



How to Measure Marketing Results: The Newest Rules



www.fusionb2b.com

How to Measure Marketing Results: The Newest Rules

In a recent survey sponsored by FUSION b2b's client the Construction Marketing Association, 21% of construction marketers ranked Measuring Marketing Results as their top priority for 2011, beating all other priorities including Internet and Social Media. Clearly in a difficult market, marketing is under increased scrutiny to prove results and justify budgets.

Frequently called marketing metrics, depending on the scale of your company or program, measuring marketing results can range from simple to a variety of complex methods and approaches. Today marketers must consider three broad types of measures, with multiple individual tools, 1) **traditional methods** of measuring including research, 2) the use of **internet-based measures**, 3) along with new tools for **social media monitoring**.

TRADITIONAL MEASURES

Some of the traditional methods of measuring results are still some of the most important. Measuring sales revenue, unit volumes or profit margins are not only important, but closely tied to company or brand success.

Other traditional approaches might include identifying new customers, and having sales, service or telemarketing personnel ask (and document) how they found out about your product or company. Inbound telephone calls and inquiries can likewise be qualified, as can trade show and/or event inquiries. At one time trade print advertising supplied reader response cards and reports, which are now less used, if at all. In the PR area, clipping services provided "hard copy" clips of publicity placements, most of which have been replaced with electronic distribution and reporting.

Tracking measures can be facilitated by a customer or prospect database, or for smaller scale marketing programs, a spreadsheet. If and when the database is integrated with corporate information systems, CRM systems or sales force automation, these customer records can help manage reporting, as well as identify such customer or marketing scenarios as new customer acquisition, retention, dormant and lost customers.

Another traditional approach to measuring marketing results is the use of marketing research, which can be a variety of types and methods. Marketing research types include secondary research, primary research or syndicated research. Secondary research is already published, and may include information publicly available on the Internet, or published by industry publications or associations. Primary research is undertaken by brand owners and could include surveys, focus groups or interviews. Syndicated research is undertaken by research firms, analysts or other independent firms and sold to any interested users.

Regardless of research type, often the information reported by marketing research can be useful in measuring marketing results. Examples include market size, market share, brand awareness, brand preference, customer satisfaction, market trends and more. For specialized markets, such intelligence can prove the most useful in measuring results of marketing.

One of the challenges for traditional measures is relating back to specific marketing campaigns or initiatives. To measure specific, traditional marketing campaigns or initiatives effectively, always use direct response offers and promotional codes for all initiatives and campaigns. In addition, most business-to-business products sell through channels of distribution, or through retailers to consumers. In these cases, end user insights must be provided by channel partners, or retail POS data (syndicated research data).

Certainly traditional marketing can be integrated with Internet marketing with it's own set of measurement tools and options.

Website registrations can come from a number of offers, registration pages or conversion forms. Marketers may have such electronic forms for subscriptions (newsletters, updates, warranties), white papers, catalogs, training material downloads, promotions and events; or RSS registrations for blogpost updates and news items. Also, email addresses from LinkedIn Connections, and LinkedIn group members can be used to build the prospect database.

When utilizing an Email Service Provider (ESP) to develop and distribute email campaigns, most provide robust campaign reporting and metrics including deliverability, bounces (bad email addresses), open rates, click-through rates (CTR), and Opt-Outs. Examples of ESPs include iContact, Benchmark, Constant Contact or MailChimp. Comparing rates to average benchmarks is a useful exercise. (Open rates average 5-20%; click-through rates average 10%).

When utilizing electronic news release distribution services like PRNewswire, BusinessWire or PRWeb, each provides a useful dashboard for measuring news placements. As mentioned, traditional press clipping services are still available.

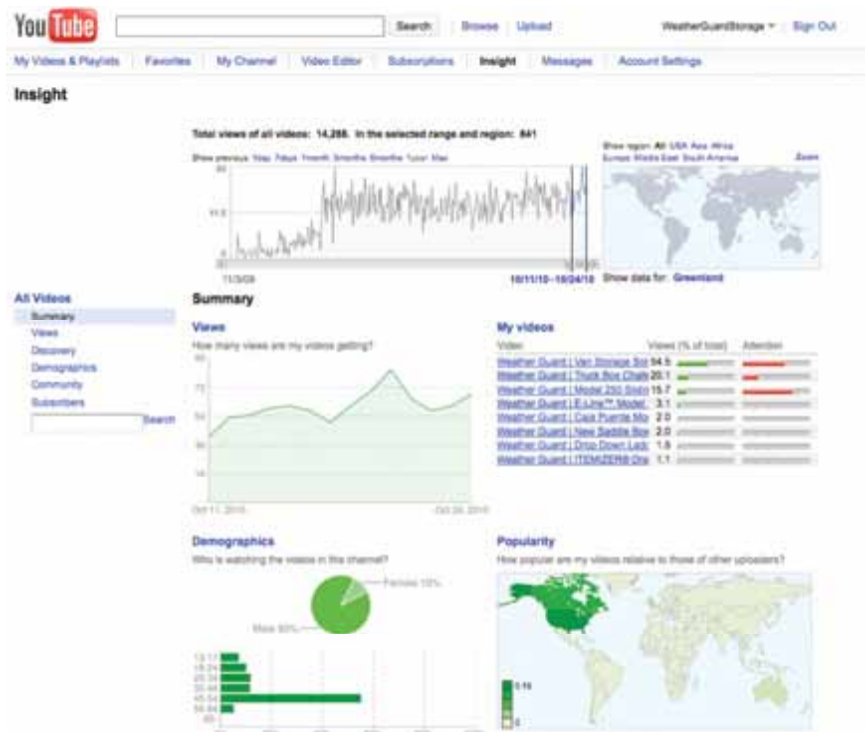
Another Internet measurement tool, Google Alerts, is equally useful in monitoring social media, and will be covered below.

Finally, a new technology called Urchin Tracking Modules or UTMs offer powerful measurement opportunities. UTMs are used to add extra information to a URL to allow significant website traffic monitoring. UTMs are specifically designed to provide the most accurate measurements of unique website visitors. For businesses looking to gain a deeper understanding of their online visitor behavior, the UTM is an extremely valuable technology. UTM combines with Google analytics to showcase exactly where website traffic is being generated from. UTMs can be used to track all forms of advertising, including print and electronic (e.g. banner ads). UTMs are a powerful combination with social media because you can track what content is generating traffic to a website.

SOCIAL MEDIA MEASURES

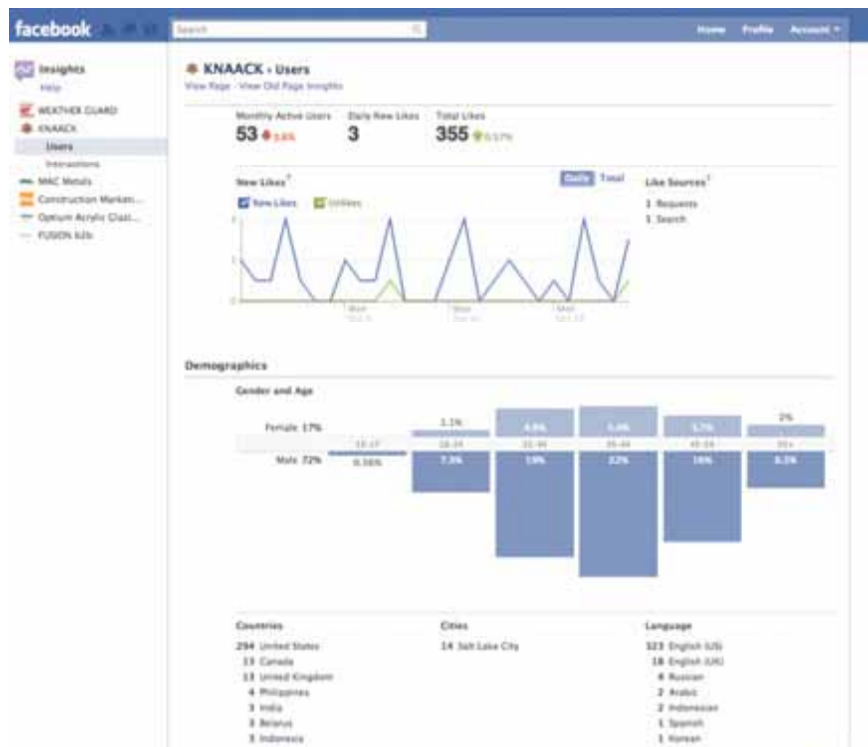
With the explosive growth of social media, we are pleased to share some of the features and tools for measurement that are now available, and extremely useful. This section will identify those tools for each of the top platforms (YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn), as well as social bookmarking and monitoring tools independent of platform.

All YouTube pages include a profile with total channel views and upload views, launch (join) date, and subscribers. In addition, YouTube has an impressive metrics system called YouTube INSIGHT. The dashboard includes total views of all videos on your channel, as well as percentages of views. YouTube INSIGHT also provides demographics including age, gender, geographic locations, and more. A typical YouTube dashboard appears below.



CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE

Facebook has made great strides to become more business friendly. Businesses now have the ability to create their own fan page. Fan pages allow you to post relevant articles, photos, pictures, and recently added custom 'tabs'. The "Like" button was introduced earlier in the year to allow users to become fans of content, or business/company/brand fan pages. Similar to YouTube, Facebook has extensive built in metrics, called INSIGHTS (plural). The amount of 'Likes' a given business page has on Facebook is an important measure. Total 'Likes' give a glimpse of how popular a page has become over time. Facebook INSIGHTS also shows the number of interactions within a Facebook page. The peaks in interactions can be linked to content generated which induced an individual to Like the page. Demographic information is also collected by Facebook INSIGHTS to identify who is interacting with a fan page. A typical Facebook dashboard appears below.



CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE

Twitter is a unique micro-blogging social media platform that allows for users to interact with each other in 140 characters or less. Twitter does not have a significant amount of metrics, but there are ways to track engagement. The most obvious metric is 'Followers' which defines how many people are viewing information that you Tweet. Another important metric to understand is influence in the Twittersphere. The WeFollow.com directory rates influence for a specific keyword(s). Certain Twitter profiles gain credibility based off the amount of Tweets written, amount of times listed by other users, or the amount of times Retweeted (RT). The effectiveness of any Tweet can be measured in two ways; 1) the amount of times a Tweet is Retweeted, or 2) Link click-through rates. Twitter does not have a built in click-through metric so utilizing a link-shortening tool is crucial. www.Bit.ly is a great metric for link click-through, while shortening the length of a link so you can be more efficient with your 140 characters per Tweet.

Over time LinkedIn has become known as the professional Social Media platform, and has become a living-breathing resume for many users. However LinkedIn has more uses than just a resume. An intriguing way to measure your LinkedIn network is your amount of connections. LinkedIn displays how many 1st degree connections you have, 2nd degree connections, and 3rd degree connections. The level of connections at each degree exponentially increases based on the strength of your network within LinkedIn. As with Twitter, LinkedIn can be strengthened by the use of a link shortening. Using a tool such as www.bit.ly will shorten the horrendous look of a long link, while providing click-through metrics demanded by marketers. LinkedIn just introduced the ability to follow users within groups that you belong to. This may sound familiar to something you might utilize with Twitter, but LinkedIn does not limit the length of interactions by users. This new tool and metric will allow for users posting content to be followed, which will increase the power of their LinkedIn profiles.

Social Bookmarking has also become an integral approach for increasing social media presence. Tracking the amount of times your content has been bookmarked, or shared is an important metric to understand. The most popular bookmarking tools include Digg, Delicious and StumbleUpon. As an example, Digg allows users

to identify how many times an article has been shared. As content gains more views, or more Diggs, it gains a significant amount of credibility with users and search engines because it has been verified by the many, instead of the few. It allows social media users to decide what content is worthy for others.

Beside the measurement features of top social platforms, there are a number of social monitoring tools available. Radian6 is just one example of such a monitoring tool, but is one of the most user-friendly and powerful. Radian6 allows monitoring of the entire Internet, and any conversations that are going on about a topic, brand, or company. This tool shows exact conversations, instead of just a statistical overview of engagement. The ability to track how many conversations are going on about your brand or keyword topics is a powerful glimpse into why social media is the future of marketing. Radian6 is available on a (reasonable) subscription basis. A typical Radian6 dashboard appears below.



Another monitoring tool that is important to understand is Google Alerts. This tool is so powerful; yet simple enough that anyone can be alerted via email when Google finds a topic of his or her choice. Alerts can be for a single keyword, or combination of keywords. This is a free tool that can be combined with all of the above metrics to completely grasp the conversations and interactions revolving around your brand, company or keyword topics on the Internet.

MEASUREMENT SUPPORTS PLANNING AND BUDGETING

Measuring the results of marketing in a difficult economic environment is more critical than ever, thus ranking as a top priority for business marketers. Depending on the scale of the marketing program, a number of methods and approaches should be considered and deployed.

Traditional methods of measurement include financial (sales, volume, margins), prospect and customer inquiries, news placements, customer feedback, and a variety of market research. Direct response offers and promotional codes support the measurement process.

The most fundamental, and powerful Internet-based measurement is website statistics or Google Analytics. However a number of other Internet tools exist for measuring search engine optimization (SEO), email metrics, news placements and keyword mentions.

Social media monitoring is possible through all the top platforms (YouTube, Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn). Social bookmarking sites also provide measures including Digg, Delicious and StumbleUpon. Radian6 is a robust monitoring tool that identifies social mentions by keyword(s). And Google Alerts is a simple but powerful tool to deliver all keyword mentions to your email.

FUSION b2b is a full-service, strategic marketing and creative communications agency. Clients include USG Sheetrock, Panasonic, AMCOR packaging, OMRON electronics, Woodworking Machinery Industry Association (WMIA), ITW, Tyco Electronics, and others. For more information or press kit, contact Laurie Oleksy

CONTACT

FUSION b2b, Inc.
1548 Bond Street, Suite 114
Naperville, IL 60563
t:630.579.8300
f:630.579.8989
www.fusionb2b.com