

About #IPASocialWorks

The IPA, The Marketing Society and MRS have joined together to launch a cross-industry initiative - the first of its kind. #IPASocialWorks, with sponsorship from Facebook and Twitter, is an ongoing project to identify best practice in social media effectiveness and measurement.

More information

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IPA: ipa.co.uk/effectiveness
TMS: marsoc.co/IPASocialworks
MRS: mrs.org.uk/social

- See case studies from BT, O2, TfL, Kerry Foods, Visit Iceland and others that have passed peer review.
- Find out more about how to submit your case study.

Contact us

We want to hear from you – whether you want to submit case studies, or share your/your company's expertise in another way.

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- TMS: Sarah Woodley, Marketing Society (sarahw@marketingsociety.co.uk)
- MRS: Christian Walsh, MRS (christian.walsh@mrs.org.uk)

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#IPA Social Works

Measuring Not Counting

How to Evaluate Social Media for Marketing Communications in Seven Key Messages

#IPA Social Works

The first cross-industry collaboration between



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Seven Key Messages

Use of social is still in its infancy and social tools, data and methods are fast-changing. Currently, there is no one best approach to measuring social activity. We are still learning. However, seven key messages have emerged from the #IPASocialWorks project to date.

1.

Social is more than marcomms and is challenging organisations

Social is helping to bring the voice of the consumer to the heart of the organisation. Not only is it broadening the definition of media, but it is also blurring the traditional lines of responsibility for marketing and insight. It is operating as a communication channel, a service delivery platform and a source of insight. It is challenging the concept of a campaign with a clear start and end, as it is always on. For many organisations social data sets are now becoming part of their company-wide digital transformation. However, this can bring with it challenges for creating the sorts of reliable data sets suitable for accurate, predictive and attributional modelling. It is also shifting the balance of the organisation from collecting data to interpreting and analysing signals from multiple sources.



2.

Social is changing the way we measure – its evaluation is more than a dashboard

Social is a new and powerful source of insight for advertisers. For evaluation, it provides new ways to understand not only 'what' happened but 'how' and even potentially 'why'. Beyond generating new metrics, social is also changing the nature of measurement. Because its feedback is real-time, the evaluation process is being integrated with each stage of campaign management from strategy, targeting, content development, delivery and evaluation. Increasingly, faster learning will require a greater emphasis on predictive benchmarks and testing and not just metrics and dashboards. This 'always on' aspect should force organisations to adopt a much broader culture of test-and-learn than is currently evident, increasingly in collaboration with external data partners, agencies and platforms.



4.

It is easy to overestimate the value of earned media and influencers

Accurately measuring causality for earned media is hard. Even with some of the most sophisticated statistical techniques, it is easy to see a causal link when in reality there is only correlation. Another reason to cultivate a broad 'test and learn' culture.



6.

Social can learn from traditional planning

Social may be new, but the planning process is not, and the best way to make use of the new opportunities presented by social is to ground them in what is already known about campaigns and other communication activity, e.g. linking to objectives, based on clear assumptions, using comparable metrics. Social needs to adhere to the strategy and planning disciplines used across other marcomms activity and to be designed in from the start, not added retrospectively.



3.

Avoid a siloed approach to social measurement

Social tends to work in conjunction with other media. It cannot be measured in isolation. Social needs its planning and evaluation to be integrated with other channels in order to maximise its benefits, establish its value, and be more trusted as a mainstream option. Further, in the majority of cases, the success of owned and especially earned tends to be a product of paid and interaction with other media. The learning objective for social evaluation is to understand how it works with other marketing at all stages of the consumer journey.



5.

The commercial value of social will increasingly lie in the richness of its data

Current methods of collection and analytics are not fully mature. Two areas in particular have further potential: sentiment analysis and Social CRM. Sentiment analysis will never be 100% accurate, but improvements in algorithms and data collection, will allow the signal to be stronger and more reliable. For Social CRM, given the potentially clearer value exchange for customers in offering personal social data, these data sets could be part of a gateway into much richer insight across an organisation.



7.

Even short-term results need a long-term context

One of the benefits of social is that it provides measurements that allow campaigns and activities to be optimised in real-time. However, the management of campaigns should balance long-term success with short-term success, since they tend to depend on different elements and strengths. The IPA has shown that key factors such as profitability and loyalty result from long-term effects, not simply cumulatively from short-term successes.

