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# SOCIAL MEDIA BENCHMARK: WAVE ONE REPORT

How businesses are adapting to, investing in  
and drawing value from social media

March 2012

## FOREWORD

Do you know your fans from your followers? Your likes from your connections? How are you measuring? The Social Media Benchmark is a new, six-monthly study exploring how marketers are adapting to, investing in and getting value from social media. Produced by The Chartered Institute of Marketing and supported by Ipsos ASI and Bloomberg, our aim is to create the definitive guide to the changing role and potential of social media in business.

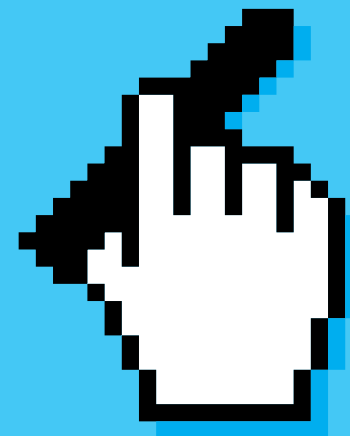
This ongoing research is groundbreaking, not only because it will build a picture of key trends over time, but because each wave of research will explore fresh themes. In this first wave, we focus on the use of Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and YouTube and investigate issues including skills, resourcing, risks, barriers and the future.

Other studies have got under the skin of what consumers are doing within social media – now it's time to discover how businesses are getting to grips with it. The results are the first colours in a pioneering portrait of this fast moving sphere that no marketer can afford to ignore.

Thomas Brown  
Head of Insights  
The Chartered Institute of Marketing

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“A pioneering  
portrait of social  
media that no  
marketer can  
afford to ignore”



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## WHO TOOK PART?

This inaugural survey was conducted over a four-week period among 1295 marketers, 64% of whom were based in the UK.

We experienced a rich mix across industry sectors, including B2B, B2C and B2B2C. We intentionally focused on a wide range of seniority – 26% of whom are practitioners, 38% managers and 36% heads of department and above – and we also ensured there was a balanced mix across national, multinational and global companies.

**1,295**  
respondents  
**64%**  
in the UK

**Wide range  
of seniority**  
26% practitioner  
38% manager  
36% head of  
department and  
above

**Rich mix  
across  
industry  
sectors**  
including B2B,  
B2C and B2B2C

**Balanced mix**  
across national,  
multinational and  
global companies

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

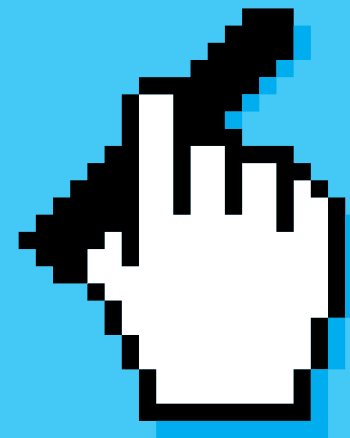
“You can’t presume to pump out your own marketing messages anymore. People expect something more,” says Allister Frost, a digital evangelist at Microsoft UK. Indeed, engaging with customers on their terms, not yours, is a prerequisite for building genuine and sustainable relationships using social media. The first wave of our research explores how well marketers are achieving this.

Here’s what we found:

- There is positive adoption overall, but too many marketers are still failing to embrace social media. With the exception of LinkedIn, B2C remains ahead of B2B.
- New content is posted regularly on most platforms, showing marketers’ understanding of the need to keep up the momentum on this 24/7 medium. LinkedIn is the least regularly updated.
- There is a lack of rationale around usage of social media by marketers and a consequent lack of effectiveness, revealing a need for marketers to go back to the drawing board in terms of creating a clear strategy.
- Social media management is inconsistent at best. Many companies have no social media champion and a worrying number of companies haven’t worked out what department it should sit in.

**“You can’t presume to pump out your own marketing messages anymore. People expect something more”**

**Says Allister Frost,  
a Digital Evangelist  
at Microsoft UK.**



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The full potential of social media is underestimated by marketers. The more obvious areas of value have been widely embraced, but marketers are missing great opportunities, particularly around customer insight and intelligence.
- Robust measurement is not evident. Given marketers' focus on measurement of offline activity and the fact that many of the online analytical tools are both free and easy to use, it is surprising that marketers are falling behind in this area.
- Organisations face potential vulnerability due to a significant skills deficit, with just 6% claiming that their skills and competences are at an optimal level. Half of businesses plan to address this by investing in training their current people.
- Investment is growing and quickly. Last year saw a significant increase, with even more companies planning to increase investment in the year ahead.
- There is lack of understanding from senior management, with only a quarter of marketers saying that their senior management really understands why they are using social media. There is an urgent need for marketers to play an educational role.
- Reputational risk is underestimated. There are many examples that have hit the headlines of companies' social

media strategies backfiring spectacularly, yet marketers seem unaware of the dangers.

- The perceived barriers to getting value from social media don't match the actual obstacles as outlined in this report. This suggests that marketers need to give more attention to some of the very real hurdles that may be standing in the way of progress.
- Marketers see social media analytics, mobile apps and blogging as the next big areas in terms of investment. Proprietary online communities and hiring a social media agency are also considered significant, with Google+ for business prioritised by just 11% of marketers.

This report explores the deeper insights that these findings reveal. In other words, what is the real story behind the figures? Moreover, we talk to industry experts to look at what marketers can take away from the results. Or to put it another way, what practical things can marketers do to move forward in their journey towards gaining optimum value from social media?

In Spring 2012, we will come back to the key questions we cover in this report, along with some new ones. As such, this study will get even bigger and better as time goes on.

## SECTION 1: STATE OF THE NATION

### 1. WHO'S DOING WHAT?

How many businesses are using social media platforms?

How does this vary by industry or size?

### 2. WHEN IS NEW CONTENT POSTED?

How often is new content posted?

### 3. WHY ARE MARKETERS USING SOCIAL MEDIA?

How do marketers rate the effectiveness of their social media activities?

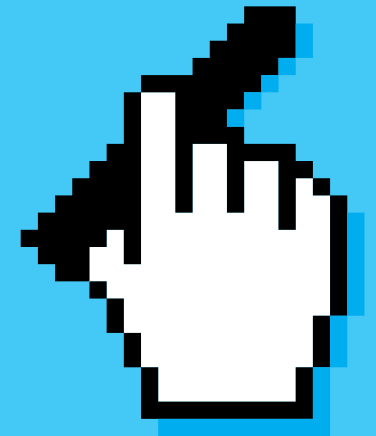
### 4. WHO OWNS SOCIAL MEDIA AND HOW IT'S MANAGED?

How is responsibility for social media resourced?

Who is managing the business's official account?

**“Some organisations still aren't convinced about the benefits to their business or sector; others don't know how to get started or worry that once they do, they won't be able to keep up the pace”**

**Says Russ Shaw,  
Non-executive  
Director at  
Game Group plc.**



## 1. WHO'S DOING WHAT?

Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn are all past the half-way tipping point in terms of business take-up, with only YouTube slower to secure widespread use.

If your glass is half full, you could conclude that the adoption of social media, and in particular these four platforms, is on its way to being mainstream. But sceptics might well ask why such a large proportion of organisations are still shying away.

Reasons include fear of the unknown, perceived lack of relevance and a poor

understanding of how to use the platform. "Some organisations still aren't convinced about the benefits to their business or sector; others don't know how to get started or worry that once they do, they won't be able to keep up the pace," says Russ Shaw, non-executive director at GAME Group Plc.

Is LinkedIn for personal or professional use? Is it really sensible to use Facebook and Twitter for customer service? Is YouTube really relevant for B2B? These are just some of the questions that today's marketers are asking.

## HOW MANY BUSINESSES ARE USING SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS?



Twitter

71%



Facebook

56%



LinkedIn

53%



YouTube

41%



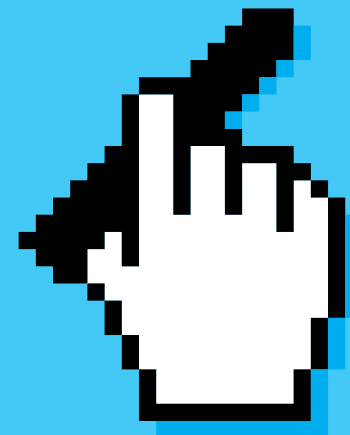
## 1. WHO'S DOING WHAT?

### So what should I do?

“There’s a race to catch up and it’s easy to feel daunted to the point of doing nothing at all,” warns Nick Eades, CMO of Psion Plc. “But remember it has never been a one-way conversation from brand to consumer.

In practical terms, just think of social media as a logical extension of what you already do. If you have 50 or 500 customers you’d normally invite to an event and show them a video, try it on YouTube. If you get hits from half or more of that number, that’s not a bad start.”

**Adoption of the core social media platforms is high – over 50% in all but one case. It’s positive to see these tools being embraced by so many businesses, but are they using them for the right reason and are they delivering value?**



## 1. WHO'S DOING WHAT?

B2C has always had the stronger foothold when it comes to social media and our findings show this continues to be the case. But B2B looks set to catch up. “I predict this is the next big wave of social media usage,” says Russ Shaw.

“Currently, B2B mainly uses it for networking and recruitment, but it’s time for companies to have more conversations with each other – a Twitter feed somewhere on the value chain between company and supplier; using Facebook to see what your suppliers are up to in order to generate new business opportunities, for example.”

Josh Graff, director of marketing solutions for EMEA at LinkedIn, has coined the phrase

“prosumer” to highlight the rise of professionals as consumers in their own right. “This is not a group marketers can afford to miss out on – they have a massive, and growing, presence online,” he says.

### So what should I do?

“Spend time looking and listening to what your competitors are doing on social media,” advises Dara Nasr, head of YouTube and Display at Google. “It will help you see where your business fits in the bigger picture. It could lead to you dipping a toe in the water if you haven’t already or getting more involved, and certainly more creative, if you’re already there.”

## HOW DOES THIS VARY BY INDUSTRY OR SIZE?



Most used of all platforms – **B2C somewhat ahead of B2B** but little variance by size of company



Significantly stronger amongst **B2C audiences**, but only slight variation between national and global/multinational companies



Significantly stronger among **B2B audiences** and smaller businesses



Least used but **significantly more used among B2C audiences** and by global/multinational companies

## 2. WHEN IS NEW CONTENT POSTED?

Social media is a 24/7 investment – it requires a level of continuous attention and engagement that doesn't typically accompany traditional media. We found a regularity and pace behind its use that suggests marketers not only understand this, but act on it.

The picture is most positive when it comes to the frequency with which Twitter and Facebook are used by marketers. But with almost half of businesses saying their activity on LinkedIn is either highly irregular or idle, there's room for improvement – not only from marketers' side but the platforms themselves. LinkedIn knows this – just last week, they launched Company Profiles, which provides the opportunity for companies to link together.

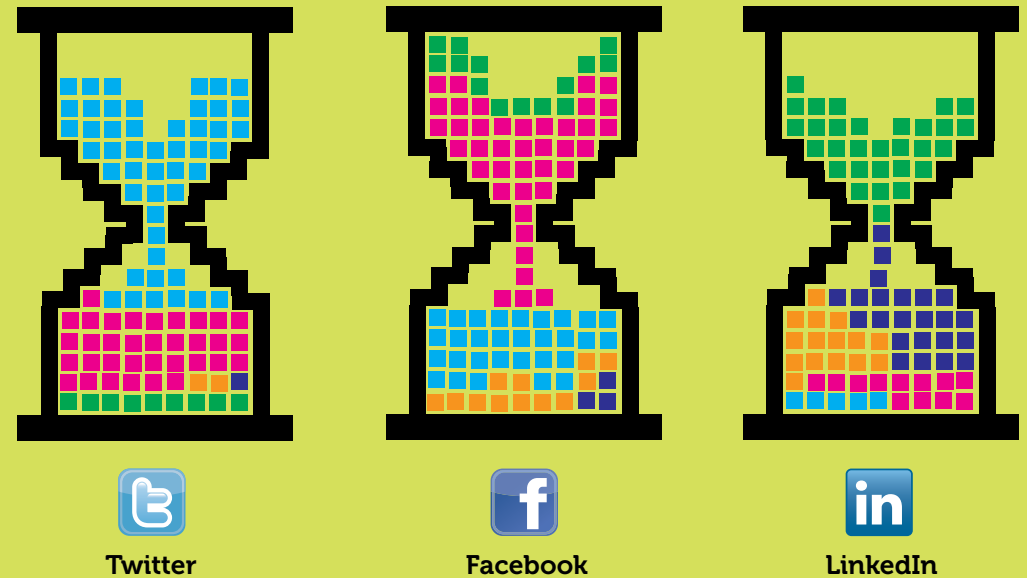
### So what should I do?

"If you've got a new product launch, you might want to post more regularly – but if you have nothing to say, don't say it," advises Russ Shaw. "So often, when I go onto my Twitter feeds, it's as if organisations can't stop and the impact they have over time is minimised. Be relevant."

Philips is an example of an organisation that sees regularity of posts as a critical issue not only for marketing, but for other departments such as product development. Josh Graff believes this is something marketers are only just starting to wake up to. "They regularly start discussions and ask challenging questions that have an impact across their whole business and indeed the wider sector," he says.

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## HOW OFTEN IS NEW CONTENT POSTED?



- Once a day or more
- Once a week to several times a week
- Once a month to several times a month
- Very irregular
- Not been used for a month or more

### 3. WHY ARE MARKETERS USING SOCIAL MEDIA?

These channels aren't exactly new, yet the rationale for using them is surprisingly opaque. Just doing things because you feel you ought to or because you thought you'd test them out won't cut it, particularly when you consider the extent of cuts to marketing budgets this year.

At best, low integration, wide experimentation and assumptions shine a light on a lack of strategy for most businesses in 2011 and highlight a priority for 2012. At worst, they can prove fatal for business. "Here's a chance to tap into word-of-mouth marketing – the nirvana of marketing," says Josh Graff. Indeed, social media transports us back to a time when the market was defined by people talking amongst themselves about a business's reputation. This was lost for a while as

the scale of organisations and markets outstripped the facility for consumers to come together, but actions as simple as 'like' 'recommend', 'share' and 'follow' mean consumers' conversations have now been reignited. If marketers don't join these conversations, they will lose the influence that is the core of their role.

#### So what should I do?

"Experimentation need not be taboo," says Tara Beard-Knowland, director at Ipsos ASI. "To a certain extent, we're all experimenting in these early years – the key is to make sure you have clear reasons for experimenting. Why am I doing it? What do I want to get out of it? The more focused you are, the more likely you are to be successful."

### WHY ARE MARKETERS USING SOCIAL MEDIA?



- 28% Just experimenting
- 27% Core part of campaign
- 18% Customers use it
- 12% It's expected
- 3% Don't know
- 2% Our competitors do
- 5% Other

### 3. WHY ARE MARKETERS USING SOCIAL MEDIA?

If someone told you they'd embarked on a business project with no clear objectives, then couldn't understand why the results were disappointing, you'd wonder if they were for real. Yet this is the broad picture when it comes to marketers using social media. Across every platform, more marketers are dissatisfied than satisfied with the effectiveness of their social media activities.

There's a desperate need to go back to marketing basics – what are your objectives? How exactly do you want to influence consumers? Couple this with learning exactly how the medium works and how to engage with it. Only then can you hope to truly understand how social media can help your brand and make your business grow.

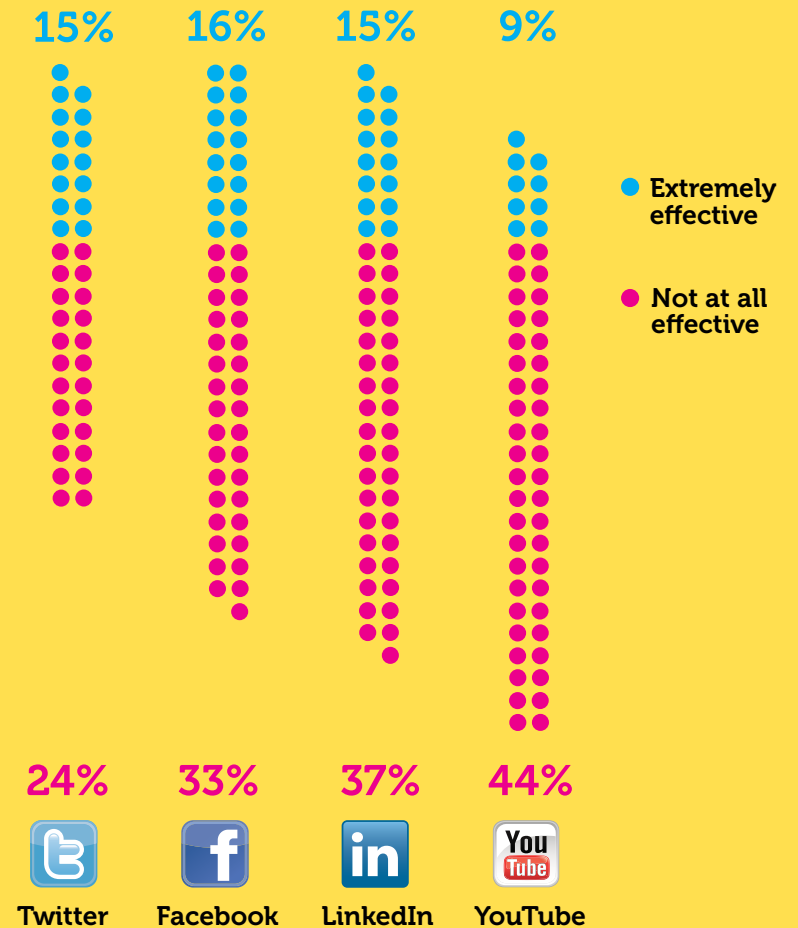
#### So what should I do?

YouTube comes out particularly badly. Marketers are missing a trick here, believes Nick Eades. "YouTube is one of the easiest mechanisms to put video out there and video is the future. If a written content tells 100 words and a picture tells 1,000 words, then video tells a million words."

Leona Shepherd, corporate marketing director for 3M UK Plc, agrees. "We have used YouTube very effectively to position our brand campaigns and our branding message. It has really strong measurable metrics and generates a lot of interest. So, for example, if we want to reach a wider audience within a particular segment with a more visionary message, YouTube will be our first port of call."

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### HOW DO MARKETERS RATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THEIR SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVITIES?



## 4. WHO OWNS SOCIAL MEDIA AND HOW IT'S MANAGED?

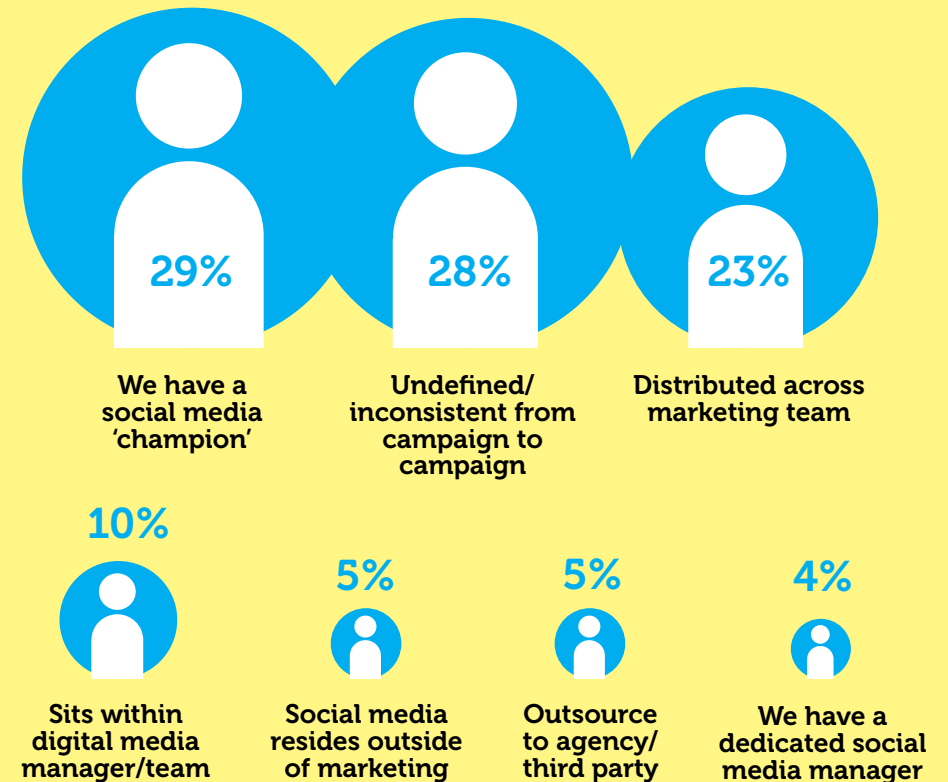
Is social media championed by a dedicated resource or embedded across the business? Our findings reveal high levels of variation and inconsistency, with relatively few organisations having a full-time social media manager. Surprisingly few outsource to a third party.

Social is for life, not just for Christmas. That means attempting to achieve your objectives in the short and long term, which in turn means it must be managed and kept fresh. It's hard to see how this can be done without someone championing it.

### What should I do?

“Ensure the responsibility lies with someone who has a passion for using the tool in business – not just the tool for its own sake,” says Leona Shepherd. “It’s too easy for businesses to get someone in to champion it who lives and breathes social media, but is surprisingly lost at sea when it comes to working out how it can further your cause, be it brand, marketing, customer experience or whatever else.”

## HOW IS RESPONSIBILITY FOR SOCIAL MEDIA RESOURCED?



## 4. WHO OWNS SOCIAL MEDIA AND HOW IT'S MANAGED?

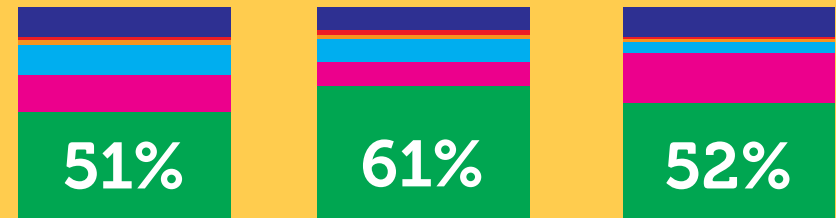
In over half of companies, marketing is leading social media activity. But in the other half, it's based somewhere else, with many companies still trying to work out whether this is primarily a tool for marketing, PR, sales or another department altogether.

There's a sense of organisations still finding their feet here, says Josh Graff. "This is an emerging medium and they don't have the luxury of decades of traditional advertising which always sat very naturally within the marketing department. Add to this the fact that it takes time to restructure departments, particularly when companies have tens of thousands of

people, and you can see how management of social media has become a sticking point for so many organisations."

There is no doubt that social media benefits from being managed by one particular department – although that does not mean that it should sit in a completely independent silo. "Social media belongs everywhere, but you need someone orchestrating it and trying to pull together a cohesive strategy. Only then does it have a hope of being embedded into the very fabric of the organisation," says Robert Harles, head of social media at Bloomberg.

## WHO'S MANAGING A BUSINESS'S OFFICIAL ACCOUNT?



- Marketing team
- Individuals
- PR team
- Third party
- Sales team
- Other

## 4. WHO OWNS SOCIAL MEDIA AND HOW IT'S MANAGED?

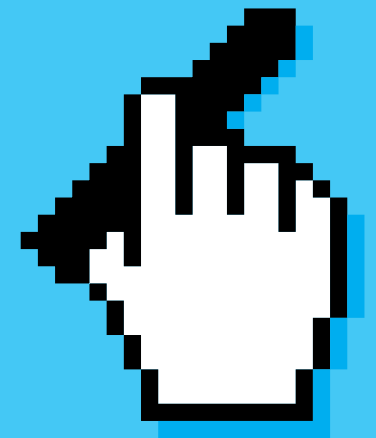
### What should I do?

“Don't lose sight of your primary objectives”, says Tara Beard-Knowland.

“So many companies put social media in a particular department, without really thinking it through. What do you want out of it? If it's building brand awareness, it makes sense to sit in marketing; if it's about 'softer' messaging, it might be better in PR.

If you are B2B and want to use it to make connections with key individuals, consider putting it in sales.”

**It's encouraging to see that the marketing function is co-ordinating social media activity in the majority of businesses, but this still leaves a risk: social media isn't something any one team can 'own'. Education and internal communication therefore become crucial.**



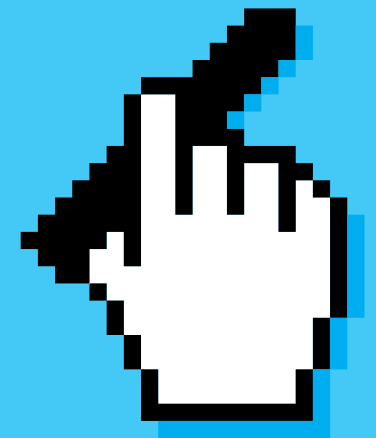


## SECTION 2: PROGRESS IMPACT AND OPPORTUNITY

5. Where do marketers see the value in social media?
6. How is social media being measured?
7. Are the right skills in place to get the job done?
8. How are organisations investing in social media?
9. What does senior management make of it?
10. Are there risks to reputation?
11. What are the barriers to getting value?
12. Looking ahead

“Seperate the wheat from the chaff by always coming back to the only question that really matters – how do you make this strategic to your business, not just a ‘nice to have’?”

Says Leona Shepherd  
Corporate Marketing Director  
3M UK plc



## 5. WHERE DO MARKETERS SEE THE VALUE IN SOCIAL MEDIA?

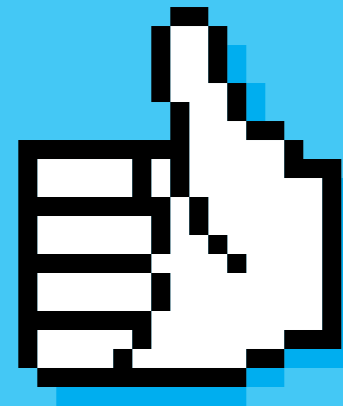
Are marketers valuing what's easy, as opposed to what counts? It's clear that they recognise some of the strongest areas of value, but understanding of the commercial potential of these tools – particularly its listening potential – appears lacking.

No wonder our research found that very few marketers believe they are getting maximum value from these channels. Clifford Chance used to be among them. "But then we stopped to ask ourselves, 'What's the best way to gain value from LinkedIn, our preferred social media platform?'" The question

was triggered by the realisation that a lot of our lawyers dabbled with it, but as a firm we hadn't worked out a clear strategy of how to benefit the most from it," says Karim Emara, CMO.

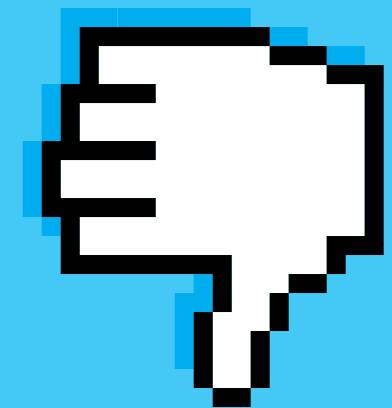
He settled on a three-pronged process. "First, set the boundaries – we have strict policies in place for people to know how to use it and how not to use it, building a clear separation between what people can do as an individual and as a firm. Second, monitor – we look widely at what people are saying about the firm, about our peers and indeed our clients.

## WHERE DO MARKETERS SEE THE VALUE IN SOCIAL MEDIA?



- **Supporting other aspects of a campaign.**
- **Regular communication/engagement with current customers.**
- **Adding value to reputation or profile.**

- **Prospecting for new customers.**
- **Generating enquiries.**
- **Competitor intelligence.**
- **Market research and intelligence.**



## 5. WHERE DO MARKETERS SEE THE VALUE IN SOCIAL MEDIA?

Thirdly, and most critically, we act – if someone is launching a new drink in Poland or a car firm is branching into a new area of business, we jump on the opportunity and ask if there's anything we can do to help. Now, my team – which covers clients such as Deutsche Bank, BMW and Procter & Gamble – are expected to use their social media dashboard on a daily basis to spot such opportunities.”

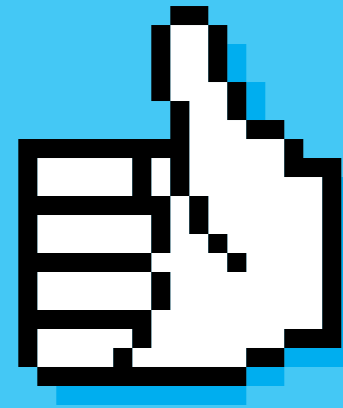
### So what should I do?

Too many organisations use social media as a bolt-on to a campaign or simply to prop up

or drive traffic to their website, then wonder why they can't spot the value. Use online platforms innovatively and you are far more likely to reap benefits.

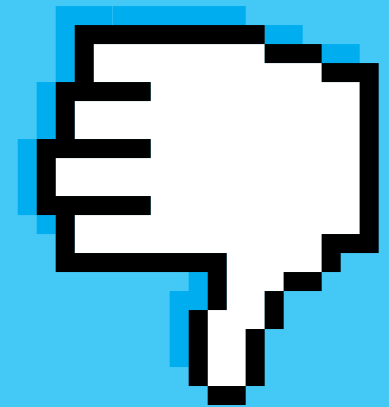
Take Vets – the UK's leading provider of out-of-hours emergency veterinary care – which worked on building a stand-alone, but segmented, community of pet owners (a kind of MumsNet for pet owners) using Facebook in May 2010. Although Vets is by no means a megabrand, it is responsible for creating the third most engaged Facebook Page in the UK.

## WHERE DO MARKETERS SEE THE VALUE IN SOCIAL MEDIA?



- **Supporting other aspects of a campaign.**
- **Regular communication/engagement with current customers.**
- **Adding value to reputation or profile.**

- **Prospecting for new customers.**
- **Generating enquiries.**
- **Competitor intelligence.**
- **Market research and intelligence.**



## 6. HOW IS SOCIAL MEDIA BEING MEASURED?

One of the much-praised benefits of social media channels – and indeed digital in general – is their innate measurability. The tools, many of which are free, provide sophisticated insight for companies of all sizes to get a pulse check. But we found a worrying number of organisations failing to take advantage of this rich suite of analytics.

“Measuring by click through is really quite antiquated, yet this is still the main tool used by many marketers,” says Josh Graff.

“Today, you can tell not only how many people are clicking but who is clicking too. Suddenly you have the ability to segment and target your audience and even create specific campaigns accordingly.”

When Robert Harles arrived at Bloomberg, nothing was measured. “But now we monitor and measure everything from how many people are engaging with us to how often information about us is shared. Most critically of all, we ask, ‘Of the X million people following us, who is the most valuable, what are they doing and how do we use it to turn leads into real sales?’”

## HOW ARE MARKETERS MEASURING SOCIAL MEDIA?



Twitter



Number of followers



Number of customer followers



Re-tweets



Mentions/comments



Sentiment analysis



CTRs



Enquiries via Twitter



Revenue via Twitter



LinkedIn



Number of group members



Number of customer group members



Posts



Mentions/comments



Sentiment analysis



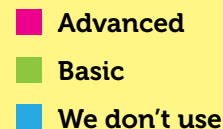
CTRs



Enquiries via LinkedIn



Revenue via LinkedIn



## 6. HOW IS SOCIAL MEDIA BEING MEASURED?

“I often hear people say social media is too embryonic to measure – I think that’s a cop-out,” he says. “It’s all well and good to build buzz and awareness, but if we can’t say, ‘We succeeded in these three dimensions, failed on these two, and here’s why, along with what we are going to do differently next time’, what’s the point, particularly given the pressure on marketers for ever greater accountability and proof of ROI?”

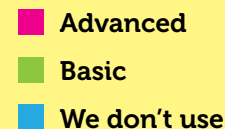
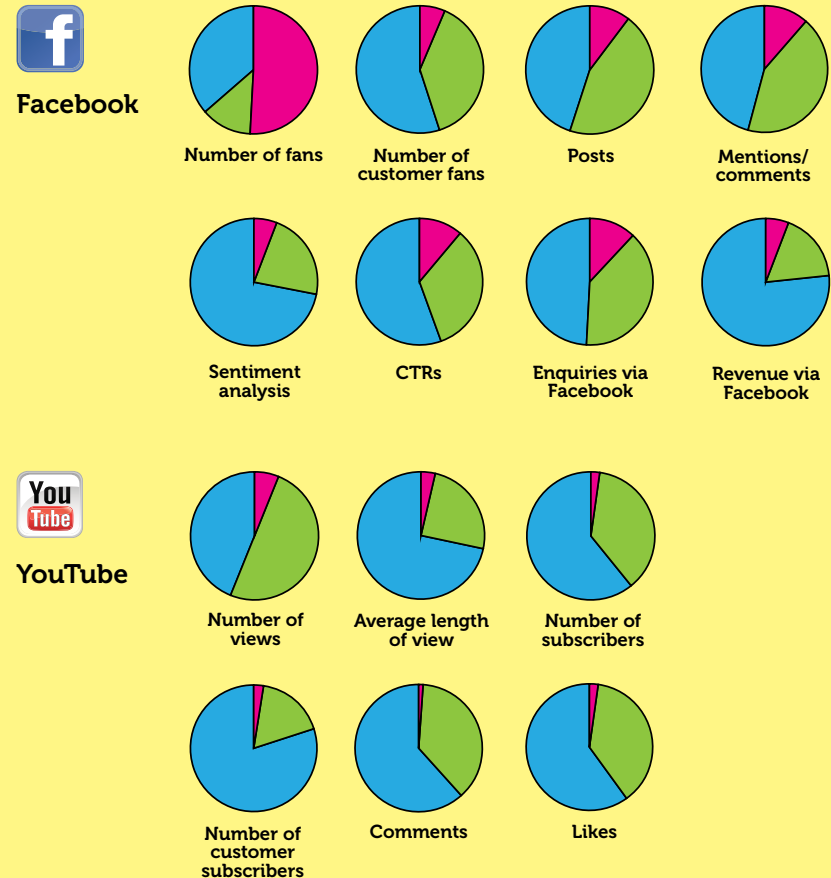
### So what should I do?

While it can be fascinating to get stuck into all the KPIs that reveal successes, what really

matters is the big picture. Focus only on measuring what you need to find out, if social media is helping you connect with your customers in a relevant way – a way that demonstrably encourages them to do business with you.

“Ask yourself not how many tweets or viewers did we get but, ‘How many did we act on?’ Likewise, if you put a promotion on your Facebook page and upload a video and watch it go viral, don’t just sit back and smile that it’s a job well done. Work out what it actually achieved in terms of sales,” agrees Karim Emera.

## HOW ARE MARKETERS MEASURING SOCIAL MEDIA?



## 7. ARE THE RIGHT SKILLS IN PLACE TO GET THE JOB DONE?

Few marketers would deny the importance of building the right talent and capability within their business, but this sentiment appears to be struggling when it comes to social media. Not only is there evidence of weakness of skills and capabilities across all sectors, but a worrying number of businesses have yet to determine how to address this.

This is 2011, not 2001. These channels have been around for some time, yet many companies are sceptical about their current ability to make the most of

them, with one in five companies admitting that they are leaving the responsibility of managing social media activities to people who are, at best, under-skilled and at worst, disinterested. As one person who blogged about our research put it, “It seems that the job description for most businesses is still, ‘Do you know how to tweet?’”

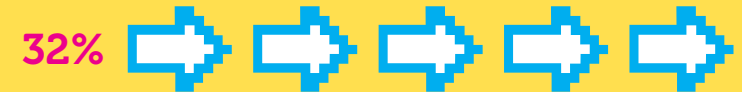
On the surface, it’s encouraging that around half of businesses intend to invest in some training for their current staff. But it will be interesting to see in our

## DO BUSINESSES HAVE THE RIGHT SKILLS IN PLACE TO LEVERAGE AND MANAGE SOCIAL MEDIA EFFECTIVELY IN 2012?

Our skills and competencies are optimal



We are average for our sector



We are improving but below industry average



We are fundamentally ill-equipped



Don't know



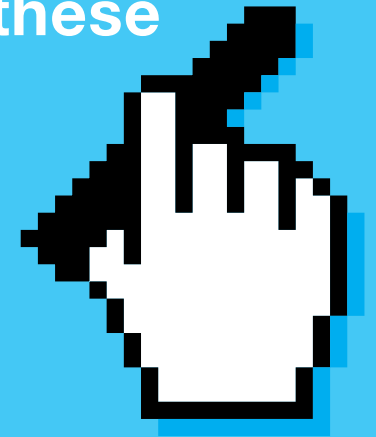
## 7. ARE THE RIGHT SKILLS IN PLACE TO GET THE JOB DONE?

next waves of research whether they really do achieve a greater skill set organically, given the current economic climate. A further alternative is to bring in 'digital natives', but this too has potential problems, not least the creation of silos within silos, causing companies to lack a joined-up approach to social media. There is also the possibility of outsourcing – although we found this is taken up by a surprisingly low number of companies.

What should I do? Waste no time in addressing the widespread skills gap that this survey has uncovered.

The gap between businesses that perform well on social media and those that don't will widen dramatically in 2012 and if companies fail to invest in the skills, time and training necessary, they will find themselves left even further behind in a medium that they themselves admit is here to stay.

**It's of significant concern that half of businesses acknowledge a fundamental lack of capability around social media, or that their skills are below their industry peers. In times of economic uncertainty, will these businesses have the time and resources to rectify this?**



## 8. HOW ARE ORGANISATIONS INVESTING IN SOCIAL MEDIA?

With over half of businesses having increased their investment in social media in 2011 and seven out of 10 planning to increase their investments in 2012, there's no doubt about the recognition of the potential of social media.

Couple this with marketers' lack of rationale for using social media, senior management's lack of buy-in and questions over the effectiveness of channels and the picture appears less rosy, however.

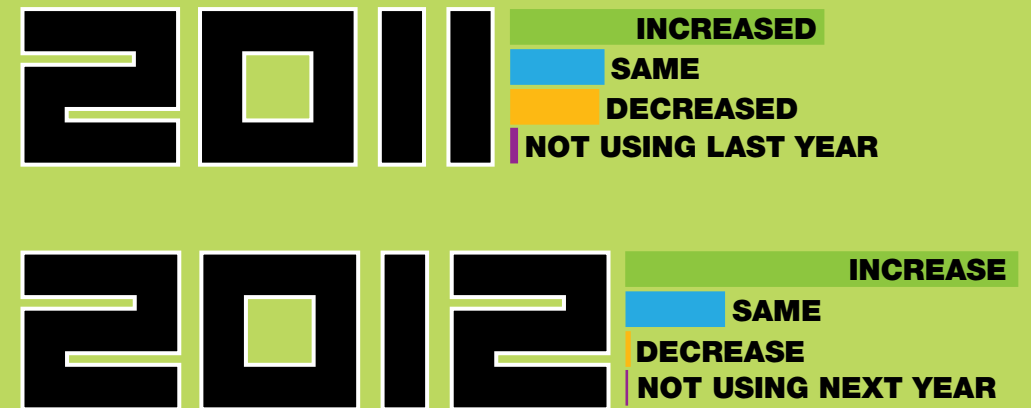
Given the current economic uncertainty, it's hard to see how investing in marketing heads and dollars without a good business case is sustainable.

"We are seeing incredible momentum in terms of investment, but if you can't justify exactly why you're doing this, it's possible that you might have some battles as 2013 approaches," says Josh Graff.

### What should I do?

Organisations clearly recognise where their customers and consumers are, but marketers need to consider the months leading up to the end of 2012 as critical in terms of backfilling a clear strategy around social media. If they don't introduce clarity into what they are doing soon, there's every possibility that the financial outlay will be scaled back.

## HOW DID COMPANIES INVEST IN SOCIAL MEDIA IN 2011? AND HOW DO THEY ANTICIPATE INVESTING IN 2012?





## 9. WHAT DOES SENIOR MANAGEMENT MAKE OF IT?

With just a quarter of marketers reporting that their senior management fully understands why they are using social media, that leaves the vast majority in a vulnerable situation. A quarter of marketers say those at the top don't get it at all.

But then again, should we be surprised? This research shows that yes, investment is growing rapidly, but metrics aren't in place to evaluate and guide activity, and many marketers are unclear about their objectives. Add to this the wide variance in how social media channels are managed and planned, and

the lack of clarity – and in some cases scepticism – among senior management becomes easier to understand.

“I've seen so many situations where senior management is ill informed and simply throws it all into the same bucket – blogging, YouTube, Facebook and more,” says Karim Emara. “For marketers, this is a simple educational process – telling them about the opportunities that exist, the impact social media is already having on the business, what competitors are doing successfully and what is your strategy.”

## DOES SENIOR MANAGEMENT FULLY UNDERSTAND WHY WE USE SOCIAL MEDIA?



## 9. WHAT DOES SENIOR MANAGEMENT MAKE OF IT?

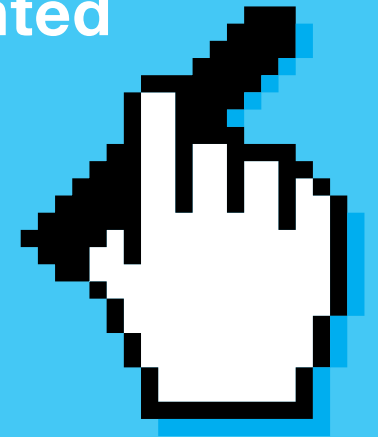
It's about saying, 'Here's what social media is about and here's how it needs to work for us' – and that explanation needs to ripple down to people throughout the business, all of whose backing you need to really make it work."

### **So what should I do?**

"When people recognise the benefits of establishing their own personal profile online, it very quickly becomes apparent what the business benefits are," says Josh Graff.

"So a quick and simple win for marketers is to get their senior management personally using these social media platforms." "Don't waste time teaching senior management the mechanics of social media," adds Leona Shepherd, 3M. "What they understand is connecting with customers, so the responsibility for marketers is to articulate the vision, the strategy, the metrics and the insight that social media can provide."

**There appears to be low concern amongst marketers about the potential risks of social media. Creativity and experimentation shouldn't be stifled, but marketers need to have a plan of action that can be implemented quickly should a campaign backfire.**



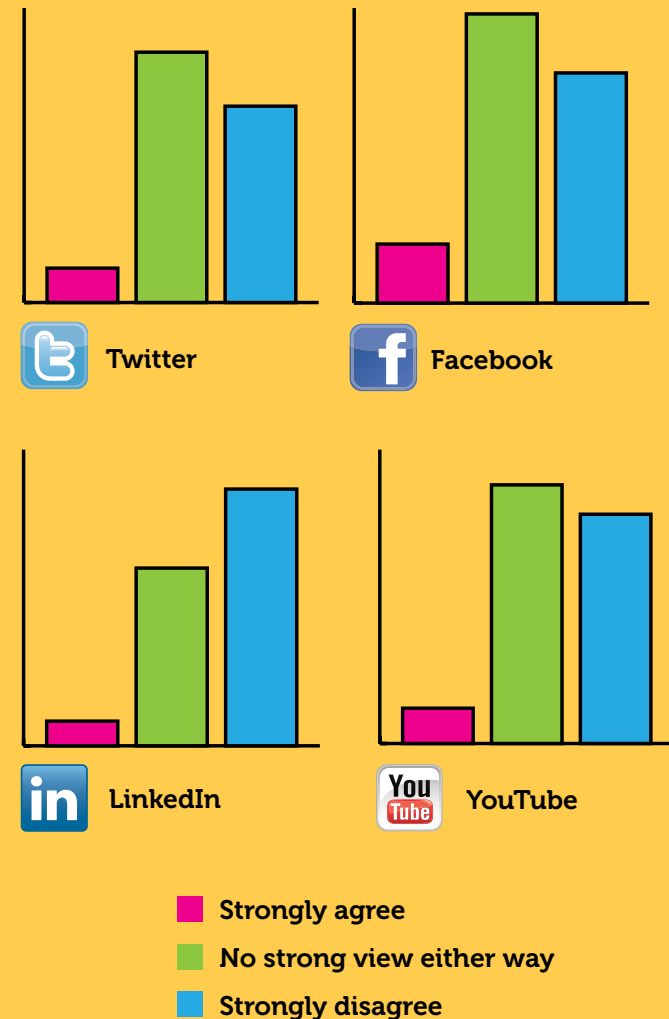
## 10. ARE THERE REPUTATIONAL RISKS?

Less than one in 10 marketers recognise the significant reputational risks associated with social media and nearly half see no risk at all. You only have to turn to the recent tweeting nightmares for companies such as Qantas and McDonald's to see the folly of this belief.

Qantas's attempt at social media promotion turned into a classic PR disaster when users hijacked the promotional tag to insult the airline. Meanwhile, a McDonald's Twitter campaign designed to spread good news boomeranged when critics unleashed torrents of abusive tweets.

"Risk does not have to hinder creativity or even experimentation," stresses Tara Beard-Knowland. "Some of the very best examples of marketing's use of social media are big, bold and dynamic. But awareness of the key areas of danger is the only way for marketers to minimise the chance of social media backfiring on them."

## DO MARKETERS SEE SIGNIFICANT REPUTATIONAL RISK IN SOCIAL MEDIA?



## 10. ARE THERE REPUTATIONAL RISKS?

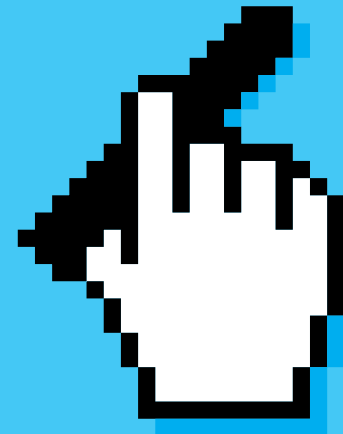
“If something does go wrong, be transparent – better still, apologise,” says Robert Harles, Bloomberg. “Social media is about a relationship with your consumers and as long as you admit when you’ve made a mistake, learn from it and move on, people may be more forgiving than you think.”

### What should I do?

“Do a risk assessment and revisit it on a regular basis,” says

Tara Beard-Knowland. “This isn’t like a TV campaign where there’s a beginning, a middle and an end. It keeps going and often involves changing objectives. If you don’t know what to do when problems arise, you’ll be unable to solve them quickly – and it’s this time lapse between the mistake and acting on it that often causes organisations the greatest reputational risk.”

**Companies typically mitigate reputational risk through control – the very antithesis of social media. The digital revolution has placed ownership of a brand or business’s conversation with the customer; is your business truly prepared?**



## 11. WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS TO GETTING VALUE?

These channels may be free, but they can take up a huge amount of time. For today’s marketers, our research shows this is a real stumbling block.

But perhaps the biggest surprise is the number of issues that marketers don’t consider a hindrance. Poor skills and management understanding come way down the list, for instance, yet marketers have admitted elsewhere in the study that key skills and top level understanding are severely lacking.

Likewise, lack of technology capability isn’t seen as a barrier to a large number of marketers,

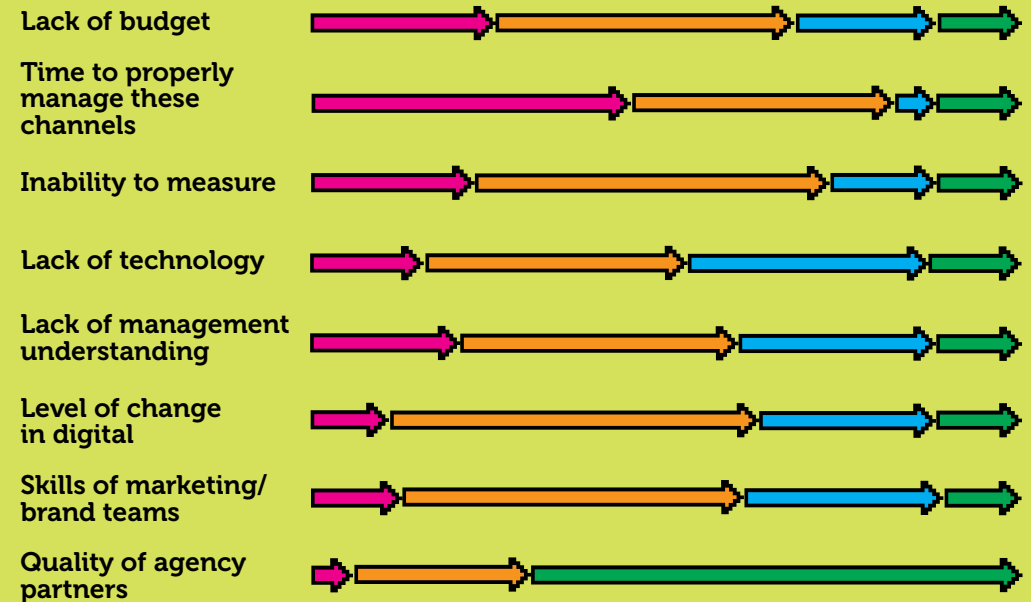
yet in many instances, the fact is that consumers are well ahead of their companies – using iPhones for home-use and Blackberries for work-use.

### What should I do?

Take the time to analyse what is really stopping you gaining maximum potential from these four platforms.

The bad news is that you might find the list is longer than you thought, but the good news is there are proven solutions and many opportunities to learn from others, with the result that progress need not be hindered to the extent that it is.

## WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS PREVENTING MARKETERS FROM GETTING MORE VALUE OUT OF SOCIAL MEDIA?



- Significant barrier to progress
- Some complications
- No problem
- Not applicable

## 12. LOOKING AHEAD

It's encouraging to see almost half of marketers planning on investing in social media analytics this year, but with just 25% having invested in this area in 2011, we'll be keeping a close on eye on whether this actually happens. At the other end of the scale, Google+ comes low down the list, almost certainly reflecting its teething problems.

Whilst it's of little surprise that mobile apps and blogging – both of which are growing fast – gain a healthy interest from marketers, other findings in this survey show that many marketers do not have clear sight of their goals. There is, then, a danger that some marketers wind up merely creating a mini version of a website for a phone, that apps may be created left right and

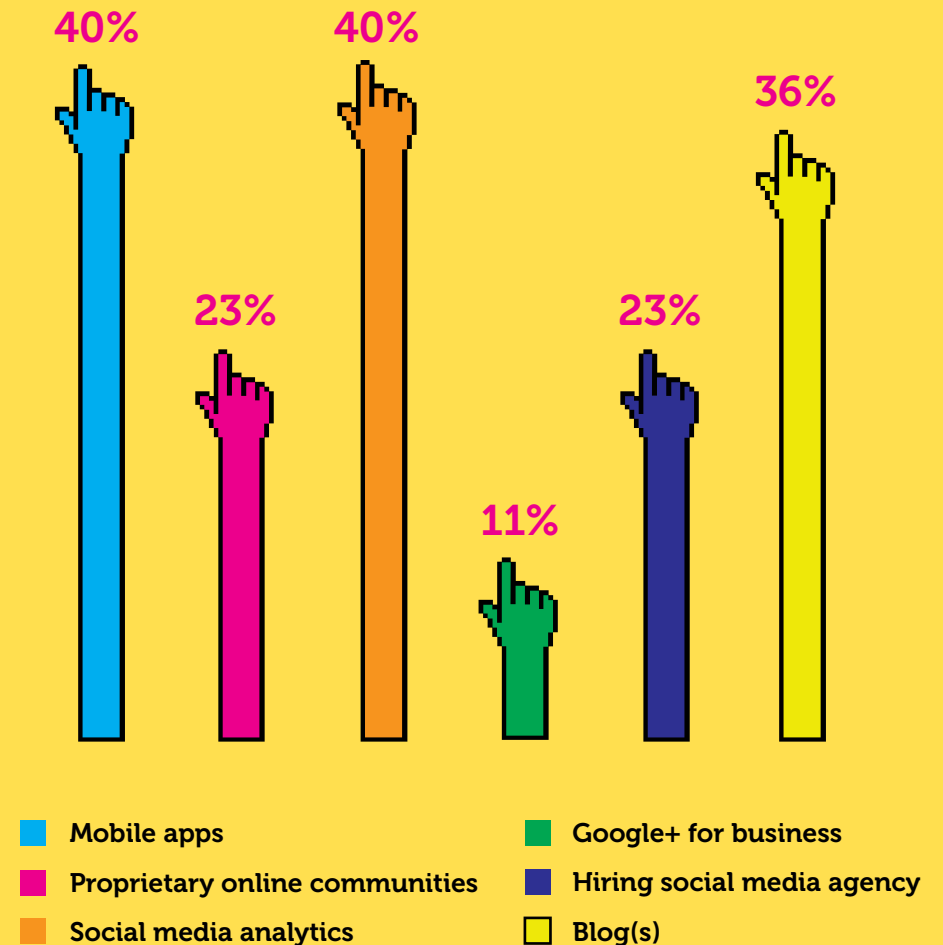
centre with no real reason and that blogs fail to stand out.

### What should I do?

Separate the wheat from the chaff by always coming back to the only question that really matters – how do you make this strategic to your business, not just a 'nice to have'? Take that crucial step back to give it the time it deserves.

"If you do try something that doesn't work out, move on," adds Leona Shepherd, 3M. "I think a big part of the learning process for marketers in 2012 will be to identify when they've exhausted the use of a particular tool in a particular segment. It's important for marketers to be able to see if something is working and if it's not, to close off that avenue."

## IN WHICH OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS ARE MARKETERS PLANNING ON INVESTING IN 2012?



## CONCLUSION

2012 is supposed to be the year in which business use of social media matures, but these results show that we're a long way away from this at the moment.

A major concern is that only one third of marketers strongly believe that the social media channels have potential as a tool to help their businesses grow – which is somewhat at odds with businesses' growing investment. In times of economic turbulence, marketers need to build a more robust rationale to justify long term investment in these channels.

Should your organisation be using social media? Absolutely. But only if your presence is supported by a clear strategy, investment and commitment. It's not enough to throw something out there for the sake of it. If you put nothing in, you'll get

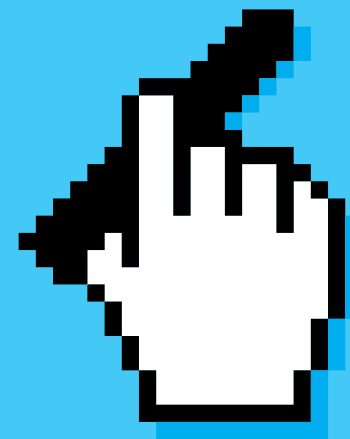
nothing out and you may even do damage. But if you use it with foresight and planning, the payback can be huge.

Social media is more than a buzzword – the next step is for it to be treated as a key aspect of achieving business objectives.

Wave two of the Social Media Benchmark is live in March 2012, where we will build on the learnings from wave one with a deep-dive into the following areas:

- Social media usage and resourcing.
- Digital capability, skills and talent.
- Data, privacy and regulatory issues.
- Social media listening and monitoring.
- Barriers to progress in 2012.

**Should your organisation be using social media?  
Absolutely. But only if your presence is supported by a clear strategy, investment and commitment.**





## LinkedIn DOs

- **Offer insights** – Share great articles, tips, quotes, advice and wisdom not just about your company, but also about relevant third party insights. Gather and share that knowledge to become a hub of valuable information for your customers.
- **Interact, then act** – Achieving the right balance between self-promotion and creative content often requires a vision of what's on your audience's mind. A simple way of deciphering this is to just ask, using tools and applications such as INMail and LinkedIn Groups.
- **Be innovative** – Experiment with your current strategy to find new and interesting ways to present the same information to your networks.

## LinkedIn DON'Ts

- **Automate your communications** – Create thoughtful and conversational content. Engaging with your prospects does not end at signing them up as followers. Even if they've agreed to receive updates on your company, this is no longer enough to ensure brand loyalty.
- **Work on the basis that one size fits all** – LinkedIn Ads are powerful tools that, as marketers, you can use to target very specific audiences within a global network.
- **Share only company content** – Current and prospective customers want to know what's relevant to them. It's not just about you and if you don't make content about the bigger questions, people won't have enough reason to come back for more.





## Facebook DOs

- **Remember that Facebook is a personal social network** – Before ‘leaping in’, take time to understand the ‘etiquette’ required. Ask yourself why your customers or consumers are using Facebook; how they’d like to engage with you (listen, respond or contribute); and what value they expect you to bring to the conversation.
- **Offer rewards** – There are thousands of businesses on Facebook so marketers need to make sure business pages stand out from the crowd. Companies can reward fans for liking the page by offering competitions and special offers.
- **Ask questions** – Companies should ask people questions to make them feel involved with decisions. Business pages should be a real online community and can be a great way to gather feedback. Use Facebook’s Questions feature and ‘Fill in the blank’ posts can be particularly useful.

## Facebook DON'Ts

- **Take fans for granted** – Getting fans is only the first step. Companies must focus on retaining them. Use Page Insights regularly to track which posts sparked conversations and sharing and keep posting this kind of content to maintain interest.
- **Bore people** – People’s News Feeds contain a lot of information and they are busy so probably won’t have time to read everything. Posts are a reflection of a company so they should be short and snappy and ideally less than three lines.
- **Make promises you can’t keep** – Offering incentives or promotions in return for ‘likes’ is fine, so long as you’re able to fulfil demand and meet expectations. Failing to do so could result in significant backlash.



## Twitter DOs

- **Link Twitter activity with other online media** – Live tweets on your website will help to optimise your web presence for search, encourage cross-promotion of your chosen channels and help keep fresh content on your website.
- **Get the balance right between tweeting and listening** – Pay attention to what your customers or prospects are talking about and interested in... Do the same with your competitors, who may inadvertently reveal a lot about their plans on Twitter.
- **Respond** – An endlessly ringing phone in a call centre would be unacceptable, so why would you leave queries or complaints on Twitter unanswered?

## Twitter DON'Ts

- **Underestimate the resource (mainly time) required to use Twitter properly** – For instance, telecoms providers (see @VodafoneUK as an example) use Twitter as an extension of traditional customer service channels, but this requires re-allocation of headcount, so may not be the 'cheaper option' many see it as.
- **Over tweet** – Don't tweet unless you have something to say and provide a variety of tweets (news, promotions, service-related announcements, comments etc).
- **Obsess about numbers of followers** – Don't stress because you don't get the same number of followers as Lady Gaga. It's better to have fewer relevant followers than more irrelevant ones.



## YouTube DOs

- **Be clear on the purpose of video in your campaign** – Is it to provide technical product information? Is it to support a brand campaign? Is it designed to be shared and spread virally amongst your target audience? Is it designed to generate leads? Clear objectives should guide what you create.
- **Deliver key messages early on** – Traditional TV advertising typically builds up to a climax at the end of the 30-second spot, whereas online video is viewed differently. Plan for user tune-out near the end of the video and deliver your key message early.
- **Include a call to action** – If it's appropriate, a call to action can be very effective. If your marketing objective is to increase visits to your channel or participate in a contest, encourage your audience to get involved.

## YouTube DON'Ts

- **Just put content designed for other media onto YouTube** – That's not really being integrated. Viewing behaviour is different online, so understand what will motivate your audience to watch, keep watching until the end and share with others.
- **Forget to help people find your video** – Simply uploading to YouTube isn't enough. Make sure you put as much effort into how you describe and publish your video as you do to making the clip. Credit notable speakers and partners in your video description and tags, include your website URL in the video description, ensure your video is categorised correctly in YouTube and consider advertising to get your videos on the search page.
- **Forget to integrate video into other media** – Simple steps such as embedding in e-mails, showcasing on your website, including in blogs, building into mobile activity, linking in traditional direct marketing (such as through QR codes) can help your audience to navigate multiple channels with ease and supports consistency of message and use of assets.

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# Social Media Benchmark

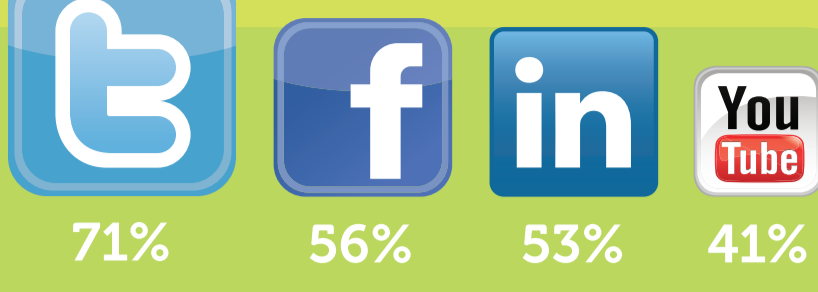
Wave one, Autumn 2011

The Social Media Benchmark is the new, definitive guide to how businesses are adapting to, investing in and getting value from social media. Conducted twice annually, this essential benchmark is brought to you by The Chartered Institute of Marketing, supported by Ipsos ASI and Bloomberg.

Find out more at [www.smbenchmark.com](http://www.smbenchmark.com) or #SMBenchmark

## Who's doing what?

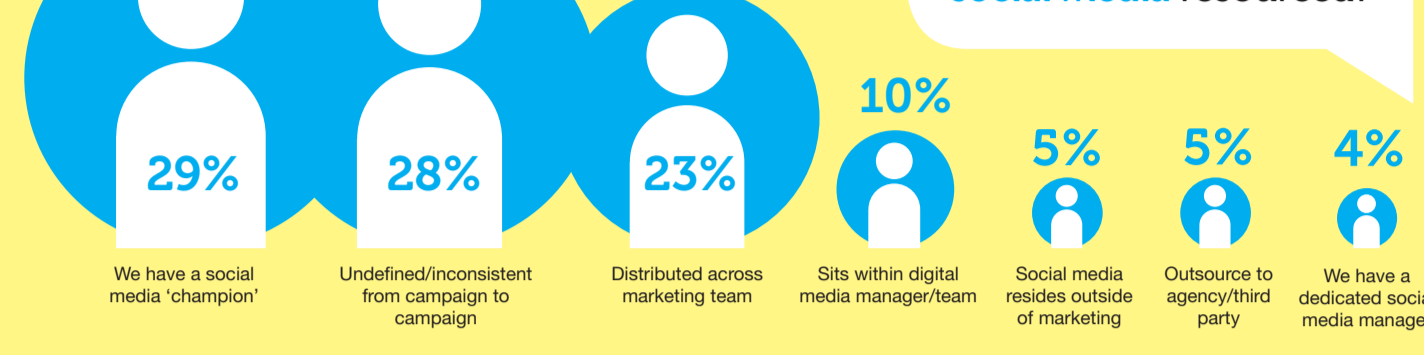
How many businesses are using social media platforms?



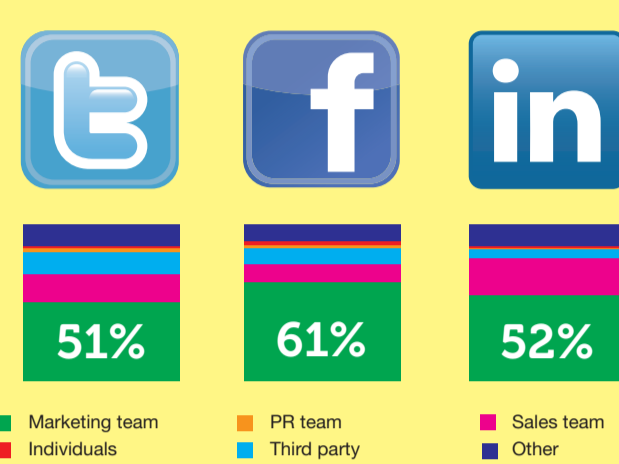
How does this vary by industry or size?

- Twitter** Most used of all platforms – B2C somewhat ahead of B2B but little variance by size of company
- Facebook** Significantly stronger amongst B2C audiences, but only slight variation between national and global/multinational companies
- LinkedIn** Significantly stronger among B2B audiences and smaller businesses
- YouTube** Least used but significantly more used among B2C audiences and by global/multinational companies

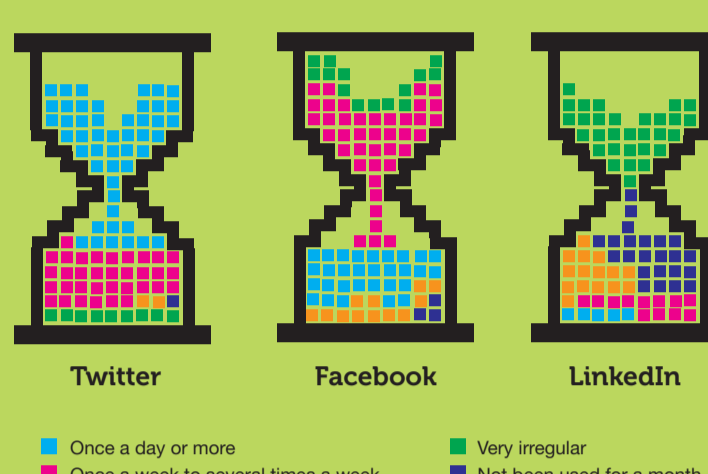
## How are marketers using social media?



Who's managing a business's official account?

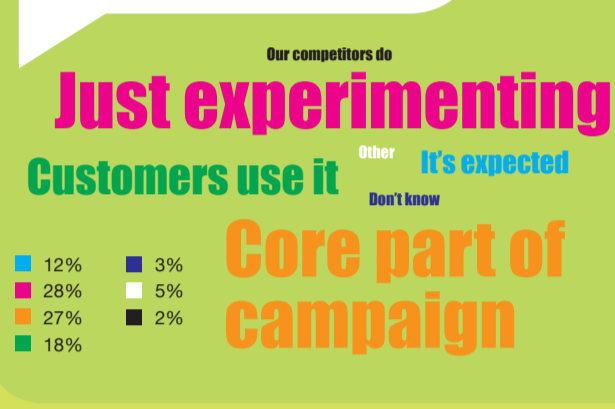


How often is new content posted?

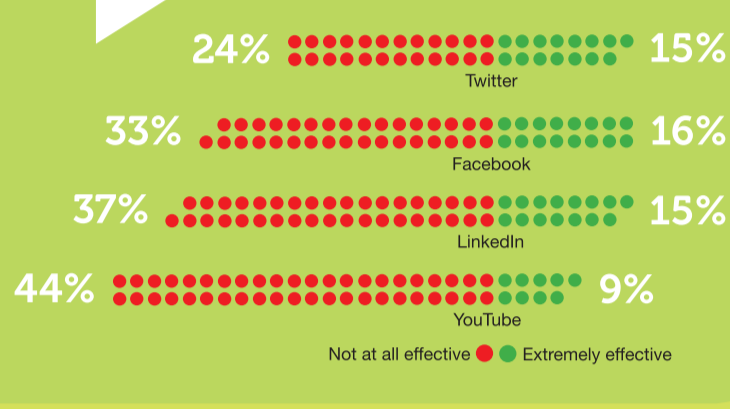


## Value and investment

Why are marketers using social media?



How do marketers rate the effectiveness of their social media activities?



How did companies invest in social media in 2011?

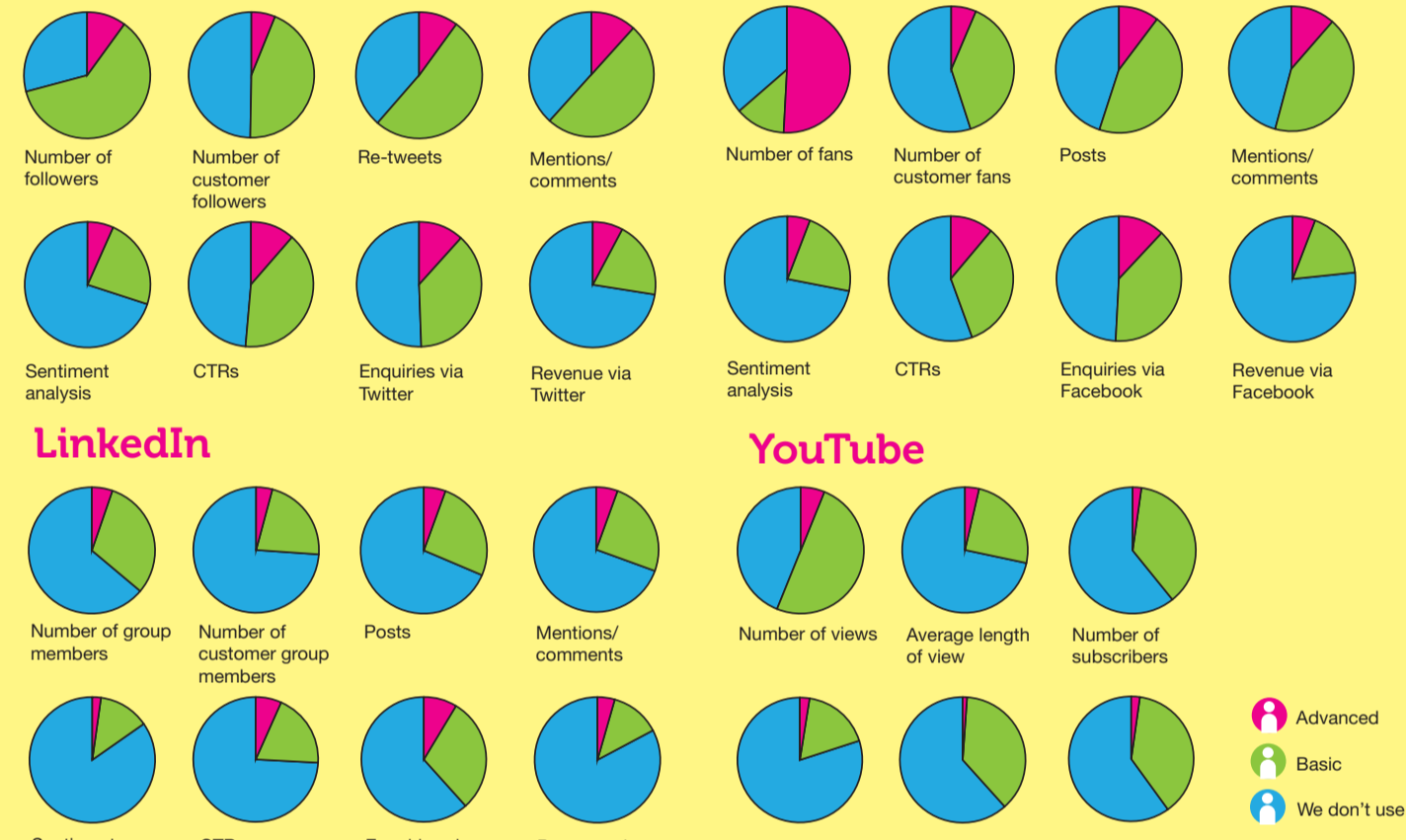


How do they anticipate investing in 2012?

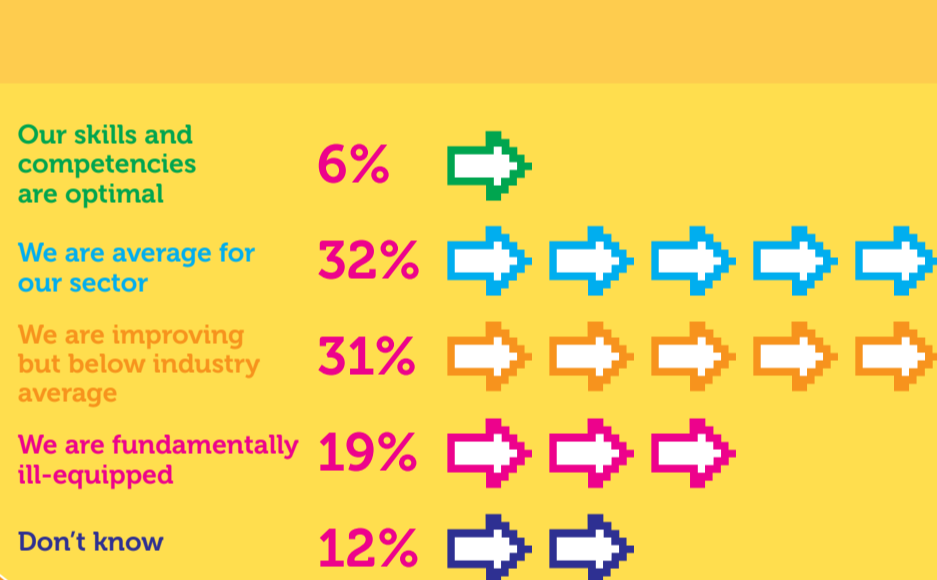


## Metrics, skills, understanding

How are marketers measuring social media?



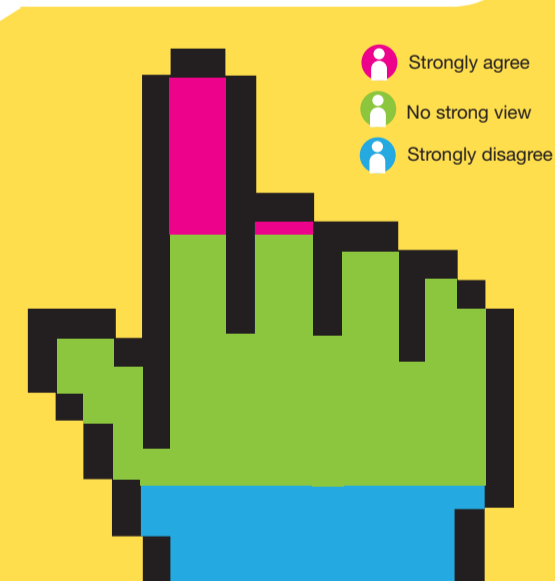
Do businesses have the right skills in place to leverage and manage social media effectively in 2012?



How do businesses plan to improve social media skills and competencies in 2012?

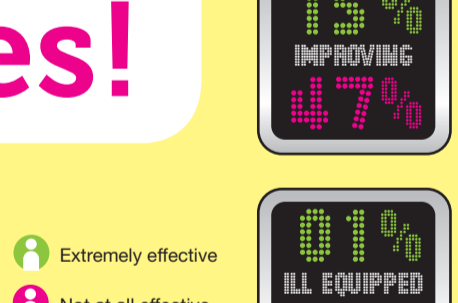


'Our senior management fully understand why we use social media'



Does having the right skills in place impact the effectiveness of social media activities?

Yes!

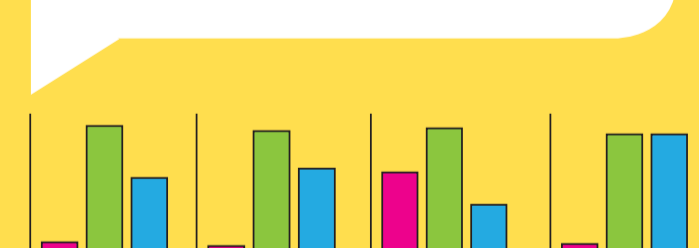


## The future

'Social media channels pose significant risks to our company's reputation'



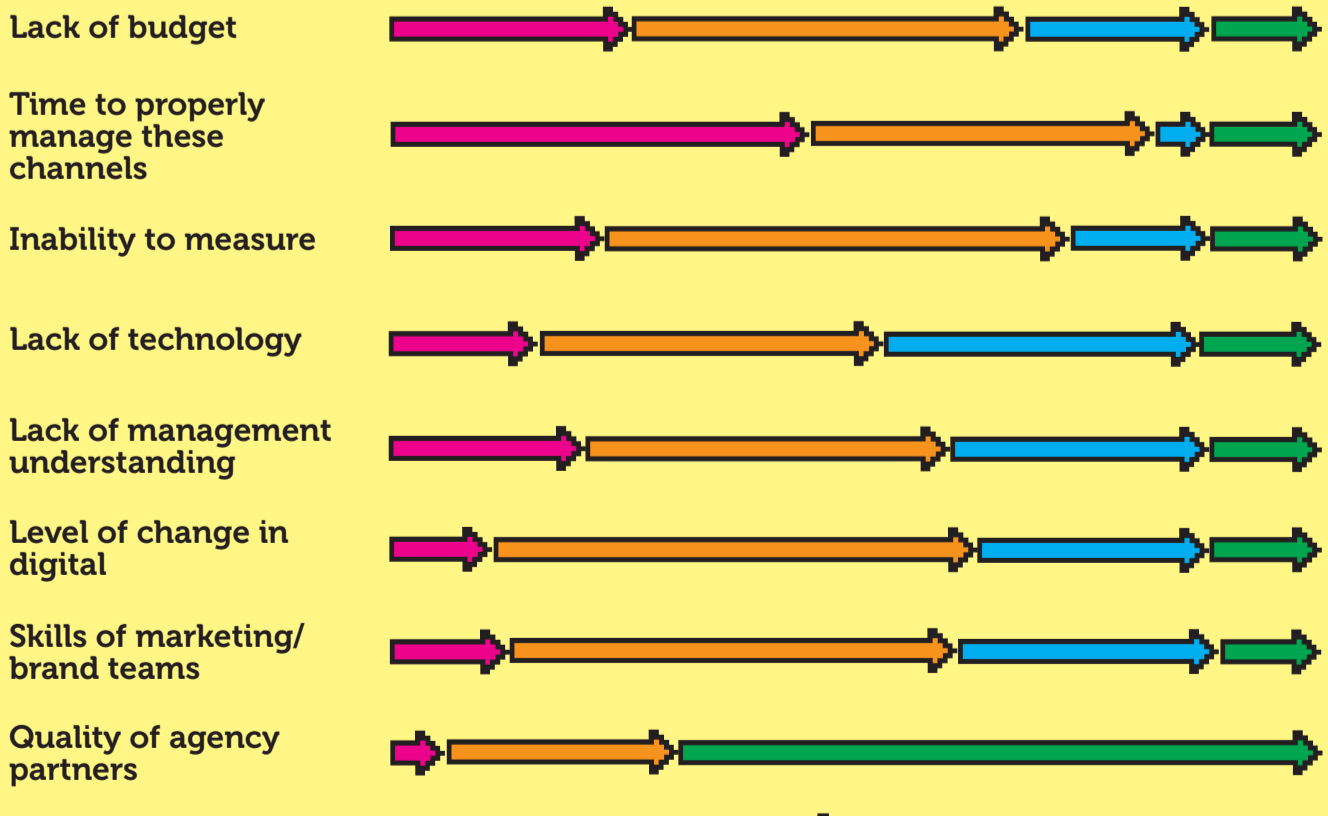
'Social media has potential as a tool to help our business grow'



'We are getting as much value from social media as we can'



What are the barriers preventing marketers from getting more value out of social media?



In which other social media tools are marketers planning to invest in 2012?

