

Marketing Thought Leaders

A playbook for leading your company to future success

Do You Rate? Social Scoring Can Give You Klout

by Nancy Pekala

You don't have to be Lady Gaga or Ashton Kutcher to garner a whole lot of clout in the social sphere. All those Twitter followers and Facebook fans from regular folks can add up to a social score that can gain you influence.

While industry awards have been traditionally the way businesses gained special recognition, social influence scoring is going mainstream to gain clout with customers, prospects and clients.

Don't be surprised if your friends and colleagues start asking you to reveal your [Klout](#) score. (As a point of reference, President Obama's score is 88 and Lady Gaga's is 90.)



Along with its close competitor Kred (they even share office space in San Francisco), Klout measures social media influence based on a number of quantifiers including "true reach," "amplification" and "network" impact.

Klout recently announced that it will be updating the way it judges people. In an announcement on their blog, Klout founder Joe Fernandez explained the changes in the algorithm is reflective of the ability of social influence to drive action. He noted, "You are not more influential because you tweet or use Facebook more; you are influential because you have an influential audience engaging with your content." The planned Klout score changes will judge people based on People Rank, True Reach (the number of people you influence), Amplification (how much you influence these people), Network Impact, (the influence of your audience), Accuracy and Transparency (the activities behind your Klout score) and Also now factoring in the algorithm is a user's activity on Foursquare, a geo-tagging social media network, as well as major blogging platforms such as WordPress, Blogger and Tumblr.

Brands are increasingly looking to social scoring companies like Klout to help them reach people who can influence the purchase of their products. For example, as part of its "Driving the Midwest" campaign, Chevrolet provided its high-level influencers the chance to test-drive the new Chevy Volt for three days. Universal Studios offered advanced screenings of movies using Klout scores while Hewlett Packard gave away a laptop pre-loaded with films from the Cinequest film festival.

While not all freebies are so impressive, marketers are getting on board with using Klout scores to get in front of customers who will likely encourage others to try and buy. And no need to send out hundreds of tweets a day to gain some Klout. It's about quality, not quantity. This means engaging people to respond and share your messages throughout social media channels like Twitter, Facebook Foursquare and YouTube.

Using influence measurements like those offered by Klout are also gaining traction. A recent collaboration between Klout and [Involver](#), a social media marketing company, is allowing brands to customize their Facebook fan pages based on fans' Klout scores. Earlier this summer, Klout also introduced the +K feature

which allows social users to give “authority” to up to five people each day who have influenced them on a topic. You visit their Klout page, navigate to their topics, then give +K to whatever topic they influenced you on.

Like its competitor, [Kred](#) also measures social influence, but also tosses generosity into the mix. This metric evaluates the re-tweets, mentions and follows you share with others. In addition, Kred takes into account real life credentials (that Addy award will rack up some points for your Kred score).

In a recent interview with [LonelyBrand](#) blog, Andrew Grill, CEO of PeopleBrowsr UK, suggested that Kred helps brands find influencers based on communities. “This is the age of fragmented markets. There are so many channels out there that brands are desperate to find out who the key influencers are,” Grill explained. “It’s true that Justin Bieber and Lady Gaga have tons of influence, but good luck trying to get them to mention your brand our product. What we are realizing is that the influencers in smaller, local communities are rock stars in their own right. It’s about getting a person who is influential within a specialized community to authentically mention your product. This is peer advocacy, and it works for brands.”



At the end of the day, like other technological innovations available, social scoring models like those of Klout and Kred are just tools. The question becomes whether influence is really a quantifiable value. Whether influence can really just come down to a member, one thing is certain. Scoring systems may be one way to drive home the message that brands need to engage influential customers in the social sphere in meaningful ways in order to drive action.

So how does your brand rate?

Nancy Pekala is the AMA’s Senior Director of Online Content and Editor of [Marketing Thought Leaders](#). Her Klout score has yet to reach Lady Gaga proportions. Continue the conversation about social scoring in the Interactive Marketing group on [AMAConnect](#), the AMA’s online community exclusively for marketers. And don’t forget to boost the AMA’s Klout score by following us on Twitter [@marketing_power](#).