

Client



Delivering practical and profitable social media monitoring for clients

Company:
Bader Rutter & Associates, Inc.

Website:
www.baderrutter.com

Headquarters:
Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA

Industry:
Marketing Communications

Size:
Three offices: Milwaukee, WI,
Chicago, IL, and Lincoln, NE
150 staff and \$19m turnover

Solution:
Alterian SM2

Results:

1. More efficient, practical and comprehensive social media monitoring
2. Multiple methods of reporting, analyzing and sharing results
3. New level of insight supports strategic counsel, strengthens agency/client relationship
4. Packaging concept of combining SM2 with consultancy creates new client service

Bader Rutter, an integrated marketing communications agency, uses Alterian SM2 to provide insight and intelligence for its customers, often enlightening and informing them of conversations they had no idea were happening. This insight leads to the ability to proactively respond and increase engagement with customers and prospects.

Agency evolution brings success

Bader Rutter & Associates, Inc. has been providing integrated marketing communications services to blue-chip clients for 36 years, its track record a testament to its evolution and ability to keep delivering an impressive portfolio of services. Based in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, the firm operates primarily in the B2B world across a range of industries, counting Dow AgroSciences, GE Healthcare, Pfizer, Generac, John Deere and OfficeMax amongst its clients.



The rise of social media in B2B

Digital technologies are increasingly providing more of the foundation for Bader Rutter's services, as the boundaries merge between the agency's many disciplines, including Brand Strategy, Public Relations, Media, Relationship Marketing, Advertising, Event planning and more.

Despite the rise of social media being less meteoric in B2B markets than B2C, Bader Rutter recognized the increasing influence of social channels and had been recommending social strategies and tactics to clients. The agency also identified that monitoring was an important early step to social media success and its initial approach involved the use of multiple free tools.

Anticipating that the social web would become even more influential, the agency's Digital Solutions Group realized that a more comprehensive and efficient approach to monitoring was needed. What's more, an immediate demand from a client for a major online PR and reputation management engagement meant time was short to find an appropriate solution.

Demand for better intelligence

"In the past, effectively monitoring the social web was too time-consuming as data had to be aggregated from several sources. This method wasn't comprehensive enough either, as only a fraction of all social sources were covered," explained Grant Thekan, Senior Digital Strategist of Bader Rutter's Digital Solutions Group. "Helping our clients understand, manage and harness the power of the social web is

a complex business. Our strategic plans have to be driven by quality insights – we needed faster and more comprehensive social web intelligence."

After reviewing several competing social media monitoring tools, Bader Rutter selected Alterian SM2. "It was clear it could help measure, analyze and report on activity throughout the entire social media eco-system and it was obviously designed for full-service marketing agencies like ours. Alterian SM2 really spoke our language and was a perfect fit," explained Thekan. "Alterian's customer support network is also impressive – access to first-class support resources was important and any issues or queries have been consistently and quickly resolved."

No-nonsense and affordable monitoring

Bader Rutter is now able to monitor the entire social web in a practical way. Covering the broadest range of sources, SM2 gathers and evaluates content from blogs, micro blogs, social networks, wikis, video and photo sharing sites, message boards/forums and review sites. Also providing multiple ways to analyze and visualize search results, SM2 works well with any agency discipline. Projects for Bader Rutter clients so far have included brand audits, corporate marketing and brand building exercises, industry and competitor insight, PR and product development.

"We were surprised at how straightforward it was to create effective search profiles and then have rapid access to useful results. The way SM2 is built means it's a performance tool too – it's always accessible and fast," Thekan continued. "It can also be very cost effective as we don't pay for the number of 'seats' or users but only for the amount of data collected; some listening programs yield few results which can be useful information in itself, yet others yield very robust data sets."

No news is good news.

Bader Rutter first used SM2 to manage an issues management project. A short-term listening engagement was set-up to understand what was being discussed in social channels about a particular topic. After 30 days it was clear that the anticipated chatter was not taking place – at least not in significant volumes – a valuable insight for the team. So much so, the project continued for the remainder of the year and was recently extended into an ongoing program. Even though it has been one of the longest social media monitoring engagements for Bader Rutter to date, no action had to be taken.

"The client was pleased that there were few conversations taking place and even fewer by those wielding significant influence or authority. Therefore, the issues management plan that was prepared

didn't have to be deployed. By listening in real-time to members of the industry community, we noted only a couple of social 'hot-spots' but those voices were never loud enough to act upon. Social media monitoring now plays an ongoing role in this client's gathering of business intelligence and market research, helping to inform marketing strategy," explained Thekan.

Revealing insights

Since then, Bader Rutter's social media task-force has worked on a mix of client engagements and new business development opportunities with SM2. The first project was all about monitoring present-day conversations but some have been about looking back in time. SM2 is the only monitoring tool with a social media warehouse storing data since 2007. Its database also continues to grow with millions of pieces of content added every day.

Thekan commented: "When we're considering a new product launch, for example, it's valuable to go and see what the reaction was to a previous product, or what a competitor did last year and how consumers reacted."

Competitor analysis with SM2 has also uncovered some eye-opening moments. One of them took place during a new business session with an existing, global manufacturing client. Monitoring various client brands and products along with those of its top four competitors, revealed a significant gap of awareness (and resulting share of voice) between the client and its competition, in particular markets. The insights gleaned provided valuable business intelligence that was used to help shape marketing strategy and communications plans for the year ahead; plans intended to make Bader Rutter's client more prominent in those verticals.

Guiding product development

Alterian SM2 is also helping guide new product strategies for a major provider of financial services for the agriculture sector. A listening profile was developed for the client's brand, as well as six major competitors, with conversation volumes, share of voice, sentiment and a variety of other parameters all being monitored. After just a few weeks it came as a surprise to the client to find that while there was indeed significant conversation taking place about issues such as financing for agri-business, little of it involved company and brand names that produced relevant products and services.

"There was almost no awareness of any of the organizations being monitored," said Thekan. "The conversations we observed centered on the issues, concerns and demands of the industry but weren't routinely associated with any brand names. It was a major wake-up call for the client, who realized there was an untapped opportunity to raise awareness and become front-of-mind with customers. We're now working to take advantage of the insight and raise our client's profile in social channels."

New agency propositions

Bader Rutter's overall impression of working with Alterian SM2 during its first year is that it's a robust tool that can yield significant insights. "The type of social data SM2 produces fits our business like a glove," Thekan said. "Our clients have an appetite for metrics and the data we're now reaping from social channels provides them with an exciting new way of understanding the organic nature of brands and how they're influenced by the consumer, who now has an active voice in the disposition and evolution of those brands."

Thekan concludes: "We now we have a powerful tool that when combined with our strategic counsel, allows us to create strategic plans for clients which strengthens their engagement with customers. We've been exposing every client to its capabilities; once they see its power and value, Alterian SM2 generally sells itself."

Alterian

Alterian (LSE: ALN) enables organizations to create relevant, effective and engaging experiences with their customers and prospects through social, digital, and traditional marketing channels. Alterian's Customer Engagement solutions are focused in four main areas: Social Media, Web Content Management, Email, and Campaign Management & Analytics.

Alterian technology is utilized either to address a specific marketing challenge or as part of an integrated marketing platform, with analytics and customer engagement with the individual at the heart of everything. Working alongside a rich ecosystem of partners, Alterian delivers its software as a service, or on premise. For more information about Alterian visit www.alterian.com or the Alterian blog at www.engagingtimes.com.

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