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Ultimate guide to using Social Media Analytics

How to get insights from
quantitative data to improve your
social media performance

How to use data to measure the performance of your Social Media Plan

How do you measure social media?

Measurement is fundamentally about performance against objectives. So, we measure our performance against the objectives established in the social media plan. A lot of what passes for measurement in social media is really data collection – tracking Followers or Likes, blog traffic or consumer engagement on Facebook.

Unless you have measurable objectives and targets in each of these areas, you are collecting data not measuring. What do you want to happen as a result of your social media campaign or initiative? You have to measure that.

We don't measure 'social media', we measure what we are trying to accomplish with social media. This may seem like we are playing semantic games, but the distinction is very important.

Aligning Social Media Marketing Objectives and Metrics

So as we were point out, before delving into the details of social media marketing measurement, it is first necessary to establish the marketing objectives for social medial. This is necessary in order to identify metrics that matter and find out the best way to measure them. If we report results without defining objectives we will get just numbers that mean little in context of the larger business.

For example, let us compare the following two results:

Result 1

"We received 5000 likes, 500 comments, and 10 shares last week on our global social properties, with 1000 likes, 5 shares, and 100 comments with 80% positivity (a 10% week-on-week increase) within the Latin Amercia."

Result 2

"One of the objectives of our social media program in Latin America is to foster customer interactions via social conversation, thereby increasing retention. Last week we received 100 comments on our LA properties with 80% positivity, a 10% increase in positive customer interactions over the previous week."

The reason why the second example is much more powerful, despite containing less detail, is because it identifies a social media objective that can speak to a larger marketing goal (customer retention) and focuses only on those metrics that support the objective.

There are mainly three steps when establishing a measurement strategy:

▶ **Identify high-level marketing goals for the brand, market, and campaign.**

▶ **Establish a set of social media objectives that contribute to the above goals.**

▶ **Define a measurement strategy that allows performance to be tracked against these objectives.**

Since marketing goals can vary for each brand, within each market, and even per product, social media objectives also need to be defined flexibly. The same applies to measurement and reporting. Different types of engagement metrics should be used to reflect differences in objectives and strategic goals across segments.

Difficulty of Measuring
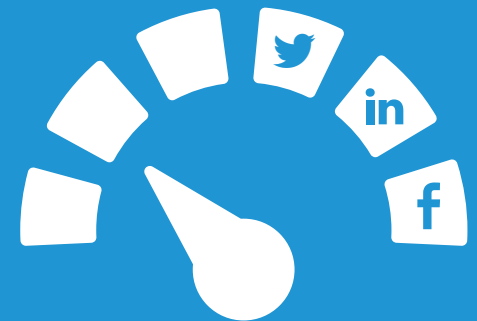## Social Media Performance
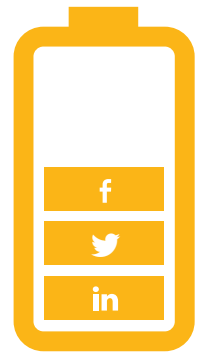
Social media presents unique challenges for measurement due to the complexity of data involved, as well as the difficulty in linking social media efforts to revenue.

Social media managers need to work with dozens, or sometimes hundreds or thousands, of properties, all with content cycling on a daily basis, with very little opportunity to conduct controlled tests.

It's no wonder that is it so difficult to extract insights and form best practices. So the question is how to maximize social media marketing insights, how to categorize the results of campaigns and maximize the relevance of the insights generated.
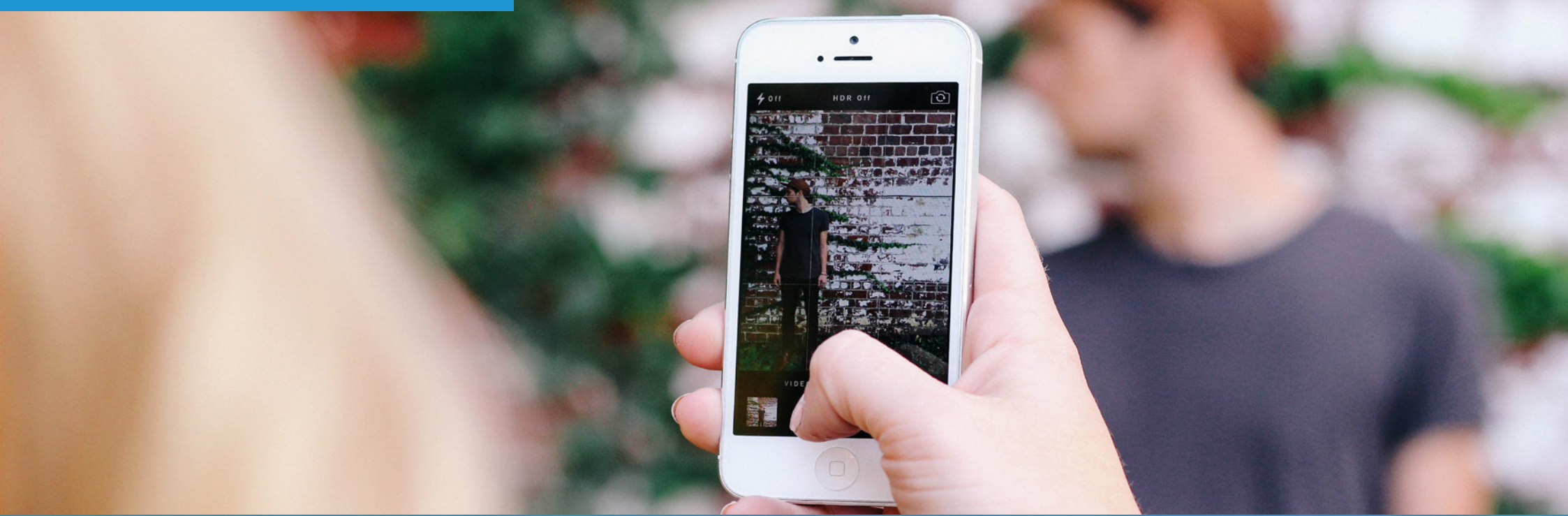
How to get insights from quantitative data to improve your social media performance

To help you do a better job we will be analyzing how quantitative data can help us extract insights to improve your social media performance. There are two main components that are key to your social media strategy: your audience and the content you develop to engage your audience. So how we can get the most from the data collection related to audience and content to improve our performance.

How we extract detailed, business-relevant, and actionable insights from the data. The insights generated can have broader business implications beyond marketing; it can helps keep brand equities distinct, it can allows for localization of language and messaging, and it can focuses relevant content towards a more interested audience.

How to use quantitative data to improve your Audience

There are three main insights related to your audience that you can take advantage of using social analytics:

Social media is a broad space, from the major networks to niche sites.

Understanding your audience will help you choose the right networks to be active on, what tone to take, and how to create content that connects and fosters the right level of engagement.

1 Finding out who is your audience

It's well worth spending time thinking about who you need to connect and engage with on social media. It's about seeing past the obvious. Who is interested in your product or service? Is there anything unique that could appeal to a certain audience?

Then think about who these people are, which industries they work in, what they like, what they read, what motivates them, age ranges, personality traits, where they hang out, technical know-how, how likely they are to use social media.

Using your analytics tool to research about your audience will be a great thing to do. For example you can set in your analytics a company that is reaching the audience you want to reach and look after their demographics, gender, time when post and so on. You can also do the same with your competitor analytics.

2 Checking if you are actually reaching the audience you want to reach

When it comes to your target audience on social media, you could be missing a trick. Recently I was working with a well known Latin America Patisserie, its main audience was Women in they 40', ABC1 segment but their audience in Facebook were a bunch of people in their 20' that were really engaged with all the contents and games the Patisserie was running in Facebook. But the tricky thing was that these people could not afford to buy the product. You can spend a ton of time and money in creating content that absolutely rocks, but if you aren't reaching the right people, your efforts will be in vain. You may have a great product or service, but unless you have a long list of people who are at least prospective customers, even the best marketing efforts in the world probably won't be able to sell it. So you can use your social media analytics and analyze your audience profile and see if matches gender, age and localization with your target audience.

3 Discovering new audiences

With your analytics tool you can also get some interested insights about your audience like finding out that you might have a good opportunity in another geographic location. For example one company has the assumption that its target audience is an American male entrepreneurs in their 30's, but looking at its social analytics learns that there is much more international interest, they notice that while there is still a heavy American following, there is also a strong European following, as well as Southeast Asia and Australia. It is hard to know what you don't know unless you become obsessed with knowing who your audience is, always try not to let your own assumptions get in the way and continuously cross check your audience profile in your analytics.

## 4 Understanding your audience to create content that works

Your audience is the lifeblood of your business, understanding your audience on social media is one of the keys to success with social media marketing. Knowing who they are and what they want is a key to success. Because the more you know about your audience, the better you'll be able to deliver the kind of helpful content and updates they're interested in.

There's also a treasure trove of knowledge about your ideal audience hidden in the sea of followers and fans you've already attracted. We have already looked at the audience now we will look at the data we can get from the content they consume, like, share and interact with.

How to use your social analytics to create a Content MKT Strategy for social media

You will need to develop engaging and inspiring content, the kind that evokes emotion or a call for action. Such content can position your business as a thought leader and a valuable source of information for your audience. Sounds easy, right? But staying up to date and providing value in your posts may be more difficult than it seems.
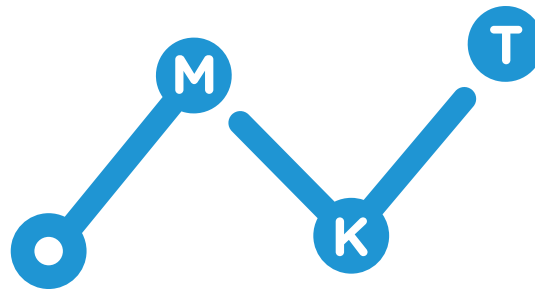
1 Develop your brand narrative

Content marketing it's more than tweeting out a cool photo. It's so much more than an infographic that gets embedded on hundreds of blogs giving your site a multitude of backlinks. Content must be emotional, tell a story and aim to change consumer's behavior, attitude or perception about your brand. And your brand's story encompasses much more than what you write on your blog or social networks. Everything you do in social media marketing must align with you brand narrative. This is why you must develop your content strategy before you start marketing it.

2 Develop the content narrative

Your content narrative is different from your brand narrative. In most cases, the brand narrative cannot change consumer behavior when shared in its pure sense. People reject brand messages. Your content narrative translates the brand narrative in a way that relates to consumers. It should consist of several inputs like, what are the issues that are important to the brand, the media perceptions of the brand, community perceptions of the brand, fan Interests, historical content performance, customer Support Pain Points.

The output of these ingredients will mold a content strategy that can scale and give birth to content that changes customer behavior – whether it's selling more products, re-positioning a company or helping customers change the way they perceive your brand.

3 Evaluating and optimizing your social media content

So now that you're ready to build your brand through content marketing, you might start to question what types of things do you post, and how do you get the audience to engage? What type of content works and what types that don't work. Did you grab attention? Did you deliver delight? Did you cause people to want to share? Did you initiate a discussion? Did you cause people to take an action? Did your participation deliver economic value? To answers these questions you might take a look at your analytics and get some valuable insights.

You can start looking, **which post had more interactions:** likes, shares and comments. Analyze what was this post about? Which format had the post: image, text, video? At what time of the day got more interaction? What was it life spam? Was a post about your product or was about a relevant topic for your audience?

With some tools, **you can also analyze the top 10 posts** with better performance. Here you have the possibility to enrich your analysis. You can start looking for something they have in common. Where they posted at the same time of the day? What was the topic/category? What was the tone ? Were these top posts sent around a similar time, Were reshares and replies also high?

You can start looking the difference between: Which of these posts perform better on likes, which one on shares and which one on comments? Was there a difference in performance when the posts were about your product and when were about a relevant topic for your audience? Analyze the difference in content between them? The difference in formats, what type of post were they: picture, plain-text, other?, the difference in lifespan and time of the date they were post. ? You can really get interesting and valuable insights that can help you improve you social media strategy overall.

Now it is time to engage. How to use quantitative data to improve your engagement

When your audience is most socially active?

Taking into account that we have already developed a great content strategy for your social media plan, now is time to focus on time. Knowing when is the best time to post will definitely improve your engagement.

So it's important to know when the highest percentage of your audience is eavesdropping on your social networks, that way when you share content you'll get maximum exposure. Learning when your audience is tuning in, and therefore when to post, is mandatory for any successful social media strategy.

So the question would be, when are they most socially active?

Here you will have to look again at your analytics and learn when your audience is most likely to tune in.

Social media moves so quickly that you have to make sure that tweets, posts and pins do not get lost in the flood of information in your fans' social streams.

For example, if they're most active during normal business hours, you can reasonably assume that social media is part of their job, so post at that time of the day, in-depth articles focused on advanced strategies and tactics could do well.

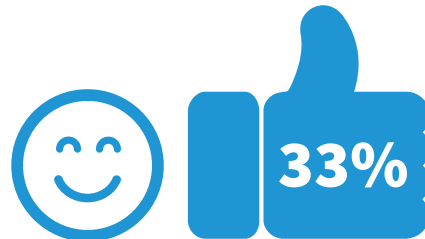# What type of content are audiences naturally engaging with?

You also have to track your content; you have to look at how your content is performing on an ongoing basis. What type of content are audiences naturally engaging with? Photo/Images, Text, links or videos? Is it photos? Then you will post more photos.

It is an ongoing work, where you have to test, look at your analytics, evaluate, get valuable insights and adjust if necessary.

There are already some juicy surveys to look at that I show below but the best way to go is doing your own analysis.

Others

120%

1. Photo posts get 120% more engagement than the average post, and photo albums actually get 180% more engagement.

SHORT

+ 23%

3. Shorter posts get 23% more interaction, Writing shorter posts isn't just handy on *Twitter*. Keeping your posts below 250 characters can get you *60% more engagement* than you might otherwise see.

33%

2. Using emoticons increases comments by 33%, if you thought emoticons were only for teens, you might want to rethink that idea. According to this AMEX OPEN Forum infographic, emoticons can make a big difference to your engagement rates.

?

100% more comments

4. Questions posts get 100% more comments, if comments are the kind of interaction you're after, questions might be the way to go. According to Kissmetrics, they get 100% more comments than standard text-based posts. This is interesting information but I encourage you to go to your analytics and crosscheck if these trends applies for your insights.

How to get valuable insights from your Competitors Analytics

You can also look at your competitors to get valuable insights about your audience and the content your competitors produce to engage them. For example if you don't have an audience following yet on your own social media profiles and website traffic, then you can find out some of this information by analyzing the accounts of others who server your same audience, like of course your competitors. It can also help you to learn about your audience interests and **dig deeper into the kind of content they want.** You can also look at the type of posts they are producing and see which ones are more popular among the audience. You can also look at what time of the day they post and which days have more interactions.

Ultimate guide to using Social Media Analytics

And finally how to get valuable insights from your Campaign Analytics

You can look at your analytics and see which type of campaigns perform better. You can analyze what were the topics of these campaigns. What was the type of campaign that engage the audience? Was it a contest, a game or just valuable content?

The posts that were part of the campaigns were mainly in text, image, video or was a mix of them? At what time the campaign had more interaction?

There are some analytics tools that allow you to group the posts that correspond to the same social media campaign. You can tag and classify posts at time of creation which is useful for broad and static classifications that do not change over time and also you can classify the, after the post have been submitted.

This categorization of posts allows you to have more agile and detailed insights from your campaigns. Either way, you can start measure how your campaign was performing and not just one post.

You can see if your audience likes you campaign, if there are engaging and interacting with it? And most important are they engaging with the campaign in the way you plan it? Your analytics efforts will also give you a general idea of y**our campaign's popularity**. If you're only getting a handful of mentions or retweets every few hours, you know it's time to reassess the campaign strategy. **Using analytics tools** you can also see if certain regions or demographics are responding less than others, and then target them with social advertising to boost your campaign.

Every campaign should end with a retrospective. Go over the entire campaign from start to finish and see what worked and what didn't. Turn your learnings into a slide deck or presentation. Sit down with your team and explain each issue you had and how they could be addressed before the next campaign. Did the language not work? Was the type of campaign the right one? Did you miss a certain market? Was the incentive not powerful enough? You should also highlight the elements that worked well, so you know what to repeat next time around. This retrospective will help you improve campaign after campaign.

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About the Author

Luciana Sario has a broad experience in online MKT. She is currently collaborating with socialmetrix as a MKT consultant. Form more than 10 years she has been researching and analyzing the changes and transformations undergoing in this field. Her expertise has allowed her to develop innovative marketing solutions to maximize revenue and growth for companies such us IDC, IBM, Oracle and RIM among others.

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