

Social Media
Listening 101

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Executive Summary

If you have recently been contemplating social media next steps or you don't know where to start, you might have noticed that there are quite a few social media maturity models or capabilities assessments available out there.

The majority of these models suggest that "listening" is an early stage of social media progression or maturity. We agree that social media listening is a critical early step to any organizations B2B social media strategy. However, we believe that listening is a critical success capability at every stage of an organizations social media strategy.

Listening across the stages

There are varying levels of the social media listening capabilities that are like building blocks. Each stage includes a new listening building block while in parallel continues to enhance existing listening capabilities already embraced as part of an organizations social media strategy or tactics.



Do you think your social media strategy is mature?

If you are not an expert social media listener, then we don't think you are.

What does that mean?
Read on.

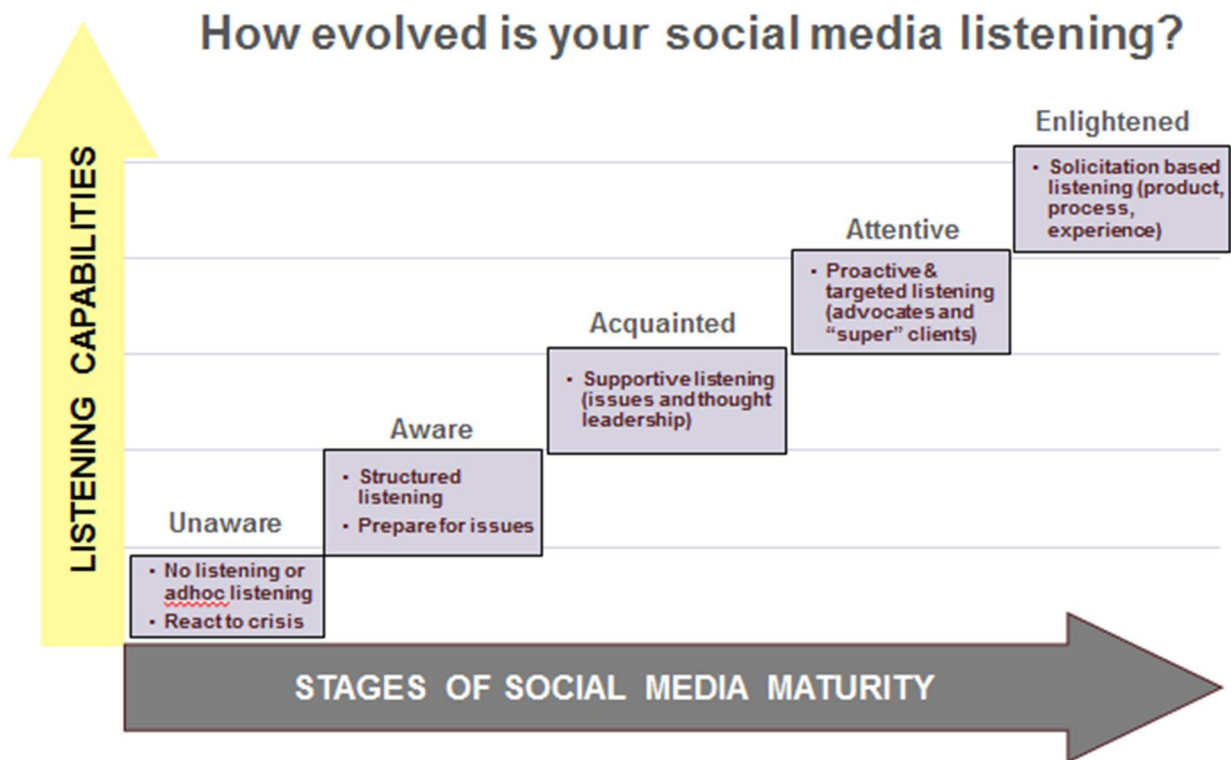
There is more to social media listening than meets the eye.

Social Media Listening Capabilities



We believe there are five different types of listening:

1. Ad-hoc
2. Structured
3. Supportive
4. Proactive & Targeted
5. Solicitation



Ad-hoc Listening

From a social media perspective organizations that primarily rely upon ad-hoc listening are unaware of what is being said, where it is being said and by whom. As well they are likely unaware of the potential impact, both positive and negative that social media will have on their bottom line. It is possible that they are doubtful of the value of Social Media in whole or in part. They may be periodically listening through manual means. Given the novelty of social media it might simply be that they don't know where to start. So in response, they listen after a major issue has gained popularity or "not going away" and they are forced to try and resolve it now that it has become "public".

Structured Listening

This type of listening is typically used by organizations that want to become aware of what is being said, where it is being said and by whom. They likely already have a high level understanding of the potential impact both positive and negative that social media will have on their bottom line. They go about monitoring through manual or automated means and do so on a semi regular basis. This enables them to be better prepared as issues arise in the social media world to minimize their impact or resolve them altogether. As well as leveraging advocacy postings to further amplify positive word of mouth.

Supportive Listening

Organizations that have supportive listening capabilities are well acquainted with social media, are very aware of what is being said, where it is being said and by whom. As well, they likely have a good understanding of the actual impact both positive and negative that social media has on their bottom line.

This type of listening moves beyond regular manual and automated monitoring to deeper social media research focused on customer business issues and thought leadership insights. It is this type of listening that will provide support for a broader approach to an organizations social media strategy such as growing it beyond a marketing communications lever.

Proactive Listening

Those organizations that have gone through the discipline of obtaining alignment to social media goals, objectives and strategies are very likely proactively listening to the social media world. They would be likely described as being intimately aware of their social media voice (specifically share and tone). Furthermore, they are targeting their social media advocates and "super clients" to gather customer experience, process and product development insights that are volunteered.



Not sure where your organization's social media capabilities are on this spectrum?

Take our free social media assessment at filigreeconsulting.com

Solicitation

This enlightened type of listening is demonstrated by organizations that have an optimized social media strategy. They are proactively soliciting their social media advocates and “super clients” on a variety of topics, issues and solutions and are actively driving this insight into customer experience management, process improvements and product development roadmaps. Moreover, these organizations may have a social media strategy for their most important clients during which all of the listening capabilities will be leveraged.

Conclusion

Social media listening can take many forms. We suggest you consider the social media listening capabilities for your organization, department or team and determine an action plan.

Your social media strategy will be all the better for it.





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