

Social testing

Social testing is an experimental process that shows how social media content is performing among target audiences. In this reading, you will learn about the different types of social testing and how each can help a brand's social presence.

Intro to social testing

Social testing is important because like any type of marketing analytics, it provides data-driven insights about a brand's social media performance and audience preferences. Social media marketers use social testing to determine which content is effective, which types of posts the audience engages with most, and how to allocate budget towards effective types of posts.

There are several types of social testing. Which type(s) you use depends on your brand's business goals. Once those goals are outlined, you will be able to determine which type(s) of social testing will help you uncover the information you need to be most effective. Some of the most common types of social testing include A/B testing and multivariate testing.

A/B testing

A/B testing compares two versions of a post with a single differing variable. For example, to test how to increase website traffic, you might run two paid social media ads that send the user to your homepage. The ads can be exactly alike, except for one changed variable. Maybe one ad includes a headline with a popular song reference in it, while the other one doesn't. If your audience clicks on the version with the popular song reference in it more often than the other version, you may feel more confident using pop culture references in the future.

Multivariate testing

Multivariate testing compares two or more versions of a post with several differing variables. For example, to find out how different variations of an ad you created perform against each other, you might create four different versions. Version one would include an image with a caption. Version two would include a GIF instead of an image and a different caption. Version three would include different copy and a different color scheme, and on the fourth version, you might change the color scheme and also include the GIF you used in the second variation.

Social testing results

A very important part of social testing is the results you get after you've completed testing. Correctly evaluating results and drawing conclusions based on statistical data is important for future social media campaigns and strategies. To get adequate results, consider running tests several times. You may want to run your tests for a week, month, or longer, and observe what your audience liked and didn't like. The more tests you run, the more certain you can be of your results.

It's also important to make sure you are thoughtful about selecting which variables to alter, so you have results to learn from—this will help you optimize your strategy.

Key takeaways

Social testing is an essential part of social media marketing, because simply put: you only know what you know. If you haven't tested what your audience likes, you may never know what that is. Make sure to identify a specific goal before you begin testing. And, do not be afraid to try new things!