

Credocast

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Reading Minds *Leveraging Social Listening*

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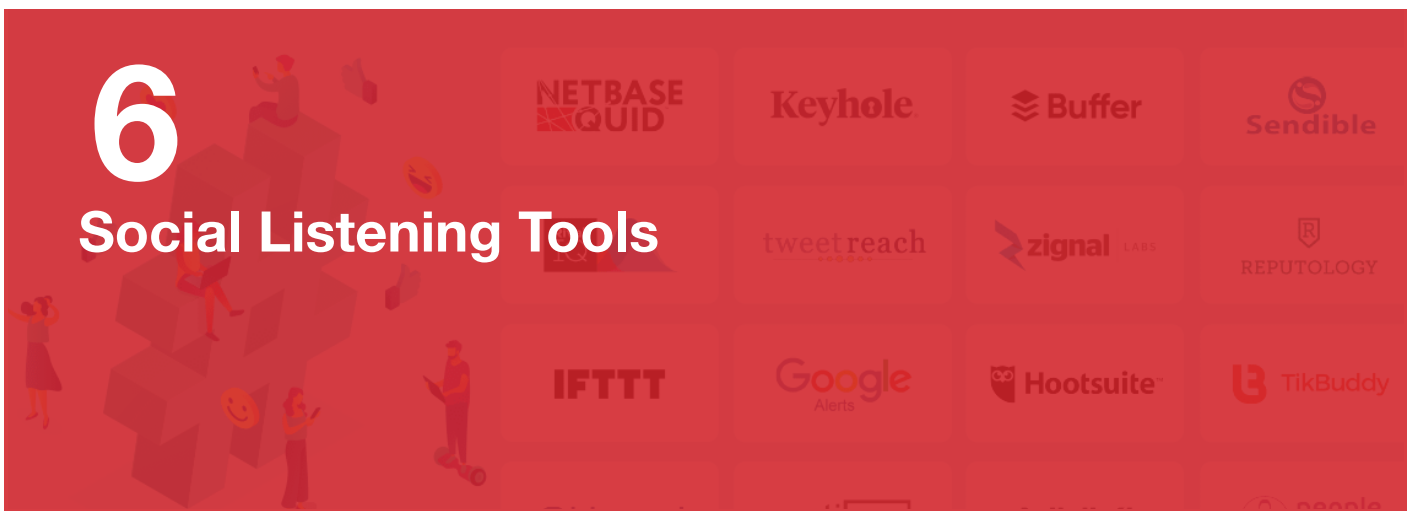
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About Credo Advisory

Credo Advisory is a leading strategic and development communications firm based in Nigeria. The firm partners with governments, organizations, businesses and individuals to raise public awareness, build trust, and effect change through targeted engagements.

We integrate our knowledge of best communication practices, industries, understanding of local markets, and research and insights to provide exceptional services. Credo is intentional about building long-term, rewarding partnerships and encouraging professional development in our people. We have unwavering commitment to championing our client needs, seeking new solutions and effecting change.

Our mission is to provide communication excellence in our advisory, products, initiatives, and interventions. At Credo, we aim to provide technical assistance and programming that enable our clients to build strong relationships across stakeholders, shape attitudes, educate audiences and influence behaviours for a positive impact in our society.



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Understanding Social Listening

Social listening identifies and assesses what is being said about a company, product, individual or brand across social media. Various listening tools track mentions of key words, phrases, or even complex queries for a better understanding of exactly what a target audience (customers, voters, etc.) thinks by analyzing what they say on social channels.¹ The monitoring and tracking is followed by an analysis of the collated data, which can reveal insights about how the target audience interacts with a brand, individual or organization on the internet in real-time via their smartphones and other devices.

By evaluating what consumers and potential customers say on social media platforms, social media listening technologies foster a clearer picture of audience perception and sentiment. They can also disclose views about another competitor brand, electoral candidate, development program, government policy, etc. when prompted through engagement. This provides useful audience research that is available in real time thanks to social listening tools like Hootsuite, Talkwalker, Brandwatch, Netbase, Primer, etc.²



Why is Social Listening Important?

The importance of understanding what your audience knows, feels, or thinks of you cannot be overestimated. Access to audience mentions or conversations about a particular topic or brand can help with developing and finetuning how brands, companies and governments engage with their audience. Based on these insights, more effective engagement strategies can be developed.³ For example, a presidential electoral candidate can assess public sentiment about his or her candidacy and electability by following conversations about them and their campaign. With Nigeria’s upcoming presidential elections, the candidates would benefit simply by using social listening tools to track key words (Osinbajo, Atiku, Greater Nigeria, Peter Obi, etc.) and analyzing what people are saying about them.

¹ Awario, S., (2019). Social listening: what it is, why it matters, and how to do it. Available at: <https://martech.org/social-listening/>

² Newberry, C., (2021). Social Media Marketing & Management Dashboard. 2022. What is Social Listening, Why it Matters, and 10 Tools to Make it Easier. Available at: https://blog.hootsuite.com/social-listening-business/#10_social_listening_tools

³ Brand24 Blog (2021). Social Listening - Benefits, Tools & Case Studies. Available at: <https://brand24.com/blog/what-is-social-listening/>

“ It essentially provides answers to the questions that determine how an individual, organization or business engage with their audience, where their market focus should be, how to determine their strategic objectives and so much more. ”



Similarly, a government agency regulating electricity consumer rights and the electricity supply industry can listen to social media commentary and public outcries to determine intervention areas. For example, a #WeNeedMeters hashtag and corresponding social media comments is a red flag to the electricity regulator to act.

Social Listening Benefits

The important feature about social media listening is that one can access valuable insights on brand competition, potential consumers, customers, market research, etc. It essentially provides answers to the questions that determine how an individual, organization or business engage with their audience, where their market focus should be, how to determine their strategic objectives and so much more.

Reputation Management

Reputation management remains the most common reason for social listening. Brands want to know how their market or audience feel about them. Are they trusted? Do their customers like their product or service? Do voters believe them or think they are electable? Monitoring social media mentions to track their reputational health can help them better react to changes in volume of mentions and sentiment early to prevent reputational damage.⁴

Social listening gives you deeper assessment about what people are saying about you online in real time. As a result, it also gives you the data and information to establish a mitigation plan for addressing the issues on social media. This is critical because not every engagement on social media will be positive; brands find this out the hard way and when it is too late. Catching these potential reputational risks as early as possible before they take on a life of their own will not only improve audience engagement, but it also fosters trust and strengthens brand reputation.

⁴Awario, S., (2019). Social listening: what it is, why it matters, and how to do it. Available at: <https://martech.org/social-listening/>

“ A social media competitor analysis is a method of "snooping" on competitor activity and results to learn about their strengths and how you compare. ”

Competitor Analysis

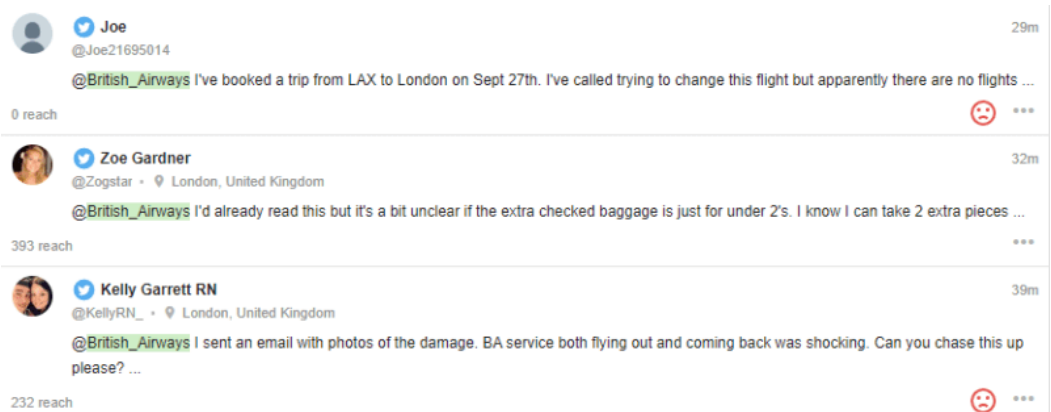
While social listening tools can help a brand assess and track audience sentiment about them, it can also provide the same for their competition across social media, in the media, on various fora and discussion platforms, etc.⁵ A social media competitor analysis is a method of "snooping" on competitor activity and results to learn about their strengths and how you compare. You can get data on your competitors' organic posts, adverts, and stories using social listening tools.



This intelligence is crucial for competitor analysis. Social listening will help measure your competition's share of voice and brand health metrics to benchmark them against your own.⁶ You can learn what their customers love and hate about their products (so you can improve yours), you can identify the influencers they partner with and so much more to better position your own brand, product or service.⁷

Customer Relations

According to MarTech, an online marketing platform, “fewer than 30% of social media mentions of brands include their handle — that means that by not using a social listening tool businesses risk not engaging on about 70% of the conversations about their business.”⁸ This is at the heart of what customer relations is about. It is about acknowledging and addressing audience feedback. Non-response to these online conversations can lead to reduction in sales, revenue loss, losing a campaign, higher audience dissatisfaction, reputational damage, etc.



⁵ Sprout Social, (2022). Available at: <https://sproutsocial.com/social-listening/>

⁶ Awario, S., (2019). Social listening: what it is, why it matters, and how to do it. Available at: <https://martech.org/social-listening/>

⁷ Awario, S., (2019). Social listening: what it is, why it matters, and how to do it. Available at: <https://martech.org/social-listening/>

⁸ MarTech (2022). Available at: <https://sprout-social.com/social-listening/>

Source – MarTech

“It is a valuable channel to gauge the effectiveness the brand’s public communication as well as audience reaction to it.”

Above is an example of social media conversations that require effective customer relations and engagement. Failure to respond and be proactive can lead to companies like British Airways, in this instance, to lose existing and potential customers as well as suffer reputational damage.

Public Relations

Social listening helps public relations departments become situationally aware.⁹ The individual or organization will no longer be heavily reliant on employees, friends and other stakeholders to keep one abreast of news on their brand. For example, it can help public relations teams monitor when press releases and articles mentioning the company get published. It is a valuable channel to gauge the effectiveness of the brand’s public communication as well as audience reactions to it. For example, in the case of a product, the brand would want to know about any defects before it breaks on news outlets. In essence, having a social listening program in place can provide a greater sense of comfort and security. There will be more time to respond to any commentary before it goes viral and potentially, damaging the brand. Additionally, public relations practitioners use social listening tools to monitor mentions of competitors and keywords across the online media.

Social Listening Tools



Source – Ranola

Conclusion

Social listening technology is still quite new and evolving. Sometimes certain web applications may not cover some areas or regions (for reasons best known to the writer of the algorithm) but it’s advisable to deploy social listening “antennae” as quickly as possible. By using different listening platforms, you can get results robust enough to jumpstart awareness of how your brand is doing online and how you can leverage that audience insight to meet strategic objectives (boost sales, protect brand image, etc.).

⁹Kane Communications Group. (2022). How social media listening programs enhance your PR strategy. Available at: <https://www.kanecommgroupp.com/articles-resources/how-social-media-listening-programs-enhance-your-pr-strategy>