



**FOSTER WEB MARKETING**

# **twitter** **for** **Attorneys**

**by Tom Foster & George Murphy**

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## TWITTER FOR ATTORNEYS

### Why and How—Quick and Easy

*By Tom Foster & George Murphy*

*“What is with this ‘Twitter’ business and what in the world am I supposed to do with it?”*

*“I don’t even understand it or what I’m supposed to do!”*

*“Something else I have to do now. I don’t even have time to keep up with my website!”*

These are just a few of the many comments I hear from clients when we speak about Twitter. Twitter is not a logical beast to many of us, and to others it makes perfect sense. I think I am somewhere in the middle. It looks like a giant Instant Message thingie to me on one hand. On the other, 80% of the posts (or “tweets!”) make no sense at all. However, I do recognize its *importance* and *relevance*.

In today’s world of Internet marketing, you can’t afford to sit back and see what happens with Twitter, Facebook or any other major media vehicle. You must embrace these new websites and online

opportunities for what they are: **Super effective ways to build your business and network!**

I am not kidding. There is nothing more effective than your online marketing efforts. This is all we preach and have been doing for more than ten years.

*Here's what we know: you are in one of three camps right now:*

- 1** You took an early leap of faith, embraced all things Internet related, are killing it with your website and/or blog and you're getting a ton of new business.
- 2** You see that it works and are sick of your competitors getting all the cases so you are playing catch-up.
- 3** You see no value in this or the web, you have lost money, and continue to rely on those Yellow Page ads (or something equally ineffective).

No matter which of these categories you fall in, this report should be informative and helpful to you. We are going to cover easy stuff like how to sign up for an account to more complex topics like finding followers and what tools you should use. We know what works and what doesn't based on real world activity, so read on.

**FIRST, CHANGE YOUR MINDSET.**

Sometimes we're hesitant to embrace that which we're not familiar with. It's hard to try a food that you've never tasted, give an opinion about a song that you've only heard once, and watch a movie that you haven't heard any reviews about or seen any advertisements for.

What's more is we are typically fearful of the unknown: things we have never seen before, technology we don't understand, or new tasks that we are simply uncomfortable with.

The web is no different, and those who are the *most successful* when it comes to Internet marketing are *those who stay ahead of the curve of the latest trends*. Those who aren't afraid to try a new website or technique just because their friends don't use it, they haven't seen it talked about on five different Fox Business channels, and they don't have access to charts or data that proves a return on investment for current users.

If you're reading this, you likely don't feel like you have a comfortable grasp on what Twitter is, how to use it or how to make it productive.

*But that shouldn't keep you from embracing it.*

Do you ever think back to when you got your first website or blog and regret waiting for so long to do so? Did your competition own Page One of Google and have a properly developed website a few years before you even knew what a website was?

If not, then chances are that you're already ahead of the Twitter curve, because it is the next big thing in social media and you don't need to read any further.

But I'd be willing to guess that you're still upset about not embracing the web sooner rather than later and you don't want to make the same mistake twice.

Twitter is one of the fastest growing social media sites 5 years after it launched. *Currently, more than 750 tweets are sent out every second and 65 million are sent each day.*

However, our report *isn't* going to say that you should hurry up and get on Twitter because everyone is doing it and, if you don't, you'll lose out to your competition (but it's true).

It's also *not* going to provide a return on investment guarantee and promise that, if you use Twitter for three hours a day, you'll get twenty leads and three cases (also true).

We *will* show you the benefits of using Twitter, but if you're only planning on using it to get leads, sales, or cases you can stop reading (ultimately that's what we want, but you can't put that first).

Twitter isn't meant to be used as ONLY a marketing tool. Can you promote yourself on Twitter? Absolutely, but Twitter is more of a networking tool than a forum for self-promotion. By using the site to network properly, you are marketing yourself as an individual that

others will find they have common interest with.

This is perhaps the most important point of this report and one that you must embrace. As an attorney, you understand the *value* of *expanding your referral network*. I speak to attorneys everyday and many of them say the same thing: “I get most of my business from referrals.”

This is true, and most attorneys do.

Seeing that a majority of your business comes from referrals and old-fashioned word-of-mouth marketing, look at Twitter as just another way to use a modern technique such as the Internet to implement an older-style grassroots marketing technique to expand your referral network.

### **Think of it as a cocktail party.**

At a cocktail party, people really don't care about you at first, just like you don't care about them. You probably don't even want to be there in the first place. You've got to give some effort to do something you don't want to do: maybe you have to dress up in a Tuxedo, maybe the location is somewhere you are unfamiliar with. You go because you know “it's good for business.”

So now you are at the party and all you want to do is go home. Everyone is talking about the same boring topics (the weather, politics, recession or how their kids made the honor roll). So you make a deal with yourself that you will only stay for a few minutes,

but first you force yourself to engage with these people so it's not a complete waste of your time.

After a few minutes of conversing and mingling, you find a few folks who you may actually have something in common with, either professionally or personally.

You exchange business cards and follow up with these people later down the road.

Just because you're not picking up cases directly doesn't mean that, if you're taking the time to connect and reach out to people in your area, you're not planting the seed for *something*.

*Okay, I get it already and now I'm curious, what's first?*

### FIRST: SET UP YOUR PROFILE

The first thing you want to do is set up a Twitter Profile. This is obviously pretty easy: just go to Twitter.com and register a username and password like you would with any other website.

Once you're registered, you want to add your biography. Include information about your practice, but also be sure to include some personal information *that will allow people to relate to you* not just as an attorney, but as a *person*.

Did you grow up in Lexington, Kentucky, graduate from University of Kentucky and your office is right up the street? **GO WILDCATS!**

Are you a family man with two kids who love baseball? *Attorney, father and part-time baseball manager.*

Maybe you happen to ride a motorcycle every weekend and one of your practice areas is motorcycle accident law? *Check out my latest Pics from Daytona Bike Week* (not in your bio of course, this is something you would “Tweet”)!

Hopefully you get the point.

Most people in the social media world don’t care about you as an attorney, or that you won Super Lawyers this year. They need a reason to relate to you *as a person*. So choose a bio that makes you unique. That makes people say, “Oh, he’s a father and a baseball coach, too.” “Oh, that’s the lawyer guy who went to UK, GO BLUE!” “He rides a chopper? SWEET!”

Give yourself a personality and maintain *transparency*, because that’s what the Web 2.0 way of thinking is all about.

### **NEXT: CHOOSE A PICTURE.**

This is going to be hard for you, I’m sure (or at least it is for most of our clients), but take down the picture of you in the suit and throw up a picture of you with your face painted Wildcat blue, a picture of you in your baseball uniform or a picture of you on your chopper.

One client of ours has a skydiving picture on his profile, and guess

what: he's one of the most popular lawyers on Twitter. Believe it or not, the picture that you choose actually has a lot to do with how people pay attention to you.

George actually took the time to ask all of his followers a poll question: "What is the first thing you associate someone you're following with, what he/she does, the quality of his/her tweets, his/her username, or his/her picture?"

And the winner, by a long shot:

### *The picture.*

When someone logs in to Twitter and sees what everyone is Tweeting about, the *most* visual element that every user has is their picture.

George chose a caricature of himself for branding and identity reasons, and do you think he gets mad every time he meets someone in real life and they say "Oh yeah, you're the cartoon guy with the crazy hat, right? Cool, man!"

Not at all, actually, because this means that he stands out. His followers are noticing him, paying attention to his Tweets, and usually visiting the website that he has on his profile. You can do this and still maintain a professional image; you just have to think of a way to stand out.

Okay, so you've updated your bio and spent three days stressing out over what picture to use. Now what?

## NEXT: CUSTOMIZE YOUR BACKGROUND

A custom Twitter background can also help with branding efforts. One site, [www.tweetalarm.com](http://www.tweetalarm.com), actually allows you to create a custom Twitter background for free, and then you just upload the final product by clicking the “design tab” and “change background image.” You can also customize the background, profile, sidebar and text colors manually.

However, if you want to really get serious about your Twitter profile, make sure people notice you, and make sure that you *really* stand out, have a freelance designer create a custom Twitter background for you.

### The Twitter Process

This is one of the easiest ways to get your practice area, product or service advertised on Twitter. The normal process is:

- 1 You follow a person
- 2 That person clicks on your name to view your profile to see if they want to follow you back
- 3 That person looks at either (the order depends on the person):
  - a Your profile
  - b The quality of your Tweets (to see if they want to see what you have to say, share, or comment on every day)
  - c Your website address (which may result in a click).

Normally it's all the same: some text, a picture, a website and a generic background with a green leaf or sky blue clouds.

### **So how do you stand out?**

Well, if you have a really well-designed custom background that includes well-written copy about yourself and your practice areas, services, or products, along with the URL to your website or blog, people are likely going to visit that website out of curiosity, amazement, envy, or all of the above.

Whether or not you want to invest in a custom Twitter background (you can likely find a freelance designer to whip you up something for around \$100) is up to you and how much time you expect to spend on Twitter, but I usually say that it's worth it.

### **NEXT: YOU NEED TO KNOW WHAT TOOLS TO USE.**

Here are a few that we recommend:

#### **Twitter Feed:**

- <http://www.twitterfeed.com>

Set it up so that an RSS feed from your blog or website is pulled and any updates are automatically Tweeted. This is a great tool for automation, but just a quick tip: set it up so that something like “New blog post” is stated at the beginning of any new automated blog tweet.

## Lawyers on Twitter:

- <http://www.lextweet.com>
- <http://scoop.jdsupra.com/2008/09/articles/law-firm-marketing/145-lawyers-and-legal-professionals-to-follow-on-twitter/>
- <http://twittgroups.com/group/lawyers>
- <http://lawmarketing.ning.com/group/lawyerswhotwitter>

We've failed to mention so far that Twitter is also a great tool to use for social networking. Your chances of finding clients at this point are probably slim, but it's good to follow other attorneys in your practice area or location to increase your network for referrals, professional relationships, etc.

- <http://justtweetit.com/>
- <http://www.twellow.com/>
- <http://search.twitter.com>
- <http://www.twitterholic.com>

Here are other ways to find attorneys, doctors and other Twitter users who share interests (Kentucky basketball, Harley motorcycles, pee-wee baseball... remember?) or authoritative Twitter users in your area:

### Twitter Alerts:

- <http://www.tweetbeeps.com>

Set up automated alerts so that you receive an e-mail whenever a certain keyword (Louisville, the name of the Kentucky's star point guard, Sturgis motorcycle rally, etc) is Tweeted so you can follow that person (and hopefully he/she follows you back).

### Media on Twitter:

- <http://mediaontwitter.pbwiki.com>

You always want to follow members of the media, and this list is broken down by location/state.

### OKAY, SO WHAT DO I "TWEET?"

So now that you're all set up and know about what tools to install and what pages to bookmark, what should you Tweet about?

The simple answer is: anything you want!

Is it against any "Twitter etiquette" to Tweet that you're standing in line at the grocery store and excited because strawberry popsicles were on sale? No.

Is there some sort of rule against Tweeting that you're walking your dog around the park and it's a beautiful day? Not that I know of.

But, one thing you always want to do when using Twitter is to ***build value.***

Tweeting about everyday events and thoughts is all fun at first, but if you follow someone and they look at your Tweets and notice that all you are talking about is Safeway and your black lab named Betsy, they're likely not going to follow you back because they don't see any ***value.***

Make sure you bring something to the table. Share that great blog post that you read earlier that day, because people may get some good information out of it. Give your opinions on that big case that you saw on the news; people value attorneys' opinions and insights (most of the time).

**But one thing you *don't* want to do on Twitter is to over-promote yourself.**

- *"Hire me for your personal injury needs."*
- *"Been in an auto accident? Call me at..."*

Nobody is going to follow you if all you're doing is promoting yourself all of the time and not bringing any value to the conversation.

The last and most important point of this report is that we will tell you before you venture off to the whole new world of Twitterville: No matter what you do, how many times you Tweet, or how many

followers you have, always take a step back and ask yourself: “*Am I building value for my followers?*”

Now go embrace this new mega-site, have fun tweeting and be sure to follow us:

**George Murphy:** [http://twitter.com/george\\_murphy](http://twitter.com/george_murphy)

**Tom Foster:** <http://twitter.com/tomfosterweb>



## NOTES



*I've been creating attorney websites for over a decade now. Today we have over 100 law firms across North America as clients. So what I discuss here is not theory; it's in-the-trenches experience.*

*But don't take my word for it. Check out my website and view and read our testimonials and then check out our clients' websites!*



As founder and CEO of Foster Web Marketing, Tom Foster has seen web marketing evolve in a way that makes it harder and more work—and time—intensive for lawyers to compete online. He developed a proprietary software solution (DSS) that makes it easy for busy attorneys to add content and update their website without involving the services of a webmaster. While other attorneys chase after expensive keywords, FWM clients achieve high rankings on Google, Bing and Yahoo via advanced Search Engine Optimization techniques. To arrange a complimentary critique of your attorney website, email [Ken@FosterWebMarketing.com](mailto:Ken@FosterWebMarketing.com).

You can follow Tom on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/tomfosterweb>.



George Murphy oversees Search Engine Optimization, blogging and social media marketing for attorneys at Foster Web Marketing. He has also helped a number of businesses, corporations, colleges and non-profit organizations increase their website traffic and leads through organic SEO and other creative Internet marketing methods. George lives in Baltimore City, and in his free time plays soccer competitively at the amateur level in addition to coaching a local high school team on a volunteer basis. He is also a freelance writer and journalist for [Yanks-abroad.com](http://Yanks-abroad.com), a website dedicated to the United States Men's National soccer team and American soccer players who play in Europe.

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