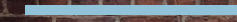


MEANINGFUL MEASUREMENT:

*The Social Media Data You're Underutilizing—
and How to Put it to Work for Free*





There is a massive disconnect happening in the social media space, and it has nothing to do with the Kardashians.

- Social media spending is expected to climb to a 20.9 percent share of marketing budgets in the next five years, up from only 5.6 percent in 2009.¹
- Only 3.4 percent of marketing leaders report that social media contributes very highly to firm performance. A whopping 40 percent report a below-average contribution.¹

You can't manage what you don't measure. So said the late, great Peter Drucker, the man commonly hailed as the father of modern business management.

But Drucker died in 2005. He died just one year after Facebook entered the scene in a Harvard dorm room. He died one year before Twitter would chirp into our lexicon. And he died a full five years before Pinterest and Instagram would redefine how we catalogue and capture our lives.

As people use social media—and it goes without saying they're using social media at an exponential rate—they leave a rich trail of data. As of January 2016, there are more than 2.307 billion active social media accounts worldwide²—that's nearly one for every four people on Earth. It's data that has the power to reveal and predict consumer buying patterns. It's the kind of data that when harvested and directed in the right way could potentially automate nearly every business function, from budgeting to R&D.

But even with all that data, and all of its potential power, there is a social media disconnect. Eighty-six percent of marketers believe that social media is important for their business,¹ and U.S. spending on social media marketing is expected to top \$17 billion by 2019.³ Yet only 3.4 percent of leaders report that social media contributes very highly to their organization's performance.¹

1. 2016 CMO Survey, Oct. 24, 2016

2. "Digital in 2016" report by We Are Social, Jan. 26, 2016

3. Statista 2016

46 percent

of B2B marketers say they're not sure whether any social channels have generated revenue for their businesses.'

Only 13 percent

of B2B marketers believe they've proved the impact quantitatively—though that may be because just 14% tie social media marketing activities to sales levels.'

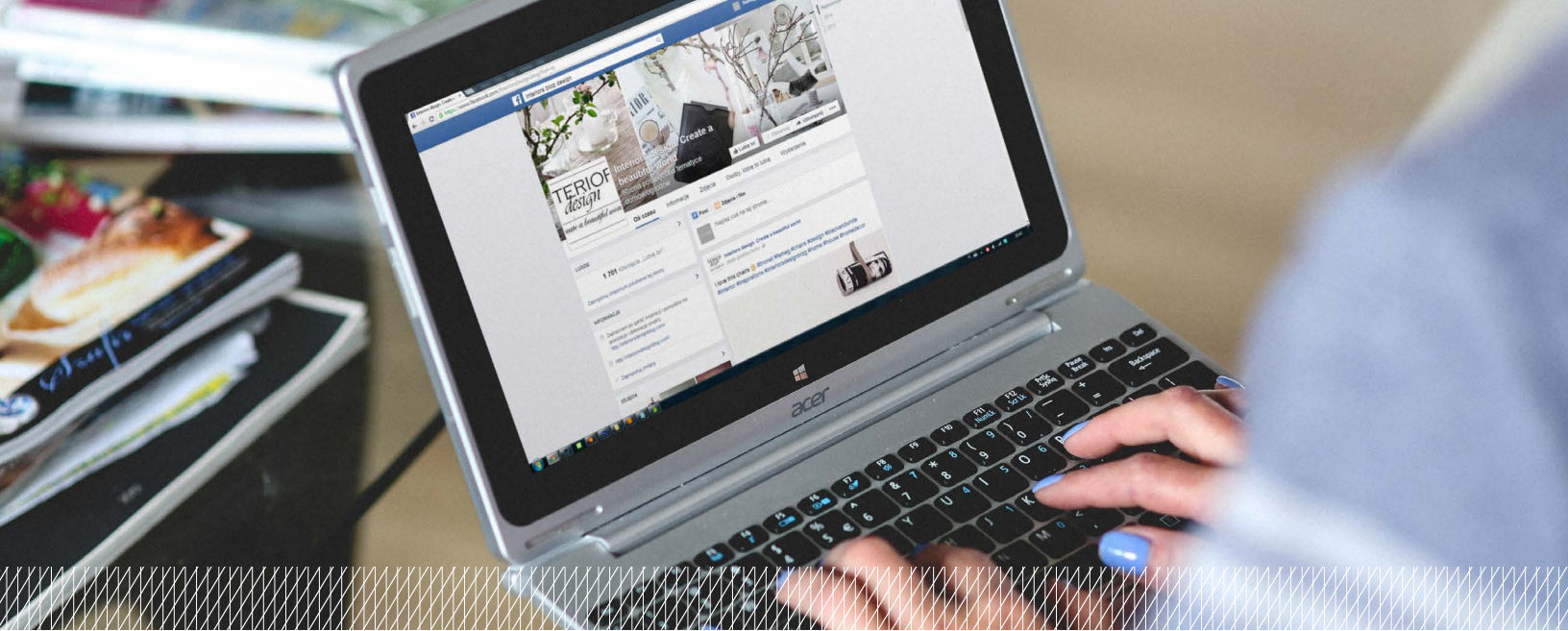
Meanwhile, 59.5 percent of CMOs were neutral or negative when asked how effectively they believe social media is linked to their firms' marketing strategy, while just 40.5 percent believed it is linked very or somewhat effectively. Forty-five percent said they haven't been able to show social media's impact on their companies' performance at all.¹

We believe there is a correlation between a lack of perceived value and the underutilization of social media analytics. After all, we can't manage what we don't measure. From a marketing and PR standpoint, ignoring or underutilizing social media analytics is the equivalent of leaving money on the table: Social media analytics allows us to tailor campaigns and one-time initiatives in ways that boost sales, convert customers and foster enduring relationships with brand loyalists.

The cherry on top? This data is all yours, for free. If your business has a social media presence on Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest, you have access to a plethora of data at absolutely no cost. The trick is in accessing it and analyzing it in the right way.

In this piece we outline the process for capturing and distilling the most powerful data on the top social media platforms. We also outline the data you don't need. Because ultimately, highly targeted engagement is far more valuable than thousands of likes, and you need the data that gets you closer to the former.

Social media offers marketing and PR leaders the ability to immediately measure effectiveness and prove ROI in a way traditional media and consumer outreach could never dream of. Don't leave it on the table. Instead, get strategically social and let data drive. Here's how to take full advantage of some of the most valuable consumer and competitive insights money can buy – without spending another dime.



facebook

What's Not Important: Likes

While 1 million page likes might look impressive, and boost your reach a little, if those 1 million followers aren't truly interested in your brand, it doesn't really matter. Facebook's algorithm doesn't even guarantee that all of your followers see your posts—visibility is determined by engagement actions, which in turn can put your content in front of people who aren't even your followers (yet!).

FACEBOOK

The godfather of social media and the world's third most visited website. Your customers are there, and with very few exceptions, you should be too. Here's how to get the most out of the data Facebook provides.

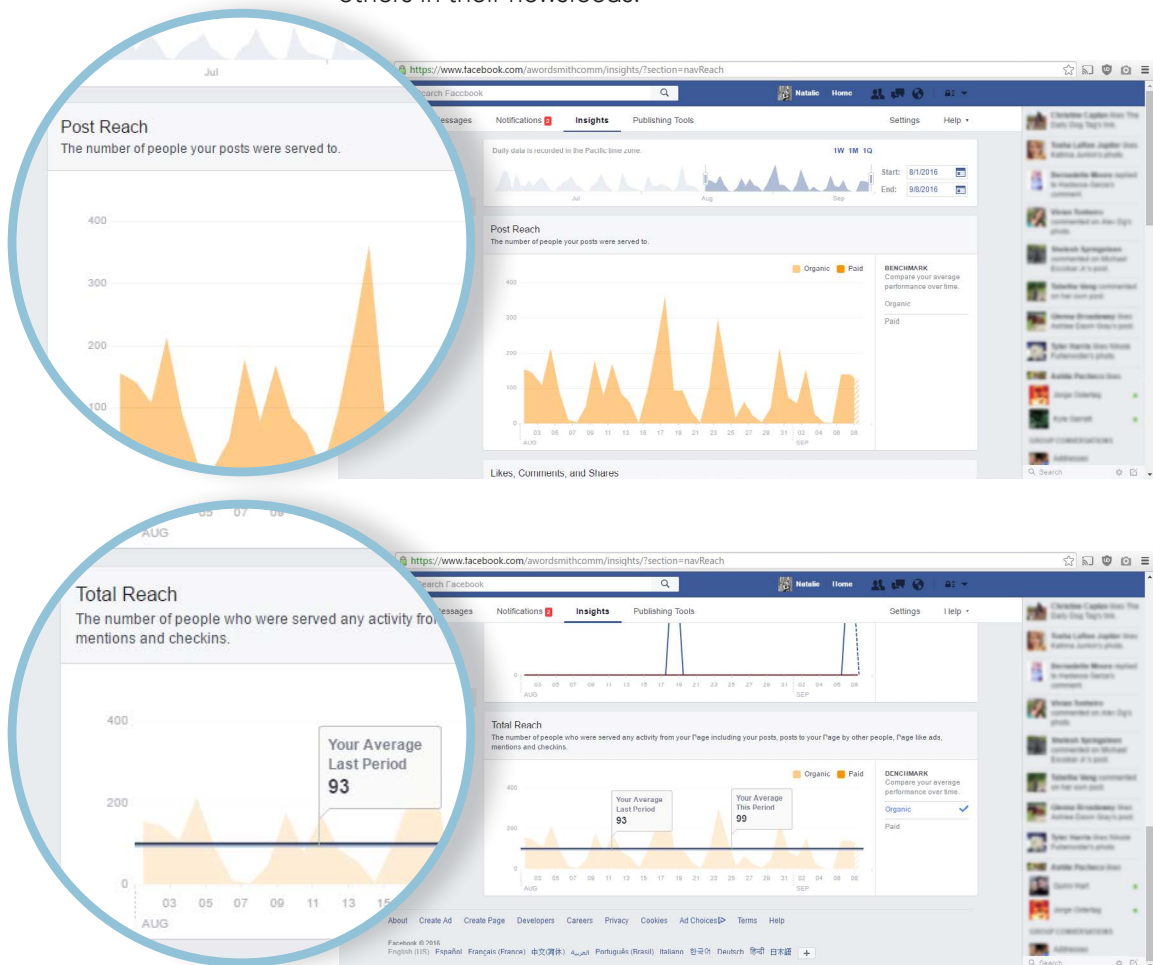
KNOW YOUR REACH

If you ask your CEO what statistics they care about most on social media, reach is probably up there right alongside conversion rates. While reach on Facebook isn't necessarily the statistic that determines whether your social campaigns are successful, it's a flashier stat that can help show Facebook's value quickly to someone not as well versed in social media.

Reach is only partly based on how many likes you have. To gauge your page's reach, click on your Insights tab and then choose "Reach" on the left panel. At the top, the page allows you to set a specific time frame to look at, which is great for benchmarking. Once you've set the desired range, the Post Reach chart will show you the highs and lows of your reach throughout the month. Look for where the chart spikes, and click on those dates to see which posts were getting traction. This will help you understand what types of posts are being seen by the most people and provide a starting point for crafting future content.

FACEBOOK

The additional charts below also offer some useful information, both for planning and proving ROI: a chart of your likes, comments and shares; information on how many people unliked your page or reported a post as spam; and the Total Reach chart, which shows you how many people saw your posts or saw interactions with them by others in their newsfeeds.



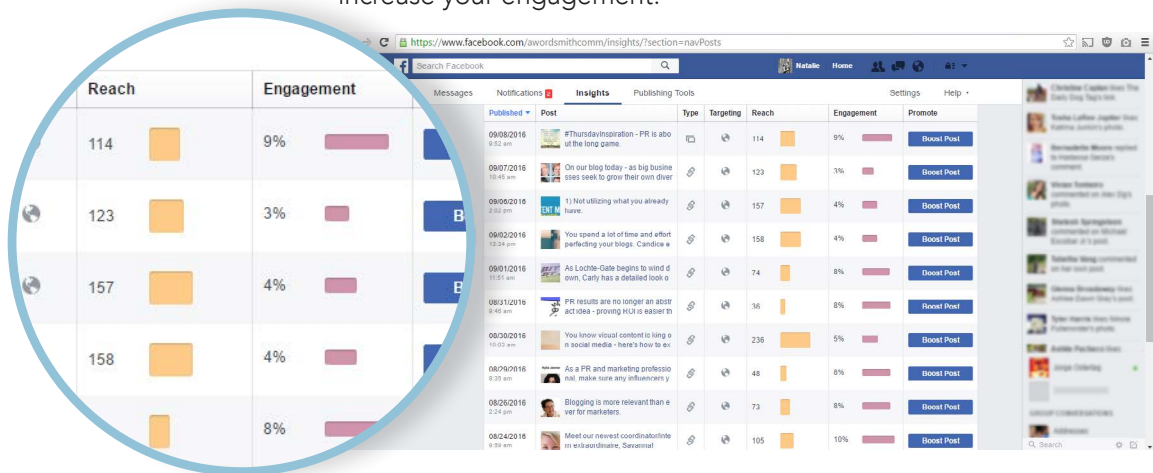
ANALYZE YOUR ENGAGEMENT

The reach of your page is a starting point. Engagement data is what will really help you understand what's working and what's not. Click on "Posts," scroll down to "All Posts Published," and choose "Engagement" from the drop-down menu. You'll probably notice that some of your posts with the highest engagement don't necessarily have the highest reach.

FACEBOOK

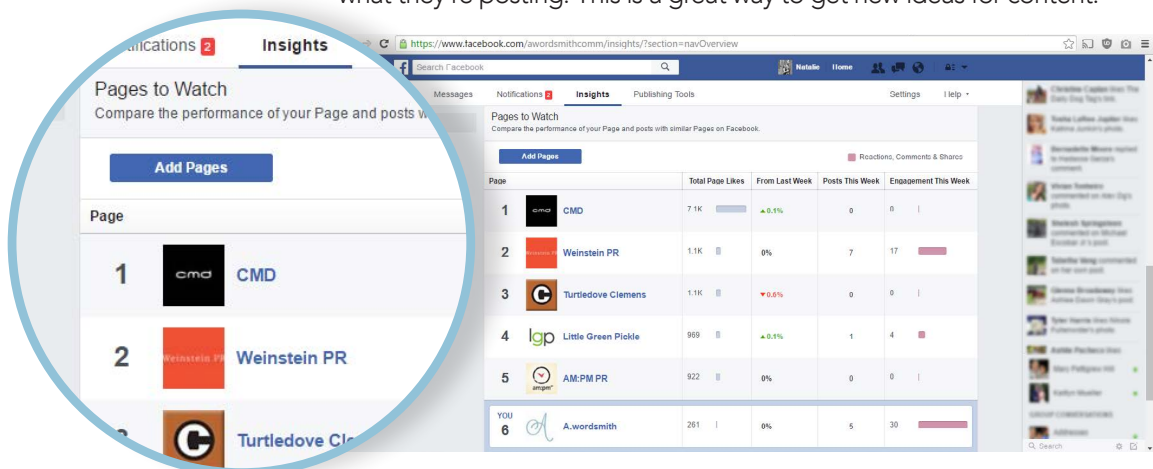
Targeted content that has a high engagement rate among the 500 people it reached will likely give you a better ROI than content that reached 10,000 people but had a low engagement rate. Those 500 people are more likely to actually make a purchase with you now or in the future.

There is a bonus statistic on this page: The hill-shaped graph at the top lets you know at what times more of your audience is online. Try posting content at those times to get it in front of more of them and increase your engagement.



TRACK THE COMPETITION

At the very bottom of your main Insights page (Overview), you have the opportunity to add “Pages to Watch.” Add the pages of your main competitors here, and track how you compare with them, in terms of engagement. You might not have the number of followers they have, but if you’re drafting quality content and posting at the right times, you might have a higher engagement number. If you see a page with a higher engagement number than yours one week, check out the page and see what they’re posting. This is a great way to get new ideas for content.





What's Not Important: Followers and Mentions

As brands on social media continue to discover that having millions of likes doesn't mean much, there will likely be less focus on racking up as many Twitter followers as possible. It's great to continue to grow the number, but without engagement, the ROI isn't as strong.

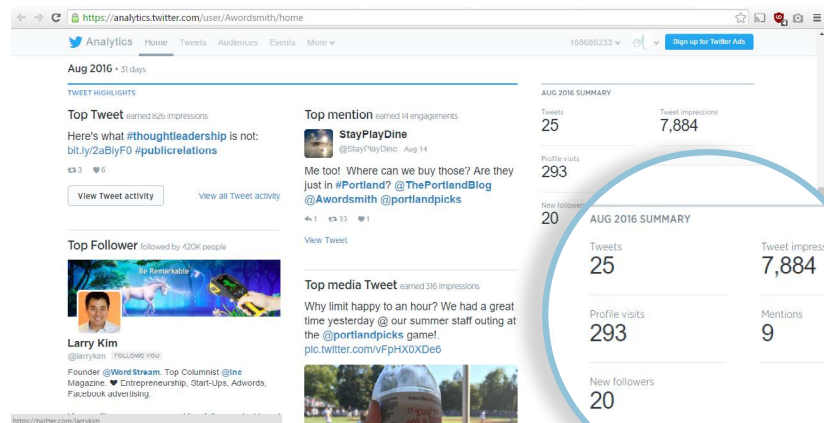
Being mentioned by other users on Twitter is an engagement method, and it can boost your reach, but mentions alone don't indicate context. Are they mentioning that they love your product or hate it? While this can be a good way to discover customer service issues, you don't need to focus on how many mentions you have. With the number of Twitter bots tweeting at other accounts aimlessly, there's a chance your mentions rate isn't even an accurate representation.

TWITTER

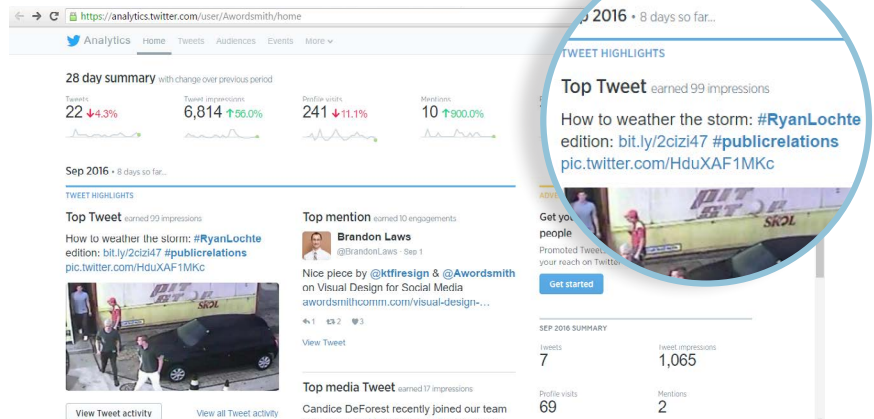
Its wide reach and easy accessibility make Twitter an incredibly valuable customer engagement platform. It also offers a personality Facebook doesn't—one that is casual, simple and direct. Even if you aren't using it as a marketing push mechanism, retweets offer brands the ability to engage one-on-one with consumers and amplify other brands or individuals.

UNDERSTAND YOUR IMPRESSIONS

Impressions on Twitter are similar to Reach on Facebook. On your Twitter Analytics home page, you'll see a breakdown of Impressions, Profile Visits, Followers and Mentions over the last 28 days. For a more thorough breakdown of your Impressions, choose "Tweets" at the top of the page. A bar graph shows you each day over the last 28 as well as details for all of your tweets on the second half of the page.



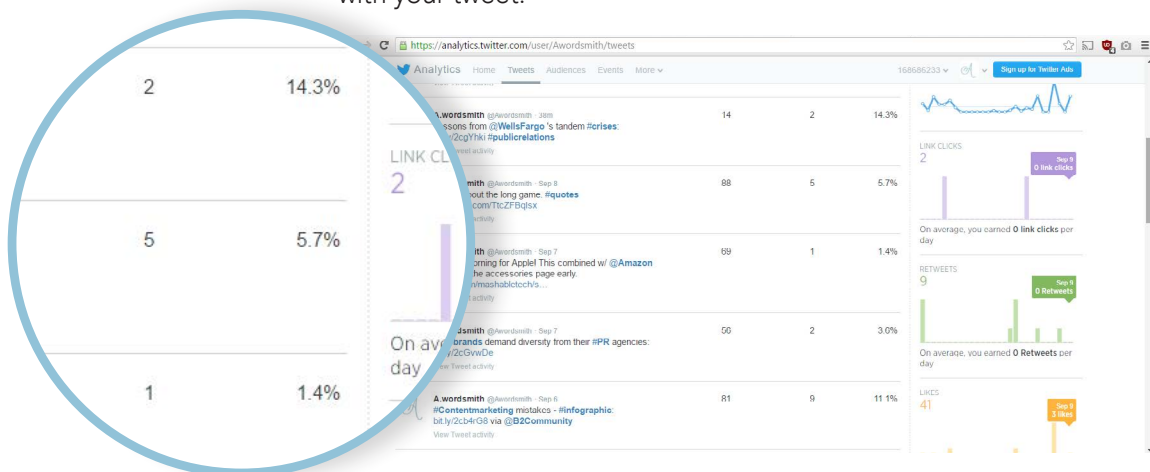
TWITTER



As a starting point, take a look at the “Top Tweets” tab and see which of your tweets made the most impressions. Your tweets can make impressions through your followers’ feeds, retweets, favorites and the hashtags you use. Using a trending hashtag might get you an impressive reach. But, just like Facebook, that doesn’t always equal high engagement.

GAUGE ENGAGEMENTS

Also on your “Tweets” tab is a percentage of engagement that each of your tweets received. As with Facebook, this is a critical data point to understand, as it measures how many people actually interacted with your tweet.

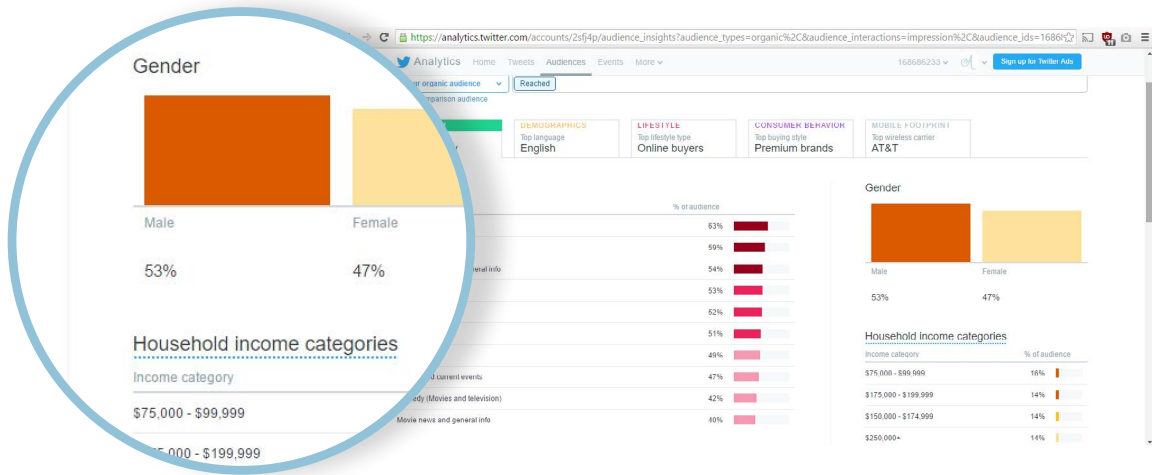


A low number of impressions but a high engagement can be a good thing: You’re probably targeting your content well. The key with Twitter is often the hashtags. You don’t need to tack on irrelevant hashtags just because they’re popular, even though this can boost your impressions. To drive engagement on Twitter, look for hashtags popular with your target audience, use them sparingly and appropriately, and be authentic in the tweets you add them to.

TWITTER

GET TO KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

The “Audiences” tab available in the analytics page includes a wealth of information. Any brand should know its audience demographics well already, and have a firm profile of the type of consumer they want to target, so this data can serve as a useful gut check.



You can choose to look at your followers only or at your organic reach audience. Look for any surprises in the breakdown of your audience’s interests, consumer behavior and lifestyle types. If there’s anything unexpected, take a look at the hashtags you’ve been using—are they targeted well? If you have an audience in a particular category that doesn’t seem to relate to your business, this can be a great time to look at the bigger picture. Is this perhaps an untapped market? Or is your content targeted at driving impressions and missing on engagement?



LINKEDIN and INSTAGRAM

Free analytics behind LinkedIn and Instagram are emerging but remain slimmer than the other three platforms covered in this piece. Here is what's available now:

- LinkedIn offers some analytics for company pages, the most important of which is the impression and engagement rates for each post. Just like Facebook, you'll want to aim for a high engagement rate vs. a high impression rate. The analytics page also offers some basic information on where your audience falls in terms of career level and page views and how you compare, follower-wise, to your competitors.
- In mid-2016, Instagram began rolling out its own analytics platform called Insights. The option to use analytics isn't available to all users yet, but when offered it includes detailed demographics information about an account's audience, a section organizing recent posts by impression level and follower activity information that notes when followers are more active online.



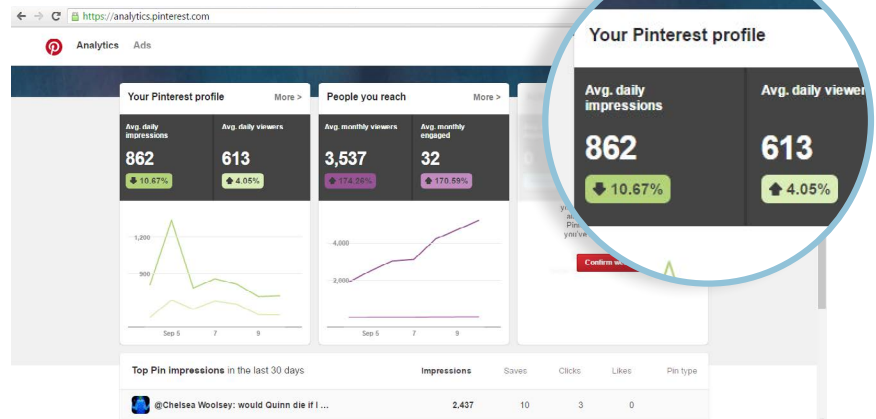
PINTEREST

With more than 100 million Pinners, Pinterest is arguably social media's most powerful conversion tool. According to research released by Millward Brown, a whopping 87 percent of Pinners have purchased a product because of Pinterest. Another 93 percent of Pinners have used Pinterest to plan a future purchase. Here's how to put social's best salesperson to work for you:

FOCUS ON IMPRESSIONS TO DRIVE AND FORECAST SALES

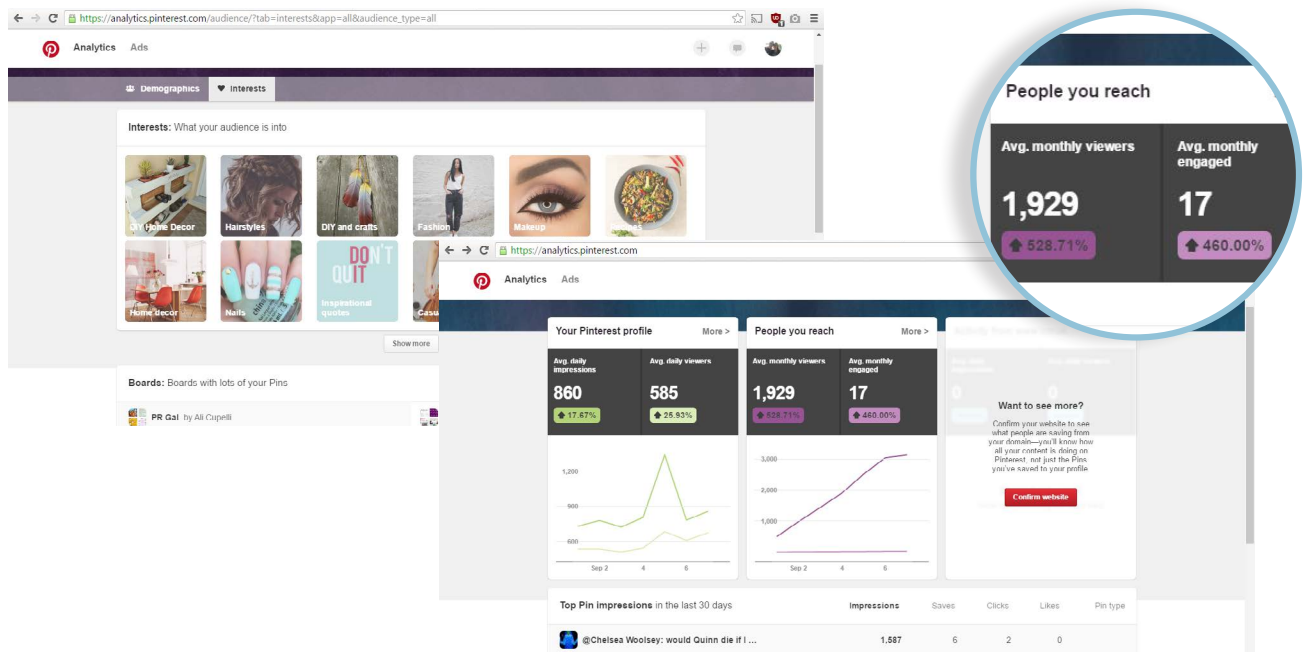
Out of the three platforms discussed here, Pinterest is where impressions mean the most. Pinterest is heading toward functioning more as a marketplace, albeit a somewhat chaotic one. While you definitely want to focus on getting users to actually click on your pins and hopefully purchase your products from them, pins that get a lot of impressions can provide a huge boost to your profile. The more eyes you have on your pins, the more followers you'll likely gain. While they may not purchase from you right away through Pinterest, many users see Pinterest as their inspiration board and will remember you when they are shopping online or in-person later. It's also a good idea to re-pin popular items that are relevant to your own boards periodically to take advantage of those pins' reach; this can bring users to your business' page to see your own pins and products.

PINTEREST



You can view your impressions statistics by clicking on the “Your Pinterest Profile” box on your analytics homepage. This section shows you your average daily impressions over a one-week, two-week or month-long period and shows your average number of daily profile visitors. At the bottom, take a look at which pins are getting the most impressions and which boards have the highest number of pin impressions to get an idea of what content is showing up in searches and resonating with your audience.

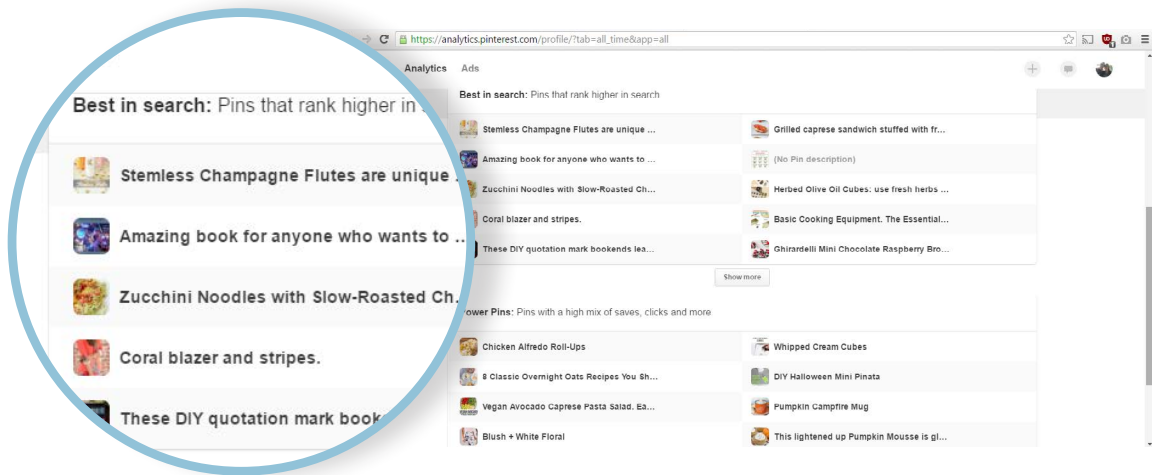
Back on the main analytics page, you also can choose “People You Reach.” This area gives a detailed look at what the demographics and interests are of the audience seeing your pins. This section can help you decipher whether your content is reaching your desired target audience.



PINTEREST

FOLLOW THE PIN

In the same section as your impressions stats (“Your Pinterest Profile”), you can take a deeper look at how your people are interacting with your pins. Both re-pins and clicks are important to note. Clicks on pins take a user right to the website that the pin is linked with and, with luck, lead to purchases. Re-pins note that the user liked it enough to showcase it on his or her own profile and is potentially interested in coming back to purchase it later.



There is also a useful tab in this section titled “All Time.” This page gives a rundown of what pins have the most re-pins, which do best in a search and which are your “Power Pins.” Power Pins are content with a strong mix of saves, clicks and searchability. These are the pins you’ll want to emulate when creating future content.

MAKE YOURSELF PINNABLE

Pinterest’s analytics are great for tracking clicks from pins you create and post, but the tools also offer the ability to track what people are pinning directly from your site. By adding the tracking code from Pinterest to your website, you will be able to add “Pin it!” buttons to your page and note what people are saving. These products are ripe for well-designed pins on your business’ profile page.

“Today, knowledge has power. It controls access to opportunity and advancement.”

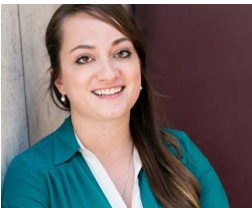
- Peter Drucker

TURNING ANALYTICS INTO KNOWLEDGE

Even as the scope and scale of free social media analytics rapidly evolve, there remains one constant: social media as a platform for marketing and PR. Social media analytics tools are a powerful way to inform even the most traditional of PR and marketing strategies. Before funneling more spend into social media marketing tactics that are delivering questionable value, marketers should ensure they're capturing all that social media has to offer for free first: consumer insights and trends, competitive strategies and analysis into the success of your current marketing and PR efforts.

Drucker understood the power of measurement. He also recognized the power of knowledge. Now, more so than Drucker could have ever imagined, knowledge is there for the taking. Weeding through the noise of social media data to capture and convert this free, valuable information is how successful marketers differentiate themselves from the pack.

THE AUTHOR



Natalie O'Grady

PR Associate & Social Media
Specialist, A.wordsmith
natalie@awordsmithcomm.com

ABOUT A.WORDSMITH

[A.Wordsmith](#) is a boutique public relations firm, specializing in thought leadership and brand storytelling for leading business-to-business and consumer organizations.

We build meaningful communications that propel our clients forward. We serve as an integrated partner with smart, passionate, innovative businesses that have complex stories to tell and manage. We believe strongly in the power of strategy, collaboration and words.