with clients and prospects as people, allowing a friendly relationship to develop, and providing you the agent with the opportunity to provide expertise and market knowledge. That leads to business.

It gives clients direct access to you, to your firm and/or employees, to partners, vendors and everyone important to your business. Because its public, it also allows clients to provide comments about their experience with your work and your customer service. Glowing client "tweets" (messages or posts) about the stellar customer service and matchless expertise they received from you as their agent will likely lead to more business... Twitter is essentially super-charged word-of-mouth. Listening and engaging on the service being received leads to a happier client, an improved client experience, and ultimately, a fervent advocate. And as we all know, passionate testimonials often lead to more clients.

Twitter Demographics & Statistics

A recent article in eMarketer provided some interesting statistics about Twitter usage. You may read the entire article here:

Do You Know Who's On Twitter?

eMarketer.com

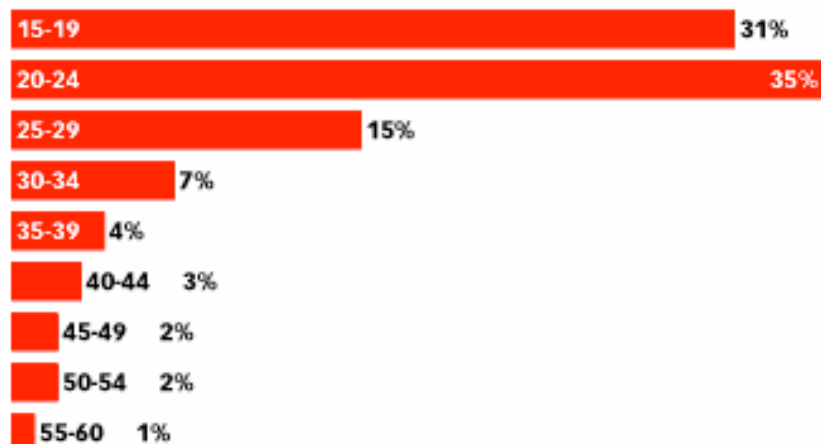
August 28, 2009

<http://www.emarketer.com/Article.aspx?R=1007250>

Below are some of the key findings about Twitter users by age, Tweets per day, by number they follow, and by number of followers:

Twitter Users Worldwide, by Age, May 2009

Twitter Users Worldwide, by Age, May 2009 (% of total)



Note: based on a sample set of 0.7% of users who disclosed their age

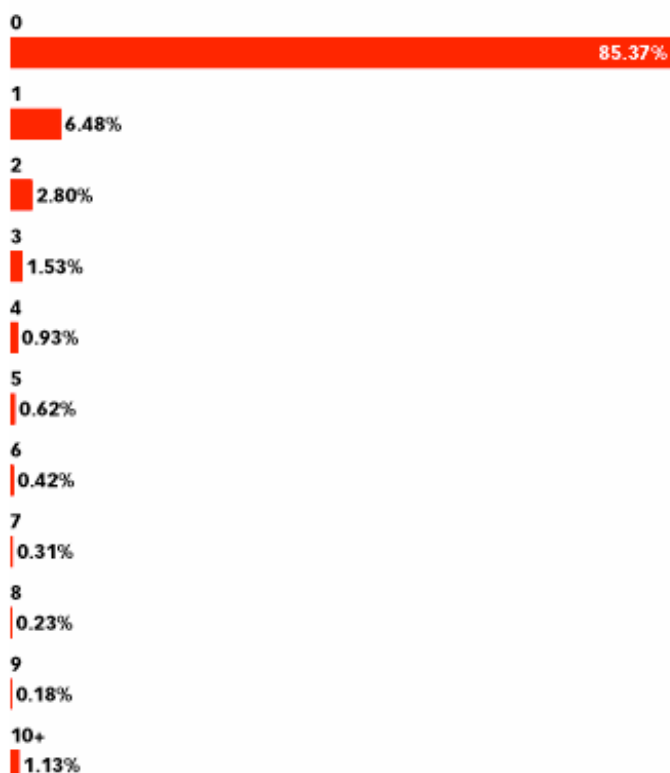
Source: Sysomos, "An In-Depth Look Inside the Twitter World," June 1, 2009

106155

www.emarketer.com

Average Number of Tweets (messages) per Day by Twitter Users

Average Number of Tweets per Day by Twitter Users Worldwide, May 2009 (% of total)



Note: numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding
Source: Sysomos, "An In-Depth Look Inside the Twitter World," June 1, 2009

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www.eMarketer.com

Twitter Users Worldwide, by Number of Followers, May 2009 (% of total)

Twitter Users Worldwide, by Number of Followers, May 2009 (% of total)

# of followers	% of total
1-100	93.68%
101-200	2.75%
201-300	1.04%
301-400	0.57%
401-500	0.36%
501-600	0.26%
601-700	0.20%
701-800	0.15%
801-900	0.12%
901-1,000	0.10%
1,001+	0.77%

Source: Sysomos, "An In-Depth Look Inside the Twitter World," June 1, 2009

106161

www.eMarketer.com

Twitter Users Worldwide, by Number they *Follow*, May 2009 (% of total)

# they follow	% of total
1-100	92.46%
101-200	3.52%
201-300	1.21%
301-400	0.60%
401-500	0.38%
501-600	0.26%
601-700	0.19%
701-800	0.17%
801-900	0.15%
901-1,000	0.13%
1,001+	0.92%

Note: numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding
 Source: Sysomos, "An In-Depth Look Inside the Twitter World," June 1, 2009

106157 www.eMarketer.com

Twitter Stats Resources

The following are a few sites which offer interesting views into Twitter statistics:

Twitter Counter

<http://twittercounter.com/>

Twitter Analyzer

<http://twitteranalyzer.com/>

Twitterholic

<http://twitterholic.com/>

Word to the Wise: An Important Twitter Warning

Given that the most singular aspect of Twitter is its ability to engage people and shrink the emotional distance between clients and yourself, the last thing you want to do is give the “hard sell.” Aggressive sales pitches never work on social media, because social media are about relationships. Imagine greeting the friend you meet every morning for coffee with that day’s top MLS listings... soon you’ll be drinking your morning latte alone!

The more transparent you are, the more appealing... just as everyone wants to hang out with genuine people, everyone wants to do business with genuine people. Just be sure to write “tweets” that mix the personal and authentic (“i.e., “At the Sentinel downtown: Best corned beef on home-baked focaccia ever! Line’s out the door! Come on down, eating outside.”), with occasional updates on new listings and links to your website or blog, where you can provide the more detailed information on current listings, articles and information. Remember that Twitter is a conversation, or at times, a dialogue. It is not a monologue.

Definitely engage your followers, by asking them questions, starting conversations, asking their opinions, and sharing insights *directed at them*. Leave, “I’m a top producer!” and “Look at this hot new listing!” for somewhere else... regular users of Twitter, “tweeters” or “twitterers,” will not follow you, and may even block you, if you blatantly use the network for marketing.

Getting Started

1. Username:

Pick your username carefully. Go for recognizable and clear, because the username is what people go by when they're looking to follow you, i.e., *LisaRobinsonRealty* or even just your name *LisaRobinson*. Avoid anything that could be misconstrued, controversial, or offensive, i.e., *HotJuicyLisa*, *TequilaLisaRobinson*, or *OurOfIraqNow!Lisa*.

2. Public Profile:

After you pick your username, you need to setup your public profile before you can begin to tweet. Your public profile is what people will see when they visit [Twitter.com/yourusername](https://twitter.com/yourusername), and as the name itself states, it's totally public. You share your name, location, links to your website and/or your blog, and you provide a 160-character description of yourself. Be sure to save what you enter.

And if your information changes, it's simple to update your profile. Simply login to Twitter, click "settings," and make your changes. You can also add a photo to your profile, and can even update the background of the public profile.

3. Settings:

Be sure to set the "phone and IM" settings, also located on the "settings" page – then, you'll be able to send and receive tweets on your mobile phone and IM client. Being able to send and receive tweets on the go is one of the best features of Twitter, and one of the most useful aspects for real estate agents.

4. Following:

Following is how you converse with others. Use the search function to find people by typing in a keyword. From a person's profile page, you can

click the “follow” and receive all of his or her tweets. Once you choose to follow someone, you can also see everyone else who is following that person, as well as whom that person is following.

5. Commands:

The command “@username” is called a reply. When you reply to someone, that person will receive a notification that you have said something to him. You can also adjust your settings so that you’re notified when someone sends a “@,” or a reply, to you.

Use another command, “d username,” when you want to send a direct, private message to someone. It won’t show up in your Twitter stream at all.

6. Twitter Apps & Add-ons:

There are several programs and services available that can organize, streamline, or enhance your Twitter experience. Some can be installed on your computer and sit right on your desktop, displaying your feed and allowing you to post tweets without having to actually go to Twitter.com. Some are web services:

Snitter (for Mac & Windows)

Requires that you download Adobe Air in order to install. Has several features and options, including one that shrinks URLs so that you save having to go to a separate site. This is among the more robust programs for Twitter, and the fastest, but switching between streams requires a selection from a drop-down menu, which can be annoying.

Spaz (for Mac & Windows)

Also requires you install Adobe Air first. Has the same features and options as Snitter, but lacks as many formatting options. That said, it is the best looking and has the best interface—it features tabs for your

timeline, and your direct messages and replies. It can, however, be a bit buggy.

Twitterific (Mac & iPhone)

Most Mac users use this, and it has a great design. But Spaz & Snitter have a few more features and can be easier to use. Twitterrific also provides functionality to upload images from an iPhone to a [Twitpic](#) account for posting on Twitter.¹

Tweetdeck (Mac & Windows)

Personal browser that shows everything you want to see at once, so that you can stay organized. Lets you customize with columns, groups, saved searches, & automatic updates to help you stay effortlessly updated with the people and topics you choose. As Tweetdeck itself says on its website, “We like to think of it as air traffic control for Twitter.”

Tinyurl.com

A web service that provides short aliases for redirection of long URLs, which can be very helpful on Twitter, where you’re only permitted 140 characters.

Ways to Use Twitter to Enhance Your Business

- **As an Educational Resource:**

Use Twitter as an educational resource, gathering real-time market intelligence and feedback. Find two or three people who inspire you and share ideas and insights with them. You can share or gain information from a colleague or associate, or from someone who inspires you in a different field (marketing and technology have especially embraced Twitter, and have come up with several ingenious ways of enhancing their businesses) that could potentially improve your method of doing business.

- **As a Networking Resource:**

After all, Twitter is a social medium based on connections, so it's fairly simple to meet like-minded people, especially those in your same field. Engage them and increase your network. Twitter is an easy way to deepen relationships and gain referrals.

- **Turn Professional Contacts Into Friends:**

Reach out to clients, vendors or business associates and turn them into friends. This can solidify future business and referrals. Invite a client to join Twitter, then they can follow you and vice-versa. And when engaged in the professional aspect of the relationship, the relationship will be much deeper than before. The benefits of a mobile, real-time network in which you can notify them of new listings and open houses, include links and websites so they can preview properties first, are ideal. And it can be entirely private.

- **Personal Branding:**

Twitter can be a great way to develop your personal brand... you can build your reputation as an experienced yet approachable real estate expert. Target future prospects by becoming a trusted advisor first.

- **Drive Traffic:**

Use Twitter to drive traffic to your latest blog posts, to your website, to interesting or pertinent articles, and to open houses and new listings. This access will help further your brand as an approachable expert.

- **Team Management & Coordination:**

Real-time, group conversation beats emailing back-and-forth all day, and forwarding the email chain when one party inevitably forgets to “copy all.” Also, consider Twitter as a method to set up meetings, with staff or clients. It can be informal, as well... “I’ll be at Le Boulangerie until noon. Would love to see you there!”

- **Keep Clients Notified:**

Keep your clients notified and updated by having them follow you on Twitter. Tell them to check that they’re set for receiving text messages, and when hot properties become available, send one text or email to your account. By doing that, you’ll instantly message all your clients’ phones.

A Few Do's and Don't's

DO:

1. Concentrate your efforts

Consider creating a persona of your ideal client or customer. Focus on finding people like your ideal persona and follow them; you can find them using Twellow, Twitter's yellow pages. It categorizes followers based on their industry and geography, and ranks the returns based on number of followers. But that ranking is the default only; you can also sort by whether the person has verified their Twellow account or simply by recent activity. Every person listed in Twellow has a profile which, depending on whether or not they've verified their account, can contain important information, such as links to their web site or blog, their bio, and their latest Twitter updates.

2. Follow Real Names

This is the most straightforward way to know if this is a genuine account. Remember, it's best to use your real name when you set up your account.

3. Follow the *Real* People Who Follow You

These folks are likely already friends, or are in your industry. Regardless, it's common courtesy to follow those who are following you, as well as the people following the people following you, and the people following the people you are following, and so on.

4. Follow People in Your Industry

Some of the best uses of Twitter are to network, to gather feedback, and to get advice. It's a great tool for meeting others in your field, for polling professionals in your field, or finding old, archived information.

5. Follow Those Who “@reply” You

@Replies can be sent into the public timeline addressed to people you’re not following. If a user has addressed you in that way, it’s worthwhile to investigate following them.

6. Follow Those Who Use the Same Hashtags

A hashtag is this symbol (#), and it’s used on Twitter to signify a highly targeted conversation. They attract like-minded people, and encourage folks to chat at set dates and times, about topics relevant to them. There are chats for caterers, single dads, association managers, even feminists! Whether they’ve been created to monitor an event, talk about a subject, or just for an organized chat, hashtags leverage Twitter for learning, networking, and finding tribemates. @spkrinteractive (<http://twitter.com/spkrinteractive>) has created a Google Doc that tracks these chats and when they’re held.

DON’T:

1. Don’t Follow Those Who Only Broadcast

Unless the account is a “shopping tips” or news account, set up specifically for informative purposes, don’t follow someone who won’t participate in conversations with anyone else.

2. Don’t Follow Those Who Don’t Have an Avatar

If you can’t see their face, company logo, or some kind of avatar, don’t follow them.

3. Don’t Follow Those With Numbers After Their Names

Spammers, or “twammers,” often use this method (because they have

multiple accounts). When setting your username, don't use numbers or you'll seem like a spammer.

4. Don't Follow Users Based on Their Follower Count

One of the beauties of Twitter is how handily you can get to like-minded people. It's highly targeted. Highly targeted media delivers not *vast* numbers of eyeballs, but the *right* eyeballs.

There are just a few of the uses, do's, and don'ts of Twitter, which has all but eliminated agent-to-buyer separation... with the right focus, you can figure which of these ways, you can out *more* ways, to weave Twitter into your social media marketing plan!

You can follow Free Help For Real Estate Agents on Twitter at [@freehelpforreal](https://twitter.com/freehelpforreal):

Free Help for Real Estate Agents **twitter** Home Profile Find People Settings Help Sign out

What are you doing? 140

Latest: The art of letting go, short sale snafus, productivity tips, survey advice and more in tomorrow's newsletter. <http://tinyurl.com/lh5mu4> about 24 hours ago

Home

Steveoftheoc Just changed my twitter background, check it out! Found it at <http://www.TwitterBackground...>
4 minutes ago from API

scotty808 RT @KITV4: The Pacific Tsunami Warning Center says a wave of 2 to 3 feet predicted from Samoa Islands' quake.
4 minutes ago from txt

AbqDunn RT @jrnygirl @AshDHart touchscreen takes a while to get used to*** that touch screen does :) iPhone easy :)
5 minutes ago from Twittelator

AbqDunn RT @AshDHart playing with the blackberry storm seeing if i like it **** well, do you? :)
6 minutes ago from Twittelator

DebbieBremner Aid For Homeowners In Foreclosure Crisis: <http://tinyurl.com/ya9w7s9>
6 minutes ago from web

DebbieBremner State Bar Takes Unprecedented Action Against 16 Loan Modification Attorneys <http://tinyurl.com/ya9w7s9>
8 minutes ago from web

DebbieBremner Take a quick read of this new blog post: STATE BAR TAKES ACTION TO AID HOMEOWNERS IN FORECLOSURE CRISIS
21 minutes ago from Twitter Tools

Steveoftheoc hope everyone is ok on the islands hit by the quake and tsunami.

freehelpforreal
266 following 101 followers 20 tweets

Home

@freehelpforreal
Direct Messages 20
Favorites

Trending Topics

#haveuever
Google Wave
#battleoftheboroughs
American Samoa
Brand New Eyes
#mechanicaldummies
Senate Finance
Jon Gosselin
#Stoptheviolence
Hawaii

Following

RSS feed
RSS feed for this query

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How to Speak Twitter

Part funny, part practical, below follows a brief Twitter glossary, adapted from the following BusinessWeek article:

http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/09_64/s0904046705853.htm

At Reply, or @reply: A Tweet sent to another Twitter user.

Dweet: Tweet sent while drunk. (Really, really *bad* idea!)

Hash Tag: The # sign. Allows Twitter users to group tweets by topic, making it easier to search particular conversations using Twitter Search.

Link: Including a URL in your tweet.

MisTweet: A tweet one later regrets.

ReTweet: To repost something that's already in the Twitter stream. Usually preceded by "RT" and "@{username}", to give credit to the original poster.

SnapTweet: A tweet that includes a photo taken with a cell phone, uploaded to Flickr and posted to Twitter via snaptweet.com.

Twittcrastination: Procrastination brought on by Twitter use.

Twadd: To add someone as a friend or follower.

Twaigslist/TweBay: To sell something on Twitter.

Tweeter/Twitterer: Someone who uses Twitter.

TwinkedIn: Inviting Friends made on Twitter to connect on LinkedIn.

Twitlectomy: To remove someone from the list of people you know.

Twitterati: The A-List twitterers everyone follows.

Twitterfly: Twitter's version of a social butterfly, marked by extreme use of @ signs.

Twitterlooting: Twittering from the bathroom.

Twitterpated: Overwhelmed with Twitter messages.

Twittfeinated, Twiggged Out, Twired: To be so hyped up on twittering that you can't sleep.

Now You Know!

Hopefully this guide will start you down the path of Tweeting on Twitter, or at least help you understand what people are talking about when they bring up Twitter in conversation.

While this guide gives you an overview of how Twitter works (and can work for you), the best thing you can do is spend a little time experimenting with Twitter yourself. One thing is for sure: Twitter is a form of social media that isn't going anywhere... how it benefits you is now in your hands.

Sincerely cheering you toward real estate success,

Scott Levitt
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