

Unlock deeper, unconscious truths using unstructured data

Fuel growth through more effective
strategy and planning with strat7.ai





Introduction

People live their lives online interacting with each other, expressing their identity and telling the world their opinions, experiences and beliefs in their own unfettered language through myriad channels and media. Unstructured data like text, video, audio and social media posts accounts for 80 - 90% of all data. ([Forbes](#)).

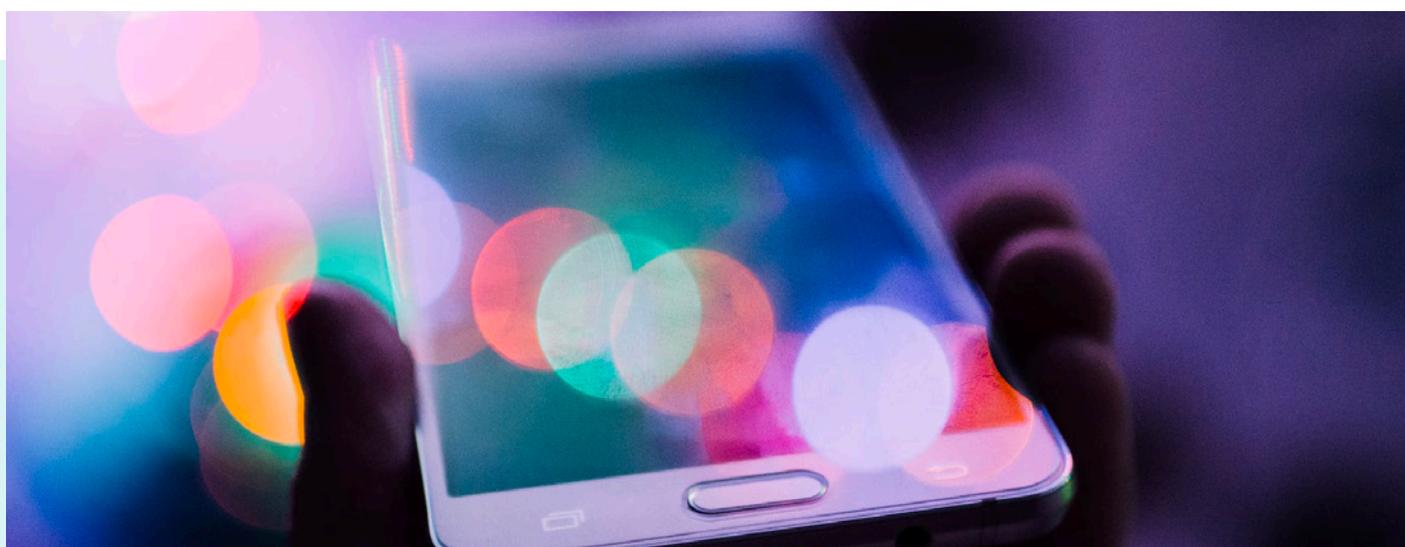
Businesses that incorporate unstructured data into their understanding of markets, categories, consumers and touchpoints have the insight and language to make more effective strategic and tactical choices. **While unstructured data is best used alongside other market research techniques, it can be done at a scale that's beyond traditional methods.**

Despite the advantages, only 18% of organisations say they're currently able to take advantage of their unstructured data ([Deloitte, 2019](#)). The inherent complexity of collecting and processing data at scale and (more importantly) structuring outputs and making them actionable prohibits companies from investing in their best source of unadulterated truth and opportunity.

Interested? Read on to get acquainted with strat7.ai, the answer to easier and more cost-effective unstructured data analysis.

Contents

Why unstructured data is important	03
What holds most companies back?	04
Bringing structure to unstructured data using strat7.ai	05
How to apply strat7.ai	07
Our top-to-bottom framework for solving business problems	08
How do clients benefit from strat7.ai?	13
Further detail: Our established analytical approach	15
What we're developing for our clients	17



Why unstructured data is important

One reason is perspective. Combining different data sources adds multiple perspectives, creating a more 360 view of any situation, which is critical to making decisions with confidence. See our [hybrid analytics eBook](#) for further consideration.

As an example, your customer database can help you detect 'high-value' customers and churn risk, but it doesn't help you understand 'the whys' - **customers' motivations, loyalty and occasions**. Also, your own databases don't give you access to insight into the wider market opportunity, potentially leading to inaccurate assumptions.

Another reason is channel engagement. Consider the sheer size of online interactions. Over 90% of customers who make online purchases said online reviews influence their purchase decisions. ([Dimensional Research, 2020](#)). Meanwhile, 9 in 10 customers say they visit a brand's website after following them on social media. ([Sprout Social, 2020](#)).

Online is fast becoming the natural environment for understanding how consumers make decisions, the journeys they take and what influences them.

What holds most companies back?

There are two dominant approaches to unstructured data analysis, neither of which is ideal.

01. The 'top down' approach

This approach usually involves paying for an off-the-shelf self-service dashboard or building a bespoke solution internally. The goal is to generate a centralised 'top-down' view of the world by collecting and visualising data related to your business.

But many of these dashboards lack actionable insight and aren't tied coherently to business goals or questions.

For example, having instant access to the top trending hashtags and keywords related to your business is useful but it often fails to answer the "so what?".

02. The 'bottom up' approach

The second approach is more actionable. It involves reading lots of individual posts and reviews, contextualising the consumer experiences from the 'bottom up'.

But, unless you're a small business or have massive resources, **it's impossible to process the volume of inputs, extrapolate the meaningful themes and serve up actionable insight.**

What's needed is rich, powerful data analysis that fits somewhere in the middle of these two approaches. A solution that provides top-down structure, built around the core business questions you need to answer, and bottom-up depth and contextualisation.

Bringing structure to unstructured data using strat7.ai

Rather than wading through masses of unstructured text at random, strat7.ai absorbs, structures and quantifies conversations to tell powerful data-driven stories that inform business decisions.



1. Designed for your core questions

strat7.ai delivers **bespoke analysis to specific business questions**.

Our tools are often more effective than 'off-the-shelf' text analytics solutions because the analysis is always focused around your core question(s). We start by building an issue tree with you, which breaks down your core question(s) in a systematic way. This provides the specificity you need to make decisions that are uniquely relevant to your business.

2. Collecting the 'right' data for your questions

We work closely with your insight, marketing and data teams to understand exactly what data sources, markets and competitors to collect data from. strat7.ai **facilitates rapid analysis of many online data sources by including social platforms, review sites, forums, blogs and expert opinions**. It can also ingest your own data such as customer feedback, behavioural data, sales data and socio-demographic data.

3. Operating at scale

Unlike primary research, **it doesn't cost extra** to collect data in different languages and across markets. And we're able to collect **100,000s of data points at speed** (in days and weeks rather than weeks and months).

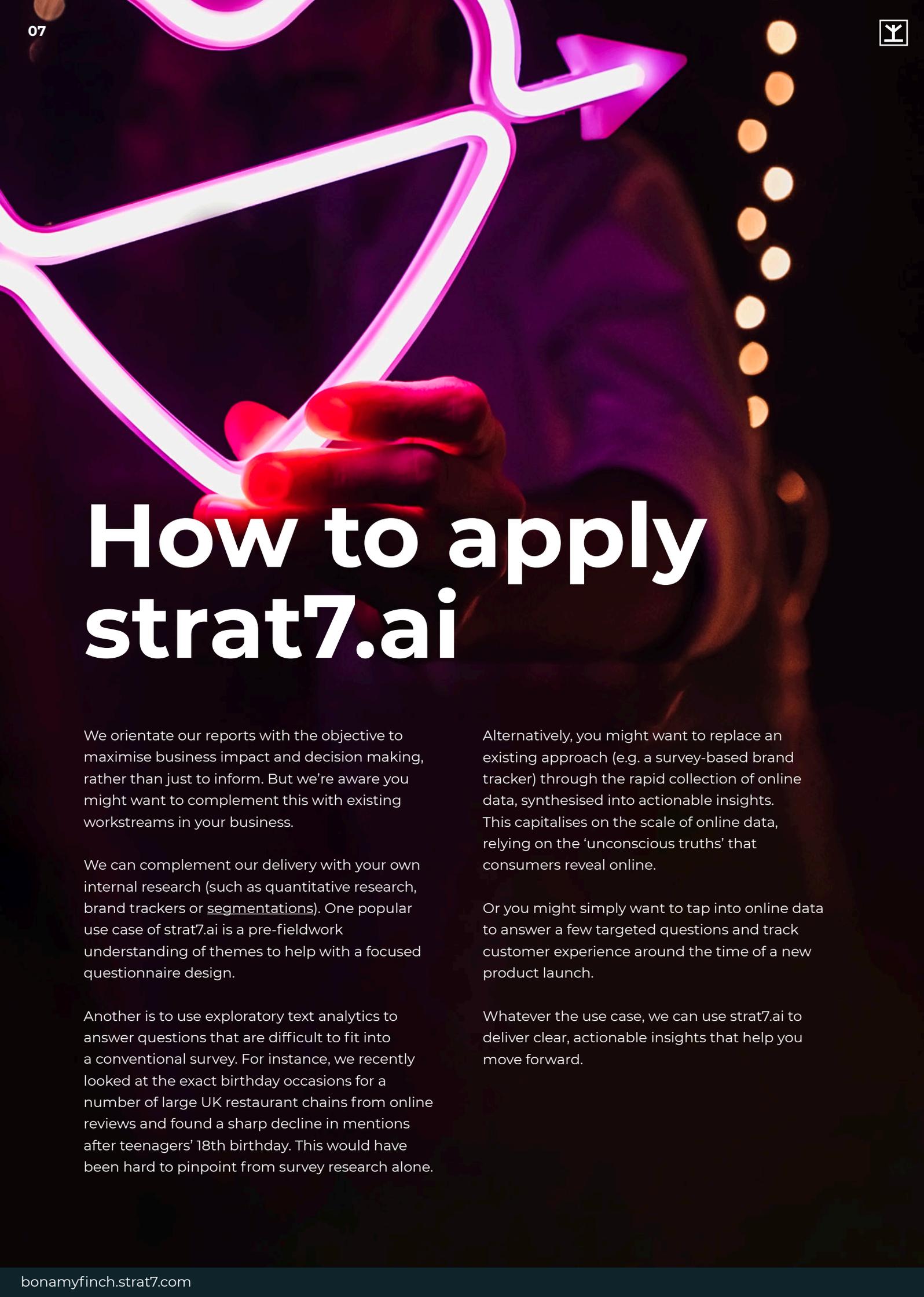
While scale is good, it's also important to focus on analysing **good quality data**. Through experience, we've developed a range of techniques to eliminate 'noisy' data - including potential fake reviews, bot activity and posts which have little relevance to your business questions.

4. Actionable business intelligence

Our machine learning technology automates tasks that can't be performed by human analysts (e.g. tagging every review with a topic or labelling every review with an emotion). But we don't just rely on algorithms alone to deliver these insights, like most platforms. Our team of customer, culture and brand experts **apply human understanding to the findings**, tailoring them to your business question. It's this combination of technology and expert analytics that results in valuable business intelligence.

5. Communicating with impact

By working closely with you, our team can make sure that our strat7.ai solutions deliver the most impact for the business. The data collection and processing and packaging of it, married with the rigour of understanding the specific business questions you need to answer, is what makes our strat7.ai approach unique. strat7.ai is different from other online platforms because the analysis comes from deep data exploration, rather than superficial insights. It harnesses the power of online to answer your real-world business question.



How to apply strat7.ai

We orientate our reports with the objective to maximise business impact and decision making, rather than just to inform. But we're aware you might want to complement this with existing workstreams in your business.

We can complement our delivery with your own internal research (such as quantitative research, brand trackers or segmentations). One popular use case of strat7.ai is a pre-fieldwork understanding of themes to help with a focused questionnaire design.

Another is to use exploratory text analytics to answer questions that are difficult to fit into a conventional survey. For instance, we recently looked at the exact birthday occasions for a number of large UK restaurant chains from online reviews and found a sharp decline in mentions after teenagers' 18th birthday. This would have been hard to pinpoint from survey research alone.

Alternatively, you might want to replace an existing approach (e.g. a survey-based brand tracker) through the rapid collection of online data, synthesised into actionable insights. This capitalises on the scale of online data, relying on the 'unconscious truths' that consumers reveal online.

Or you might simply want to tap into online data to answer a few targeted questions and track customer experience around the time of a new product launch.

Whatever the use case, we can use strat7.ai to deliver clear, actionable insights that help you move forward.

Our top-to-bottom framework for solving business problems



Our strat7.ai funnel framework matches your business questions to the right type of analysis, from big picture contextual understanding to evaluating the optimal tactical response to a sudden event.



Context

strat7.ai uncovers culture, category and market trends shaping consumer behaviour — foundational insight that provides context for what to do and why. Data is structured around underlying dimensions and sub-dimensions, creating a framework to organise, understand and size what's most important.

When it comes to context, strat7.ai can help you answer:

- What are the dimensions that underpin a culture, category or market?
- What is the size of the relationship people have to these dimensions? What is growing, dominant and at saturation?
- What can online conversations tell us about an industry outlook to support business planning?

Also, depending on the exact business questions you have, the data collection and analysis can be accessed ad hoc or on a continuous basis, focus on the here and now or help brands future proof.

Crowd Signals, STRAT7 Crowd DNA's proprietary solution, powered by strat7.ai tracks and visualises cultural change over time.

It is structured around a bespoke taxonomy of nine fundamentals of modern life - each evidencing a macro culture shift, five to eight micro trends and thousands of real time cultural signals, from slow to fast. Each culture shift looks ahead five or more years; the micro trends predict change over two to three years; signals are live indicators of real time change.

Strategy

For projects with a strategic objective, strat7.ai provides a lens to explore themes and test hypotheses, helping to make evidence-based decisions.

When it comes to strategy, strat7.ai can help you answer:

- What should I focus on to help get, grow and keep customers?
- What are the big growth areas that we're not currently taking advantage of?
- What are the different occasions across my customer base and wider market?
- What are the key touchpoints in the customer journey?
- What are the main drivers in a topic of conversation?
- Where are the key opportunities?

Here's an example of strat7.ai assisting with strategy:

Helping a leading UK restaurant chain pinpoint an area for growth

We recently helped a restaurant chain understand key **strengths, weaknesses and customer occasions** to help with its brand strategy using strat7.ai.

We first collected 20,000 online posts around restaurant habits in the UK and applied topic modelling to identify eight core themes. We then collected bespoke data for the restaurant and a few predefined competitors to benchmark against these eight themes and develop rich insights. This helped us identify that the restaurant chain:

- Was overperforming in areas that were known to drive consideration and visits
- Was performing better in other areas than previously thought – a finding that was corroborated by further primary research
- Was excelling in certain visit occasions. However, these were impacting its ability to drive relevance among a new target that was better aligned with its future brand vision

By mining through the wealth of online conversations, we were also able to highlight key qualities that the brand stood for vs. its competitive set. This allowed us to pinpoint which elements of its proposition the chain would need to dial up in order to deliver against its refreshed strategy.

So what?

We triangulated the insights from this work with qualitative and quantitative research to develop a robust set of strategic recommendation that they were able to directly incorporate into a broader business plan. Including:

- Which customer groups had both growth potential and were closely aligned to the new brand vision
- Which occasions these audiences should be targeted on to maximise revenue potential
- Specific recommendations on proposition elements

Planning

strat7.ai helps you understand 'how to win'. It can uncover information on your brand's relative strengths, weaknesses and areas of growth potential. Similar analysis can be quickly carried out for competitors, helping you benchmark performance and focus your resources on areas of a clear competitive advantage.

When it comes to planning, strat7.ai can help you answer:

- What are our core strengths vs. competitors?
- Where have we recently improved? Where have we regressed?
- What are our main weaknesses when it comes to our products, services and customer experiences?
- How are we performing on our key performance indicators (KPIs)?
- What distinctive language is being used to describe my brand and product portfolio?
- What can we learn from our competitors' activities?
- Where are we falling behind the competition?
- How are we talked about in the same conversation as our competitors?
- How does my brand stand out?

This approach can also analyse the 'state of the market' periodically (e.g. every six months) to detect things like shifts in consumer behaviour and sentiment.

Below is an example of strat7.ai being used to assist with planning, helping a brand understand its current weaknesses and areas of growth potential.

Improving the customer experience for a headphone manufacturer

We recently used [hybrid analytics](#) and strat7.ai to help a headphone manufacturer understand areas for improvement to boost customer experiences. We used our technology to web scrape and structure review data (over 200,000 reviews across 30 different brands).

So what?

We found that the brand's aesthetic design resonated with customers, with 'vintage style' and 'old school' key differentiating words. This was recommended as a KPI to track and capitalise on in future marketing campaigns.

The brand's headphone battery life was found to have worsened over time (across more than one product), especially when compared to the market average.

The recommendation was to commit more R&D to extending battery life and adjust future product descriptions to make more realistic battery life promises.

Moreover, the headphones seemed to have compatibility issues with a specific smartphone brand. We suggested that addressing this issue could help to significantly boost the consumer experience and improve credibility.



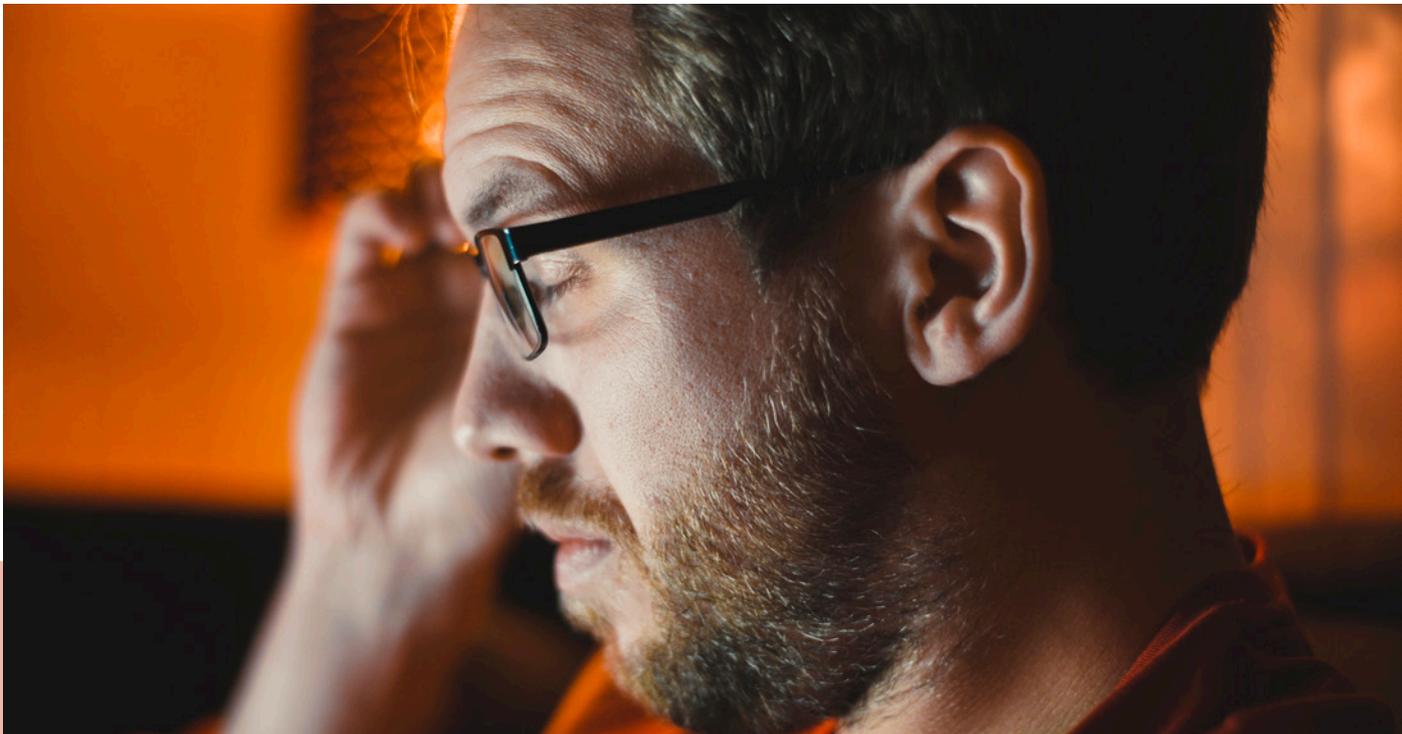
Tactics

strat7.ai helps brands understand the context behind sudden events and what the optimal response could be. For instance, established financial services companies are increasingly interested in how blockchain and cryptocurrencies may affect their business model in the next 12 months. strat7.ai can help clients in this industry (and others seeking similar insights around sudden events) understand these kinds of trends to help with tactical planning.

When it comes to tactics, strat7.ai can help you answer:

- How should we respond to this sudden market development?
- How worried/concerned/excited should we be about this latest trend?
- What are the product or service descriptions that will give us a competitive edge?
- How have consumers responded to new product releases?
- What is their emotional attachment to our brand and products?

We also find that projects which start with a context, planning or strategy lens often have tactical recommendations which are specific in their guidance, as with the headphone manufacturer example.



How do clients benefit from strat7.ai?

What's the overarching benefit of using strat7.ai?
Bespoke answers to bespoke questions, harnessing the power of online to deliver insight that is truly representative of what people think, feel and do. Let's take a look at the specific benefits strat7.ai unlocks for our clients.



1. Sharpened competitive edge

We quantitatively **benchmark the performance of your business (and product portfolio) against your competitors** by collecting data across many brands in your market. Since we have access to millions of conversations and are skilled at eliminating 'noise' from the data, these results are more robust than methods which rely on smaller sample sizes, providing deeper and more actionable insights.



2. Improved marketing effectiveness

We 'data mine' conversations to **find the unique key phrases used by customers** to describe your brands or products in different contexts – something that's virtually impossible to do manually. This boosts marketing intelligence, helping you craft messages that resonate with customers and prospects.



3. Saved time and money

We collect data at speed and at a fraction of the time of primary research. This means strat7.ai is well suited to dovetail established survey-based projects, as well as deliver on standalone projects with relatively quick timelines. And with rapid data collection comes greater cost efficiency, boosting the return on your investment.



4. Unlocked, open-ended, untapped insights

strat7.ai excels in uncovering insights to questions that you haven't explicitly defined. These 'untapped insights' or 'unknown knowns' **can only be revealed through deep, structured exploration of online conversations.** While you can still set research questions in the usual way, strat7.ai can find the answers without the need for a prescriptive survey questionnaire.

Further Detail: Our established analytical approach

We've become skilled practitioners in analysing unstructured data through numerous projects spanning **context, strategy, planning** and **tactics**. Valuable outcomes for your business are guaranteed thanks to our comprehensive, end-to-end approach. Let's take a closer look at what this entails.





Stage 1

We uncover your underlying business challenges and the core questions you're seeking to answer through a dedicated workshop with your key stakeholders. This points us towards the type of data to collect (e.g. markets, languages, data sources and timeframe), helping us focus on actionable insights.

Once the data is collected, we apply rules to filter out 'noise' in reviews and social posts — such as near duplicates, suspected bot activity or very short reviews. The result is **clear informational content**. These filters are typically missing in self-service dashboards and 'bottom up' approaches.



Stage 2

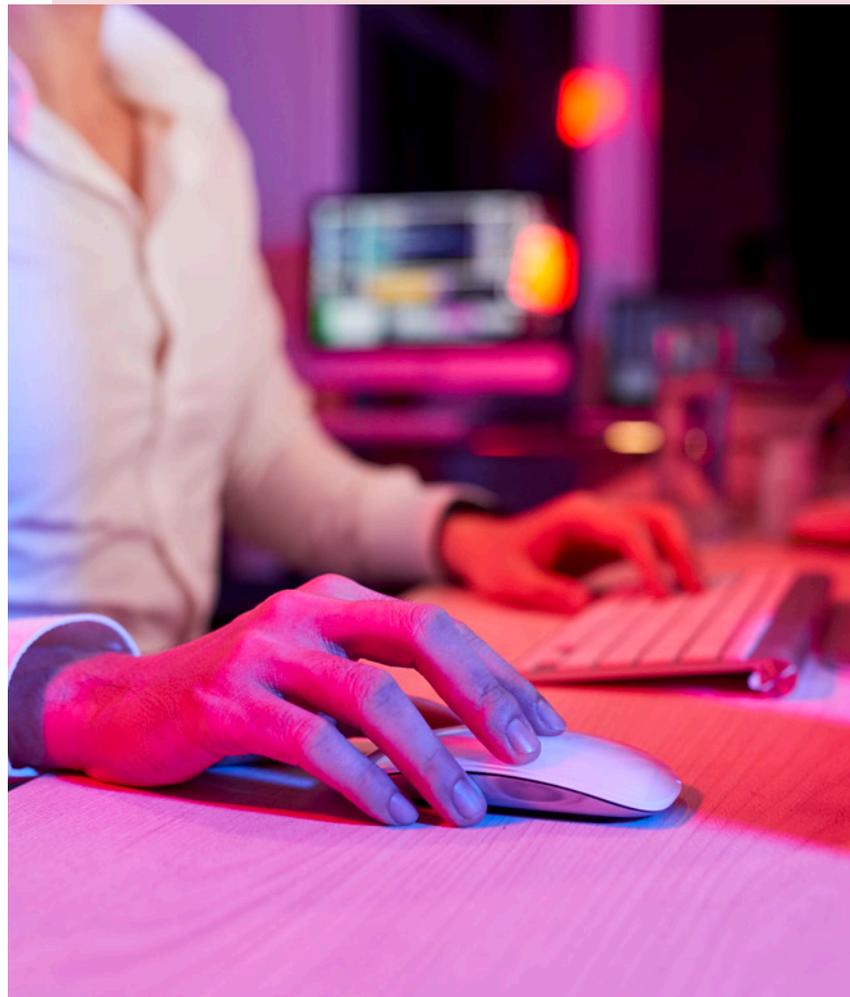
We use a set of unsupervised machine learning (ML) techniques called topic modelling to break down text conversations into groups — similar to how statistical algorithms cluster behavioural and survey data, using factor analysis. The models we use can tag both historical and future data.

Through expert interpretation, we balance the output from our ML technology with the need to create **distinct, interpretable and memorable** topics to track. We work collaboratively with our clients to make sure the final topics are aligned to business goals. And with our flexible approach, it's possible to tag conversations with more than one topic.



Stage 3

We present the results of our findings, leading with powerful 'top down' insights first. Then we follow with confirmatory 'bottom up' evidence, backing up our findings with individual user reviews and posts. **Many companies try to do this the other way around and then can't cope with analysing the sheer volume of data.** This leads to a lack of structure, resulting in disappointing outcomes and wasted effort.



What we're developing for our clients

With strat7.ai, we're always looking out for new and creative ways to solve your data challenges and level up your insights. These are things our data scientists have developed in the past six months, based on feedback from our clients.



Emotion detection

Assisted by Google's GoEmotions dataset, we recently trained a bespoke model to accurately label eight emotions. For instance, we can accurately assess if the main emotion in a positive social post or review exhibits 'joy', 'trust', 'anticipation' or 'surprise'. This helps us draw out greater context within unstructured data.



'Unique phrase' data mining

Lots of text analysis focuses on keywords and phrases with the highest frequency or growth. But we've developed data mining methods to find the unique phrases associated with your brand or product within each topic, emotion and market. So, you know exactly what customers are saying about your business and can use the voice of the customer in your marketing.



Sarcasm detection

Our in-house sarcasm detection algorithm can identify tweets and other text-based posts which shouldn't be assigned a sentiment label (sentiment algorithms are often confounded by ironic or sarcastic comments). This makes sure that the insights you get from text analysis are an accurate representation of what people really think about your brand, product or service.



Interactive dashboards

Our default output is to deliver compelling insight reports. But we can also build bespoke, interactive dashboards, especially for projects with very high data volumes and a clear need to track themes over time. These dashboards are designed to specification by working closely with you, rather than a 'one size fits all' software as service (SaaS) platform.



Image analytics

As well as specialising in text analytics, we're developing an advanced image analytics capability. We can extract information from public images related to your brand including:

- Demographics
- Emotions
- Logos
- Human actions
- Colours

This will further enrich the insights gathered from your unstructured data, providing even greater marketing intelligence for effective customer engagement.



Harness the power of unstructured data with strat7.ai

This ebook was written by Hasdeep Sethi (STRAT7 Bonamy Finch) and Jonathan Stone (STRAT7 Incite).

Bonamy Finch is the advanced analytics company within the STRAT7 group, leading on the technical development of strat7.ai. We combine data science, advanced analytics and bespoke research to help brands get, grow and keep profitable customers.

Incite is an award winning human-centric Research and Strategic Planning agency, commercially focused on unlocking opportunities, driving business strategy and improving decision making.

Find out more

strat7.com/strat7-ai
bonamyfinch.strat7.com
info@bonamyfinch.com

STRAT7
BonamyFinch 

Coveham House, Downside Bridge Road,
Cobham, Surrey, KT11 3EP

bonamyfinch.strat7.com
info@bonamyfinch.com
+44 (0)1932 808295

STRAT7
incite

11 Soho Street, London
W1D 3AD

incite-global.com
london@incite-global.com
+44 (0)20 8158 2093

