

7 Steps to Measuring Your Brand's Social Media Health

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Just because you can, doesn't mean you should measure everything. Social media is very easily measured with various indicators like share of voice, reach, retweets, and comments. However, measuring without a clear objective in mind won't bring you closer to success.

Nowadays, its not enough to have and execute a social media policy. You need to be able to gauge its success, measure it, and see that it remains healthy and vibrant.

Having already [written](#) about the differences between “monitoring” and “measuring” and [how to properly conduct](#) the former. Now, we turn to some best practices to help you measure your brand's overall social media health, as well as the effectiveness of your various online initiatives.

Read on for the seven steps to getting the most out of your social media measurements.

1. Have a Goal

In order to properly measure your social media efforts, you need to know why you are engaging in social media in the first place. This objective will dictate not only what you do, but also how you measure what you do. Let's take a look at some objectives and the corresponding metrics you'll measure for each.

- If your goal is driving awareness, you will be looking at metrics like share of voice, reach, readership and engagement with content (measured in action vs. views).
- If you need to increase satisfaction through better support, you need to look at sentiment, satisfaction rates in surveys, speed of resolution and percent of queries resolved.
- If creating better products and doing market research is a goal, you need to focus on top market trends and satisfaction with various competitive products.
- If developing customer advocacy is a goal, you should be looking at who your advocates are, measuring their influence and reach and their engagement with your product and content.

All or none of the above could apply to your particular objective. It's important to be specific about your purpose and to measure towards that end.

2. Get Your Departments on the Same Page

Social media is not a silo. You need to set up your organization for success by better aligning necessary departments to work as units towards a common goal. Understand what goals are important for each department, and set them up for success with strategies and metrics that make sense.

You will need to establish a process by which your departments can communicate and share the right metrics with the right people on demand. Will you create a dashboard that's easily visible by every department or simply send email recaps? Will they be customized to match the interests of each department? Can you export raw data and easily share charts and graphs?

3. Always Consider Context



Metrics without context are meaningless. If you know your share of social media conversation is 35%, what does that mean compared to your competitors' shares or their change over time? Always look at metrics over time and inside of a competitive landscape.

4. Select Your Platform Wisely

Just like with monitoring, selecting the right tool for the job is the next step after figuring out your strategy. Here are some aspects you should consider when selecting a platform:

- *Data* – Which data do you need? Which channels are you going to measure?
 - *Reports* – Identify how you want to share and present information. If you are going for a premium tool you should definitely be receiving embeddable and emailable charts and downloadable raw data. You can even automate delivery of reports and dashboards via email.
 - *Actionable insights* – There's a big difference between data and insights. Don't forget the importance of an analyst within your organization, even if it's a part-time effort of your social media specialist.
 - *Budget* – Do you have a budget or can you only afford a free tool? Keep in mind that cheaper tools can sometimes be harder to use or come with less features. "Free" may cost you more time in the long run.
 - *Ease of use* – If you have limited resources, your platform must be easy to use and allow you to get your job done quickly. Consider productivity-boosting alerts and workflow modules, automation and advanced analytics.
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5. Conduct a Full Social Media Audit

Now that you have selected your platform, start by conducting a full social media “audit” with the specific metrics you are measuring. Note where you and your competitors are today and use this as a baseline against which you will measure at least once a month.

Conducting a social media audit can also help you monitor the current share of conversation of various players and channels. Through this process you can find where to listen for service issues and where you should be building relationships with thought leaders and influencers.

6. Dig Deeper in Your Channels

Start by measuring volume of conversation in aggregate, across all channels. You should also evaluate performance by channel, for yourself and for your competitors, to find which sections are performing well and to help give your numbers specific context.

A surface look at metric like share of voice, buzz and sentiment allows you to understand what’s happening during an identified period of time. However, to get the most out of your social media analysis, you need to dig deeper. If you discover a spike in negative sentiment or a spike in buzz for one of your competitors, you need to dig in and find out what’s driving it.

7. Do A/B testing

Do you have a couple of campaigns out there? Are you curious about the adoption of certain product features or what content is getting the best response? Social media measurement can help you conduct the right analysis to figure out what’s working and what isn’t. Similar to how you can test web traffic patterns against website copy changes, you can measure the public’s opinion of things you try.

Remember to measure your general social media health comprehensively at least once a month and track responses to particular programs more frequently. Commit the right resources and choose your platforms wisely. Don’t be afraid to experiment and always measure!

More Social Media Resources From Mashable:

- [How News Consumption is Shifting to the Personalized Social News Stream](#)
- [A Look Back at the Last 5 Years in Social Media](#)
- [5 Funny Social Media Web Comics \[PICS\]](#)
- [5 Useful Tools to Track Twitter Unfollowers](#)
- [How Freelancers Might Use Social Media in the Future](#)