TWITTER
FOR YOUR MINISTRY

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A free resource from:

churchjuice
energizing church
communications

Section One
THE BASICS

TWITTER
FOR YOUR MINISTRY

Twitter has been consistent in one goal since it began: short form communication. Users have 140 characters (letters, numbers, spaces and punctuation) to say whatever they want. What hasn't always been the same is the way people use Twitter. Even the way Twitter talks about itself has evolved over the years. Here's a look at that history.


BEFORE 2009

"Twitter is a service for friends, family, and co–workers to communicate and stay connected through the exchange of quick, frequent answers to one simple question: What are you doing?"
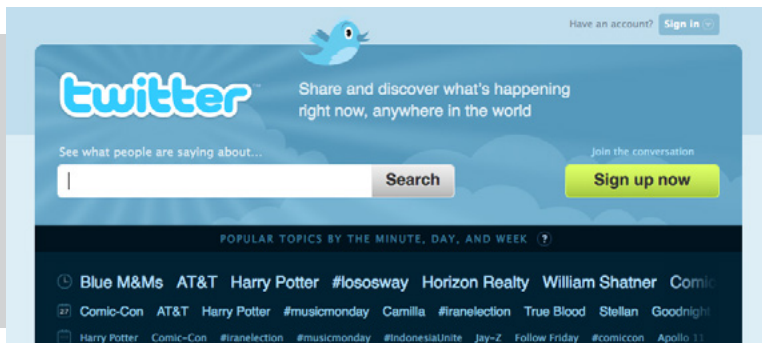

JULY 2009

"In countries all around the world, people follow the sources most relevant to them and access information via Twitter as it happens—from breaking world news to updates from friends. See what people are doing right now."
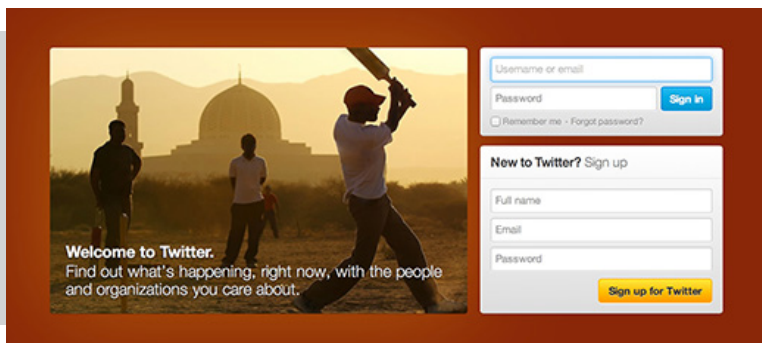
JANUARY 2012

"Twitter is a real-time information network that connects you to the latest stories, ideas, opinions and news about what you find interesting. Simply find the accounts you find most compelling and follow the conversations."
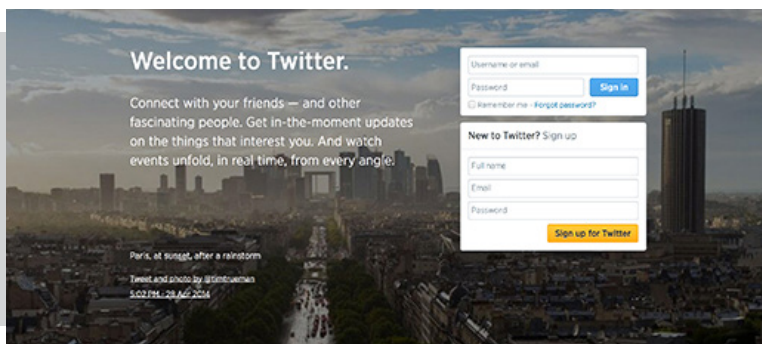
AUGUST 2014

"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."

As you can see from the different descriptions, Twitter looks at itself as more than just a way to see what your friends are doing. Increasingly, Twitter considers itself an information network for breaking news, niche content sharing and live search to see what's happening in real-time.

Tweet: The message someone sends in Twitter using 140 characters or less.

@username: Adding the @ symbol before someone's screen name lets you tag them in a tweet, meaning it shows up on that person's page. When it's at the beginning of the sentence it's a public reply to someone. Only you, that person and your mutual friends can see it. You can easily reply to someone by clicking "reply" below a tweet.

> Example: *Just had a great lunch with @examplepastor to talk about new changes for this weekend's service.*

> Example: *@examplepastor Thanks for bringing donuts to the meeting today.*

ReTweet (RT): This is how you share someone else's message with your friends. Just add RT to the beginning of the message you want to pass along. Or hit the retweet button and Twitter will send it long to your followers without the letters RT. It will look like the original tweet except with a note under the tweet saying you're the one that retweeted it.

> Example: *RT @churchjuice We just posted a new resource on using Twitter as a ministry tool.*

Modified Tweet (MT): Like a retweet, a modified tweet is sharing someone's post, but adding a MT to the front means you changed the content in some way. The most common use of this is to shorten the length of a tweet.

Hashtag (#): Hashtags help categorize tweets. They're popular for general interests, conferences, discussion topics, TV shows, etc. This makes it easier for users to search tweets that have a common topic. If you click on a hashtag, it will show all the tweets using it.

> Example: *I'm loving the speakers at this conference! #Echo2013.*

Message: You can send a private, direct message to someone you follow by starting the tweet with "D" or "DM." Or click on the dropdown menu on the top right corner of your Twitter page and select "direct messages." This keeps your message out of the public feed, but it's still limited to 140 characters.

Favorite: When you favorite a tweet, you're giving it a gold star. It's similar to liking something on Facebook. It's a way to let someone know you liked a tweet or a way for you to collect tweets you like. You can see your favorite tweets on your main "Me" page.

Trending Topics: The most popular things people are tweeting about will appear on the left sidebar of your Twitter page.

Lists: You can create your own lists of people to follow. This can help you organize your community based on topics so it's easier to see the tweets you're looking for. To create a list, go to the profile drop down menu on the top right and click "lists." You can choose whether these lists are public or private.
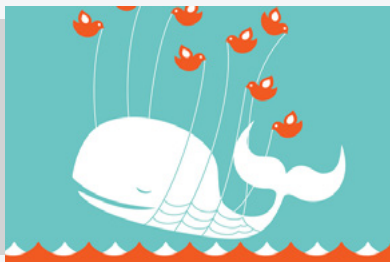
FAIL WHALE

The Fail Whale gained a celebrity status of sorts on Twitter. In the early days, Twittter servers couldn't handle all the traffic, so this image popped up when the service was over capacity. The Fail Whale has a clothing line, cocktail and countless websites dedicated to it.

Want more? Check out Twitters glossary page http://goo.gl/lykcM

TWITTER DEMOGRAPHICS

Pinning down the exact makeup of who uses Twitter is a little tricky. There are several organizations who've presented research that are close in numbers, but not identical. So use the information below as a guideline.

AGE

These stats look at the percentage of internet users who use Twitter within their age group. For example, 27% of all internet users ages 18-29 use Twitter. This *doesn't* mean 27% of Twitter users are 18-29.

18-29 — **27%**

30-49 — **16%**

50-64 — **10%**

65 & Older — **2%**
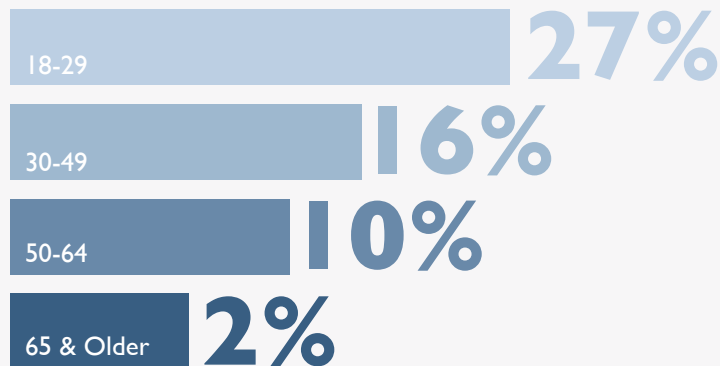
Teenage Tweeting?

Twitter has a slightly older audience than other social media sites like Facebook. But it's worth noting the 18-24 age group saw the largest increase in new users from 2011 to 2012, showing younger adults are starting to use Twitter more.

GENDER

FEMALE — **47%**

MALE — **53%**
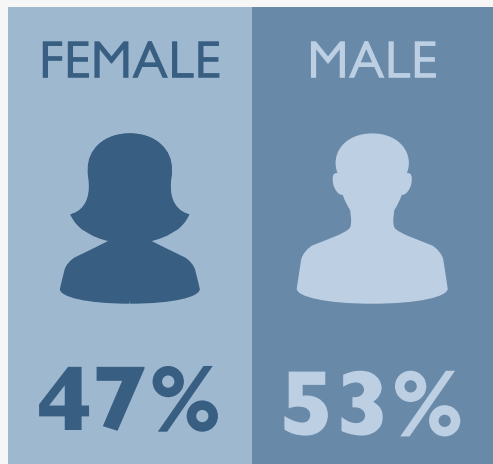
Gender distribution on Twitter is a hard stat to find consistency. Some research shows there are actually more women than men on Twitter.

Sources: Pew Research Center and onlinemba.com.

OTHER NUMBERS

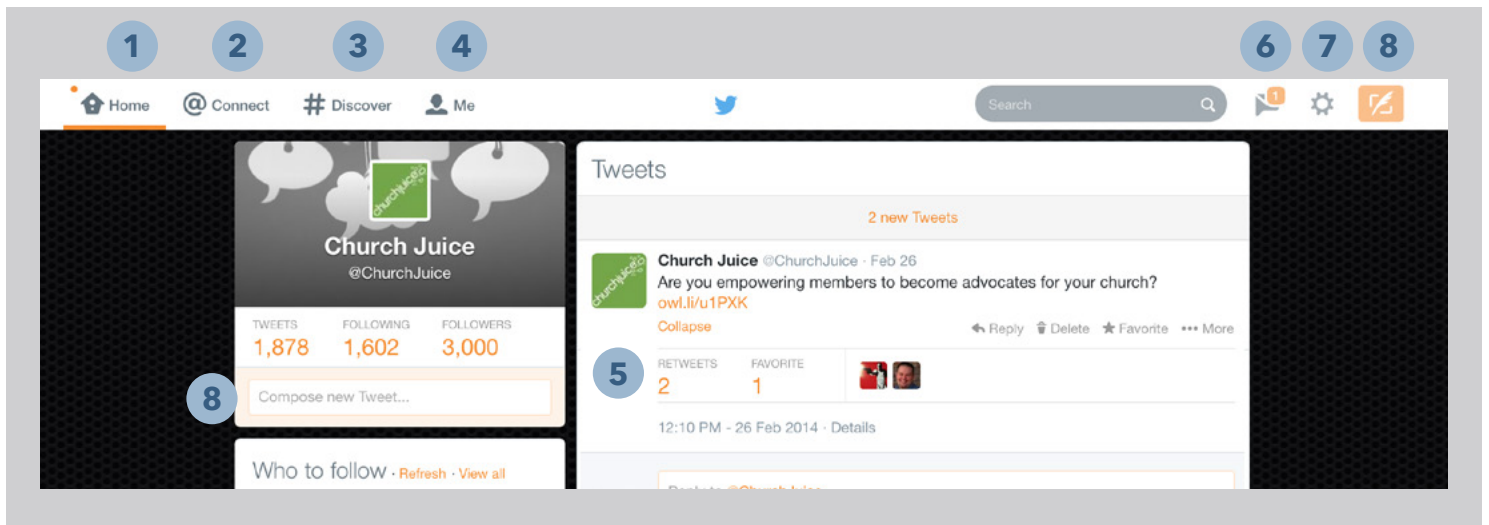**36%** of Twitter users tweet at least once a day.

16% of all internet users use Twitter.

500+ MILLION users are registered on Twitter.

200 MILLION of those accounts are active.

54% of tweets are made from a mobile device.

YOUR TWITTER HOMEPAGE

1   **Home:** This is your main page where you can see a real-time list of tweets from the people you follow.

2   **Connect:** Look here to see who's interacted with you You'll see new followers, tweets mentioning you, people who've retweeted you and folks who have marked your tweet as a favorite.

3   **Discover:** This tab will let you find new stuff on Twitter. You'll see top tweets, who to follow, new friends and categories to browse.

4   **Me:** This is your profile page and what people will see when they first visit you on Twitter.

5   **Expand/Collapse:** See more information about your tweet like who's retweeted it or marked it as a favorite. You can also reply to someone or delete a tweet.

6   **Direct Message:** If someone sends you a private message, you'll get a notification here.

7   **Profile Dropdown:** From here you can see/write direct messages, view your lists, see keyboard shortcuts, get to your settings and sign out.

8   **Compose a Tweet:** What are you waiting for? Get tweeting.

Section Two

SETTINGS & PROFILE CUSTOMIZATION
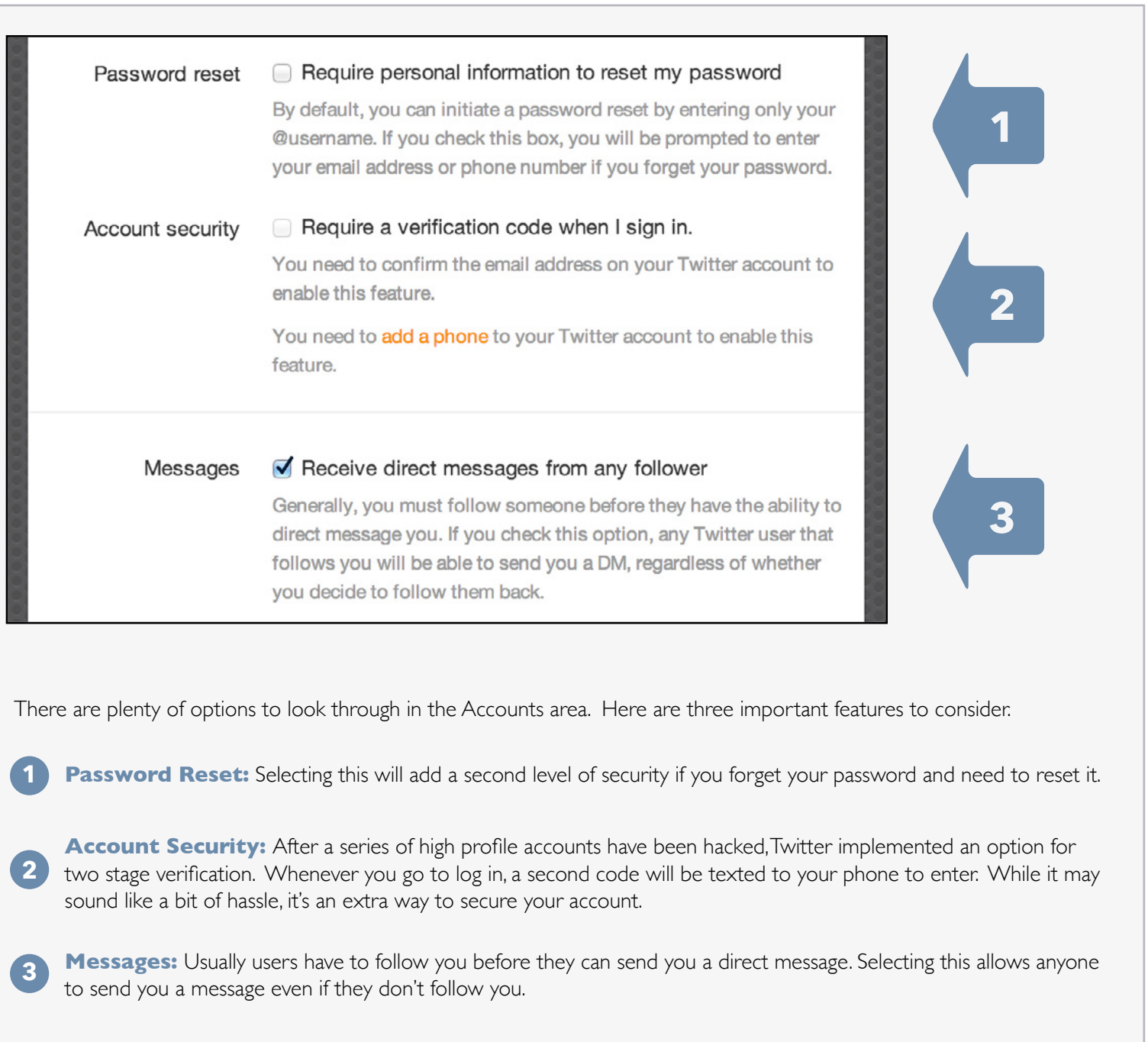
TWITTER
FOR YOUR MINISTRY

Twitter settings are fairly standard and straightforward. You access them by clicking on the profile dropdown (number 7 in the previous section) and selecting settings. There are seven settings category options: Account, Password, Mobile, Email Notifications, Profile, Design, Apps and Widgets It's good for you to go though all these areas and pick the setting that make the most sense for your organization. We won't go through all of them in this resource, but here are a few things in settings to think about.

ACCOUNT SETTINGS

Password reset ☐ Require personal information to reset my password

By default, you can initiate a password reset by entering only your @username. If you check this box, you will be prompted to enter your email address or phone number if you forget your password.

1

Account security ☐ Require a verification code when I sign in.

You need to confirm the email address on your Twitter account to enable this feature.

You need to add a phone to your Twitter account to enable this feature.

2

Messages ☑ Receive direct messages from any follower

Generally, you must follow someone before they have the ability to direct message you. If you check this option, any Twitter user that follows you will be able to send you a DM, regardless of whether you decide to follow them back.

3

There are plenty of options to look through in the Accounts area. Here are three important features to consider.

1 **Password Reset:** Selecting this will add a second level of security if you forget your password and need to reset it.

2 **Account Security:** After a series of high profile accounts have been hacked, Twitter implemented an option for two stage verification. Whenever you go to log in, a second code will be texted to your phone to enter. While it may sound like a bit of hassle, it's an extra way to secure your account.

3 **Messages:** Usually users have to follow you before they can send you a direct message. Selecting this allows anyone to send you a message even if they don't follow you.

PROFILE SETTINGS

Profile
This information appears on your public profile, search results, and beyond.

Photo

Change photo ▾

This photo is your identity on Twitter and appears with your Tweets.

Header

Change header ▾

Recommended dimensions of 1500x500
Maximum file size of 5MB

Need help? Learn more.

Name

Church Juice

Enter your real name, so people you know can recognize you.

Location

Chicago, Illinois

Where in the world are you?

Website

http://www.churchjuice.com

Have a homepage or a blog? Put the address here.

Bio

Energizing church communications by providing free resources, tips and consulting.

About yourself in **160** characters or less.   78

Facebook

The following permissions are needed to post to Facebook:

• Post on your behalf to your profile.

Allow   Disconnect

Having trouble? Learn more.

Save changes

Pick an icon that not only represents your church but is also easy to recognize. It's small, so don't use a lot of words. If you're designing your own, make it 400 x 400 pixels.

This image appears across the top of your profile page similar to the cover photo on Facebook. There's more detail about this on the next page.

You have 160 characters to share who you are and what you believe. Be concise. Think about the most important information you'd want to share with someone who is just meeting you.

When you connect your Twitter and Facebook accounts, you can post a tweet directly as Facebook status. Once connected, all you have to do is add #fb to the end of a tweet and it will post on Facebook (with the #fb stripped off).

Creating a Custom Header and Profile Picture

Thankfully, Twitter made adding custom images to your page much easier with a 2014 design change. Instead of having to create a confusing background graphic that displayed oddly at different sizes, the new header image is much more consistent. Below are the demensions you need to know.
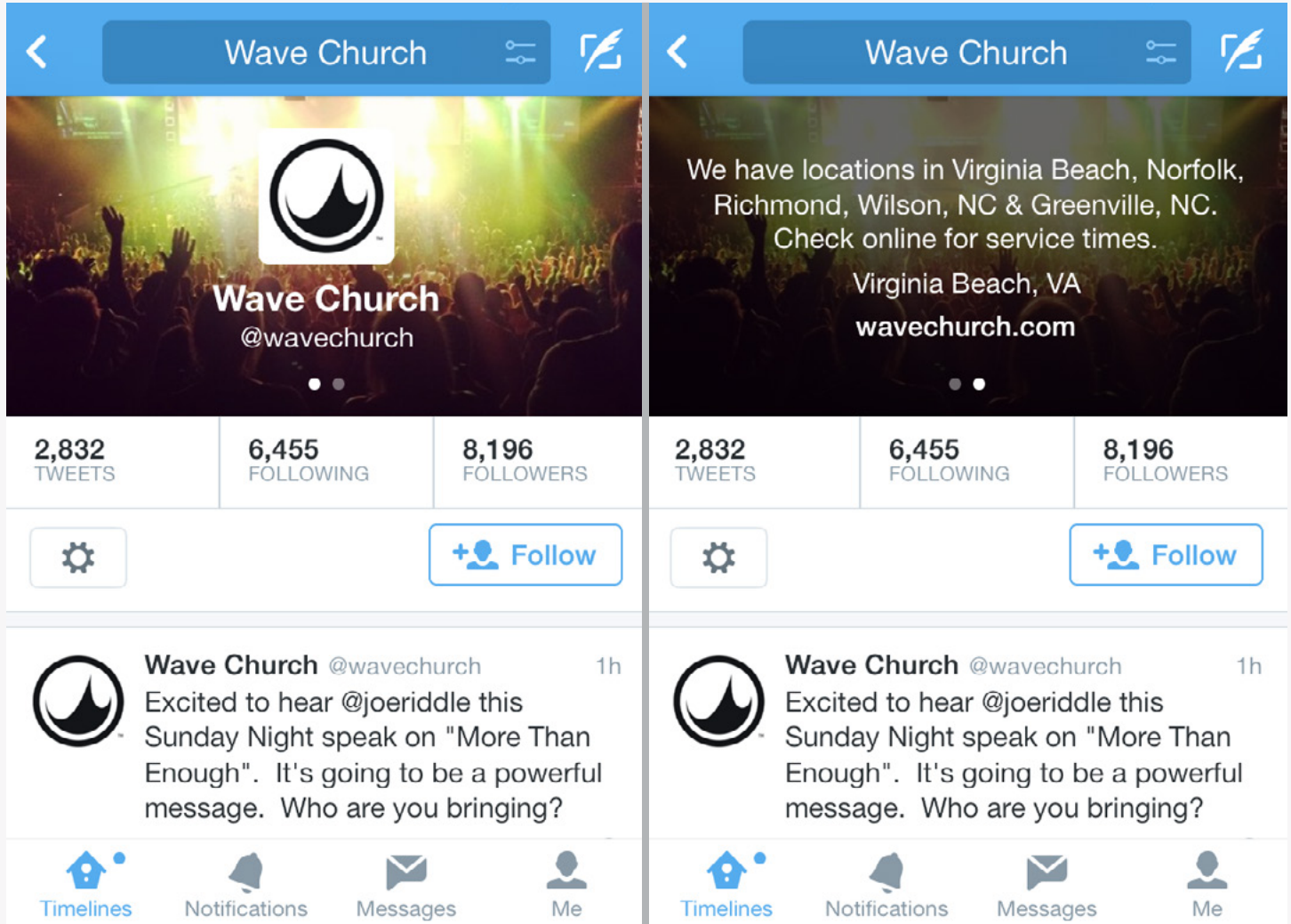
Header Image
1500 x 500px*

Profile Picture
400 x 400px
(upload size)
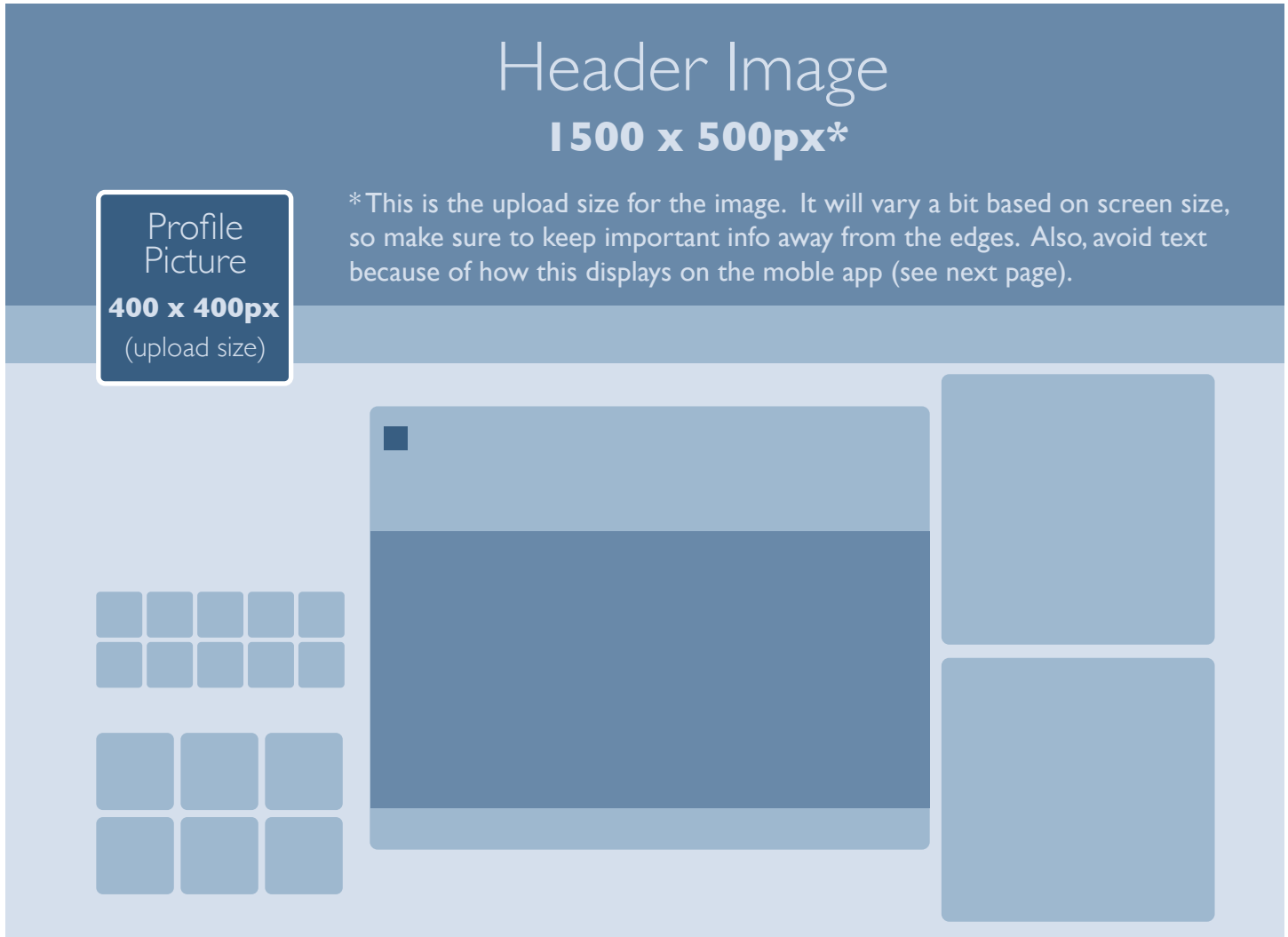
*This is the upload size for the image. It will vary a bit based on screen size, so make sure to keep important info away from the edges. Also, avoid text because of how this displays on the moble app (see next page).

Consider this:

How does your header image interact with other elements, like your profile picture and images you tweet? Try not to repeat your logo or building for header and profile images. Instead, craft a story that gives a glimpse of your church.

Header Image on Twitter's Mobile App

Twitter displays the header image a little bit different on their mobile app. While the image stays the same, the information about you becomes a slider. The first page just has your profile picture. The second page displays all the profile text over an opaque layer that darkens the background image. Keep this is mind as you design a header image. Here's an example:
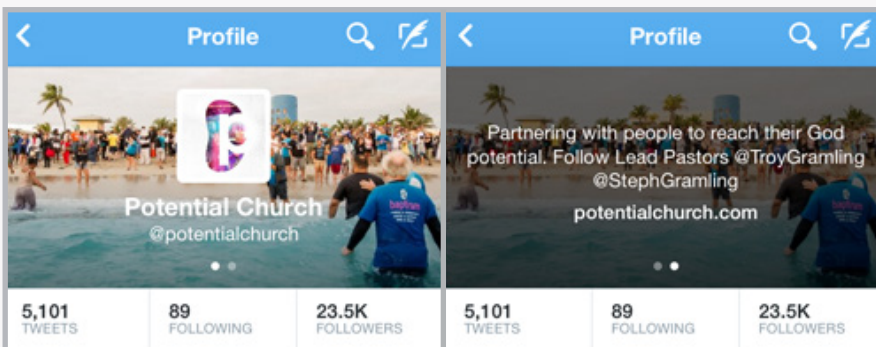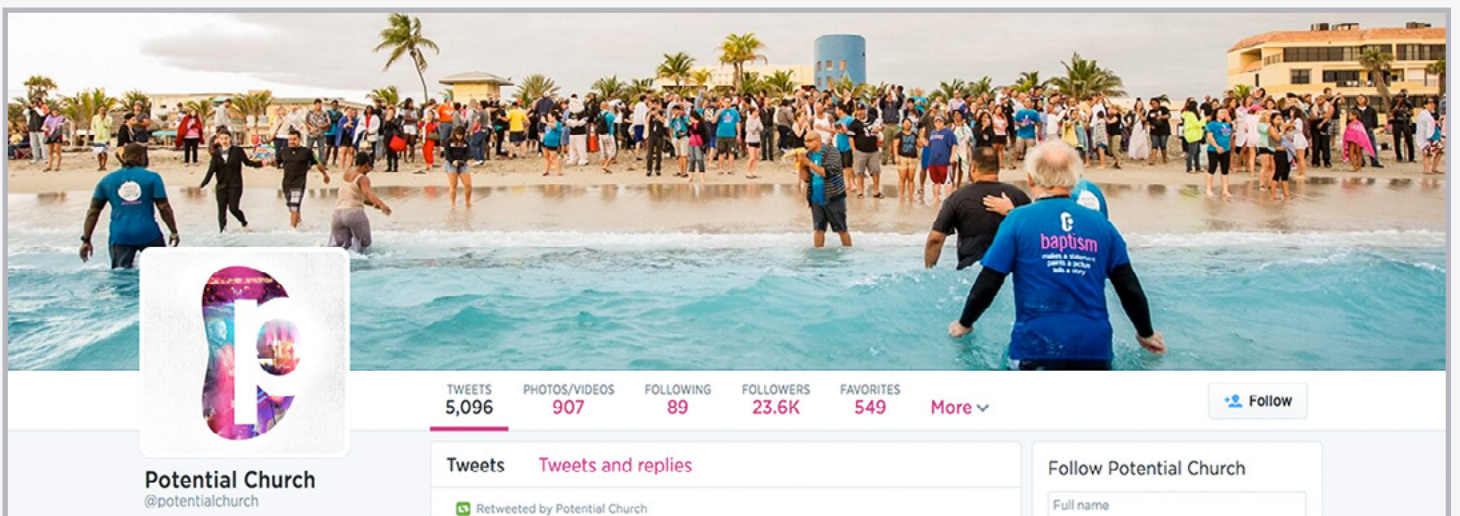
Examples
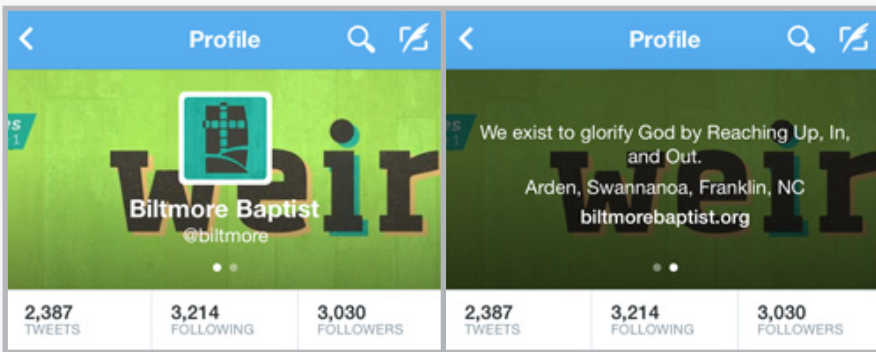
Sermon Series

This is a great graphic for a sermon series that looks nice on a desktop web browser. But in the Twitter app, the image is cutoff and covered by the profile image. Centering content in the header image could help, but it will still not be completly viewable.

Your Beliefs

By using this baptism picture, Potential Church is telling a story of who they are and what they believe. Not only does this show the importance of baptism to the church, it also shows people in fellowship in a community near the coast.

Your Service Style

The three example above show how a simple picture of a worship service can give a glimpse for what to expect from a church. They range from contemporary bright lights to coffee house to traditional. It's a quick peek of what the culture might be like at a church. It tells a far richer story than just showing the outside of your building.

Collage

Collages are a great way to show multiple aspects of your church. It tells a more full story. Just be careful about mixing in stock photography. It looks especially fake next to real images.

Artistic

Using a more artistic picture is a way to say something different about your church as well. A stained class window contrasted with a modern logo, like the Revolution Church example, says we're in a traditional building, but we're not stuffy. Showing tickets works well for National Community Church since they meet in a lot of movie theaters. Even a stylized picture of your building can work. The challenge is using an image that tells a story. In general, showing your people in action say more than the exterior of a building.

DESIGN SETTINGS

In this area, you can select a custom color for links so they match your brand colors. There is also the ability to add a background image, which isn't necessary when you've switched to the new layout. Consider it a leftover from the old design.

APPS SETTINGS

Here you can view or remove any third party apps that are linked to your Twitter account. You have to give permission for them to be linked from the beginning,

EMAIL NOTIFICATION SETTINGS

If you're concerned about overlooking a tweet that involves your church account, you can choose to get an email notification when a whole array of things happen.

Section Three
POSTING STRATEGY

TWITTER
FOR YOUR MINISTRY

Knowing the right time to tweet really depends on understanding your audience. Experimenting with posting at different times on different days will let you see when your followers are more active in responding and retweeting. Bit.ly, one of the most commonly used URL shorteners on Twitter, released some findings on when posts get the most click-throughs.

Best Time to Post:

Monday - Thursday
1-3 pm

Times to Avoid:
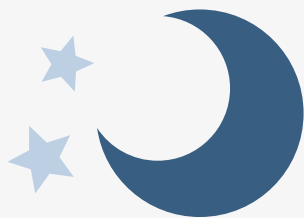
Any Day
After 8 pm

Friday
After 3 pm

Twitter's Highest Traffic Times:
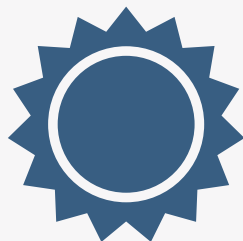
Monday - Thursday
9 am - 3 pm

WHAT INCREASES ENGAGEMENT?

The organization Buddy Media looked at more than 300 of the largest brand Twitter accounts to see if there were trends in engagement.

How People Engage with Brand Tweets:

Click on Links	**92%**
Retweets	**78%**
Replies	**23%**

Tweets that include a link to a photo *or* a hashtag get **2X** more engagement.

Tweets that are less than 100 characters get a **17%** higher engagement rate.

Engagement rates suffer if you tweet more than
SIX TIMES A DAY

Tweets with more than two hashtags see a
17% DROP IN ENGAGEMENT

Engagement with organizations is **17%** higher on
SATURDAY & SUNDAY
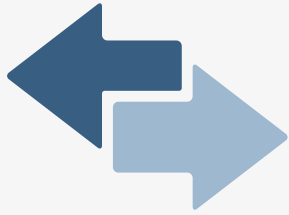
LINKING ACCOUNTS

It's easy to link Twitter with Facebook so one posts to the other. Resist that. Each outlet has a different audience, so uniquely meet their needs. Plus Twitter lingo doesn't work on Facebook. If you commit to Twitter, do it right.
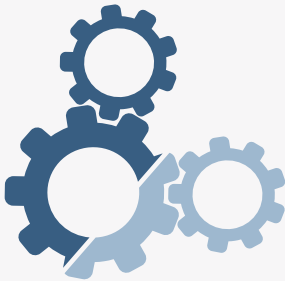
USING AUTOMATION

There is nothing more impersonal than following someone on Twitter and getting an instant, canned, generic direct message sent to you. It's worse when it's promoting something. Just because you can doesn't mean you should.
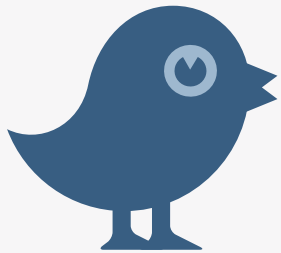
ASKING ASK FOR RT'S

This is a tricky one. Statistics show if you ask for retweets, you'll get more of them. But for regulars on Twitter, it's highly annoying to see. Default to respecting your community. If you need another reason, asking for a RT makes you sound desperate.
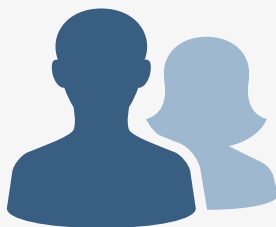
NOT FOLLOWING OTHERS

Keep a good ratio of people you follow and those who follow you. If it's lopsided where you're not following others, it looks like you only care about your agenda. Tilt the other way and it looks like you're spamming people. It is important to follow people in your community to help you understand it better.

Of all the social media platforms, Twitter's native site and app are pretty good. They're fairly simple and easy to use. While you'll always have to visit the main site to customize your profile settings, some prefer to use other tools for the day-to-day work on Twitter. Here are a few of the most popular ones.

HootSuite   *hootsuite.com*

HootSuite is great if you're managing multiple accounts or working in a team. The platform lets you customize streams of information, schedule tweets, see analytics on how your posts are doing, and will let you know if someone else on your team has responde to a direct message. HootSuite also integrates with Facebook, Google+ and others. It's website and app based.

TweetDeck   *tweetdeck.com*

TweetDeck started out as an independent organization and has since been bought by Twitter. It no longer supports integration with other social networks. Like HootSuite, you can manage multiple accounts, customize streams to view and schedule tweets. Recently Twitter announced it would quit updating smartphone apps to focus only on the web based version.

TweetBot   *tapbots.com/tweetbot*

Tweetbot is an iOS app only with lots of features that are similar to HootSuite and TweetDeck. There are a lot of customizable options that make it a little more robust that the standard Twitter app.

URL Shorteners

Space is valuable in Twitter's 140-character world. URL shorteners take those long web addresses and shrink them into a shorter link that redirects to your bigger one. Most platforms have URL shorteners built into them, but here are a couple of options if you're looking for a service. Both let you track performance of your links.

bit.ly
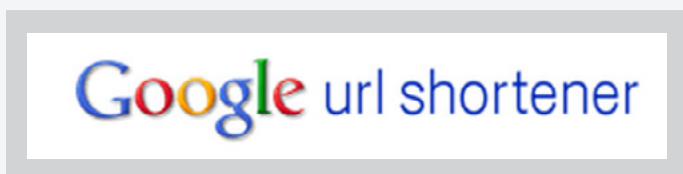
goo.gl

Section Four
TWITTER ADS

TWITTER
FOR YOUR MINISTRY

Advertising on Twitter is still fairly new, especially compared to Facebook. In a small test using the @churchjuice Twitter account, advertising had an affordable cost per click and helped us add quality followers who might actually have an interest in the content we post.

Types of Ads

PROMOTED TWEET

It's as simple as it sounds. Pick a tweet (or write a new one) you want more people to see. The tweet will appear across Twitter based on the parameters you select in terms of budget and audience targeting.

These tweets are marked as promoted.

PROMOTED ACCOUNT

With this option, your Twitter account gets prime placement in the "who to follow" section of someone's account, based on the audience targeting you select.

When displayed, you're at the top of the list with a note that it's promoted.
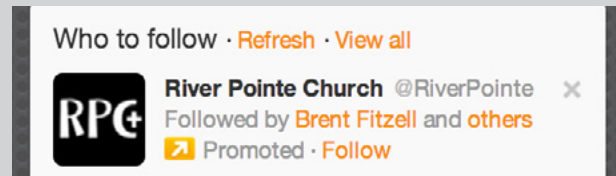
TWITTER CARD

A Twitter card gives your tweet more guts by highlighting a specific call to action (usually going to a website).

Beyond sharing 140 characters, you can also upload an image (320 x 800 minimum size), create a title and choose a call to action button (like read now).

Creating a Twitter card is possible through twitter ads, but can be created for free. The free option posts like a one-time tweet. You can also choose to promote your Twitter card tweet just like a regular ad.

Audience Targeting

The basic targeting features let you easily select who you want to see your promoted tweets and account. You can make selections based on geographical location, device type the person is using and gender. You can also get more specific and pick interests or specific users whose followers you'd like to reach.

Choose the location of your audience. ?

Search for locations		
Country	× Canada	× United States

38.7K
AUDIENCE SIZE ?

TARGETING USERS
· like your followers
AND in 2 locations

Choose your audience based on their interests. Use @usernames to reach people with the same interests as followers of that user. Or, add interest categories. ?

Search for interest categories or @usernames | Browse categories

▼ More targeting options

Limit targeting to specific devices and platforms: ?

☑ Desktop and laptop computers
☑ iOS — apps and web on iPhone, iPad, iPod touch
☑ Android — apps and web on Android phones and tablets
☑ BlackBerry — apps and web on BlackBerry phones and tablets
☑ Other mobile devices — web on smartphones and tablets

Limit targeting by gender:
⦿ Any gender   ○ Male only   ○ Female only

Budgeting

You only pay when someone interacts with your promoted item. For a promoted tweet, that means clicking on a link, retweeting, replying or favoriting. For a promoted account, you don't pay until someone follows you.

You bid for what that will cost you. This is a maximum you're willing to pay for each interaction or follow. Twitter will suggest an amount but also says it may cost you less than that amount depending on competition and narrowness of your targeting. After you start a campaign, check back to see how much you're actually paying. You might be able to set your bid lower or see a lower suggested amount.

Twitter also allows you to set a maximum daily amount to spend so you don't go over budget. Payment is made by registering a credit card. Twitter will send occasional invoices to your email letting you know when they've charged your card.

Promoted Tweets
You pay when targeted users engage (click on, retweet, @reply to, or favorite) a Tweet.

☐ TARGETED AUDIENCE
■ ESTIMATED REACH

[Promote my Tweets]

195K

Spend no more than $ ____ per day ?

Bid a maximum of $ 0 per engagement ?

0

We recommend a bid of at least $1.50. ?

Promoted Accounts
You pay when targeted users start following you from a Promoted Account listing.

☐ TARGETED AUDIENCE
■ ESTIMATED REACH

[Stop promoting my account]

195K

$ 5 per day ?

$ 1.15 per follow ?

85.1K

We recommend a bid of at least $2.50. ?

Analytics

You never get as many numbers as you'd like, but Twitter does provide some basic analytics for how your ads are doing. Below is an example of a graph showing growth in followers due to a promoted account campaign. If you promote tweets, you'll get a similar breakdown showing impressions (total people seeing the content), click rates and amount spent.

PROMOTED ACCOUNT	26.9K IMPRESSIONS	×	1.05% FOLLOW RATE	= 281 FOLLOWS	$273 SPENT

Cumulative follower growth   ☐ Promoted ☐ Unpaid

	15 Feb	22 Feb	1 Mar	8 Mar	15 Mar
2,188					
2,115					
2,041					
1,968					
1,895					
1,821					
1,748					
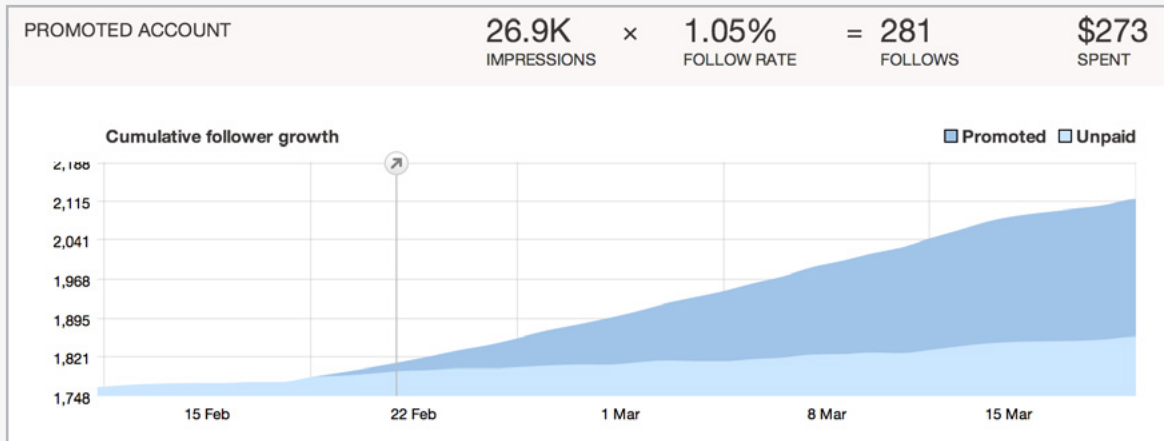
Advanced Twitter Ads

If you're comfortable with online advertising, Twitter gives you the option of opening up more advanced features. This is a good option if you plan on running multiple campaigns at the same time or want more detailed analytics. Here's one warning: once you go advanced, you can't go back to basic.

DIFFERENCES

Compare features   ✕

	BASIC	ADVANCED
TARGETING	Target one audience, tweak it over time	Target multiple audiences at the same time in multiple campaigns
BUDGETING	Separate daily budgets for promoting Tweets and promoting your Account	Separate daily budgets and total budgets for each campaign
CAMPAIGN CONTROLS	Manual start/stop at any time	Schedule start and end dates
WHERE ADS ARE SHOWN	Who to follow, in users' timelines	Who to follow, in users' timelines, and search results
REPORTING	Simple follower growth chart; per-Tweet statistics	In-depth reporting on Tweets and all targeting for any dates; CSV download
EXTRA ANALYTICS	None	Stats for every Tweet; follower demographic breakdown
PRICING	Same pricing and bids (no minimum spend required)	

Stay with Basic   Switch to Advanced

BUDGET AND BID $5/day $1.15

Like all social media, there is no magic formula for being successful in using Twitter. Likewise, Twitter isn't the right communications solution for every church. First, decide if and how Twitter fits in your communication plan. Then spend time using the technology, learning your audience and watching what other organizations you admire do. Social media, Twitter included, is about learning, adapting and creating a customized experience for your unique audience.

CREDITS & REUSE POLICY

Twitter For Your Ministry is written by Jerod Clark. He's the project leader for Church Juice, a ministry of ReFrame Media, that helps churches use media better. For more information, visit www.churchjuice.com.

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energizing church
communications

re:FRAME MEDIA
SEEING GOD'S STORY IN YOUR LIFE