

# Measuring **ROI IN DIGITAL AND SOCIAL: FIVE METRICS** That Matter Now



**Leigh Householder**

Digital Strategist

Every successful digital and social plan has three complementary parts:  
**the strategy, the marketing plan,  
 and the optimization commitment.**

**E**very conversation about digital and social marketing should start with these six words: What do you want to accomplish? More often, those conversations start with: We need a website and an email blast.

These are tactics to check off a list — digital must-haves that support other campaigns rather than build new kinds of engagement and relationships online. One reason for this approach is that as healthcare marketers, we need metrics. We've got seven, maybe 12, years to build an entire product lifecycle — often introducing not only a new treatment, but an entirely new category of treatment. Every marketing dollar needs to show results.

How to choose the right metrics for digital and social hasn't always been clear. We've seen push and pull along a continuum of TV-style impressions (it's enough that they saw it) to command and control expectations (if I say click, most of you better click). The result? Frequently, campaigns underperform when people didn't behave exactly the way the brand wants them to. And almost always, we are left with a long list of campaign indicators that don't connect to real business goals. There is a need for better metrics that signal your investment is providing real value to the people who are using your brand. This kind of return reaps real benefits. Here are five of the best metrics to measure impact.

## 1. Community Context

The way people make healthcare decisions today includes both expert content and peer context. For both professionals and consumers, "key opinion leaders" are a complex combination of known experts and online advocates — from physician bloggers to leaders in patient forums. Is your investment in digital inspiring echoes in peer-generated content? Measure upticks in brand mentions. Look for comparative posts that put your product in context. Track the number of professionals and patients mentioning brand names for the first time.

## 2. Return on Reputation

Last year, Sally Susman, SVP and chief communications officer for Pfizer, made big news by talking about the metric that matters to her: "return on reputation." She believes that ads can't change people's minds, only actions can. Here, here! If reputation is too long term of a measure, another way to look at this metric is sentiment: a score of the positive/negative tone in the conversation about your brand that is easily measured by many social listening tools.

## 3. Engagement

In its simplest form, engagement means that people chose to spend time with your brand. Look for longer visits to the website or more pages viewed. Check your YouTube statistics for length of video watched and numbers of videos per session. If engagement isn't enough, consider taking another step forward toward interaction. Ask people for their opinion; answer their questions directly; listen and respond. Once people interact with your brand, they're more likely to feel ownership in it.

## 4. Influence

If engagement means people spent time with your brand, influence means the time spent made a difference. Sometimes the right metric to track can't be tracked online. Digital and social investments have an amazing ability to move the needle on persistent offline challenges, for example filling more first-time prescriptions. Depending on the study you read, 8% to 22% of prescriptions are never filled. One reason for this is that the decision isn't actually made in the exam room.

In "Will She Say Yes" — a recent study about how women make healthcare decisions — Pink Tank and Meredith Research Solutions found that 44% of women will continue to evaluate a new prescription before deciding if they will fill it after leaving the doctor's office. Where do they go to do that? Online. What can you create there that will move those offline numbers?

## 5. Attention

People turn to Dr. Google for one thing: answers. If your digital and social investment could answer just one question, what would it be? How much search traffic and community context are you getting around that answer right now? Attention means you're the go-to source for the questions you most want to answer. It means the people you interact with online are incredibly qualified leads because they're not there by chance, they're there to see your very best content. Track the amount of search volume and key terms. Sort how much traffic is coming for your "best at" content and how much for incidental terms or expertise.

Metrics are incredibly addictive. But, remember they require investment. Every successful digital and social plan has three complementary parts: the strategy (what you'll create), the marketing plan (how you'll tell people), and the optimization commitment (how you'll keep improving it over time). ■

*Editor's note: Leigh Householder can be reached at leigh.householder@gsw-w.com or @leighhouse. She is also author of advergill.com and contributor to brandliberators.com and whatsyourdigitaliq.com.*

**GSW WORLDWIDE** is a full-service agency that provides an array of services from strategic insight and guidance, branding and hallmark creation, prelaunch, and disease state awareness to medical education, digital and closed-loop marketing, patient outcomes, brand entertainment, and DTC campaigns. For more information, visit [gsw-w.com](http://gsw-w.com).

No. 4815162342



# “BUT” CITATION

TO BE ISSUED TO COWORKERS FOR FLAGRANT USE OF THE WORD “BUT”  
WITH THE INTENT OF CREATING AN EXCUSE FOR NOT PURSUING GREATNESS.

FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	INITIAL
ADDRESS	MONTH	DAY
	YEAR	TIME
		<input type="checkbox"/> AM
		<input type="checkbox"/> PM

VIOLATOR'S STATE OF MIND:			SITE OF INFRACTION:		
<input type="checkbox"/> FEARFUL	<input type="checkbox"/> DOUBTING	<input type="checkbox"/> LETHARGIC	<input type="checkbox"/> HALLWAY CHAT	<input type="checkbox"/> TEXT MESSAGE	
<input type="checkbox"/> OVERLY CAUTIOUS	<input type="checkbox"/> AMBIVALENT	<input type="checkbox"/> ANXIOUS	<input type="checkbox"/> CONFERENCE CALL	<input type="checkbox"/> E-MAIL	
			<input type="checkbox"/> VIDEOCONFERENCE	<input type="checkbox"/> BLOG POST	
			<input type="checkbox"/> PHONE CALL	<input type="checkbox"/> DINNER CONVERSATION	

RECEIPT OF THIS CITATION RENDERS THE FOLLOWING EXCUSES INVALID:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> "But there are too many barriers." | <input type="checkbox"/> "But the group isn't sure."         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> "But it's unproven."               | <input type="checkbox"/> "But it makes me nervous."          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> "But there's not enough time."     | <input type="checkbox"/> "But there's no guarantee."         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> "But our budget is limited."       | <input type="checkbox"/> "But it's never been done before."  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> "But the old way works fine."      | <input type="checkbox"/> "But it's too different."           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> "But it's too risky."              | <input type="checkbox"/> "But that's just not us."           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> "But we can't do that."            | <input type="checkbox"/> "But what about upper management?"  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> "But now's not the best time."     | <input type="checkbox"/> "But we don't have the people."     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> "But that'll never fly."           | <input type="checkbox"/> "But that's not realistic."         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> "But who's going to do it?"        | <input type="checkbox"/> "But the reps may not like it."     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> "But where's the precedent?"       | <input type="checkbox"/> "But there are too many hurdles."   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> "But will everyone approve?"       | <input type="checkbox"/> "But it's too new to tell."         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> "But I'm just not sure."           | <input type="checkbox"/> "But we have no control over that." |
| <input type="checkbox"/> "But things could change."         | <input type="checkbox"/> "But _____."                        |
- (Other unspecified violation of "But")

FAILURE TO RESPOND TO THE VIOLATION AS CHARGED SHALL BE CONSIDERED AN ADMISSION  
OF LIABILITY IN DIRECT OPPOSITION TO THE FOUNDING PRINCIPLES OF INNOVATION.

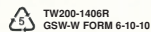
CITING LIBERATOR	I. D. NUMBER
TOTAL POINTS	TOTAL FINE

**TO PLEAD NOT GUILTY, CEASE AND DESIST IMMEDIATELY FROM ALL USE OF THE WORD “BUT.”**

COMMENTS:

Send questions to: **THE DEPARTMENT OF BRAND LIBERATION**

<http://www.gsw-w.com/blog>



Instructions for Use: Complete, cut out, and present to offender at first mention of the word "But."



The first step toward expanding our digital world may be to change the way we talk about our business, which might just change the way we think and act. What are other Brand Liberators doing to surgically remove the “t” from can't do? Share your thoughts and download more free “But” citations at [gsw-w.com/blog](http://www.gsw-w.com/blog).