



brandwatch

Ideas from the Experts/ Social Consumer Market Insights



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Introduction/

Brandwatch hosted an open and frank discussion to understand how brands are using social data to glean valuable consumer insights.

The roundtable event included leaders from some of the world's biggest brands and agencies, and involved an in-depth exploration around the subject of social consumer marketing insights.

We collated the responses for this paper to share learnings from the discussion and educate other brands and agencies on the state of social CMI.

The discussion touched on the impact of social consumer insights on digital, content and influencer marketing and how brands and agencies are tackling issues in these areas.

As those working in the field will be well versed, consumer insights have traditionally been extracted by fairly clunky means. The process can be painfully slow and expensive, and cognitive bias is inevitable, and can distort the objective truth - what researchers want, and need.

Social media has augmented the market research landscape – it's far easier and cheaper to find the voice of the customer online than conducting focus groups or executing traditional surveys, and online analysis tools are now pretty much as broad – or as narrow – as researchers require.

Of course, we have to recognize that social data brings back research from people who regularly use social media channels; the audience we're sampling from is initially self-selecting and may not represent the population as a whole. However, even with this limitation, the volume and accuracy of data available can help generate tangible insights for a variety of organizations and brands.

Using social data for consumer insights, the raw voice of the customer is collected.

The wealth of unsolicited conversations finds consumers and communities not only talking about brands and products, but covering their other interests, and demographics, social metrics and sentiment data can unlock an overview of almost any topic.

Collecting the voice of the customer using social data allows brands to discover what else they care about, giving a fuller picture of those people - social data provides context that isn't available with traditional research methods, helping to understand consumers on a more holistic level.

The guests of our roundtable will remain anonymous, but we can describe the responsibilities and industries each participant represented.

- A senior director of analytics at a consumer electronics company
- A principal of a social media agency
- A partner at a social media consumer insights research group
- A social media manager at a consumer body
- A senior solutions architect at a consumer technology company
- A SVP of insights and analytics at a social media marketing agency
- An analyst of consumer insights at a global retail brand
- A social media and market research strategist at a non-profit organization.

This expert group gave us insights into how they use social CMI, how they understand their customers, and gave us real-world examples of how social CMI has impacted business.

Who owns social listening?/

“Consumers don’t care which department owns social media. They care about the holistic experience you’re providing.”

Jade Mangahis, senior PR strategist, Praytell Strategy

It became obvious during the discussion that it’s impossible for one group or one team to own social listening. Consider customer service versus corporate comms, or marketing. These teams all view Brandwatch - or any platform - in different ways. In large brands there can’t be a single owner.

A Senior Vice President of Insights and Analytics kicked off the conversation.

“With bigger clients we see that one team is responsible for brand, and another may be responsible for revenue. The brand side very much focuses on ‘how do people see my brand?’ The revenue side is much more focused on operational levels. Our job in insights is to show that what happens on the brand level supports the spend on the revenue side.”

A senior director of analytics at a consumer technology company explained his view.

“For us, at a global brand, the ownership of social is such a behemoth it’s impossible to be centralized, there are just too many people doing too many different things in too many geographies.

We’re trying to centralize it in the U.S., then align with other major geographies. We are currently aligned with Europe as we both use Brandwatch, and they’re being tested out in other geographies. We find that where social listening sits all really depends on the specific organization and scale within a company. We’ve got a hub and spoke model, we control the query and query writing so there’s a certain amount of data hygiene, but what different departments do with the data is up to them.”



Also working in the consumer technology space, the senior solutions architect in attendance chimed in.

"In a way we see the same thing. Trying to centralize in the U.S. and other geographies is something we're contending with as well. It's really, really hard to bring everything under one roof within the organization. We're seeing the rise of centers of excellence."

A consumer insights analyst at a global retail brand added her thoughts.

"Within the consumer insights team I'm doing social insights. When it comes to who owns social media engagement there's PR, customer marketing, customer service, so many different departments. How do we connect all of that? I'm almost there. At the end of the summer we're pitching to other geo-locations 'do you want to do social listening?'

It's nice because it's ramped up. Last year we weren't doing anything and now we're global. Learning as we go."

We've also spoken with other researchers and research bodies on this subject and we have observed that for a long time, social analytics lived in the communications area, but many have lobbied to move it into the research team.

"Our listening and monitoring informs our comms strategies at a tactical level. At the end of the day we know what the impact is and we tweak strategy to know what the impact is.

For past and future we look at much larger data sets that inform long term strategy rather than tweaking around the edges with real time for more immediate activities."

Managing Director, International Research Firm

Blended data/

“Traditional market research is not pliable. It takes time and has a very short shelf life. The benefit of social is it's a live focus group. You determine the rules. It's direct, it's instant, it's unfiltered.”

Will McInnes, CMO, Brandwatch

Discussing analysis techniques, we uncovered themes in how social data can deliver those precious actionable insights that every researcher needs.

What became immediately apparent is that the integration of data, and the blending of social CMI with traditional research, is particularly useful.

“Surveys are really critical - people won't say certain things on social,” explained one guest. “Layering social data with survey data can uncover some really insightful findings and can offer another level of validity to social data since individuals can tend to be more authentic in a private, anonymous survey. You can normalize that overall sentiment.”

Another guest expanded, “Social is a critical base for us, we also use CRM data and surveys. We built a framework that allows us to go into companies and match social identity CRM data in their existing database.”

Our senior director guest from a consumer tech brand raised the issue that finding trends and topics intentionally can be difficult.

“If I'm looking at a global query, then the big issue is trying to parse out the noise. If you want to look at competitive mentions for an industry like ours - consumer electronics - there are 20 million conversations each day.”

Of course, there are billions of conversations happening online every day. Social data can add context; tell you more about the conversations, trends and people impacting your business.

Blending social data with traditional research/

"We're using social data to inform primary research; social will give you the hint, or the clue, and then we work with primary survey research.

Generally we're establishing a hypothesis through social and then proving it or discovering it through the more traditional ways of uncovering data and information."

One of the clients of a guest at the table is in the children's toys sector. They look at how social is able to drive ROI by blending social data with other forms. "Ads come up increasingly more in the ROI maturity activities we're doing, and we then measure that against web data, in-store data - we map it out to see how one affects the other."

Business impacts: Being reactive with the data/

One of our guests, the Head of Global Social at a retailer, shared some examples on how social insights allowed her team to make business decisions quickly.

"I was very fortunate to work at a retailer, and you see that business impact very quickly. We were able to make really quick decisions using social consumer insights. Things would go viral over a weekend - for example, a juice craze happened and a specific blender was getting mentioned online and we had the mechanism to buy all of those blenders before any other retailer.

We were able to leverage social data to provide a competitive advantage.

Another example is that we were able to tell via social insights certain pop stars were falling out of favor. The company I worked for would stock a large amount of merchandise regarding these stars, and seeing these discussions on social helped us manage our inventory differently.

It's really powerful stuff. Predictive. Your customers tell you in real time what you'll feel offline in six months. Instead of waiting for it to happen and scrambling, you can deal with it quickly."

Defining a value proposition using social CMI/

“This isn't about what you've got to say, it's about listening to what your market is saying.”

Deborah Lee, Forbes Top 50 Global Social Media Influencer and social media consultant

The group discussed how finding correlations in the data can be really meaningful, and a lot of it depends on what you do before the query.

But sometimes clients don't actually know what they're trying to find.

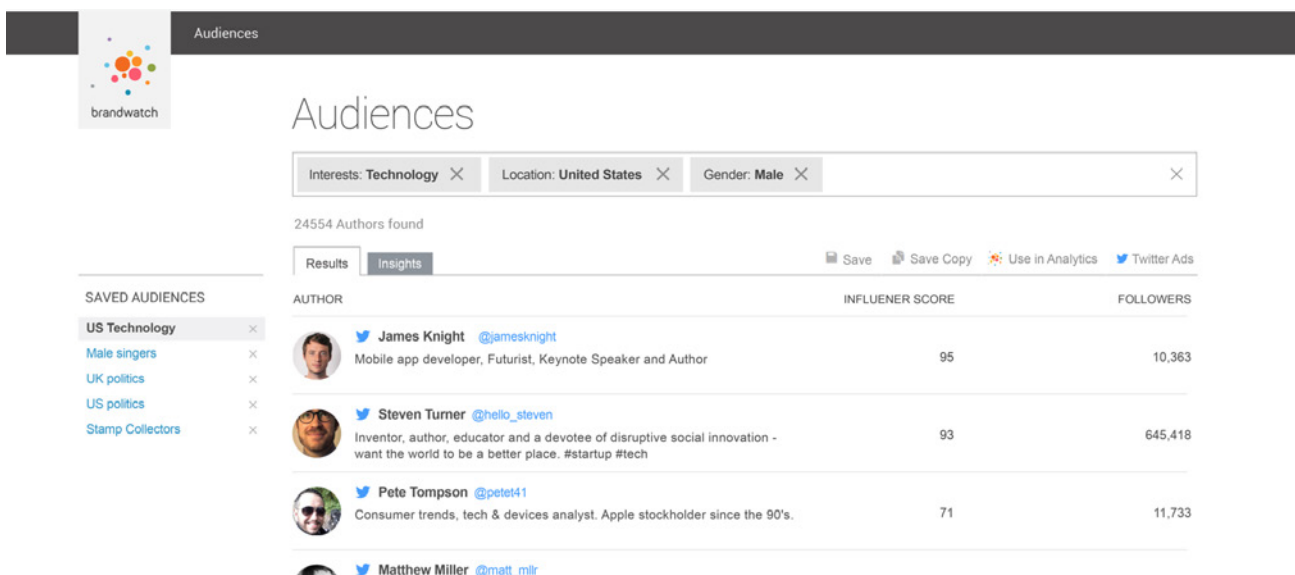
“We sometimes find clients who have no value proposition. We had a financial services client that wanted to know what a potential value prop could be for their business.

How could they go out and communicate with those entities? Using social data we researched this and were able to help them define their value proposition.”





“Working with influencers is another area of the unknown; working through influencers, but not those already talking about the situation, but those talking about peripheral issues.

If we can isolate those talking around a particular topic, if we can reach out to them and have a dialogue with them, have them understand where we're coming from, potentially because of their interest in a similar peripheral area, then the message can be disseminated from a more diverse group of influential individuals.

We want to find not just one peripheral area, but a number of them. We use social data to do that.”



The screenshot shows the Brandwatch Audiences interface. At the top, there are filters for Interests: Technology, Location: United States, and Gender: Male. Below the filters, it indicates 24554 Authors found. The main content is a table of influencers with columns for Author, Influencer Score, and Followers. The table lists four influencers: James Knight (score 95, 10,363 followers), Steven Turner (score 93, 645,418 followers), Pete Tompson (score 71, 11,733 followers), and Matthew Miller (score not visible, followers not visible).

AUTHOR	INFLUENCER SCORE	FOLLOWERS
 James Knight @jamesknight Mobile app developer, Futurist, Keynote Speaker and Author	95	10,363
 Steven Turner @hello_steven Inventor, author, educator and a devotee of disruptive social innovation - want the world to be a better place. #startup #tech	93	645,418
 Pete Tompson @petet41 Consumer trends, tech & devices analyst. Apple stockholder since the 90's.	71	11,733
 Matthew Miller @matt_mlr		

Where social CMI can add value/

We wanted to learn how our guests are using social insights to impact other areas of the organization.

A business analyst from a retailer kicked off the topic. "R&D is a huge area of opportunity - we have a lot of scientists and a big investment in this area. The concept of social data and what consumers are talking about and opportunities for product innovation can inform a lot of that R&D work."

Another guest from a global retailer went on to give a little more color.

"The investor relations is a team we're trying to plant seeds with now. We're sending them reports, trying to get them hungry for social data and insights. We're educating them and other departments, and the more we provide them data the more they're going to start thinking about bringing us in and give them a social perspective.

During a restructure in our organization, our global social media team partnered with HR to take the temperature of employee discussions - a use case being used more and more in a lot of organizations from what we're hearing.

Yet another example is the sponsorships and partnerships area of marketing. Recently we had a NASCAR driver endorse a political candidate and NASCAR emailed us about it. We saw more positive sentiment than negative on social and were able to watch the conversation unfold in real time.

All kinds of different teams can use social data, especially from getting ahead of a situation or potential issue or crisis on the corrective side to evaluate the way we act when something happens. It's a way to determine how understanding the conversation on social could help us react, or not react."

Using social CMI for product development/

Another guest explained how social CMI helped a client with product development.

"A similar example is with a former client of mine. They were looking to social to inform product development. They were trying to create groundswell for a product feature that customers wanted and were discussing on social that wasn't offered at that time.

In part thanks to social listening, they ended up developing the product with that feature. I thought that was really cool.

I work a lot with clients facing hostile takeovers and battles. Seeing who is driving the support, who is driving support for the other side of that battle is a good use of social listening to be better prepared."

Sometimes market research can be incredibly niche. Social data can help researchers unearth insights quickly without having to conduct a survey or contact consumers directly.

"A very recent use case for us is conducting market research in the Brandwatch platform about student loan refinancing. When I found out who was talking about it, we learned that those people discussing it on social are people in the industry - not students.

Not a lot of people are talking about student loan refinancing that aren't specifically working in that area or concerned with that topic. We didn't want to have to go and ask a load of students about it, and now we can use this information to help our strategy."

Assessing brand health using social CMI/

“Social listening and brand health tracking have both been valuable enterprise marketing tools for years, but now is the time for the two to come together. Surveys lend structure and allow for directed questions but also take time and require resources devoted to recruiting responses. Social data is immediate and contains plenty of content, but it can be hard to mine for insights. Social data can help customer insights pros understand brand equity, health, and even value.”

Allison Smith, Brief: Track Your Brand Health With Social Data, Forrester

We wanted to learn how those in the room use social CMI to assess brand health.

Research consultancy Millward Brown explains, “You can no longer measure brand health without including search and social data to get the full picture. [Social data will] help you make good decisions quickly, and use your budget more effectively.”

Your brand health will ultimately have a deep impact on the consumer awareness of your brand and your bottom line, and social data can help provide a metrics and a view on the health of a brand. We discussed this topic with the group, and uncovered some very interesting cases.

Predicting brand health with social data/

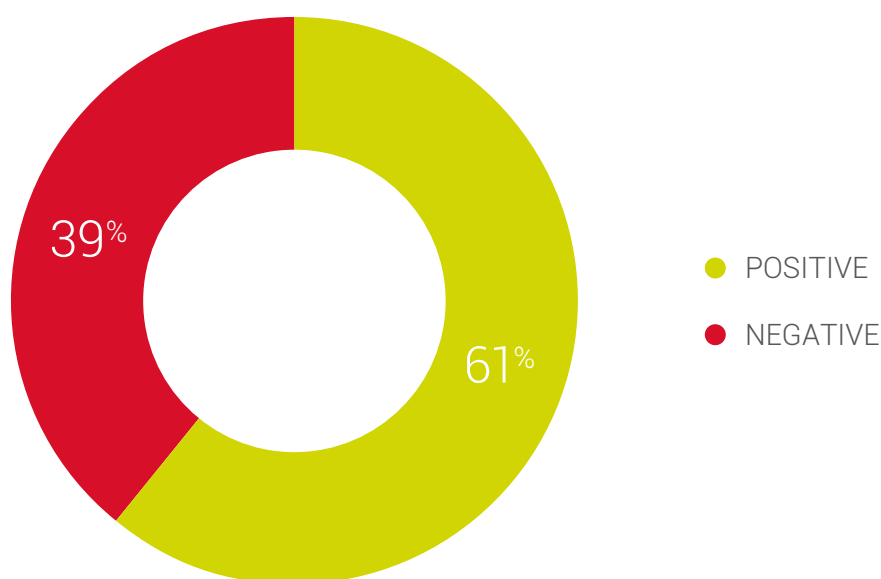
An analyst from a large agency shared the following story:

“We have a hospital client who wants the HCAP scorecard that hospitals have to measure against. The higher the rating the more funding that hospital gets.

The client wanted to anticipate when, and in which areas, they were dipping low in when it comes to specific categories - bedside manner, wait time, patient experience.

Through using Brandwatch for social research, and review sites, we can predict how the HCAP score is going to look.

The social insights were accurate to what the scores showed. We’re closing in on our first year of historical data on this, and the client is very happy in using social insights to figure out how to adjust and which areas and score categories to focus on.”



Another agency client continued: "We spend a lot of time looking at internal and external brand health.

Sometimes we're learning that the conversations aren't always as positive as we'd like them to be. We look at that conversation, blend it with employee conversation and different metrics and use the blended data to improve where we need to."

Using influencers to assess brand health/

The conversation moved onto how pulling insights on influencers online can help assess brand health.

"Using social CMI we've been able to identify top influencers in science, and when the data came back we realized we have work to do in engaging and activating influencer communities and individuals that we hadn't realized were our potential influencers.

We want to start mapping out our employees to see where they have influence that the brand doesn't, to locate the conversations the brand can't get into authentically or organically - deep subject matter expert territory where brands aren't welcome.

If we have an employee with that leadership and expertise, and unleash them with our messaging in a highly organic and relevant way in that field or topic, that can prove to be very powerful. That's the direction we're heading in with our influencers."

The room was in agreement.

"I like to call them brand-ividuals," added a founder of a social media marketing agency. "Brands should be utilizing employees because everyone is influential in some area or about some subject matter.

I've been seeing quite a few studies on micro-influencers. If you're a well known brand you have the ability to create influence and identify those up and comers, and have influence on your campaigns. Build relationships, and reach people a brand can't."

Tweeters | SMM | Last 7 days

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Columns

TWEETER	TWEETS	SENTIMENT			IMPACT	TWITTER	DEMOGRAPHICS		KRED	
		POS	NEG	NEU	TOTAL	FOLLOWERS	ACCOUNT TYPE	GENDER	INFLUENCE	OUTREACH
@SME Examiner	1	0	0	1	51	186972	Organisational	-	976	5
@techdirt	1	0	0	1	51	37779	Organisational	-	955	5
@leemeade77	1	0	0	1	47	12063	Individual	Unknown	958	11
@exploreB2B	2	0	0	2	46	127195	Organisational	-	890	7
@WarrenWhitlock	1	0	0	1	46	194371	Individual	Male	920	9
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@SMOKerala	24	0	0	24	45	16368	Individual	Male	726	6
@Jankovitch	1	0	0	1	45	45824	Individual	Male	930	10
@waff48	3	0	0	3	45	45958	Organisational	-	888	7
@socialmediamind	3	0	0	3	43	163625	Organisational	-	833	8
Total for tweeters	38	0	0	38		925123			9019	78

"Exactly. How do we compel people to our point of view? We go to where they are talking and hopefully influence them.

My advice would be to engage in conversations where you are losing, but nonetheless be where the convo is being had. We use Brandwatch to identify white space conversations, peripheral discussions and people who we may not have known could be engaged with on a certain topic.

Every brand, every person, has a story to tell and it's probably already being told in a space that you didn't expect. Identify where the conversations are, engage with the people who might be better at better telling your story."

About Brandwatch

Brandwatch is the world's leading social intelligence company. Brandwatch Analytics and Vizia products fuel smarter decision making around the world.

The Brandwatch Analytics platform gathers millions of online conversations every day and provides users with the tools to analyze them, empowering the world's most admired brands and agencies to make insightful, data-driven business decisions. Vizia distributes visually-engaging insights to the physical places where the action happens.

The Brandwatch platform is used by over 1,200 brands and agencies, including Cisco, Whirlpool, British Airways, Heineken, Walmart and Dell. Brandwatch continues on its impressive business trajectory, recently named a global leader in enterprise social listening platforms by the latest reports from several independent research firms. Increasing its worldwide presence, the company has offices around the world including Brighton, New York, San Francisco, Berlin and Singapore..

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