

Social Media Monitoring and Listening

Your reputation is your currency. Period. Measuring reach, optics, leads, presence, adopters and influencers is not only the most critical safeguard for you, but it's your bread and butter. Social media presents a unique challenge to companies and organizations today. Not only is it a direct channel of communication with your fans, prospects and customers, it also doubles as a marketer's medium to expand brand awareness and generate leads. However, if handled without careful thought, your social media presence can hurt your bottom line with one tweet gone wrong.

It's important to understand that if you begin to use social media channels to reach an audience, you also need to be prepared for unhappy customers or prospects will use it to converse with you and share their feelings about their experience with your brand. In fact, the tables have basically turned with the power to start and end a conversation in the hands of the customer, prospect or brand loyalist via their preferred social media channel.

Some shoppers use social media to research a company's product or services to learn what others are saying about your brand. In other words, if you're active on social media, not only is a scheduling plan critical to your success, so is social media listening and monitoring. According to a 2016 Forrester study¹, "87% of respondents indicated that they visited a brand-managed social media channel during the discovery phase."

The conversations about your brand are happening whether you are officially on social media or not. If you're not doing your best to take control of the conversation, it's possible that a barrage of negative comments could sway a prospect to stay away or send your brand loyalists elsewhere. In fact, if you're a national company or organization and you're not on social media, some consider it suspect and won't engage with your brand.

If resources are an absolute scarcity and you are playing lean, choose one or two social media channels that are most relevant to your industry and end user, but be sure to listen and monitor. Many companies hire firms that specialize in this, saving them the time it takes to find and train the right individual.

What's the difference between monitoring and listening?

Social media monitoring is the first step beyond posting that you'll need to add to the ongoing list of tasks that come with social media marketing. It includes monitoring and reporting on the number of mentions or interactions with your brand on all social media channels. This might come in the form of a report that contains daily, weekly and monthly brand mentions across all your social media channels. Monitoring also includes stats on shares, such as retweets and replies.

With an abundance of social media channels today, you'll want to put more effort toward the channels that have the audience you're hoping to reach. For example, if you're

targeting another business, Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn are your more important channels. Snapchat, Instagram and YouTube are the heavyweights if you're a consumer brand. The platform is as important as the message.

Social media listening takes monitoring one step further. As you monitor channels for brand mentions and engagements, social media listening includes the practice of reacting and responding to those engaging with you. It also includes analyzing the engagements with your brand and in turn, using the active channels to your best advantage depending on your social media goals.

Now that you've created your social media goals, such as growing your following or lead-gen activities, let's take a look at the types of social media engagements you should be looking for in order to properly monitor and listen to the conversations happening around your brand.

Customer Service Mentions

The most important type of social media mention that you want to monitor and respond to are mentions regarding customer service interactions with your company. Undoubtedly, negative comments should take top priority and should be responded to in a timely manner in all cases. During regular business hours, it's best to react and respond within the hour and get them over to customer support for immediate help.

According to a recent survey by Conversocial², "Over half of respondents (54.4%) preferred new messaging channels – such as SMS, Facebook Messenger, Twitter, and WhatsApp – as their primary form of communication with brands over legacy channels such as email, phone, and web chat." In other words, customers and prospects want you to converse with them in their preferred social media channels, not yours.

Because of the large volume of social interactions that need immediate attention, many companies today utilize auto-generated direct messages (especially on Twitter) to respond to customer complaints. However, it's better practice to have the first response to an unhappy customer be personalized. It's best to start by addressing them by name (you might have to do some research to locate their name) and apologizing for their experience. You want them to leave the interaction feeling that their issue is resolved and that your company cares about their experience. According to the same Conversocial study, a total of "46.7% respondents indicated that a personalized response from a brand would strengthen their brand loyalty." So, not only is it important to respond, it's important to respond to them with a personalized message versus using an automated response mechanism.

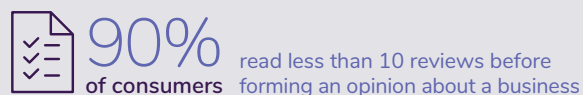
In the event there is a positive and cheerful mention of your brand on a social media channel, share it. In fact, statistics consistently show that customer reviews today are highly valued, read, shared and considered a trustworthy source of advice before making a purchase.

Brand Mentions

When monitoring for mentions of your brand, be sure to search with or without the '@' symbol and also search for your brand as a hashtag. Also, search for ways your brand might be commonly misspelled as you might find some positive or negative outliers there. As mentioned above, make sure that users with a specific customer complaint related to a product or service are your top priority.

If there's a social media user that continues to disparage your name, but refuses help to remedy their situation, it's likely best to leave them alone. Most often, they'll quiet down as quickly as they rapid-fired negative tweets your way. Do pay attention to the number of

Consider the following statistics published in a 2016 survey from BrightLocal³:



followers or influence the commenter has, as that should also sway how involved you become with that person. Naturally, the more followers, the greater influence, so be sure to always address these individuals with care.

To help extend reach and awareness when you have an announcement, keep a Twitter list or Google Sheet of key influencers you find and when you have a product announcement to share with the industry, let them preview or test it before it's launched so their review is timely. It's actually a chance to work with them, win them over, and convert them to using your product or service.

Hashtags, Hashtags and Hashtags

Be sure to research and be aware of generally popular, event-based and industry-related hashtags within the social media channel itself or within a social media listening application (we'll go over these later). Many companies create their own unique hashtags for one-time happenings, like a Twitter chat or a conference, in order to closely track the conversation. Plus, if your hashtag becomes viral or becomes featured as a moment in Twitter or a Snapchat story, for example, you will undoubtedly gain followers and increase your brand awareness.

If there are hashtags trending for your industry, be sure to join the conversation around these in an authentic way that relates to your brand. As a result, you'll likely increase engagement and followers. Popular and trending hashtags also bring to the surface industry influencers and leaders, who you can ask to review your product in exchange for a review, good or bad. It might be that they just needed a chance to try out your company's products or services.

What social media analytics should I be generating?

This depends heavily on your business goals, whether you want to increase brand awareness or generate leads, for example. You'll want to track and analyze how effective you are with social media based on what you're trying to accomplish.

If you're promoting an event, such as a webinar, the goal would be defined as a campaign-based analytic, as it includes a start and stop date. Or, you might use social media to drive traffic to a landing page with great recently-created content. You could test how it performs on different social media channels by integrating google analytics with your website or by using unique URLs for each channel.

Often, the social media analytic is tied to a more important analytic, such as content shares, which directly affects campaign conversions, or what every marketer is in search of — leads. By analyzing which social media channels are more engaged with your brand and content, marketers can adjust their tactical plans to include those more relevant and engaged channels.

If you want to track the daily interactions with your brand and even more esoteric things like brand sentiment, that is defined as an ongoing social media analytic. If one of your social media goals is to grow brand awareness, then you'll want to look at follower or page growth, and how often people are re-sharing, commenting or replying to your social media posts. Social media is just like New York, it never sleeps. So, most of your social media analytics are ongoing and should be tracked daily, weekly, monthly and yearly, as well as the same period from the previous year. Here are a few metrics that can help you understand your impact on social media::

1. Track the number of followers you have; compare to the same period from the previous year to show growth.
2. Track your number of followers against your competitors' - on a month to month basis, are you gaining more ground than they are?
3. Track how many active vs. inactive (don't follow you) followers you have.
4. Track the number of engagements, such as likes and loves.
5. Track reach, which is the number of people that have seen your post in their feed.
6. Track how many customer issues you helped resolve via social media.

But, what about the bots?

First, let's define what these are before we jump to how they may impact your social media efforts. Bots automate tasks that normally require a human to perform. Apple owns probably the most famous bot today, Siri, who searches the web for whatever you ask. Simply ask her, "what is the weather forecast for tomorrow" and she'll tell you. Or, ask Amazon's Alexa to set a reminder for you or play your favorite Pandora station.

While the aforementioned are helpful bots, unfortunately there are bots that perform malicious actions that can cause serious problems for social media managers. Social media bots are used by spammers or scammers on social media sites as a vehicle to drive their spam or scam to social media accounts, which is usually ripe with content-hiding malware. By falsely increasing the number of followers, likes and views on their bot accounts, it's easy to be fooled into thinking the account is managed by a real person and not a bot.

Bots can automate posts to the actual social media account, follow or friend users, automate direct messages to other users they are targeting, or like or love a post, just to name a few things. In the event a social media spammer or scammer is successful in getting a user to click a link that leads to malware, bots can take over your social media account and post to it or ask your friends or followers to follow them back.

While Twitter bots are perfectly legal, how can you protect your social media accounts from being taken over or accidentally sharing malware? Here are a few tips to protect your social media accounts:

- ➔ If you suspect you've clicked a suspicious link or you have malware, change the password on all your social media accounts
- ➔ Utilize two-factor authentication on your social media accounts when available

- Only follow people you know are real people
- Only share content that you know is safe by checking the links yourself

What tools can I use to track my social media mentions, engagements and reach?

BuzzSumo: This is a great tool to track who is linking to you (also great to know for SEO purposes) and monitor brand mentions, via alerts. Search for content around your relevant keywords to see what's being shared, the top influencers in your space and track your competitors' reach as well.

Reddit Keyword Pro: With more than 150 million unique visitors each month on Reddit, it's best to use a tool to track mentions on this massive beast of user-generated content. There are thousands of topics, reviews and advice generated monthly that you can monitor with a Hootsuite plugin.

Track Reddit: If you're not using Hootsuite (a great social media scheduling and monitoring web-based app) who offers Keyword Pro, try TrackReddit to monitor and listen to what the conversation is going on around your brand. Also, Reddit happens to be a great place to see what other professionals recommend themselves for social media monitoring and listening.

Mention: Mention recently partnered and integrated with Buffer, an industry-leading social media scheduling tool. Mention, which searches billions of sources in more than 40 languages, allows you to monitor your brand mentions, blog comments and specific keywords that you designate.

Quora: With more than 4 million active users, Quora is a great tool to monitor conversations by topic. Answers to popular topics and questions are either down- or up-voted, allowing you to find popular influencers and industry experts based on the number of up votes they have.

Social Mention: This monitoring tool tracks sentiment, the hardest to quantify in social media. A sentiment score is provided in their dashboard to give you a quick snapshot of how social media users feel about your brand. It also tracks top hashtags, mentions, top users and sources.

IFTTT: This is a free application that allows you to customize notifications and automate tasks between applications and social networks. Automated tasks are actually recipes you build. For example, let's imagine the scenario that you've got a Twitter user regularly complaining about your company. You can set up a recipe that tells IFTTT to email you when this user mentions your brand. Now, you can quickly react to this user rather than let the social momentum build.

Google Alerts: This tool is free and used to search for specific keywords you want to monitor. Plug in a brand, company, or topics you want to know people are talking about and you'll get an email with all the recent mentions it finds on the web. You specify how often you want to receive an email and you're plugged into what's web searchable around your keywords. It sometimes may miss a mention, so combine this tool with another one.

If you want to do some of your own investigation of social media tools, there's a fairly comprehensive directory you can search on [SocDir](#), which has more than 300 social media tools, or visit some of the aforementioned sites like Reddit or Quora. There are hundreds of experienced professionals with the same goals whose experiences you can learn from when they share their own. Or, simply ask the question on your own social media channels. You just might find the answer there.

Summary

You simply cannot afford to not get these mechanisms right. Navedas and our thought leadership will guide the way. We believe in protecting, monitoring and listening for our customers, their users and our employees equally. Navedas is poised to help companies of any size with social media monitoring and listening.

If you are ready to discuss how we can bring you closer to operationalizing your social media monitoring and listening, [contact us](#).

Citations:

¹ Why Search + Social = Success for Brands: The Role of Search and Social in the Customer Life Cycle, Forrester, April 2016.

² Conversocial Report: The State of Customer Service, Conversocial, August 2016.

³ Local Consumer Review Survey, BrightLocal, September 2016.

Whatever the future might bring for your company consider these facts. As of February 2017, each minute:

2.5 million



pieces of content
were shared by
Facebook users

300,000



tweets
were posted by
Twitter users

220,000



new posts
were seen
on Instagram

72 hours



worth of UCFC
were generated
by YouTube users

Transformational Growth. Made Simple.

At Navedas, we are progressive outsourcers that tackle operational growth from a unique perspective. We've been the quiet magic behind the scaling and growth of some of the country's most innovative, early stage and mature consumer-facing companies. Our mission is to be agile and responsive to the needs that prevent rapid scaling. As experts in digital solutions for our clients' customers, we strive to improve customer workflow, management and experiences.