



# How to get ahead in the world of social media measurement

Having a social media strategy can help you to identify trends, track sentiment, find new opportunities and uncover potential crises for your organisation. With many businesses using social media to increase their brand presence, it's also becoming a popular platform for communications professionals to push out their messaging and amplify campaign communications.

In this whitepaper, we identify the social media metrics that really matter, why they're important and how to track them.

## Why it matters to measure social media performance

Proving social media Return on Investment (ROI) is one of the toughest challenges facing communications and marketing professionals. However, effectively measuring your social media ROI can provide information on how to improve your campaigns for engagement.

The most important reasons to set up social media campaigns is to enable tracking individual behaviour through links that are shared on social networks. There are several benefits of social media analytics, some of these include:

- Ability to prove your ROI
- Create winning social media campaigns
- Discover key influencers for your brand
- Benchmark against your competitors
- Identify trending topics

## How to know what to measure

First, you need to understand what you are trying to accomplish through these social channels and which channels are relevant to those goals. Brainstorm what you want your audience to do with the content on these channels. Is the intent for them to read, share, reply, click, purchase or engage?

Match your goals with behaviours that can be measured. Here are a few suggestions of behaviours to measure, based on a few common social media goals:

- To measure **awareness**, use metrics such as audience profile and size, competitor benchmarking, and reach to determine how far your message is spreading. To take this further, you can also run research studies to gauge if your audience has retained the awareness i.e. Can they remember you?
- To measure **engagement**, look for metrics around shares, Cost Per Click, Click Through Rate and likes. Understand how many people are participating and in what capacity. What percentage of people view your videos? Are they watched til the end?
- To **drive traffic** to your website, track URL shares, clicks and conversions. Investigate if people are moving through social media to your website and what is their behaviour once on the site.
- To increase your brand's **share of voice**, track your volume relative to your closest competitors. Media monitoring and sentiment analysis can assist with determining how much of the overall conversation is around your industry or product category or brand.

## Know your audience

Knowing your audience is a vital component to understand in order to effectively deliver your messaging.

There are typically 3 types of groups within an audience:

1. **Lurkers** – people who monitor what you share but don't interact. This could be considered majority of your audience.
2. **Influencers** – people who have access to a larger audience and have the potential of influencing this audience.
3. **Engagers** – these people will more than likely be very active in your community.

When interacting with your social media audience, there are also four main areas of measurement metrics that you should be focusing on:

1. **Awareness** – these metrics illuminate your current and potential audience.
2. **Engagement** – these metrics show how audiences are interacting with your content.
3. **Conversion** – these metrics demonstrate the effectiveness of your social engagement.

4. **Consumer** – these metrics reflect how active customers think and feel about your brand.

## Key metrics to know and track

To enable social success, it's important to be clear about the metrics you'll focus on and the tools you deploy to capture, organise and report these metrics.

**Sentiment analysis** is extremely useful in social media monitoring as it allows you to gain an overview of the wider public opinion behind certain topics. Automatic sentiment analysis can be very helpful as it assists with analysing positive, negative or neutral mentions of your brand, product or service and it provides a faster and easier process for monitoring your social media. Sentiment at an aggregate view can be more telling as a quick way to identify how your audience is responding and tracking brand awareness through sentiment will illuminate your current and potential audience and is important to know what attention your brand gets, across all social media yielding relevant data.

**Reach** should be one of your key performance indicators – something you can keep track of to see if your social media exposure expands. Reach refers to the unique number of times your content was displayed (one person or account can see your post more than once) and is a good way to track the exposure of your posts, hashtags and accounts to see if your social media exposure increases.

Another metric to monitor is tracking **follower growth** (or lack thereof). This is a good indicator for how your social media channels are performing in general and an important metric to closely monitor. You will learn which are your top social media channels and be able to quickly notice changes with your followers. A solid followership on social media ensures reaching more people and building a strong community full of potential customers, but also making sure to attract new followers/potential customers on a regular basis as awareness increases.

## Engagement metrics

Engagement numbers show how people are interacting with your content and monitoring the number of likes, shares and comments you receive. This determines how many people are participating and how often. If there is a high engagement rate, the actual number of likes

and shares and comments are irrelevant. At a simplistic (but still a useful first-glance) level, content or posts getting more engagement are probably best hitting the mark with your audience.

The benchmark for this metric is different on every platform. Facebook and Twitter, for example, typically have lower engagement rates (e.g. 0.5% - 1%). Instagram, on the other hand, is known for its relatively high engagement rates (e.g. 3% - 6%).

A large number of **clicks** with very few likes (and shares) shows that your post got attention but didn't deliver the exceptional quality needed for the viewer to engage. Great overall engagement with a low number of clicks indicates that you need to work on how you pitch your content by testing different titles or visuals. Engagement numbers can be a first step in evaluating which social networks are worth more or less of your time – this can be very helpful when drafting content.

Ultimately, the levels of engagement with your social media posts are the first clue toward what is working with your audience, from this you can dig deeper.

**Impressions** are also important as they measure your ability to get content in front of your intended audience and is calculated by the number of times your displayed content is clicked or not. When your impressions rise, it's likely due to your content surfacing more frequently into users' feeds. Impressions is often seen as more of a vanity metric and means very little however, it depends on your goal and whether you're using this as a tactic to build brand recall.

**Conversion** metrics relate to the number of visitors who, after clicking on a link in your post, take action on a page (e.g., subscribe to your newsletter; download a gated content asset; register for a webinar) against that page's total visitors. This is a valuable metric to measure as a high conversion rate means your content is relevant and compelling to the target audience. It's important to note, the conversion rate of a post can be high even if its traffic is low - the two metrics are mutually exclusive.

Measuring social media can help you gain insight into so much about how your audience feels about your brand, your campaign, your product and service. It's important to invest time in working out the best metrics to suit your business requirements and thinking strategically about how you can improve, maintain or change outputs over time.



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