



# Gaining Insight and Growing Business with Social Listening

## What is social listening?

Hootsuite defines social listening as “the practice of monitoring social media channels for mentions of your brand, competitor brands, and related keywords.”<sup>1</sup> Social listening can also be used to monitor your social media channels for feedback, or to see when your target audience mentions your brand.<sup>2</sup> With it, you can actively listen to your customers and use their sentiments to improve your marketing. When you are performing social listening, keep questions in mind to guide your efforts, such as:

- How does your audience feel about your company?
- How do they feel about your competitors?
- What are their top needs, desires and goals?

## What are the benefits?

Social listening can help you:

- **Understand and target your audience better** – For example, a customer posts that they love your seed they are planting, or you see a conversation where people are wondering about an herbicide you provide. Receiving this feedback can help you improve what you offer to customers in the future.
- **Uncover market trends** – What are people talking about as they're planting? How are they dealing with seasonal weed pressure? You can track related keywords and hashtags for your industry and use this information to keep up with current trends.
- **Improve campaign targeting** – Social listening can provide you with a deeper understanding of your customers. If they start posting about weeds or other issues, you can get an idea of these problems and use it in your messaging, reaching out to them even before they reach out to you.

## Social media listening tools

If this sounds like a lot to take on, don't worry. There are companies with tools that can assist you with your social listening strategies. These tools collect and examine data from your social channels helping you understand how your clients feel about your brand. Hootsuite, Audiense and Sprout Social are just three examples of the many options available. They offer features like audience analysis, customizable reports, customer feedback, trend identification and more. Many of these companies offer free trial periods, so you can check them out and gain a greater understanding of social listening prior to purchasing.

## 3 easy steps to get started

1. Pick two or three social media channels and monitor them for mentions of your brand, products or key terms having to do with your business. You can either monitor these channels yourself or use a social listening tool like Hootsuite Streams to set up filters with automatic alerts.
2. Analyze the information for ways to put it into action. Review the information for possibilities of how to act on it. It may be as simple as responding to a client who is pleased with a seed purchase, or you may decide you need to change how you talk about your brand.
3. Taking a broader view, you may want to monitor particular keywords and hashtags to get an idea of what people are saying about your brand or even the industry overall.

Social listening can be a strong ally in your efforts to improve your marketing by highlighting the perspectives of your customers. By paying attention to what they are saying, you can better understand their wants and needs, provide them with a first-rate customer experience and strengthen the position of your brand.

<sup>1</sup>Macready, Hannah, and Christina Newberry. "What is Social Listening, Why It Matters + 14 Tools to Help." Hootsuite. Accessed 3/25/2024. <https://blog.hootsuite.com/social-listening-business/>

<sup>2</sup> Coursera. "Social Listening: Definition, Tools, and Strategies for Business Growth." Accessed 3/25/2024. <https://www.coursera.org/articles/social-listening>.

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