



Brandwatch

# Social Listening in Practice/ Command Centers



# INTRODUCTION: LAUNCHING THE MISSION

When Gatorade introduced its mission control center in 2010, the business world was quickly enthralled by the potential opportunities command centers offered. Harnessing the power of social media data through a wide range of analytics platforms, the massive displays promised to be a portal into the social media world and consumer's mind. At a quick glance, decision-makers would glean the social pulse surrounding any topic of interest.

Following the mission control center's implementation, Gatorade was soon lauded as a pioneer for its efforts in leveraging the vast amount of online conversations into actionable insights and setting the foundation for digital leadership.

The concept of a command center is an attractive one, harking on a common affinity for big screens, fast information and holistic brand awareness. However, the command center is in its nascent stages and there is still a lingering confusion around how it can be used and how brands can identify the solution that is best for them.

The following guide outlines a selection of the most common use cases and provides a framework for evaluating and comparing the various command center solutions available.



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Social listening use cases organized from consumer-focused to business-focused.

Consumer    1.1    1.2    1.3    1.4    1.5    1.6    1.7    Business

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# What's the point?

## A look at command center use cases

When the Mission Control Center landed, industry leaders held their breath as they waited for the technology to either revolutionize marketing and business decisions or leave its many promises unfulfilled. The reality was far less polarized.

While the first-generation command centers successfully informed marketing decisions and PR teams with some high-level metrics, businesses were still underwhelmed by the new technology's ability to either convey the social pulse of a brand or provide meaningful insights that inform business decisions.

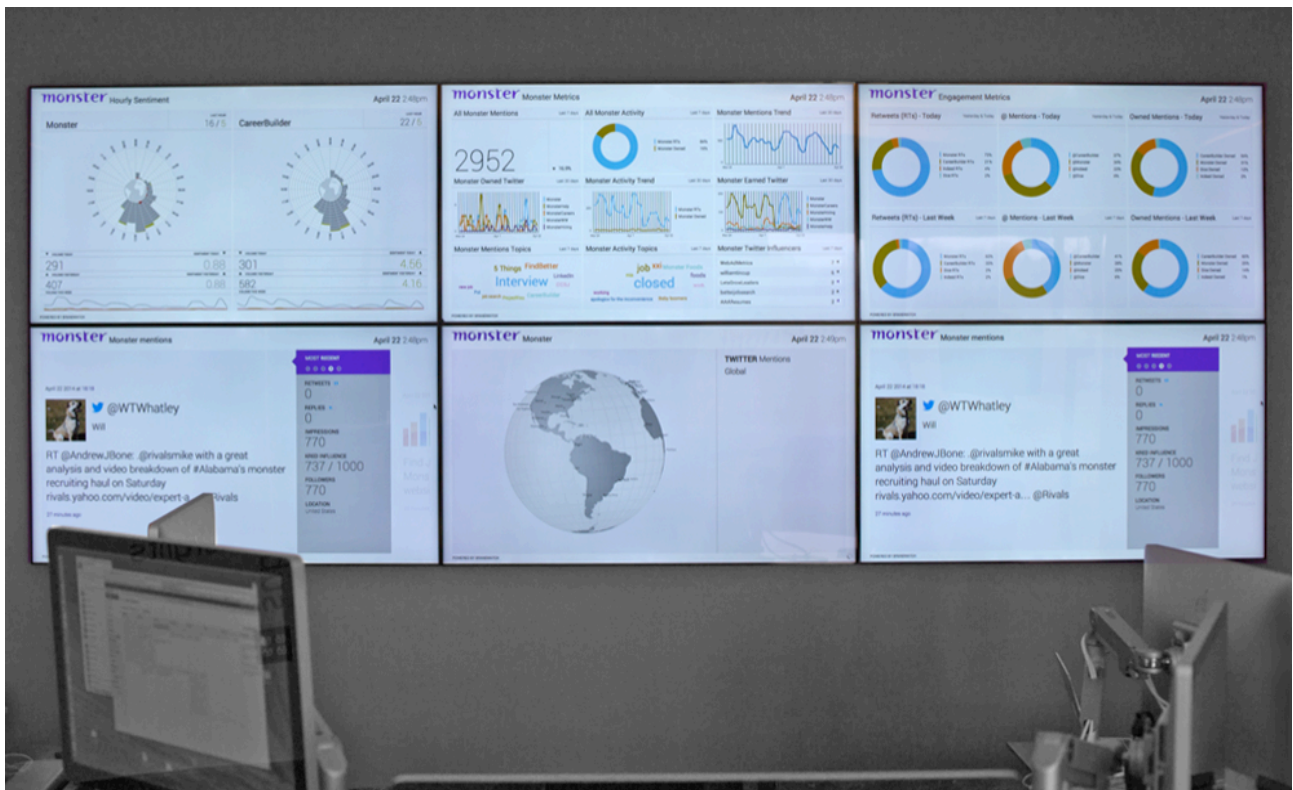
However, since its inception, the command center's capabilities have and are continuing to evolve. Today's command centers are being used by a wide range of teams in unique ways that were hardly considered when the big screen displays were first installed.

### 1.1 ENGAGEABLE OPPORTUNITIES

With expert setups, users can parse through large volumes of conversation to automatically or manually emphasize specific mentions, important authors or popular topics on the command center display.

By scanning for certain keywords or phrases, command centers can highlight engageable conversations, facilitating stronger online relationships between brands and consumers.

Furthermore, the large monitors bring community managers outside their individual screens and create a collaborative environment in which entire teams can contribute to social engagement. These dialogues often create an important foundation that ensures social teams are all aligned on engagement strategies.



Monster Offices in Weston, MA

At the Monster headquarters, the digital communication and social media team is organized around a six-screen command center. With the entire group following the social flow, they are well equipped to uncover engageable opportunities. Furthermore, having the entire team in a single location facilitates a more consistent social media voice and a stronger brand personality.

## 1.2 CUSTOMER SERVICE

For both large and small brands, providing excellent customer service on social media channels is a rising imperative. Indeed, numerous studies have indicated that when businesses do not constructively respond to negative feedback, it reflects poorly on the brands and can often discourage consumers from a purchase (Evans et al., 2012; Smyth et al., 2010).

Social media command centers can be instrumental in contextualizing, measuring, and triaging complaints so that customer service teams can quickly and appropriately respond to large volumes of incoming complaints.



MoneyGram Headquarters in Dallas, TX

For MoneyGram, a business that prides itself on top-level customer care, the command center is a principal element in their customer service department. Using powerful analytics to segment the data by location and language, MoneyGram was able to triage incoming complaints and react appropriately to each individual concern in real time.

Performing reactive engagement at scale requires businesses to have clear strategies and organized systems in place to strategically handle the large volumes of incoming complaints – the command center facilitates that process.

### 1.3 CRISIS MANAGEMENT / PR

The command center is an invaluable tool for quickly identifying and appropriately responding to crises or other public relations issues.

Live-streaming social content on a consumable display means that more employees can watch, pinpoint and handle public complaints before they become larger issues.

Searching for specific discussions that may threaten or shape a brand's online image, command centers can alert specific issues to individual screens. In the event of a PR crisis, social media teams can immediately flag potential threats to PR teams and concerned executives.



That way, executives can be assured that potential media crises are appropriately and rapidly brought to their attention and that all affiliated parties understand the issues.



IKEA Offices in Amsterdam, Netherlands

For some large financial institutions, social media accounts for over 2,000 online mentions each day. At such volumes, the command center provides an effective way to organize and handle incoming feedback in a way that an analytics platform cannot.

By scanning for certain phrases or terms, brands can lump mentions into separate categories, highlight them on the big screen and distribute them directly to concerned parties. In public relations, having organized systems to deal with crises as well as the tools to handle issues swiftly is paramount.

## 1.4 REAL-TIME MARKETING

With communication moving at the speed of social, certain ideas and opinions have the propensity to gain significant momentum fast. For brands, while the opportunities for businesses to understand and react to fluctuations in public opinion abound, the risks in not being adaptable are just as pressing.

Real-time marketing allows brands to track, understand and direct the flow of a campaign as it evolves. While having well-defined plans is crucial, responsiveness and agility are becoming central components to successful campaigns.

Command centers are the ideal platform for relaying the progress of a campaign in real-time. They permit large groups to watch the public discourse around an event unfold and

to make sense of how online conversations are affecting campaigns. In an instant, brands can curate discussions to bring mentions from key influencers forward, collaborate with bigger teams on social replies and compare performance against competitors.



Jaguar/Mindshare Command Center at 2014 Super Bowl, Source: AdWeek

During the 2014 Super Bowl, Jaguar, in conjunction with ad agency Mindshare, used a command center to follow how the social media audience reacted to their commercial in real-time. The social data displays allowed the commercial team to better visualize how the social media responses unfolded and provided a stronger understanding of how, where, when and to what extent the social buzz developed. Furthermore, the command center presented opportunities for instant communication with consumers through personal or broad online engagement.

## 1.5 REGIONAL BENCHMARKING

While social media has broken down many of the communication barriers between states and countries, certain areas are still more receptive to trends or products than others are.

For brands, understanding the market landscape across regions informs marketing and sales teams and ensures that their efforts are aligned with the company's regional goals. For businesses looking to expand to new territories, being able to identify and engage with influencers or advocates in target locations is crucial.





Brandwatch Offices in New York City, NY

The command center can be instrumental in conveying a brand's social performance across regions as measured by share of voice, consumer sentiment, mentions with intent to purchase or other user-defined metrics. Indeed, these quick displays allow employees to understand who and where their audience is at any moment.

## 1.6 COMPETITIVE BENCHMARKING

One of the major advantages of online data is the wealth of organic feedback that's publicly available. Since all businesses have the same potential access to social data, brands are just as capable of running social media analyses on their competitors as they are on their own brand.

The command center gives businesses an immediate and simple way to visualize how their brand stacks up against competitors and provides employees with a clear understanding of the market landscape. In that sense, the displays act as a KPI board from which employees can track the company's social performance as an indicator of brand equity and product quality among other customizable social metrics.



Brandwatch Headquarters in Brighton, England

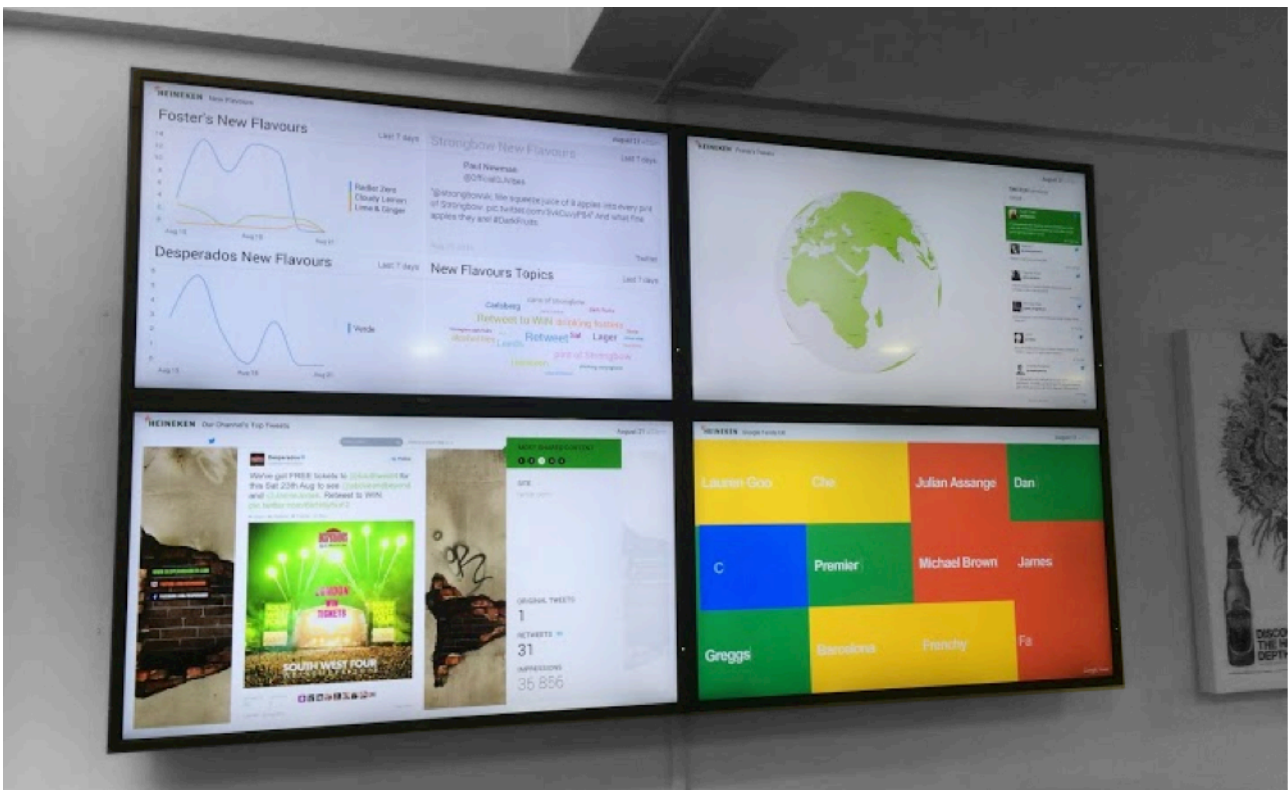
At Brandwatch, one of the command center displays was arranged to depict the online share of voice against our competitors in the social media monitoring space. Watching as the share of voice grew from 100 mentions per month when the display was originally set up to over 3,000 per month was an exciting process for the employees. Indeed, it was a defining moment for Brandwatch when the company's share of voice surpassed one of its leading competitors on the big screen.

## 1.7 BRINGING COMPANY AWARENESS TO THE BUSINESS'S ONLINE PRESENCE

Perhaps one of the most influential yet often unintended functions of the command center is that it raises awareness around a brand's online presence to employees. Many leading businesses, acknowledging the growing influence of social media, are currently going to great lengths to emphasize the importance of social intelligence internally.

The command center is an excellent way to introduce social into the work environment. Considered an insight into the consumer pulse, social media displays provide employees with a link back to the ground where customers' everyday thoughts and opinions are driving businesses.

Additionally, many businesses, recognizing the growing list of PR crises arising from negligent employee Twitter handles, want to convey how an employee's social media activity may reflect on the greater company.



Heineken Offices in London, England

At the headquarters of some of the world's largest airlines, command centers stand in the main foyer, displaying a breadth of overarching social media insights pertinent to the thousands of employees passing by throughout the workday. At a quick glance, airline receptionists, flight attendants, customer service representatives and executives alike can all recognize how their roles affect consumers and how those consumers' opinions contribute to the business's overall success.

## What's the right fit? Things to consider before buying a command center

While the command center fulfills many distinct use cases, the role it plays in a business often varies as each company's needs and interests are unique. For some brands, the command center is merely a vanity item used to impress outsiders with its futuristic capabilities and alluring displays. For others, it is an instrumental component in the efforts of business strategy, marketing, community management and customer service teams.

Currently, there are many command center solutions available and still more in the incubator. As the social media displays are a considerable investment, businesses should understand the advantages and limitations of all available options before implementing any permanent systems.

## 2.1 THE ANALYTICS BEHIND THE SCREENS

At its core, the command center is an information display that translates massive volumes of real-time online social data into easily comprehensible figures. Yet behind the visualizations exists a complex set of social interactions. As such, one of the most important aspects of a command center is how capable the analytics software powering the displays is.

Firstly, it's essential that the analytics software offers complete data so that important discussions or online mentions do not go unnoticed. Also, during the query writing stage, there should be enough operators to easily pinpoint the desired mentions and filter out the spam. The analytics should offer effective ways of grouping and organizing the data before the visualization stage.

## 2.2 CUSTOMIZABLE AND FLEXIBLE

As the realm of social media analytics constantly evolves, it's important that command centers are able to adapt to a business's changing needs. A flexible setup ensures that as the use cases expand and the analytics platforms grow more powerful, reconfiguring the displays is simple.

Customizability can be defined at three levels:

### 2.2.1 Flexibility of data collection and segregation

At the data collection stage, weeding out spam and uncovering clean samples should be straightforward. After collection, there should be simple systems in place to identify, separate and categorize specific discussions to organize the information.

### 2.2.2 Flexibility of data visualization

The command center should include an extensive variety of scenes that effectively convey actionable insights, including: mentions, share of voice, competitive analysis, sentiment analysis, regional analysis, brand-related trends and campaign measurement.

### 2.2.3 Flexibility of command center displays

Strong command centers can seamlessly switch between displays so that each team or viewer can quickly bring forward the information they need. For example, the ideal layout for executives, marketing teams and community managers may be dramatically different. Users should be able to remotely manipulate all screens and triage messages across screens. Furthermore, users should be able to rotate scenes within a display on timed intervals.





FGV Display at Brandwatch Offices in New York City, NY

## 2.3 PERMISSION MANAGEMENT

Since the command center is designed to support a wide range of business applications, it's important that the user interface allows companies to delegate responsibilities and permissions accordingly. Specifically designating which users can build queries, edit displays, create scenes and send messages facilitates a more organized and efficient workflow.

Additionally, businesses should be able to control which devices, be it mobile, tablet or laptop, are capable of editing certain aspects of the display. Being able to limit permissions minimizes potential security issues or user errors.

## 2.4 DATA INTEGRATION

Recognizing that each team's objectives are informed by data beyond social, command centers should be designed to display information from a variety of sources. A more holistic information display ensures that all relevant information is available and creates opportunities to draw new parallels between social media and other business metrics.

Furthermore, as the volume and type of information that businesses collect continues to grow, finding correlations between social data and existing data sets could provide brands with an even greater opportunity to understand and predict their consumers' behaviors. Leading businesses, already incorporating social into their larger analyses, benefit from



having command centers that integrate various types of information into a single display area.

## 2.5 SCALABILITY

As businesses and the roles of social media expand, it's important that command centers are scalable. Oftentimes executives or other teams, recognizing the value of social media displays, will request single screens in their offices or departments to stay on top of relevant trends and increase communication with social teams. Systems that can easily be upgraded to connect new screens to the existing setup are ideal for facilitating that evolution.

## 2.6 CUSTOMER SERVICE

A command center is a highly involved and constantly adapting combination of software and hardware. As with all developing technologies, there will inevitably be a learning curve as internal teams adjust to the new platform.

While a straightforward user interface definitely helps mitigate errors along the way, strong customer service is vital to ensure that the system is properly set up to offer insightful visualizations and that key employees have an effective learning process. Furthermore, the efficiency of a distributor's customer care will determine how costly any errors from either the system or the user are.

# Brandwatch Vizia

Brandwatch's Vizia is designed to be simple, dynamic and powerful.

The renowned performance of our Analytics platform ensures that the data is both clean and accurate. With a wide variety of data segregation abilities and real-time charting options, Vizia enables businesses to glean a holistic understanding of the social pulse at a quick glance.

Our goal was to provide flexible and customizable data displays in a simple way. That's why Vizia can instantly be edited from any device at any location. We make it simple to triage messages, displays or alerts across screens, enhancing your business's ability to communicate internally.

If you have any questions about Brandwatch Vizia, we invite you to contact us for a full overview of the product's capabilities.

## Thank You

We hope this report provides your business with some helpful insights on the capabilities and considerations surrounding command centers. Please reach out with any questions or comments about the contents of this report.

**Brandwatch. Now You Know.**

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