



# A deep dive into sentiment and the value of reputation

Understanding customer opinions and perceptions to inform decisions continues to be a constant business challenge. As behaviours change and the cost and speed of face-to-face qualitative research becomes more difficult, businesses are required to think of different ways to inform their customers and discover more accurately how their brand is being received. Thankfully, we live in a world on live streaming, non-stop communications and interactions with customers, consumers, policy makers, leaders etc. can be instantaneous and with all this text and direct information, it can harness to strong brand equity and the opportunity for your business to monitor, measure and maintain this strong reputation.

In this whitepaper, we take a deep dive into sentiment and the value of reputation – why they're important and how they are mutually beneficial.

## **Why sentiment is valuable to your business**

Businesses and brands use sentiment analysis to find and measure customer opinions and attitudes towards their brand, products, services, campaigns and even their leaders/people. Analysing sentiment on across various media channels provides an excellent source of data and will provide insights that can:

- Determine brand reputation and potential equity
- Improve customer experience
- Crisis management
- Lead generation
- Improve marketing campaigns
- Develop products and services
- Identify advocates and potential new audiences

Brand health is an important part of the listening phase and is integral to sentiment analysis. To understand the overall tone, often this analysis looks at what the majority of keywords in the text suggests, for example if there are far more 'positive' words the overall sentiment would be seen as favourable to the subject.

For now, sentiment analysis is still rather incompetent in grasping things like sarcasm, hope, anxiety, excitement, fear and anger as not all sentiment can be categorised as simply as positive, negative or neutral. The below examples showcase this:

- **Context:** a positive or negative sentiment word can have the opposite connotation depending on context (e.g. "my internet provider does a *great* job when it comes to stealing money from me".)
- **Sentiment ambiguity:** a sentence with a positive or negative word doesn't necessarily express any sentiment. (e.g. "can you recommend a *good* book I could read?" doesn't express any sentiment, although it uses the positive sentiment word "*good*").
- **Sarcasm:** a positive or negative sentiment word can switch sentiment if there is sarcasm in the sentence (e.g. "Sure, I'm *happy* for my browser to crash right in the middle of completing my report").
- **Language:** a word can change sentiment and meaning depending on the language used and can be locally contextualised based on a country having their own slang, dialects, and language variations. An example: the word "that's mean", used in New Zealand is used to describe a good situation and would be clear to a New Zealand audience, however this term wouldn't necessarily be used outside of New Zealand.

Sentiment analysis can be a valuable tool for reputation and management. How your clients and wider audience perceive your brand defines your business and understanding this sentiment can help address and maintain a positive perception of your brand.

Sentiment analyses web and social media mentions about a product, brand, service, or marketing campaign and the emotional tone behind words. This assists with understanding the attitudes and opinions being expressed and allows businesses to discover valuable insights into consumer attitudes towards them and their products or services.

The applications of sentiment analysis are broad and powerful. The ability to extract insights from social data is a practice that is being widely adopted by organisations across the world

and it can be used as an essential part of your market research and customer service approach. On the flip side, using inaccurate sentiment analysis data can prove catastrophic and impact the operations of your business.

## Sentiment affects your reputation

Creating, curating and maintaining a positive reputation is a complicated process however there are three basic elements that should be considered when curating a positive brand reputation:

1. Perceptions
2. Business relationships and
3. Intellectual property assets - often a logo mark can get you a meeting, but if you don't think of brand as a whole suite of things, it can impact your reputation.

### Perceptions

Understanding organisations subjective realities can enhance cooperation and communication and may also influence opinions. This can prompt people to deliberate and re-evaluate business views and influence others.

For your clients, it is important for them to know what they are investing in and therefore your organisation needs to prove their worth with relevant content and advertising.

### Business relationships

Building trust is a critical factor in fostering healthy business relationships as transacting with trusted businesses act in furtherance of their best interest. Once that trust breaks down, it can be difficult to salvage a relationship. Another factor to consider is customer satisfaction – ensuring that the product or service you provide meets the standard your clients expect. This will only strengthen your relationship and promote your business.

### Intellectual property assets

Businesses and industries with reputation problems are more likely to incur the scrutiny of legislators, regulators and the wider public. According to IPEG, an Intellectual Property Expert Group, approximately 70-80% of western businesses market value are driven by intangible assets and are subject to patent challenges, core patents and invalidation issues. A business can lose its valuable assets by losing its core patent(s) and therefore, it's a logical approach to look into the potential reputational damage when patents are being challenged.

As social media covers a huge part of today's day-to-day activities, businesses can effectively leverage on this by carefully listening and monitoring their clients and wider audience. To properly understand client needs, it is imperative to leverage sentiment analysis to assist with solving business problems and maintaining a reputable brand image.

There are many reasons why sentiment analysis is beneficial with how it can complement a business' reputation, here we outline a few of these benefits:



### Lead generation

Having accurate sentiment will promote your marketing campaigns, enable greater customer service, improve product quality to meet market needs and increase the quantity of marketing qualified leads. When we talk lead generation, we can move customers further down the 'buying funnel' and right at the top is where sentiment can have a positive impact as potential's start to look for 'proof' that the brand/product/service/campaign is well received. Sentiment analysis will inform your business of the challenges your audience is facing, what is working well (and what isn't) and how you can grasp better ideas to create content to attract new customers.

### Crisis management

Constant monitoring of media conversations enables your business to prevent or mitigate any potential online communication crisis.

These crises may originate from poor product quality, poor customer service, a business-related issue or an industry issue.

With sentiment, it allows the monitoring of language and communications to be quickly measured, preventing a viral outbreak and a huge impact on your business. Sentiment analysis will alert you to shifts in opinion – and can be saving grace or detriment to an issue becoming a crisis. If you are hit by a PR disaster, measuring the sentiment and filtering the comments by severity of negativity, makes it easier to target your messages. Alternatively, you might identify conversation with positive sentiment allows you to amplify those messages.





### Improve customer experience

Keeping your customers loyal (for as long as possible) is the key to your business' success and reputation. Customers can become micro-influencers for your business, and this is the core reason why a positive customer experience is important for their loyalty. Sentiment analysis can pick up negative discussions and provide real-time alerts - ensuring response time can be done in a timely manner.

Generally speaking, if there is a fast reaction to a problem or response to negative feedback, customers will forget feeling frustrated and be satisfied with great customer service or response time. Monitoring sentiment is a great way for your customer support to track consumer dissatisfaction and address issues before negativity grows and impact your reputation.

### Public relations

Positive sentiment promotes positive brand reputation, which in turn builds loyalty and increases customer confidence in your brand, products and services. All the elements of corporate brand, from tone and personality, functional and emotional benefits, core messaging to its reputation – can help raise performance and credibility. Enhancing the awareness to a brand through public relations is usually an essential part of any overall strategy aimed at sustaining and raising standards of performance and credibility.



### Content marketing

Reputation is a very fragile thing which can make or break the success of a company. Social media plays a large part in fusing together brand and reputation with content marketing (especially social media) being used to attract new customers.

Brands are increasingly judged by the ways they do business and on the social platforms they use alongside the leaders they attract. The awareness of brand and organisational actions have been exponentially heightened by social media to the point where they are often integrated. The brand and its reputation are what the organisation is.

## **The future of sentiment and reputation**

Sentiment analysis is an important tool for brands seeking to learn more about how their customers are thinking and reacting. The insights gained from these tools are becoming much deeper as a result of emerging social media platforms (and their features) but it also needs to move beyond a one-dimensional positive to negative scale. This is because there are other kinds of sentiment that cannot be placed on a simple barometer.

While major changes will continue to shape the corporate world in unpredictable ways, these findings certainly point to some of the core developments that will be driving sentiment and reputation in the future.

**Want to learn more about sentiment, the value of reputation or anything media intelligence related? Get in touch with our talented media-savvy team to discuss your needs.**



For more information, please get in touch at [isentia.com](https://www.isentia.com)