



# Hoteliers Guide to Twitter



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# Introduction

## Overview

By partnering closely with many leading-edge hospitality companies, Revinatate is in the unique position to learn first-hand about the social media strategies that work, and don't work, for the hospitality industry.

The Hoteliers Guides are our way of sharing what we have learned with the larger community. To learn more about review sites, please see our "Hoteliers Guides to Review Sites and Forums" and our "Hoteliers Guide to Facebook", both of which are available on our Web site (<http://www.revinatate.com/>).

This guide is an introduction for hoteliers who are new to Twitter. We'll explain why you should consider using Twitter, how it can become an invaluable tool, and how to get started. We'll also provide some helpful tips and best practices along the way.

## What is Twitter?

Twitter is a free "micro blogging" service that allows users to stay updated with friends, businesses and influencers.

Twitter allows anyone to create an account and then post "tweets", which are short messages with a maximum length of 140 characters. (This character limit is due to Twitter's initial focus on cell phone text messages, which are limited to about 140 characters.)

Any Twitter user can "follow" any other Twitter user. It's important to understand that unlike Facebook's "two-way" relationships, which need be confirmed by both sides, relationships on Twitter only need to be "one-way". So, as a Twitter user, you can follow whoever you want (including @BarackObama for example) without getting permission. (@BarackObama can then choose whether or not to follow you in return.)

When a user posts a new tweet, it is sent to all of that user's followers. The tweet is also publicly posted on the user's profile page on Twitter, such as at <http://twitter.com/revinatate>. (Users are able to make their accounts private, but they are a small minority.)

Both individuals and businesses use Twitter. Many Twitter users have just a few followers, while some users have hundreds, thousands or even millions of followers.

A major reason why Twitter has grown so popular is that the company behind Twitter has encouraged other businesses to build services on top of the open Twitter "platform". These "3rd party services" include:

- Twitter “clients”, which are software programs that run on computers or mobile devices that allow people to view and search tweets, and post their own tweets. (Revinat includes an exclusive Twitter client, called TweetConcierge, that is customized for hotels and is fully integrated with a comprehensive solution media solution. TweetConcierge allows hoteliers to monitor Twitter for any mention of their hotel and their competition, and also post tweets and interact with followers.)
- Web sites that provide general insight and analysis into Twitter activity, such as <http://twitaholic.com>, which tracks the most popular twitter users.
- Services that add features to Twitter, such as <http://bit.ly/>, a “url shortening” service which turns long web links into short ones, and <http://twitpic.com/>, which allows users to include photos in their tweets.
- Other web-based services that integrate Twitter into other web sites (such as blogs).

In addition to providing a unique “one-to-many” communication channel that allows individuals and business such as hotels to interact with fans in unique and valuable ways (covered below), the growth of Twitter has created a unique platform where the real-time updates of millions of users can be analyzed to find “trends” and news happening around the globe. In fact, news often breaks on Twitter today more quickly than it is covered by journalists or bloggers, because no matter where something happens there is usually a Twitter user nearby who will post an update within seconds.

# The Value of Twitter to Hoteliers

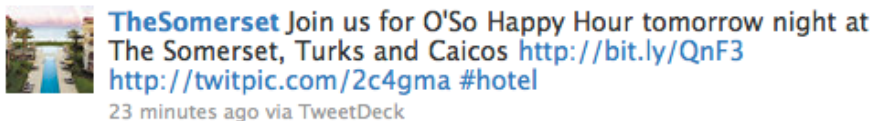
## How Twitter Can Work for You

Twitter can help you provide new insight into the unique personality of your brand/property, stay connected with your most loyal followers, promote news and offers, and delight your guests . At a high level, hotels can use Twitter to:

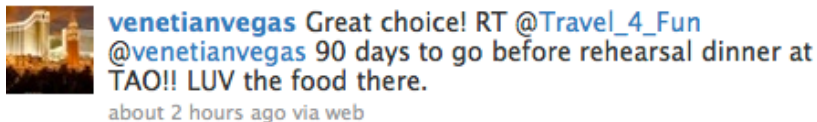
- **Build stronger relationships with your loyal fans.**



- **Spread the word about your fantastic service, location, facilities and more.**



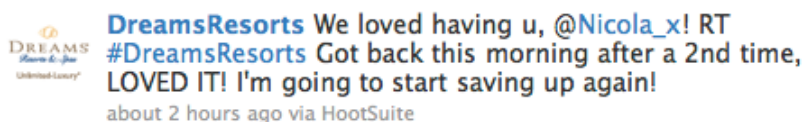
- **Gather real-time market intelligence and feedback about your hotel, restaurant or competitors.**



- **Quickly share information with people interested in your hotel(s).**



- **Surprise and delight guests who tweet about your hotel.**



- Engage with customers one-on-one.



**hotel\_max** Give a birthday shout out to our @BanyanBranch friend: @Guythinks! He is awesome! #happybirthday #pleaseshareyouricecream

about 2 hours ago via TweetDeck

- Share photos and update customers on hotel activities, promotions and events.



**TrumpLasVegas** Celebrate forever with our Trump Blissful wedding package. <http://ow.ly/2nMsk>

about 2 hours ago via HootSuite

- Provide convenient and delightful customer service.



**HyattConcierge** @ZaireMakel Certainly, the number is (904) 359-0120. If you need anything else feel free to tweet back at any time.

about 4 hours ago via TweetDeck in reply to ZaireMakel

- Promote special offers.



**Montelucia** Hi all! Remember that if you're interested in staying with us now through Labor Day, book your exclusive \$99 room... <http://fb.me/EeglU68r>

18 minutes ago via Facebook

- Announce updates and news about your property.



**WHotelSD** We're ready to unwind with @lululemon! Join us for Vino & Vinyasa beginning at 6pm!

about 1 hour ago via SocialOomph

- Offer new insight into the unique personality and character of your property, staff and service.



**Kimpton** There's a strange thing in the SanFrancisco sky 2day. Looks like.. sorta round, brite, feels like..OMG! It's the sun! Qwik. Evryone outside!

about 2 hours ago via TweetDeck

- Prospect for new business.



**theGEMhotel** For anyone stuck in NYC tonight due to LIRR cancellations, GEM Midtown West near Penn Station has rooms from \$289: <http://bit.ly/d1bMo9>

about 6 hours ago via TweetDeck

## Examples of Success

We hear stories almost every day from hoteliers who have used Twitter to strengthen relationships and win new business. Most have found that the time and energy they devote to Twitter pays off tremendously.

For example, a hotel was actively monitoring tweets and saw that a guest tweeted that his room faced a wall and he was unhappy. In less than five minutes the hotel was able to identify him and call his room to ask if he wanted a new room. The guest was dumbstruck that the hotel was so on top of guest satisfaction and tweeted his love for the hotel for all his followers to see.

As an example of winning new business, a hotel in Napa Valley was able to identify a bride-to-be who was looking for recommendations on wedding venues. The hotel sent her a tweet and suggested she come by for a tour, and she ended up booking her wedding with them.

## The Importance of Protecting Your Name/Brand

The viral nature of Twitter means that an interesting story can become the biggest news story of the day. For example, when two Dominos employees decided to upload a video of their pizza preparation, complete with unhygienic activity, on YouTube, the Twittersphere exploded and it created a PR nightmare for Dominos. It seemed that everyone was talking about the video.

But Twitter explosions can also be great for a brand. For example, many people learned about the brilliant Old Spice campaign, “The Man Your Man Could Smell Like”, via Twitter. As people watched the YouTube ads and loved them, they tweeted to their friends, causing the campaign to go viral beyond belief.

Companies need to be aware that Twitter has the power to dramatically help, or hurt, a brand by spreading the word from follower to follower at blazing speed.

# Getting Started with Twitter

## Before You Begin Tweeting

Before you begin sharing your thoughts with the world, it's best to familiarize yourself with how Twitter works by following some people and reading through their tweets. Spend some time monitoring their accounts and seeing what they tweet, how often they tweet, and what sort of responses they get. Talk to experienced users who can share best practices. Check out what other hotels are doing in your area.

But most importantly, make sure you're ready to dedicate ongoing time and resources to Twitter. Once you set up an account you need to consistently monitor and respond to tweets or you risk disappointing your followers and causing damage to your brand.

Have a plan for who's in charge, and for what success looks like for your property. When brands first started using Twitter, many measured success in terms of the number of followers. Today, many are looking at statistics around engagement or conversion. For example, how many Tweets are retweeted or replied to, or how many sales result from a tweet in which an offer is made. (Revinatate can help with all of this.)

## Creating your Twitter Account

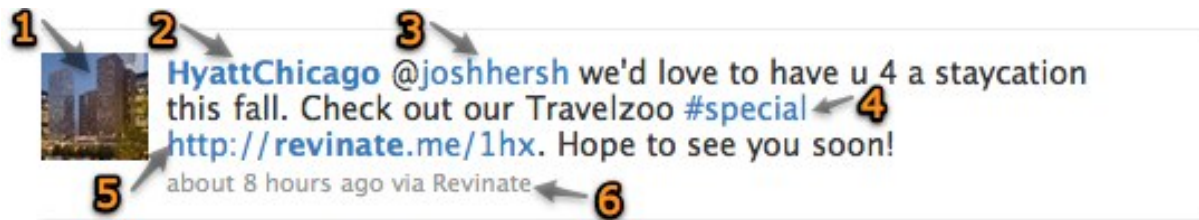
If you're ready to begin, the first thing you must do is create a Twitter account. Go to [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com) to sign up. You will then select your name and user name. We recommend you use your hotel name so people can easily find you. Once you create your account you can customize your page and upload an image (logo or photo) so people can easily identify your tweets.

## Following, and Being Followed

Now that your account is live, click the 'Find People' link on [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com) to search for people that you want to follow. You can search by name, or browse interests. For example, hotels might want to check out 'Travel' to see who is Tweeting about travel related topics. When you find someone that you want to follow, just click the 'follow' link. The person you are following will be notified that you are following and may choose to follow you back. You'll also discover interesting people to follow as you ramp up, so don't feel like you need to follow too many people right off the bat.

To see a list of all your followers, you can click on the 'followers' link on [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com). To see who you are following, click on the 'following' link.

## The Anatomy of a Tweet



1. **Author Image** - the profile image of the Twitter user who sent the tweet.
2. **Author Username** - the username of the Twitter user who sent the tweet.
3. **Mentions** - if other users are mentioned in a Tweet they are referred to by their Twitter username, which is preceded by the "@" sign.
4. **Hash Tags** - any tweet can optionally include a hash tag, which is simply any word following a "#" sign. These are included to help people who search Twitter find tweets on a subject or topic. You can make up your own hash tags on the fly to help people find your tweets.
5. **Shortened URL** - because regular URLs would quickly take up most or all of the 140 character limit on tweets, services have been created to shorten links. Just about every Twitter client (including Revinate's TweetConcierge) will shorten URLs for you - you simply paste the full URL into the tweet and it will be shortened automatically. When someone reads your tweet and clicks on your link, they will be automatically directed to your original URL. (Shortened links can also be tracked, so that you know how many people click on them once you send out the tweet.)
6. **Byline** - including the time the tweet was sent, and the Twitter client used to send it (in this case it was Revinate's twitter client, aka TweetConcierge). If the update was a "retweet" that information would appear here as well.

## Sending a Tweet

You can send tweets from Twitter.com or any Twitter client on a computer or mobile device. Once you send a tweet it is sent to every Twitter user who is following you, and posted publicly on your Twitter.com account page. Depending on their own settings, your followers may receive your tweet by text message, or more likely they will see it the next time they visit Twitter.com or their own Twitter client.

There are a few different types of tweets, described here.

- **Regular Tweets** (aka update): A regular, public message on Twitter is 140 characters (or less) of text.

### What's happening?

Hello world!

Tweet

- **Replies:** Replies are tweets that start with '@' followed by the username of the author to whom you are replying. Most Twitter clients automate this by including a "Reply" link next to tweets. It's important to note that even though your reply is directed to a specific user, your reply is public for anyone to see.

### Reply to kimpton:

@kimpton Thanks for all the great feedback! :)|

Tweet

- **Retweets:** Retweets are a major way in which information is shared across Twitter, and here's why: the tweets that you see usually aren't seen by the people following you. So when people see an interesting tweet they'll often "retweet" it, which simply means that they will post it as an update to their followers. So how do you send a retweet? A retweet is simply the original tweet preceded by "RT @originalAuthor". Recently, Twitter launched a new method for retweeting, which allows for automatic retweeting with the click of a "Retweet" button. Both retweet methods are still in use.

### What's happening?

RT @revinate Welcome, Kyle Duffy, to the team. <http://revinate.me/1ZW>

Tweet

- **Direct Messages:** You can send private tweets directly to other users who are following you. You can not send a direct message to a user who has not already followed you. Direct messages begin with a 'D' in front of the username of the person you are direct messaging. Most Twitter clients also automate this with a "Direct Message" link. For hoteliers, this allows you to respond privately and directly to guests.

### Direct message charlehotel:

D charlehotel I hope you find this Twitter guide helpful!

Tweet

## Including Photos or Videos in Your Tweets

In order to include a photo in your tweet, you must use a Twitter photo service, such as [TwitPic.com](http://TwitPic.com) or [TweetPhoto.com](http://TweetPhoto.com). Most services also have mobile applications so you can tweet photos from your mobile device. When tweeted, the photos appear as shortened links that can be clicked to show the images.

## How To Search Twitter

Twitter clients, such as Revinat's TweetConcierge, make it easy to search the entire Twitter universe for topics that matter to you. Here is a guide for searching Twitter.

Word-level search:

- Search for exact match using quotations: **"Hilton Los Angeles"**
- search for any of these words using 'OR': **Hilton OR Los Angeles**
- exclude any word using a minus sign: **Hilton Los Angeles -Paris**
- search for related discussions using hashtags: **#hotels**

A person-related search:

- find threads by a specified Twitter user: **Hilton from:revinate**
- find threads addressed to a specified Twitter user: **Hilton to:revinate**
- find Tweets referencing the specified username: **@revinate**

Location-specific search:

- find Tweets sent near the specified location: **hilton near:seattle**
- find Tweets sent within XX miles of the specified location: **near:NYC within:15mi**

Date-specific search:

- find posts sent since / until the specified date (YYYY-MM-DD): **Hilton since:2008-06-25**

Emotional color and semantic structure search:

- finds Tweets with positive / negative attitude: **hotel :) (positive)** or **hotel :( (negative)**
- search for questions: **hilton?**

# Twitter Tips & Best Practices

## How Many Accounts Should My Hotel or Brand Set Up?

We recommend that hotels who are just getting started with Twitter set up a single Twitter account for their property. However, depending on your organization, you may decide that you need multiple Twitter accounts. It is not unusual for full service hotels to have a general account, an account for the bar and one for the restaurant. Before you set up multiple accounts you should think about whether you will actively support all accounts and whether you have multiple customer sets. For example, it might make sense for a hotel that has a very popular neighborhood bar to have a Twitter account since the bar customer set is comprised of locals, not travelers, like the hotel's followers. Furthermore, hotel personalities, such as chefs, GMs or concierges would make great tweeters, if they are interested in having their own accounts.

## Customizing Your Profile Page

Twitter allows you to customize both your Twitter page and the icon that travels with every tweet. Any time you are provided with the opportunity to showcase your personality or brand, you should do it. Customize the colors to match your brand and add a background image. If you are tweeting on behalf of the hotel or brand, use the logo as your icon. If you are tweeting as a hotel personality, for example the GM or concierge, it's OK to use your own picture.

## Building Your Followers

You may come across services that will build followers for you, for a price. These offers can be tempting, because Twitter accounts with high follower numbers appear to be more popular. But while it might be tempting, don't do it. There are no real advantages, since people who are paid to follow you have no interest in your services or having a relationship with your brand so you're just throwing away your money. And the phoniness of "purchased" followers will taint your brand.

Instead, focus on bringing value to the followers that you do have. Continue to provide interesting tweets, and you will build up a real, valuable following over time. Also, resist the urge to follow everyone in hopes that they will follow you back. Some will, but unless you focus on your content you will lose them.

## Best Practices

- Ask your guests to follow you on Twitter by placing the Twitter icon on your Web site, in newsletters, mailings and including it in the signature of staff emails.
- Think of Twitter as a communication vehicle to learn more about your customers, and to provide unique insight into your brand and personality - and not solely as a way to generate immediate sales.
- Give your Twitter followers a reason to follow you. Offer them Twitter specials or give them advanced notice about events.
- If you receive criticism, respond publicly with your apologies and ask the person to direct message or email you directly.
- Monitor what your competition is saying, and what people are saying about your competitors, by monitoring their activity and relevant keywords.
- Share great reviews and news so that the world sees the positive remarks about your hotel.
- Don't waste characters with a long URL. Create a short one at [bit.ly.com](http://bit.ly.com), [TwitPwr.com](http://TwitPwr.com) or [Tinyurl.com](http://Tinyurl.com). (Many Twitter clients will shorten URLs automatically for you. Revinatate customers using TweetConcierge can simply enter the long url and a shortened one will automatically replace it.)
- Thank people who retweet your tweets.
- While you need followers to help spread your messages, don't take shortcuts to get there (such as buying followers). Focus on quality content and the people will follow.
- Identify your most influential followers on Twitter by checking their 'clout scores' on [klout.com](http://klout.com) or [twitalyzer.com](http://twitalyzer.com).
- Search for keywords that might help you win new business. For example, if you are a Napa Valley hotel, search for 'wine country wedding venue', or 'napa wedding' to see if anyone is looking for a recommendation.

# Appendix

## Twitter Clients

Revinat has designed the ultimate Twitter client for hoteliers, called **TweetConcierge**. TweetConcierge comes with every Revinat account. There are a number of key advantages for hoteliers over any other client on the market.

- 1) TweetConcierge allows multiple team members to collaborate across multiple Twitter accounts
- 2) TweetConcierge includes integrated URL-shortening
- 3) TweetConcierge includes link tracking, allowing you to track every single click on links you post to Twitter, giving you powerful analytics.
- 4) TweetConcierge allows hotels to track Twitter "Campaigns" and measure click and sales activity generated across multiple promotional tweets.
- 5) TweetConcierge also makes it incredibly simple to post a tweet from any, or all, of your Twitter accounts simultaneously.
- 6) TweetConcierge allows your hotel to track everything being said about your hotel and your competitors on Twitter.

Other clients include **HootSuite**, a professional Twitter client that allows any business or consumer to manage multiple Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and Ping.fm profiles, pre-schedule messages, and measure success. Their tabbed dashboard layout makes it easy to organize and customize the social networks your hotel is following. There is a free version of HootSuite, or you can sign up for a paid subscription for enhanced functionality.

Another popular client, **TweetDeck**, is a personal browser for staying in touch with what's happening now and connecting you with your contacts across Twitter, Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn and more. TweetDeck is available for the desktop as well as iPhone and iPad.

## About Revinat

Revinat is the ultimate social media solution for hotels. Developed exclusively for the hospitality industry, Revinat allows hotels to turn social media into actionable plans to quickly respond to competition and market demands, increase customer satisfaction and drive revenue. To learn more, please visit [www.revinat.com](http://www.revinat.com) or email [info@revinate.com](mailto:info@revinate.com).