Social Media Listening

The Critical Marketing Tool for Digital-First Audiences
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Over the past 5 years, trends in consumer behavior have clearly and consistently shown that audiences and customers are posting more than ever on social media channels like Facebook and Twitter. The vast and constantly growing amount of consumer-generated data on social media has profound implications for many core marketing functions – from audience analysis to customer support to competitive intelligence – yet consumer-facing businesses have been slow to adjust their practices and strategies accordingly.

In 2020, brands have been catching up and social listening is increasingly being recognized as an essential marketing ability, rather than a “nice-to-have”. This trend has only been amplified by the outbreak of COVID-19. The rapid changes in consumer behavior caused by the pandemic has exposed brands without an active pulse on social media, allowing those with continuous listening capabilities to gain a competitive advantage at all customer touchpoints.
Social Listening

vs. Social Monitoring
Social Listening vs. Social Monitoring

Social monitoring and social listening are very different things — both are crucial functions in today’s digital marketing climate and both leverage the mission-critical data continuously posted by audiences on social media, however one is far more difficult to implement than the other.

Social monitoring is a process that alerts teams when key, specifically defined events occur that require action (monitoring social channels for customer questions, brand mentions, etc.). Social monitoring serves as the baseline and bare minimum for what a listening platform should offer.

Social listening is a process that seeks to surface insights from listening data (much of the same data captured in social monitoring activities) that inform broader marketing decisions — think audience analysis, competitive intelligence, uncovering trends, etc.

Social Monitoring

- Monitoring of specific keywords, like brand or product mentions
- Data surfaced individually for the purpose of driving individual responses, like responding to customer complaints or questions

Very limited when it comes to analytics and generating insights: Analysis not scalable, lots of noise, difficult to identify trends

Social Listening

- Extracting trends and insights from listening data
- Data surfaced in a structured way allowing for insight and analysis
- Data used to inform future decisions

Invaluable when it comes to research and analytics: In-depth insights driven by AI, extremely scalable, trends easily identified
While listening tends to be associated more heavily with marketing teams (competitive analysis, audience research, etc.) and monitoring with customer care teams (support requests, customer complaints, etc.), both have use cases at all stages of the customer journey.
Audience and Competitive Research
Audience Analysis in 2020

Audience analysis has traditionally been one of the most difficult aspects of marketing to get right, but the trove of social media data available in today’s age of digital marketing means that audience analysis is more accurate, dynamic, and easy to conduct than ever before.

The number of users on social media, and by extension the amount of audience data being generated, has been steadily increasing over the past 5 years. The charts to the right show the number of monthly active users on Facebook, as well as the company’s quarterly revenue from selling paid ads (increased ad spend is an indicator that more brand audiences are residing on the platform). Note the increase in growth starting in Q4 2019.
When surveying 264 marketers across the globe, Socialbakers found that nearly 40% of participants desired more knowledge about their audiences. That illustrates the difficulty and importance of finding an accurate audience analytics and intelligence methodology.

For deeper analysis, see Socialbakers’ Audience Insights Report.
Adoption of Listening Tools for Audience Analysis

Most brands still don’t utilize social listening when it comes to audience analysis, even in situations where a listening solution clearly provides the best source of insight.

When Gartner asked 200 marketers how they were getting information on rapidly changing consumer behaviors during the COVID-19 outbreak, only 51% of respondents utilized social monitoring/listening in any capacity.

Source: Gartner’s “Marketing in Uncertainty” Survey, March 2020. Participants were from the US.
When looking at the breakdown of how marketing leaders responded to Gartner’s survey, we can see the huge advantage a well-implemented listening solution can provide brands.

The number one source for rapid consumer information was third-party research, which offers the closest level of insight to a listening solution compared to the other answers on the chart. However, third-party studies are inefficient, not brand-specific, and offer extremely slow time-to-insight.

In a situation with rapidly changing consumer sentiment, insights from a conducted study or survey could be irrelevant, stale, or even misleading by the time they are used to inform a decision.
Adoption of Listening Tools for Market Analysis

Since social listening only leverages publicly accessible data (albeit on a massive scale), this means that the same level of insight generated for one’s own brand can also be generated for the competition and broader market.

Even when restricted to simple keyword and sentiment monitoring, consumer-facing companies can still uncover invaluable insights into their competitive positioning by simply comparing surfaced conversations and sentiment for competing brands with their own.

Despite this, according to a study conducted by Clutch surveying 300 marketers, only 8% of brands who leveraged a listening solution utilized it for competitive research and analysis.

Source: Clutch’s Social Listening Survey, March 2017. Participants were from the US.
Why Social Listening Tools Will Soon Become a Necessity for Audience and Market Research

As mentioned earlier, the vast amounts of social media data available in today's age of digital marketing can make audience analysis more accurate and easy to conduct than ever before.

Despite this fact, most brands lack a listening solution allowing them to leverage this valuable data. For many brands, usage of a social listening tool is non-existent, or fails to go beyond basic social monitoring.

While basic keyword monitoring is critical for driving engagement and bolstering customer/community care, more in-depth insights can only be generated via robust listening solutions that offer both monitoring and listening capabilities.

Thus, it's critical that marketing teams find a social listening solution that can aid in audience analytics and research.
Customer Support and Customer Care
Customer Support and Customer Care

Audiences today expect rapid response customer support and customer care through social media channels, even on platforms where support seems unintuitive like Twitter.

Since support interactions are increasingly taking place in public channels like Twitter and Facebook, customer support is no longer siloed and heavily intersects with marketing, branding, and PR strategy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Customer Expectations for Response Times on Facebook and Twitter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Facebook</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85% of consumers expect an answer on Facebook within 6 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Twitter</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64% expect an answer on Twitter within 60 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Actual Average Response Times**

- Facebook: 1 day, 3 hours, 47 minutes
- Twitter: 1 day, 7 hours, 12 minutes
Customer Support and Customer Care

Social Listening Report

With support actions ranging from answering questions from prospective audiences to responding to direct customer support requests all taking place on social media, a monitoring solution is critical for consumer-facing brands in 2020.

Social monitoring allows care and support teams to quickly surface relevant conversations so they can deliver support interactions that are fast, empathetic, and helpful for the world to see.

In addition, social listening can help uncover trends in frequent support requests, helping teams optimize their support workflows and identify problems with their product or campaigns as soon as they occur (and before they escalate into brand crises).

Why Social Listening Is Critical for Customer Support in the Age of Social Media

David Willis
@DWill

Hi @Waterstones I’ve been locked inside of your Trafalgar Square bookstore for 2 hours now. Please let me out.

11:55 PM · Twitter for iPhone

1.1K Retweets  13 Quote Tweets  11.3K Likes

Waterstones
@Waterstones

We’re pleased to announce that @DWill is a free man once more. Thanks for your concern and tweets!

1:15 AM · Twitter for iPhone

1.5K Retweets  2 Quote Tweets  1.5K Likes

socialbakers
Why Social Listening is Critical for Customer Support in the Age of Social Media

When examining the number of comments posted on the Facebook profiles of major airlines during the COVID-19 pandemic, we can see clear as day the reliance modern consumers have on social media when it comes to customer support.

Due to the extreme uncertainty around flight availability and scheduling caused by COVID-19, the average number of comments posted to the pages of airlines in March was a staggering 18,341, compared to just 3,600 in the prior month.
Social Listening and Sentiment Analysis
Sentiment analysis plays the most critical role in converting unstructured listening data into actionable insights.

With sentiment analysis, basic social monitoring data can be analyzed in large quantities and given the context required to inform broader marketing decisions. Accurate sentiment analysis is a hard requirement for teams that want to use their listening tool to aid in audience, market, and product research.

In the next slide, we'll use listening and sentiment analysis to quickly construct a basic overview of average sentiment over the past year for various industries.
Sentiment Breakdown by Industry

Sentiment on Comments in Selected Industries on Facebook

Profiles in Top 10 Industries by No. of Posts

- Auto
- Retail Food
- FMCG Food
- Beauty
- Electronics
- Finance
- Fashion
- Services
- Ecommerce
- Retail

Positive | Neutral | Negative
---|---|---
20% | 40% | 60%
The Takeaway

With consumer discourse increasingly taking place on public forums, listening tools will soon become an essential marketing practice for conducting both audience and market research. As more brands add listening capabilities to their suite of existing intelligence tools, brands that fail to leverage the troves of consumer data being generated every day on social will find themselves at a major competitive disadvantage.

The question going forward is not whether or not brands will need to adopt a listening solution – social listening will undoubtedly become an indispensable marketing function for most consumer facing brands, especially as listening technology continues to improve. The effectiveness and efficiency in which marketing teams can leverage their listening capabilities will be the differentiating factor in the future, and having a tool with the right capabilities is only one piece of the puzzle.
Socialbakers is the trusted social media management partner to thousands of enterprise brands and SMBs. Leveraging the largest social media dataset in the industry,

Socialbakers’ unified marketing platform helps brands large and small ensure their investment in social media is delivering measurable business outcomes. With over 2,500 clients across 100 countries, Socialbakers is the leading social media management platform.

Socialbakers has been a Facebook Marketing Partner since 2011, a Pinterest Marketing Partner since 2017, and a LinkedIn Marketing Partner since 2017. Socialbakers was named in the 2018 Inc. 5000 list of the fastest-growing private companies in Europe.

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