



IMPLEMENTING THE RETAIL METRICS FRAMEWORK: SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYSIS

Retail Metrics Framework - Strategies for Piloting the Metrics

The WorldGBC has identified five strategies that companies can use to begin to engage with the Framework. This guidance note puts forward strategies for implementing the social media component of **Strategy 1 - Assess what employees and customers have already said about your store environments.**

SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYSIS

Social media analysis provides a meaningful way to understand what people think, in real-time, of your building, branding and events. It can identify what people like and dislike about physical building characteristics as well as gauge their emotional and behavioural response to specific types of environments. This approach is potentially valuable at the start of any design brief, as well as an additional data source to examine in-use building performance from a human perspective.

Social media offers a significant means of obtaining occupant feedback in relation to design and operation of the built environment. The benefit of this data collection method is that the data already exists and can be mined easily with minimal financial outlay. Occupant perceptions can then be correlated with performance metrics such as sales. Twitter even provides an interface to 'mine' large numbers of users comments. The nouns and adjectives can be used to reveal community sentiment to the built environment.

Review sites allow people to leave honest feedback and share their experiences of various locations. This information can be used to better understand what people like and dislike about certain venues and environments.

Social media and review sites have broken down walls between brand, corporations and consumers. Bad practices have nowhere to hide.



SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYSIS FOR THE RETAIL METRICS FRAMEWORK

Social media sites can be 'mined' for existing data on retail environment occupant perception and then this data can be correlated with metrics from the Framework. Nouns and adjectives can be identified that relate to Environment (lighting/daylighting; air quality; thermal comfort; acoustics; interior layout; look and feel; active/inclusive design; biophilia; amenities; and space for community),



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Experience (positive and negative perception of retail environments), and Economics (loyalty, distance travelled, brand).

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CASE STUDY: USING SOCIAL MEDIA METRICS ON A PROJECT

BuroHappold was appointed to undertake Building Environmental, MEP and Structural engineering concept design development for a retail mall project in Europe. As part of this project, they conducted a best practice review of large retail malls, explored the latest initiatives, use of new technology and strategies to attract shoppers.

This work was undertaken with a view to delivering long-term sustainability for the mall, covering environmental, social and economic considerations.

For this project, social media data in relation to ten top shopping malls were analysed in order to inform the design. The ten malls had collectively more than 50,000 tweets, 150,000 followers, and 4,000 mentions over the course of a week. They looked at a selection of malls across the UK and identified common positive and negative comments. Data collected were tagged

with time, username, language, source of tweet, hashtags “#...”, images in tweets, and shopping centre they were tweeting about. Opinions from review sites were also considered and the resulting trends and key take home messages are summarised below.

FEEDBACK FROM SOCIAL MEDIA AND REVIEW SITES

POSITIVE FEEDBACK:

- Variety of shops and eating areas, catering to all types
- High-end feel
- Amenities, modernity, cleanliness
- Easy to get to and free parking
- Friendly staff, great atmosphere
- The ability to spend all day under one roof without doing any shopping
- Events hosted at the mall
- Beauty, aesthetics
- Initiatives

NEGATIVE FEEDBACK:

- Disorganised and expensive car parking
- Traffic, along with an expectation that malls should take ownership of this
- Noisy, under-lit, overcrowded space
- Crowded and hard to find way around
- Unappealing food, rude staff
- Disconnect between opening hours and transport options
- Poor customer service

Using this data, BuroHappold highlighted key drivers and trends relevant to the design team for inclusion in the mall concept proposals, from place making and identity, to brand and user experience, to design and operation and technology. The concept proposals responded to how users shop as an end to end journey.

Review sites and social media enable retailers to understand how the customer perceives their retail experience through a series of touchpoints along their journey from home to the retail environment and their return. Review sites offer more considered comments, where social media offers instant and often very emotive feedback of particularly key experiences or touchpoints.



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THE OPPORTUNITY (AND THE RISK)

Historically, evaluation of building environments relied upon expert opinion and/or costly post-occupancy evaluations. No matter how good the opinion or data, it always faced limitations: it was an estimate of what customers valued in the physical environment (in the case of design) or a snapshot in time (in the case of operations).

Social media and review sites with their direct connection to the customer and a flow of real-time data, offer something significantly more powerful for understanding the impact of the environment on people: a direct tool for companies to assess the performance of their physical assets. This means that far more data and far more buildings can now be reviewed than ever before, should companies wish to do so. Social media analysis can also be used retrospectively to go back and learn lessons.

“Social media, with its direct connection to the customer and unlimited flow of real-time data, offers something powerful for understanding the impact of the environment on people.”

Perhaps most significantly, social media with its very public profile does something else: it makes building performance evaluation available to everyone. Previously, poor building performance was something known to owner and tenant – now it can be broadcast to the world. Making sure that your environment is good for people is now something you need to know because now everyone can know.

WorldGBC is grateful to [BuroHappold](#) for their contribution to this guidance note.

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