Impressions, Engagement Rates, Analytics, Oh My: Tips & Tricks for Sharing Social Success

By Jordan Bath

Measuring and communicating social media success is a necessary, and sometimes difficult, task. From compiling impressions to monitoring follower growth, analytics may cause some to shudder in fear. To add to that, calculating and reporting on social media analytics is still a relatively new and untapped field, which seems to come with endless ways to compile a single report.

But that should not dissuade you from harnessing the power of analytics. Measuring and sharing metrics is incredibly valuable and persuasive. When you're able to calculate and attribute social media results, you're bridging the gap between a potentially meaningless and incredibly meaningful campaign.

Whether you're new to analytics or simply need a refresher, follow the tips and tricks outlined below, and you'll become a savvy analytic pro in no time.

1. Set Goals Related to your Audience & Keep Them Top of Mind

Often social media measurement may seem more complicated than it needs to be because you're not sure what the reporting goal is. Have clients or colleagues ever asked you to show how well a campaign performed?

You think to yourself, "Are they looking for overall impression metrics? Engagement rates? Follower growth? All the above?"

Rather than overwhelm your clients and colleagues with data, overwhelm them with meaningful results by setting goals for each campaign before it launches. Specifying social goals can help you manage expectations and more easily produce reports since the overall goal will be top of mind the entire time. As the campaign evolves, these goals may shift, but by keeping a keen eye on the overall objective, your future self will thank you.

The goals that you and your team set forth will depend on the campaign itself, but an

Preparing SMART goals leads to smart reports and even smarter results.

easy way to start brainstorming is to use the age-old SMART method, an acronym for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-based.

Specific: As mentioned above, if you and your team don't create specific goals for the campaign, you might be left floundering when compiling a report. Be as detailed as you can when outlining each and every goal.

Measurable: It may seem redundant, but this is key. Make sure you set metrics to achieve. Do not use overarching statements, such as "increase followers." Put a specific number or percentage behind the goal so you can track progress and, ultimately, success.

Achievable: Let's be real. A Facebook page will most likely not gain 100,000 new followers in one day. Here's where you need to manage expectations with the internal team and client to be sure you're not setting yourself up for failure. Look at past results to see what has been achieved, and set the goal slightly higher to competitively push yourself.

Realistic: Again, the above. Do you have enough team members, time, etc., to make the goal happen? If not, perhaps the goal needs to be restructured.

Time-based: Please, don't create a goal and forget to set a time frame. Having an ultimate end date with weekly, monthly or quarterly objectives will rally you and your team to attain the goal and will allow the client to have a proper expectation of when to see results.

By setting SMART goals, you're enabling yourself and your team to create quality reports that will help make each coming campaign even better. And don't forget, strategically executing reporting will save time and money—a true win-win.

2. Leverage Native Tools

It's true: You do not need to purchase a social media tool to produce analytics. It certainly may make compiling a holistic report

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> Easily learn or brush up on your social media reporting skills with these three tips & tricks:
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> 1. Set goals related to your audience and keep them top of mind
> 2. Leverage native tools
> 3. Know your audience and tell a story

across social assets a little easier, but with the ongoing evolution of analytics for advertisers on social platforms, native platforms have begun to build out robust and effective tools.

With this in mind, let's take a look at the typical analytic metrics public relations professionals are apt to measure for various platforms:

- Facebook: page likes, impressions, shares, engagement rate
- Twitter: followers, engagement rate, mentions
- Pinterest: viewers, impressions, average repins/pins
- Instagram: followers, engagement, clicks to website
- LinkedIn: followers, impressions, clicks

Lucky for us, the platforms listed above produce these metrics automatically. Like Facebook's Business Manager and Twitter's analytics.twitter.com, the native tools have increasingly become deeper and more user-friendly, helping PR professionals and advertisers alike. In addition to the metrics listed above, these platforms also show intriguing and highly visual data, like Twitter's report that shows Top Tweet, Top Media Tweet and

Top Follower followed by 2.33M people

Brian Hazard ✓

@colortheory FOLLOWS YOU

80s synthpop + EDM + piano at
https://t.co/DwG9XDcDpz. I may not see your tweet or
DM, so if it's important, contact me at
https://t.co/IwLBbFBGxf.

Each month, Twitter automatically compiles a Top Follower for your personal or company profile, providing intriguing and highly visual data.

Top Follower for each month.

By spending a little bit of time with each of these native tools, you'll be able to efficiently compile top-line metrics across multiple social platforms.

3. Know Your Audience and Tell a Story

When creating a campaign, you'll dutifully research and develop target audiences. When creating reports, it shouldn't be any different. Knowing who will be the recipient of each report will assist you in shaping the final product and ensure that you're helping them learn about the progress and success of the campaign instead of creating additional questions.

When you solidify your audience, you can determine how simple or in-depth the report needs to be. Excel reports work for some. Highly visual Word documents work for

others. An executive summary with three to five bullet points may also be beneficial and can serve as a nice benchmark. Make sure it works for you and the recipients.

No matter the type of report, be sure to include screenshots or captivating graphics. You know that pictures are worth a thousand words, and this is true for reporting as well. Include photos of top-engaged posts, a graphic of increases in followership or any other visual detail. Again, the native tools for each platform already highlight these, so this should be an efficient use of your time.

After compiling these images and graphs, start to develop the story. An easy way to do this is to ask "why" to every increase or decrease in the platform's metrics.

Why did followers increase? Why was there a spike in engagement during a certain time of day? Why did reach decrease when using a specific photo?

By utilizing the native tools and insights, you will know the answers. Tell your audience in the way that suits your needs and theirs.

You've Got This

As a PR professional, you're innately keeping an eye on social media, and this trait is even more helpful when producing reports. When you notice a social post is doing well, make a note of that. Don't leave the report until the eleventh hour; spend time developing a strategy that works for you. You've already devoted a lot of time and energy to the campaign itself, so it's important you produce reports that let the results shine through. Social media analytics is not a sprint, it's a marathon.

By learning how to develop, execute and share reports, you're adding an incredible asset to your company and your own personal arsenal. Make SMART goals, work smart and share smart results. ∎

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