

Momentum

Playbook 6

Listen In, Listen Up (Part 1)

By Maria Rass

Here's What's Inside!

| | |
|--|---|
| Why Eavesdropping is Good For You | 3 |
| What's the Word on the Street? | 3 |
| Be the Fly on the Wall | 4 |
| Your Assignment: Listen In to Your Tribe | 5 |
| One Last Thing... | 7 |
| Goodies and Inspirations | 8 |

Playbook 6:

Listen In, Listen Up (Part 1)

Why Eavesdropping is Good For You

Does anyone else remember the late-1970's sitcom, [Three's Company](#)? The show about Janet, Chrissy and their roommate Jack used to drive me crazy sometimes.

Almost every episode involved a miscommunication because someone eavesdropped on a conversation and got the wrong idea. Mayhem and hilarity ensued.

Even as a little girl, I'd scream at the TV, "Just tell her what you thought you heard and clear up this whole problem!"

A direct approach can work wonders to clearing up communication challenges and getting the straight scoop.

But eavesdropping in context does have its advantages.

Market researchers share these sagas all the time when they do focus groups or studies. Sometimes people tell you what they think you want to hear when you ask. Or they tell you something that makes them feel better about themselves. Or they tell you what they prefer – but when faced with an actual choice in the real world, they act quite differently. [New Coke](#), anyone?

There are times to eavesdrop on your ideal clients so you can find out exactly what they want and need. You just have to be smart about how you do it.

And there are also times when you have to just drop the façade and straight up ask them what they think and feel. Again, you just have to be smart about how you do it.

This week we're going to talk about eavesdropping.
Next week, we'll tackle surveys and direct interviews!

What's the Word on the Street?

You have killer expertise in your subject area. You've studied, researched or had experience with your work for years now. So you're not starting from Ground Zero.

If you're a real estate agent and you've been working for a while, you already know what people want and need when they are looking for homes. You know the questions they ask, the fears they have, the spots where things get sticky for them.

If you sell complex software, you already know what objections prospects may have to your product, what needs it fulfills, and which problems the solution solves for them.

But what's going on *right now*? What's the scuttlebutt, the trend, the "jargon du jour" in your space?

The best way to get an unbiased and unfiltered look at what people are saying and asking is to listen in on social media.

What?! I thought social media was only for pushing out my own content and solutions!

No, my friend. Social media is interactive. Which means your ideal clients and customers are there, having conversations, searching for terms and asking questions. Use it as a research tool!

You can eavesdrop on social media to get the scoop on what's happening in the lives and work of your target audience. Use it to find out what your competition is talking about. Use it to dig into what people are frustrated with, happy about or wish existed in your area.

P.S., this is also the first step to ensure you are using social media channels most effectively. More on this in a later lesson!

Be the Fly on the Wall

You just put together your ideal client personas with many "best guesses" and your own common sense. Now refine those even further by listening in to their conversations on social media. Here are a few ways you can use social media to gather more intel about your target audience:

- 1. Search for relevant hashtags:** While some of us (yes, I'm guilty) use hashtags as ironic commentary - #SueMe - they serve a purpose. They link together similar discussion topics. Identify the relevant hashtags in your space and go to that cute little Search bar in Twitter (or LinkedIn or Facebook) and type in the terms. See what posts and tweets come up. What are the conversations? Who are the players? What are people asking around that topic area? To which influencers, blogs or articles are people linking? There is a wealth of information out there if you just take some time each week to find it. Are you a wellness guru? What conversations are taking place about #yoga, #fitness, #wellness, #stressmanagement, #nutrition?
- 2. Find the players and follow them:** Who are the influencers in your space? What conversations are they having with their audiences? It's okay to stalk them in the interest of research! Like their Facebook pages, follow them on Instagram or LinkedIn, read their blogs and, most importantly, the comments people leave. Your desired audience may already be there, so you can simply eavesdrop on those conversations. For example, if you're a hybrid business/life coach for entrepreneurial women, just read the hundreds of comments on Marie Forleo's blog for 20 minutes every week and take notes. You will instantly find out what your target audience cares about the most.
- 3. Find the right groups and participate:** The first step here is to identify a few groups online, perhaps on LinkedIn, Facebook or even standalone platforms, such as [SheWrites](#) for women

authors, that attract your target audience. Just do a Google search or within the specific social media network itself, by topic area or keyword. Make sure they are active groups and the last post was not in 2012. Also, see how many people are in the group and how much interactive conversation and posting takes place. You don't need to be a part of ALL groups, but just pick a few good ones on which to eavesdrop for a while. Once you find the right two or three groups, don't do anything except listen for a bit. What questions are people asking? What are they struggling with? What terminology are they using?

These are great places to not just gather data and build brand awareness, but, later, you can "soft sell" your offerings by answering questions or giving resources to show your expertise. I am a member of a few active solopreneur and small business groups on LinkedIn and every now and then, I pop in to see what people are talking about, even if I don't write anything. But I'll occasionally jump in to add value. As an author, for example, I frequently consult the [SheWrites](#) community: when my book launched, I contributed a few resource articles to get on people's radars.

Your Assignment: Listen In to Your Tribe

First, identify five to ten relevant hashtags or keywords related to your business or project area:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Next, spend 20-30 minutes this week searching those terms on Twitter, LinkedIn or other social media networks. Document below the blogs, influencers, questions, topics, groups or even specific words that come up in the conversations. If you're stuck, please post on our Facebook group and we'll give you some ideas! You can also create a file on your laptop called *Content & Marketing Ideas* and start a rolling list of things YOU can create to solve these problems for people:

Now, use those same keywords to identify at least five online groups where your target audience hangs out. They could be on Facebook, LinkedIn or in a standalone community. Remember, these should be current, active and have a meaningful number of members. You can then eavesdrop on these places, too, and add themes or questions to your list above.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Last, choose just two or three of those groups that will be your focus, and potentially where you will actively participate on a regular basis (although no pressure to do so if that's not your jam...more on this in an upcoming lesson!)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

NOTE: If the "style" of these groups doesn't mesh with your brand, it's not worth your time. Maybe they are not your ideal people. We'll be talking about vibe in a later lesson, but for now, you'll know it when you see it!

But wait, you're not quite done....

Now: post your findings from this week's assignment in our nurturing Facebook group for a chance to win a fabulous prize from yours truly.

Remember, we are here to encourage you and provide any feedback. If you're like me, often it's fellow collaborators that help me polish my ideas to a glossy sheen.

Again, I'm going to reward you all year long, so don't lose your MOMENTUM: Post it now and keep that train moving!

One Last Thing...

Understanding your audience is not going to happen overnight.

It realistically won't all happen this week. But occasional eavesdropping will help ensure you have your ear to the ground on what your audience thinks and needs.

This will be something you do every so often, maybe weekly or monthly. You may even want to schedule time in your calendar and call it "Audience Research!"

Take the pressure off your "actions" this week and just listen. No need to post, no need to contribute (unless you can't resist!) and no need to worry about your follower stats or your profile right now. If you loathe social media and don't want it to be part of your marketing activity, that's okay. All we're doing this week is using it as a tool to gather information.

And remember, this is different from "social listening" to monitor your brand or products. This is about listening to what your ideal clients want and need in your particular industry or expertise area.

If you're not working on a "business" per se, you still need an audience. Which means you still need to understand what makes them tick and what they have to say as it relates to what you do.

No matter whether you have a business, cause or creative endeavor, you still require an audience to support it.

This week is just Step One. But it's such an important one and one many entrepreneurs just plain forget to do.

Happy listening!

Maria

Goodies and Inspirations

I highly recommend [this book](#) for understanding bias during formal research or focus groups. It's targeted at women, but the lessons in here apply to any audience segment and are eye-opening and even humorous. This book is one of my business faves. And [here's a short article](#) the book's co-author wrote for Forbes.

This is a good article about [social listening](#). Right now, don't concern yourself with listening for references about your own brand or how to jump into the conversation – that's a marketing tactic we'll cover later.

I have no idea if this is a legit app, but check out [Ear Spy](#). Yikes!

And for fun....here are [16 interesting facts about Three's Company](#), referenced at the beginning of the lesson!