

## I Spy: Look Who's Talking... About You

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You always check your reviews on RealSelf, Yelp, RateMDs, Angie's List, and HealthGrades. You lose sleep over every less-than-5-star rating and agonize over every not-quite-over-the-moon comment, but what are they saying about your brand on social media?

What you don't know can hurt you and probably already has. If you don't know what your brand's stakeholders, customers, vendors, partners, employees, and influencers are saying about you in online forums and social networking sites, you can't act on it. No matter where a conversation is happening on Twitter, Instagram, blogs, or traditional media, if it is online, it can be tracked. Listen in.

Social media listening offers clues about how your brand is being perceived by your target audiences online. Once you gain these insights, you can make a plan to fix what may be broken and capitalize on what's working.

### **The Lay of the Land**

The volume of data created daily on the social web is pretty overwhelming. Knowing how to comb through all of it to extract valuable insights requires some strategic planning. The key metrics to analyze include Facebook posts, Twitter feeds, Instagram feeds, blog posts, customer demographics and influencers, website visit experiences, and product purchase history. Some of this can be tracked via your own web pages and social channels.

To gather more intel, it is important to cast an even wider net. You probably have gotten into the habit of setting automated Google alerts for your name—John Smith, MD—as well as your brand or practice name—Smith Facial Aesthetics Clinic—but you should add a few variations of your brand names that consumers may be looking for or using. These include: first name only, last name only, first & last name, last name comma first name, with and without degree, with and without Dr, abbreviations of your company or practice name, common misspellings of your brand names, slogans, and key messages.

Once you have identified your target audience(s)—and there may be more than one—you will be in a better position to develop strategies as to when and where to engage with them. You want to find out how they are sharing your content, and to understand how they feel about your brand, the team, and the products and services you offer.

Who's driving the most important conversations about your brand? Learn more about them, their authority across each social channel, and their social footprint. To be proactive, if you notice a user liking and sharing your posts, reach out and thank them, and return the favor. Social media is a two-way street. You need to follow to be followed and like to get liked.

## **Competitive Insights**

To gain a competitive advantage, identify the top five practices or medspas who you consider to be a threat. If patients don't come back for treatments, where are they going? Compare reach, share of voice, and impact of your brand against your competitors. Track your competition to see how and why their performance changes over time, and learn what you can be doing better.

Facebook Insights makes this easy. If you are an Admin on your business page, click on Insights at the top of the page, go to Overview, and scroll down to view "Pages to Watch—Compare the performance of your Page and posts with similar Pages on Facebook." Facebook automatically spits out possible pages of competitors to review. This is an easy way to get a peek at how another practice or brand is doing in terms of likes, comments, and shares.

Listening to what customers, clients, and patients are saying about your brand online is equally as critical as managing your online reputation. Social media listening will help guide you to maintain a positive online reputation for your brand in the communities that are keys to your success.