Video 1: Social Media Listening and Monitoring: A Business Must-Have

Hi! Eric from HubSpot Academy here to teach you about social listening and monitoring. I've been managing HubSpot Academy's social media presence for a few years now, and responding to you all and listening to your feedback via Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn has been tremendously valuable to the team here at HubSpot Academy. We love to hear from you all, so don't be a stranger!

Now, do you know what your customers are saying about you on Facebook? Have you seen how your competition is using Instagram in their new marketing campaign? Are you answering product questions from prospects on Twitter? Or is the reverse true – no one is talking about your company on social at all. How do you even know?

You know by developing your social listening and monitoring skills.

When most people think of social media, they assume it's all about getting their message out to other people, but there's another side to social media that is equally, if not even more, important: listening to what people are saying about your brand. Your social media presence can be an incredible listening device for you and your organization. Wouldn't you like to know what people are saying about your brand? The feedback they have or the success they've experienced? Listening to and monitoring these online conversations gives you the opportunity to be a part of them.

Don't believe me? Carrie Kerpen, CEO of Likeable Media, says you should always start by listening…

> "When a company is first starting out in social media, the first thing I tell them to do is just listen. Before you do anything else, you should be looking across social media channels and listening, not just to what people are saying about your brand; you may be a smaller brand and not have a lot of people talking about you; but look at how your target is speaking. What are they talking about? What are they listening to? What interests them? By searching across different social networks for conversations, you'll learn a lot about what your audience wants to hear.

When's the last time you interacted with a brand on social media? Were you saying something positive, or was it negative?

Companies that use social media strategically know that responding to a post, whether positive or negative, will improve that person's perception of your company. **In fact, according to convinceandconvert.com, answering a complaint increases customer advocacy by as much as 25% and not answering a complaint decreases customer advocacy by as much as 50%!** Just by showing that you're listening to them and hearing their concerns – you can completely change the relationship they have with your business.

Video 2: The Power of Social Listening

The rise of social media is arguably one of the most important advances in modern history. It has the power to influence music and art, to change and shape governments, and it's very important to businesses – to connect sellers with buyers all over the world.

But why is that? Because of the power of one-to-one relationships and the incredible reach now available from the one to the many. Through digital and social media, you have the ability to directly reach your customers and prospects in unprecedented ways, with greater reach and more specific targeting than ever before. And yet, those same customers and prospects wield a great deal of power themselves. They choose when and where they want to respond to your marketing messages. They also have the ability to be vocal with their opinions about your brand and your products.

That's why social listening is crucial to your digital strategy. Social listening is how you track, analyze, and respond to conversations across the internet. By monitoring social media discussions about your industry, your company, and your products and customers, you can shape the direction of the conversation. It will help you get a leg up on your competition and inform both brand and business decisions. Done right, it will even help you save both time and money.

You can do social listening with free tools such as Google Alerts, Hashtagify, Social Mention, or Twitter's Tweetdeck. There are also a variety of paid social listening tools available, such as HubSpot's social media tools, which are available as part of HubSpot's paid offering.

There are **eight key benefits** to doing social listening:

The **first benefit** is that it gives you the opportunity to measure the performance of your social media, web, and even to some extent, your conversations and offline content strategy. You can measure the results from marketing and sales campaigns, including mentions, comments, shares, reshares, and the volume and sentiment of the conversation around your content. Did people love your last blog post or did it ruffle feathers? Do videos resonate better than static images? Did your customers share content to their social channels from the last email you sent to your mailing list? Once you discover what types of content work best, you might consider how to use similar content in targeted ads. Social metrics should be a crucial part of evaluating your content strategy as a whole.

Second, social listening helps you manage reputation. If that blog post did ruffle feathers and you suddenly have a Tweetstorm on your hands, understanding the full extent of the conversation is key. If you're aware of the conversation early on, you can respond in a timely manner and potentially turn the tide of the conversation. If your customers are complaining about your company or product, you can respond, publicly, how you'll make it right.

Third, social listening helps you identify your biggest fans and influencers. This is important because people trust word of mouth more than they do brand conversations. In fact, a recent Harris Poll discovered that 67% of people are more likely to purchase a product if a friend or family member mentioned it in social media. Once you've identified your super-fans, thank and reward them for their loyalty and support. Engage with and involve them in conversations, content, and your campaigns. Leverage their word of mouth to increase the reach of your messages.

Fourth, social listening can help you discover new product ideas or ways to enhance features on existing products. Listen to what your customers and prospects are talking about to discover their pain points, and make shifts to address them with better product features or services. You can identify some of the biggest detractors and invite them to meet with your product team to share their ideas. You can also look for gaps and weaknesses in your competition's products and up the ante with your own development schedule.

I just mentioned the **fifth** benefit of social listening: Watching the competition. You can learn a great deal from monitoring your competitors, ranging from how their content performs with their audience, to how happy their customers are and what the world at large is saying about them.

Sixth, social listening can lead to new business opportunities. Monitoring can help you identify gaps in your current industry offerings. Are your customers and prospects asking for something that isn't yet provided? Is there an underutilized sector of your industry that your company might be able to service? You can also identify trends early on and shift direction to take advantage of those opportunities.

The **seventh** way that social listening can make a difference for your business is by helping you find leads. For example, some companies look for unhappy customers of a competitor and reach out with an offer to help. If the company is responsive when other companies are not, then switching may often be an easy decision for the customer.

The **eighth** and final way you can use social listening to make a difference is to help you determine how to set strategic benchmarks for your future. Including listening metrics in your strategy – metrics like volume of engagement, sentiment, shares of your content, mentions, and more – will give you the baseline you need to set better social media and business goals for the quarters and years ahead.

There are **two modes** of listening to think about: monitoring and engagement.

Monitoring is the method of actively looking for mentions and conversations that pertain to your brand, your products, your hashtags, your employees, your competitors, and your customers.

Engagement is the step you take to have conversations with individuals talking about your industry, brand, products, and services.

If you're in the early stages of developing your digital promotion strategy, you may only need to be monitoring social media. But as your company grows – or, in fact, to help directly drive that growth – you'll need to consider how you'll engage with your customers. In the ideal world, you'll monitor and engage your audience on all social channels, but when starting out, perhaps you might decide to only engage on Facebook or Twitter, depending on which network your buyer persona tends to frequent. Just make sure you're adequately directing your audience in all channels to the best way they can have a conversation with you, whether it's directing them to a specific social channel, a web page, or to an email address. You don't want to appear unavailable to an audience that's trying to reach out to you.

There you have it! Social media listening is one of the best ways to get a jump on your competitors and to build loyalty with your customers. It really is one of the most important strategies any business can take to understand what the world thinks about its brand.

Video 3: Understanding Brand Conversation

Social media is a powerful tool for businesses, but it can feel overwhelming when you're just getting started. Unlike other communication channels, social media offers so many options and tools that some companies have successfully adopted a social-only marketing strategy. Here at HubSpot Academy, we tend to recommend a more balanced approach by combining social media, search engine optimization, email marketing, and content marketing in a holistic inbound strategy. It all comes down to knowing your buyer persona and aligning your strategy with their behaviors. One real-time way to stay on top of your buyer persona and their consumer behavior is through social monitoring.

In this video, we'll break down the difference between social listening and social monitoring. These two activities seem similar at first glance, and in many cases, they both involve the same tactics. Where they differ is in your objective. You can use social listening to centralize conversations about your brand so that you can join them. Social listening may be used by sales reps, social media managers, and even executives in your company. On the other hand, you can use social monitoring to actively look for mentions and conversations that pertain to your brand, your products, your hashtags, your employees, your competitors, and your customers.

Social monitoring aims to measure more broadly what the market is saying, not just about you, but about the problem your company solves and the topics your customers care about. example, you might use Google Alerts to get email notifications when an article is published about a topic that your buyer persona cares about. You might use TweetDeck to monitor phrases, brands, and people that your buyer persona cares about on Twitter. Perhaps it's as simple as bookmarking a Facebook search in your browser and checking it regularly.

No matter how you choose to do social monitoring, there are some clear benefits to being "in the know" about the things your buyer persona cares about.

First of all, it puts you and your target buyer persona in the audience together. Here's what I mean. In a lot of ways, marketing is a two-way communication channel. You communicate with your audience about you, or they communicate with you about them, and the other party listens. Social monitoring allows you to listen to a third party: other people and brands talking about the things you and your customers care about. It's no longer you and your audience talking about each other, to each other, it's you and your audience talking **to** each other **about** a third subject or party. In doing so, you're saying "hey, we both care about this, let's learn about it together." Talk about humanizing! Remember, to be a part of the conversation, you don't necessarily have to be the subject of it.

There are some important dimensions to measure at this higher, macro level. For instance, measure your brand reputation. In social monitoring, we're not responding to social media posts like we would in our social listening activities. Monitoring brand sentiment combines all of those individual messages into an overall reputation metric along a spectrum of negative to positive. For example, HubSpot Academy has an extremely positive sentiment on social media (we love you guys!), so when something goes wrong in the product, or with a marketing campaign (it happens!), and we see that sentiment drop, we know that we have some work to do to get that sentiment back up. Be on the lookout for brand damaging conversations and customer unrest.

Social customer service is the new normal for organizations. <u>Forty percent of customers expect a response within one hour after posting a complaint on social media</u>! If people have questions about your product or service,

make sure your support team is ready to respond in a helpful way. You might even keep a customer from churning if you work in a subscription-based business. These conversations on social media can also inform your product or service. Are people unhappy with a particular feature, or maybe a recent change to your service offering? Are they excited about a particular feature that they're trying for the first time? Use this market intelligence to guide other teams in your organization.

Use social media monitoring to track links to your website on social media, engagement from campaigns, and check on the sentiment and performance of your marketing campaigns. By doing this, you'll learn whether your campaign content is resonating with your audience. To make this easier to track, consider using a hashtag for your marketing campaign. This way, you'll have an easy way to track the conversations and your audience will know where to find the conversation as well. Tracking links, created by appending UTM parameters to any links back to your website, can help you monitor exactly where traffic came from. In this example, we append a source, medium, and campaign, so we know exactly where traffic to academy.hubspot.com came from in our website analytics.

Let's talk about how social monitoring can boost your recruiting efforts. The most important asset in your organization isn't the website, and it's not the building your office is in, or even the product or service you sell – it's the people who bring all those things together into a growing business. Recruiting, therefore, may be the single most important activity your organization performs on a regular basis, and monitoring social media can help you recruit more diverse, talented, and remarkable employees for your team.

Here's how your HR or recruiting team can apply an inbound marketing approach to their recruiting efforts: Just like the buyer persona you've identified to be a potential best-fit customer for your product or service, create a job seeker persona that is a potential best-fit employee for a particular job opening. Just like you'd listen to and monitor the opinions of your buyer persona, do the same with your job seeker persona. If potential candidates are active on social media, they're giving you a way to understand them better, learn what they value in an organization, and fine tune your job descriptions, interviews, and career page to suit their priorities.

In this video, you learned the difference between social listening and social monitoring, as well as a few ways to use social media monitoring to grow your business. Remember, social media monitoring helps to inspire and inform your content, your brand, and even your product or recruiting strategies.

Video 4: Watching the Competition

Listening to and monitoring your competition is likely the number one, most obvious way to use your newly gained social media monitoring powers. In competitive markets, after all, it's an absolute imperative. Think about candidates running in an election - every word said by or about the opponent is an opportunity to strike, to differentiate, to tell the world that we can do it better. But is that really… inbound?

Inbound is a human, holistic, and helpful approach to doing business. Here's how I like to think about using our marketing superpowers for good. When I was a kid, my father used to tell me to look forward, not side to side, when I was concerned with how my grades stood up against my classmates. "Put your blinders on, and just focus." he'd say. I think he was comparing me and my classmates to horses, but that's neither here nor there. "The energy you put into looking side to side will keep you from winning the race." There is some truth in that wisdom when it comes to social media monitoring, because watching the competition can become an obsession that might over-influence your strategy. Just remember, inbound is about being customer-centric, not competitor-centric.

Now, with that out of the way, let's go over why you might monitor your competition as part of your social media monitoring activities. Well, for one, you and your competitors are innately participating in the same industry. When rising tides lift all boats, understanding those tides is pretty important to guiding your company's strategy. Your competitors might be more or less susceptible to a particular variable that influences them. Social monitoring is a great way to learn what those variables are and get ahead of them.

For example, in May of 2018, companies who store data about European Union citizens needed to spend a ton of energy orchestrating their data processes and technology to support the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requirements. Another business might see how this regulation impacted their competitors and ask, "if that were to happen with our customers, what would we need to do? What are those companies doing to prepare themselves, and where are they feeling the most pain? What can we learn from them?"

When monitoring your competitors, take note of theirs wins, losses, reputation, differentiations, marketing tactics, relationships, alliances, and even their brand voice. These characteristics, and how they change over time, can be used to inform your own decisions. Remember what my dad said about focusing on your competition, and try to use the information as part of a holistic market intelligence strategy.

Let's say a competitor had some kind of very public blunder. Ask yourself: if that catastrophe happened to you, wouldn't you feel like they took a cheap shot? Is this really an opportunity to go in for the kill? Is the oversight of a few of your competitor's employees really going to help you differentiate your offering?

In this case, the best thing to do is simply to listen to the social posts about the incident and creatively and helpfully contribute to that conversation. Don't take the opportunity make a sales pitch to their customers, just make sure those people feel as though they're being heard, especially if your competitor isn't listening.

In this video, we've covered the importance and delicate balance of using social media monitoring to learn from our competitors. Before we move on, let's review a few simple ways to monitor your competitors. We're going to move through them quickly, so feel free to rewind and pause the video to take notes.

- Subscribe - Okay, not very original, but subscribing to your competitors' social media channels is perhaps the easiest way to monitor them.
- Here is a list of social media monitoring tools that we love.
  - Slide: HubSpot, TweetDeck, Social Mention, Followerwonk, SumAll, Mentionmapp, Klout, Hootsuite, BoardReader, BuzzSumo
- Native Search - Just about every social network has a search functionality, and in most cases, the URL of the search results can be bookmarked or saved for future reference. For more advanced searching, you can even use boolean search queries. Boolean search is a type of search allowing users to combine keywords with operators (or modifiers) such as AND, NOT and OR to further produce more relevant results. Here's an example I'm always checking. It combines tweets from community members like you who are passing their certification exams and tweeting in English, Spanish, or Portuguese. You can do the same with your competitors. Now go ahead and congratulate a few of your soon-to-be fellow graduates! I'll wait.

Can you think of any other ways to monitor your competitors? Tweet them to us at @HubSpotAcademy with hashtag #smmonitoring and you may just find yourself featured in a future iteration of this video.

Video 5: Evaluating Social Listening and Monitoring Tools & Services

Hi again! Let's go over some of the tools you'll need to build social media listening and monitoring processes into your daily and weekly routine. No matter how large or small your organization is, what industry you're in, or how much budget you have, there are tools and technologies that can help you with your social media listening and monitoring efforts.

If you're low on budget or bandwidth, start with the native analytics and search functionality in your social network of choice. Search for keyword phrases about your organization, like the name of the company, name of top executives, product names, feature names, and even the names of your existing customers. Take note of various filtering and sorting options. For instance, Facebook's search functionality allows you to filter by content type, like posts, photos, videos, and even people, by age of the post, location of the post, and even by group.

Some social networks, like Twitter, have additional monitoring tools like Tweetdeck. TweetDeck is a social media dashboard application for management of Twitter accounts.

Now, if you have some budget for social media monitoring and listening tools, you have quite a few tools to choose from. Examples include but aren't limited to, tools like the following: Buzzsumo, Brandwatch, Keyhole, TweetReach, and Streamview.

Take advantage of free versions and trial periods to make sure you're seeing measurable value from the tool before you sign up for a subscription. How do you know it's generating value? Well, look at the information it's providing you, the decisions you're making based on that information, and the results you're getting from those decisions. If you can't connect key business metrics like new business revenue and customer retention back to social media strategy, you might not be ready to buy social media tools at all.

Don't worry, we've all been there. If you're going to ask your boss to invest in a piece of software, that means you'll need to make a clear business case for it. How much revenue is attributable to your social media activities? How will this new tool add value, and how much? Will you achieve a return-on-investment from the tool? Answer these questions and you'll have a much easier time getting the budget to invest in social media tools.

Let's break out the social media listening and monitoring tools into a few types: social media monitoring and social media engagement. Social media monitoring tools, sometimes called listening platforms, are where most social media strategies begin – monitoring and tracking mentions of your brand, products, competitors, and industry issues. Social media monitoring tools offer countless ways to analyze, measure, display, and report findings…The features vary by vendor as do cost, so people typically select one social media monitoring solution or provider and supplement it with tools in other categories.

> Katie Greeves, Social Media & Public Relations Manager, OPIS By IHS Markit:
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> "We use social listening as a tactic in our marketing strategy very much, and very often. It helps us in a

variety of different ways, from breaking the latest news, and to see what other people are talking to, to relative what's trending on general topics around the oil and gas industry. A lot of times things are happening so quickly in my industry, in the oil and gas industry, that social media has actually helped me talk to our C-Suite and our editorial staff about something that people are talking about, and then they go and investigate it further. And they can put out quality content to our subscribers in a very timely manner."

Social media engagement tools are communication platforms where users take action and can respond, engage, interact, or communicate directly on social networks. Examples include:

Tweetdeck, HubSpot, Spredfast, Sprinklr, Hootsuite, Sprout Social Influence, Conversion

Users provide the login credentials and give the application publishing permissions so that the user can publish social media content without leaving the social media engagement tool. These are real-time, highly customized dashboards and often offer multiple accounts, a shared workspace for many users and the ability to respond in multiple places with one click. Social media engagement tools differ from social media monitoring tools because they are primarily where activity occurs rather than where one analyzes activity.

There are also tools that overlap in functionality with social media monitoring and social media engagement but extend these tasks with specific features like customer relationship management, which aggregates dozens of types of information from multiple networks to give you a complete view of each customer. For example, in the HubSpot Marketing Hub, social interactions are connected to the rest of your contacts' information, so sales, services, and marketing users can take advantage of that information because it's in a central, organized place. Other tools, like Google Analytics, can help you measure conversions from social media while others provide information about the level of of influence people have.

Last but certainly not least, there are tools for managing reputation and influence. These high-level monitoring tools typically come at high price point because they're constantly pulling data from all over the web and using machine learning to visualize your brand reputation in an easy-to-understand dashboard. Examples of tools for managing brand reputation, sentiment, and influence include: Buzzlogic, Radian6, Nielsen, Trackur, Brands Eye, Reputation Defender, Sentiment Metrics, Visible Technologies, and Cision.

These are all tools for listening to and monitoring conversations about your brand, and they provide a way to be a part of those conversations. When someone says something about a brand on social media, whether it's positive or negative, just knowing that the brand is listening is so, so powerful.

You can turn a negative experience around with a single, helpful tweet. You can share one customer's positive experience with the rest of your followers to build a sense of community. You can attract website traffic by participating in conversations about the topics that you and your customers care about. You can generate leads by converting that traffic into contacts. You can even support ongoing opportunities and help your sales team close more deals by helping prospects research a solution to a problem they're posting about.

In order to do these things, and to develop relationships with anyone who interacts with your business, it all starts with listening and monitoring on social media.