

## Objectives

Three years ago, MasterCard CEO Ajay Banga challenged his team to transform the 45 year-old B2B financial services giant into a more consumer-focused payments technology company. From a communications standpoint, MasterCard was squarely B2B; the opportunity was to shift engagement online and develop a direct relationship and dialogue with consumers and influencers. Early data revealed **more than 30 Million** online conversations weekly related to MasterCard and its industry; however, **MasterCard was engaged in just 1% of those discussions**. Further, commerce – the center of MasterCard’s business – was shifting online and increasingly via social media channels.

## Strategy

To move beyond traditional “listening”, **MasterCard created the Conversation Suite** – a dynamic, global insights and engagement engine that shifted the company from monitoring social and traditional media to **applying purposeful listening to inform business decisions and foster more impactful communications**.

## Tactics

The Conversation Suite is a web-based analytics tool supported by a global team of social experts that monitor, analyze and engage in conversations around the world, in real-time, 24/7. The data mining and analysis serve as a foundation for communications decision making, helping set the communications roadmap, enabling active response and engagement and serving as a barometer and resource to the business. It is also a physical space with hubs at Corporate Headquarters in Purchase, NY as well as in Miami, Mexico and Brazil along with a mobile version. The innovative physical space, comprising an LED screen that features a ‘live’ look at conversations shaping the brand, provides a creative venue for discussion and ideation around the MasterCard story.

Additionally, MasterCard Communications has engineered the platform to go beyond serving as a communications tool to fueling insights that not only drive better business but also better partnerships. In 2012, MasterCard launched the Partner Plus program. Through this effort, MasterCard Communications exposes partners including issuers and merchants to Conversation Suite data and insights relevant to their businesses and industries, and also works collaboratively with partners to develop and implement joint social media programs informed by the platform.

A customized, proprietary system designed by PRIME Research powers the Conversation Suite, providing communications visibility in 43 markets in 26 languages across all social, online, digital and traditional channels. Advanced web intelligence, sentiment analysis, human validation and in-house coding all contribute to making this system the hub of MasterCard’s engagement network.

## Execution

There are six dedicated desks staffed full-time with a cross-functional team monitoring, analyzing and engaging. This rotating team focuses on the data yielded from the tool as a way to reinforce the CEO’s vision for transforming the company. This tool is part of an ongoing mission of making MasterCard a more social enterprise.

PR Platinum Award Winner 2013

Category: Best Use of Research and Evaluation  
Entry Title: The MasterCard Conversation Suite  
Agency: PRIME Research  
Client Name: MasterCard

### Evaluation of Success/Results/ROI

Since implementing the Conversation Suite in May 2012, MasterCard has dominated the emerging payments dialogue, driving a **400% increase in online engagement within three months** of the platform's use.

Conversation Suite data and insights aid in execution of communications campaigns in real time – whether in identifying and responding to an issue in real time or in facilitating creative opportunities to position the brand with media, influencers and consumers alike. At the 2012 CTIA trade show, product teams partnered with Communications to monitor and instantly respond to questions relating to MasterCard announcements, reinforcing messaging, clarifying misconceptions and refining positioning while also achieving **68% share of conversation** among the company's competitor set. The press conference was live-streamed into the Conversation Suite to keep employees informed of developments while also tracking competitor announcements and dialogue, allowing MasterCard to enter into the conversation with its perspective.

The physical Conversation Suite has become a coveted destination for MasterCard employees, heightening awareness of the importance of the millions of online conversations shaping the brand and industry and serving as a flexible space for brainstorming and information sharing. The Conversation Suite has helped to evolve the company culture to be more open and collaborative, demonstrated best-in-class engagement within the industry and met the challenge of transforming MasterCard into a more consumer-focused, aware and insights-led technology payments company.