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Strategic Insights On:

Healthcare

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Healthcare

From diagnosing challenges and opportunities to reach potential patients, to prescribing industry-specific strategic solutions, our healthcare clients take care of the health of others; we take care of the rest. MZI Healthcare, Orlando Orthopaedic and Mid Florida Eye Center and Logan Eye Care are just some of the organizations that have put their trust in us.

We hope you enjoy this content and evok's commitment to the healthcare industry. If you would ever like to be a guest writer or suggest blogs for us to write, please contact us at info@evokad.com.



3 TRUTHS HEALTHCARE MARKETERS MUST KNOW ABOUT MILLENNIALS

Marketing Healthcare to Millennials: What You Need to Know

How millennials interact with marketing has become an increasingly popular topic in recent years (we've written about it extensively). But the spotlight on this generation is well deserved. An often cited stat reporting millennial's purchasing power totals over \$200 billion annually has put a bullseye on this group, making them the ultimate audience to target and win over.

Today, we're here to translate insights surrounding the millennial mindset into actionable guidelines for healthcare brands. Whether your goal is to attract new patients in this age group or retain existing patients with strategic communications, here's what you need to know about millennials.

Overall Well-Being is a Priority

Millennials have been named as the driving force behind wellness trends, making health and well-being part of their every day. They view healthcare as a tool to take care of their overall wellness rather than a service called upon only when they're sick.

When millennials do get sick, they want to get to the root of the problem rather than Band-Aid the problem. To treat the cause, not just the symptoms of their condition, more and more millennials are turning to alternative forms of medicine.

The Internet is Their First Stop

From pulling a muscle at Cross Fit to researching the ingredients in their cold medicine, there's one destination that beats all competition for the millennial market share—the Internet. A study by C Space Health reports half of millennials research symptoms and treatments online before going to or calling a doctor.

Needless to say, millennial's Google habits is a prime opportunity for healthcare marketers to reach this audience. Your target audience is already online looking for answers, you just need to create and publish informative content that focuses on helping instead of selling. And while blogging on your own site has proven highly effective, sponsoring content on millennial-read publications to position your brand as experts in the space can supercharge your content marketing strategy.

Cost is a Concern

Millennials are less likely to have healthcare coverage than any other age group, with millennial men most likely to be uninsured out of all gender and age combinations. And even with insurance, healthcare costs are a reported concern for millennials, with about one in four of them skipping a doctor visit to avoid medical bills.

For healthcare marketers, demystifying medical costs is step one in connecting with the millennial audience. As a matter of fact, all age groups are requesting more transparency in healthcare. Starting a thoughtful conversation about affordable healthcare positions you as a provider who cares about millennials and both their health and financial needs.



HOW TO PROMOTE YOUR NEW HEALTHCARE APP

4 Quick Tips to Get Users to Download Your Healthcare App

Just like you treat your patients with great care, your plan to launch your brand new healthcare app should be given the same attention.

While creating your mobile app from the ground up was a daunting task, advertising and marketing is another hurdle to overcome. But, if you follow these four quick tips, you can do just that.

1. Evaluate the Competition

See who's in the playing field. Check out their website and their app store page, see where they're lacking and take note of what your app can bring to the table. Make sure you highlight and emphasize all these unique features within your copy.

2. Promote Your App

Reach out to healthcare blogs or websites who fall within your niche and give them the rundown of your new app. If they like what they see, ask them to write a blog post introducing it or feature it on their website.

You can also write up a press release and send it professionals in the field. Consider adding snapshots of the app, so readers can fully understand what it does and how it functions.

3. Create a Website and Video

Create a website to give people a place to go if they would like more information on your healthcare app. Within the website, think about creating separate tabs for each app feature to increase search engine optimization and also to better help visitors understand your app.

Some apps and platforms aren't the easiest to explain in a few words. If your app is complex and hard to write about concisely, create a video for your site that explains the app, its features and purpose in layman's terms—healthcare industry jargon might further confuse readers.

4. Optimize It in the App Store

The final and most important tip, app store optimization (ASO). You may not know, but optimization isn't just for webpages but also for app stores. Similar to optimizing a webpage, make sure you maximize your keywords in the app name and create a compelling description that focuses on keywords thematically.

Also, think about your app icon. Users scroll through endless lists of apps and your icon is their first visual impression. Make it stand out and be eye catching.

Although advertising and marketing your healthcare app isn't a walk in the park, these tips and tricks help make it a little breezier.



HOW TO CREATE OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH ONLINE PERSONALIZATION IN HEALTHCARE MARKETING

Make Healthcare Marketing More Personal

About three out of four online consumers are frustrated by website content that is not personalized and about the same number have chosen, recommended or paid more for a brand offering personalized experiences. These days, tailoring online user experiences with one-to-one messaging is no longer optional, it's expected. And with few things as personal as our health, the demand for content customized to the individual patient is on the rise.

From booking appointments to researching conditions and purchasing treatments or services, more and more of the healthcare process is happening online. This shift has created (often untapped) opportunities for healthcare providers and professionals to tailor messaging on an individual basis without crossing privacy lines.

If you're looking for ways to give your healthcare marketing an edge with increased personalization, here are two ways you can start transforming your messaging today.

Dynamic Content and Personalized Calls to Action

Potential patients searching "causes of cloudy vision" versus "cataract surgeons near me" are at very different stages on their eye healthcare journey. A person searching for answers to their cloudy vision may not need, want or be ready to receive information on cataract surgery or fill out a consultation request. Your website's content and calls to action should reflect those differences and speak directly to each user's specific needs and wants.

Dynamic website content allows you to personalize the user experience for each and every single visitor to your site depending on their browsing history, location, demographics and other known data. Instead of a static page, the user in the previous example can be served a call to action to explore helpful articles on the topic of cloudy vision, which might be more appropriate, more relevant and more likely to turn that visitor into a patient.

Segmented Email Marketing With Relevant Information

When it comes to email marketing, list segmentation offers nearly endless opportunities for personalized messaging. Because nearly all of us check our inbox at least once a day, it's likely you know firsthand how well personalized emails can perform.

Dividing email lists into groups based on shared characteristics—like patients over 50, guardians of underage patients, etc.—has been proven to boost open and click-through rates by almost 19 percent and 22 percent respectively, according to MailChimp. That's because this process allows your emails to be relevant, timely and valuable. In other words, your senior-aged patients won't receive an email promoting a kids' teeth cleaning special and vice versa.

Whether your healthcare practice's goal is to attract new patients or nurture existing ones, the modern advertising landscape has made an all but complete shift favoring one-to-one messaging. Don't let your business fall behind.



EXECUTING HEALTHCARE AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS IN THE MIDST OF CRISIS

The Opioid Crisis

Over the last decade, the opioid epidemic in America has greatly impacted the ways in which healthcare providers administer both urgent and preventative care options to those most affected.

There's no way to immediately judge just how much of an impact the opioid crisis will affect Florida in the future, but there are still ways in which healthcare organizations can educate the masses while helping those who may be struggling with addiction.

Acknowledge That There's a Problem

As much as you may pride your organization on being the best at what you do, on behalf of your patients, we know you can't do it all. Essentially, admitting that there's a problem in the way that you currently disseminate vital, educational information to patients and their families is the first step in creating a more effective crisis-based communication plan.

Once you've addressed the elephant in the room, your focus should then shift to creating the best plan of action for keeping those concerned up to date on any new developments, legislative actions and treatment/recovery options.

Become an Advocate For Patients and Families

As mentioned before, there's educational information that's important for both patients and their families. When dealing with addiction, the circle of those affected is much wider than what some people would perceive.

Be mindful of creatively effective ways in which your organization can disseminate information that families and caretakers can use to help care for patients and information that can help patients take better care of themselves.

The more effort you put towards creating an environment of mutual support, the more likely you are see positive treatment results.

Team Up With Proven Industry Experts

Perhaps the only silver lining that comes from the opioid crisis in Florida is that there are plenty of industry organizations that are willing to help get the word out to the right audiences, freeing you and your system up to do the one thing that matters most: improving the health of your patients.

If you're looking for an agency that can help you prioritize and optimize your current marketing and education strategies, contact us at 407-585-8231, or email us at info@evokad.com.



HOW TO SELL WITHOUT GETTING SUED: MEDICAL MARKETING IN THE AGE OF HIPAA

HIPAA—whether or not you say that acronym in affection or exhaustion, you can't deny its impact on how we approach healthcare and the public. Since 1996, the healthcare industry has been navigating what it means to be a successful brand in the age of HIPAA. While marketing according to HIPAA's seemingly endless restrictions can seem like a daunting task, it's not only incredibly beneficial to your healthcare brand—it'll get you a lawsuit if you don't.

Here are some ways to get the word out about your brand while staying in HIPAA's good graces.

Make It Personal—Without Giving Private Information

Marketing under HIPAA is defined as “a communication about a product or service that encourages recipients of the communication to purchase that product or service.” That's a pretty straightforward definition, but one with a lot of asterisks. In the digital age, it's easier than ever to share a testimonial or story of your brand's success with thousands, but medical marketing faces a unique challenge—how do you effectively show what your brand has done without specifically highlighting the people you've helped?

Under HIPAA, it's imperative that marketers do not share patient information. Be certain that the marketing materials you create do not reveal any patient's identity. Stray away from using patient names and photos, substituting stock photos and actors for visuals of real-life patients. Tell the stories of patients who have been helped by your brand while keeping their personal health information (PHI) and identity disconnected.

Being HIPAA Compliant and Digitally Savvy

While your medical company may know HIPAA inside and out, the people creating your graphics, writing your copy, and crafting your social media profiles may not. Make sure that your brand is working with an agency that's well acquainted with HIPAA and what it means when it comes to marketing in the digital age.

One misstep in sending out PHI could become disastrous. The help of a business attorney can serve as a final measure to ensure that your hard work is legally sound. Medical brands need a great marketing strategy to thrive but can't neglect the HIPAA restrictions they need to survive.



THE IMPACTS OF DISASTER PREPAREDNESS ON HEALTHCARE SYSTEMS

Months after initial landfall, there are still plenty of people feeling the effects of Hurricane Irma. None more than the families of those lost due to the heat-related deaths suffered at the Rehabilitation Center at Hollywood Hills nursing facility.

Now, politicians are trying to figure out what regulations make the most sense to prevent this from ever happening again. As lawmakers work toward preventative regulations, it's up to advertisers to help rebuild trust while healthcare facilities develop ways to ensure quality patient care in the wake of hurricanes and other natural disasters.

Advertise Less, Advocate More

In times of disaster, especially when human lives are at risk, it helps to turn down that marketing/advertising voice in your head that's tuned to promotion and sales and amplify your sense of advocacy.

There's nothing that leaves a bad taste in someone's mouth, so to speak, more than being tone deaf in the midst of tragedy. Refrain from trying to "sell" people on things and use your resources to help the greater good. This could include organizing fundraising events on behalf of a client, donating ad services to create cause-awareness campaigns, or even taking a day to volunteer your agency's time to helping rebuild or restore a local business.

Be Sincere on Social and Beyond

To extend your sense of advocacy, pay extra attention to your social media channels immediately following any disaster, as this may serve as the first touch between your organization and the people looking to learn more about what's to come.

Keep these points in mind:

- **Double check any automated posts on the schedule.** Sending out something unrelated to what's currently going on may get lost in translation, creating mixed signals for audiences.
- **Refrain from making light of serious situations.** For some, humor is used to diffuse heavy situations, but that's not a wise approach as some can (and likely will) take offense.
- **Do not go about business as if nothing happened at all.** Sometimes we want to take a neutral stance on things, especially if they appear politically charged. Inaction will reflect far worse on you in the long run as an organization.

A little foresight and some due diligence will go a long way in preserving your social media presence, while being helpful to those who need it most.

Keep the People Informed

As disaster management takes place, keeping people updated on progress is the best way to garner trust and credibility with those you serve. A proper mix of both internal and external communication not only bolsters the role of public health in disaster management for hospitals, nursing homes and other healthcare facilities, but also helps you create viable long-term-care emergency preparedness protocols.

Knowing which information to disseminate—and the proper mediums in which to use—takes a dedicated, thoughtful team of content and strategy professionals who are in tune with both user-generated content sources and professional news networks.

For more information on how evok advertising can help strengthen your online content strategies, regardless of the situation, contact us today at info@evokad.com, or call (407) 585-8231.



BEST MARKETING STRATEGIES FOR HOSPITALS

Should a hospital advertise? If so, what is the best way for them to advertise? Hospitals are not a place that people want to visit, but if they must visit, they want the best hospital with the best care for them and their loved ones.

In a market with so many healthcare choices from urgent care to walk-in clinics to stand-alone emergency rooms, hospitals need to fight to keep the patients coming in the door. They have to find gentle ways to let the community know what they have to offer. People are seeking you out in times of stress and anxiety—you have to be sensitive to that in your messaging.

Best Advertising Practices

Regulation does not exist on advertising for hospitals, so they can use any media source and put out any message. This leaves it wide open for a hospital to use any method of advertising. Here are some of the top advertising means hospitals are using:

- Most Americans are attached to their mobile devices, so it is crucial for hospitals to get a website that is mobile friendly. For example, evok advertising developed a mobile friendly website for Orlando Orthopaedic Center. It streamlined their scheduling and made it easier for its patients to navigate the site from their mobile devices.
- Billboard advertising might seem like an older method of advertising, but it still sees amazing results. This form of advertising brings in people driving by and satisfies an immediate need. Take, for example, the Hurley Medical Center in Flint, Michigan. The outdoor advertising campaign for their new hernia center brought in 40% of its 150 patients. The billboards still bring in almost 15 calls per day, leading to a 140% increase in patient volume.
- Blog writing is quickly becoming a go-to method to engage the community about hospitals. These blogs are being written by patients, doctors, and nurses and include powerful stories and helpful health advice. These blogs bring in new customers and increase their readers' trust in your establishment.
- Don't forget about your employees. They are an extension of the hospital and can be a great way to share your positive message. Communicate with your employees and encourage them to attend events and participate in the community to spread the word about their place of work.

Social Media Implications

Social media is currently the best and most affordable way for a hospital to get community engagement. Social media is expected to increase its users by 200% within the next 5 years. Forty percent of consumers use social media to research and discuss health issues, and 72% of all Internet users search for health information.

With these statistics, healthcare facilities are turning to digital and social media as a main source of advertising. Social media can be a great way to earn the trust of the community. Here are the best tips for using social media for healthcare marketing:

- Ask patients to post stories of their positive experiences. Much of these patients' experiences may revolve around confidential patient information, but they may be more than willing to share a great experience they had with a kind, friendly nurse or doctor.
- Respond to all comments—both negative and positive.
- Feature doctors and share information on their awards, successes, and research, which will increase page visitors' trust in the hospital and its doctors.

Doctors are also using social networking forums to work together and collaborate about patient care. They are sharing research, ideas, knowledge, and successes that will improve customer care and go towards keeping patients loyal to your hospital. Healthcare marketing may be a tricky skill to master, but in today's digital landscape, we've never had more tools to make it easier to navigate.



STREAMLINING THE RFP PROCESS AND AGENCY SELECTION FOR HEALTHCARE ORGANIZATIONS

Without the proper resources and strategic planning from a healthcare marketing/advertising agency, your healthcare organization, hospital or medical enterprise is destined to lose traction, plateau or diminish in the heat of competition.

So when it's time to begin the search for a full-service advertising agency, it can be a bit overwhelming. Taking this step is significant for any organization, but it is absolutely vital to identify your goals and creative needs and begin your selection process early. This process can be daunting and not for the faint hearted. As a starting point, use this checklist of key insights to consider when evaluating a prospective agency partner:

- 1. Establish Your Key Performance Indicators and Your Return On Investment:** Your business objective is to produce work that performs and has specific and measurable results. Ask your prospective agency how they measure, track, and analyze results and if their answers align with your own goals and KPIs. Have them explain their process for tracking and measuring ROI.
- 2. What Channel Experience Do They Have?** Channel experience should be a critical determining factor because hospitals, medical professionals, and healthcare organizations have tougher regulatory influences, and industry experience has to be part of the selection process. The healthcare industry has many complex issues, from patient care to insurance providers along with constant changes in policies, so a deeper understanding is necessary to communicate issues and answers between a provider and the general public. Ask to see samples of their work, blogs and case studies that are relevant to your needs.
- 3. Digital Experience Should be a Must:** Patient care has transcended from its roots in a traditional approach, and whether it's a website, app or video content, an agency must have the digital chops to be a contender. Request digital work that they have completed for organizations in your specific industry and see what innovative digital work they have done that solves issues your organization is facing. Find out what experience they have in PPC, search marketing, mobile site requirements, search engine optimization and support for SEO. Ask about their credentials in the digital space, are they affiliated with the Google Partners program?
- 4. Do They Have Their Finger on the Pulse of the Industry?** A good agency will receive all the channel-specific publications and follow all the trends affecting your industry. Ask for examples of how they identified an industry trend and created a ripple in the share of voice for their clients. Do they have local clients in the area or work that effects your healthcare organization? Be sure to ask them to explain their media buying tactics, software and approach.

- 5. Are They Full-Service or Strategically Aligned?** Some agencies claim to be full-service, what they do is partner with other companies to buy their media or code their digital. Don't be afraid to dig a little deeper and see what their core capabilities are. Be clear to identify and ask who the day-to-day team will be and who exactly will be working on your account and what their experience is. You need to make sure you have the right team to align your organizations goals so they can be achieved.
- 6. Set the Expectation:** Your organization and advertising agency need to be on the same page and have the same goals in sight. Be clear of what success looks like for you and the agency, an agency with a slick market process with no real concise explanation should not really be trusted. You and your future agency need a mutual understanding of performance criteria and a defined system for tracking and reporting.
- 7. Show Me the Money:** Establish a clear understanding of fees, retainers and any "extra" charges. Dig deep and ask about their approach to change orders, approvals and general agency operations. You definitely don't want to start your new business relationship with financial surprises and unexpected money matters.
- 8. Size Matters:** A criterion to consider is how many active clients they have and how your budget stacks up against these clients. Ideally, it is best to seek an agency where you budget will place you in the top 10 of their clients. The idea is to make sure you're getting the proper attention.
- 9. Meet the Players on Your Team:** The agency principals and the people you initially meet may not be the day-to-day account workers. Determine who all the agency team members are and ask about their credentials and experience. Define responsibilities and how they resolve differences. Maintain a communications channel to the agency principals.
- 10. Do They Practice What They Preach?** Does the agency you reviewing care about its own advertising? Do they establish thought leadership through the creation of content on their site or write blogs, white papers or other content through their social media channels? Is the website well-designed? Do they create engaging content or videos? If the agency doesn't care about its own image, it may be time to move on.

Selecting a healthcare advertising agency can be challenging and arduous. We invite you to use this checklist to assist in guiding you through the selection process.

Although creative talent, reputation and industry experience are important, hiring an agency that checks off these boxes should guide you through this process. Invest the time to carefully evaluate the people and processes when selecting a healthcare advertising agency.



WHAT'S NEXT FOR MEDICAL MARIJUANA IN FLORIDA?

In November 2016, Florida voters passed Amendment 2, legalizing medical marijuana, a drug that, for many, is the difference between life and death; however, patients still do not have legal access. The voters, patients and supporters of the amendment have been pushing the Florida Legislature to develop a rollout plan, but—at the time of the publishing of this article—there are no signs that it's coming anytime soon.

So, here, we examine medical marijuana's sordid timeline, analyze the long-term implications of its slow, yet steady, legalization, and how it can (and will) affect the local marketing industry.

History of Marijuana Legalization

Many trace the initiation of regulation of marijuana to 1937 with the Marijuana Tax Act, a primarily a way to make money for government, but it did not prohibit people from using it. Then, in 1972, President Nixon started his war on drugs and created the Controlled Substance Act. He put marijuana in the "Level-1 Category" of drugs, which is the most un-useful drugs, and most highly addictive. These were highly regulated drugs and breaking this law came with stiff sentences. He did this even though the researchers recommended to him that this drug was not harmful at the time.

Then the baby boomers through experimentation and social interaction realized that marijuana not only offered relief from many types of pain, studies showed that it wasn't addictive. They, along with lobbyists, worked to decriminalize marijuana, and a few states did so in the 70's. However, it did not get much traction until in 1996 when California was the first to vote to legalize marijuana for medical use. Since then, 22 other states have done the same, and others are sure to follow.

Impact of Legalization

Many people against the legalization of this drug say there is not enough research; we do not know the long-term effects of its use, and those pushing for it are just out to make a money grab without consequence. However, you cannot argue the benefits that people are seeing while taking this medical marijuana. Here are just a few of the remarkable stories of healing:

Hannah is a vibrant little girl that was diagnosed with stage IV lymphoma cancer. When they found the cancer it had moved to her bones, her spine, her stomach and her skull. The only treatment recommended to her was chemotherapy and that almost killed this precious little girl, so her mother drove them to Denver to find other options. Hannah started cannabis oil and saw results immediately, even her symptoms from the chemo subsided. She just put the oil in her chocolate milk each morning and now is in total remission.

Stephanie, a 30-year-old, found a lump in her breast and by the time the doctors diagnosed it, the disease spread to her bones and was given one year to live. Stephanie researched her options and decided to eat organically, exercise, went for acupuncture and added cannabis oil treatments; she is now cancer free.

Mary, a beautiful 6-year-old from South Carolina, suffers from pediatric epilepsy and had up to 100 seizures in one night. She was lucky that the state she lives in legalized marijuana for medical use and her doctor prescribed cannabis oil, the seizures reduced by 81%, and now Mary can be a happy kid again.

The stories go on and on with people being cured of ailments with Cannabis. There are many strands of cannabis and many combinations of the drug are used to cure different issues and each person needs to get medical advice on what's best for them. The problem is that states are not legalizing all types and patients may have to move to seek the treatment that is right for them.

What's Next for Florida?

Advocates of Amendment 2 were ecstatic when the majority of the voters passed the amendment. However, the legislature and the Department of Health were given the responsibility to create a bill, which will create the rules and regulations to go with this new law. The patients, doctors and caregivers all needed to know what they can and not do in regards to consuming and administering this medicine. In May of 2017, the bill fell apart in the House and Senate and had to be rewritten. The Senate finally approved the bill and the Governor is set to sign it in July, with the Department of Health is responsible for implementing the guidelines.

The bill specifically lists all the ailments that would qualify a person to get medical marijuana, patients must have cancer, epilepsy, glaucoma, HIV/AIDS, PTSD, ALS, Crohn's disease, Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis or a condition of the "same kind or class," though what precisely that means is uncertain. Patients also qualify if they have chronic pain related to one of the named diseases or are terminally ill.

Additionally...

Patients are able to obtain their medicine right after getting the prescription and will be allowed a 70-day supply with two refills before seeing the doctor again. The Department of Health will be required to issue health cards for all patients to show their legal status for carrying the marijuana; this card is also their proof to be able to purchase the drug.

The doctors and caregivers of patients will be required to attend a class lasting two hours, and each will have to pay a fee before being able to pick up or administer the medication.

Minors that need the medicine will be required to see two doctors and both must give the same recommendation for this medicine.

The problem with the bill is that it included a clause that the marijuana cannot be smoked, it can only be consumed by vaping or ingesting it. This will likely cause a problem with the supporters because Amendment 2 as voted on stated that smoking was banned in public areas but not altogether; the Senate expects a lawsuit will most likely be filed to fight this part of the bill. The lawmakers state that there is not enough evidence that smoking the drug is effective, and many feel that the smoke is full of chemicals to cause harm.

The state has issued licenses to 7 growers that have set up their businesses around the state of Florida, and another 10 are in the approval process, each of which will be allowed 25 dispensary locations. With the exception of Knox Medical, in Orlando, many of the dispensaries are in place but have not been allowed to open until the bill passes, and the laws are in place. The growers must track the marijuana from seed to sale, and for every 100,000 patients, the state will license another 4 growers.

This will bring jobs and will boost Florida's economic growth. The estimate is that by 2022 the dispensaries will be bringing in \$542 million in sales. In the original amendment the state was looking forward to collecting sales tax on the marijuana sales however in the new bill there will not be sales tax charged as they deemed the marijuana to be medicine and not subject to tax, but it did include a commitment to giving \$750,000 to a treatment center in Tampa for research on how marijuana affects patients with cancer.



SENTIMENTS ON SENTIMENT ANALYSIS

Humans are innately social creatures, and in an increasingly interconnected world, we're sharing more than ever on social media. Consequently, social media data is hardly ever black and white, but rather riddled with opinions and attitudes. For advertisers, this wealth of shared information is a gold mine for insights about a company's actions or products, but where do you even begin analyzing it all?

Because of the nature of shared data, its analysis begs a deeper look at the emotions and opinions. Sentiment analysis, also known as opinion mining, is the collection of users' expressions about a brand or topic that can be categorized as positive, negative or neutral. Rather than compute it manually, many advertisers are now turning to automated software that interprets this data on its own. But, as with all technological advancements, there are some caveats to be wary of. Is opinion mining, the analysis of human expression, safe to be trusted solely with computer software?



What is Sentiment Analysis?

Sentiment analysis monitors public opinion online. This is a pivotal method of monitoring results and impact, particularly when a brand or public figure needs real-time results to act accordingly. For example, the Obama administration utilized sentiment analysis to feel out the public's perception prior to the 2012 presidential election. Social listening is important for any brand, not only presidential, so that messages that don't work can be adjusted and messages that do can be boosted. Noticing the effect on your target audience and changing your tone can make you more favorable and even lauded for connecting in an authentic way.

How is Sentiment Analysis Performed?

For the most part, sentiment analysis is divided into two categories: manual and automatic. Manual processing is exactly what it sounds like: going through expressions one by one without using a program. It is the most accurate judge of sentiment, but not completely error-free. Larger accounts would most likely use algorithms to process keywords or computer systems for sentiment analysis. These streamlined approaches are quick, easy to implement and cover the most for what it's worth. However, the downfall to these programs is that sarcasm and irony aren't very likely to be detected. The accuracy rate for these types of programs is less than 70%.

Is Sentiment Analysis Suited for All?

There are few distinguishing factors that separate competitors in today's industries, and brand perception is perhaps the greatest one. If you aren't clued in to what your audience thinks of you, tough luck. Sentiment analysis is the closest a brand can get to on-the-fly surveys to position themselves the best it can. Although sentiment analysis has its shortcomings, the overall benefit of understanding the consumers' minds outweighs the cons.

The best practice for sentiment analysis would be to utilize automated systems combined with real-time monitoring, as we do here at evok. The high volume of expressions is simply impossible to go through manually, but in unison with a team that can clear out troublesome phrases, sentiment analysis can get people chatting about your brand in a positive way.