

Combating Disinformation: Why Your Brand Needs to Understand Its Audience

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News travels fast. Fake news travels faster. Today, brands' options are nearly limitless when it comes to communicating with their audiences. And in turn, consumers possess unprecedented access to companies and their leadership. Though most brands engage in some form of media listening, savvy communications professionals understand the value of taking it a step further.

In an online world filled with noise, it can be difficult to discern the real conversations and concerns from the fake. But brands can make the job of detecting disinformation significantly easier, even stopping it in its tracks, by establishing a thorough understanding of their audiences.

Identify unusual behavior

When you understand your audience's online behavior, communications professionals are better able to detect disinformation campaigns or online 'backlash' in advance. For example, do users typically interact with specific posts at specific times of day? Does the demographic you primarily target typically interact through favorites, but suddenly they've embraced re-Tweeting? Have searches for members in company leadership increased seemingly out of nowhere?

When your traditional monitoring keywords have yet to identify a problem, familiarizing yourself with audience behavior can catch red flags in advance, allowing brands a chance to act proactively rather than reactively. Though a sudden change in online behavior can be a normal part of brand and consumer

growth, a keen eye on an audience's patterns can be the key to stopping disinformation campaigns in their tracks.

Look in the right places

The internet is a vast place. Consumers can move from Twitter to Reddit to Discord in an instant. All the more reason to understand where your audience lives online. Brands should, of course, be on the lookout for sudden migrations across platforms. But on a more basic level, it is important to understand what social sites consumers engage so they can detect conversations around disinformation and negative content even faster.

More than that, engaging on the platforms your consumers frequent demonstrates a fundamental understanding of your audience and a willingness to meet them where they are. Even though common sense dictates, it still must be said, brands who regularly engage with their base across preferred media channels are likely to pick up discontent among consumers faster than those who do not.

Understand Audience Values

Most brands can rattle off their target demographics in a heartbeat. It is important to know your audience is comprised of 18 to 34 year old, middle class females with Bachelor's degrees. But none of that matters if you don't understand what your audience values, what they prioritize above all else or at least what they'll go out of their way to make time for. In turn, brands can use 'values' keywords to pay attention to general concerns and conversations amongst specific groups of users.

Through the combination of understanding how your audience behaves, where they communicate and what they value, brands can anticipate both positive and negative online moments. Companies who want to stay ahead of the game and act

proactively rather than reactively should incorporate thorough audience audits into their branding and anti-disinformation strategies.



About the Author: Dan Brahmy is the Co-founder and CEO of Cyabra, a SaaS platform that uses AI to measure impact and authenticity within online conversations. Prior to Cyabra, Dan served as a Senior Strategy Consultant at Deloitte Digital and a summer Business Associate at Google EMEA. Since founding Cyabra, Dan and his team have helped brands analyze conversations and unravel hidden insights to identify and categorize disinformation, deepfakes, and the types of accounts they're coming from (real, bad, or fake). Dan received his B.A. in Business Administration and Marketing from IDC Herzliya.