

Social measurement

The greatest mistake made in a huge number of organizations (in my experience the majority) is to focus on volume-based metrics when looking at social media campaigns. More often than not, a campaign is started and the initial target is to reach a certain number of likes or followers. But in reality what does having a million followers actually mean? The answer is very little. We need to understand who that audience are, look at how engaged they are, their sentiments, and,



most importantly, understand if social media is actually having an impact on my business objectives.

We'll look at mobile analytics much more in the final chapter of Part Two, but we can use analytics to look at the success of our mobile social media activity in a number of ways. We can start with the basics, and look at how much traffic we are getting from social media sites to our websites. We could then take it a stage further and look at how many of these visits are on mobile devices. If we are using analytics effectively, we will have also set up goals, and we can see what part social media, and particularly mobile social media, is having on driving my website visitors to complete my goals. All of this will be covered in more detail in Chapter 18, but the key point is that it's not just about the social media data, like number of followers or amount of engagement: it's actually about understanding how this drives my end objectives.

Benchmarked measurement

One of the key problems with looking at volume-based metrics is that it doesn't give you an indication of what success actually looks like. You may feel that getting 10,000 followers on your Facebook page is a great success. However, if your nearest competitor has 500,000 followers, it's suddenly a very different story. For this reason we need to try and benchmark our measurement, and there are a couple of ratio-based measures that are easy to use, but very rarely looked at.

Share of voice

This is a great ratio for understanding where you sit in relation to your competitors, and for judging the success of and reaction to your social media efforts. You'll need a social media listening tool to calculate this, and for many channels there are free tools that will do the job.

You start by measuring the total level of conversation around the topic area you are concerned with. In my case this would be digital marketing, but it could be anything. For example, a recent client looked at all of the conversations around skincare. The easiest way to do this is to look at channels one at a time, so for example, how many tweets

are there around the topic of skincare within a particular geographic region (you can do this using the Twitter advanced search).

You achieve this by deciding on a set of keywords and phrases that you want to monitor, and then see the level of conversation on these phrases. You would then repeat this process, but just identify the tweets that were specifically about, or mentioned, your product, brand or service. You will then have two numbers, one for total conversations and the other for conversations about you. Divide the number of conversations about you by the total number of conversations on the topic, and you have your 'share of voice' percentage.

This may be very low, but you can continue your social media efforts, and then take the measurement on a regular basis (normally monthly is sufficient). Progress made in increasing this percentage gives you a more useful guide than just looking at a number of tweets or likes. The other great thing about this measure is that you can calculate it for your competitors. You then have a benchmarked measure that can give you an indication of how effective your efforts are and how that compares to your competitors.

Sentiment analysis

Many social media tools will carry out some form of sentiment analysis. The idea is that the context of the social media mentions you receive is analysed, and the sentiment or intention of the social media user is understood. This most usually takes the form of grouping these mentions into positive, negative and neutral.

There is a problem however. The majority of social media tools get this completely wrong. These tools work by analysing the text and using fairly rudimentary methods of analysing the language. For example, if I tweet 'Top 10 digital marketing disasters of 2014' and then link to my website, many tools will see this as a negative tweet and associate negativity with the link to my website. It will be seen as negative due to the use of the word 'disaster'; however, from experience, this will actually be a very popular tweet. Some tools, however, are a lot more effective at analysing language and take a far more sophisticated approach. These tools certainly aren't 100 per cent accurate, but they are far less likely to make rudimentary mistakes like this.

The solution is to understand how effective your particular tool is at analysing the social platforms you are looking at, and then manually checking the results you get. This doesn't mean reading every single tweet or comment (although in an ideal world you will), but it certainly means scanning through and understanding the assumption the tool is making.

This is particularly important when you look at share of voice. During a really bad social media crisis, when everybody is talking about you and saying negative things, your share of voice will be high. You therefore need to understand sentiment when you look at share of voice.

Audience engagement

This is another percentage that you can easily measure and benchmark against your competitors. I tend to look at it on a platform-by-platform basis, so I will know my audience engagement for Twitter, Facebook, Google+ etc and make efforts to improve this. Again, I normally measure this on a monthly basis.

You start by looking at the size of your overall audience on a particular social platform, such as Facebook or Twitter, and then you consider how much of that audience is actually engaging with you. So, for example, if you have 10,000 likes in Facebook, and when you post some content you get 1,000 likes on that piece of content from your likes, your audience engagement is 10 per cent.

We need to define what we mean by engagement. On a platform such as Facebook, there are multiple ways to engage as you can like, share and comment on a post. I would count any of these activities as engagement. With Twitter I consider a reply or a retweet to be engagement, and so on. Now, technically speaking, if the same user were to carry out multiple engagement activities on the same platform on the same piece of content, we should probably not count these more than once. In practice it doesn't actually matter, as long as you are comparing like for like.

As well as taking this measure for your own social platforms, you can very easily analyse your competitors as well.

Benchmarking and business results

Although these benchmarked measures don't relate directly to business results, they are far more connected to helping us achieve our objectives than just looking at volume-based metrics alone. Realistically, if you are targeting the right audience, your share of voice is growing and your audience engagement is increasing, you are in a strong position.

The next stage is to connect these social media measures to our web analytics and business objectives, and we'll look at this in detail in Chapter 18 on Mobile Analytics.

Social media advertising

Many social media platforms give you a number of paid advertising options. Major search engines like Google, Yandex and Baidu also allow you to run paid search campaigns, which we will discuss in more depth in Chapter 12 on mobile search. We should discuss the implications of paid social campaigns here, however, as they can heavily impact the effectiveness and measurement of your social campaigns.

Facebook posted an increase in profits in the first quarter of 2013, up by 30 per cent from the previous quarter, and much of this was attributed to mobile advertising, with at least one third of this income from mobile advertising revenue. In the same announcement, Facebook said that 751 million of its 1.1 billion users are accessing Facebook every month on their mobile device (Sky, 2013). This increase in revenue via mobile is very much in line with our expectations of mobile growth, and everything we are discussing in this book, but it also offers some key challenges to consider.

Value proposition, privacy and trust

Since our mobile devices are in many cases very much part of our personal and social lives, we need to be very cautious about how we use these devices in a blatantly commercial way. Nearly everything

we have spoken about so far involves providing value via engagement and understanding the user needs. Exactly the same principle should be applied to social advertising.

We need to consider how much of an interruption social advertising can actually be seen as, how it can actually damage our brands if used badly and what image we are projecting of our organization. Facebook themselves are responding to this, and already there are signs that users will be able to opt out of most ads on mobile devices if they wish to (Atlantic Wire, 2013).

The key point is to understand the social platforms you are using, why a user is there and make sure the value proposition is clear. If you are on Facebook, you are interested in health and fitness, and brands like Nike offer you free tools to help you achieve your fitness goals, then that's great. If, however, you are on Facebook and you have liked a digital marketing podcast, it doesn't mean that any of your friends necessarily have an interest (see the example below).

FIGURE 11.6 Facebook Insights: the impact on audience size of promoting a post (www.facebook.com)



The screen shot in Figure 11.6 shows how much of an impact running a promotion on a post in Facebook can have on boosting your audience. In this particular case, the sharp rise in audience and engagement,

shown by the steep rise in the graph, was caused by promoting a post. Promoting posts will make your post more visible to those people that have already liked you, but it also means that your post is shown to the friends of your likes as well. Whilst in this particular case this leads to an increase in overall likes and engagement (as well as a knock-on impact in Klout score), what isn't clear is how many people saw my ad for whom it wasn't relevant, and how much of an impact this had on what these people thought of my brand. The problem is there is no way of finding out who these people are and what impact these ads have had on them.

Trusting algorithms

The reality is that it's actually in Facebook's interest not to annoy people with irrelevant ads, just as it's not good for Google to give you irrelevant search results. Both scenarios lead to dissatisfied users, which in turn leads to those users moving to other social networks and search engines. The problem is that Facebook is under serious pressure (*Telegraph*, 2013) to increase its profits but it can't do this at the expense of losing users.

The algorithms, which are just sets of rules and logic, behind these sites are what decide which ads you are shown or which search results you are given. Google has spent many years and much investment in developing its algorithms and focussing on relevancy. For Facebook it's relatively early days, and mobile advertising for Facebook is only something that has existed for under a year. As time goes on, the algorithm that targets the advertising is likely to become more advanced and more effective at doing this in a highly targeted way.

Mobile social media: conclusions

As well as needing to consider all of the usual complexities of social media when planning our mobile activities, we have some additional things to take into account. We still need to consider appropriate use of channels, focus on content and engagement and find effective measurement strategies. Most importantly with mobile social media,

we need to consider the overall user experience and be very much focussed on trust.

User experience is all down to making sure we have thought through and tested how the user will actually experience our social media content and how they can engage with us. Although time consuming and fragmented, due to the number of possible devices and scenarios involved, it is a very practical and reasonably straightforward issue.

Trust on the other hand is far more subjective but of huge importance. Mobile devices can act as magnifiers for missteps we make as marketers. By interrupting, being irrelevant or making incorrect assumptions, we will actually inconvenience our target audience when they are most likely to find this annoying. This may be by giving them much more irrelevant content to scroll past or bombarding them with the same message again and again.

As with all social media, mobile social can be a double-edged sword: it gives us great opportunity but also carries risks. This means that now more than ever, mobile social media requires well-thought-out and considered plans that focus on providing value to the user.