



Embracing the Power of Social Media for Broadcast Business Insight

Media and entertainment companies can maximize their programming content by integrating a broadcasting-focused, organization-wide intelligence program with consistent use of social measurement and analysis tools across functional silos.

Executive Summary

Broadcasters are using social media to innovatively enhance consumer engagement, traditional marketing campaigns and promotions. However, their approaches to social media are often siloed and narrowly focused, limiting the value that this new communication and engagement model can provide. By listening to, analyzing and integrating findings from social media on an enterprise-wide level, broadcasters can ultimately improve their reach and engagement levels with their content audience.

This white paper highlights how broadcasters can maximize the value of their social media programs. In addition, it provides a high-level framework for establishing a social media analytics program to drive the value obtained from social data throughout the organization.

Trailblazers in Social Media

Of all the broadcast industry participants, television is the most active in its use of social applications such as Twitter.¹ This comes as no surprise, given that the entertainment industry lends itself to pop culture and social conversations. But while many in the industry have used

social channels for the past several years to market content, this is not to say that television has perfected its social media use. In fact, the rise in social media's popularity has given a substantial boost to other players in the value chain, instigating a flood of new issues for the broadcasting industry.

Talent

The talent component of the broadcast industry seems to have benefited most from social media. As social media prominence has risen over the past decade, actors, athletes and musicians have been quick to establish social networking accounts, realizing the potential benefits of directly engaging with fans.

Having found early success using social media, celebrities continue to utilize it as a means of creating, building and dictating the direction of their own careers. Social media has enabled them to add value to their personal brands by building large networks of fans and followers, take control of their image and reduce reliance on studios and production companies for promotion. According to a recent Knowledge@Wharton article, "The rise of the Internet has accentuated the value of

Celebrities Tweeting Broadcasters to the Punch

Talent dwarfs entertainment companies in follower count



Source: socialbakers.com

Figure 1

celebrity endorsements. Celebrities – for better or for worse – do get our attention.”² Along with Twitter and Facebook, niche applications such as Instagram and Whosay are growing in popularity for celebrity communication and engagement.

In fact, conventional metrics reveal that talent is leading the media and entertainment brands with which they are connected in terms of followers and fan counts. A sample of Twitter follower counts in Figure 1 reveals a disparity of millions of followers for Lady Gaga, Cristiano Ronaldo and Oprah Winfrey compared with the most popular entertainment organizations on the social network.

This disparity in social clout not only increases celebrities’ endorsement power with brands, but it also provides them with more negotiating leverage when being hired by broadcasters.

Broadcasters

Social media has transformed traditional broadcasting norms. New technology and increasingly powerful mobile devices have allowed networks to break down the so-called “fourth wall” and connect audiences with programming like never before. Broadcasters are using this technology to create a “second screen,” extending program content to screens alongside the primary television view.

Reality competition shows such as *American Idol* and *Dancing with the Stars* take advantage of these new capabilities, integrating fan voting, audience polling and show topic hashtags into programming (see Figure 2).

Recent technological breakthroughs in broadband-delivered programming on personal computers and “smart” TVs are opening up a world of possibilities in screen-clickable social interactions and cross-promotions.

Broadcasters are also leveraging social networks to deliver new types of content and interact with viewers beyond the program. For example, fans of *The Simpsons* can go to Fox’s Facebook page to see more photos and commentary and interact with other fans. Fans of HBO’s *Game of Thrones* can visit the show’s Wikia page to contribute additional details and insights about the show. In fact, many of these communities are created and managed by “super fans,” which make rules, correct false information and promote show events. The social media platform allows fans to directly help promote and encourage the growth of the audience base.

The New Social Reality

Reality TV shows rely heavily on social media to drive content and ratings.



Source: fox.com³

Figure 2

Gaps and Challenges

While marketers in media and entertainment have improved by leaps and bounds in harnessing social media to promote content, many are missing the true benefit of the social Web. Marketers continue to build social profiles, with a narrow focus on gaining likes and followers. Some are even finding success in driving traffic to online content, digital libraries and traditional broadcast programming. The hurdles we often see is that they take a siloed approach, use disparate tools and struggle with understanding which social data to sift and analyze to generate greater business insight.

In addition, marketers still rely on traditional forms of measurement. Budgets continue to be devoted to focus groups, pre-screenings and workshops to test content and messages on individuals. This creates a disjointed approach to marketing. On the one hand, marketers are using state-of-the-market tools such as Radian6 (now Salesforce Marketing Cloud) or Crimson Hexagon and building marketing campaigns and publishing promotions in near-real-time using social media promotion tools such as HootSuite. On the other hand, they are still applying physical forms of measurement and key performance indicators (KPI). Many organizations don't realize they can now filter through the ever-increasing "noise" generated from expanding numbers of users in social media channels, gather messages from fans and customers promoted through social media, and take action on those messages.

Marketing departments continue to use social tools for promotion, but this is not enough. They must create and then meet business-critical KPIs for gathering and thoroughly applying meaningful business insights and intelligence based on social data. This takes an organizational commitment to social tools that are already being used inside the organization. Additionally, they need to apply a rigorous framework for applying data defined by these tools and do so with an eye toward effective data governance, maintenance and storage.

The Potential of Social Media Data in Broadcasting

The true power of social media is in the information it provides. Millions of users, generating thousands of messages every minute, freely give away valuable insights in public forums. They reveal to marketers all the relevant details of their media consumption habits and opinions. Once social data is combined with an internal strategy

criteria and traditional performance metrics (e.g., Nielsen ratings, subscriptions, ad revenue, etc.), rich insights can be gleaned that can inform powerful business decisions.

Broadcasters are always looking for a competitive edge when it comes to their programming and marketing. Actionable, insightful data is a great way to achieve this. Here is a sample list of relevant insights into the TV business that can be gained from social data:

- Deep and ever timelier insights into what people like or do not like about content.
- Viewership behavior and sentiment, week-over-week or by season.
- Response to promotional campaign events.
- Social sentiment based on demographics, segmented by demographic market area.
- Validation of sentiment for syndicated products for use in sales and bundling.
- Precision viewership predictions driven by the social buzz that precedes the airing of a program.
- Greater confidence in predicting award winners.
- Better understanding of key influencers and buzz generators.
- Faster awareness of trends, events and emergencies.
- More precise targeting of promotional messages.
- Targeting of sponsors and cross-promotion partners.

All of these insights can be gleaned through social data right now. But how do organizations begin to approach this opportunity and find the valuable nuggets of data being touted? Fundamental to the discovery is an integrated framework of social strategy, tools and processes, along with keen analysts who understand the business and the metrics that need to be defined. Further, the framework is useless if organizations do not heavily embed the mindset of mapping social metrics to specific business goals in their overall social analytics strategy.

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Harnessing Social Data to Build Actionable Insight

According to a recent study by McKinsey & Co., social technologies can potentially unlock billions, if not trillions, of dollars in value to organizations across industries.⁴ A large portion of that value is

thought to be created through deeper customer insights, resulting from better products and services achieved through better market intelligence. Another area where social technologies are projected to unlock value is in improved communication and collaboration opportunities. What this means for media and entertainment companies is that they can impact marketing and the production value chain through the ability to listen, understand

and act appropriately on social data. Broadcasters can use this data to improve content, engage customers and optimize operational efficiencies. A social analytics program consisting of listening, refining, workflow and strategic elements must be implemented to effectively realize this potential.

The following describes, at a high level, how media and entertainment organizations can implement a social analytics program using these elements.

Listening

The most fundamental and important step in analyzing social media data is listening. This is the component of the social media analytics workflow where data feeds from various platforms (e.g., the Twitter firehose, Facebook's Graph API, Pinterest Web Analytics) provide access to all of the "chatter" available on the social Web. However, data pulled from social media applications is either unstructured or less structured than traditional data pulled from common marketing data sources, such as Nielsen, focus groups and other research output stored commonly in relationship databases. A large majority of the social "chatter" typically does not come in usable formats; it needs to be refined in order to be used effectively. Solutions have emerged to address this issue. For example:

- Crimson Hexagon's social listening tool comes with an algorithm that users can train over time to structure social data into a more useful form.
- Salesforce Marketing Cloud allows users to edit searches to seek out (or omit) key phrases for more refined listening.

- Sentiment analysis companies such as Fizziology offer services to monitor the entire industry, using historical comparative and non-social benchmarks to discover unknowns.

There are at least a dozen solutions attempting to bring meaning to social data. While no one solution dominates the market, ever-increasing competition is a sign of the value that organizations place on the ability to effectively listen to customers via social media. In fact, even traditional market research companies are jumping in, as evidenced by the recent Nielsen acquisition of SocialGuide.⁵ With this acquisition, the traditional measurement giant can combine its proprietary ratings system in television with the social capabilities of SocialGuide to gain an advantage in linear television measurement. This will allow Nielsen to provide "listening" services on multiple fronts. More combinations of traditional media and social media pairings are sure to follow.

Refining

The refining of data is a critical function of a social media analytics program. Here is where all of the data acquired from a social listening program (Tweets, posts, etc.) is organized into a structured, usable and insightful format. Refining data for an entire social media listening program requires the right people, processes and technologies to manage the complexity of transforming the data into meaningful insights.

The data deluge of today's social media industry exceeds an organization's abilities to handle it manually. Take, for instance, the reality competition program *The X-Factor*. The season premiere garnered 1.4 million comments, peaking at 13,374 comments per minute.⁶ That is simply too much data for the typical group of marketing analysts using Twitter accounts to process. The refinement exercise must be automated, process-driven and woven into a robust strategy, replete with appropriate tools. Otherwise, thousands, if not millions, of comments and opportunities will be missed.

The list of vendors providing social media analysis tools is expansive. In addition to Salesforce, Crimson Hexagon, Bluefin Labs and Fizziology, other vendors have successfully marketed their social listening products to large organizations, as well, such as Attensity, Lithium and Jive Software. There are also smaller vendors building targeted products for media and entertainment companies, as well as companies building niche products for one component of the social media analytics workflow. Almost all of these tech-

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Workflow and Integration

As important and technically challenging as refining social data is, it can be equally challenging to build a workflow. Different APIs, schemas and formats cause integration challenges, and the siloed structure of media companies can trap data within single departments, when this data could provide value to other areas of the organization. Here is where refined data is made valuable:

- **If a tweet is analyzed about an actor's performance**, a process should be in place to relay the detail to the production team.
- **If a post mentions the difficulty of downloading a digital copy of an episode**, it should be forwarded to a customer service rep in the appropriate department.
- **If a report is produced on volume and sentiment trends for a series**, it needs to be available and communicated to marketing teams, executives, production teams and all relevant stakeholders within the organization.

The value created through the increased efficiencies of integrating social intelligence into the current business process is potentially enormous. Given the examples above, a production team can work with an actor to adjust his or her delivery. This could potentially re-engage viewers and prevent those eyeballs from moving to a new show. The difficulty in downloading the digital copy could immediately be resolved by the customer service team, saving a sale and even future sales by forwarding bugs/fixes to the technical team. Reports on trends could automatically route to stakeholders, increasing transparency and allowing more time for respective groups to anticipate and adjust.

An effective workflow can create value in almost every department of an organization. There is opportunity for all of the aforementioned examples to become a reality, but it will take hard work and a concerted effort, from the top, down.

Strategy

The main problem with social media programs is their lack of a comprehensive strategy. Individual departments within an organization are devising

social strategies to benefit particular business units, including programming, research, ad sales, creative and sales, all over the organizational map.

For example, a marketing department might create its own Facebook page and Twitter account to promote a show. Across the lot, the production team creates its own hashtag to interact with the show in real time.

Meanwhile, the research department is looking for its own tool to gauge the social buzz about this season's lineup. All of this is happening in isolation, when the activities could be optimized with a bit of planning and coordination.

To maximize the benefits of social media, a standalone social strategy is not the answer. A sustainable framework will incorporate social data in all elements of the business strategy and plan, coordinated across the enterprise for optimal sharing and integration, to create better informed business insights. This strategy must be fully supported by an engaged executive team and typically needs to be enforced by a group tasked with the specific goal of breaking down these silos in order to unlock the value of social data across the organization. To achieve a return on investment, goals must be connected to specific metrics, and a process must be developed to continually report on specific outcomes and refine practices appropriately.

Looking Ahead

The broadcast industry is becoming increasingly competitive, and the lines of demarcation are blurring. As the business model in the entertainment space continues to shift toward Web-delivered content, televisions will get "smarter," delivery channels will grow, and applications will continue to become more "social." In fact, the rise of "over-the-top" television (OTT) and "TV anywhere" delivery will surely promote even further integration with social networks and provide more granular data about consumption to be revealed via social media. This increased competition and complexity creates ever more reason to capture intelligence and extract full value from established programs.

Social measurement and analysis must become a block in the foundation of any intelligence program. When performed correctly, social media analytics can unlock the value content,

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allowing the organization to better engage the fan base, optimize marketing and ultimately increase profits and ratings. The information is out there, it's publicly available, and it's ready to be used. The companies that build comprehensive

analytical programs around it will be rewarded. The companies that continue with traditional business models for analysis and measurement will be left behind.

Footnotes

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