

How do you qualitatively monitor campaign feedback in a digital age?

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There are two essential points to consider in determining how best to perform qualitative monitoring in an expanding media arena:

First, qualitative monitoring requires qualified monitoring. The reason: monitoring produces value only if the underlying search faithfully reflects the campaign objectives.

Take a PR firm that represents a large US manufacturer as an example. The firm, on its client's behalf, has initiated a huge campaign to garner widespread support for a major trade bill recently introduced in Congress. To help attain that goal, the effort will include an intensive grassroots component that enlists the active assistance of employees located in areas where the company has factories, warehouses, research facilities, and sales offices.

The framework of qualitative monitoring takes shape with the fleshing-out of the endeavor's details: writing letters to local daily and weekly newspapers, staging rallies that spur coverage by broadcast and cable stations, as well as print outlets, and getting the word out to neighbors, families, friends, and elected officials through social media. It's obvious, therefore, that the given scenario calls for monitoring on a multimedia scale.

This raises the second essential point: qualitative monitoring is strategic monitoring. Viewed through this wider lens, qualitative monitoring means more than identifying the prospective audiences and selecting the channels to reach them. It also entails establishing relevant metrics by which the campaign results can be meaningfully measured. Besides providing a solid basis on which to assess the progress of a campaign, ongoing measurement of substantive traits such as story sentiment



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and message delivery can generate insights that spark ideas for news stories that help to maintain a campaign's momentum.

All in all, the formula for creating a monitoring program in which benefits outweigh costs is a simple one: qualitative monitoring equals strategic monitoring equals quality results.

Johna Burke, SVP of marketing, BurrellesLuce

The numbers can be overwhelming: 500 million Facebook users and Twitter accounts with more followers than the circulation of the largest newspapers. Yet it is possible to monitor and measure – qualitatively and quantitatively – the impact of your communications activity across all media channels if you follow a disciplined process and remember the fundamentals of media analysis.

- **Have a plan.** Both “traditional” and social media communications (proactive and reactive) should be driven by strategy: what are your goals? What outcome constitutes “success”? How does social media impact print and broadcast coverage?

- **Lend an ear.** Make sure you hear what's being said. There are free tools that monitor social media, such as Google Alerts, or even search functions on Twitter and Facebook. But to track all channels, you may also choose a subscription offering that integrates both traditional and social media monitoring on one platform.

- **Select a universe to monitor.** You cannot engage everyone everywhere, so identify the right people to track. In traditional media, the outlet often drives influence. On the social Web, the individual almost always does. You know the “go-to” journalists, bloggers, and analysts who impact overall coverage. Identify other social media influencers using metrics such as average monthly unique visitors, inbound links, number of followers and comments, and sharing patterns (like retweets).

- **Measure the results.** The return on your multi-channel campaign can be measured. Established methodologies and metrics analyze the impact of print, broadcast, and online news coverage; social metrics offer both quantitative and qualitative data. Track tone and campaign messages or use an automated sentiment tool. Often, comments on influential blogs offer priceless anecdotal information.

- **Continuously improve.** Stay engaged after your campaign. Keep tracking conversations, analyze how social channels are affecting your entire coverage universe, and identify shifting influencer patterns in this dynamic communications environment.

Mathilda Joubert, VP, analysis services, Cision

Master Class

In order to effectively analyze a PR campaign, one needs to first develop a set of qualitative measurement guidelines to determine what will and will not move the needle for the organization.

When conducting a qualitative analysis of a campaign, the first step is defining the objectives of that initiative, which should support the organization's broader business goals. Is the purpose of the campaign to raise awareness? Drive consumers to a Web page? Get sales? Donations? All of the above? Clearly identify the desired result.

The next step is to subjectively determine what media will positively impact the campaign and meet the objectives outlined. For example, *60 Minutes* is a highly influential program and certainly a top-tier outlet. However, if the campaign goal is to reach young adults between 15 and 25, getting coverage on *60 Minutes* will not count for much. Know your audience and where to reach them.

In today's ever-increasing multi-channel communications world, the top-tier media for a campaign could be, for example, 80 local television stations, 20 newspapers, six magazines, 30 blogs, Facebook, and Twitter. Hits or mentions outside of that group are nice, but do they really achieve the goals? We monitor each of the more than 1,000 broadcast sources in real time so that the qualitative campaign feedback we recommend – such as tonality, key messaging, and a call to action – can be instantly derived, no matter the source.

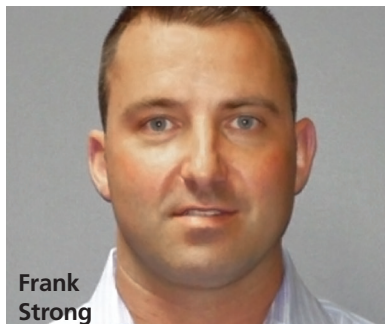
As the old saying goes, one man's trash is another man's treasure, even for the same organization across different campaigns. Spend time and effort qualitatively monitoring where it counts for the specific campaign at hand.

Steve Shannon, VP, sales and marketing, Critical Mention

TechCrunch recently cited Google CEO Eric Schmidt as saying, "Every two days now, we create as much information as we did from the dawn of civilization up until 2003." That's mind-boggling. It also explains to us why the Internet contains a staggering 1.2 zettabytes of content and why listening through the clutter can be a challenge.

Clearly, we want to know what's being said. However, we also need to know where it's being said, why, and how much:

• **Where is it being said?** Conduct an audit of social media by type to see where your organization receives the most chatter. The most prominent or active social networks, such as Twitter, are obvious opportunities, but



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“SHARE OF VOICE DEMONSTRATES HOW SOCIAL MEDIA EFFORTS MOVE THE OVERALL NEEDLE”

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if you dig a little deeper, you might uncover others. For example, we find YouTube Forums are often overlooked.

• **Why is it being said?** Sentiment analysis shows overall tone or feeling around a given topic. Identifying the positive and negative mentions is often indicative of where we need to focus our energy in crisis or what platforms present the most opportunity. Sentiment analysis also provides useful insight into how sentiment gravitates from one type of media to the next – it is often different in microblogs than on blogs or traditional media. As Joe Chernov of marketing automation company Eloqua once said, social media mentions without sentiment analysis is like “clip-counting 2.0.”

• **How much is being said?** Share of voice is a useful metric that demonstrates how social media efforts move the overall needle for an organization. For example, what is your share of voice for a specific keyword or phrase vis-à-vis the competition? If it's increasing, you're on the right path. If it's not, perhaps an alternative plan should be evaluated.

Frank Strong, PR director, Vocus
The proliferation of new media has provided PR pros with an opportunity to broadcast their message more broadly. At the same time, it has presented them with the challenge of trying to assess how to measure that message's resonance in the marketplace.

Determining success factors during a campaign is critical to help you develop a plan to monitor, measure, and react effectively.

Once a campaign strategy is established, delivering the message to the appropriate constituents is vital. A media directory that allows you to target specific titles, journalists, bloggers, and so on is paramount. Most successful campaigns include a social media outreach strategy in addition to traditional media.

One issue that PR pros encounter is aggregating mentions from various media channels and ensuring data is “clean,” which helps in providing a valid assessment. Harmonizing data across all media types is key in order to provide robust, meaningful insights. The easiest way to accomplish this is to find a vendor that monitors all media types, instead of dealing with multiple vendors.

“Clean” data means data relevant to the specific campaign. “Harmonizing” the data refers to consistent scoring of the clean, relevant content. Our research shows that as many as 90% of broadcast mentions are not relevant to a specific search.

Data harmonization can be accomplished to a degree through automation, but the best tool only provides about 50% accuracy. For a higher level of accuracy, human intervention is required to review and score this content.

Once you have established “clean data,” there are various tools available to present it in reports and charts so you can easily assess the impact of your campaign and make the appropriate changes if necessary.

Peter Wengryn, former CEO, VMS

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