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Why do we need to evaluate?

From behavioural metrics to emotional responses

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Opinion Piece

Why Facebook Reactions are good news for evaluating social media campaigns

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Abstract

Evaluating any aspect of a marketing communications campaign is challenging, especially when the campaign includes social media. In the past, social media and paid social activity such as Facebook have been measured with metrics such as clicks, impressions, likes, comments and fans. Although these measurements provide an insight into the numbers of viewers exposed to content and some indication of how well the content is 'liked', they are less efficient at providing an understanding about how consumers engage with the content. The trial of Facebook Reactions provides an opportunity for marketers to measure such emotional engagement.

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Introduction

Evaluation is an important part of any marketing communications campaign. It allows brands to measure the effectiveness of messages, review whether the optimal channels have been used and assess whether the mix has been right. It also provides an answer to the ultimate question: 'What was the return on investment?' Such information not only allows marketers to review past campaign performance, but also provides valuable insight for future campaign planning and investment.

Measuring social media

Existing techniques for measuring social media have been criticised in the past by bodies such as the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising for their 'vanity measures' and the measurement of 'fake' followers, leading to lengthy debates regarding 'the monetary value of the like'. Despite this, metrics such as fans and new fans, retweets, reach (paid and organic), shares and likes are still central measures of social media success. Although such measures are useful to understand how consumers behave, they provide less insight into how consumers feel.

In addition, although comments or posts allow some opportunity to evaluate reactions to communications, the need to understand how

Emotional response	consumers engage with social media remains. In particular, evaluating how consumers respond emotionally to social media campaigns is important if marketers are to fully understand the impact of their campaigns. Facebook Reactions allow marketers to gain a better measurement of consumers' emotional response to content.
Facebook Reactions	Facebook Reactions — which are currently being piloted in Ireland and Spain — provide consumers with the opportunity to respond to news feed items by selecting one of six new emojis: Love, Haha, Yay, Wow, Sad and Angry. This provides marketers with an opportunity to measure how consumers emotionally respond to content. ¹
Emotional impact	<p>By inviting consumers to indicate how the content makes them feel emotionally in one simple click, the impact can be measured within six emotional categories:²</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Love (Love)• Haha (Amusement)• Yay (Happiness)• Wow (Surprise)• Sad (Sadness)• Angry (Anger)
Emotional engagement	<p>This allows for more precise measurement of engagement than has previously been possible. In the past, metrics had included measures such as percentage increase in desirable content or percentage decrease in undesirable content. Providing consumers with a way to respond with more discreet measures will provide more precise data for evaluation. For example, possible metrics in the future could include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Per cent increase in Love replies• Per cent increase in Haha replies• Per cent increase in Yay replies• Per cent increase in Wow replies• Per cent decrease in Sad replies• Per cent decrease in Angry replies
Emotional preferences	As well as quantitative measures, such as the increase or decrease of items, Facebook Reactions will enable emotional preferences to be evaluated. This will provide marketers with a better understanding of how different emotions influence impact. Furthermore, layering existing Facebook data will enable marketers to see how content behaved within different demographics, that is, the majority of users that reacted with 'anger' were 18–25/from a particular city/married and so on, which will eventually enable content creators to tailor the messaging to specific audience segments.

Conclusion

Emotional objectives	Facebook Reactions provide an opportunity for marketers to gain a better understanding of how consumers engage emotionally with social media
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content. With the potential for more precise measurement of emotional response, these metrics will allow brands to consider new ways to measure campaign effectiveness in the future. This will necessitate that marketers will need to consider the emotional objectives of marketing communications campaigns.

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