HOW TO USE

Social Media Monitoring Tools

by JAMIE TURNER

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If you're like a lot of people, you're probably already using social media in some way, shape, or form. You might have a Facebook page, and you probably have a Twitter account. You might even have a blog, a LinkedIn profile, and a Google + profile.

And, like so many people, you've been disciplined about posting updates and keeping your followers engaged with your brand. Sure, there might be a few times when you've fallen a bit behind, but overall, you've done a pretty good job of keeping your campaign active.

The problem you might have faced—and it's a problem many people face—is that you don't know where to go next. You don't really know how to take your social media program to a higher level.

Should you increase the number of posts you upload? Should you expand the number of social media channels you use? Or perhaps you should get more people in your company engaged with the program?

All of those are good options. Before you dive into any of those initiatives, many people find that learning how to use social media monitoring tools is the best next step. When used properly, these tools can do more than just give you a snapshot of who is talking about your product or service. Instead, they can help you monitor whether your social media campaigns are actually *driving revenue for your business.*

Questions to Ask Before You Begin Monitoring

The problem many people have with their social media programs is that they think about tactics before thinking about strategy. Typically, this means that they dive into setting up a Twitter account or a Facebook page without really giving any thought as to why they're doing that or *what their objectives are.*

You probably already have most of your social media channels set up, but it never hurts to ask yourself *why* you set them up in the first place. Were they for branding purposes only? Or were they intended to drive people to sign up for your e-newsletter? You might even have set them up to drive people to an e-commerce page on your site.

Now is a good time to take a step back and ask yourself: "What is our objective? What's the end result we want from our campaign?" Be sure you get very specific. For example, don't just say, "We want more customers," or "we want more revenue." Instead, say, "We want to generate 10,000 leads from new prospects over the next 12 months and convert 1% of those leads to customers during the same period."

Three of the terms you hear quite frequently are *prospects, leads*, and *customers*. A *prospect* is someone who has visited your website,

and a *lead* is someone who has raised their hand (figuratively) and asked for more information from your company. In other words, a lead is someone who has downloaded a white paper from your website or filled out a "Contact Me" form. That's an indication that the lead is genuinely interested in you, your products, or your services.

The lead becomes a *customer* after they've bought a product or service from you. Sometimes, in low-consideration products, it's easy to convert a lead to a customer. But, in high-consideration products, the sales conversion process is much more complex and convoluted. For example, for expensive business-to-business (B2B) purchases, even though there might only be one person who approves the purchase, there might be several people who influence the decision-making process.

The good news is that social media can help you every step of the way—from the first visit, to the first request for information, and all the way through to the final sale.

There's one other thing you should do before I move forward. Now that you've thought through your objectives, you should *write them down*. Objectives have a way of getting lost in the shuffle when they're not written down, so be sure you put yours on paper. And make sure they follow the S.M.A.R.T. rule: Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Realistic, and Timebound. By being specific about your objectives and writing them down, they're more likely to be accomplished.