



# Twitter helps you network, and it is easy to get more followers

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**Q: Hi Steve — I follow you on [Twitter](#), as I follow a lot of people. My question is – do I really need to have a lot of Twitter followers? What good do they do a small business guy like me, and if I do need them, how do I get them?**

**A:** There are many reasons why someone would want more Twitter followers, but the first thing to realize is that sometimes, quality beats quantity. When you see some of these people with tens of thousands of followers, one wonders what it means. Do people really follow this fellow, and if so, how closely? Maybe they don't and maybe it's a charade.

**FOLLOW STEVE ON TWITTER:** <http://twitter.com/stevestrauss>

So for starters, far more important than the actual number of followers you have is the quality and connection you have with those people who do in fact follow you. Social media is all about making connections, networking. Think of a mixer at your local chamber — is it more valuable to come home with a lot of business cards in your pocket, or having had one long, great conversation with a potential business associate? Of course the latter is preferable, and that's the point. Lots of connections may look good, but actual connections are probably more valuable.

Having said that, having an increased number of followers can also have its advantages. For instance, having more followers offers you the opportunity to meet more people; people you would otherwise not meet. That, in turn, can open up business opportunities. So while having quality followers is Job 1, it is also true that have some quantity of followers is also important as it spreads your name and brand to new and varied people.

Indeed, one other reason to get more followers is

that there is some brand equity that comes with having a lot of people follow you on Twitter (or similarly, be your friend on [Facebook](#), or your connection on [LinkedIn](#).) Shallow yes, but true nonetheless: Having thousands of followers looks better to some people than having scores of followers.

So here is how you build up your Twitter follower base:

**1. Tweet well:** The first and most important thing you need to do is tweet smart. Business people use Twitter to learn new things and meet people, so be someone that people want to meet. Tweet interesting articles (using a tool like Tiny URL to reduce URL address length), insights, tips, quotes or pictures.

**2. Follow more people:** The "twitaquette" is that people follow people who follow them. That is, if you follow someone, they should follow you back. This is not always true of course, but you can tell if someone follows this unwritten rule if their number of "followers" and "following" are roughly similar. If they are, it is a pretty safe bet that if you follow them, they will follow you.

**3. Follow the leaders:** Here is a great strategy: You know who the leaders in your industry or area of interest are, so go over to their Twitter homepage and see who is following them. Click their link of followers and you will find a goldmine of people interested in what you are interested in. Follow selected people on that list and again, because you already know that they follow people in your industry, the chances are high that they will follow you, too.



**4. Use hashtags:** In the world of Twitter, hashtags — # — are used to create discussions. For instance, #SmallBiz is where you can find lots of great small business tweets. People add hashtags to their tweets so as to drop them into the proper Twitter stream. Therefore, by searching Twitter for hashtags related to your business, you will again find good people to follow. Follow the ones you like, and they will follow you. It's really that simple.

And before you know it, you will have met a lot of new people, made some new connections and built your online cred.

**Today's Tip:** [Guy Kawasaki](#) of AllTop.com is a Twitter pro (250,000 followers and counting.) In this great article, he [lists "6 Twitter Types."](#) My favorite? The Maven: "The Maven is an expert in a field such as recruiting, marketing, or web design. If you're interested in their field, following them is a rich, rewarding, and time-saving experience. Motivation: getting re-tweeted and recognized as an expert. Recommended approach: follow."

*Ask an Expert appears Mondays. You can e-mail Steve Strauss at: [ss Strauss@mrallbiz.com](mailto:ss Strauss@mrallbiz.com). And you can [click here](#) to see previous columns.* Steven D. Strauss is a lawyer, author and speaker who specializes in small business and entrepreneurship. His latest book is [The Small Business Bible](#). You can sign up for his free newsletter, "Small Business Success Secrets!" at his website — [www.mrallbiz.com](http://www.mrallbiz.com). Follow him on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/stevestrauss>.