

## 3 Key Metrics To Measure Social Media Success

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Social media marketing has entered a new era. Brands are no longer content to simply experiment with a Facebook page and a Twitter account and “hope for the best.” With social media marketing budgets on the rise, marketers need their social campaigns to drive bottom-line sales, measurable brand benefit, and improved customer lifetime value.

The maturation of the social media space has created the need for simple, standardized measurement techniques that clearly show whether social campaigns are working to deliver real brand impact and actual sales. Unlike the online advertising industry, which has standardized on a few key metrics (CPC, CPA, and CPM), social media success measurement is still in its infancy and continues to suffer from a lack of common metrics standards.

Large brands are able to license powerful social media analytics software and hire agencies to help them measure social programs with accuracy. However, many smaller organizations are unsure of how to best measure their social marketing programs.

- What should we measure?
- How do we measure it?
- What does success look like?
- Out of the many numbers we could measure for social media, how do you determine which are the key metrics you should measure now and in the long term?

The answers to these questions are complex, but every company can get started with social media measurement by focusing on three simple metrics.

These metrics won't tell you everything about the impact of your social media programs, but they will establish a low-cost, repeatable standard you can use to gauge success over time.

## 1. Total Online Community Size (sCRM)

Assuming your business has invested in a solid brand community presence on social media networks like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, and launched a few managed blogs, measuring the total active size of your [social CRM](#) program is the simplest key metric to regularly evaluate.

Absolute size isn't as important as whether your program steadily growing over time. The sCRM metric offers insight into the value you're creating for those communities, as well as size of the 'captured audience' that has granted you permission to receive regular messaging, deals, and content.

*sCRM = #Facebook Fans + #Twitter Followers + #blog unique users + #YouTubeChannel subscribers + #all other registered managed community members*

**To do:** Manually collect figures from key channels; calculate weekly or monthly; save figures in basic spreadsheet; produce sparkline graphs to depict trendline. Bonus points: calculate same numbers for top three competitors and compare monthly.

## 2. Monthly Referred Social Traffic to Site (sTraffic)

Many large brands use sophisticated social content sharing tools to exactly track social media link clicks, content pass-along, and other deeper metrics. However, you can start simple and focus on the total unique site traffic coming to your website from links shared through blogs, forums, and the key social networks. You can get this with a simple query through your Omniture, WebTrends, Google Analytics, or other website analytics tool.

*sTraffic = monthly website Unique Users via Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, owned and 3rd party blogs, and forums*

**To do:** Export absolute sTraffic # and % of total site traffic from your site analytics tool to a spreadsheet, then produce month-over-month sparkline graphs to depict trendlines.

### 3. Social Monthly Impressions (sMI)

Measuring the true reach of your brand in social media is a daunting task; it can take the best analytical minds weeks and a variety of tools. But estimating your 'social monthly impressions', while an imperfect science, can help provide a sense of how pervasive your brand is across the Web.

*sMI = #mentions of your brand on blogs, forums, Twitter, etc. within a given month.*

**To do:** Monitor brand mentions on a regular schedule (daily/weekly) using a free alerts tool like Google Alerts. While not necessarily comprehensive, this offers a regular digest of the individual instances of brand mentions in blogs, mainstream news media sites, and on large public social networks like Twitter.

**Advanced Approach:** Evaluate and select one of the many social monitoring tools to track total pervasive brand mentions, or take a look at emerging tools offered by companies like Simply Measured and SocialMention.

Whatever your level of social media marketing efforts, if you measure these three numbers at least once per month and track their relative movement over time with simple sparkline graphs via spreadsheet charts, you'll be able to regularly observe the benefits of your social investments.

While it's not a one-size-fits-all complete social media analytics solution, tracking sCRM, sTraffic, and sMI will get you started on a basic 'measure it to manage it' program for your core online social community initiatives.

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