

Listen Up

the Definitive Guide to
Social Listening for Smarter Business



meltwater

#whatsthebuzz @meltwater



Table of Contents

Contents

INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1 Drive Word-of-Mouth Marketing.....	3
CHAPTER 2 Do They Really Like You?	6
CHAPTER 3 Keep Tabs on the Competition.....	11
CHAPTER 4 Look Who's Talking.....	14
CHAPTER 5 Find Conversations that Matter.....	17
CHAPTER 6 Start Your Own Meme	22
CONCLUSION	26
RESOURCES.....	28
ABOUT THE AUTHOR	31

INTRODUCTION



Introduction

Twitter users send more than **400 million tweets per day.**

March 2013



Starting a social conversation around your brand is the #1 goal of a good social media campaign. Viral word of mouth is the difference between advertising and social marketing, and as such, it's earned media: you can't buy it, but it's not free.

Inciting word-of-mouth is dependent upon mastering the social conversation, and in order to do that we marketers must do something often counterintuitive: stop talking for a moment, and listen first.

After you read this e-book, you will understand how to find the conversations that matter most; how to use social monitoring to inform efforts across the entire marketing organization; and how to start your own viral marketing memes.

You, fellow social media marketer, are the catalyst that ignites a great social marketing program. Be the meme, compatriots.

Be the meme.

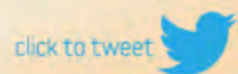
CHAPTER 1

Drive Word-of-Mouth Marketing...
Otherwise You're in the Ad Biz



SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING MANIFESTO

1. If content isn't shared socially, it isn't social marketing.
2. As social media marketers, driving word of mouth is our primary goal.



Social media marketing is... well, social. Content that isn't shared socially is long-format advertising: the social share is the key difference between the traditional monologue broadcast advertising model and the new [social media dialogue marketing](#) model.

Focusing on shares shouldn't lead to the impression that social media marketers aren't going to have direct marketing goals. The social media marketer is typically going to be running certain efforts that are designed for business goals like lead capture or sales conversion. Any content put on your channel specifically designed for someone to take direct action back at you (rather than sharing out to their people) is a direct marketing effort despite being on a social channel, but that doesn't mean that it's not a social media marketing effort.

Chapter 1: Drive Word-of-Mouth Marketing... Otherwise You're in the Ad Biz



However, the social share is what gives the power to a social media marketing program, for several reasons:

- 1) The number of people your content is going to be exposed to is now exponential.
- 2) People are more likely to pay attention to content from a person they're following intentionally.
- 3) It's very likely that a lot of the folks in your social communities are also on your email lists.
- 4) As much as "impressions" are a soft metric, they are a real one: an impression is what leads to awareness, and awareness is the first step on the customer path to a purchase.
- 5) You have no way of knowing where your audience is on the sales funnel. What you do know is that the more people you shepherd into the top of it (awareness), the more will make the happy trip down to the bottom (purchase).
- 6) The more people see your offer, the more people are going to click on it.

With that in mind, social media marketers need to master the art of the social conversation — and mastering the social conversation starts and ends with listening.

Yes, we are asking you to be quiet. Don't worry, fellow marketer! It only hurts for a second.

CHAPTER 2

Do They Really Like You?





More than half of Twitter's users follow 6 or more brands.

Listening for brand sentiment is one of the most clear-cut use cases for a social monitoring program. What are people saying? Social brand monitoring generally addresses three main marketing areas: general reputation, marketing programs and promotions, and products and services.

General Reputation

Keeping tabs on what your customers are saying about you is the most obvious use case for a brand monitoring program. Many brands use Twitter and Facebook as customer service channels for this reason: a social media customer service program is simply monitoring taken one step further to focused, channel-specific engagement.

Tip: Set expectations with your customers on your social channels. Something as simple as a note in your Twitter bio that says “We respond to tweets within 24 hours, M-F” will help you set expectations about response time.

Basically, any time you want to know what your customers think, social media monitoring is a great way to find out. With that in mind, there are several marketing and business scenarios in which getting a quick read on your reputation is important.

Chapter 2: Do They Really Like You?

Here are a few examples:

Crisis Communication

When your hair's on fire, it can be hard to determine how bad it really is. Social monitoring during a PR crisis (or any crisis) can help you determine the scale of the problem, and it can give you an idea as to your best response and positioning.

- What is the main message and tone of the conversation?
- Is there something you can do to help extinguish the flames immediately?
- Is the criticism widespread, or localized within a small group of people?
- Who are the core detractors? Do you have any core influencers? Is it worth reaching out to them?
- Is your message being heard?
- Is conversation volume increasing or decreasing over time?

Human Resources

Corporate reputation sites like Glassdoor tend to cater to the detractor and, with static content, they don't tell the whole story.

- What are your current employees saying about you?
- What are your ex-employees saying about you?
- What are your prospects saying about you?
- Who are the main influencers or detractors?

Investor Relations

Investors are people too – and people talk. Frame your brand name searches with filters specific to investor relations: terms like “IPO” and “stock price” and “shares” and “Q4 earnings call” will turn a general brand sentiment search into a social media effort that your CFO can support.

- Are your shareholders happy?
- Did that Q3 earnings call go well?
- Are your talking points being heard?
- What are the thematic trends around your brand among industry analysts?
- What are folks saying about your IPO?
- Who are the main influencers or detractors?

Chapter 2: Do They Really Like You?

Example: A PR crisis in the form of the sudden departure of a company's founder and CEO not long after its IPO led to an 80% drop in share value over the first several months of public trading. Angry employees took to social channels to complain and criticize management, leading to a second PR crisis that would further damage the company's valuation. By listening with a solid social monitoring product, the company was able to identify how widespread the complaints were, and whether the criticisms from shareholders and employees were being echoed in sentiment by industry analysts. The company was then able to come up with a messaging platform and outreach action plan designed to diffuse the noise and change the narrative on both fronts.

Marketing Programs & Promotions

Social listening is not only a great way to figure out whether a program or promotion you're running is resonating with a target audience, but it's also a great way to test your creative direction.

Social media channels are less expensive than traditional media channels for experimentation. With the right social monitoring tools, reaction to your creative can be both quantified and qualified.

3 Ways to Test Your Marketing Programs & Promotions Before they Happen

1. Use Twitter to test subject lines before you send the email
2. Use Facebook to test ad creative before you do an ad buy
3. Use YouTube to test video creative before a TV buy

Example: Kmart released an online video in 2013, "[Ship My Pants](#)," in which scatological wordplay was the hook to let customers know that they will ship you any product you can't find in a store, for free. This irreverent and surprisingly funny video creative was additionally surprising in that it was well outside the realm of the usual, straightforward Kmart advertising. This is the sort of concept that, in the past, would have been rejected by the client for a major ad campaign, and would be living sadly on the Wall of Rejection that nearly every creative agency has to showcase their favorite concepts that were summarily rejected by their clients.

The gamble paid off: it was hugely successful, both in viral word-of-mouth and with press. As of the writing of this book it has 29 million shares overall, 3 million Facebook likes and

Chapter 2: Do They Really Like You?

50,000 Twitter shares.¹ The video was so successful that a second, similarly-punchlined “Big Gas Savings” was produced as a followup.

This sort of thematic testing would have traditionally been conducted with a focus group before a larger ad campaign was launched. These days, using social media is a great way to test program names, themes, messaging, discounts, and anything else that could have been traditionally serviced by a focus group.

Products & Services

Listening to your customers before you launch a new product or service is a great way to find out what they think before spending a fortune on R&D. It’s also a way to spot industry trends that can lead to new product ideas.

- What sort of positioning will resonate for a new product?
- Is chatter around your brand and product more prevalent on one channel, as opposed to another? Perhaps Twitter is better than LinkedIn or Facebook for spreading the word.
- Is there a target community out there that might be good for a pilot program?
- Are there any key influencers you might engage?
- Are you seeing any sort of geographical trends that might lead to a new market? Good tools break down chatter geographically

Example: A frozen burrito company started a social monitoring program and noticed that a lot of positive sentiment about their products was coming from Twitter. They also noticed that the bulk of the chatter was happening after midnight, especially on the weekends. The company realized that late night snackers were a great target community for sales, promotions and new products, and they consequently adjusted their online marketing to engage directly with this blarily enthusiastic crowd on Twitter. Out of this engagement, the company found a few key Twitter influencers who helped spearhead a contest to invent a new product: the late-night frozen breakfast burrito.



¹ Data source: [Unruly Media](#)

For good social karma, share this book!

CHAPTER 3

Keep Tabs on the Competition



Chapter 3: Keep Tabs on the Competition

Now that you know how to listen for what your customers are saying about you, it's time to use that knowledge to monitor your competitors. Social media competitive analysis has typically been quantified by community size: the number of Facebook fans and Twitter followers are often the first benchmark a social media manager examines.

Since driving word-of-mouth is the primary goal of a social media marketing program, the quantity of community activity and the quality of engagement are far more important than community size itself. By measuring engagement volume and listening to the content of your competitors' customer conversations, you can get a much better idea as to how your reputation, marketing programs and products stack up against your competition.

Monitoring your competitors' conversations with their own communities will help you understand their positioning, and can give you insight into their marketing strategy.

General Reputation

Are their customers happy? If so, you can listen more intently to find out why. If not, you might think about ways to engage that community that makes them happier with you.

Promotions & Programs

Listening for new promotions and programs is a great way to stay informed on your competitor's marketing strategy. It's also a great way to do low-fi market research: are their customers excited about any particular promotion or program?

Products & Services

Are their customers asking for new features, products or services? Is your competitor talking about any upcoming launches? Listening for product and service announcements and reaction is great market research for you.

Chapter 3: Keep Tabs on the Competition

Example: A small digital marketing agency with a well-researched SEO keyword list started using the phrase “social listening,” as it was a low competition keyword. They took the lead on this keyword, and saw a pleasantly surprising amount of traffic from it. Within the next couple months, the bigger competitors in their space suddenly started using this phrase in articles, site collateral and product announcements. Consequently, the competition’s customers began using the term when prompted with social sharing for related articles and announcements.

The smaller agency now understood that (1) their larger competitors were monitoring them, and (2) this keyword was of increasing value industry-wide. With the knowledge that the big guns were doing them the favor or socializing this term with a larger audience, but simultaneously trying to knock them out of their Google rankings lead, the smaller agency was able to quickly formulate a content and SEO plan to defend their position.



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CHAPTER 4

Look Who's Talking



Chapter 4: Look Who's Talking

Now that you've been listening to what's being said, it's time to take those insights and take a closer look at who's talking. Listening to what your customers are saying is the first step in customer profiling.

By figuring out what sorts of people are talking about your company, you can then make plans for active engagement and cultivation of a strong [social community](#).

WHO?

Get a feel for who's talking about you. Traditional customer segmentation includes demographics, and this is also something that Facebook provides to its advertisers in order to target ads appropriately. However, social monitoring will give you far more information on what makes your customers tick: social media channels are a history of their online social interactions, after all, and some people are downright chatty online.

Tip: Twitter is a great channel for customer segmentation by interest, as opposed to standard demographics like age and location. Search by hashtag to find out who's talking about your industry. Do you see commonalities among these people? Are they worth earmarking as an influencer? Check their Klout and Kred scores within your areas of interest, and you can get a pretty good idea as to whether it makes sense to engage directly.

WHAT?

What format is most the communication taking? What style and tone are they using? Are people sharing pictures primarily, or are they sharing text links? Are they writing their own content, or are they sharing other people's? Getting a feel for the format and style of content being shared will help shape your [social channel strategy](#) by helping you craft channel-specific content that works.

WHEN?

How often are people posting? When are they posting? Are there events driving participation that makes sense for your brand? They say that timing is everything, so paying attention to both your timing and cadence is a key component to making sure that your message

Chapter 4: Look Who's Talking

resonates.

WHERE?

Where is your target community the most active? Channel identification is critical in order to tailor your marketing campaign appropriately.

WHY?

What's motivating your target community to share? Take a look at the content so that you can determine how to best motivate your target community to care about what you're going to say. **In social media, caring is sharing.**

Tip: Earned media is earned, and in social media, this amounts to a person sharing your content with their community. In order to earn that sort of endorsement from your social community members, you have to think about their wants and needs. When crafting your target message, remember that your content must demonstrate three things in order to become a topic of social conversations:

- **Relevance** — Make sure that you're considering the interests of your community first, not your own. (Don't try to sell anything.)
- **Appeal** — Be sure to engage your community members by giving them something great to share with their overlapping communities. (Don't try to sell anything.)
- **Consideration** — Community is about mutual give and take. Give first. (Don't try to sell anything.)

Social listening for customer insight is the first step to crafting a solid community management program. A good social media monitoring tool doesn't stop at listening: it should offer strong community features that allow you to identify and engage your influencers. Look beyond demographics to interests, behavior, and overlapping social networks.

Example: A sports-centric watchmaker started listening around their brand name and that of their competitors, and noticed that a lot of people talking about them happened to be surfing enthusiasts. They identified a few key influencers within that community, and engaged them in conversation to determine the best way to spread the word about their brand among a larger surfing community. Ultimately, the watch company partnered with a surfboard brand to co-sponsor a surfing tournament that drove awareness in a new community with a lifestyle consistent with their brand. This led to the cultivation of multiple social communities rallied around outdoor sporting interests, rather than a typical target audience across standard demographics like age, income level or gender.

CHAPTER 5

Find Conversations that Matter



Chapter 5: Find Conversations that Matter

1200 relevant conversations per day are surfaced in an average social media monitoring campaign.

Stat source: Meltwater Buzz

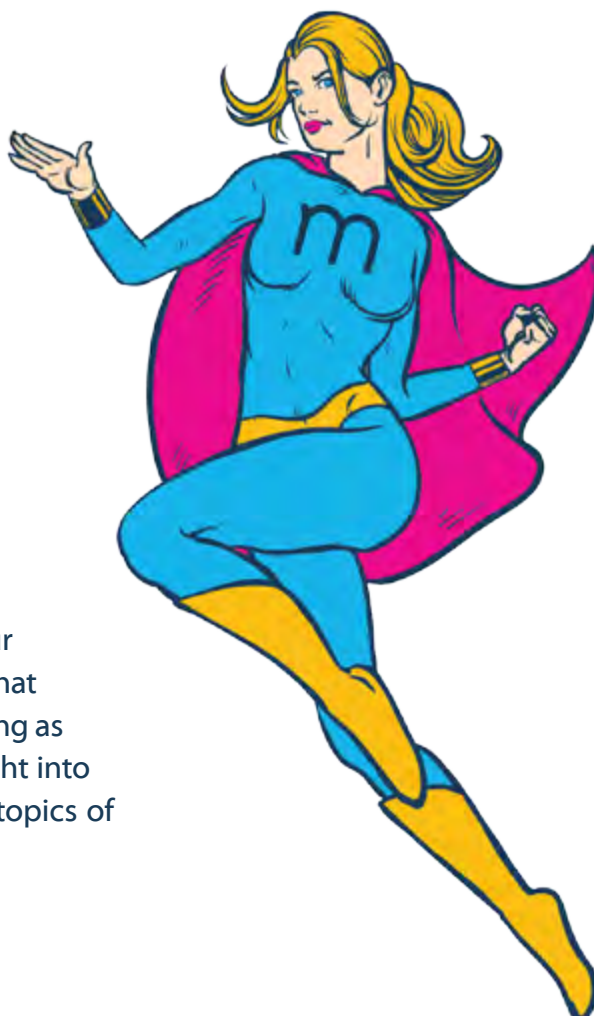
As we learned in the previous 3 chapters, social listening helps you get the insight you need to turn conversations into customers, and customers into advocates. But first, you have to find them.

You're Not (Entirely) Superhuman

With billions of social conversations happening out there simultaneously, finding the ones that are relevant to your business effort can be like finding a needle in a haystack. You are awesome, of course, but don't try to be superhuman: use a tool. (Yes, you're still allowed to wear a cape.)

There are free and freemium social listening tools out there. These tools are free because they parse a limited number of data sources for results, and analytics are spotty. Nonetheless, they're a good way to dip your toe in the water of social monitoring.

Once you're running a serious social media marketing program and want measurable business results, you're best off with a social listening tool that delivers both comprehensive data and the insights associated with that data. With 1200+ results surfacing on an average social monitoring campaign (well, that's the number if you're using a mighty tool like [Meltwater Buzz](#)), your job becomes a lot easier if you have a platform that addresses your social media workflow. Something as simple as a word cloud will give you quick insight into what's going on in social chatter around your topics of interest.



Chapter 5: Find Conversations that Matter

Word clouds, like the one above that measured the social sentiment around the 2013 U.S. Supreme Court decisions regarding Proposition 8 and DOMA, are a useful infographic. Word clouds themselves are a great way to get a quick idea as to what's trending, and a good social monitoring tool will allow you to dig into any word that surfaces and see the context around it.

Get Better Results: 3 Tips for Better Listening

Social monitoring is, at its core, a social search. As follows are some quick tips to make sure that you find the results you need.

1. Know Why You're Listening

This may sound obvious, but understanding both the business and marketing goals for a social monitoring program will help you craft better searches, and in turn will yield better results.

2. Narrow Your Searches

All social listening tools have limits on the number of results your account can return at any given price point; hey, the data isn't free. Because professional tools pull in millions of data sources every hour, it's a good idea to add filters to your searches - especially if your brand name is a commonly used word like "apple." If you're monitoring social sentiment around a specific brand or event, consider putting in modifiers.

3. Look at the Word Cloud First

Comprehensive tools yield comprehensive results. Once you start analysis, the word cloud is a quick way to cut through the noise and get a high-level look at the central themes in your search results. The word cloud is also a great way to find additional narrowed searches that you may not have considered.

Chapter 5: Find Conversations that Matter



CHAPTER 6

Start Your Own Meme



Chapter 6: Start Your Own Meme

Now that you know who's saying what, the next logical step is to participate.

A Meme Creates Social Conversations

Creating social conversations is about creating a meme: an idea that spreads from person to person. In the magical land of the internet, cats are the unofficial rulers of the meme kingdom (Grumpy Cat, Keyboard Cat, fat cats, I can haz cats?), but there are other ways to start word-of-mouth marketing that don't involve a feline.

How?

Think about the considerations mentioned in previous chapters while you're listening to the conversation of your target communities. Once you listen with purpose, you should have an idea as to what sort of content your community is going to enjoy and share. It's now up to you, social media manager, to join the conversation with something engaging.

Tip: Conversation is the new Target Message, and there's one big difference between them: conversation can go viral, but it can't be controlled. Think about what degree of control you need to have around your message. There are times when you want your message going out in a static, broadcasted fashion (i.e. crisis communication), and other times when you're happy to let the crowd go back and forth with each other and you. If your need to control your message is a greater concern than inciting word-of-mouth buzz, you're not running a social media marketing campaign: you're running a PR campaign.

Social Conversations Depend on Social Networks

Social media makes it easy to share content with large groups of people: a click takes far less effort than a phone call or a walk to the water cooler. The power of social media lies in the social networks of your target community members; the power of your content lies in its potential to start a social conversation among the community.

Once people become influencers or advocates on behalf of your brand, they are giving a personal endorsement to their community, and those people are inclined to pay attention to one of their own.

This is how word of mouth starts, and why it's so powerful.

Your message may not be targeted in terms of paid traditional media demographics, but it's hyper-targeted in terms of attentiveness. People are simply more likely to pay attention to

Chapter 6: Start Your Own Meme

something that a friend recommends than they are to a broadcasted ad. This is basic human nature, and the good news is that you're human, too.

So, when you craft your target message to spark active social conversations, remember to just be yourself. Hey, people like you.

Example—Grumpy Cat Infographic, the meme that spawned a PR-fect meme. (No groaning, that door was wide open!)

At SXSW 2013, the largest digital marketing conference in the world, Meltwater was on the ground and listening to the hubbub of 25,000+ attendees. Our business goal was simple: to bring more customers to the Meltwater Buzz [social media marketing suite](#). To that end, we had a booth on the trade show floor for lead generation. We also set a marketing goal to raise awareness and interest by demonstrating the power and relevancy of our social marketing software to our target community: the SXSW attendees and other tech-minded folks paying attention to the conference.

SXSW is an extremely noisy conference from a brand awareness perspective, and standing out among all the other tech brands is a challenge. We agreed that press was the best way to grab the online limelight, and to that end we decided to create compelling, press-friendly infographics that summarized what brands, speakers and topics were making the biggest impact.

In order to prevent a social monitoring account max-out in Buzz (even we have a results cap; yep, we do use the same tool as our clients do), we set up multiple narrowed searches around the keynote speaker names. We also created event-driven searches like "SXSW party," which pulled in filtered results with party-related words: "lounge," "drinking," "party," "parties," and "beer" were some of the filters we put into that search.

The results of the party search told us which brands were succeeding in their PR spends on lavish lounges, and that list was passed to our sales team. The results also gave us

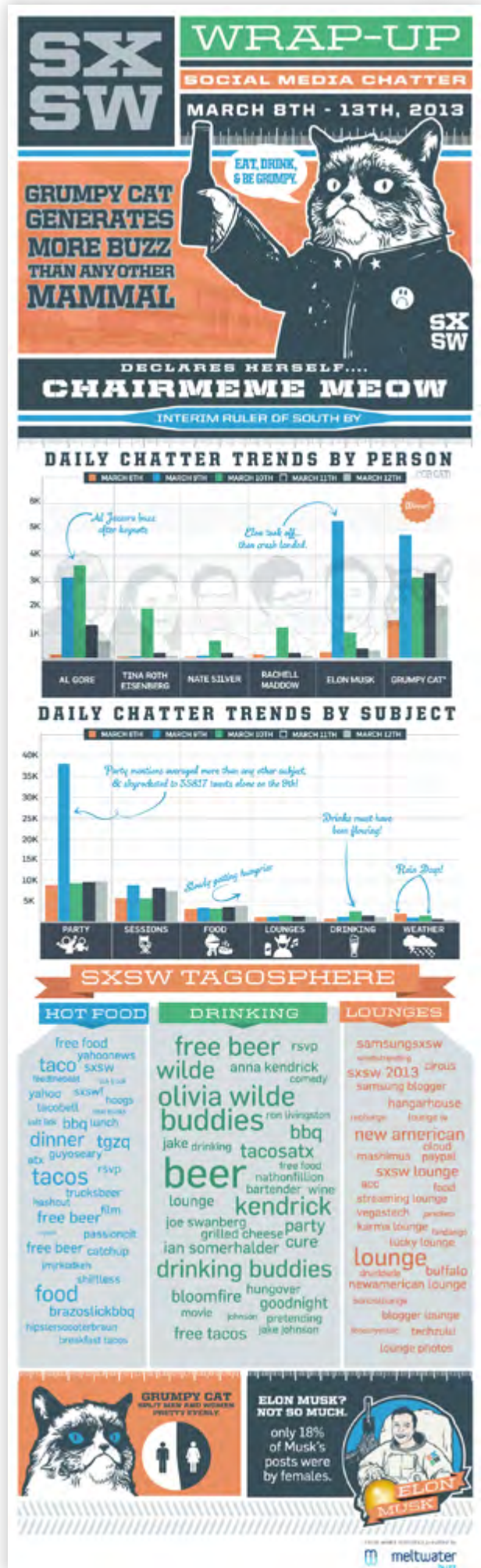


Chapter 6: Start Your Own Meme

an interesting comparison point in terms of conversation volume against other SXSW hot topics, like speakers and sessions (and, as it turned out, tacos).

This author spent her late nights at SXSW missing the parties and analyzing the social data that flaunted how much fun they were, then delivering those insights and art direction to an incredibly talented designer who was willing to brave 5 days in a row of all-nighters to make our press deadlines. (Thanks, Dan!)

After Mashable picked up our first infographic to 1000+ shares, they asked for an exclusive. Our infographics were subsequently featured by Mashable for 4 days in a row, leading to over 5,000 shares and millions of impressions.



CONCLUSION



Conclusion

After reading this book, you should have a good idea as to how social monitoring can help you jump-start word-of-mouth marketing around your brand. (Bonus: you now also have a publication that you can summarize for any manager who pushes back on a spend for a high-caliber [social media monitoring tool](#). Hey, did we mention that we make one of those? Check out [Meltwater Buzz](#), or hit the button below for a [demo of Buzz](#).)

Viral word-of-mouth presents itself, in the world of social media, as terms like “likes” and “shares” and “retweets.” These channel-specific engagement metrics are what help you, the social media manager, measure the success of your social marketing programs.

Engagement varies per channel, and your metrics will necessarily be channel-specific. Channel considerations will help you determine what sort of community engagement is most meaningful. The “What, When, Where” considerations, mentioned when discussing customers in Chapter 5, are all a function of channel.

In our next book, we’ll take a deep dive into social channel strategy. Until then, keep listening!



For good social karma, share this book!

RESOURCES



Resources

Sign up for a Meltwater Buzz demo and get started today!

A Meltwater demo includes the following services to help you make the right decision.

- One news or social media monitoring campaign and its associated analytics
- Configuration assistance to set up your demo environment
- Ongoing support from a Meltwater solutions expert during your demo
- A professional assessment to match your needs to the right Meltwater solutions
- Demonstration of advanced capabilities as indicated by your personal needs assessment
- 14 full days to complete your evaluation

We provide full support during your demo to ensure your evaluation is satisfactory and complete. The exact coverage of your demo will be designed to meet your specific needs. However, due to certain technical limitations and data costs, some product modules can only be demonstrated during the demo process.

Please fill out the form to the right and a Meltwater solution expert will contact you within 24 hours to begin your demo.

If you're ready to turn social media into social marketing, sign up for a [DEMO NOW](#).



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Resources

“The 4 C’s of Social Media Marketing”: Moving from Monologue to Dialogue

Interested in learning more?

In our fundamentals social marketing e-book, “[The 4 C’s of Social Media Marketing](#),” we discuss how to take our traditional monologue marketing principles and apply them to a dialogue model.

The 4 C’s of Social Media Marketing: Moving from Monologue to Dialogue

- [Target Message](#) -> [Social Conversation](#)
- [Target Audience](#) -> [Social Community](#)
- [Target Channel \(Media Outlet\)](#) -> [Channel \(Social Media Outlet\)](#)
- [Marketing Campaign](#) -> [Social Marketing Campaign: integration of 3 C’s + business goal](#)

Here’s a quick summary:

Conversations

Creating [social conversations](#) is about creating a meme: an idea that spreads from person to person. *Spreading content by word of mouth depends entirely on engagement, and engaging people in social conversations starts and ends with [social listening](#).*

Communities

A monologue marketing campaign aims to influence individual audience members, and it’s a one-way conversation. A dialogue marketing campaign aims to take that influence a step further by sparking conversation among community members. Good [social community management](#) identifies and engages influencers to help spread the word.

Channels

Social channels define the framework that shapes your community. That social framework is made up of social rules, etiquette, messaging types, and engagement tools. [Social channel strategy](#) should map back to a larger, umbrella marketing strategy: don’t craft a Twitter plan, for example, until you understand how it’s servicing a larger marketing goal.

Campaigns

A coordinated social media marketing effort that integrates community, conversation and channel toward a measurable business goal is what makes up a [social media campaign](#). A good campaign is conceived with the discipline of mapping your tactics back to the strategic business goal, and asking yourself whether your efforts smooths the pathway to that goal.

If you’d like to learn more, download our [social media how-to](#), “The 4 C’s of Social Media Marketing.”

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



About the Author

Leslie Nuccio is a marketer and writer who started working in digital marketing before the first Internet bust, and has been running social media programs since 2008. Leslie is on staff at Meltwater to wax poetic about all the social media marketing topics she can think of, in order to help fellow marketing types utilize the power of social. You can find her at the Meltwater [social media blog](#), or off on a trail with a dog.

Please follow Leslie on Twitter. :)

[@leslienuccio](#)

