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THE GUIDE TO SOCIAL MEDIA MONITORING

**GAUGE THE HEALTH OF YOUR BRAND * FLAG CUSTOMER SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES
HANDLE YOUR NEXT CRISIS * GENERATE LEADS * KEEP TABS ON THE COMPETITION
COLLECT PRODUCT FEEDBACK * TRACK INDUSTRY TRENDS
IDENTIFY INFLUENTIAL ADVOCATES AND DETRACTORS**

WITH CASE STUDIES FROM VERISIGN TO BANK FRONTIER AIRLINES GNC DELL AND BEACHBODY

THE GUIDE TO SOCIAL MEDIA MONITORING

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Introduction

In the rainy season, the Amazon River widens to 48 km (30 mi) and dumps 300,000 cubic metres (11,000,000 cu ft) of water per second into the Atlantic Ocean. [\[source\]](#)

That's what the social web is like: a massive, fast-flowing torrent of information. In the minute that's elapsed since you opened this ebook, people around the world have posted [42,000 Facebook status updates²](#) and [173,000 tweets](#).

As you struggle to stay afloat in this flood of data, how do you find the one tweet that might lead to a large contract, the LinkedIn Group that inspires a whole new product line, or the blog post that could permanently damage your brand?

With *social media monitoring*.

Effective monitoring involves filtering all those conversations using relevant keywords and keyphrases to find the posts and conversations that matter to your business.

It takes self-discipline to talk less and listen more, but a social media monitoring program can revolutionize your business.

Read on to learn how!

Before We Begin: Listening Basics

Sweeping the entire social web is no easy task, so make sure you carefully research which tool will help you find the conversations that matter. ([Here's a short guide to picking a social media monitoring platform.](#))

Each of our 8 chapters explains what to listen for and suggests keywords to search. As you sort through the resulting posts, you'll uncover additional keywords to use and realize where the action is happening.

Don't assume you need to be on the most popular social networks. Social media isn't just about Twitter and Facebook. For some industries, the best places to interact are blogs, forums and message boards. For others, it might be LinkedIn or niche online communities.

The searches you undertake as part of your listening program will focus your efforts, uncover discussion and dialogue, and help you understand where you should be spending your time and effort to engage the communities you care about.

Chapter 1 / Gauge the Health of Your Brand

Why?

The first thing every company wants to know about social media is what people are saying about them. Gauging the health of your brand online provides business intelligence that you might not glean from other sources.

Do people love you, are they frustrated by your customer service, is your new product a hit? And does the feedback line up with how you're positioning and presenting your company to the public? (Maybe you need to change your language to suit your customers.)

Don't shy away from criticism. Negative feedback can be some of the best intelligence you can gather about what you can improve in your business. Instead of taking offense, [think of your critics as volunteer mystery shoppers](#).

If there are issues that concern your community, it's always best to be aware, responsive, and determine a course correction.

How?

Your brand isn't just what you say it is. It's also defined by your customers, prospects, competitors, industry, media and the world at large.

A brand is the sum of all conversations, and in the fast-moving and dynamic world of social media, you need a handle on how your brand is being perceived.

Search for terms that are directly related to your business. Develop a stack of keywords and phrases that include:

- Your company name
- Your brands, business units, or product offerings
- Names of specialized services you offer
- Names or terms around specific campaigns
- Key stakeholders in your organization
- Nicknames, abbreviations, or misspellings of any of the above

Case Study: VeriSign

When network company [VeriSign](#) and their agency partner, [Voce Communications](#), began to use Radian6 to monitor the brand on social media, they discovered that much of the feedback surfacing online about VeriSign was neutral or negative in tone.

They saw this as a prime opportunity to not only monitor their reputation, but to learn who their industry influencers were, and respond to issues and concerns from their customers and leave a positive, progressive impression of their work.

Monitoring has uncovered other key outreach opportunities for VeriSign, including the ability to correct misinformation about their products and services. Their marketing department uncovered a key white paper that mentioned VeriSign and provided a powerful case study and rich market information for their messaging and positioning.

“That white paper was discovered through monitoring on a wide breadth of keywords, some of which were added after an initial analysis of our online reputation,” said Karen Snyder, former Social Media Strategist at VeriSign. “We never would have found the document unless we had been monitoring with Radian6.”

[\(Read the full case study.\)](#)

Chapter 2 / Flag Customer-Service Opportunities

Why?

Social media has tipped the balance of power from the brand to the customer. Nobody enjoys listening to hold music for 45 minutes. Customers will broadcast their complaints on Facebook or Twitter, and expect you to come find them.

By listening carefully to your customers and community, you can easily catch customer service issues as they emerge, even on fast-moving sites like Twitter.

Communities see responsiveness from companies, and those companies earn their trust. Your customers aren't asking you to be perfect, they're asking you to pay attention.

How?

Searching for terms around your brands and products, as described in Chapter 1, will turn up most customer service issues.

Your first challenge is to determine whether the author of a post is a customer. If you sell directly to consumers, you'll have to figure this out from the context of the post or by asking directly.

B2B companies track their customers much more closely with CRM systems. The first time a person pops up, figure out their employer by viewing their social profiles. This might take a little sleuthing, following links from Twitter to About.me to LinkedIn.

Crosscheck the name and location in [Salesforce](#) (or whatever CRM system you're using.) Your CRM data will give you more context on ongoing customer service issues and let you know which Account Manager in your organization is responsible for this customer.

Pay attention to whether your mentions increase as folks talk about your stellar customer service practices, and see if your ratio of positive sentiment increases as your outreach and resolution of customer service issues in social media takes hold.

Case Study: TD Bank

TD Bank understands that customers place a great deal of trust in their bank and they expect it to be as accessible, helpful and responsive to their needs as possible. To TD that means being there for customers where they feel most comfortable, whether it's in the branch, on the phone or on social media channels.

Using social media, the bank has been able to identify and help with thousands of customer inquiries on a range of topics, from service issues to banking hours. For example, during Hurricane Irene, which shut down much of the east coast for several days, TD was able to update affected customers with information about branch and ATM availability.

"People are very candid on social media, and it gives us the chance to get feedback on our branch hours and services or help a customer resolve an issue. We find our customers are happy to know that we are listening and that we are here to help," explains Wendy Arnott, VP of Social Media and Digital Communication. "Social media gives TD the power to be where our customers are and for us there is no where else we would rather be."

[\(Read the full case study.\)](#)

Chapter 3 / Handle Your Next Crisis

Why?

Your mother used to remind you that you have two ears and one mouth for a reason. Being a good social media listener will help you immensely in a crisis, allowing you to respond quickly to the right people with the right information in the right way.

A good social media listening program can preserve — and even improve — your brand's reputation in a crisis.

How?

Discussions happening in social media can serve as an early warning system before an issue erupts. By using advanced tools you can observe new words popping up more frequently about your brands.

If you were an cell phone carrier, for example, the sudden appearance of the word "cancellation" along with "bad" and "customer service" should send you digging for more detail.

Keep an eye on negative mentions. If you suddenly see a huge increase in people badmouthing your brand, you have a crisis on your hands.

Listen Before the Crisis

Emergencies are no time to develop basic listening skills. Start now. If your brand earns the reputation of being a good listener that takes care of its customers, you'll have a backup reservoir of trust to tap into when the crisis hits.

Beforehand, look for channels to use for crisis outreach. Where does your community hang out: Twitter, Facebook, or industry forums? Also identify and build relationships with key influencers who can amplify your response.

Social media can alert you to potential issues before they escalate. For example, community news sites around your facilities could help you prepare for the windstorm that could knock out a server farm. You'd be able to warn your customers of impending downtime.

Monitoring social media can shut down many crises before they get off the ground. You can

deal promptly with an upset customer or rogue employee before the issue gets posted on *The Consumerist*.

Listen During the Crisis

During a crisis, monitor relevant conversations. What kind of volume and sentiment are you dealing with? Which people and which sites are critical of your brand? Knowing about the 5,000 angry posts on your Facebook wall will help you respond quickly and sensitively.

Monitoring social media will help you see the crisis from your customers' perspective, shaping your language and adjusting your priorities.

Listen After the Crisis

Don't stop listening just because the latest crisis has passed. You need to be aware of unresolved issues and lingering frustrations that need to be fixed. Don't just passively listen: ask.

Monitor social media for sentiment around your brand, comparing levels before, during and after the crisis. Is your stock beginning to rise again? If not, why not?

Because attentive listening throughout a crisis shows you care about protecting your customers as much as protecting yourself, it can turn a crisis into a bonding experience with your community.

Case Study: Frontier Airlines

Last July 13, a massive hailstorm hit Denver, taking 22 of [Frontier Airline's](#) planes out of commission. Frustrated customers idled in long lines at Frontier counters and even longer wait times on their toll-free reservation lines.

Marco Toscano, Senior Manager of Social Media, saw this as the perfect chance for his department to assist the reservations group by providing information and flight re-accommodations.

The team tracked down mentions of Frontier across the social web and reached out to re-book flights, spread updates, and let their customers know they were there to help.

"Customers on Twitter were so surprised at how easy we were making it to re-book that they were reaching out and asking for us to send them email confirmations because they couldn't believe it could be done so quickly," explains Toscano.

The first few days following the storm were challenging but soon the team at Frontier saw an increase in the “thank you” tweets, and was thrilled to see how grateful people were to be updated about flight number changes, delays and cancellations.

One of the 4,000 thankful customers they helped tweeted, “Another reason to fly @flyfrontier their @FrontierCare booked me a new ticket in 10 min rather than the insane line at airport. Awesome!”

[\(Read the full case study.\)](#)

Chapter 4 / Generate Leads

Why?

Social media is inundated with blatant pitches, advertisements, and “cold calls”, either in response to posts or out of the blue. These marketers just aggravate folks who have not expressed interest (let alone need). The interruptions are often irrelevant to them in the moment that they hear them.

But there is a time when a sales pitch, connection, or outreach is more than welcome. That’s at the point of need, the moment when someone expresses a desire that your product can fill.

Listening at the point of need can help you discover opportunities to help by offering information or expertise — without sales pressure — at the perfect time.

How?

Think about the wording potential customers might use in looking for your product: phrases like “I’m looking for,” “I need,” and “I’m trying to find.” Experiment with your keyphrases to find these inquiries.

Monitor keyword phrases that imply someone is searching for a recommendation. For example:

- “best [product or service]”
- “[your product] vs. [competitor product]”
- “[product or service category] recommendation”
- “new [product or service]”

Collect a list of keyword terms and phrases that are used in discussions in the industry you serve. Don’t just guess these terms; take the time to find out what they are. You might even consider surveying your customers to discover exact terminology they’re using online.

Case Study: GNC

GNC is the world's largest vitamin and supplement retailer, devoted to helping its customers live healthily and meet their fitness goals. They understand that their customers are looking to them for the most recent scientific research and new product developments.

GNC knew that many consumers were using social media to get answers to their health and wellness questions, make product recommendations and share their experiences.

"Social media has given consumers the power to get answers and recommendations long before they step foot in the store to make a purchase," explains Chris James, GNC's Director of Social Media. GNC knew that conversations were happening online and they wanted to find a way to bring these people together and help them find the right information at the right time.

Using the Radian6 platform, the team at GNC listens for questions or concerns that relate to the products GNC carries or people who are chatting online about looking for help to start a health and wellness plan. The team engages with people who have questions about products they should be using, or which brand to try.

GNC has built a strong and healthy online presence. They have given consumers access to resources and experts, without them ever leaving their computer.

Along the way, GNC has also connected with their customers who take to social media to share their inspirational stories.

"It is truly amazing to have customers thank us for helping them lose 150 pounds", says James, "I think it's amazing that we have a chance to connect with our customers on this level, that we are a part of helping them change their lives for the better, and that we can share in the journey with them."

[\(Read the full case study.\)](#)

Chapter 5 / Keep Tabs On The Competition

Why?

People on social media are talking about your competition. Who they're hiring, who's recently left. What new product they're coming out with. They're communicating what your competition isn't doing, which presents all sorts of opportunities for you.

Monitoring can uncover amazing insight about [how your competitors are presenting themselves online](#), how they're employing social media, and where there might be unmet needs in the community that you can fill.

Are your competitors getting ready to launch a new product or service offering? Sometimes the community will share some insider information that can tip you off. Perhaps the prospects you'd like to reach are expressing a need for a service or product that neither you or your competitor offer yet, but should be.

Having the advantage of listening means you might be able to be first to market with something new and compelling.

Competitive intelligence used to be limited to expensive reports from business intelligence companies, or whatever information you could glean through your network of acquaintances, friends, and contacts. The social web has brought a new dimension to competitive analysis, and put a wealth of information out there for the taking.

How?

Fill your bucket by searching for:

- Names of competing companies, brands, products, and services
- Stakeholders in those companies
- Buzz around competing campaigns or promotions
- Nicknames and misspellings

Marketing Efforts

If you want to keep an eye on your competitors' marketing efforts, make sure you are searching for the keywords they are using in their marketing. Learn their marketing language and search using those terms. Observe the language they're using and compare it to how you speak, and how your customers speak. Note how they're positioning themselves in the market.

How successful are their efforts? Are people engaging with those messages and following them back? How do their customers describe them on social media? Does it match up with their own self-understanding?

Product Enhancements

Read between the lines. Observe how your competitors respond to product reviews of their current offerings. If a company is shying away from a topic, it could be a sign of an area they don't want to discuss because they haven't found a solution or because they have. Either way, it's a sign to improve your product offering.

Customer Interactions

Many customer service issues are happening right out in public. Stay quiet and observe. Elbowing in to steal the customer away will needlessly antagonize both the competition and their customer.

Instead, note recurring customer service issues. These may reveal weaknesses in their products and services. They might also suggest potential pain points you can use in your own marketing.

Stay tuned for how the competition responds to complaints. How do they handle negative issues? Is there a chance for you to offer a discount based on certain issues that customers are having with a competitor? These are all things you can glean by watching their interactions.

For more information on competitive listening, check out our ebook [Getting the Competitive Edge with Social Media](#).

Chapter 6 / Collect Product Feedback

Why?

Social media supplies voluntary feedback and product reviews without the toil and cost of focus groups.

Tapping into negative conversations around your brand can lead you to your detractors. Although negative feedback can sting, there's usually an element of truth behind unpleasant words.

Understanding what people love and hate about your product can help you figure out how to better satisfy customers and prospects.

How?

Monitor keywords that include phrases that imply your product or service has room for improvement. (If everyone's hung up on the same thing, you'll know exactly what to fix.)

- "wish [product or service] had"
- "[product or service] really needs"
- "would buy [product or service] but"
- "decided not to buy [product or service]"
- "don't buy [product or service]"
- "wouldn't buy [product or service]"

Here are some things to listen for:

- Comments on current products
- Comments on competitors' products
- New uses for existing products
- Opportunities for product offerings
- New industry opportunities
- Potential new product features
- Product pain points
- How customers are using your product
- Points of difference about your product

Case Study: Dell

As Dell prepared to launch the Inspiron 910 netbook several years ago, they turned to what they termed “free-range marketing”: allowing the community to drive the excitement and the story about the new product. Blogs, forums, and social bookmarking sites like Digg were abuzz with talk about the new Dell notebook.

Dell actively monitored the ongoing dialogue, absorbing the information and feedback from the community. As customers and the web buzzed about their thoughts and opinions and speculations about the Mini 9, Dell strategically added to the conversation with bits of product information or corrections about misinformation. They were careful, however, to allow the conversation to happen as organically as possible.

As Dell continued to monitor the social web using comparative topic monitors in the Radian6 dashboard, they learned that their product held a distinct competitive advantage.

“By setting up topic profiles on both Inspiron-related keywords and those of competitor’s products, we learned that customers who were contemplating a purchase of a mini notebook were foregoing competitor’s products in favor of waiting for the new Dell Mini 9,” says Geoff Knox, Supervisor, Global Operations for Dell’s Community Team. “The buzz in social media was creating a level of anticipation that was actually extending the buying cycle and driving demand for our new product.”

Listening online helped Dell understand their customers’ expectations for features and capabilities for the notebook. From specifications to pricing, their customers and prospects were talking about what they wanted from the Mini 9. By participating in that dialogue and passing that feedback to their internal notebook teams, Dell was able to understand and address any discrepancies between the community’s expectations and the actual Inspiron 910 itself.

Leading up to the product launch, Dell also set up topic profiles in Radian6 based on the keywords they’d uncovered throughout their monitoring in the previous months. They were able to craft their launch messaging around what they’d learned, and measure the peaks in conversation before and after the Inspiron 910 hit store shelves.

“When it came time for the actual launch, we felt informed and prepared, and our team was very excited about building on the momentum that social media had generated for the Mini 9,” says Knox. “Monitoring the social web allowed us to join the conversation in a completely relevant way.”

[\(Read the full case study.\)](#)

Chapter 7

Track Industry Trends

Why?

Every company is seeking to fill a role within their industry, and provide expertise, leadership, and solutions that help their customers improve their lifestyles, do their jobs better, or make an impact on the world around them.

Resist the temptation to listen only around your own brand. Listen a level above your brand to the discussions happening in your industry. Not only can you understand your [share of conversation](#) within the discussions you want to be part of, but you can learn valuable information about emerging trends, crises, or issues of interest to your community and prospects.

How?

Begin by searching for:

- Terms related to verticals you specialize in
- Phrases that define the markets you serve
- Broader industry keywords or categories
- Professional organizations you belong to or that fit your business profile
- Names of thought leaders in the industry you serve

This is where you can identify emerging trends and issues that you need to pay attention to, and what the larger community is saying about them. You can learn about overarching perceptions of your markets or your business purpose. And you can identify and locate conversations that aren't about your company, but where you can engage and communicate expertise, meet new people, and establish your online presence as a resource and authority.

Chapter 8 / Identify Influential Advocates (and Detractors)

Why?

One of the most beneficial things you can do on the social web is foster strong connections with those who love your brand the most. After all, they're the people who will vocally celebrate your successes, refer business your way, purchase your product, and even defend your brand in the face of criticism.

Influence is relative, and what matters most is that you are finding the people who are the best advocates for your work. That may not always be the people with the biggest audiences or reach, but the people who are most passionate about what you do.

Listening carefully means that you'll know not only where the most active conversations are about you, but who is the most vocal, connected, and enthusiastic about what you do. Or, you might find the squeakiest wheels about particular pain points that need attention. Not every influencer is friendly, and you need to know who your detractors are.

Perhaps you're spending time building a blog when passionate advocates are active on discussion forums. There might be groups on Facebook for your industry that you haven't participated in, and could signal an opportunity for a presence there. And you might think you want to reach moms, but the dads are talking you up enthusiastically, too. Listening is key to understanding who your best advocates are and where they spend their time.

How?

In order to find those doing the influencing, you have to listen to the distinct social media conversations that take place at the funnel's different stages. These conversations are what will lead you to brand advocates and detractors.

For example, monitor keyword phrases that imply someone is searching for a recommendation, and pay close attention to who answers these inquiries.

- "best [product or service]"
- "[your product] vs. [competitor product]"
- "[product or service category] recommendation"
- "looking for [product or service]"

Listen to the conversations happening in your industry’s community. Start by casting a wide net. Note posts that generate tons of comments and tweets that get widely retweeted.

Find out more about these influencers by:

- Searching for them on LinkedIn
- Searching industry events and see if they will be speaking
- Looking at Klout for their influential topics
- Looking them up in your CRM system and asking your account team

Rank the list and pare it down to a manageable number, somewhere between 10 and 50.

Now that you have your list, how will you get them to pay attention to you and your brand? Check out our ebook [Win Over Your Industry’s Social Media Influencers](#).

Case Study: Beachbody

[Beachbody](#) produces DVD home fitness programs featuring online support, fitness gear, and supplements. Among the best-selling programs are P90X, 10 Minute Trainer, Turbo Jam and Slim in 6 – brands which may be familiar through TV infomercials.

Beachbody, including trainers and several product brands, is active on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Flickr. The Facebook page for P90X has received over 500,000 likes. There’s also a blogger outreach program where fitness and mommy bloggers are offered a free fitness program and asked to blog honestly about the experience

Pierre Abraham is the Social Media Manager for Beachbody and at that earliest point he was listening for disgruntled customers. Now he uses Radian6 to sort through and prioritize over 26,000 mentions per month.

Most mentions are about P90X – a favorite among celebrities like actors Demi Moore and Ashton Kutcher, singer Sheryl Crow, and professional athletes including San Francisco 49ers football kicker David Akers.

A while back, the CTO of networking systems giant Cisco, [Padmasree Warrior](#), mentioned on Twitter that she suspected Santa would give her P90X for Christmas instead of chocolates! Abraham quickly saw that she had more than a million followers, and jumped at the opportunity to respond with a word of encouragement.

Warrior jovially reciprocated the connection from @Beachbody, creating the opportunity for her 1.4 million followers to see the P90X brand, experience the personal outreach, hear the message, and learn that Beachbody is listening.

[\(Read the full case study.\)](#)

Conclusion

Many brands see social media as just another megaphone to blast their marketing campaigns and news releases at their customers and prospects. Then they give up because no one seems to care. Why do they fail? These jabberjaws never stopped to listen.

In contrast, the social media strategies we've highlighted in this ebook are built on a foundation of attentive listening. These companies know that every social media activity — and indeed every business activity — will be far more effective if you've cultivated a deep understanding of the relevant social media conversations.

Every moment the Amazon of social media flows by, it carries valuable insight into how you can grow your brand, delight your customers, sail through your next crisis, generate leads, surpass the competition, improve your products, learn from industry trends, and win over passionate advocates.

All this from a little listening. You'd be wise to pay attention.

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