1.1   Online engagement evaluation tool

Purpose	The purpose of this tool is to support the evaluation of online engagement activities
When?	• Ongoing monitoring of online engagement metrics
	• Monthly or quarterly online engagement session
Resources	• 1 hour a month/quarterly to conduct an online engagement sense-making session
Rating	

With online engagement, a wealth of new data is constantly being collected, analysed and made available. This data is a gold-mine for monitoring and evaluating your online community engagement. Most of the different online engagement platforms have their own internal monitoring systems and indicators than enable users to track their online engagement at a microscopic level. The challenge is how to make sense of all this data, and its implications for your broader online engagement.

The purpose of this tool is to help you make targeted use of this data and conduct a higher-level evaluation of online engagement. This tool includes four components to meet these needs:

1. Online engagement metrics

2. Making sense of online engagement metrics #1 (simple)

3. Making sense of online engagement metrics #2 (intermediate)

4. Making sense of online engagement metrics #3 (advanced)

Online engagement metrics

To understand your online engagement, you will have to do ongoing monitoring of the different engagement platforms you are using. These guidelines are intended to help you focus your monitoring efforts on the most important metrics for different platforms. We also provide basic advice on how to collect this data.

See the 'How to access social media metrics' guide for instructions on how to find these metrics across different platforms

Note: It is likely there is someone within your organisation who is responsible for maintaining these different online channels, and who is already tracking online engagement. They may want to use these guidelines to build on what they are already doing. We also understand that different organisations use different platforms, we have only provided guidance for the most popular online engagement platforms.

Clear Horizon

Facebook

HOW	DETAILS
How do I track this form of online engagement?	Facebook insights (see 'How to access social media metrics' guide)
When?	Weekly or fortnightly

KEY METRICS	DETAILS
Reach	The number of people on Facebook that see your content or post.
Number of page 'likes'	The number of people who 'like' your Facebook page. This provides an indication of the size of your audience on Facebook. You want to track how this number changes over time because ideally, you want to grow your audience.
Engagement	Engagement measures the number of times that someone took action on your posts which includes things likes, shares, comments and reactions. This is one of the most important metrics, because it shows how many people like your content, as well as the exposure to potential new audiences.

Instagram

HOW	DETAILS
How do I track this form of online engagement?	Instagram My Profile analytics (see 'How to access social media metrics' guide)
When?	Weekly or fortnightly

KEY METRICS	DETAILS
Impressions	The number of times your posts have been seen.
Followers	The number of people who 'like' your Instagram profile page. This provides an indication of the size of your audience on Instagram. You want to track how this number changes over time because ideally, you want to grow your audience.
Interactions	Engagement measures the number of times that someone took action on your posts which includes likes, shares, and comments. This is one of the most important metrics, because it shows how many people like your content, as well as the exposure to potential new audiences.

Website

HOW	DETAILS
How do I track this form of online engagement?	Google analytics (see 'How to access social media metrics' guide)
When?	Once a month
KEY METRICS	DETAILS

Website visits (reach)	This metric indicates the reach of your website.
Page visits	This metric will help you to understand which pages people are visiting on your website.
Bounce rates	The bounce rate shows the percentage of visitors that open your website and then exits without clicking on anything. This will help you understand if people are using the website.

Newsletter and emails

HOW	DETAILS
How do I track this form of online engagement?	Using your email management platform (eg: Mailchimp). (see 'How to access social media metrics' guide)
When?	After sending out your newsletter. Wait at least 48 hours after sending the email to get a more accurate measure of open and click rates.

KEY METRICS	DETAILS
Open rates (reach)	This metric indicates the number of people who are choosing to engage with the content you are sending them. This is one of the most important metrics for your emails.
Click rates	Click rates refers to the number of people clicking through the links you've shared in your email to access further content. This metric shows a deeper level of engagement that just open rates and indicates how relevant the content you are sending out is.
Number of people receiving the email	This metric indicates the possible number of people your emails could reach. Measuring this allows you to work out the proportion of people that chose to engage with your emails.
Unsubscribe rates	This metric provides an indicator of the number of people who are actively choosing to no longer engage with your business or organisation.

Making sense of online engagement metrics #1 (beginner)

As well as regular monitoring, we recommend undertaking a periodic 'sense-making session' of your online engagement to give yourself a higher-level overview of how your engagement efforts are progressing. The purpose of this session is to evaluate the broader reach of your engagement across multiple platforms and to ask some critical questions about how you are engaging online. We often find that discussing outcomes together leads to deeper responses to critical questions and supports decision-making based on the evidence. With this in mind, we suggest undertaking this session as part of a 1-hour meeting with members of your organisation who are involved in online community engagement activities. We recommend that you do this session periodically (quarterly or monthly).

Online reach template

The purpose of this template is to monitor the overall 'reach' of your online engagement activities across different platforms. 'Reach' is defined as the number of unique people who saw your content. Before you stocktake, you should report on the 'reach' of each online source (Facebook, website, newsletter, other) separately and compare data from previous months. Table 1 provides a template for reporting 'reach' from each source.

Table 1 Total online reach/ visits for each source

Source	Quarter/ month 1	Quarter/ month 2	Quarter/ month 3
Facebook (reach)			
Facebook (page likes)			
Instagram (Impressions)			
Website (visits)			
Newsletter emails (subscribers)			
Newsletter emails (opens)			
Other			
Total (exc. Facebook page likes)			

Note: The 'Total reach' figure should be interpreted with caution because it double-counts people who have engaged with multiple sources: this means if an individual sees a Facebook post and visits the website they will be counted twice.

Critical questions to ask

These critical questions are intended to help you make evaluative judgements about your online engagement activities based on the monitoring data you collect. Below, are a list of critical questions for you to discuss as part of your online engagement stocktake:

- How is the reach of our online engagement changing?

  - Is it growing, shrinking or steady?

- How are people engaging with us online?

  - Which platforms are people choosing to engage with?

  - To what extent are people engaging with our content? (eg: liking, sharing, commenting, responding to newsletters).

  - Where do we think people will try and reach us online? (eg: website, Facebook, twitter etc.)

- Where is the website traffic coming from? (eg: Google searches, Facebook etc.)

- What content is performing well?

  - What kind of content is driving greater engagement? Why do we think that is?

  - What type of content are people engaging with? (ie: videos, blogs, images etc.)

- What returns are you getting from these platforms?

  - Have we seen any flow-on outcomes from our online engagement? (think about instances of impact, refer to *Impact and Learning Log*)

  - Is it a good use of staff time to update these platforms?

  - Are there other pages we want to direct visitors to? If so, what can we do to help direct them?

- Is our website meeting our stakeholder's needs? (you will need to reach out to stakeholders and ask them either by survey, focus group or survey)

- Based on our discussion, what actions we need to implement? What (if anything) do we need to do differently?

Making sense of online engagement metrics #2 (intermediate)

This guide is for those who have the time and capability for more complicated evaluation of online engagement. Increasing the standard of your online engagement evaluation *does not involve collecting more metrics*, rather it involves *more planning and more complex analysis of the same metrics.* We find that this analysis is better suited for one – two people rather than an entire group. We recommend that this analysis should be conducted periodically (e.g. monthly) and inform ongoing decisions by those in your organisation responsible for online engagement.

Testing and analysing types of stories

One of the best things about online engagement metrics is it allows you to test new content and compare it to other stories. We recommend you group the content published online into common types of stories (for example, you may have stories about recipes, impact on local community, recreational fishing, and reefs). This allows you to test different types of stories to and compare results to see which stories get the most likes and engagement. Over time the members of your organisation involved in online community engagement should test different types of stories and gain a clearer understanding of which stories are best for online engagement. Below is a list of critical questions for you to discuss as part of this analysis:

- What types of stories have we published recently?

  - How well do these stories suit our target audiences?

- What are the results for each type of story?

  - Which type of stories have the best results?

- Which type of stories have poor results?

- Which type of stories perform best on each platform (Facebook, website, newsletter)?

- What are you going to do differently moving forward?

  - What type of stories will you **keep** testing?

  - What type of new stories will you **start** testing?

  - What type of stories will you **stop** testing?

Making sense of online engagement metrics #3 (advanced)

This guide is for those that have financial resources dedicated towards evaluating their online engagement. We recommend you contract a specialist digital marketing company to provide an expert understanding of your audiences, leverage social media analytics platforms, and inform marketing and brand strategy with evaluation data. These companies can also support you to plan and organise your social media content. There are many different providers in the digital marketing space – three popular providers are Hootsuite, Sprout Social and HubSpot (we do not have a relationship with these providers).