Chapter 1: Setting Realistic Targets to Identify Success

In This Chapter

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- ✏ **Understanding the importance of social media measuring**

*G*one are the days when businesses could operate behind closed doors. The popularity (or should we say massive explosion?) of social networking has busted open those doors, and there's no turning back.

Your customers are now *social customers.* They love to share, chat, post, like, and comment — and when they have something important to say (good, bad, or worse), they're quick to share it on their social networks. Their comments run the gamut from the best raves to the worst rants.

This chapter first examines the importance of social monitoring and describes ways that you can take advantage of the social conversations related to your niche and your business. From there, we explore strategies related to social measuring, discussing how you can best measure your prospects' and customers' social activities, and then use this information in your marketing messages to get your fans to take action.

Your customers and prospects are going to be social with or without you, so it behooves you to pay attention, take notes, and get into the conversations at just the right times. This chapter helps you do just that!

Exploring Social Monitoring and Measuring

If you're just dipping your toe into the ever-changing Facebook waters, the idea of taking on social data tracking may be a bit daunting. You may be wondering, "Where do I start?" When you do collect the data, you might ask, "What the heck do I do with it?" We address both of those questions and many more throughout this section.

The purpose of tracking online activity is to identify the overall impact of your efforts. The data that you collect can help you support your customers, promote your brand, and grow your business. Although we've been exploring Facebook marketing throughout this book, it's important to note that you should take a holistic approach to monitoring and measuring social media activity. By *holistic approach,* we mean including all social activity that is important to you, no matter whether it's coming from Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, or a different social network. All sites that matter to your clients should matter to you.

In addition to listening to your fans, you should do a reality check to find out whether all your social media marketing efforts are worth your time and effort. Is what you're doing really working? When you're exploring monitoring and measuring strategies, you first want to set your key performance indicators. Ask yourself these questions:

- ✦ What do I want to achieve?
- ✦ What does success look like?
- ✦ What are the indicators of my success?
- ✦ By what date will I complete this goal?

Although you'll find some overlap in the data, monitoring and measuring are two different processes. When it comes to taking action, you analyze and use that data differently. This chapter closely examines both processes so you can better understand what overall tracking can do for your business.

The Importance of Social Media Monitoring

Monitoring is a bit like eavesdropping while pressing your big digital ear against the computer screen. You get to listen to all the chatter about you and your company, as well as hear what's being said about your competitors and industry. In this section, we explore what it means to monitor social media activity and what you can do with the data you collect to improve your overall marketing initiatives.

Monitoring involves identifying a set of keywords relevant to your business and brand. Knowing what words your prospects and customers are using online to research your niche or business is paramount to overall marketing success.

After you identify your keywords, you plug the keywords and information about your social media accounts into a monitoring tool. (We review your options for monitoring tools in depth in Chapter 3 of this minibook.) The monitoring tool tracks the communications that are most important to your niche and business, and organizes the data for you in a way that's easy to

digest, such as comprehensive charts, tables, and lists. Overall, monitoring allows you to know who's talking about a topic (by means of specific keywords that you've identified) and what they're saying about it.

To put a successful social monitoring plan in place, you must understand why monitoring is important to your business and look closely at what you can do with the information you collect.

Seeing why monitoring online conversations is important

Monitoring is all about listening to online conversations with the intent to learn, engage, and support. The benefit of social media monitoring is the opportunity to join the conversations that matter most to your business and its relationships with its fans.

When it's working in your favor, Facebook can function as a word-of-mouth machine, broadcasting every customer rave that hits its airwaves. When you're engaged with your fans and firing on all cylinders, Facebook can be your best friend.

At some point, however, all best friends have spats. Sooner or later, someone will use Facebook to tell the world that your product is lacking, that your delivery department is slow, or that your call-center response time is horrendous. It's bound to happen.

In both cases — that is, in the "singing your praises" scenario and the "lackluster results" scenario — your goal is to be prepared to engage. You want to respond to both types of posts as quickly as possible. That's why monitoring is a crucial component of your overall social media marketing strategy.

In the case of the raving, happy fans, catching them in the moment only elevates their appreciation for you and their admiration of you. They feel heard and appreciated. See Figure 1-1 for an example of a positive exchange on Facebook.

In the case of the ranting, frustrated customers, keep in mind the two main reasons why responding quickly is crucial:

✦ **You want to take care of your customers.** If someone's upset, you want to genuinely meet his or her needs and put the fire out quickly.

✦ **You want the rest of your online audience to see that you take care of your customers.** What you say and do for one client or customer directly affects all viewers' perceptions of you, so this situation is your chance to make lemonade out of lemons and shine a good light on yourself.

Figure 1-1:
Admins from the Facebook Page Social Media Examiner are quick to respond to fans' appreciation.
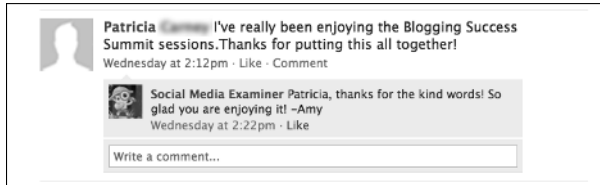
Situations like these give you the opportunity to protect your brand. One goal of an effective monitoring strategy is to guard your brand's reputation and keep it polished at all times. Also, you can increase your brand's social proof by engaging in these important, in-the-moment, two-way dialogues, which increase fan trust and admiration.

Understanding the importance of real-time engagement

Monitoring online conversations is important if you want to stay in the loop about conversations related to your niche and your business. That said, the optimal outcome of social media monitoring is to take full advantage of the opportunity for real-time response. The goal is to get in on the conversations that matter most at just the right time. In this section, we give you a few examples to illustrate just how important real-time response is for your business.

Suppose that you're the owner of an online store that sells wine, and your goal is to increase overall sales. Monitoring for phrases such as *"wine pairing," "the best wine that goes with,"* and *"wine recommendations"* can help you help others. Knowing when people are talking about your area of specialty gives you an online icebreaker; it allows you to join the conversation at the right time and even do a little consultative selling, where you offer suggestions and advice focused on the products and services you sell. Best of all, because you're monitoring in real time, you're joining the conversation at a time when people are open to suggestions and in need of help. In essence, they're raising a digital hand and saying, "Hey, I need your expertise over here!"

Real-time monitoring is crucial when you want to make an impact online. To help you grasp the magnitude of real-time monitoring, we want to tell you about a post that was shared on Twitter and Facebook. Tim Ferriss, the

best-selling author of *The 4-Hour Workweek* and *The 4-Hour Body* (Crown Archetype), was trying to give a $100,000 donation to St. Jude's Hospital. Not too shabby, right? Although he tried to contact the hospital multiple times, his calls were never returned, so out of frustration, Tim took to the social media airwaves, as shown in Figure 1-2.

Figure 1-2: Tim Ferriss posted these status updates on Facebook and Twitter.

Imagine that you were St. Jude's Hospital and saw Tim's post online, in real time. You'd be sure to reach out immediately, right? If a fan posts something negative about you or perhaps asks advice of you, and you delay your response, someone outside your company will likely step in to defuse the situation or offer a better solution. That "someone" just might be your biggest competitor coming to the rescue.

Almost 200 people responded to Tim's post, making suggestions for his donation. (*Note:* St. Jude's did reach out to Tim quickly, and he posted that he was talking with the hospital about his possible donation, as shown in Figure 1-2.) Now do you see why real-time response is so crucial?

Monitoring the right way

Social media monitoring is not just about identifying and responding to your online detractors. To develop a clear picture of what's being discussed online, you should monitor more than just your customers' and prospects' conversations about you. In this section, we take a look at additional ways to use these monitoring strategies to take your marketing initiatives to the next level.

An additional way to use monitoring strategies is to follow the conversations of industry thought leaders, your top competitors, and your partners. The goal is to cover all the bases. Also, consider monitoring keywords that are associated with products or services that may be complementary to your own. The conversations may give you insights and ideas about possible partnership opportunities or brand extensions.

Monitoring is keyword based, so choosing the right keywords is crucial. Here are some suggested keywords that you can monitor:

✦ The names of key people in your company

✦ Your company name

✦ All brand names associated with your company

✦ Product names

✦ Names of your services

✦ Your top three competitors' names

✦ Names of industry thought leaders

✦ Names of businesses that you partner with

✦ Competitive product names and services

✦ Industry or niche keywords

Clearly, when it comes to monitoring, you have a lot of information to pull. You can monitor all the public conversations that are taking place online at any given time. To start off right, you should monitor the communication that's posted on Facebook as status updates; posts where your name or business have been mentioned in a post (also called @tagging) or comments; Twitter updates; and comments on blogs.

Identifying your monitoring outcomes

Here are some outcomes of monitoring social activity:

✦ **Spy on your competitors.** What are they doing online? What do their customers say about them?

✦ **Understand your ideal client.** Find out what she wants and needs, what makes her tick, and what words she uses when talking about your brands and services.

✦ **Participate in conversations.** You want to join the real-time conversations that matter most to your business. When people online are talking about your industry (niche, topics, and so on), you want to get in on those conversations to generate exposure for your company. You can offer advice or just share your thoughts and insights.

✦ **Gather market intelligence.** You want to listen to what people are saying in your industry so that you can create better products and services.

✦ **Manage your reputation.** You want to know what your customers are saying about you. You want to see both good and bad comments in real time so that you can address them quickly.

✦ **Set up a listening portal.** You want to set up a support team to monitor your clients' needs and concerns and to address issues quickly. (We talk in detail about setting up a successful social media team in Book I, Chapter 2.)

Setting up a listening station is the most important piece of social monitoring. While listening, observe with the intent to genuinely understand group dynamics and behaviors. Look out for the influencers and leaders, because these people are the ones who can spread the word about your business. Notice how people interact, and pay close attention to the community norms. Make sure that you understand the rules of engagement before you begin to interact and add value.

To review, here are some of the most important benefits of social monitoring:

✦ You're more responsive to your fans' needs when you can help them in their time of frustration or confusion.

✦ By jumping into online conversations at the right time, you stay relevant and at the top of your fans' minds.

✦ By monitoring regularly, you begin to fully understand your customers.

✦ Monitoring online communication allows you to hear others sing your praises. When your fans post compliments, rave reviews, and praise, these communications are great social proof. Take screen shots of these posts to use in your marketing materials. (The term *social proof* refers to the psychological phenomenon of people being motivated to do things that they see other people doing.)

✦ Monitoring allows you to spot trends, keeping you on the edge of your industry.

✦ When you understand what your fans are talking about when it comes to your brand, you can better deliver the features and benefits that your audience is asking for.

The Importance of Social Media Measuring

Measuring is more statistical than monitoring and occurs over a period of time versus in real time. In the following sections, we explore how measuring your social activity allows you to evaluate the success of your social media efforts, as well as to better understand the behaviors and habits of your customers and prospects. We also examine what data is best for you to measure, depending on your marketing outcomes. With all the data on the web today, the last thing you want to do is to get bogged down in too much information! When you know what to measure, you can streamline your efforts, saving yourself a lot of time and stress.

Seeing why measuring online activity is important

The benefit of measuring activity that relates to your brand, company, and industry on Facebook and other social networks is to spot trends, behaviors, and reactions early. The goal is to analyze the data quickly and act on it to get your biggest bang for your time and efforts. Constant benchmarking is crucial to ascertaining whether things are working in your favor.

Measuring online activity as it relates to your social networking sites is important because the data allows you to see fairly quickly what's working and what isn't. This valuable data will help you stay on track and continue to move toward your desired results. For example, let's say you are a wine seller. When measuring your data, you find that over the past few months your fans engaged with your content (clicked on links, commented, and shared your posts) more often when you posted about wine pairing versus when you posted about the types of grapes used in specific wines. This data will help you determine what content your audience wants to see more of, therefore eventually increasing your overall engagement and reach.

To begin measuring, first identify the keywords that reflect your business and brand. Useful tools for researching and identifying the best keywords for your niche or market include Google Keyword Tool (`http://google keywordtool.com`), Scribe SEO (`http://scribeseo.com`), and Google Alerts (`www.google.com/alerts`).

Keyword tools make it easy to find out what people are searching for online. With Google Keyword Tool, you can enter a word or phrase, and the tool returns other popular keywords or phrases that are searched for online, as shown in Figure 1-3. Then you can do some research to find out what words are searched for most and determine the words that best fit your brand.

Figure 1-3:
Keyword
suggestions
from Google
Keyword
Tool.

Find keywords
Based on one or more of the following:

Word or phrase   One per line

Website   www.google.com/page.html

Category   Apparel

☐ Only show ideas closely related to my search terms ?

Next, plug your keywords into a monitoring tool. (Again, we review monitoring tools in depth in Chapter 3 of this minibook.) The monitoring tool scans the Internet; grabs all blog posts, online articles, videos, and so on that contain those keywords; and disseminates the information in different data combinations, building patterns that tell a story about the social activity collected. The tool might tell you the specific keywords that were mentioned on specific social media channels and how many times they were mentioned. This type of data is useful for finding out what people are talking about online and where they're talking.

After the tool grabs the information, the measuring starts. Monitoring and measuring tools allow you to analyze the data, to slice it and dice it in different ways to gain full understanding of its meaning.

REMEMBER

One of the major benefits of measuring the data is that measurement keeps you accountable. When you see what's working and what's not, you can take action to do more of what's working and tweak what's falling short.

Determining what you should measure for your return on investment (ROI)

When monitoring and measuring, it's important to pay attention to your return on investment, meaning you want to make sure that your time, efforts, and dollars are delivering real results toward your specific goals and outcomes. When it comes to tracking and measuring online data, you have numerous options. Therefore, it's important to identify the metric indicators that are most important to you. If you post content with links to your blog, for example, it's important to track which links get the most clicks from your fans by using a link-tracking tool such as bit.ly (`https://bit.ly`).

A free tool, bit.ly allows users to shorten, share, and track links (URLs). You copy and paste a long URL into bit.ly's portal, and the tool automatically generates a shorter link that you can use on social networks or anywhere else on the web. These shorter links are trackable, meaning that bit.ly will tell you how many times that link has been clicked and on what social sites it has been shared, as shown in Figure 1-4. Over time, this data helps you see which content your fans interact with most.

Figure 1-4:
Click
metrics
from a bit.ly
dashboard.

The Ultimate Guide to Facebook Marketing | Copyblogger

www.copyblogger.com/ultimate-facebook/

I've just finished writing Facebook Marketing All-in-One for Dummies with two fabulous co-authors (Amy Porterfield and Phyllis Khare) and we've been neck-deep in Facebook for the last 9 months. Even Copyblogger is on Facebook now. Do you have your Facebook Page yet?

142 SAVES   0 SHARES   354 CLICKS

and 138 more

If you're looking to increase the comments on your Facebook Page, you may want to use Facebook Insights to track which posts are getting the most comments. *Insights* is Facebook's built-in analytics dashboard. You can use it to look at trends in the activity on your Page, including how many comments you're getting from your posts. We talk in detail about Facebook Insights in Chapter 2 of this minibook. This tool can paint a picture of what types of posts your fans respond to best — most favorably and most frequently.

One of the ultimate benefits (and goals) of monitoring and measuring, after all, is uncovering information that allows you to increase the impact of your social media posts. Tracking the time of day you generate the most activity on your Page, such as clicks and comments, can help you decide the best time of day to post a call to action.

Suppose that you own a store for runners, and you're currently having a special on running shoes for men. By analyzing your data, focusing especially on how many men are engaging with your content, the time of day they're most active on your Page, and what content they're engaging in, you can find out the best time of day to post your promotion and how to craft your post around this data.

By measuring these behaviors at this depth, you can reach more of your targeted audience with each post and turn your fans into loyal, paying customers.

Read on for specific ideas about what to measure, based on your business outcomes and goals.

Turning social activity into key metric indicators

When it comes to social media activity, you can track and measure numerous indicators. Here are the most important areas to consider:

✦ Engagement

✦ Brand awareness

✦ Influence

✦ Sentiment

✦ New likes/unsubscribes

✦ Click activity

✦ Financial return

✦ Volume

✦ Demographics

To help you understand how these indicators can support your marketing efforts, we dive a little deeper in the following sections, exploring the benefits of each indicator. To decide which indicators are a good fit for your business, keep your marketing goals in mind as you read the options.

Engagement

Engagement refers to the relevance of the Facebook Page to users and the actions they take when they visit the Page. You can measure engagement by taking a look at the types of activities users engage in, such as becoming a fan, writing on your Timeline, liking or commenting on an update, uploading a photo or video, or mentioning your Page in status updates. You can monitor this information weekly and monthly with Facebook Insights (see Book IX, Chapter 2 for details) and by spending time on your Page on a daily basis.

You can also monitor and measure all the words and phrases that your fans and prospects use when they talk about your brand. Are these words and phrases what you expected? Are they the same words that you're using to explain your programs and services? These words and phrases are key to understanding how people are talking about your business! In addition, when you know the words your fans use online, you can build rapport more quickly because using the same words creates a connection.

Brand awareness

Brand awareness refers to how much your company is talked about on the social web and, even more important, why people are talking about you. It also refers to how recognizable and known your brand is to your ideal audience. Is it in relation to a product announcement, a press release, or some company news you've played a role in? Or did someone write a review or mention your company in a blog post? Regardless of where the awareness comes from, you don't want to be the last one to hear about it.

You may want to add a reference point to your social mention tracking to see how many times your company and products are mentioned along with your competitors' during a 30-day period. This type of monitoring is often called *share of voice*, meaning you are sharing this social space with your competitors and monitoring and measuring how often your brand is mentioned compared to theirs. You can access the information you need to monitor share of voice through third-party monitoring tools. You add up all the

mentions of your business and the mentions of your competitors, and then divide your mentions by the total to arrive at your share of voice.

Influence

Influence refers to how much your company is referenced and respected on Facebook. If a company whose Facebook Page has 10,000 engaged fans posts a link to your new video on YouTube, and your video goes viral overnight as a result, you'd be able to attribute your success to being discovered on that company's Facebook Page. Then you'd be able to monitor the increase in comments, likes, and shares on one of the social listening tools, such as Netvibes (`www.netvibes.com`), as shown in Figure 1-5. You'd also want to send a shout-out to the company for helping make your video a success. In the future, when you launch a new video, you'll probably want to add that company to a list of companies to alert.
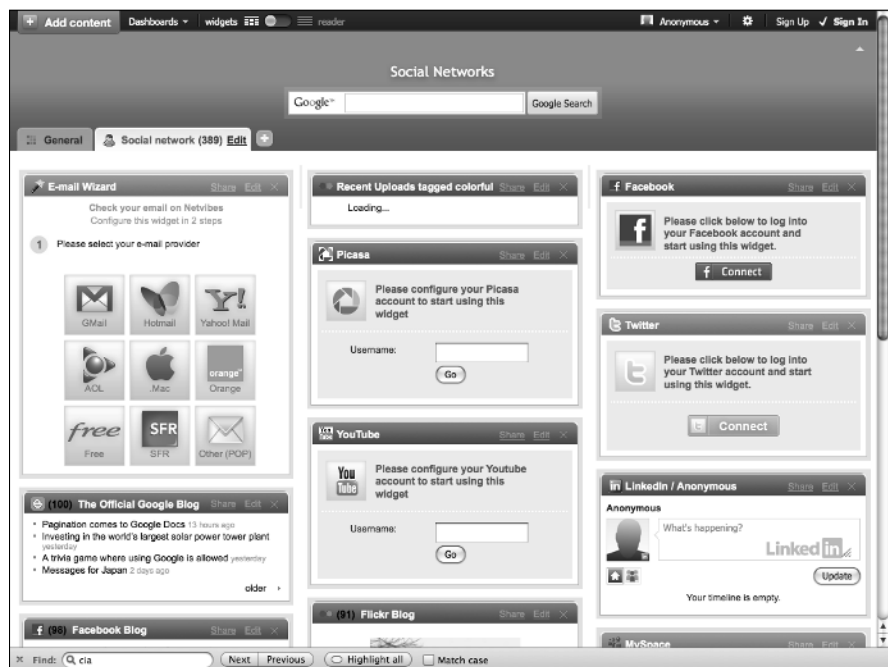

Figure 1-5:
A Netvibes listening station.

Sentiment

Sentiment comprises both positive and negative reactions to your brand on Facebook. Perhaps someone ordered a product from you and was dissatisfied with the color or the overall quality. Perhaps that person went to your Facebook Page and wrote that he'll never order another product from you. But what if your customer service reps were monitoring the page in

real time, and one of them offered to take the product back, refund the customer's money, and send him a new model? You could nip the situation in the bud, not only undoing the negative sentiment, but also turning it around significantly.

New likers/unsubscribers

It's important to measure how many new likers can be attributed to individual updates and your collective activity on Facebook. If people respond favorably by liking your Page, and especially if they respond to a specific update, you can gain a good sense of how your users feel about that type of content. If videos get more attention than other links do, for example, you want to post more videos for your fans.

On the other hand, if users unsubscribe in reaction to a particular update, that situation gives you invaluable information, too. Perhaps users don't want to see that type of content from you, or maybe you've overloaded your users with too many updates. Although ascertaining why you lose one fan here or there may be hard, a major exodus would be very revealing. You can monitor the number of new likers and unsubscribes on Facebook Insights.

Click activity

Click activity refers to the times when a person clicks your Facebook Ad and is taken to your website or a tab on your Facebook Page. It's important to measure click activity so you'll know how effective your ad campaign is and whether you want to run it again or tweak it the next time around. You can monitor this type of data by using Facebook Ad reports. (See Book VIII, Chapter 3 for more about these reports.) Clicks are also tracked for Page likes and event RSVPs. You'll want to know whether your event is drawing people in on Facebook; if not, you may need to change the description or the date. Will you have enough interest to run it? You can see information about likes and RSVPs in the Facebook Insights reports. (For more on Facebook Insights, see Chapter 2 of this minibook.)

Financial return

Financial return is the same as return on investment (ROI) and looks at the efficiency of your efforts in terms of time, resources, and dollars; it compares those efforts to your end results. When examining your financial returns, you want to make sure your efforts are paying off, meaning they are moving you toward your overall goals.

Asking yourself specific questions related to your goals and marketing outcomes will help you determine if you are moving toward a financial return. For example, what are you getting in return for the time you spend on your Facebook marketing efforts? Have you increased your number of fans? Sold an online or in-person event via Facebook promotions? Brought more people

to your web page and in turn sold them your programs or services? Had people download a white paper or report that, in addition to adding value, promoted a product or service? Brought more people to a special offer through a Facebook-specific promo code?

To see a real financial return on your social media activity, think in terms of conversion. The goal is to convert an interested potential customer to an actual, paying customer. Social media allows you to add value and to create engagement, trust, and affinity with your fans. After you capture your fans' trust, it's time to sell them your programs and services.

Tracking tools can show you how much traffic is generated, what content is of interest to your fans, and how often fans engage with you. To see a financial return on your social media activity, use these metrics to generate activity and to create and sell products, programs, and services for your ideal audience.

Volume

Volume is how frequently people search for your company in search engines. Facebook Pages come up in search-engine results for your company name, so someone who's looking for your website might also decide to check out your Facebook Page. Google Analytics shows which Facebook custom apps on your Page sent traffic to your website, which is all the more reason why you want to make sure to display your URL prominently in the About box of your Facebook Timeline and on the Info tab.

Demographics

Commonly used *demographics* include age, race, gender, language, location, and household income. Tracking tools such as HootSuite (`www.hootsuite.com`) can show you a breakdown of likes by region (as shown in Figure 1-6), and Facebook Insights can show a breakdown by gender, countries, cities, and languages, as shown in Figure 1-7. You may already know the demographics that are most associated with your products and services, but if you suddenly discover, through monitoring your Facebook Insights reports, that a significantly different group is coming to your Facebook Page, that discovery could not only potentially affect your social media marketing efforts, but also demonstrate that your company is connecting to a different demographic than you realized! You may want to adjust your products and services accordingly.
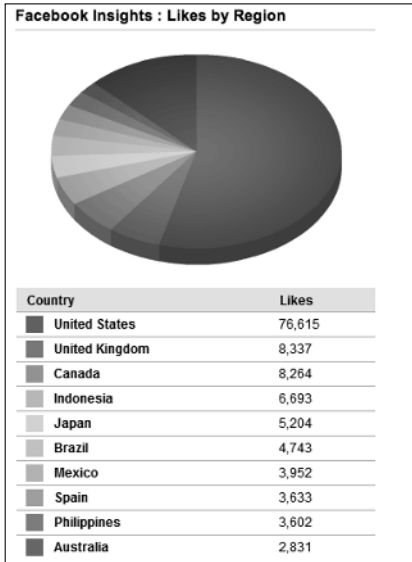
Figure 1-6:
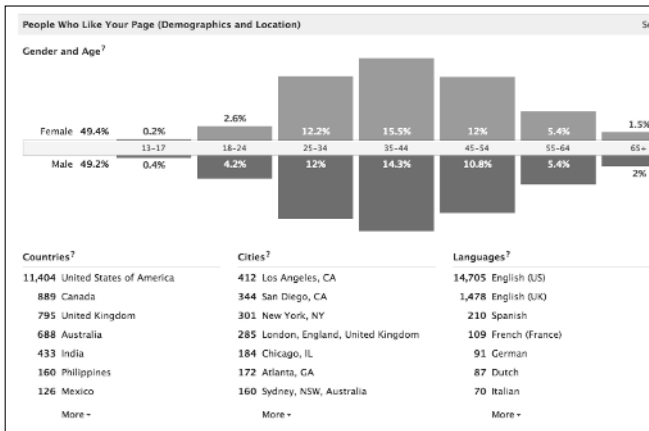Regional
Facebook
data
generated by
HootSuite.

Figure 1-7:
Demographic
metrics
generated
by Facebook
Insights.