

Your brand



Turning social sentiment  
into opportunity



## Deliver amazing customer experiences.

Let me just say, we don't think your brand 'sux', but in today's social and mobile world you may encounter this type of sentiment at some point during the life of your business. Coming from a global company that just underwent one of the biggest branding overhauls of the century, we know how hard it is to build a brand—and to face the critics of your most heartfelt work. One thing we've learned, however, is that even negative sentiment can be turned into an opportunity to improve your marketing, sales, and service teams. Ultimately, social offers an unprecedented ability to drive more personalized, authentic customer experiences.

In the following pages, we focus on how to reap the rewards of customer feedback on social, even if it isn't always positive (and trust us, it won't be ;)). Nobody is perfect—and the best of us are always on the lookout to improve.

This first ebook on social listening for marketing also accompanies the launch of Microsoft Social Listening and Social Insights, powered by InsideView. Both are now available in Dynamics CRM at no additional cost and can be used by anyone with a professional license\*. This type of affordable, democratized social insight is set to change the game for our customers, and we've only just begun.

We hope you find this series valuable to your business, and we look forward to hearing about how you deliver amazing customer experiences on social (the good and the bad!).

All my best,


*Fred Studer*

*GM, Microsoft Dynamics CRM*

<https://twitter.com/fredstuder>

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# YOUR BRAND:

it's what they say it is 

While traditional marketing is still important to communicating your brand, engaging with the voice of the customer is becoming more important than ever. When a customer searches for your brand, they won't be searching for what you say about your brand—they'll be searching for what other customers like them think about your brand. When someone shares something on social, it's there for the whole world to see—and customers today increasingly focus on peer reviews over marketing material.

Customers today increasingly focus on peer reviews over marketing material.

For savvy brands that want to reach customers at the point of influence, social marketing is the new mandate. Furthermore, social listening plays a critical role in bridging the gap between your digital campaigns and the conversations they spark.

Think about it for a minute. If you aren't listening to social chatter, you can't hear negative comments about your brand—or put the fire out before the complaints go viral. You also can't see the full effect of your marketing messages or ads when people respond.

Social listening is vital to understanding how your messaging, products, and brand are resonating with customers so you can adjust them before you've spent your entire marketing budget on a campaign customers don't care about.

Are you ready to hear what consumers are saying about your products and services? Read on for tips, tricks and best practices for tracking brand sentiment, product feedback, and ROI on social—as well as managing the risk of brand damage on social.



# Tracking **BRAND SENTIMENT**

Accurately tracking brand sentiment—how people feel about your brand on social—is vital to strategic marketing. A sentiment analysis—which analyzes the thousands of tweets, likes, posts, updates, discussions, product ratings and reviews, and so on—can offer quantifiable metrics that reveal how your products, promotions, and marketing messages are resonating with target audiences. By accurately tracking how various audience segments feel and react to your brand, you can make adjustments to build deeper and more profitable relationships

**1. Don't just monitor the main social networks:** Social is much bigger than Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. It also includes blogs, forums, and other types of online communities.

**2. Look for sentiment trends over time:** Just as you wouldn't make product decisions based on one day of web page traffic spikes, don't make marketing decisions based on one day of sentiment—good or bad. Generally, you should look for trends over time to better gauge how consumers really feel about your brand. Of course, there are exceptions: if your website crashes or breaking news about your company or its partners emerges, your marketing and PR teams may need to move quickly in the name of reputation management or corporate responsibility.

**3. Use negative sentiment as lead generation:** Listening to what people are saying about your competitors can showcase weak spots in their offering. Think of it as an opportunity to help, and have the appropriate

salesperson send the customer something useful. Are people dissatisfied with a competitor's product? Can your product pick up the slack? Monitoring the competition can help you create tighter messaging around their weaknesses and drive more leads for your sales team.

#### **4. Sort posts by sentiment type:**

Set up a social listening tool to rank the sentiment of each post so you can quickly scan the good, the bad, and the urgent—and respond accordingly.

#### **TIPS FOR GLOBAL BRANDS:**

Social listening on a global scale brings challenges from responding across time zones, speaking multiple languages, and prioritizing your monitoring.

- Make sure your social listening software can analyze posts in the native language. Translation software doesn't always capture local sentiment.
- Include global social media sites: find the most popular social media sites in the countries your customers are in and include them in your social listening efforts. RenRen is popular in China, for example, and Orkut is especially popular in Brazil.



## TIPS TO IMPROVE ENGAGEMENT

An Internet Advertising Bureau study revealed 90% of consumers would recommend a brand to others after interacting with them on social<sup>1</sup>.

**Ask a question:** Ask what your customers like most about your new product. When you ask questions you get 100% more comments, according to Kissmetrics<sup>2</sup>.

**Keep it brief:** Twitter makes you keep your posts to 140 characters or less, but keeping it short on Facebook also drives more conversations. According to Buffer, posts below 250 characters can see 60% more engagement and posts under 80 characters can see 66% more engagement<sup>3</sup>.

**Post a photo:** According to Kissmetrics, photos get 53% more likes, 104% more comments and 84% more click-throughs on links than posts with only text<sup>2</sup>.

**Use emoticons:** An AMEX Open Forum infographic revealed emoticons make a big difference in engagement rates—getting 33% more comments, 33% more shares, and 57% more likes<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> [www.iabuk.net/about/press/archive/iab-research-shows-social-media-drives-roi-for-fmcg](http://www.iabuk.net/about/press/archive/iab-research-shows-social-media-drives-roi-for-fmcg)

<sup>2</sup> <http://blog.kissmetrics.com/more-likes-on-facebook/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://blog.bufferapp.com/7-big-social-media-mistakes-and-the-counterintuitive-advice-that-can-help-you-avoid-them>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.bitrebels.com/social/facebook-science-engagement-infographic/>

# Tracking PRODUCT FEEDBACK



Customers are talking about your products and services on social networks, blogging sites and, of course, product review listings all over the web. Social gives you immediate feedback that helps you stay agile. The challenge is tracking it: You are dealing with unfiltered data and the volume of data is rapidly growing. With 55 million Facebook status updates a day<sup>1</sup> and 400 million tweets a day (and Facebook and Twitter are just a couple of networks) it's easy for valuable feedback to get lost in the social noise. Here are 4 best practices for using social listening to track product feedback:

**1. Filter out the noise:** With millions of conversations about brands—and brand categories—online, you need to filter out the noise before you can tap into relevant customer feedback. 40% of accounts and 8% of messages on social are spam.<sup>2</sup> Social listening software can cut out a lot of manual work.

**2. Monitor strategic keywords:** Once you've filtered out the noise, you can drill down into product feedback by monitoring keywords and phrases. Examples include: "decided not to buy [your product name];" "[your product name] needs more;" or "don't buy [your product name]." Do the same around your competitor's brands and products and gain competitive intel.

**3. Turn insight into action:** Most customers are posting on social about the products they use, yet 56% of customer tweets to companies are ignored.<sup>3</sup> That's a lost opportunity, since 85% of consumers favored using online information to help a dissatisfied customer.<sup>4</sup> Many of today's product leaders have recognized the power of listening to customers on social channels in real time, and have created processes to quickly make improvements or additions. As you listen to what your customers like and don't like, consider the criticisms. That's where you'll find product innovation ideas that could grow your business.

**4. Monitor your suppliers:** For some companies that rely on global suppliers to help create their products, it's important to actively monitor public sentiment for them as well. For example, if one of your suppliers is criticized for human rights violations, you'll want to be the first to know.

<sup>1</sup> <http://blog.kissmetrics.com/facebook-statistics/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://thesocialskinny.com/216-social-media-and-internet-statistics-september-2012/>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.mediabistro.com/alttwitter/customer-service-twitter-top-retailers\\_b23362](http://www.mediabistro.com/alttwitter/customer-service-twitter-top-retailers_b23362)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20120607005837/en/Maritz-Research-Poll-Finds-Online-Consumers-Companies>



# Measuring **SOCIAL ROI**



As social transitions from being a cutting-edge business tool to a business necessity, the focus on ROI for social will increase. Whether your goal is to drive more traffic to your social media sites, build brand awareness and engagement, or drive sales, these 5 best practices can help you drive value from social:

## **1. Benchmark your performance:**

Before you can truly measure growth, you need to understand where you're starting. For example, how many followers or fans do you have before you launch the campaign? How many new leads are you currently generating? Gather these metrics as a benchmark, then collect them again after your initiative.

**2. Set social goals:** Determine what you want your social program to achieve. Do you want to gain new followers and fans? Increase share of voice? Develop brand awareness and reputation? Drive more web traffic? Generate leads and sales? Set social media goals at the onset of a campaign. With a benchmark and clear goals, you can accurately measure success.

**3. Identify metrics to measure your goals:** The metrics you use depend on what you want to measure. If you want to measure engagement, track comments, replies, retweets and participation. Want to drive traffic? Measure clicks, conversions and URL shares. Seeking more awareness? Measure amplification, exposure, volume and reach. Finally, if you want to measure your effectiveness in boosting your brand's share of voice, measure your volume compared to your competitors' volume or the overall industry.

## **4. Tracking leads through forms and landing pages:**

Creating and optimizing landing pages in order to drive leads and conversions is part art and part science—but there are best practices. In a nutshell, you want to maintain brand consistency with the same language, tone and content or promotional offers that caused your social media followers to click through in the first place. If you are generating leads, you'll want a simple form. If you are driving sales, you'll want a strong call to action and a prominent 'buy now' button. There are other general rules of thumb, like keeping the content simple and the design clean, using contrasting colors, and displaying your logo. Of course, your web analytics will show you how many visitors to the landing page came through your social media campaign.

## **5. Measure at appropriate intervals:**

Now that you know what you want to measure, set up your analytics to capture those metrics. Although you can check daily stats, don't make snap decisions based on a good day—or a bad day. Similarly, pick a time frame to measure over that makes sense. If you measure your impact too soon or for too short a period after you launch your program, you may not get credit for the full benefit of your program. The key is to look for trends and benefit over time.



# Social Listening Metrics

## 101



**1. Conversation Volume:** The number of social interactions (blog posts, forum discussions, tweets, etc.) discussing a topic. Volume is a stronger metric when measured over time—marketers use conversation volume to set baselines for future campaigns.

Here's a tip: When you find a topic that works, work it. In other words, talk more about what your followers want to talk about and you'll drive more conversation volume.

**2. Demographic Metrics:** The collection of metrics making up the background details of online consumers. Social listening tools can collect data on consumer location, gender, and age. Marketers use demographic data to determine whether their campaigns reach targeted consumers.

**3. Level of Influence:** The authority of an online consumer, measured by his or her overall reach online. A consumer with a highly read blog and thousands of Twitter followers is assigned a high influence score, while a commenter on a small forum has low influence.

Your marketing team needs to engage with high influence followers. You can do that by following them back, interacting with their posts, and maybe even sharing their content when appropriate.

**4. Message or Ad Reach:** The number of total impressions in an online discussion. Measured by the number of different sources covering a topic and each source's potential page views. Many discussions start small, but once picked up by a larger source, will reach a large number of consumers.

**5. Sentiment:** The positive or negative attitudes consumers express, generally scored as positive, negative, or neutral. Although many online brand mentions are neutral, containing no sentiment, social listening tools track adjectives around keywords to determine consumers' tonality about a topic.

**6. Share of Voice:** The ratio of discussion volume among multiple brands—often represented as a percentage and depicted in a pie chart. Many marketers track their brands against competitors' to determine which company has a larger share of voice.

# Best Social Listening Practices FOR GLOBAL BRANDS



If your brand is global—and you could argue that every brand is global in the digital age—your social listening strategy needs to span the world. Social listening on a global scale brings challenges from responding across time zones, speaking multiple languages, and prioritizing your monitoring.

## **1. Include global social media sites:**

Do your homework to find out the most popular social media sites in the countries you do business and include them in your social listening efforts. RenRen is popular in China, for example, and Orkut is especially popular in Brazil.

## **2. Check your web analytics for clues:**

If you aren't sure in what nations your brand is making an impact, check your web analytics. Web analytics tick down a list of how many visitors from which countries are frequenting your site. This helps you prioritize your social listening efforts.

**3. Listen in their language:** Set up your social media software to listen—and respond—in the languages your target audiences speak. That means setting up keyword queries in multiple languages on multiple social media networks.

**4. Listen carefully for content feedback:** The content you create for Russia isn't likely to resonate with audiences in China. Cultural nuances could cause content to thrill one audience and offend another.

**5. Create a global strategy:** Your best next step is to take the time to create a global strategy because managing multiple social properties around the world will become more difficult—and more vital—in the years ahead.

# In Case of Emergencies: MITIGATING SOCIAL MELTDOWNS



We've all seen the stories of brands that have been damaged on social:

- Hackers seizing control of owned assets to mock the company and brand values
- Employees posting inappropriate, "joke" videos
- Executives making off-color comments on social channels
- Customer complaints going viral, getting auto-tuned, and ultimately, becoming fodder for mainstream comedians that inform millions of your company's faux-pas

Any one of these scenarios is enough to give a marketer nightmares of one day waking up to a PR storm and pink slip. Nevertheless, the way a company reacts in the aftermath of such a scandal can sometimes say more about the company than the original misstep—and help rebuild trust and relationships with your most important stakeholders. Here's an emergency checklist to keep handy if and when you ever cross that bridge:

**Keep your cool:** Don't get emotional – instead, focus on taking the right steps to remedy your situation. Most people are reasonable and will understand that, while you're not able to reverse the mistake, you're doing everything you can to make it right.

**Apologize:** Everybody makes mistakes. Whether poor security practices allowed a hacker to distribute nasty messages or your social chatter is painting your brand with a negative brush, you have to deal with the situation head on. The worst thing you can do is ignore a situation, cover it up, or try to silence someone. Simply acknowledging a situation and taking responsibility can go a long way: "Hey, sorry to hear about your experience. We're looking into this and will reach out as soon as possible." If you're at fault, don't wait to apologize. It may not solve everything right away, but most will respect you for doing so.

**Be transparent:** Promise to gather and share information as it unfolds. Then keep people informed with timely follow-ups. Build an FAQ page – create a site where you can post all the information you have on the crisis at hand. Incoming questions can then be answered with a quick link.

# Avoiding Emergencies!

## MANAGING SOCIAL RISK



(continued)

We all hope never to have to deal with social hackers cracking your Twitter password and sending out damaging messages that hurt your brand and alienate your customers. In reality, we need to do a lot more than hope. Whether or not you get hacked, it's likely that you will have to deal with controversial posts at some point along your social marketing journey. If you do your homework and have a plan to avoid and react, you will be better positioned to handle any controversies—and ideally avoid the worst.

**Create a social emergency task force across departments:** Get together with your sales, service, and marketing department leaders to develop an official response strategy to social emergencies. Come up with a list of guidelines for various situations, including issues with suppliers, hacked accounts, and accidentally offensive posts. This can make all the difference when dealing with social “emergencies”.

**Create and communicate guidelines:** For many companies, the list of topics and language that does not represent the values of the brand are similar. Religious, political, or offensive language are good examples of general things to avoid.

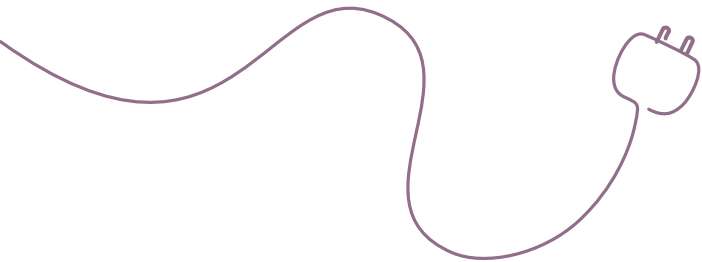
**Practice password wisdom:** It sounds simple, but it's often overlooked. Make sure you choose difficult passwords that are hard to crack. Your passwords should be at least eight characters, and ideally 14 characters

long. Combine letters, numbers and symbols, and mix upper and lower cases. Use words that you can remember but are difficult for others to guess. Avoid repeated characters, like “123” or adjacent letters on your keyboard. Choose different passwords for each social account and assign one person responsibility for the keys to your social kingdom so the passwords don't get into the wrong hands.

**Learn to identify a controversy in the making:** An unfavorable comment about your brand does not a controversy make. When you are learning new, negative information about your brand; when serious new criticisms arise; and, most importantly, when something has the fuel to start a brand fire you have an official controversy on your hands.

**Invest in social listening software:** You can't possibly keep up with social controversies by refreshing your Twitter page and hoping you catch brand-damaging drama before it goes viral. Get equipped with social listening software that can help you head off controversies at the pass. Then make sure to set a listening schedule. In other words, someone needs to monitor the social listening software.

# Turn Sentiment **INTO OPPORTUNITY**



Social listening is an important part of your social marketing strategy. Even if you aren't allocating significant spend on social marketing, consumers are still talking about your brand on social channels. In other words, you don't control the conversation—your customers do. Social listening offers actionable insights that can help you prevent brand disasters and tap into new market opportunities.

Every company has something to learn, and whether it's welcome or not, social feedback provides a lot of opportunities to identify areas of improvement. Whether it's a product glitch or a service issue, take each complaint and each negative post to get better.

*Wait, there's more >*

# Insights FROM THE EXPERTS



We published these responses from some of the world's most influential social thought leaders, raw and unfiltered. While the views expressed here may not necessarily reflect the views of Microsoft or endorse Microsoft's products, we are all about diversity of opinion and open dialogue. We believe this is the best way we can support our customers.

As we continue to build on this series to discover how companies are creating amazing customer experiences on social, we'd love to hear from you.

Who should we reach out to?  
How should we look at this differently?  
Let us know at [@MSFTDynamics](https://twitter.com/MSFTDynamics).

Regards,

The Microsoft Dynamics CRM Team

# JASON MILLER

Senior Content Marketing and Social Media Manager, LinkedIn Marketing Solutions, **LinkedIn**  
@JasonMillerCA



## What are three key elements of an effective social strategy?

Good question. From my experience it would be:

- Social Intelligence (Listening). Having the right tools in place to monitor conversations around your brand, where they are happening, and who's saying what is essential. Taking it up a notch to measure sentiment, share of voice and share of conversation is where some of the best insights can happen.
- Continual Source of Content (Fuel). Content fuels social; without it, your business objectives will likely fail.
- Budget to Promote (Extend Reach/ Targeting). 2014 is the year of pay to play. If you are serious about social media, then you need to have a serious budget in place to support both headcount and native advertising, with an emphasis on mobile.

## How has engaging your customers on social benefited your company or your clients?

First and foremost it shows that your company is paying attention and communicating with them where they choose to be. Social has changed everything in terms of how customers and prospects buy. They are now in control of their journey and will go on it with or without your company being involved. Engaging in social very early on is essential for building relationships with these folks and staying top of mind so that when they are ready to buy, your company will likely be their first choice.

## What are some tips on dealing with negative sentiment on social?

It's all about responding promptly and sincerely. Social media gives everyone an equal voice for both praise and complaints. Many times they simply want to know that they are being heard, and responding quickly and offering to help can very often turn a negative mention into a positive one.

## Who are the top 5 people you follow on social?

- Ann Handley: <http://www.linkedin.com/in/annhandley>
- Brian Clark: <http://www.linkedin.com/pub/brian-clark/8/606/b5a>
- Mike Stelzner: <http://www.linkedin.com/in/stelzner>
- Jay Baer: [www.linkedin.com/in/jasonbaer](http://www.linkedin.com/in/jasonbaer)
- Nichole Kelly: [www.linkedin.com/in/nicholekelly](http://www.linkedin.com/in/nicholekelly)

## What are your top 3 tips on how to get up to speed on social?

- 1) Put together a plan. Have a 30-60-90 day plan in place so that you don't get overwhelmed up front and give up before you start to see results, and stick with it. Social media success does not happen overnight.
- 2) Set Your goals. List the goals that you are looking to achieve with social: lead gen, brand awareness, customer service etc. They should be aligned and support your overall business goals.
- 3) Don't over complicate things. It's going to take time, effort, budget and headcount but you don't have to do it alone. There are a ton of great consultants and agencies that can help you get your social strategy up and running and into a good place where it will be delivering value.

## What are your top 3 favorite educational resources for social listening?

Social Media Examiner, Social Media Explorer, and the Hootsuite Blog.

## How important is social listening to your marketing team or marketing teams in general?

Extremely. Customers and prospects expect responses in near real time. Arriving late to the conversation means you have missed your opportunity.

## How important is social listening to your sales team or sales teams in general?

Extremely. Again, I cannot stress this point enough. These are not only conversations, but opportunities for both sales and marketers to interact with customers and prospects. If you are not listening, you are simply missing opportunities, and ultimately sales.

## How important is social listening to your customer service team or customer service teams in general?

Extremely. The voice of the customer is bigger and louder than ever before. Social is their telephone which can quickly turn into a megaphone. If your customer service team is not monitoring the conversations closely and responding promptly then your brand/ product and or service will suffer.



# CLARA SHIH

CEO & Founder **Hearsay Social**, board member of **Starbucks**, author of *The Facebook Era*  
@clarashih



## What are three key elements of an effective social strategy?

- Focus on customer rather than on functional silos
- Clear business goals and metrics
- Executive sponsorship

## How has engaging your customers on social benefited your company or your clients?

- Product ideas and feedback
- Word of mouth
- Close connection with the customer voice and stories which are incredibly compelling to all of our employees

## What are some tips on dealing with negative sentiment on social?

Be honest and responsive. Diffuse and move the conversation offline if possible. View it as an opportunity to get even better.

## Who are the top 5 people you follow on social?

- Aaron Levie: @levie
- Jeff Weiner: @jeffweiner
- Bill Murray: @billmurray (parody account)
- Linda Descano: <http://www.linkedin.com/influencer/204274949>
- Mohamed El-Erian: <http://www.linkedin.com/today/influencer?authorId=34334392>

## What are your top 3 tips on how to get up to speed on social?

- 1) Use social like a consumer first to learn the etiquette, lingo, and customer perspective, and only then start using it for business.
- 2) See how the best companies do it and adapt the best ideas for your business (e.g, Starbucks, AXA, Lululemon).
- 3) Start small and keep iterating. Social media is a long-term commitment, not a one-off campaign. Don't be afraid of failure or not getting it exactly right the first time around.

## How important is social listening to your marketing team or marketing teams in general?

Extremely important to listen first before responding or taking other action.

## How important is social listening to your sales team or sales teams in general?

Extremely important. Sales is the next frontier of social business. At Hearsay Social, we started our entire company on this premise and have seen record growth year after year since we founded the company in early 2010.

## How important is social listening to your customer service team or teams in general?

Very important. Depends on the industry you are in and whether your customers want to be serviced through social media channels.

# JESSICA SMITH

Senior Marketing Director, **FlexJobs.com**

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## What are three key elements of an effective social strategy?

- Defining what success looks like and being able to clearly articulate it to the organization.
- Setting a baseline and then mapping metrics to that success so the team can pivot and optimize appropriately.
- Developing tactics to support and then testing, measuring, and tweaking those tactics to reach established goals and benchmarks.

## How has engaging your customers on social benefited your company or your clients?

A job search can be very personal for a lot of people so we identify their pain points and address them through a robust content strategy that aims to be helpful but still respects that this is a personal experience for them. By measuring engagement, we have also realized that jobseekers like to hear first-hand experiences of other jobseekers so we regularly featured job seeker success stories. These get a lot of great responses across our social channels. The benefits of having strong content and different voices represented is that our content is shared across various social channels. Unlike other job boards, our paying customer is the jobseeker versus the employers, so our conversations and content are based on what they, the jobseekers, want and what they have expressed that they need.

## What are some tips on dealing with negative sentiment on social?

There are varying degrees of negative sentiment that companies will deal with on social. For example, a customer complaint that is easily and quickly resolved is a lot different than a crisis situation where the impact to business is large and hard to contain. Here are 5 things I recommend when faced with negative sentiment on social.

- Even if you don't have an immediate answer or solution, acknowledge the frustration/anger/disappointment immediately so that the person (or people) know they have been heard and that it's being addressed. Do this publicly on the social channel where the negative sentiment was initiated.

- Next step is to have them privately send you their preferred method of direct contact information such as a phone number or email so that you can take the conversation offline. You will accomplish more one on one.
- With that said, remember that anything you say through private channels can easily be relayed via social. Be especially careful with what you send via email as screenshots can be taken and shared within minutes.
- Make sure every communication you have demonstrates your commitment to resolution.
- If the person or people insist on continuing the conversation via the social channel versus one-on-one, don't panic. Use this as an opportunity to show the public how well your organization handles their customer experience and how responsive you are via social.
- Sometimes you will run into people who do not want to resolve the issue and really just want to drag your name through the mud. This is unfortunate but not unusual. Take the high road, offer reasonable solutions, and be clear and concise in your communication. If you remain reasonable and fair, you will find that you will come out more respected by your existing fans and might pick up a few new ones because of your professionalism.

## Who are the top 5 people you follow on social?

- John Andrews: [www.linkedin.com/in/katadhin](http://www.linkedin.com/in/katadhin)
- David Meerman Scott: [www.linkedin.com/in/davidmeermanscott](http://www.linkedin.com/in/davidmeermanscott)
- Maggie McGary: [www.linkedin.com/in/maggiemcgary](http://www.linkedin.com/in/maggiemcgary)
- Amy Vernon: [www.linkedin.com/in/amyvernon](http://www.linkedin.com/in/amyvernon)
- Don Bartholomew: [www.linkedin.com/in/donbartholomew](http://www.linkedin.com/in/donbartholomew)

## What are your top 3 tips on how to get up to speed on social?

- Don't overthink it. Just remember it's two-way communication, so don't use it like a bullhorn.
- Think about your personal favorite brands, and see how they are using social.
- Be active on LinkedIn; there are lots of really good influencers sharing their expertise.

# BRIAN SOLIS

Principal Analyst at **Altimeter Group** and author of *What's the Future of Business (WTF)*  
@briansolis



## What are three key elements of an effective social strategy?

In a recent Altimeter Group report published by Charlene Li and me, we found that only 17% of companies identify their social strategy as mature. Just 60% feel their social strategy is connected to actual business goals.

After all of these years, the evolution of social media is not as far along as many would like to believe.

1) In our research, we also learned that just over one-third of businesses look at metrics beyond likes, followers, and comments to measure the impact on the company bottom line. This means that most businesses are looking at tactical numbers and not the bigger picture. These engagement metrics only represent activity and not necessarily movement toward something more meaningful or important.

An effective social strategy starts with defining what it is your social strategy is designed to do. Believe it or not, this is something that most businesses miss. Aligning social media strategies with business goals from the onset helps organizations begin a meaningful journey toward becoming a social business.

2) Your social media strategy must set out to do something meaningful. Unfortunately, organizations jump into social without thinking of the greater benefits for the brand and for customers and employees. Everything starts with defining a vision and purpose for your social media strategy. It must articulate what customer relationships and experiences will look like.

- What will you improve?
- What is your mission?
- How will you add value?
- How would your customers confirm that your social strategy is brilliant?
- What would they say?

This is your North Star.

3) A true social strategy also looks beyond marketing. Yet today, most social media strategies are run by the marketing team, which creates a silo. While marketing is important, an effective social strategy considers the customer lifecycle. A mere 28% of businesses we studied felt that they had a holistic approach to social media, where lines of business and business functions operate in a unified and complementary fashion.

Consider how marketing, service, HR, and lines of business can work together to meet the needs and expectations of prospects and customers. The only way to break down silos is to work together.

# MORGAN NORMAN

VP of Revenue Generation **Zuora**  
@meetmorg



## What are three key elements of an effective social strategy?

- Enable your whole company, and send the right story to the right people.
- You have to listen to where your customers are and understand your presence. You can use social listening as a benchmark.
- Many people have a fragmented social strategy, and the social presence often doesn't match the brand presence. It's important to match that voice.

## How has engaging your customers on social benefited your company or your clients?

Social helps us reach people outside of our database, for example, people that are experiencing a problem that we haven't thought about yet. Social has helped us become more of an agile organization, and we can evolve our story and our messaging quickly. Social also lets you build on PR. In the past it would just die off, but social lets you keep a story alive over a longer period. Social is also one of the greatest ways to launch products. It allows people to offer a lot of promos, and you can test various mechanisms and see how people respond in real time.

## What are some tips on dealing with negative sentiment on social?

- The most important thing is to be responsive. You can't ignore it. You have to first understand what you've done to not meet someone's needs, and you need to act fast.
- The other thing is that people are not trained in customer service. They don't know how to immediately give someone the right answer. People are not only tweeting a company, they are tweeting the CEO. You need to empower everyone to respond. Social enterprise solutions, such as Yammer, can really help with this. You should also build a follow-up process to learn.

## Who are the top 5 people you follow on social?

I spend my time following new brands. This helps me understand their social approach. I'm more curious about brands than people. Hipmunk. Hubspot. Marketo. Mailchimp. I'm looking for techniques. You know, it's one thing for people to connect with people, but how to companies connect with their customers in meaningful ways.

## What are your top 3 tips on how to get up to speed on social?

- Like all things you just have to do it. You have to get dirty. If you are in sales you need to follow your industry, competitors, brands. Identify your industry influencers. Know who the top leaders in companies are. Follow them on LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook. Get connected to marketing. Leverage the content that marketing provides to offer consultative material that actually helps people do their jobs.
- For marketers, you should really think about how you empower your entire company to distribute your content. Create an integrated, cross-department approach. This ebook is about social listening and this is the first thing you need to do. Understand what matters to your target audience and create content around that, not what you think they want, but what they are actually asking about. Break out of Twitter and LinkedIn. Look at Slideshare, social webinars. Don't be shy about reaching out to other people to learn. Take twenty minutes with someone that you respect and see what they are doing. You have to record social ROI. Your landing pages need to tag leads accordingly, so you can make data driven decisions about where to spend your time. A lot of people miss the analytics of social, and this is a mistake. You should be all over it.
- Design matters in social. Don't be cheap. Designers are the new engineers in Silicon Valley. Create digestible content.

## How important is social listening to your marketing team?

Extremely. This depends on your brand. Are you B2B? B2C? Of course it's very important, but it's different for all companies.

## How important is social listening to your sales team?

Very important. While we are interested in social, our account executives are busy. From a demand gen perspective, it's extremely important. From a sales perspective, it's very important when you have time.

## How important is social listening to your service team?

It's hard to rate it in this way. Of course it's important. For Zuora, our service comes through other channels. In the perspective of empowering buyers is extremely important, but it's not the main way that people reach out to us.

# STÉPHANE SAMSON

Group Brand Director, Lotus F1 Team  
@stephanesamson



## What are three key elements of an effective social strategy?

The first key element, for Lotus, would have to be the interaction with the fans. We never look at the raw figures but at our engagement rate. We, first of all, want to create a genuine community, and not one of the diluted, monstrous army of “fans” who finally do not really care about your brand. This is the reason why we never fell into the paid campaigns on Facebook to grow drastically our fan base, for example.

Secondly, creativity is really important too: you need to surprise and entertain your fans, you want to go viral from time to time. Lotus often gets close to the line, but it's part of the game.

Finally, you need to be responsive. Answers and re-tweets have to be sent instantly, not two days after the original message was posted. It helps to humanize your social presence, which is key in building a strong and engaged community.

## How has engaging your customers on social benefited your company or your clients?

It has actually helped us build the brand the way we wanted to. Lotus F1 Team is all about being approachable, but also cheeky and sometimes disruptive. We've always been honest and transparent too. This is something that our fans liked a lot, especially compared to our rivals' approach. Engaging with customers has helped Lotus F1 Team establish itself as a new race team, as everybody today seems to have forgotten about Renault.

## What are some tips on dealing with negative sentiment on social?

As we said before, we never deny if the negative sentiment is generated by a true story. We sometimes acknowledge, we even apologize when we have to. Of course, some people will always go too far and their messages will require moderation if not appropriate. But it does not happen that often.

## Who are the top 5 people you follow on social?

- Usain Bolt: [@usainbolt](https://www.facebook.com/usainbolt)
- Manchester City: <https://www.facebook.com/mcfcofficial>
- Element: [instagram.com/elementusa](https://www.instagram.com/elementusa)
- LeBron James: <https://www.facebook.com/LeBron>
- Mashable: <https://www.facebook.com/mashable>

## What are your top 3 tips on how to get up to speed on social?

Be responsive, be daring, be honest.  
Listen, monitor and engage.

## How important is social listening to your marketing team or marketing teams in general?

Extremely. We're part of the same team, building a brand. In this respect we need to be fully in line.

## How important is social listening to your sales team or sales teams in general?

Not very. Social media are not used to please our sponsors, but we always show them a lot of respect.

# JOHN ANDREWS

President, **The Katadhin Group**  
@katadhin



## What are three key elements of an effective social strategy?

- Clear, measurable objectives
- Content plan (curation, original, user)
- Communication guardrails (delivering a message without controlling the message)

## How has engaging your customers on social benefited your company or your clients?

It's created real relationships with clients and customers alike that resulted in:

- 1) Better communication
- 2) Higher levels of customer interaction
- 3) Measured conversion and sales impact

## What are some tips on dealing with negative sentiment on social?

- Be positive, deal with the issue not the emotion.
- If you're wrong, apologize.
- Ignore haters, Haters Hate—most people realize the difference between legitimate complaints and brand bashing.

## Who are the top 5 people you follow on social?

- Ted Rubin: @TedRubin
- Umang Shah: @UmangShah
- Zach West: @ZachDWest
- Robert Moore: @MediaLabRat
- Jim Tobin: @Jtobin

## What are your top 3 tips on how to get up to speed on social?

- Get involved—use the tools to understand them
- Be flexible—the landscape is changing quickly
- Measure everything

## How important is social listening to your marketing team or marketing teams in general?

Extremely. The lack of engagement is a good sign that no one cares what you have to say. Figure out what types of things elicit interaction and do more of those!

## How important is social listening to your sales team or sales teams in general?

Extremely. What are your customers and fans saying (or not) about them and their competitors? What conversations do they want to own?

## How important is social listening to your customer service team or teams in general?

Extremely. If there were one area to excel at, social service would be it. There is no bigger fail than having an active social stream and producing crickets when someone has a problem or question.



# RYAN HOLMES

CEO, HootSuite  
@invoker



## What are three key elements of an effective social strategy?

- **Planning and goal-setting.** What goals are you trying to achieve as an organization? Who are your customers, and what is most important to them? What level of social empowerment are you looking to achieve—team, department, or organization-wide? Are you in a regulated industry, such as healthcare or financial services, where there are communication restrictions?

Consider how social media can help your company achieve its most important objectives and then set some goals. Next, identify the resources necessary to manage your social media efforts, set guidelines for how employees should engage in social media, and provide training to encourage active participation that is aligned with company goals.

- **Active listening and engagement.** Start by monitoring for mentions—the good, the bad and the ugly—of your brand. Also listen for cues and trends in your industry and on your competitors. Next, follow the conversations and the people that are relevant to your business. Then begin to engage in conversations with content that is interesting, relevant or useful to your audience. Retweet posts you find interesting and use hashtags to increase the discoverability of your content.
- **Measure results.** Provide visibility on how your social programs are moving the needle. If you are just kick-starting your social media strategy, start with tracking the Like, @ mention, Retweet or Follow activity. As your social strategy becomes more advanced, build the capacity to measure every social action, and link to key business goals, such as brand sentiment, revenue and customer satisfaction. One way to do this is to use a URL shortener (like ow.ly), to track your click-throughs and leverage analytics to measure on-site conversions. You can even drill into location-specific data to develop geographic insights on your social efforts.

## How has engaging your customers on social benefited your company or your clients?

Social media is an integral part of our entire organization—from customer support, to marketing and sales.

Our customers move at the speed of social. When they reach out to us, we need to respond quickly. It also allows us to be proactive with our clients. We use our own platform to constantly listen to online conversations about our product so we can spot and respond to positive and negative feedback as quickly as possible and respond accordingly. Our support department—a 17-person team that supports 8 million users—uses social media daily to engage with our clients more effectively online. This allows us to be more available, deliver faster responses, and engage with our clients by being where they are. Thanks in large part to social media, HootSuite boasts a customer support satisfaction rate that exceeds industry standards.

Every customer matters, and their experience with your company determines not just whether they will continue to be a loyal customer, but whether they will advocate your product or service to their followers. At HootSuite, more than half of our Enterprise clients started out by using our Free product. These customers increased their investment in HootSuite over time because they grew to trust and depend on our product, and because they appreciate that we valued them even before establishing a financial relationship. We use social media to connect with these customers and support them on their social journey.

Our sales department uses social media to identify prospects who express purchase intent or indicate that they are in a position to buy. These buying signals are visible, in real-time on social networks such as Twitter, LinkedIn Groups, as well as blogs and forums. By proactively reaching out to buyers who are looking to purchase, our sales team is able to have meaningful conversations directly with the decision maker.

Read on >



# RYAN HOLMES (continued)

## What are some tips on dealing with negative sentiment on social?

Nielson has reported that more than half of all U.S. consumers now turn to social media to air questions and complaints about products and services. The good news: The majority of consumers who experience a quick and effective brand response on social media are likely to recommend that brand to others.

So it's important to spot negative comments about your brand quickly and then address them immediately and effectively. If the negative sentiment is based on misinformation, correct the misinformation publicly in the social channel. When a customer complaint is a matter of opinion, acknowledge the concern and then make arrangements to connect with them privately to resolve the concern.

At HootSuite, we see every complaint as a golden opportunity. When a customer reaches out to us we see it as a chance to engage with them and also learn from their feedback.

## Who are the top 5 people you follow on social?

- Jeremiah Owyang: @jowyang  
Chief Catalyst at Crowd Companies. His career mission: to help corporations connect with customers using web technologies
- Sree Sreenivasan: @Sree  
One of the earliest and most thoughtful social media evangelists, formerly of Columbia University, now Chief Digital Officer at the Metropolitan Museum of Art
- Charlene Li: @charleneli  
Founder of the Altimeter Group - thought leader in all things social Enterprise
- John Legere: @johnlegere  
Outspoken CEO of T-Mobile who is leveraging social to shake up the industry
- Peter Aceto: @PeterAceto  
CEO of ING Direct Canada and a truly social CEO

## What are your top 3 tips on how to get up to speed on social?

Getting up to speed on social at an enterprise level requires a holistic approach that includes change management, technology adoption, and security considerations:

- 1) Educate employees on the appropriate use of social media in a professional setting, along with the best practices on building deep relationships with customers over social channels. According to Altimeter, only 18% of companies said that their employees have a good or very good understanding of their social media policies. At HootSuite, we have mandatory social media training for all of our new employees.

- 2) Deploy a social relationship platform to empower your employees to share company content over social channels. This helps them to build their credibility with customers by being seen as industry experts. The right technology can help you do this at scale with capabilities like delegation and approvals to enforce process, and workflow and assignments to help teams collaborate on social. An open platform capable of integrating with existing line of business applications is essential for a seamless user experience.
- 3) Secure and protect your social presence. As you scale your social media strategy across the organization, involving more and more employees to support your social business goals, the chance of a mistake or a full-blown crisis can increase exponentially. By following a few basic social media security best practices, you can substantially decrease the risks many associate with these channels. These include centralizing control of social media accounts, creating complex passwords and using Single Sign-On technology.

## How important is social listening to your marketing team?

Social listening is extremely important across our marketing team, and is incorporated into activities such as campaign measurement, demand generation, reputation management and influencer marketing. We rely on social listening to create campaigns that resonate with our community. For example, our demand generation team uses social media to identify top-performing keywords that are applied to search engine optimization, pay-per-click advertising, and content marketing. Our corporate communication team relies on social listening to track brand sentiment and engagement with top influencers.

## How important is social listening to your sales team?

Social listening is an integral part of our sales process. Our sales team regularly listens to clients and prospective clients for buying signals over networks like Twitter or LinkedIn, and come in at the right time with an ice breaker to engage prospects. We use social media as "the thin edge of the wedge": a way to open up discussions with decision makers. We've found that social media is an effective and personal way to open doors.

## How important is social listening to your service team?

Our customer service team pro-actively tracks @mentions and keywords that may not have reached our specific customer service accounts. This allows us the opportunity to respond and mitigate even more customer inquiries than a typical inbound approach.

# TRICIA MORRIS

PR & Communications Manager, **Parature**  
@DessertContent



## What are three key elements of an effective social strategy?

While there are a host of key elements that go into an effective social strategy, three that our brand and that I personally believe are must-haves are (1) developing and defining a monitoring, response and escalation process, (2) having the right staff representing your brand and brand voice on social media, and (3) centralizing social media and especially customer service with your other support and communication channels.

## How has engaging your customers on social benefited your company or your clients?

For Parature, our company strives both to deliver impressive customer service software and impressive customer service. Engaging customers and followers on social media lets our customers and prospects know that we care and are interested in their brand or organization, that we're listening no matter what channel they want to reach out on, and that our own social monitoring and response solution works well.

Engaging authentically and in a timely manner also increases trust in our company and has helped to build Parature's reputation as a customer service provider and thought leader. Instead of a one-way push of sales and promotional tweets and posts through our social media channels, Parature chooses to actively engage and participate in the social conversation, sharing customer service best practices of our own, as well as those of others. In 2013, our social product and our approach to social customer service and engagement paid off in the receipt of Frost & Sullivan's North American Social Customer Service Applications Customer Value Enhancement Award. This was a truly meaningful recognition for us.

## What are some tips on dealing with negative sentiment on social?

One of the best tips is don't fire back. While it's natural to want to offer a rapid response, and social media demands a quick reply, take some time to think through the reply you're offering on behalf of your brand to make sure it's polite and cannot in any way be misconstrued or misunderstood.

Never use an auto-response; you can tweak a scripted response from your brand, but never offer the same reply over and over or provide a reply that sounds robotic. Brands such as American Airlines and Bank of America have learned this lesson the hard way. Social media is just that, social. Customers and followers want an authentic and human response.

Do not delete a negative post or tweet unless it's offensive. Deleting complaints and questions can lead to even more social backlash and a tarnished PR reputation, at least for a while, as many major organizations and brand have learned.

A professional and polite response is always the best course of action with helpful and proactive follow-up, taking the matter off social media if needed to avoid further conflict and to deliver a satisfying response and customer service experience. Probably one of the most famous recent examples of what not to do in response to a negative tweet or post came in 2012 when Sir Patrick Stewart tweeted to Time Warner Cable that he had lost the will to live after trying to set up a new account. While the social customer service rep tried to be helpful and had an amazing response time, they assured Stewart they were going to take care of the issue on social but didn't offline, and the whole service conversation played out in the public view on Twitter. Follow-through is key.

*More ahead >*

## TRICIA MORRIS (continued)

### Who are the top 5 people you follow on social?

- Paul Greenberg: @pgreenbe  
The godfather of CRM, Paul Greenberg is the Managing Principal of The 56 Group, LLC, and authors "Social CRM: The Conversation" for the CBS-owned technology media property, ZDNET. Paul is the author of CRM at the Speed of Light: Social CRM Strategies, Tools and Techniques for Engaging Your Customers, which has been used as primary text by more than 70 universities. Need to know what analysts think about social customer service, social CRM, and its future? Follow Paul's fascinating predictions, insights and conversations with fellow analysts like Esteban Kolsky, Brent Leary and more on Twitter. He is leader; never a follower.
- Econsultancy: @Econsultancy  
I use Econsultancy as a go-to source for reputable statistics to back up social customer service and social media trends, best practices and to get key highlights from top polls.
- Zappos Service: @Zappos\_Service  
The Twitter handle for Zappos Customer Service is always on and always responsive. This is a terrific example of a company that takes social customer care serious and offers an authentic brand voice on social media. You will never get an auto response from these social customer service leaders.
- Brian Solis: @briansolis  
Brian is the Principal Analyst at Altimeter Group and is globally recognized as one of the most prominent thought leaders and published authors in new media. A digital analyst, sociologist, and futurist, Solis has studied and influenced the effects of emerging media on business, marketing, publishing, customer service and culture. His book, Engage, is regarded as the industry reference guide to build and measure success in the social web.
- Frank Eliason: @FrankEliason  
Referred to as "the most famous customer service manager in the US and possibly the world" by BusinessWeek for his social customer service and the man behind the twitter handle @ComcastCares, Eliason is best known for developing the use of social media in the practice of customer relations. He is now Global Director of Social Media at Citi, and remains a sought-out social customer service thought leader.

### What are your top 3 tips on how to get up to speed on social?

- 1) Watch others before you participate, Not just to learn the rules, but to learn what leaders in your industry with large follower counts are doing right or differently.
- 2) Read up on social media best practices and trends.
- 3) Learn the nuances of each channel.

### How important is social listening to your marketing team?

Extremely. For Parature, social listening is extremely important to our marketing team to monitor brand reputation, share customer service best practices, know what analysts are saying about us (as well as key trends and competitors in our industry), and to interact with influencers, partners, customers and members of the #custserv community.

### How important is social listening to your service team?

Extremely. For Parature, social listening is extremely important to our company, not only to use social as the canary in the coal mine to notify us of any potential customer or product issues, but also to answer customer questions, respond to feedback and entertain product development and improvement ideas. For Parature, it's especially important that we listen and respond, as our customers know we offer and use our own social monitoring and response solution. It needs to work.

# BRIAN CARTER

CEO, Lead Consultant, Keynote Speaker **The Carter Group**  
@briancarter



## What are three key elements of an effective social strategy?

- A budget for social ads
- Consistent creation of high quality content
- Using the first two to build the size and diversity of your owned media lists (email, fans, followers, group members, retargeting audiences)

## How has engaging your customers on social benefited your company or your clients?

Pretty incalculable. First, the ROI of networking is impossible to anticipate and very hard to quantify. I've met several people who've changed my career in good ways. Engagement on Facebook is critical to remaining visible and top of mind while reducing how much you have to spend to do so. Also, it's important to engage non-customers too, if you want lead gen and new customers.

## What are some tips on dealing with negative sentiment on social?

First, if it's true, fix your company. Beyond that, I believe in being proactive and owning the space in which you distribute content and lead conversations - that could be a Facebook page or group or a LinkedIn group. I believe you should be clear about the behavior you want to see, what kind of comments are unacceptable and what will get people banned. I don't worry about eliminating those people, because my best customers are not the trolls or the people who dislike me anyway.

## Who are the top 5 people you follow on social?

I mainly use Facebook (on Twitter, I follow too many people to use my stream) and don't typically follow people on Facebook that I'm not friends with - but I am friends and fellow group members with some folks who are both fun and smart:

- Jason Miller of LinkedIn: <https://www.facebook.com/Jasonmillerca>. He's amazing at content marketing.
- Merry Morud of AIMClear: <https://www.facebook.com/merry.morud>. She's a Facebook ad guru.

- Jay Baer of Convince & Convert: <https://www.facebook.com/jaybaer>. Probably the classiest social media speaker.
- Michael Stelzner of Social Media Examiner: <https://www.facebook.com/stelzner>. Amazing at business having grown an agency, a white paper business and now SME and the Social Media Marketing World conference.
- Jeff Widman of Unified: <https://www.facebook.com/jeffwidman>. Super smart on stats and analyzing social media.

## What are your top 3 tips on how to get up to speed on social?

I can't do just three! It's such a huge amount of learning... Buy books, go to conferences, get into good discussion groups, network with experts and gurus in person, and set up a Google blog alert on the topics you're trying to learn.

## How important is social listening to your marketing team or marketing teams in general?

I think it's more valuable to PR and customer service than to "direct" (results-oriented) social marketing. The other side is competitive intel like InfiniGraph does, and psychometric market research like Facebook Graph Search. I'd much rather understand my prospects and customers that way than read the typical SM listening reports on people who mention my company. The people who talk about companies aren't always the customers, so it's more of a PR thing to me.

## How important is social listening to your sales team or sales teams in general?

I believe sales and marketing should collaborate, and this is more of a marketing/PR function. However, anywhere the complaints heard in social listening echo what salespeople hear in objections? That's important and needs to be addressed.

## How important is social listening to your customer service team or teams in general?

Your customer service team definitely needs to be paying attention for cries for help via social.

# MICHAEL BRITO

Group Director, Content & Engagement **The W2O Group**  
@britopian



## What are three key elements of an effective social strategy?

I would say that the three elements of a social strategy consist of analytics, content and engagement. Analytics will give you a 360-degree view of your customer and what they truly care about. In addition, looking at historical content performance is key to better understanding how and when they like to consume content. These variables will help deliver a more effective brand story (content) that will break through the clutter and reach consumers with game-changing content. The last is engagement. What's the point of creating awesome content if you aren't going to prove that the brand is human and engage in a conversation.

## How has engaging your customers on social benefited your company or your clients?

Engagement equals brand love. When brands prove that they are human, solve customer problems and/or provide helpful information, they naturally create brand advocates. An advocate is someone who will promote or defend the brand without being asked to do so. This is good for all brands.

## What are some tips on dealing with negative sentiment on social?

The first tip is to ensure that the sentiment data is actually accurate. Sentiment analysis still has a long way to go before it can be substantiated as a good measurement framework. That said, the second tip is to "only" engage in negative conversations if you are actually planning on having a resolution. If you aren't prepared to manage negativity, then I would say that social media may not be the right channel for you to engage in quite yet.

## Who are the top 5 people you follow on social?

- Jeremiah Owyang: @jowyang
- Jacob Morgan: @jacobm
- Dave Berkowitz: @dberkowitz
- Brian Solis: @briansolis
- Jay Baer: @jaybaer

## What are your top 3 tips on how to get up to speed on social?

- 1) Just do it. Stop procrastinating. You will make mistakes and learn from them.
- 2) Read a lot. There are several blog posts and resources for you.
- 3) Participate: Use the tools personally so you can learn how to apply them professionally.

## How important is social listening to your marketing team or marketing teams in general?

Extremely. Just like any relationship, the majority of what you should be doing is listening.

## How important is social listening to your sales team or sales teams in general?

Extremely. For the same reasons above.

## How important is social listening to your customer service team or teams in general?

Extremely.

# BRIAN KELLY

Chief Marketing Officer, **InsideView**

@bkkelly



## What are three key elements of an effective social strategy?

- 1) Be relevant. Anyone can post on social sites, or respond to the contribution of others. The most effective social influencers are both contributors and consumers of relevant information.
- 2) Communicate innovative ideas fearlessly. Consumers of social information are drawn to new ideas and break through approaches to existing problems. Creating social discussion around topics that are both relevant and that provide new perspectives and ideas are likely to attract the attention of the audiences that matter to you. For example, blogging about new approaches to precision targeting, by a CMO who is in the trenches, will attract the attention of marketers.
- 3) Be authentic. Make valuable contributions about topics that you understand and be open to responses, both negative and positive, about your point of view. High-energy dialogue, even between opposing views, often leads to even better information and even more useful ideas.

## How has engaging your customers on social benefited your company or your clients?

InsideView is at the heart of social. One of the major contributions that we make for our customers is that we reveal social insights about the buyers they target as marketers and sales people. Our users follow us socially, and are quick to respond to our news, our events and our ideas—and they do it socially. This open dialogue with our customers gives us real-time information that helps us guide our priorities and our product plans.

## What are some tips on dealing with negative sentiment on social?

Be open. Be honest. Negative social comments can be one of the most authentic gauges of how your product and company is perceived in the market, and an opportunity

to embrace a vocal customer to win them back. Social is a wide open feedback loop that users leverage to communicate with and change companies and products. By acknowledging the negative feedback and responding evenly and honestly, a company can build trust among its users. Companies who embrace feedback, both positive and negative, and then show progress toward addressing problems or issues often win over negative customers and turn them into loyal advocates.

## Who are the top 5 people you follow on social?

I do follow some people, but I also like social sites that provide the best thinking of a community of experts. Here are some of my favorites:

- Entrepreneurship and start up blog posts on [www.quora.com](http://www.quora.com) are contributed by people like me, and people who have succeeded at things I am attempting to do. Entrepreneurs weigh in on everything from managing product to managing the hectic life of being a Silicon Valley executive.
- Seth Godin: <http://sethgodin.typepad.com/> Seth always has ideas about people business and marketing. His ideas are often controversial, and generate good discussion.
- Leena Rao: TechCrunch  
Leena is always on top of what is happening in Silicon Valley and the technology world. TechCrunch is irreverent and unapologetically covers the industry in living color. You can learn a lot from your peers. Leena always delivers it right to my desktop
- Paul Greenberg, ZDNet  
Paul is a CRM watcher, and knows what is going on in CRM. His deep connections always surface interesting things about our partnership network and the ecosystem that InsideView plays in.
- Scott Santucci, Forrester sales enablement blogger  
Scott has his finger on the pulse of what is going on in enterprise, B2B sales and marketing. What Scott writes about is important to our customers and to the evolving market of CRM Intelligence.

Still more >



## BRIAN KELLY (continued)

### What are your top 3 tips on how to get up to speed on social?

- 1) Follow people you respect, in industries or areas that interest you. Learn from what and how they post, and also from who responds to them. Become active in discussions that are relevant to your business, and in areas that you can offer value.
- 2) Participate in communities or groups that are relevant to your users. You can learn a lot from what the community shares about your products and the other products that are in your ecosystem.
- 3) Comment on content, provided by people you respect, and engage in a useful dialogue with them.

### How important is social listening to your marketing team or marketing teams in general?

Extremely. InsideView marketing professionals use social information for precision targeting and to help guide marketing offers.

### How important is social listening to your sales team or sales teams in general?

Extremely. Our sales and marketing team manages their contact list through InsideView. InsideView provides live, active social streams.

### How important is social listening to your customer service team or customer service teams in general?

Extremely. The InsideView CSM team uses our CRM Intelligence platform to monitor company social pages and the social activity of key account contacts. This social information is important as the CSM team manages the account and engages with them to maintain account control and to grow account value.





# STEVE HIBBERD

Co-Founder & CEO, **Tiger Pistol**  
@sjh0811

## What are three key elements of an effective social strategy?

A key driver behind the approach small businesses need to take to their social activity is their short horizon when compared with mid size or large companies. Small businesses often don't have the luxury of running a multi layer marketing strategy including elements that will deliver short, mid, long term and sometimes intangible benefits, they need transparent outcomes today, this week or this month.

There are people searching for and talking about their business or category on social everyday. So getting practical, the first element they must nail is to make the organic search and conversation work for them. They need to have a social profile set up, optimized and then maintained where people search for businesses like theirs, be it on Facebook, Google+ Local via Google search, Foursquare, Yelp...

With their presence in place and optimized, the second element they must nail is to consistently monitor for reviews, comments or mentions of their business, and respond to all in a timely manner. Consistency with this element will dramatically improve their appearance in search results, as well as their 'click to call' and 'click to web' conversion rates.

Now, given their short horizon, sales today are paramount, and although this can and will occur via social search and conversation management, to stay alive and grow, small businesses often need to reach their target audience at scale in a short timeframe with calls to action that will lead to sales. Where this is required for their business, social ads are a must in their plan, however it is vital for the small business operator to not invest in social ads without a clear goal they know that spend is solely aiming to achieve.

## How has engaging your customers on social benefited your company or your clients?

Small businesses have been the greatest adopters of the established Facebook practice of posting regularly to appear in the News Feed, and similarly on other social networks. The benefit of these posts has largely been positioned as engaging with your fans and target audience.

As social networks are aggressively migrating to advertising models, these posts are no longer organically engaging fans and the target audience as was once expected, and to reach fans and the broader target audience advertising campaigns are required.

With the shorter horizon existing for small businesses, once they're investing in advertising, most need that investment to lead to sales or some measurable value creation activity, and what we have called engagement on platforms such as Facebook just won't stack up.

Small businesses can benefit from engagement of their audience without it being a click to a call to action in a post or ad, and the more progressive and active small businesses are developing an understanding of the link between those engaged and their greater propensity to respond to call to actions.

Read on >

## STEVE HIBBERD (continued)

### What are some tips on dealing with negative sentiment on social?

As has been well documented over time, the customer/prospect who speaks out negatively is doing the business a huge favor, so long as you know they're talking and respond appropriately.

We gain much delight in managing this for a large number of our customers, and frequently turn negative customer/prospects into advocates of the business. The key tips are:

- 1) Monitor effectively; it's not a set and forget, but an activity that needs regular refreshing based on changing topics of the moment, products, locations etc.
- 2) Don't be too reactive and defensive, sometimes the comment, review or mention is not directly about the business, but they are merely mentioned in the comment.
- 3) Where the comment, review or mention is about the business, ensure you respond as promptly as possible, even if it's acknowledging the comment and asking for a way to contact the customer/prospect outside of the social network at an appropriate time to gather more details.
- 4) Avoid arguing, or over clarifying, and instead acknowledge the feedback and where possible move to making the customer/prospect aware of a positive alternative or next step you can make available to them.
- 5) Where possible, track the post negative feedback behavior or the customer/prospect, and if they purchase or take up the alternative service or product you presented, reach out again and thank them.

### Who are the top 5 people you follow on social?

- Amy Porterfield: <http://www.amyporterfield.com/>
- Jay Baer: <http://jaybaer.com/>
- Nick Bilton: <http://nickbilton.com/>
- Scott Stratten: <http://www.unmarketing.com/>
- Gerry Moran: <http://marketingthink.com/>

### What are your top 3 tips on how to get up to speed on social?

Small business operators are typically overwhelmed, and lack the time to properly get their head around subjects that they don't deem core to their existence. We do however observe 3 common practices those active undertake consistently.

- 1) They speak to their existing customers about where they spend time on social and why. They then use this information to apply focus to getting their head around one or more relevant social networks.
- 2) They then become avid users of the relevant social network(s), often getting some assistance with the basics via family and friends. They personally experience how they use the networks, and how businesses interact or attempt to interact with them. This often brings with it many 'Wow, I didn't realize...!' moments.
- 3) They identify businesses that have been active on the relevant social networks for some time, usually people they know, and ask a lot of questions. This often includes looking at the social presence of competitors to sanity check what they have learnt with a relevant business they know well.

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