5 Proven Tools to Effectively Measure Engagement and ROI on Social Media

By Ray Larson and Chris Baldock

Are you using social media in your marketing and public relations campaigns? These days, the answer for most is certainly a resounding yes. Social media—including **Facebook**, **LinkedIn**, **Twitter**, **Google+** and **Pinterest**—is entwined in the fabric of any effective modern-day messaging and communications plan.

So you're a believer. You're dutifully trying to create posts, promote content, manage messaging and encourage interaction. But do you really know what kind of return you're generating on the time, effort and money you're investing in social media? When upper management or a client asks you what kind of payback is being generated, do you have real answers with data to support?

Fortunately, you don't have to be evasive when explaining what kind of bang is being generated for your social media buck. Following are five proven tools that anyone can use to measure the return on social media activities, along with hands-on tips for how to get the most out of each.

Google Analytics / Webmaster Tools

One of the best tools for measuring social media activity is right in front of you, and it's free. When paired with Google Webmaster Tools, **Google Analytics** is a great way to monitor your social media success. If you don't have either of these set up to monitor your website, you're missing out on extensive and easy-to-catch data that can help you optimize your social marketing campaigns.

These are rather easy tools to implement, so start here as soon as possible. This is the low-hanging fruit, so to speak.

Once you have these tools set up for your website, there is deep knowledge to be gained from the data. The best places to start are in your Acquisition tab and your Behavior tab. These two tabs are set up to display data describing where your visitors came from and what activity they engage in on your site. You will also want to look at Behavior Flow.

In your Acquisition tab, there is actually a social drop down menu that will allow you to see what type of impact your social message created. And in the Overview section you'll see a table of social networks that drove traffic to your website.
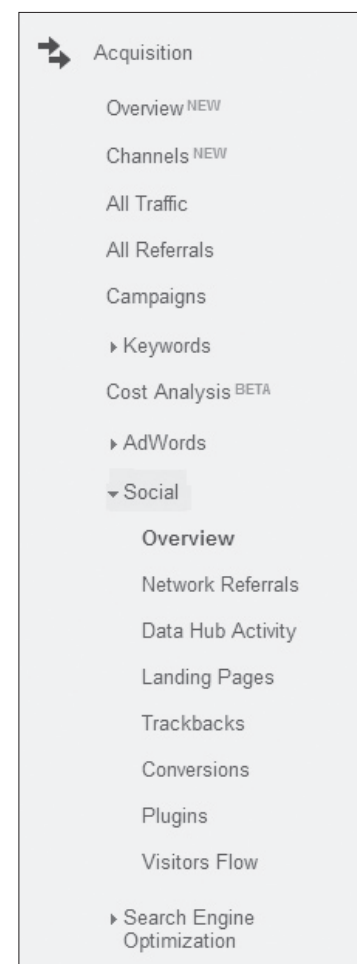
Google Analytics' Acquisition tab.
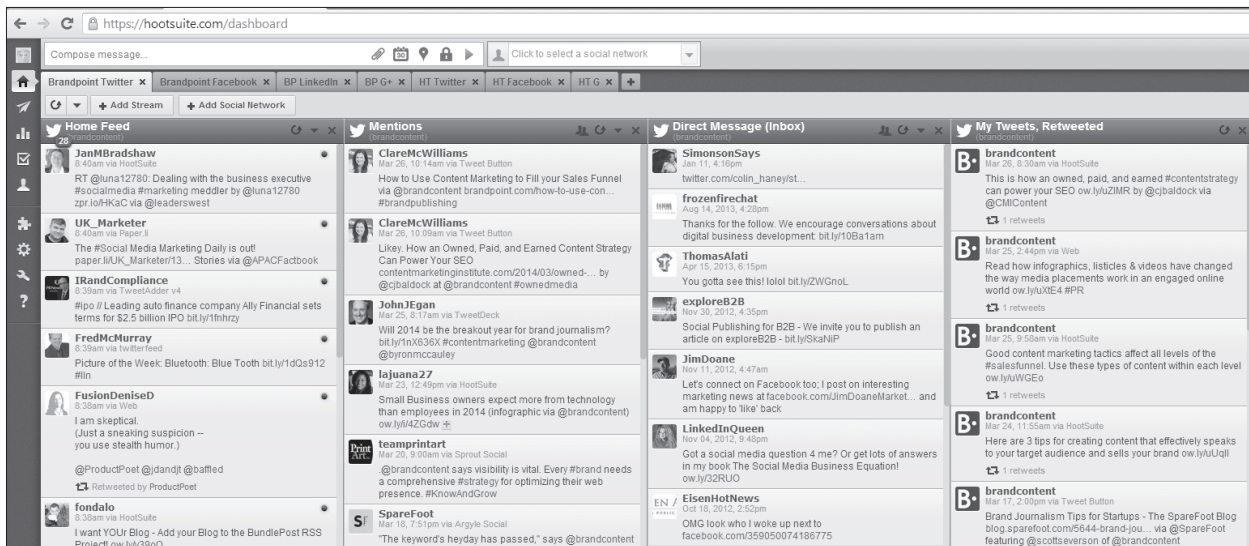
An example of a HootSuite dashboard.

To drill down on where visitors entered your site, you can choose the Landing Pages option. This is a good area to look at to understand which social posts drove the most traffic. Using different landing pages for every campaign will allow you to specifically track those visitors and then see a return on your social effort.

The Behavior tab explores exactly what its name suggests. It maps the behavior of all your visitors—what they do and where they go on your site. In the Overview option, you'll see the landing pages on which your visitors came into the site. Once again, this is a great place to measure your social reach. If the landing page you used in your social campaign is showing up on the list, it means people are clicking the link in your social posts.

Another great option for monitoring the success of a social media campaign is within the Behavior Flow section. Here you'll be able to narrow the visitors to just the medium they came to the site from. You'll then be able to understand what those visitors from your social platforms are doing once on your site.

Look at the following factors. How many interactions do these visitors perform? How many leave after the first page? These are important questions to ask. If these questions don't have good answers, you need to optimize your pages by asking yourself these questions:

- How do we keep them on site longer?
- How can we get them to offer us their information?

Keeping an eye on your social media campaigns through Google Analytics and Webmaster Tools can help you optimize your campaigns and learn the type of return you're getting on your social media investment.

HootSuite

If you have a social media campaign that involves more than one platform, then it's time to get a social media management tool.

One of those tools is **HootSuite,** which allows you to connect all your social platforms to one "hub." You can then manage and monitor your social campaigns without having to login to different platforms every time you want to check something out or review performance.

HootSuite lets you create streams for every social platform (located in the tabs at the top of the page). Here you can have your feed,
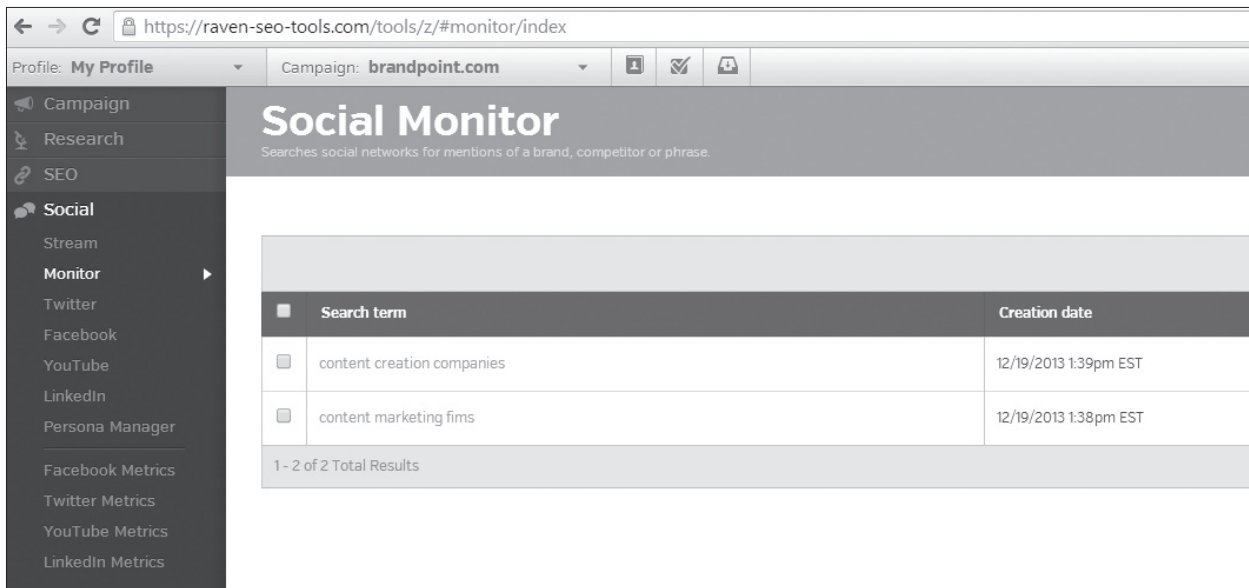
The Monitor tab on Raventools.

mentions, direct messages and scheduled posts all in one place.

Another column to utilize is the option to follow keywords or topics within the social platform. If your company has keyword phrases of interest or product names that you want to monitor, you can add that stream to the platform. Every time that word shows up in a social post, anywhere, it will show up in your stream. It's a great way to follow and monitor conversations on your company, product or service. You'll know what's being talked about, so you can manage ongoing messaging.

Another tool you can use in HootSuite is the analytics that are provided for your account. Here you can dig down into individual posts and see what type of interaction you had with your followers: how much a post was shared, how many clicks your URL received, how many likes and so forth.

With these analytics you can understand what type of comments or posts work best for your company. For example, if you see there is a day of the week or a time during the day that you get the most interactions, you can start to post more during those times. This

should help you generate more traction for your posts.

Another smart idea is to test the layout of your posts. Does a link work better for you, or does a photo? Play around with your posts to get a better return on your social campaign. Don't just do what you've always done.

If you're on a budget and want to access social media information with one login, HootSuite is a great way to do it.

Raven

For social media, **Raven** is another tool that you can use to bring your Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and LinkedIn profiles into one spot to monitor them and make posts.

Raven isn't limited to social monitoring. If you have an in-house SEO team or even a marketing department that wants to optimize its website and content marketing campaigns, this is highly recommend tool.

The metrics provided are the keys to optimizing your campaigns in Raven. This lets you monitor returns. These metrics allow you to pull directly from the four platforms so you can see the data pertinent to the account. Shares, likes and comments will all show up.

Raven makes monitoring your social media interactions a breeze.

The other thing that makes Raven ideal is the Monitor tab. You can choose most anything you want to monitor—competitors, keywords, products, your brand—and Raven will search the web and pull in all the information for you. Raven will also give a rating to the mention of what you're monitoring. If it's a good, neutral or bad comment, Raven will tell you. From there you can be sure that the comments that need the most attention will get it.

Monitoring your social brand is important, and controlling the message is only part of the job. Raven allows you to put your top platforms in one area and then monitor those platforms for comments or shares. But it's also a great tool for more than social. That may help you "make the case" to invest in Raven. It's something that every marketing department should have.
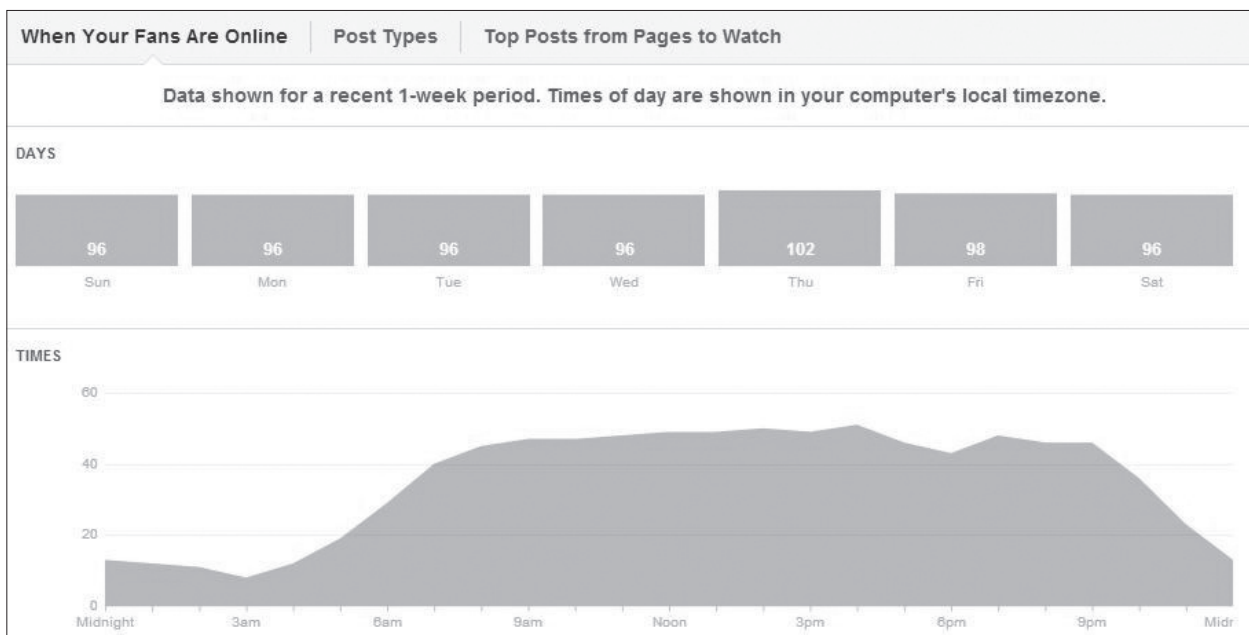
Facebook Insights

Facebook might have the easiest dashboard of all the social media platforms to measure the efficacy of your campaigns. But not everyone leverages Facebook's tools to their full extent. The key is to understand the vernacular of the Insights dashboard. Here's a quick primer on the most important terms:
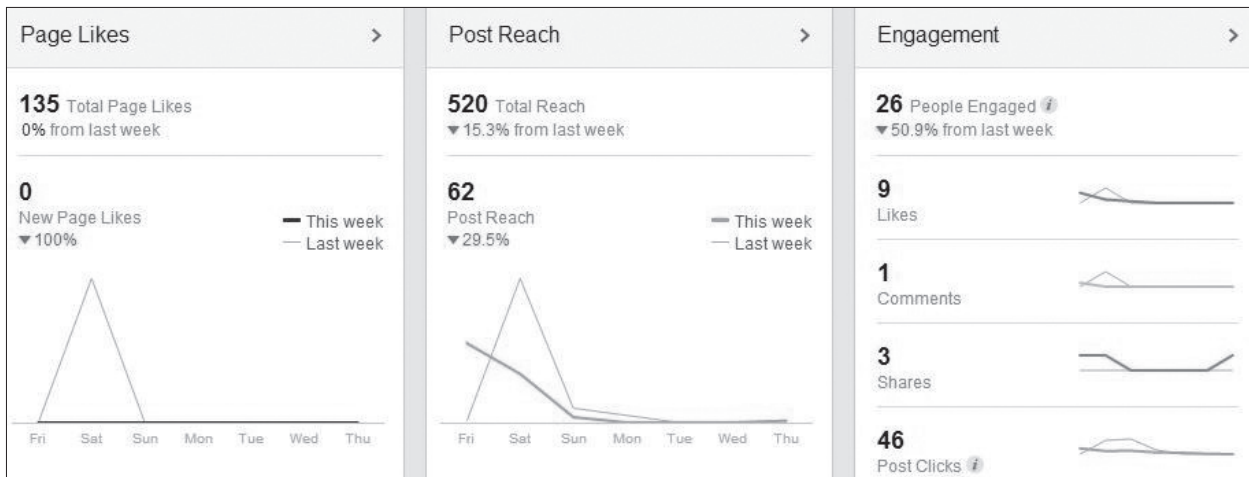
- **Organic reach:** the number of unique people (does not include multiple views by the same persons) who saw your post in their news feed or on your post including the people who saw it from a story shared by a friend when they liked it or interacted with it
- **Paid reach:** the number of uniques who saw your post through an ad
- **Impressions:** the number of times a post from your page is displayed, including multiple impressions by the same unique
- **Engagement:** the number of uniques who clicked on, liked, commented or shared your posts during a 7 day period

Demographics of your page's audience are merely a click away, as is data on where exactly your fans come from by city, country and language as well.

The Insights dashboard is a virtual data mine. However, the most important informa-

| When Your Fans Are Online | Post Types | Top Posts from Pages to Watch |

Data shown for a recent 1-week period. Times of day are shown in your computer's local timezone.

DAYS

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
96	96	96	96	102	98	96

TIMES

Facebook Insights allows you to learn when your fans are online.

An in-depth look at Likes, Post Reach and Engagement on Facebook.

tion for day-to-day monitoring of the health of your Facebook page and campaigns lies on the Overview tab. From here you can visually discern whether or not your Likes are increasing, the reach of your posts and how engaged your audience is.

A simple click to the arrow at the top of each of the three metrics yields in-depth dive into each.

Once you understand Facebook's terminology, understanding how your page is performing is quite simple with the easy-to-use Insights dashboard.
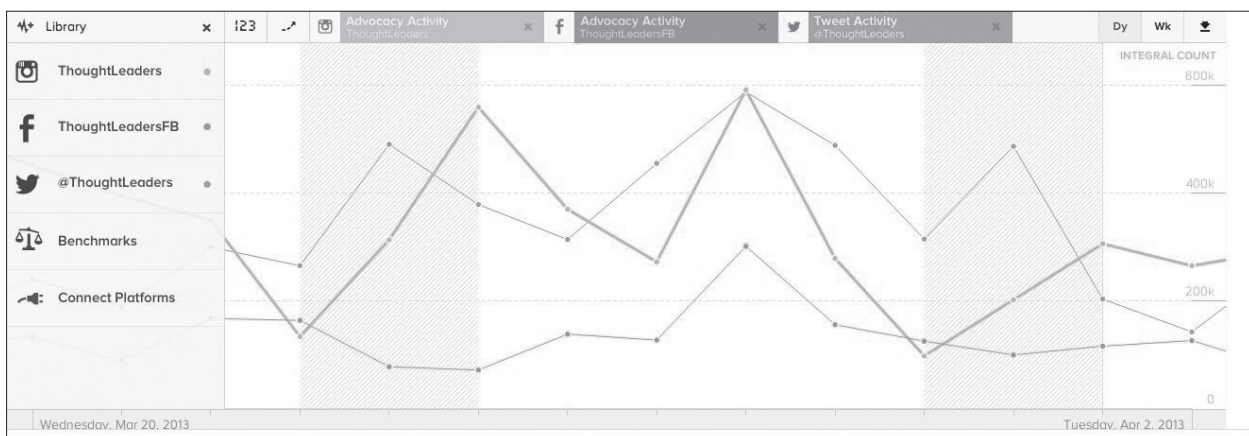
SumAll

Here's the best kept secret in the measuring/analytics world: **SumAll**. SumAll is a

"data visualization service," still free, that allows users to better understand their data across multiple platforms. SumAll lets you integrate social media data from many sources, see it visually, and make better sense of your business. SumAll empowers users to "mash" data from different streams to look for correlations.

SumAll pulls data from these platforms and more to produce eye-catching visuals of the data your various analytics programs capture.

The real deliverable SumAll brings to the table is the ability to connect all of your data streams in one place and then visually determine whether or not your social activity, for example, is converting. Most importantly, the

A SumAll visualization of thought leaders on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter.
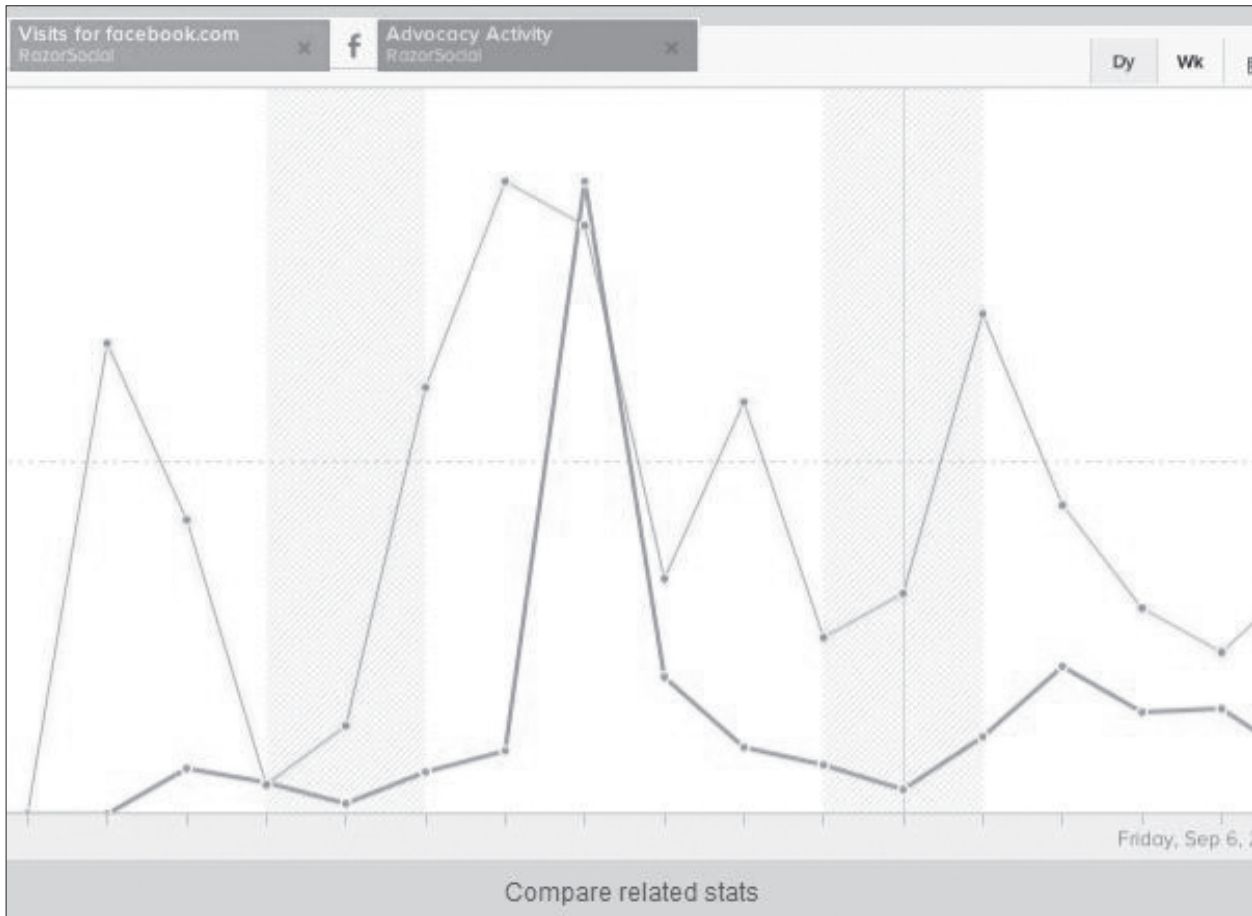
A SumAll visual comparison of advocacy activity and Facebook visits.

data can be aggregated into easy to see and understand visuals for your C-suite to digest.

If you're a social media marketer, deploy SumAll to determine whether or not a Facebook or Twitter interaction produces a positive ROI. This tool allows channel correlation to visually determine how activity on Facebook affected website traffic. This could be accomplished, for example, by overlaying data from Facebook (like advocacy) to referral traffic from Facebook from your Google Analytics on the same graph. This allows you to compare related metrics and look for correlation.

Conclusion

Quit guessing at what kind of ROI you're getting on your social media investment. There are plenty of tools out there to help you get a real handle on how well your social campaigns are doing to generate conversations, engage prospects and distribute your message. Google Analtics and Webmaster Tools, Facebook, RavenTools, HootSuite and SumAll represent five great tools for measuring the effects of your social media efforts and investment. **PRN**

Ray Larson and Chris Baldock are content strategists at Brandpoint.