

Client



Company:

University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center

Website:

www.mdanderson.org

Headquarters:

Houston, Texas

Industry:

Healthcare

Size:

9 sites across Texas
18,000 staff, 90,000 patients

Solution:

Alterian SM2

Results:

1. More efficient and comprehensive monitoring of social media channels
2. Enhanced listening builds stronger relationships through better patient relations and customer service
3. Social media has become a more strategic tool for M.D. Anderson driving more engagement with the public and healthcare community
4. ROI and value of social media can be easily shared with management

Measuring the social web increases engagement with the public for leading cancer hospital

An Authority on Cancer Treatment

As one of the larger cancer hospitals in North America, the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center treats over 90,000 patients every year. Having grown into one of the leading authorities in its field during the last 60 years, the hospital aims to become the world's premier cancer center, through programs which integrate patient care, research and prevention. The M.D. Anderson also has an extensive education facility for students, trainees, professionals, employees and the public.

Recognizing the Value of Listening

An early adopter of social media in the medical world, the hospital's external communications department had started using it back in 2007. Twitter, Facebook and the blogosphere were its initial focus, as an increasing number of people were writing about their cancer experiences and treatment online. It even set-up a specific role to monitor both what was being said about the brand and cancer-related topics, in addition to the communications being created by the institution itself.

"About two years ago we realized there were patients and prospective patients using social media to discuss their concerns or ask questions about treatment, or find out about the hospital," explained Jennifer Texada, Communications Program Manager, Digital and New Media, M.D. Anderson Cancer Center. "We were using free monitoring tools from Twitter and Google, plus Technorati and a few RSS feeds and could see some interesting conversations going on. But it took a lot of time to look at these manually."

The hospital also recognized there had to be many more conversations which it wasn't aware of and it was also about to expand its own social media programs, so began looking for a better method of listening to the social media world.

"Our desire to get closer to patients and the general public online, and engage with those who were socially connected, meant we had to be able to monitor a much larger number of sources," added Texada.

New Ways of Monitoring

"We decided to start use Alterian SM2 just over a year ago, as it gave us a proper structure to our whole monitoring process and let us measure the benefit of our campaigns. It's a lot more comprehensive than isolated tools and we can now see everything in one place, dramatically reducing the time spent on monitoring. Even using the free evaluation version 'Freemium', I could see the power and value it could bring to the hospital," commented Texada.

A critical issue for M.D. Anderson was being able to search message boards, set-up by patients and survivors of the 100+ cancers, such as Planet Cancer.

"A lot of tools couldn't see deep enough into message boards but with SM2 we could, which helped identify which ones we should watch or join," Texada continued. "The number one reason we selected Alterian, however, was its amazing level of customer service, right from my first dealings with the company. Every time I Tweet them with a question, I receive a call within minutes. Being a small department this level of support is invaluable to us."

M.D. Anderson began using SM2 to monitor its brand then moved to include awareness of its campaigns and particular topics, such as the results of one of its clinical trials, or a new cancer drug that had come to market. The hospital now uses it for general listening, social media campaigns, public relations, marketing, customer service improvements and search engine optimization.

Measuring ROI

An initial business driver for using SM2 was to see how the institution could link ROI to its social media efforts.

One such project saw the hospital monitor a set of keywords from a PR and social media campaign and track clicks back into their site. The campaign had been designed to increase the amount of physicians who registered online with the hospital's online EMR (Electronic Medical Records) system and in turn, increase the number of patients referred to the hospital. Using SM2 to track the campaign's spread, in addition to web analytics, it revealed their social activity was responsible for a 9.5% increase in patient referrals in a three month period.



Alterian Case Study

University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center

"This was a real eye-opener to how social media could benefit the business," Texada said. "We could see which activity made most impact and which spread fastest."

Evaluating Public Education

Whilst planning their program for the year ahead, the team ran searches on keywords and topics to help inform their strategy. An example of the tactical outcome was the decision not to run the same Prostate Cancer Awareness month as the year before. With SM2 now in place, they could search historically and saw that social media traffic around the initiative had been low. As a result, the Education office ran a more straightforward communications program, focusing on men's health and saw a significant increase in traffic.



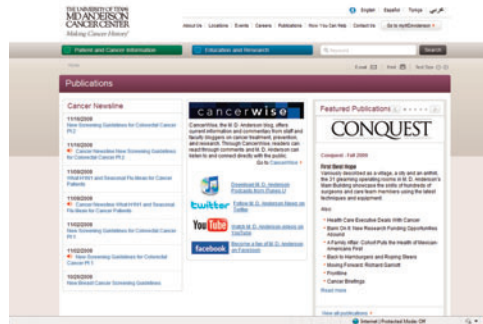
"Comprehensive monitoring really helped us understand what type of content drives more conversations," commented Texada. "In addition to some messaging on cancer prevention, the recent campaign centered on announcements and alerts about healthy eating, eating on a budget and exercise – so more content of benefit to a broader audience."

M.D. Anderson uses Alterian SM2 in a host of other ways, including:

- Monitoring its own blog to engage with individuals who react to posts and build new relationships with key influencers
- Improving patient relations and customer service by identifying patients with an issue, or resolving complaints about concerns like waiting times
- Refining the hospital's SEO strategy by examining keyword performance and gaining ideas on what to change or expand to improve traffic

Demonstrating the Value of Social Media

"By applying the output of SM2 we're able to respond to patients and those talking about the brand a lot more often and much faster than before. Over the last year, we've witnessed an increase in the number of mentions of M.D. Anderson and word is spreading that we're listening via Twitter, Facebook, cancer blogs and message boards etc, and responding to our various audiences," said Texada.



Internally, the reports from SM2 have helped achieve a greater understanding of the benefits social media bring to the institution. "The insight generated lets us see how we're influencing our different audiences on an individual level and the benefit of engaging through these channels." Texada continued: "I train my colleagues about how great social media is but what makes them really sit-up and take notice are the statistics SM2 reveals. If I can show that 3,000 people mentioned our brand last month, for example, and this is where we featured, then people take notice. The data is the keystone of my internal training program."

Keeping the wider management team regularly up-to-date is easy too, as reports are quick to create in formats everyone can use. "Many people in healthcare can be very esoteric and don't focus on the ROI of social media. But VPs and Directors want to see numbers. SM2 lets me analyze, display and share findings very easily – it gives me the facts which show that activity 'x' made 'y' impact – these are the ROI metrics executives want."

Future plans

With some upcoming changes to their brand and a push to increase national awareness, M.D. Anderson expects to use SM2 a lot more for tracking improvements in activity, as accountability becomes even more important.

Texada plans to increase the use of SM2's historical data back to 2007 in various benchmarking and reporting exercises, while its Geo-mapping ability will help monitor national efforts, as it shows the location of conversations and their intensity. "This year we'll be broadening our use of the tool even further, not only to keep guiding our marketing communications strategy and social activity but also uncovering other ways it can help improve the business such as customer service."

"Measuring and reporting on the social space is evolving all the time for us. From simple beginnings, it's now becoming a key part of driving more effective engagement with the cancer community and wider public."

Alterian

Alterian (LSE: ALN) empowers marketers with an integrated marketing software platform combining database, online and operational marketing applications on a shared data infrastructure. The Alterian Integrated Marketing Platform makes it practical and cost effective for marketers to use actionable insight to execute an integrated marketing strategy across online and offline channels.

It is the unique integration of analytics, content and execution through our industry leading tools, such as the Alterian Messenger email platform, and the award winning Content Management solutions, which enables marketers to drive a seamless, multi-channel customer experience.

Alterian's analytically-led software is delivered to approximately 1,000 marketing departments, across 26 countries, and an international network of more than 100 business partners, including marketing services providers, agencies and systems integrators. Its partners, such as Accenture, Acxiom, Allant Group, Cap Gemini, Carlson Marketing, Experian, Epsilon, InfoUSA, LogicaCMG, Merkle, Ogilvy One and Euro RSCG Worldwide, deliver Alterian software alongside their own domain and services expertise to help market leaders such as Princess Cruises, General Motors, Zurich, Astra Zeneca, HSBC, Limited Too, AEGON, Avis, Worldwide Wrestling Entertainment, Dell, Amnesty International and Vodafone integrate marketing processes and drive competitive advantage. For more information about Alterian, products within the Alterian Integrated Marketing Platform or our Partner Network, please visit www.alterian.com.

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