

Twitter Nuts & Bolts 4 Lawyers:

A How-To Guide for Law Firms

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485 retweet

Step by Step
Guide to have
Busy Lawyers
Tweeting
Efficiently and
Effectively in
15 Minutes or Less



Complimentary Edition



Twitter Nuts & Bolts for Lawyers: A How-To Guide for Law Firms

Step by Step Guide to have Busy Lawyers Tweeting Efficiently and Effectively in 15 Minutes or Less

By Reba Kennedy, Esq.

This is a complimentary (free) publication provided by Reba Kennedy, Writer (www.rebakennedy.com) and disseminated to law firms and attorneys as well as those otherwise involved in the legal profession or in the legal marketing industry.

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While Twitter may have started as a micro-blogging site used for personal communications, it has grown into an important component to marketing even the most conservative law firm pursuits on the web.

Today, the question of whether or not Twitter is appropriate in law firm marketing has been answered. Well respected industry leaders like Vinson & Elkins, Jackson Walker, and Fulbright routinely use Twitter.

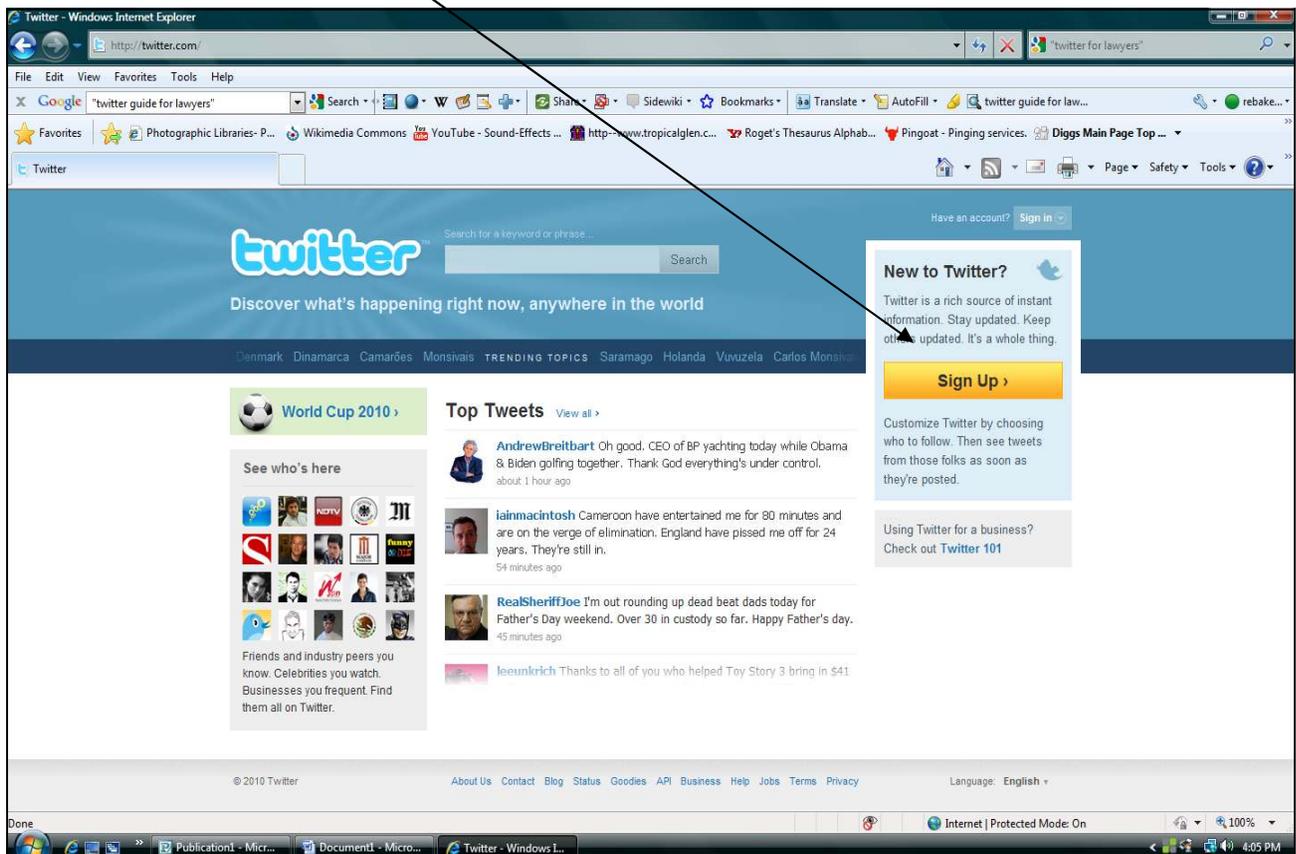
So should you. *Here's how.*

1. Join Twitter

First, decide on your Twitter name, which is important. It must be easy to remember. Keep it short. While clever names are popular, an attorney or law firm is best left to choosing their name, the firm's initials, a practice area, or a combination of these three.

For examples of law firm Twitterers, check out [@FulbrightHealth](#), [@ERISA](#), [@Vinson&Elkins](#), and [@TerryLenamon](#).

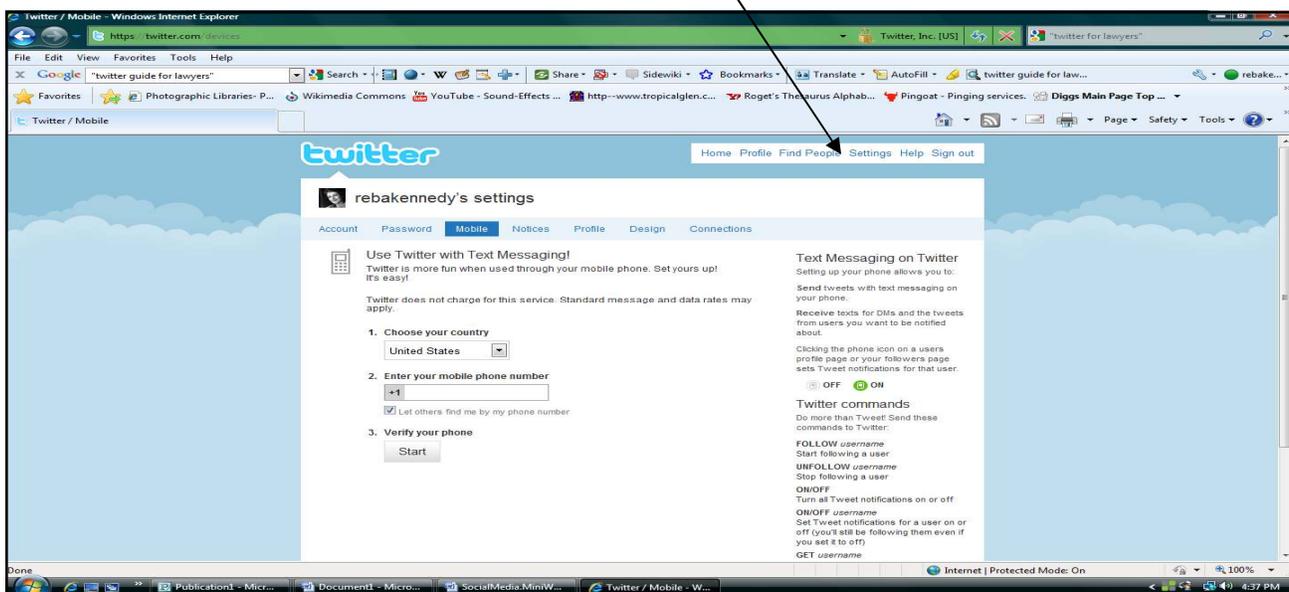
Once you've decided upon a Twitter identity, it's time to join Twitter. On the web, go to www.twitter.com and [join](#). It's free, and it's fast.



Remember to jot down your username and password now that you've joined. Repeat this step for each Twitter identity you want (Jackson Walker had 14 at last count.)

2. Complete Your Profile and Select Your Background.

Once you've joined Twitter, you'll be routed to your Twitter page. In the top right corner of the screen, several words will appear: Home, Profile, Find People, Settings, Help, Sign out.



Choose **Settings**, and complete the information according to your personal preferences. For example, if you want to Tweet via your phone, then here's the place to insert your mobile number (**Mobile** tab). Settings also allows you to insert a photo as well as a link to the firm's website or blog page (**Profile** tab).

Additionally, Settings lets you personalize the background of your Twitter page. Their choices include both patterns and photographs as well as graphics. You can vary the colors, too.

There are also free apps that let you do this, too, such as [TwitBacks](#). (I have chosen a basic blue TwitBacks background for my Twitter page, because it allows me to provide a sidebar with my personal information (phone number, LinkedIn badge, etc.) Finally, your web designer can pull your website background onto the Twitter page for a fee.

3. Find Some Connections in the Twitter Universe.

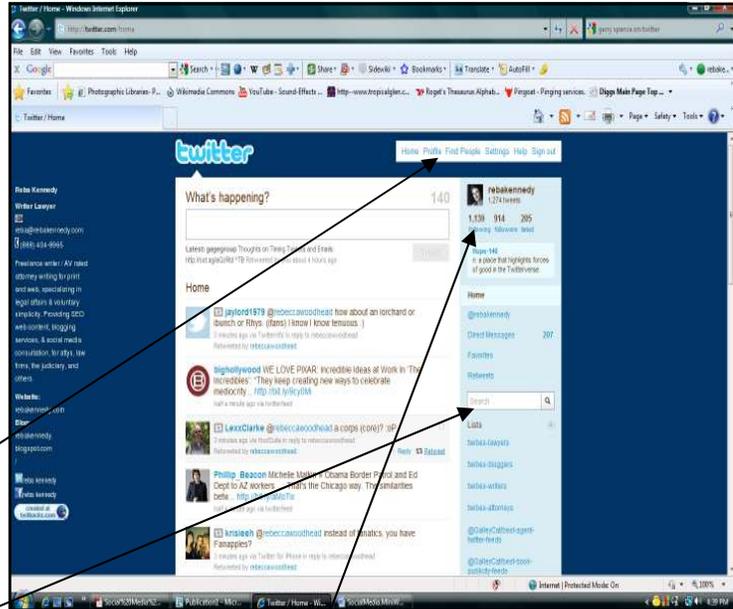
Here is where some attorneys get nervous. They're not interested in spending time chatting on Twitter ("tweeting") – it seems intrusive on already packed schedules. Time is money and Twitter doesn't pay a thing. It is only viable to a lawyer or law firm if it is seen as a marketing expense, a method of building an individual reputation or branding a firm.

Twitter is an excellent way to build a representation online as a leader in your practice area or area of legal expertise.

Choose who you follow accordingly.

Networking with Twitter

While you cannot control who chooses to follow you (you can unfollow them after they've chosen you, and it's wise to periodically cull your followers—excluding spammers, blatant marketers, etc.) you can and should proactively decide upon your following.



1. **Find People** is a tool to use for finding Twitterers whose tweets you want to follow. Plug in some names and see what pops up.
2. **Search** is another tool for finding Tweeters to follow. Search for your areas of interest, in a method similar to that used in WestLaw or Lexis.
3. Comb through the **"Following"** and **"Follower"** Lists of those Twitterers you respect. For example, most law firms will find followers at [@wsjlawblog.com](https://twitter.com/wsjlawblog), the Wall Street Journal's Law Blog Twitter page.
4. Surf through your favorites (bookmarks) and check for those websites that have Twitter options ("Follow me on Twitter").

Each time you find a Twitterer that you'd like to follow, go to that Twitter page and choose "follow" under their name. For those promoting Twitter on their websites, you may be able to set up a "follow" from their website page.

4. Plan Your Tweeting Strategy

Twitter isn't just about creating a series of single tweets. For attorneys, tweets should be viewed as individual, integral components of an overall marketing strategy. Potential clients, referring attorneys, colleagues, and media sources will read your library of tweets and from this body of work, glean impressions and information about your professional acumen and expertise.

Quality tweeting does take time—especially when you're new to communicating in 140 character spurts. With each tweet, you are building relationships with colleagues, potential clients, and future referring attorneys. Just because a "tweet" seems like a small, short sentence, don't underestimate a single tweet's possibilities.

Released into the Twitter Universe, your tweet can be shared exponentially to millions of readers as it is "retweeted". Moreover, even tweets that are deleted upon second thought may have been seen and read already. This is the power of Twitter — and it's worthy of a strategic approach.



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Focus Your Tweeting On Your Goal

If you are seeking to build recognition for your expertise in a certain area of the law, then your tweets should be focused upon that area. DUI attorneys should focus on driving while intoxicated topics. Probate attorneys should tweet on probate matters.

Why? Because over time, your tweets will grow. Others searching Twitter will be able to look at your tweet history by clicking on your name, and it will give them a good, concise overview of who, and what, you are.

Don't Tweet Willy Nilly Just Because You Can't Think of a Tweet

For example, [@TerryLenamon](#) dedicates the entirety of his tweeting to capital punishment. As a death penalty criminal defense attorney, this makes sense for him to do. Reading through [@TerryLenamon](#), and you get a clear idea of both his area of expertise and his level of dedication.

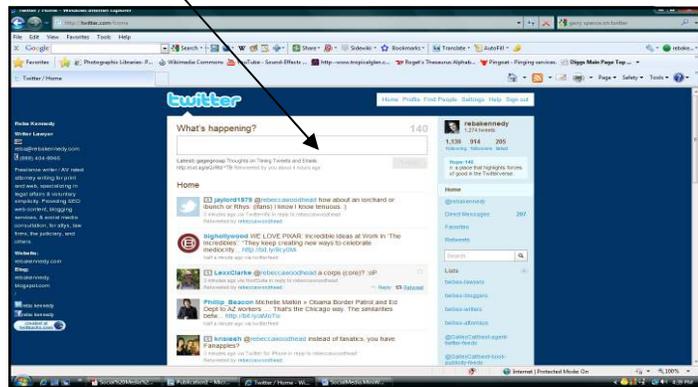
For all we know, Terry Lenamon is a huge Miami Dolphins fan or a professional chef — but we won't learn it from his tweets. His tweets are focused upon his area of legal expertise, and links to his blog which is dedicated to the same subject.

5. Write Your Tweets

Twitter is a free service where members follow the conversations of others, sharing information with their followers through their own tweets and “retweeting” - forwarding along the tweets of others. Tweets are limited to 140 characters in length, and this includes the white spaces.

Where to Tweet

Go to your Twitter Home Page, and type your tweet into the white box immediately under the question “What’s Happening?” Make sure you’re happy with your tweet before you hit “enter” - while you are able to delete tweets after publication, there’s no guarantee someone hasn’t read the tweet before you’ve erased it.



Use Abbreviations

As you keep track of other tweets, you’ll begin to collect your own list of abbreviations that help you keep your message with the Twitter limits. Text messaging abbreviations are common (IMHO, FYI, etc.).

Omit the Vowels

Omitting the vowels in a word can be very helpful — as long as the tweet still makes sense when you’re done. Take out almost all the letters, if you’re sure the reader will understand your meaning. Lawyers will recognize “Sct” - you don’t need to type out “Supreme Court,” and you’ve just saved yourself 10 characters for your tweet.

Shorten The Links (URLs)

Tweets link to lots of information on the web, and you’ll want to include links in your tweets. However, the usual hyperlink is so long that alone, it may exceed 140 characters. Use bit.ly— a free service that will give you an alternative url that is tweet-friendly.

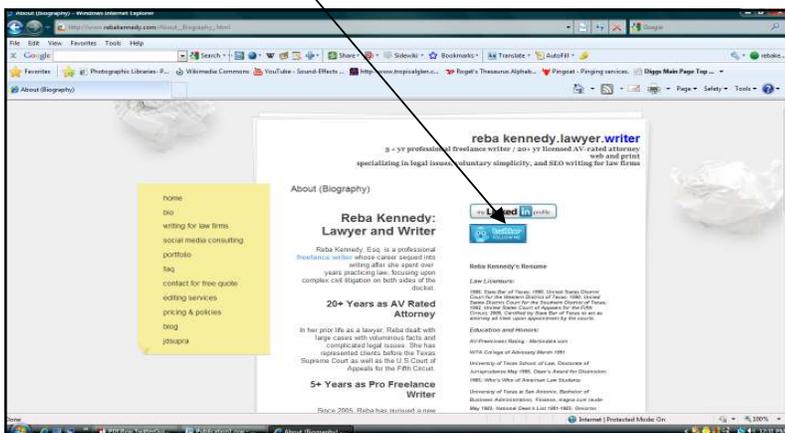
6. Twitter Lingo

As you begin to build your Tweet History, you'll also want to build relationships with others in the Twitter Universe. You can do this by **“retweeting”** - a choice available to you for each tweet you read on Twitter by clicking “retweet” in the lower right hand corner of the tweet you wish to share. It is good Twitter etiquette to thank those that retweet your tweets, by the way.

When both you and another Twitterer follow each other, you are able to communicate directly through **“direct messages.”** These are tweets seen only by the two of you. As you build relationships, you may have a series of DMs with other attorneys, colleagues, etc. Usually, this gets cumbersome pretty fast and you'll switch to email. Voila! Networking success!

7. Promoting Your Tweets

On your website, it's helpful to let visitors know that you are active on Twitter. Add a **“widget”** or **“badge”** to your site that invites them to **“follow us on Twitter.”** Alternatively, they can subscribe to your Twitter feed. There's a widget for that, as well.



On your blog or website, it's helpful to have a **“retweet”** button, allowing individual posts to be easily **“retweeted”** by your blog readers. Gadgets are also available that **marquee** your last 3-5 tweets in your blog's sidebar.

Finally, **LinkedIn** and **Facebook** both provide applications that

allow Tweets to be duplicated on these sites upon their publication on Twitter.com. Use them.

8. Innovations in Law Firm Tweeting

Twitter's impact upon the legal profession is still growing. Not only are law firms delegating significant time and resources to social media pursuits within the firm, with some employees responsible for tweeting firm news and events as part of their job, but tweeting is evolving into areas of the profession:



1. Litigators are using their smart phones to **tweet from the courtroom**, to coordinate trials, e.g., tweeting expected witnesses that day regarding time of arrival, working with support staff back at the office, communicating with clients.

2. Blawgs (law blogs) **gain a wider audience** through tweets that provide the gist of the day's post and the bit.ly url linking the tweet to the blog post itself.

3. By following "trends" as well as news sources, **law firms can follow developments in news and events for their clients**, as well as pending legislation and newly released court opinions, and immediately advise their clients on matters that can or will impact them. Details can then be sent later by e-mail, letter, or phone call.

9. Keeping Track of Followers and Tweets

Will all your tweets be read by all your followers? No. Will you be able to read all the tweets that you receive? No. The high ranking Twitterers have thousands of followers – no one can (or should) read all those tweets.

Then why bother? Twitter gives the reader an ability: (1) to search for a topic and find the law firm's tweets discussing that area, or (2) to search for the law firm, and read through the tweet history that the firm has built over time. It also allows you to build relationships with individuals and firms that you otherwise would never have met.



Twitter Lists and free services like **TweetDeck** allow you to organize followers by category, and this can help corral those tweets that are most important to you.

10. Scheduling Tweets

One tweet, published one time, is not going to reach many readers. Do not expect that single tweet to draw lots of traffic to your new blog post that you've promoted. You need to tweet often, and you need to schedule your tweets to time periods that coordinate with your readers. More people read Twitter at ten o'clock in the morning, rather than six o'clock on the morning—though it may be more convenient for you to tweet during your morning commute.

Also, while Twitter does not allow duplicate tweets, it doesn't mean that you can only tweet about a blog post or a new court opinion once. Draft tweets that address different aspects of the issue, and piecemeal the information through a series of tweets. Another example: give various details on the upcoming firm seminar in a series of tweets that spans the two weeks before it's scheduled to take place.

Conclusion

Twitter's use as a legal marketing tool—as well as a means of communication — is growing at an amazing rate, with new uses still be discovered by attorneys everywhere. Law firms, law organizations (ABA, etc.), law firm practice groups, and individual attorneys are taking advantage of the growing web presence of Twitter and what it has to offer.

Today, clients and law firms can have full-time employees whose time is devoted solely to building the organization's web presence through Twitter (and other social media vehicles on the web). Ford Motor Company's [@ScottMonty](#) is a prime example of a client-savvy Twitterer. Additionally, law firms often have attorneys, or groups within the firm, that promote their area of expertise. Still others hire ghostwriters to work with them as they build a presence in the Twitter world. Twitter is here to stay.



As a lawyer who consults with attorneys and law firms on the use of Twitter, I found that there was a lack of basic, how-to information on the web for lawyers, although there are several good (and free) e-books and white papers on its marketing potential. I hope this e-book helps meet that need. If you have any questions or concerns after reading it, please feel free to contact me at reba@rebakennedy.com. **Happy Tweeting!**

About the Author

Reba Kennedy is an AV-rated 20+ year licensed attorney with 5+ years professional writing experience, published in variety of national publications (Reuters, Chicago Sun Times, CNN.COM, etc.) with work focusing upon legal issues, voluntary simplicity, and law firm internet marketing needs.

Reba's work includes: writing articles for print or web, varied word count; writing e-books and print-on-demand publications; writing SEO web site content for law firms and others; consulting with attorneys on writing for sites and blogs; consultant for lawyers on social media (Tweets, Posts); consultant on copyright infringement and defamation concerns. Reba has written SEO content for 100+ law firm web sites and blogs.

This e-book was written and designed by Reba Kennedy, and has been provided free of charge as a courtesy to law firms and attorneys across the country.

For more information, questions, or comments, please feel free to visit her website, www.rebakennedy.com; email Reba at reba@rebakennedy.com or call her at 1-888-404-8965.



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