Success Through Social Listening
REAL-TIME FEEDBACK THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA’S SOUND WAVES
“Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply.”

Stephen R. Covey  
author, 7 Habits of Highly Effective People
In today’s world, there’s no doubt that social media has changed the way people relate not only to each other, but to companies and brands. In some ways, social media has become a digital focus group for businesses everywhere – 24/7, always on.

This e-book will help you discover key metrics to enhance the critical facets of a social media program, increase your social intelligence, and unlock insights about your brand through listening.

Here are a few statistics that show just how important social media has become:

- 60% of social network users follow brands
- 40% of the Fortune Global 100 use Twitter for customer service
- Social network use is INCREASING in every age group
It might be easy to think that listening to conversations on social media is just a job for a marketing or customer service department. But truthfully, what goes on across social channels can bring greater benefits to the company as a whole when you don’t limit it to one department. Here are just four roles that can create competitive advantage by being involved in social listening.

Content Marketers:
Can you gauge success by looking at sales numbers? Probably not. Listening for interaction and engagement can confirm your messaging is on track — and helps assess your brand’s impact. Here are three framing questions that you can use to validate messaging decisions based on listening:

- Are you positioning yourself properly through attractive and relevant content?
- Is the customers’ reaction in line with your message?
- Are they brand advocates – or adversaries?
Community Managers:
Leverage social media influencers. Pay attention to users who are familiar with your industry – even if they aren’t talking directly about your brand. They can be early signs of trends, and you should be paying attention.

Listening also helps you counter negative sentiment and plan out an internal system for funneling inquiries to the correct department. Would your social team efficiently address a tech support issue? How about successfully convert a sales lead? Or handle a legal issue? On social channels, your community managers are often a first contact. Make sure they know where various inquiries are best addressed.

Data Analysts:
Trends in social communication are always changing. Mine conversations for key data points. Track new topics, tones, or changes of any kind.

Hint: Number of interactions and engagements are more relevant than number of followers.

Upper-level Management:
As a company figurehead, you don’t need all the finite details of every single interaction. Still, you can make decisions that are in line with up-to-the-minute trends. With a well-planned listening strategy in place, your team will be able to see what your customers are talking about – while you watch your departments manage the conversation.
Leveraging Real-Time Feedback

Feedback on social media is constant and in real time. Use the immediacy of this communication to your advantage – proactively messaging to strengthen your brand. Here are just a few areas to think about as you build your capabilities.

Actionable listening:

So much of the talk on social media is not actionable – meaning it’s irrelevant to your brand. A well-designed listening strategy is necessary to identify the resonant material.

Don’t forget – users shape your brand. You can only guide them. Identifying actionable communication and messaging quickly can help turn industry influencers into advocates for your brand.
Time of crisis management:

Social media listening particularly pays off during times of crisis. Managing rampant negative feedback, an embarrassing news story, or any other brand-damaging event might be a defining moment for your company. Do you have the right system in place to handle it quickly and appropriately?
Customer Spotlight:

HP takes listening in on social media to a new level. Kriti Kapoor leads HP’s Global Social Customer Care team, and she makes social listening a priority in their customer service strategy.

“We will earn customer loyalty by listening and helping, one customer at a time consistently no matter where in the world they live.”
HP has a very simple philosophy: follow the customer. Beginning in 2008, HP saw customers were increasingly turning to social for technical support and queries. They recognized the need to be there for them with answers.

That’s when they adopted a social-first mentality. While social listening, their agents have access to a comprehensive view of the customer. They can instantly see the customer’s history, their warranty information, other products they own, previous issues, open cases, and more – all before appropriately responding.
Advantages of Democratizing Listening

We’ve already pointed out how listening benefits each role in your organization (see page 3). But how will your entire company benefit internally? Consider these three main advantages of democratized listening:

Convert sales leads.
Social media users are always talking about things they want. These social mentions are truly sales leads. Proactive companies jump on these opportunities to engage their future customers.

What about social media users who are unhappy with your competitor? Although you may not be mentioned directly, you should be listening. These are leads too. Make sure community managers can recognize them. Other possible sources for sales leads:

- Your fans and followers who haven’t bought anything from you
- Your competition’s fans and followers
- People who have expressed interest in your industry

Leads are everywhere on social — even when your brand isn’t mentioned.
Route customer service requests.

Service-related inquiries are some of the most time-sensitive communications on social media. The majority of users expect to receive a response within a day — some, even sooner. Democratized listening gets information to the right department quickly. Remember:

- Customer service requests can masquerade as a rant
- Suggestions for product upgrades could really be requests for tech support

Manage content decisions.

Democratized listening will help streamline the approval process for time-sensitive social content. Consider the following timeline:

1. A current event triggers a social media reaction.
2. Your industry isn’t affected directly, but your customers are talking.
3. If you wait even three hours, a response would not be relevant.
4. Your competitors aren’t saying anything.
5. Your marketing department creates a topical and relevant message quickly.
6. Messaging is promptly approved with an established and efficient plan.
7. Your customers engage.
Creating Key Performance Indicators with Social Metrics

On social media, your customers’ opinions are unsolicited – therefore truthful and raw. But there’s also a lot of them. And it can be overwhelming. Here are a few areas to think about when gathering this unfiltered data, so you can set achievable goals.

Design metrics for success based on user engagement.

Social media is not just about number of fans and followers – it’s about their activity. More engagement leads to a larger social community.
Gain key competitive analysis.

Track your competitors’ interactions and engagements. What are their customers telling them? Find out where you fit in the conversation, and tailor your offerings.

Monitor industry topics.

Broaden your view of your industry as a whole through social listening. Follow advances in technology – and identify the topics that drive user interaction.

Maximize your ROI.

Are your efforts on social media worth it? Listening in on social conversations can help you define and refine your KPIs and goals.
Conclusion: Listen intentionally and you’ll grow

Listening is clearly important in this day and age. But hopefully this book has started to get you thinking about how you listen. Because having a defined listening strategy is one key way to uncovering your brand’s potential on social media.

1. Every individual role in your company will benefit.

2. Stay on top of the conversation with real-time feedback.
3. Get the right communications to the qualified departments efficiently.

4. Set achievable goals based on relevant information.

Salesforce Social Studio provides the interface needed to accomplish these steps. Easily track your brand, customers, competitors, and products across multiple social media channels – maximizing ROI and driving real revenue.

Are you really listening? Find out how you can.

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