



# Social data guides BET Networks' marketing strategy.

Television company leverages viewer insights from Adobe Social to shape marketing content and increase social engagement.



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*JP Lespinasse, senior director of social media, BET*



## SOLUTION

Adobe Social solution within Adobe Marketing Cloud

## RESULTS



### MEANINGFUL DATA

Gather valuable, real-time insights from audience to shape content



### ONGOING MONITORING

Study data on a continuous basis for trends and actionable insights



### ADAPT RAPIDLY

Modify promotional strategy based on audience feedback



### ENHANCE ENGAGEMENT

Improved audience participation with multi-screen strategy

## BET

Established in 1980

Viewership: Over 98 million households

Washington, D.C.

[www.bet.com](http://www.bet.com)

## CHALLENGES

- Capturing holistic social data to provide valuable insight into content strategy
- Analyzing social data on an ongoing basis to identify trends
- Adapting marketing strategies in real time based on quantifiable metrics

## The evolution of a network

Black Entertainment Television (BET) is a dominant African-American consumer brand with a diverse group of business extensions. Its businesses include BET.com, a leading Internet destination for Black entertainment, music, culture, and news; CENTRIC, a 24-hour entertainment network targeting the 25- to 54-year-old African American audience; as well as BET Digital Networks, BET Gospel, BET Hip Hop, BET Home Entertainment, and many other popular services.

With its broad reach and rich offerings, BET has evolved since its launch in 1980 into one of the top 20 ad-supported cable networks in the United States and the top network in primetime among African Americans. Now an international channel that can also be viewed from Canada, the Caribbean, the United Kingdom, and sub-Saharan Africa, BET features a mix of both original and independently produced television content, as well as reality shows and music programming.

The company's flagship programming, such as *The Game* and *106 & Park*, continues to draw target demographics to the network; but new shows are crucial to attracting new viewers. For example, *Being Mary Jane*, launched in January 2014, attracted more than four million viewers with the first of eight scheduled episodes.

"As a television network, ratings underpin our business," says JP Lespinasse, senior director of social media at BET. "But we also have a robust digital presence that keeps our audiences engaged with the BET brand and shows when they are away from their televisions."

The company's social footprint includes more than 4.5 million Facebook fans and nearly 1.5 million Twitter followers. For BET social marketers, the challenge is tapping into that social following to gain real-time insights into what BET fans are talking about during and after BET programs. Through social engagement, the company saw an opportunity to shape conversations to drive additional viewership.

## Blending traditional with social TV viewing habits

BET partnered with Adobe Professional Services to implement Adobe Social, part of Adobe Marketing Cloud, and integrate sophisticated social listening capabilities into its social strategies. Using the Adobe solution, the broadcaster can measure and compare show-related social mentions against ratings and identify topics BET viewers are passionate about. In following with this strategy, Lespinasse used Adobe Social to track conversations across social platforms about individual show characters during the second episode of *Being Mary Jane*. What he discovered was a surprise.



“Adobe Social helped uncover a definite correlation between heightened social media activity and increased viewership. It was something we always thought was true—now we have the data to back it up.”

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“The character generating the second-highest level of buzz on Twitter after Mary Jane was Avery, a supporting character that would only appear in four episodes during the season,” says Lespinasse. “We never anticipated this.”

Although filming was complete, as a result of the data collected and analyzed using Adobe Social, BET realized that her character resonated with viewers. In turn, BET adjusted its promotional strategy for the remainder of the season to feature Avery in 10- and 15-second advertising clips. Lespinasse and his team also altered their social media strategy to include more memes with Avery.

“With Adobe Social, we can analyze social data in real time, enabling us to effect change immediately and deliver a positive return on investment,” continues Lespinasse. “We can shape our business in virtually limitless ways—from marketing and promotions to creative content.”

Adobe Social also helped Lespinasse monitor and identify a significant level of conversation on Twitter around the actress who plays Avery on the show. Based on this data, BET recruited her to live Tweet during episodes in which she was featured, resulting in noticeable spikes in engagement. Most importantly, overall ratings increased during the last two weeks of the show.

“We monitored what was being said on social channels and served up more of the character that people wanted to create conversations around,” says Lespinasse. “Adobe Social helped uncover a definite correlation between heightened social media activity and increased viewership. It was something we always thought was true—now we have the data to back it up.”

### **Driving results and innovation**

As *Being Mary Jane* heads into its second season, Lespinasse and his team are well equipped to connect the dots between social interactions and business results. And while the media and entertainment industry is still fairly traditional in its approach to measuring success, Lespinasse sees this evolving at BET, thanks to data collected and analyzed with Adobe Social.

“We are now beginning to consider actors’ social footprint in casting decisions,” explains Lespinasse. “Our producers are becoming more aware of the power of social, and how social conversations can draw in audiences, creating a level of engagement that just wasn’t possible before. Adobe Social is powering those insights.”

For *Being Mary Jane* producers, a startling finding was that the social performance of a character may whole-heartedly determine the investment they will make in future castings. It will also help them rethink how and if they incorporate a specific character into the show.

## SOLUTION AT A GLANCE

- Adobe Marketing Cloud, including the Adobe Social solution. Capabilities used include:
  - Listening and moderation
  - Social analytics

Similar early wins generated using data from Adobe Social encouraged creative staff, BET event producers, and digital marketers to prioritize social as part of their content and engagement strategies. One such example is the BET Experience, for which event producers considered the social following of who they booked for the event. BET is also considering new ways to integrate social content directly into programs to drive online conversations. The network's emphasis on social has prompted actors to take notice, encouraging them to engage audiences via social media and build their own social profiles.

"For any business, you can't calculate ROI without the data," says Lespinasse. "Adobe Social helps us not only measure social interactions, but also monetize those activities and provide a real business case behind social engagement."

### For more information

[www.adobe.com/solutions/social-marketing.html](http://www.adobe.com/solutions/social-marketing.html)



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