



## Twitter for Independent Educational Consultants: A Brief Guide

As a busy professional, you prioritize your time to get the most out of your day. For that reason, you may be wary about jumping into a new technology. Our take is simple: Twitter can provide you some good benefits no matter what type of commitment you want to make. Here is a simple overview of what it is and how you might use it.

### What is Twitter?

It's an online service that allows you to share information, whether you want to write a note or offer a website link. Unlike email, which goes from a sender to a recipient, the information you share is usually posted on Twitter.com, though there are some options to restrict who can see what you post. The length of your note, or "tweet", is limited to 140 characters. As a result, Twitter consists of thousands of brief notes that tell the world what is going on right now.

### How Might Educational Consultants Use Twitter?

Two basic strategies are for research and for marketing.

**Research:** Do you like to stay up-to-date on specific universities? Or, do you regularly read certain newspapers and authors? Most likely, you'll find their virtual presence through Twitter.

As an example, if you decide to "follow" a university, you can go to Twitter.com and receive short updates about their activities as they are happening. The immediacy allows you to get a lot of information and to receive it quickly. Usernames on Twitter are preceded by the @ symbol; for instance, check out American University (@auadmission) at <http://twitter.com/auadmission>.

**Marketing:** Plenty of articles are available on the web about how to use Twitter for promoting your business. A good place to start for advice is the Twitter website at <http://business.twitter.com/twitter101/>.

There are some basic strategies, however.

- Remember to emphasize your Twitter account in your other marketing materials. The industry standard is to share your @name. For example,



# go see campus

Plan Campus Visits and Make the Most of the College Search at <http://goseecampus.com>



<http://facebook.com/goseecampus>



| <http://www.twitter.com/goseecampus>

Go See Campus promotes @goseecampus instead of the entire web address (<http://twitter.com/goseecampus>).

- Twitter should be a means of communicating good, timely information. If you provide quality content to your followers without overwhelming them, you should see your audience grow.
- Share good information from others and give them credit. If you follow the AU Admissions Office (see above) and learn an interesting fact about applications that you think your clients would want to know, you can pass on that information. This is called "retweeting".
- Engage your audience by writing direct messages and mentioning them in your posts. For example, if you just returned from a campus visit, tell your audience about it and invite their questions on Twitter. Learn more about direct messages at <http://support.twitter.com/articles/14606-what-is-a-direct-message-dm>. See how to mention another user at <http://support.twitter.com/articles/14023-what-are-replies-and-mentions>.

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By using Twitter, you can have more frequent, more informal interactions with your clients, universities, and industry connections. Let us know at @goseecampus if you have other ways you like to use Twitter!