

VISION-ONE PRESS

Using Twitter to Increase Online Profits

by Skip McGrath



Copyright ©2009, Skip McGrath and Vision-One Press. All rights reserved. This eBook is free. It may not be sold, but can be given away as is with no changes.

WWW.SkipMcGrath.Com

INTRODUCTION

I was very late to Twitter. It has been around about a year but honestly I couldn't see the value and I didn't think it would help my business. Boy was I wrong.

Since starting with Twitter I have been using it to promote my blog and my website and build my mailing list. I am still in the very early stages but the results have been spectacular. Within three weeks of setting up my Twitter account I have over 3000 followers –people who see my messages when I tweet (send out a message). I am also using Twitter to earn affiliate income. Here is a link to a system I bought that taught me how to do this:

<http://budurl.com/TOSyst>

The key to making this work is to build your Twitter list –the people who follow you on Twitter. If you can get hundreds or thousands of people following you that are interested in the topic you write about, then you can use twitter to drive traffic to your blog, your website or even landing pages of affiliate products you are promoting. Actually with this last method you don't even need a website or a blog. You can even use Twitter to drive traffic to your eBay listings.

But first you need to understand the basics of Twitter, how it works and how to set up your account. Once you create your account it can be a real pain to make changes, so you want to do it right the first time.

Rather than re-invent the wheel, here is a link to an excellent free eBook: **Mastering Twitter in Ten Minutes or Less, by Dirk Dubon.** [Just click here to download your copy.](#) I strongly recommend you read this book BEFORE you set up your twitter account.

WHAT IS TWITTER AND HOW DOES IT WORK?

Twitter is a free social networking and micro-blogging service that enables its users to send and read other users' updates known as tweets.

Tweets are text-based posts of up to 140 characters in length which are displayed on the user's profile page and delivered to other users who have subscribed to them (known as followers).

Senders can restrict delivery to those in their circle of friends or, by default, allow anybody to access them. Users can send and receive tweets via the Twitter website, Short Message Service (texting) or external applications. The service is free to use over the Internet, but you can incur fees if you are using Twitter on your cell phone.

Since it started in 2006 Twitter has gained extensive popularity and now has millions of users worldwide.

Estimates of the number of daily users vary, because the company does not release the number of active accounts. Late last year Forrester Research estimated that Twitter had 4 to 5 million users.

A February 2009 Compete.com blog entry ranked Twitter as the third most used social network (Facebook being the largest, followed by MySpace), which puts the number of unique monthly visitors at roughly 6 million and the number of monthly visits at 55 million. In March 2009, a Nielsen.com blog ranked Twitter as the fastest-growing site on the internet

Twitter had a growth of 1382%, Zimbio had a growth of 240%, followed by Facebook with a growth of 228%. Think about it. That is faster growth than eBay had in the early days when it was exploding.

Let's go back to the basic concept. Think of Twitter as a micro-blog. We all know what blogs are. They are a place where people can write about a specific topic and people who are interested in that topic will look for and follow your blog. Well Twitter is the same –but you only get 140 characters, including spaces.

You might think 140 characters isn't much –but it is much more than an eBay item title, more than a Google ad and more than the average classified ad.

Here is what a 140 character tweet looks like:



lattegirltoo Trainer Super Potion 2000 Geodude 1999 Moltres
2000 Porygon 1999 <http://tr.im/mP27> LOT POKEMON Trading
CARDS Nintendo CHARMELEON Magmar

Now that may not make a lot of sense to you unless you collect Pokémon trading cards. But this person is using Twitter to drive traffic to her eBay listing. If you click on the link in her tweet, it takes you to her eBay listing which looks like this:

The screenshot shows an eBay listing for "LOT POKEMON Trading CARDS Nintendo CHARMELEON Magmar". The item number is 200337799731. The listing includes a thumbnail of several Pokémon cards, a "Buy It Now" price of US \$9.99, and a deal alert stating it's less than \$20 including shipping within the US. The end time is May 31, 2009, at 12:59:53 PDT. Shipping is US \$3.00 via US Postal Service First Class Mail. The seller, lattegirltoo, has 3554 feedback points and is a PowerSeller. The listing also includes links to "Meet the seller", "Watch this item in My eBay", and "See detailed feedback".

This is an example of someone using Twitter to promote her eBay listings. But your Tweet could connect to anything including your website, your blog or even a ClickBank affiliate link.

I asked *Lattegirltoo* if I could use her example and I also asked her how she uses Twitter to promote her eBay auctions. If you think this doesn't work, here is what she has to say:

"The way I make my tweets is first I put the short URL¹ of the listing, if it's a store item I make sure I add the store referral credit to the end of my url before I shorten it. Then I put the full listing title behind the URL and in front of the URL I put the benefits of the product till I run out of the 140 characters.

Twitter tweets are highly picked by Google and that's my purpose, not to gain followers. I also used Twitterblast that I purchased from PowerSelling Mom (also on Twitter) and she blasted my links for a week on twitter.

She has over 2000 followers. Personally I don't tweet a lot, maybe up to 10 listings / day. It all depends how am I meeting my selling goals. If my goals are met, I don't tweet (LOL).

Based on my Omniture reports, Twitter is my number 6 referring domain as of today right after, eBay, Google, eBay UK, my domain VeryDesperateHousewife and eBay Canada.

This is how you use Twitter to increase your eBay sales. Later we will show you how to use Twitter to promote your website or affiliate listings. The technique is very similar.

¹ You can make short URL at www.budurl.com or www.tinyurl.com. BudURL is my favorite as you can keep and track your links. It's free to casual users and only \$4.00 month for more frequent users. This is a great affiliate tool

BUILDING FOLLOWERS ON TWITTER

Followers are the people who elect to receive your tweets when you send them out. Getting a lot of people to follow you is the key to using Twitter as an e-marketing tool.

Take a look at my Twitter home page:

The screenshot shows a Twitter interface. At the top left is a text input field with placeholder "What are you doing?". To its right is a large blue button with the number "140" in white. Below this is a tweet from "SirLancelotSV" about eBay wholesale sources, with a timestamp of "less than 5 seconds ago from web". The next tweet is from "ebaylovers" about a Jackson family autopsy, with a timestamp of "less than 20 seconds ago from twitterfeed". The third tweet is from "MasterParks" about poker software, with a timestamp of "less than 20 seconds ago from web". On the right side of the screen is a sidebar for the user "Skip_McGrath". It displays the following statistics: 2,790 following, 3,292 followers, and 103 updates. A red arrow points from the text "How many people I am following and how many people are following me (followers)." to the "following" and "followers" counts in the sidebar. Below these stats are sections for "Home", "@Skip_McGrath", "Direct Messages" (1,185), and "Favorites". At the bottom of the sidebar are "Trending Topics" (including "Tweetboard Alpha", "MJ's", and "Iran"), a search bar, and a magnifying glass icon.

If you look on the upper right under my photo you will see how many people I am following and how many people are following me (followers). As you can see, when this screenshot was taken, I had 3292 followers (I have almost 5000 now). That may sound like a lot, but it's not –many people have thousands more followers. But I built those followers with just a few hours of effort. Whenever I have a little spare time, I open my Twitter page and start getting followers.

If you want to follow me on Twitter, here is a link to my page: http://twitter.com/Skip_McGrath

The trick to doing this is both simple –and a little boring. So how does it work? I call it *Follow To Get Followed*. Once you learn this you can gain between 50-100 followers with about 10-20 minutes work. If you were to spend 20 minutes a day doing this, you could build up a list of 1000 followers in about 7-10 days.

Here is how it works. About $\frac{1}{2}$ of the people on Twitter automatically follow anyone who follows them. So the simple tactic to build your list is to follow other people. Now how do you find the people to follow?

Well that depends on your topic. Remember lattegirltoo who was promoting her Pokémon cards? Let me use her as an example.

If you also collected or sold Pokémon cards, then her followers would be a logical place to start. Let's start by looking at her Twitter profile page:

A screenshot of a Twitter profile page for the user 'lattegirltoo'. The profile picture is a woman with blonde hair. The username 'lattegirltoo' is displayed in large, dark purple font. Below the name is a grey button with a green checkmark and the word 'Following'. The user's bio is written in purple text:
Trainer Super Potion 2000 Geodude
1999 Molters 2000 Ponyta 1999
<http://tr.im/mP27> LOT POKEMON
Trading CARDS Nintendo
CHARMELEON Magmar
A timestamp 'about 1 hour ago from tr.im' is shown below the bio.
A note at the bottom left says: 'Rubber Stampede # 744-D shows Suzy expressing her love to you <http://tr.im/mP1n> SUZY'S ZOO I Love You RUBBER STAMP 1994 Retired Stamped'
The right side of the screen displays the user's profile information in a light grey box:
Name: Desperate Housewife
Location: Oregon USA ~ Zilina Slovakia
Web: <http://www.veryde...>
Bio: Online Mom-Preneur /
Marketer ~ Soccer Mom ~ Tap
Dancer ~ Retired Molecular
Biologist ~ Latisse Botox / Skin
Care Junkie ~ Political Refugee
~
76 following 160 followers
Updates 636
Favorites
Actions
message lattegirltoo
block lattegirltoo
Following
An arrow points from the 'followers' link in the bio to the '160 followers' count in the sidebar.

As you can see, she has 160 followers. If I click on the word followers, Twitter takes me to a webpage that shows all of her followers. Here is what that looks like: (see next page)

lattegirltoo's 160 Followers



imaniwalker / imani walker

[follow](#)



selectgolfclubs / Mike Martin

[follow](#)



CarolRiddickRDU / Carol Riddick

[follow](#)



StephanieNickel / Stephanie Nickels

[follow](#)



Skip_McGrath / Skip McGrath



alphahydrox / AlphaHydrox

[follow](#)



shopandorder / ShopAndOrder.com

[follow](#)

Notice that there is a button that says Follow beneath each name. So if you wanted to follow the same people she follows, then just click on the button and you will be following. (This is just one page. She has several pages of followers. There is a Next button at the bottom of the page so you can see all of her followers).

Now you probably won't notice anything right away, but after a few hours if you go back to your Twitter profile page, you will notice that you have picked up quite a few followers.

WHO TO FOLLOW AND WHO NOT TO FOLLOW

You want to pick who you decide to follow carefully. If you look at the list you will notice that the last two are commercial interests, AlphaHydroxy and a website, shopandorder.com. I wouldn't bother with these two and they really are no use to you if you want to promote your Pokémon blog, website or eBay auctions. Personally I usually follow people who have a photo and a real name or a unique username. These are most likely real people as opposed to commercial outfits just trying to build their list and use Twitter to market to you.

Of course you want to find people who have an interest in what you are selling. There are people on Twitter who have interests in almost anything. On your Twitter home page you will see a link that says Find People.



When you click on this link it will bring up a search box. Obviously if you know the name of someone you want to follow, you can type that in there. But if you don't know a name, then you can sometimes type in a keyword that people might use in their name. For example, if you sold vintage fly fishing equipment, then just type *fly fishing* into the search box.

Find people. Follow them.

[Find on Twitter](#) [Find on other networks](#) [Invite by email](#) [Suggested Users](#)

You can search for people you know who already have a Twitter account.

Who are you looking for?

Search for a username, first or last name

Name results for: **fly fishing**

0.104 seconds

Search for a username, first or last name



RabbiEE / Fly Fishing Rabbi Rabbi who writes a Blog about Trout, God and Religion

[Follow](#)

810 followers · from Ridgefield, CT · updated about 18 hours ago



flyfishingmi / Fly fishing MICHIGAN Fly fishing team with a lot of beginners but a great heart to practise catch-and-release.

[Follow](#)

780 followers · from Sterling Heights, Michigan · updated 6:23 AM May 28th



aboutflyfishing / Fly Fishing I write about Fly Fishing for About.com. Check us out at <http://flyfishing.about.com>.

[Follow](#)

749 followers · from U.S. · updated 1:00 AM May 24th



FlyFishingExpo / FLY FISHING EXPO

[Follow](#)

481 followers · updated 11:23 PM May 24th



WildontheFly / Fly Fishing Travel Want a free subscription to Wild On The Fly Magazine, 3 World Fly-Fishing DVDs, a fly box, and more for free?

[Follow](#)

<http://www.wildonthefly.com/travel.html>

334 followers · from Colorado, USA · updated 1:55 PM May 11th

As you can see there are plenty of people who tweet about fly fishing. If you clicked on each of these names and go to their page, you will be able to access their followers and follow them to get them to follow you. Looking at this list, I suspect it would be pretty easy to build up to 1000 followers.

Now this technique can cause you one problem. You end up following a lot of people whom you don't really want to follow, NO Problem: After a day or

so, just go to your twitter profile, click on the link that says *Following*. When the list comes up, just click on the button that says *Remove*. But before you do that, check your direct messages. Some people will actually answer you when you follow them. Some of them will be people trying to sell you stuff –but most others will be real people who send you nice messages that you may want to respond to.

USING TWITTER WITH TO MAKE AFFILIATE INCOME

The same techniques that worked for eBay can be used to promote your affiliate links and ClickBank products. All you have to do is make a BudURL (see below) of your affiliate link or your ClickBank link and send out a tweet

Even better, if you put your affiliate recommendations on a blog or website, use the URL of that page to direct readers too. This way, you can write text to pre-sell your listings –or even put a number of listings on one page if you have several offers.

The key however is to be focused on some common topic that your readers are looking for. If you are trying to use Twitter to talk about automotive accessories one day and gourmet food items the next, you will just confuse –and lose, your followers. If you sell items in several different categories, just get different email addresses (Gmail or Yahoo) and set up different Twitter accounts.

The key to making Twitter work to sell products or earn affiliate income is to build a following. If all you do is send out ads you may get some business, but after a while you will see it stop working and your list will start to shrink. The key to keeping your list alive and getting people to click on your links is to be honest and generous. Don't just send out promos for what you are selling.

Send out information, do blog posts and invite people to read your posts, if you see something others have written, send their link to your list. Much like eBay was in the old days, Twitter is a social community and they

reward those who are good community members. This is a situation where you have to “give” if you want to “get.”

Here are the best practices I have identified around using twitter to promote affiliate offers or your items for sale:

- Send out promotional tweets about every 12th to 15th tweet. The other in-between tweets don’t necessarily need to be deep in content but they should have some value for your readers.
- Buyers first want to feel as though they’ve had a conversation with a friend or associate.
- Running contests in conjunction with promoting your products is a winner. I did a contest asking people to send me their best eBay tip in a tweet. It worked really well.
- People also respond to give a-ways. Give away something for free such as an eBook like this one or an eBook that promotes your business.
- One of the more powerful things about Twitter isn’t the ability to spread your message to many people rather it’s to get them to stick with you and to successfully target, contact, and engage quality leads. The reason it’s worthwhile to spend time there is that through bios, and search tools – you can tap into conversations and find people who match your target audience.

When using Twitter to promote your offers, you should consider using a URL shrinking site such as budurl.com.



Email Password
[Create an Account](#) | [Forgot Your F...](#)

[Home](#) [What is BudURL?](#) [FAQ](#) [Features](#) [API](#) [Enterprise Edition](#) [About Us](#) [Get Started!](#)

Enter Large URL

Shrink It!

The BEST click stats of any tool available!

- Sign up for an account (it takes 10 seconds)
- Manage all of your links in one easy interface with custom notes to keep track of

Shrink 'em fast
toolbar for

IE users: Have I

Latest BudURL

May 26, 2009

Because twitter is limited to only 140 characters every word becomes valuable when pitching your offer. To assist in this URL shrinking sites such as [Budurl](#) help you maintain the 140 character limit. You can even double up, sending two links in one tweet.

All you do is enter the widget link where it says 'Enter Large URL' and then click "Shrink It!" That's it. Post the resulting URL link into your Twitter message.

For example, I might tweet something like...

My latest blog post on the new eBay policies is up at
<http://budurl.com/SkipsBlog>

So, shrink your URLs to keep them manageable. BudURL comes with a service that tracks your clicks so you can easily see which ones are working for you.

So that's it for using Twitter. You can use it for fun, to build a following, to promote your blog or to sell your products on eBay or to earn affiliate income.

THIRD PARTY TOOLS

There are a lot of third party tools to help you use Twitter. Here is a list of some popular Twitter widgets and accessory programs. Some of these are free and some have a small charge.

Desktop Applications

- [Twhirl](#) - also allows monitoring of multiple accounts
- [Snitter](#)
- [Twitterrific](#)
- [MadTwitter](#)
- [Spaz](#)
- [Tweet Deck](#)

iPhone Apps

- [Tweetie for iPhone](#)
- [Twinkle for iPhone](#)
- [Twitter for iPhone](#)
- [Hahlo](#)
- [Pocket Tweets](#)

Blackberry App

- [Twitter Berry](#)

Twitter on any Mobile device

- [Tiny Twitter](#) - phone needs java
- [Twitter Mobile](#) - only go here on your phone

- [iTweet](#)
- [twibble](#)

Twitter on Windows Mobile

- [Pocket Twit](#)

Post via Mobile

- [Twitterscan](#)

Send via eMail

- [Twittermail](#)

Counter to show your twitter followers

- [Twitter Counter](#)

Enhance your Tweets

- [Twitter Keys](#)

Un-follow Someone for Just a Few Days

- [Twitter Snooze](#)

Find out who Stopped Following You and Why

- [Qwitter](#)
- [Twitterless](#)

Wordpress Blog plugins

- [TweetSuite](#)
- [TweetThis](#)

Manage who Follows You and Who You Follow, Recommendations Also

- [Friend or Follow](#)
- [Mr. Tweet](#) - Recommendations

Top Twitter Lists

- [Twitter Counter Top 100 List](#)
- [twInfluence Top 50 List](#)

Visual Map of Twitter Posts

- [Twitter Vision](#)

Monitor Twitter for Cities, Keywords & What's Hot

- [Tweet Grid](#) - monitor keywords

- [Monitter](#) - monitor keywords
- [Twitscoop](#)
- [Flapto Twitter Search](#) - search twitter for a keyword
- [Twitspy](#) - monitor twitter public timeline in real time
- [Tweetscan](#)
- [CityTweets](#) - follow tweets by City

Share Files, Pictures & Videos via Twitter

- [Tweetcube](#) - files
- [Twitpic](#) - pics
- [Visual Twitter](#) - pics
- [Twixxer](#)

Share Quotes and Bits from Webpages

- [Tweet All About It](#)