From Networking Event to Action - 8 Lessons from Applied WIN LOSS Analysis

UK Networking Event Series
FROM NETWORKING EVENT TO LESSONS LEARNT
Using Social Media to Push CI Boundaries

by
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During 2016, Miribure’s Suki Fuller shared with the SCIP UK chapter the steps needed to extract value from social media for CI. We covered topics like the need to be convinced of the value of social media in the first place, which social media platform to use for which application, and whether social media’s value is about finding nuggets or if there is a role for standalone deliverables powered by social media.

The SCIP UK networking event series aims to follow up sessions such as Suki’s to discover how the ideas that are discussed have been implemented back at the ranch, for better or worse. In a networking event co-hosted by The Insights Distillery’s Catriona Oldershaw and EE’s Andrew Beurschgens, focus was directed on the real life application of a social media listening platform to push the CI boundaries, including the set-up, deliverables, and feedback. Not only was the presentation pitched to the UK forum, but it was also successful in being part of the line-up at the SCIP European Conference in Prague.

Little Social Media Listening Platform Exposure
What was clear from the audiences that Catriona and Andrew had the opportunity to share their experiences with, was that using an enterprise level social media listening platform for CI purposes was not that widespread. While practitioners had stated they were actively involved in using discreet platforms like LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, or even Glassdoor, there were only two hands raised when the question was asked if they use listening platforms like Brandwatch, Crimson Hexagon, Synthesio, or Sprinklr to name a few. These listening platforms typically sit within Marketing or Consumer Insight teams, but also offer powerful opportunities for CI teams to tap into real-time and unmediated insights of competitor activities and how they are landing with customers.

While previous SCIP conferences had broadcasted the message that CI teams should get involved with social media as an exciting new human intelligence frontier, there had been little sharing of how to do so, possibly until now! [see Table 1: Social Media Context]
Definition
A form of intelligence gathering which uses technology to harvest and analyse user generated content and data from social media channels

Strengths & Weaknesses

**Strengths**
- Fast and can be always on
- Cost effective
- Scalable
- Unmediated and unsolicited
- Insight rich | un/structured data

**Weaknesses**
- Can only provide answers if the data is there
- Shortage of people skilled in using the tools AND experienced in business (and CI) strategy
- Less data is available for B2B brands because of lower conversation levels and closed networks like LinkedIn
- Possible scepticism over lack of established models

Why CI Teams Should Get Involved with Social Media
- Unparalleled ‘speed to read’ market developments
- Opportunities to predict likely impact on reputation and customer loyalty
- Fresh and quick source of hands-on insight to answer a variety of senior management questions

### Social Media-fuelled CI Driven by a Combination of Factors: the EE Experience

Andrew has returned from SCIP European Conference in Prague with social media ringing in his ears. However in pure isolation, social media did not answer the “so what” question. Social media was looking for a problem to solve and it couldn’t be delivered by the CI team. Social media’s CI application in this context was brought to life through the term “Set Up C3” to act as a pathfinder for other practitioners, with each of the three Cs representing the ingredients to a successful project kick off: context, complement, and collaborate.

[See Figure 1: Building Blocks to Using Social Media to Push CI Boundaries]
From Networking Event to Lessons Learnt - Using Social Media to Push CI Boundaries

C3 | Context required to provide a business problem
For EE, the business problem social media was looking to answer was to tap into the UK’s digitally savvy and connected population to understand EE’s and its competitors’ customers’ changing sentiments in a market that was undergoing significant change. Change focused on competitors broadening their portfolios, launching new services, and evolving to be sustainable in a yet to be proven market scenario of multiplay product adoption. Was the demand side, the customers and target market actually going to care? The business problem was brought to life through the objective “map an early read at speed of customers’ changing sentiments in an evolving multiplay market to stay one step ahead”. Over the course of the set up and in-life delivery, the problem got abbreviated to “Gaining an early read at speed”. The project also played to the hidden agenda, were we missing out as a result of not “listening in”? 

C3 | Complement Existing Insight Platforms
The social media project could not be left in isolation. If complemented with other existing and more established insight platforms it would only grow in strength. To ensure the CI social media initiative complemented other insight platforms its output looked to build on the driver analysis associated with EE’s customer experience tracking and deep dive program. With the market being peppered by the launch of EE’s and its competitors’ multiplay initiatives, it was important to gain an early read of speed on the market feedback of these launches. We ensured the management team would be able to understand the categories from social media by replicating the customer experience drivers in name from the existing, classic market research-based customer experience insight programme. Social media was also able to provide evidence-based hypotheses in advance for the customer experience insight platform to test and disprove, therefore delivering increased value to the wider business. Drivers were sought across the multiplay product components; namely mobile, television, and broadband.

C3 | Collaborate Internally and Externally to Align Goals
The CI team was unable to deliver the promise of the early ready at speed through social media alone. The social listening platform sat within, and was managed by another part of the business. The complementary Customer Experience Insight Platform was delivered through another adjacent team. The social media listening platform owner had built up a work stack that had not factored in such broader market developments and therefore did not have the resource to activate the CI project’s benefit. But the listening platform owner was extremely keen to see social media’s profile raised in the business through such an initiative. Therefore it was critical to work with an external partner, The Insights Distillery, to provide an extra pair of hands, whose passion, pragmatism, expertise, and commitment to the project was as strong as the CI team to ensure the project delivered on its promise, “deliver an early read at speed of the customer’s changing sentiment in an evolving multiplay market to stay one step ahead”.

Quick Wins are Imperative
Along with any programme or initiative it is important to obtain a quick win. The programme was geared towards gaining an early read at speed of a new competitor’s market entry which did not eventually take place until the end of the year. The programme could not wait until that time to deliver on the proverbial “golden goose”. By working with The Insights Distillery a number of other quick wins were identified and achieved. First off, it was found that the trended sentiment told a broader narrative over time and provided a social context that was initially outside of the proposed event analysis. Secondly, the initial benchmarked events ensured subsequent trials were placed in context. Thirdly, the ability was understood that to create competitor maps, according to our customer experience drivers, it was important to work those maps into the social media listening platform used back at the office. The fourth and final win that was discovered was a two-page template that answered the stay-awake issue that was experienced with social media. Should we be concerned? Social media looked at conversation volumes, their sentiment, whether the source of conversation came from industry or consumer accounts, as well as outlining the motivations and barriers, negative and positive key themes respectively. Quick wins built credibility for the initiative from the outset. [See Figure 1: Building Blocks to Using Social Media to Push CI Boundaries]
Has It Been Worth It?

Despite the mobile telecom’s higher negative social sentiment averages, compared with other industry sectors, according to the Insights Distillery’s broader social expertise, business feedback has been positive. Directors described the output as “sexy”. It delivered on its promise, an early read at speed, and it was described as another brick in the decision wall. Other perspectives were received from a presentation held at the local SCIP chapter in the UK, and also at the European Conference in Prague. The following was discussed and presented:

- C3 – Bringing the rest of the company up to speed.
- Real case studies on industry, market, competitor social media monitoring/intelligence.
- Poor applicability in the B2B space.
- Benefit of social media listening tools.
- Social media feedback tends to be more negative than other research/survey methods in service industries relative to product-based industries.
- The sophisticated use of social media and its correlation with practical business outlooks.

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Figure 2 (What Are You going to Do Differently Tomorrow?) summed up the steps and considerations associated with realising a social media listening platform to push the CI boundaries.

What’s Next?

What else can social media focus on to deliver an early read at speed? What’s the new context? The new problem? There is a definite use case around a major annual product launch in the telecoms space that could look to hypothesise the core features of that product’s next release. Indeed there could be a case around tracking the UK nation’s sentiment as it gets accustomed to BREXIT and the extent it has as an effect on the nation’s consumption behaviour. Can social media provide an early warning ahead of a bigger set of events? Perhaps other practitioner case studies will emerge delivering social media’s value proposition; an early read at speed.

Networking Event Series

The SCIP UK Chapter hosts a series of networking events throughout the year. These events bring together practitioners from all corners of the discipline: service providers, consultants, academicians, and practitioners to address topics as identified from the previous events’ feedback.

The series aims to increase the understanding and awareness of desired themes among SCIP members and non-members, as well as to take the discipline to different business practices through co-hosting opportunities with other professional organisations and membership...
bodies. It is about creating an environment to discover, enhance, exchange, and problem solve. To understand the previous networking events’ discussion themes, go to the SCIP UK chapter page for a complete running order, as well as the links for the many discussions that have been published in SCIP’s Competitive Intelligence Magazine article, helping to form SCIP’s Body of Knowledge.

The SCIP UK Chapter is grateful to all speakers’ passion and ability to share, without whom there would be neither a networking event nor the creation of a rich exchange of ideas and learnings. The opportunity to speak at these networking events is open to anyone, United Kingdom-based or just passing through, subject to meeting the growing list of event topics. Engagement with attendees is typically around five themes, centred on case studies to bring out applied learnings, namely: innovative integration of CI within the business, professional growth in CI, analysis in action, mastering information overload, and communicating with impact.

We encourage others to come forward to introduce the group to new perspectives, experiences, and learning. Everyone’s application of CI brings new perspectives, as CI from one company to the next is different. What links all the prospective speakers, regardless of their background or role within the competitive intelligence profession, is a passion for the discipline. Along with all the volunteer speakers to date and those that have yet to take advantage of the opportunity, they are all unique examples of characters continuing to fix the discipline more firmly on the map! What is the next step? Register your interest and details with Michelle Winter mwinter@scip.org to explore speaking opportunities and/or to be proactively kept abreast of forthcoming events in the UK.

Sources:
2. ‘Gaining an Early Read at Speed | Pushing CI Boundaries with Social Media’ SCIP Prague Presentation, Nov 2016 by Andrew Beurschgens and Catriona Oldershaw

About the Authors:
Andrew Beurschgens is the Head of Market Intelligence at EE, the consumer home and broadband line of business, which has been acquired by BT. In cooperation with other volunteers from both the practitioner and supply side of the competitive intelligence discipline, Andrew is acting Volunteer Chair of the UK Chapter. He is a former SCIP Catalyst and recent Distinguished SCIP Member Award winner, recognised for his volunteer services to the profession and its members, and has served on the SCIP Board.

Catriona Oldershaw, co-founder of The Insights Distillery (“TID”), has 20 years’ experience in senior agency, client-side marketing and commercial roles, including 4 years as Managing Director UK at social media provider, Synthesio, where she was selected as a member of the Silicon Valley Comes to the UK Top 100 Club of most promising UK based business leaders of high growth companies. She has spoken at numerous events as a social media intelligence expert, including Social Media World Forum, techMAP, NewMR and news:rewired.