



# SkillBites Sampler



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Thanks for opting in! As a small token of our appreciation, we have developed this sampler of tips from various Business SkillBites for you.

## 1. How to Tweet

What is Twitter all about, and is it really worth spending your time to figure it out and start tweeting? According to best-selling author Michael Tasner in his SkillBite *The Complete Guide to Twitter Traffic* (<http://skillbites.net/complete-guide-to-twitter-traffic/>), if you aren't tweeting, you are missing big opportunities. Twitter is about building your list of warm leads. These warm leads are more likely to become your customers. And if you aren't tweeting, your competitors most likely are, which means those leads will go to them.

Further, Twitter helps with search engine optimization, so if you refer to your website in your tweets and use some of the same key words that you use for your website, you will improve the search engine ranking of your website. Properly deployed, a marketing campaign based upon (or supplemented by) Twitter can be incredibly effective and surprisingly easy to orchestrate.

Tasner's Guide walks you through the steps to creating an account, and provides tips on how to optimize your account to build quality leads. For instance, Tasner advises that when creating your Twitter account, you want to pay special attention to the username that you use, as it's not easy to change it later on.

After creating your account, you'll want to identify something you can offer people if they choose to follow you -- something useful and informative based around your niche market, such as a newsletter, special report, or even a full-length information product.



At this point, you are not looking to sell any products or services to your followers. Twitter is primarily a social network and people frequent the community to learn more about others who share their interests and passions. They aren't there looking to buy products or sign up for service offers, so you need to take an indirect route in order to really maximize your income and stand out in the marketplace.

So, when do you get to the point where you can start selling to your followers and monetizing your Twitter account? Find this out and more by reading Tasner's Guide (<http://skillbites.net/complete-guide-to-twitter-traffic/>).

## 2. Tips to Effective Sales

What is it that makes some people able to sell you anything, and others sound like used car salesmen who you'd never buy from? If you are in Sales, what can you do to be in the first group? In her straightforward SkillBite, *6 Tips to Effective Sales* (<http://skillbites.net/6-keys-to-effective-sales/>), Betsy Silver provides you with the keys to get there.

Silver, a highly effective business development manager, explains that people buy from people they trust. Accordingly, the primary goal of a salesperson should be to focus on how to best help the prospective customer, not how quickly you can persuade someone to buy your product.

One of the first steps the salesperson needs to take is to do some homework to learn as much as possible about the customer. For instance, review their website, investigate whether there are any



recent press releases on the company, and look up the contact person on LinkedIn, Facebook, or other social networking sites to learn more about both their work history and personal life.

The more information you gather about your customer and the contact prior to meeting with them, the easier it will be to build rapport and trust. It will also make it easier to determine which stories to tell, which past customers to talk about, and which features of your product or service to bring up that will specifically help your prospective customer.

Another way to build trust is to treat every customer as if they are your most important customer. Customer service is about being relevant, reliable and responsive. It means asking probing questions and actively listening to the answers so that their needs and their challenges drive the conversation. It also means following through on your promises every time, or at least communicating when you aren't able to meet your commitment. And it means responding promptly whenever your customer contacts you.

### **3. Grooming Your Second in Command**

One of the most common mistakes of small business owners is the desire to personally touch and control all aspects of their business, explains business consultant Rochelle Shirk. This effectively puts a low ceiling on the ability of the company to grow. To position a company for growth, the owner must develop a strong 2nd in Command or 2nd tier of leadership in his or her organization.



In her SkillBite *Grooming Your 2nd in Command* (<http://skillbites.net/grooming-your-2nd-in-command/>), Shirk outlines the steps for doing so.

For most small businesses, the 2nd in Command emerges out of circumstances rather than a conscientious decision. Sometimes the default 2nd in Command is a family member, an employee that has been around the longest, or an employee the owner sees him/herself reflected in. Occasionally, these defaults can work. Most often, they do not. Yet, the person you choose to put in the position of 2nd in Command will have a significant impact on your organization so you must take the selection process very seriously. **DO NOT USE THE DEFAULT METHOD.**

If you have potentially strong internal candidates or a family member that is an obvious successor, put them through an interview process. This will help to ensure that they actually are the right person for the job and clarify expectations on both sides.

You should also clarify the role that you want the 2nd in Command to fulfill. Create a job description that clearly communicates the work to be done as well as the values, skills and experience needed to be successful. When outlining the tasks the job will require, consider current tasks that you are not good at, do not like to do, or do not have time to do well. Maybe you can create a position around these tasks so that you are able to refocus your time where you will deliver the greatest benefit to the organization.



## 4. Trademark Law

Have you ever wondered why some product names have either an ® or ™ after them? The ® means that the name has been registered with the US Patent and Trademark Office, while the ™ is used when the name is not yet registered.

In his book *Fundamentals of Trademark Law*, (<http://skillbites.net/fundamentals-of-trademarks/>) trademark attorney Shawn Farmer explains the purpose of trademarks, why it is important to register a trademark with the US Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO), and how to register a trademark. Trademarks identify the source of a product and allow companies and their customers to distinguish goods or services from similar goods and services offered by others.

In the U.S., trademark rights can be obtained in two ways - by common law rights or by registering a trademark with a state government or with the federal government. To obtain common law trademark rights, the trademark simply needs to be used by someone to identify a product or service that is currently being sold or offered for sale. This process is often referred to as “use in commerce.” No other specific act is required to obtain common law trademark rights. However, common law trademarks can be extremely limited and difficult to enforce.

A federally registered trademark provides an owner with a much broader scope of protection than that provided by common law trademark rights. The owner of a federally registered trademark has rights in any geographic region of the country. Thus, a registered trademark owner can enforce his or her rights against an infringer who is using the mark, regardless of where the mark is being used. Registered trademark owners also have the right to use the ® symbol after their mark which can be an effective deterrence against potential infringers by providing notice of the owner’s trademark rights.



## 5. Succession Planning and Exit Strategy

Can your company survive without you in charge? What if one or more of your key personnel left -- can the organization survive their departure? Do you know when you want to retire or take a lesser role? Not knowing what life has in store for you or for your employees, you need to be prepared, and having well-thought-out plans in case the unexpected happens can give you peace of mind.

In his SkillBite, *Exit Strategy and Succession Planning* (<http://skillbites.net/exit-strategy-and-succession-planning-by-oswald-r-viva/>), Oswald Viva, consultant to top management, walks you through the steps to take to develop a plan to cover the company's needs when the CEO or other key personnel leave the company (a succession plan). He also covers the issues for an owner to address so that the owner receives the maximum benefits when he or she decides to leave the business (exit planning).

As Viva writes, the most important succession decision is who the CEO chooses as his or her successor if he or she were to depart the business. This can be the determining factor in the success or failure of the business and in the well-being of all families tied to the business. However, succession planning should cover the replacement of not just the CEO but of all key positions in the company.

To develop an effective succession plan involves a number of steps, including:

- Defining every function and the tasks, roles and needs of each function.
- Selecting the proper candidates to succeed the incumbent performing the function, if and when the incumbent departs.



- Developing a plan to ensure that the candidates will be capable of stepping into the incumbent's position.
- Monitoring and updating the plan as needed to ensure its effectiveness.

Exit planning, on the other hand, involves a different set of issues for the departing CEO to address, including, among many others:

- Determining when you want to retire;
- Determining the income you need to achieve financial security; and
- Determining how much your business is worth (realistically) and how easy or difficult it would be to sell.

## 6. Building Successful Partnerships

Everybody has a story about a partnership that has fallen apart. Unfortunately, it is a somewhat common occurrence, as about 2 out of every 3 partnerships fail. Yet entering into partnerships can greatly expand a company's opportunities and markets. Judy Weintraub, a business attorney who works with a lot of partnerships, provides a number of useful tips for partners or prospective partners to build durable partner relationships in her SkillBite, *Building Successful Partnerships* (<http://skillbites.net/building-successful-partnerships/>).



One of the first steps prospective partners should take is to conduct an investigation of their partner's background, even if they feel they know the person well. As Weintraub explains, your reputation and your investment in the business will be on the line, so before you enter into a partnership, make sure you know as much about your prospective partner as possible.

The areas of investigation will vary, depending on the circumstances, but might include your partner's credit rating, verification of the schooling and employment history, and a legal review to determine whether there are lawsuits or even criminal claims filed against them.

Another step in the process is for the partners to discuss their expectations concerning the business. One of the main causes of partnership failure is unmet expectations – for instance, one partner feels the other is not pulling their weight. So it is valuable for partners to spend some time making sure they each understand how much time they will be committing to the business.

Another key issue to address is financial expectations – how much each partner desires to earn in the way of salary, whether the partners expect to have profits distributed or redeployed in the business, how much each partner is able to contribute initially and later, if necessary, and what each partner is looking to obtain in the way of financial benefits in the long term.



## 7. Career Planning and Job Search Today

Whether you are a recent college graduate looking for your first real job or an employee who has recently been let go, you'll find a wealth of valuable information in Dick Cipoletti's SkillBite, *Career Planning and Job Search Today* (<http://skillbites.net/career-planning-job-search-today/>). Cipoletti takes you through the steps to identify the career that would be most enjoyable and meaningful, and then the steps to find a job involving that career choice.

One of the first steps in determining the right career is to identify your values, interests, preferences/personality, and situation. Cipoletti delves into each of these areas. For instance, he lists a number of issues to consider when determining one's preferences, including:

- Do you prefer to work with people or work on tasks?
- Do you prefer any particular industries?
- Do you prefer products or services?
- Do you want to work for a small or large firm?
- Are you willing to take a job involving travel? If so, how much travel?
- What hours are you willing to work?
- Are you willing to relocate?

To find a job that you will enjoy, Cipoletti recommends that you identify your talents or strengths. These differ from your skills. Skills are things you do well, but talents or strengths are things you do well and you enjoy doing. For instance, you may be good at math, but if you don't enjoy math, you would probably not be happy in a career involving heavy usage of your math skills.



Cipoletti also provides an interesting and fun exercise to help you identify what you really would enjoy doing: imagine that you have won the lottery and money is now not an issue. It is a year or so later, dream trips and financial planning is done. Now, what would you do with your time?

Did you know that most job opportunities are not advertised? All those jobs posted on online job boards and the classifieds represent only a small fraction of the job openings available. So how do you find out about all those non-advertised jobs? Read Cipoletti's SkillBite (<http://skillbites.net/career-planning-job-search-today/>) and you'll learn all about it.

## 8. Acing Your Job Interview

In a competitive job market, you need every advantage. In *Top Ten Tips To Ace Your Job Interview*, author Cindy McGeever, longtime headhunter for big business, gives you the inside scoop on what recruiters are looking for, to give you a leg up on the other applicants. For instance, a key element for acing your job interview is your preparation. Part of preparation is identifying the specific accomplishments that you've had in each of the positions you've held. Think of your background in narrative terms. Be prepared to tell a short story about your experience and the progression of your career. What were your motivations for moving from one employer to the next? Learn how to tell this story in an "abridged" version – in a few minutes; but prepare a longer narrative for those who want more detail.

Another component consists of asking good questions. Employers like to hire smart people, and one very telling way for them to assess your mental dexterity is by the questions that you ask. The



questions should not be shallow questions about the employer's business or industry. These questions can be readily answered through basic research on the internet. Instead, you want to ask well thought out questions that show a depth of understanding of the open position and the company on the candidate's part that warrants further conversation. One such question might be "What are the key objectives for the person you're hiring over the next 6-12 months? What are some of the barriers to success?"

Do you know anyone looking for a job? Imagine how grateful they'll be to get this book from you, so they can soon be gainfully employed! Go to <http://skillbites.net/top-10-tips-to-acing-your-job-interview-by-cindy-mcgeeever/>, and for just \$4.95, help someone you know land a great job.

## 9. Making A Lasting Impression

Within the first seven seconds of meeting someone, we make judgments about their appearance, body language, manner, dress and professional competence. This first encounter can be nearly impossible to reverse. So it's very important to make a great first impression. In *Three Steps To Making A Lasting Impression* (<http://skillbites.net/three-steps-to-creating-a-lasting-impression-the-first-and-every-time/>), image consultant Sara Canuso provides a myriad of techniques for making a great first impression.

For instance, Canuso explains that a key step toward making a great first impression is identifying the look that is right for you. It should work with your personality, lifestyle, career and budget. The right image for a trial attorney will differ from that of an English professor and both will differ from the image of a software engineer.



An image consultant can help you determine this or you can look through magazines and cut out photos of looks that inspire you and that you want to emulate.

Canuso includes tips on what colors to wear for what occasions. Wear navy or navy pinstripe, for instance, when you want to show a commanding presence, such as when meeting a client for the first time or when you are conducting a meeting.

Canuso also teaches the importance of body language, and how to read the body language of others. Body language communicates volumes about a person. It is a subconscious, nonverbal form of communication comprised of many elements, such as posture, eye contact, clothing, etc. Bodily signals, in fact, are the most reliable, nonverbal signs of honesty or deception. A strong posture, for example, immediately conveys confidence and command of the situation. So if you want to make a great lasting impression on someone else, you'll want to make sure you read the tips in this SkillBite.

## 10. How to Negotiate

Negotiating is such a critical life skill. In the business world, we negotiate with our customers, vendors, even our supervisor and peers. In our personal lives, we negotiate large matters, such as purchasing a home or car, as well as smaller issues, such as getting our children to bed or doing their homework. Fortunately, negotiating is a skill that can be learned. In *The Essentials of Negotiating Effectively* (<http://skillbites.net/the-essentials-of-negotiating-effectively-by-judy-weintraub/>), author and attorney Judy Weintraub shares tips on preparing for the negotiation,



delivering a powerful opening, dealing with tactics and difficult behaviors and other areas so that you will approach negotiations with greater confidence and be more effective.

Ms. Weintraub explains, if you are really nervous in a negotiation, take some slow deep breaths, speak slowly, smile, make eye contact, and take a sip or two of water. These actions will make you appear confident to the other side, even when you don't feel confident. It is the perception of confidence that is more important for negotiating effectively.

During the negotiation, listen carefully to what the other party is saying, and do your best not to interrupt. This shows respect, and increases the likelihood that they will listen carefully to you when you talk. Moreover, you may learn some important information that you weren't previously aware of, such as a critical interest or need of theirs.

If the other side seem particularly emotional about something or are repeating something, that is a strong indication that the point they are making is important to them. If you can't figure out what their interest is, you can ask: "This seems like it is very important to you. Can you help me understand why you need that?"

Wouldn't you like to feel more confident when you negotiate? For just \$4.95, you can learn in about 10 minutes some valuable tips to increase your confidence and make you more likely to achieve your goals in your negotiations.

We hope you enjoyed learning some new business tips. There are lots more tips in each of the SkillBites, and many more topics than what was shared here. Visit the site often, as we are continually updating it and adding more SkillBites for enriching people's lives.



