

The three pillars of social media success

by Rebecca Giantonio, online strategies manager, The Pita Group

More than 30 billion pieces of content are shared on Facebook each month. Forty-eight hours of YouTube video is uploaded every minute, and 600 tweets are posted each second. But who is listening, becoming inspired and taking action? To raise awareness of your brand or organization, develop relationships with your target audience, influence perceptions and achieve overall social media success, begin the process of listening, measuring and adapting.

LISTEN

Whether or not you are active in the social media world, it is important that you tune in to hear what people are saying about your brand and industry. Without this knowledge, effective strategic planning is impossible.

Social Mention and Google Alerts are free, easy-to-use tools that provide a good overview of posts, videos, blogs and websites containing specific keywords or phrases. Twitter Search works in a similar way, monitoring conversations on Twitter.

MEASURE

The digital world offers a wealth of social media measurement tools. Consider your needs—what are you really trying to find out or measure? Reach and engagement are two important areas to examine.

Keep in mind that a larger reach is not necessarily better. Your community may consist of only 400 people, but they may be the exact people you want to reach. In addition to traffic, look at your audience's conversations; how they portray your brand; the extent to which they serve as advocates; and whether they are taking action and purchasing your product, attending your event or shifting their views.

YouTube Statistics – Your video has been up a week and already has 1,000 views. Great! But are the people you want to watch it actually tuning in? YouTube recently added a tool that reveals geographic regions from which viewers come, demographics and referral sources. It also serves as a market research tool. Compare your statistics to those of your competitors and see what has and hasn't been successful for them. Have a concept for a video? Look for videos with similar characteristics and see if they are reaching your target demographic.

Facebook Insights – Accessible to page administrators, this tool gives an in-depth look at growth in page “likes” over time, fan demographics, the content fans are viewing and the feedback and activity each post generated. This tool is available only for pages, not profiles.

Klout – Based on a daily updated score of 1 to 100, Klout reveals how much of your audience is truly engaged, the likelihood that your posts will result in retweets, messages and mentions and your influence of audiences within the Twitter realm. You can also learn your Klout Classification, essentially a personality profile for your Twitter presence that can help you better understand what you're doing well and where you might be falling short.

ADAPT

As you analyze audience data, you will better understand whom you are reaching and their interests, perspectives, online behaviors and level of engagement. Armed with this information, you can now adapt your social media strategy to maximize success.

Does your audience, frequently comment or start debates related to your posts? A live Tweet Chat with your CEO would show them that their input is valued. Do they frequently upload photos or video to your Facebook page? Consider a contest. Is your target audience active on competitors' social networks but silent on yours? Determine what sets you apart and bring it to your network.

Now repeat.

The social media world is rapidly evolving. New networks and tools show up online seemingly every day. As a result, listening, measuring and adapting is not a one-time process; rather, it is a cycle you must embrace to consistently develop successful strategies and content that inspires your audience to take action and speaks to their needs and interests.

To learn more about this process and The Pita Group's social media measurement boot camp, call 860.293.0157, ext. 20. For more social media insight, visit blog.thepitagroup.com.

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