

— SOCIAL MARKETING —

# ADVANTAGE

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## GUIDE 8:

TRACK, TEST AND IMPROVE

# Track, Test and Improve

So, you've spent some time thinking about how you can create the perfect brand to promote on social media. You've made a logo and come up with your tagline and your mission statement, you've set up your social media accounts and you've come up with a schedule for posting new content that seems to be working.

And no you haven't forgotten! You're even remembering to interact with your audience, to comment on their posts and to respond to their messages. You're seeing growth and improvement and you're pretty happy with how it's all going.

## Is that it?

Not quite. There's just *one more* aspect to consider if you want to have the very best social media marketing campaign and if you want to accelerate your growth as much as possible. And that's the data. The analytics. Or as Facebook calls it, the 'Insights'.

These are powerful tools that these social accounts give you to help grow your accounts even more efficiently and if you miss out on using them, it will be at your own peril. Read on then and we'll look at some of the ways that you can use this to grow your account.

## Why Analytics Matter

Analytics basically give you some actionable data regarding your content and some feedback regarding what is working and what's not working and that in turn allows you to do more of what *is* successful and less of what isn't.

This is powerful because it means that if you carefully watch your stats and look at how your posts perform, you can effectively evolve to meet what your audience wants. Over time, your posts will improve in quality and effectiveness and you'll do less of what isn't working. That means that gradually, you should be moving to a point where *all* your posts are immensely successful. Or at least that's the idea.

If you've never looked at your analytics before, then you might be in a position where 95% of your posts have had no real interaction but *one* thing you did blew up and was massive. You *could* be emulating that one thing every single time and thus growing your account at twice the rate... and yet you're not.

And this isn't just hypothetical: I speak from experience here!

I actually was using IFTTT – a very powerful and certainly very useful tool – in order to automatically share my content from YouTube to my Facebook page. Problem is that it was never getting any real response. One time I shared the link myself and it had 10x the amount of engagement. Why? Because the way the video was presented in the feed was much different and was inherently more engaging.

For ages I never bothered to log into my analytics so I was none the wiser. The one day I saw this was the case and recognized the error of my ways! The moral of this story? Check your analytics!

## How to Get Started

There are a plethora of apps and tools you can find online or download that will provide you with extra details and analytics and frankly, the more data you can collect the better.

However, for the sake of just illustrating the point, we'll look at the two most popular analytics tools for social media: the two built in options.

## Facebook Page Insights

The first is Facebook Page Insights. To get started, head on over to your Facebook page and then look at the tabs along the top. You'll see Page, Inbox, Notifications and *Insights* (the last one on the list is Publishing Tools).

Insights is what we're interested in here of course, so click on that and you'll be greeted initially by your page summary. Here you can see the number of actions on the page, the number of page views, the number of page previews, the page likes, the reach, the post engagements, the videos and the page followers.

This is mainly useful for tracking growth more than anything else and if you click on any of these elements, then you'll be greeted by a line chart that will chart the growth or decline of your page.

Another useful aspect though, is that you can look at who viewed your page by gender, by section, by country, by city and by device. This is all useful information, as it will allow you to see where the most of your traffic is coming from. Perhaps most of your audience are male, perhaps most of them are female. Perhaps they largely come from Google, or perhaps they mostly come from your website.

This is all useful information because it allows you to gain more insight (hence the name!) regarding your traffic, what they're interested in and how you're acquiring them. From there, you can then make sure you do more of what is working and that you cater your content for the audience actually viewing it.

While tracking the number of page views or likes might be an interesting way to track your improvement over time, what would actually be a more useful statistic to follow would be your post engagement and your reach.

The reach tells you how many people have *seen* your posts. That is important because it gives you an idea of just how many people you're capable of promoting to or interacting with in a given week. Post engagement meanwhile tells you how many people have liked, commented or reacted to your posts. This is far *more* useful because it allows you to see whether your posts are actually having any impact on the audience. It's not enough that your content simply be seen – you need people to click on it, to share it or to make comments.

Not only can you see whether or not this is happening but you can also see whether it is increasing or decreasing over time.

While this is all very useful though, it ultimately leaves you guessing. You are left to look at the spikes and troughs in your traffic and to try and identify what could have occurred at the same time to make those occur.

Better yet then, is to scroll down slightly and to look at your posts themselves. You can see your five most recent posts at a glance and then you can click to get more information from other posts. Next to each, you'll be able to see the reach and you'll be able to see the engagement. Engagement in this case tells you about the comments, the clicks and the likes.

So, this now helps you to get a little more granular. No longer are you looking at a general increase in numbers over time but you're looking at how people reacted to *specific* posts that you made and you're looking at where all that growth and improvement has come from. This is where you can really see what is working and what's not.

What kind of content is your audience hungry for?

What is getting the most engagement?

What *hasn't* worked?

And finally, head down the bottom of the page to find the 'pages to watch'. This will give you a selection of great pages to keep your eye on that are similar to yours. This is a very useful tool indeed, as it allows you to see what is working for other brands and then perhaps emulate them if appropriate.

## **Twitter Analytics**

Twitter Analytics has many of the same features but dressed up somewhat differently and with different additional tools and elements to look out for.

This is a summary for the month rather than the week. Along the top, you can see how many tweets you posted and how many impressions these tweets got. 'Impressions' tells you how many times the tweets were shown on a page or screen and that in turn means that they're gaining exposure. Profile visits does what it says on the tin and tells you how many people have been to your profile page. Mentions tells you how many times someone used '@' to tag you in a post. And your followers here is your total number rather than a change.

Next to all these stats though, you'll be able to see how this compares with what happened one month ago and that lets you see which way things are moving.

What's more interesting is the 'Tweet Highlights'. For instance, the 'Top Tweet' will be the Tweet with the most impressions. And if you click on 'Tweet Activity' you can actually see how many Tweets each of your posts got. What you'll find is that a post being liked or shared by a bigger brand can make a massive impact to your Tweet's success and these will be the Tweets that do the best.

You can also see here the number of engagements and the engagement rate. This tells you a little bit more about how people are actually interacting with each Tweet.

Back to the main analytics page, you'll also see your top media Tweet and you'll see your top follower. Top follower is a very useful thing to know. This tells you who is following your account who has a big following themselves and that in turn lets you know who you can potentially approach for a shout out.

This is powerful because very often, creators will try to reach big influencers and approach them to ask if they can get promoted. What happens, is that they tend to get ignored!

But as this section of your analytics will show you, you actually have influencers among your followers! They have the reach *and* they're already a fan... so reach out to them or target them with your future messages!

You can also click here to see 'audience insights' which will tell you the interests, the age range, the gender and more of your followers. You can see the region too and again, all this will help you to identify the best kind of content in terms of what will get the best responses from people.



## Running Tests

This is all good and well and simply knowing how to use these dashboards will help you get a much better idea of what's working and what isn't in your campaign.

However, if you want even more benefit from this section, then you also need to run tests. In other words, don't just passively watch data but instead try changing things up to see what works and what doesn't.

In fact, you can try using something called a 'split test'. This means you're going to release one version of a post written in a certain way or presented in a certain way, then you're going to release another that is formed slightly different. You then look to see which gets the best engagement, the most impressions etc. and this will tell you which style you would do well to adopt moving forward!

Do be wary of this though, as a sample of one is not really enough. In other words, you need to run many more experiments to be confident that this wasn't just a coincidence. That means that before you draw conclusions you should post a few more and see if the trend holds true. You can still never be certain but it will definitely be *more* likely that this is the case with each successful test.

And this is something to be wary of in general. Consider the fact that your engagement can't entirely be whittled down to numbers. There is qualitative difference looking at one social media comment versus another. Not only that, but if you only concentrate on chasing numbers, it can be easy to forget the human element and to forget the most important thing: creating quality content that adds value and that you're passionate about.



Data in itself is great but it's important that it doesn't dictate your entire campaign. As with everything we've looked at here, this is just one part of a highly intricate puzzle.

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