



## The state of corporate social media in 2011

Results from the first  
Corporate Social Media Survey



**Written by Nick Johnson**

with contributions from the  
Useful Social Media Community

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  - b) Europe: Who writes your social media communications?

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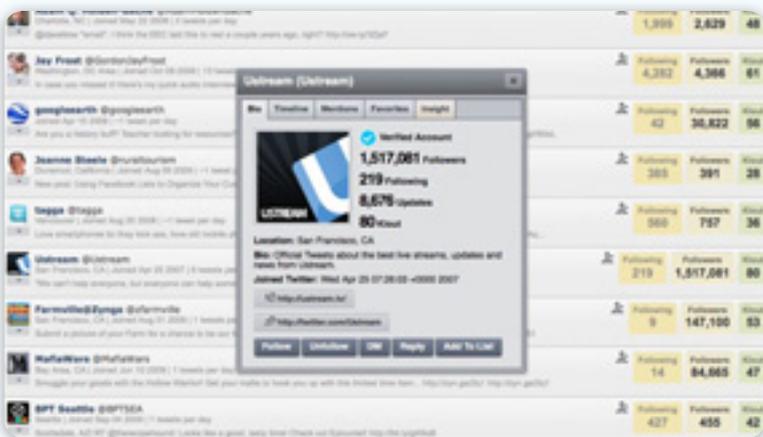


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## Foreword

### **The rapid growth and proliferation of social media in just about every sphere is undeniable.**

The continued creation and adoption of new networks will not slow, but become more specialized over time as participants enjoy more and more niche communities. Once a chatty playground, social media tools is now the most disruptive form of communication on the planet; one that businesses need to understand, take part in and monitor, in order to grow.

However, the rapid rise of adoption means that many companies are still learning the power of social media and striving to understand how it can flow into their systems. Whether to task Marketing, PR, or Customer Service with the company's social media efforts is a difficult decision. Furthermore, in this emerging landscape it can be a challenge for companies to budget appropriately for their social media tools and campaigns.

What is the solution? Within most companies, social media is best employed as an inter-disciplinary initiative, crossing the verticals of each department to engage customers and audiences with the highest level of expertise.

At HootSuite, we're hardwired for social media campaigns. Not only do we make a social media dashboard to help businesses and organizations manage multiple networks and profiles, we use social media to promote our own business, the same way that our customers do. As practitioners and developers, we continually seek the best practices of this medium and incorporate into our tools.

This useful report is designed to help companies understand the emerging trends and successful methods for integrating social media into your corporate culture. As the supporting partner of this report, we truly look forward to seeing the success you achieve in your social media campaigns as a result of the knowledge contained within.



Best,



**Ryan Holmes**  
CEO  
HootSuite

## Join the conversation!



## Introduction

### **Hello and welcome to our briefing investigating the state of corporate social media in 2011.**

Over the next 29 pages, we will present and analyse the results of an extensive survey we conducted with corporate social media practitioners. Our aim is to put together solid facts and statistics on corporate social media adoption; along with information on the evolving use of social media by large businesses.

The briefing will cover:

- How large business organises social media expertise within their organisation
- Current and predicted budget levels for social media
- The development from social media as a marketing tool to its broader role within business
- An investigation into the differences in corporate social media between Europe and the USA

I hope you find the information contained in the briefing useful, and I'm hopeful that it will be a starting point for interesting discussion in the corporate social media community. We have established discussion groups for this reason on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn: details on each are in my signature. Please do join us and get involved in the debate!

Finally, it would be remiss of me to leave you without mentioning our Corporate Social Media Summits. If you're a social media practitioner within a big business, we are confident that you simply will not find a more targeted, practical and above all useful set of conferences anywhere else.

We pride ourselves on our exclusively corporate speaker line-up, our dedicated focus on social media issues for business (emphatically not the 'social media industry'), and our extraordinary networking opportunities with your corporate peers. For more information on our conferences, along with our newsletters and other briefings, head over to [www.usefulsocialmedia.com](http://www.usefulsocialmedia.com).



Kind regards



**Nick Johnson**  
Founder  
Useful Social Media

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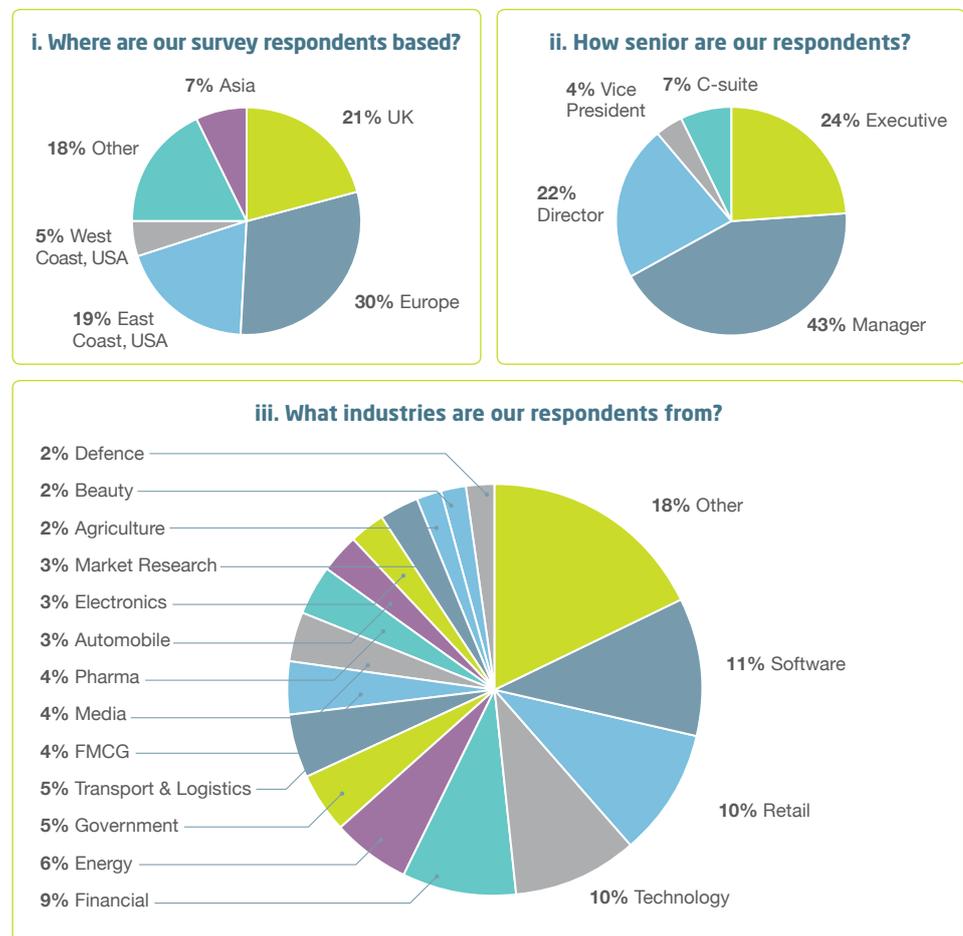
 [facebook.com/usefulsocialmedia](https://facebook.com/usefulsocialmedia)

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## The Survey and our methodology

This briefing is based on responses from over 100 corporate social media practitioners, based around the world. They were kind enough to fill in a survey in December 2010.

Whilst we promised anonymity in an attempt to get a more honest response, we did gather some details. Our respondents were asked about the companies they work for, where they're based and how senior they are. You'll see a breakdown of their responses below.



As you can see, we have a truly global set of respondents, with about a quarter of respondents from the US, 20% from the UK and 30% from mainland Europe. The 'other' category is made up of people who declined to respond to this question.

Over a third of our respondents were Directors or more senior, whilst 43% are managers.

Unsurprisingly, a large proportion of our audience come from industries closely linked to new technology: 21% in total. However, there is a good proportion of respondents from other industries – with a large showing from the FMCG sector, and many responses from the financial services sector too (perhaps a surprise given their high levels of regulation).

## Internal Structure: How social media expertise is organised within business

### Introduction

**The first task for any company intending to use social media is to assign and organise human resources in the right way. There are many questions to be asked:**

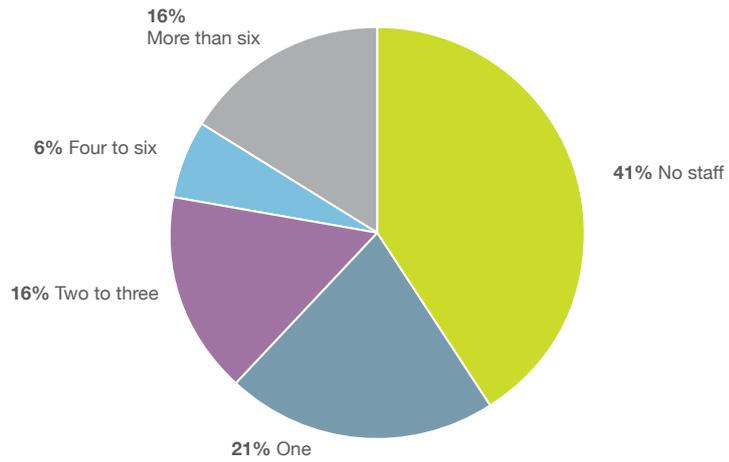
- 1 Should you hire in expertise from outside the company, or recruit internally?
- 2 How many people should you have working on social media for it to be effective?
- 3 Is it better for staff to work on social media exclusively, or can it be one of a variety of priorities for them?
- 4 Should you create a distinct 'social media team', separate from other departments?
- 5 Or is social expertise better placed within a pre-existing department, like marketing?
- 6 Alternatively, is it better to avoid planning for a 'social media team' at all – and instead assign social media responsibilities to a variety of individuals throughout your company?

The charts below set out the opinions of our respondents on each of these issues. We feel that a consensus has been reached on some, whilst the divergence of opinions on others is striking.

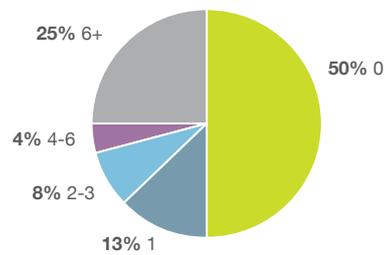
The first six charts deal with the amount of people a company assigns to work on social media – both exclusively and as part of a broader role. The final chart looks at the seniority of social media practitioners within a business.

# Number of Social Media Practitioners

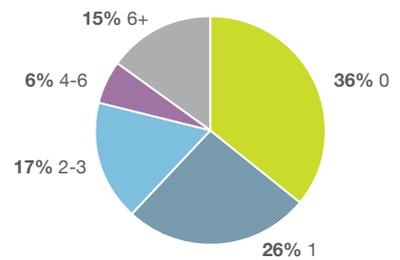
1. How many members of staff work exclusively on social media for your company?



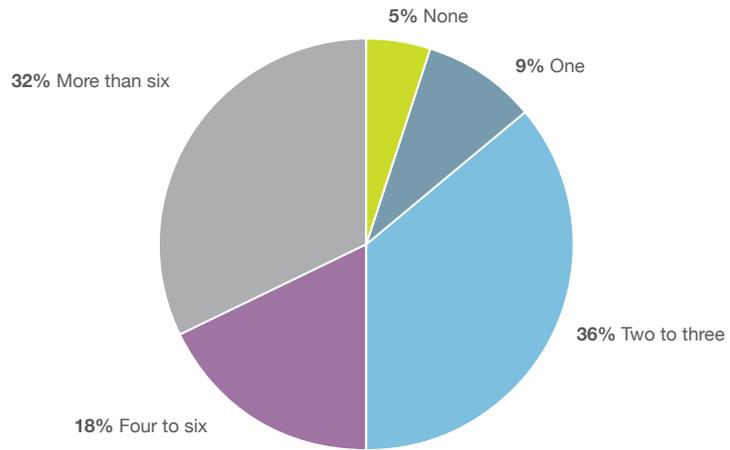
1a. USA: Working on social media exclusively



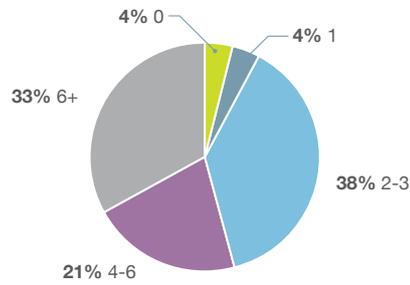
1b. Europe: Working on social media exclusively



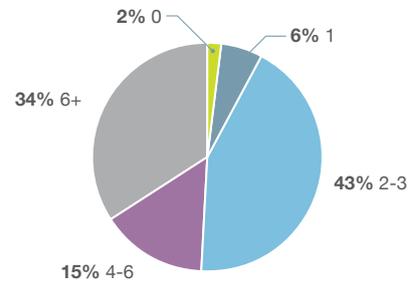
**2. How many members of staff interact with social media as part of their role's responsibilities?**



**2a. USA: Working part time on social media**



**2b. Europe: Working part time on social media**



On a simple level, one can conclude that most social media ‘teams’ (ie number of people assigned to work on social media as part of their role) have 2 – 3 members. 36% of respondents selected this answer.

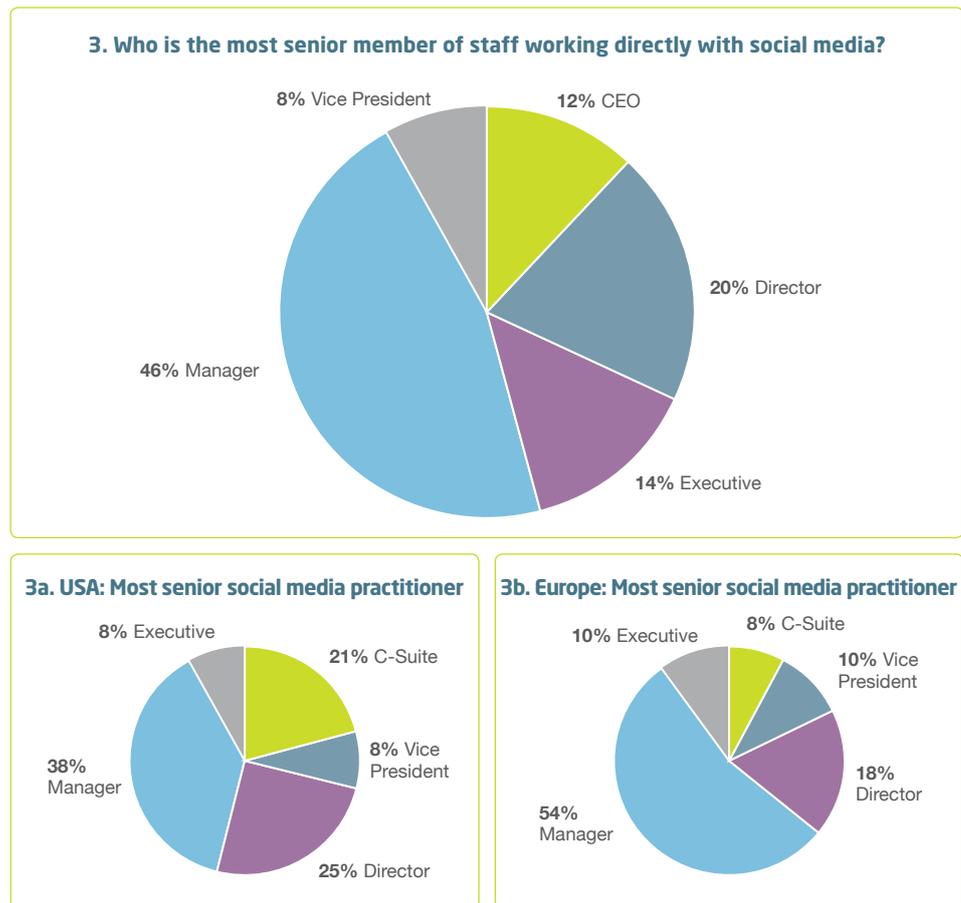
Interestingly, a huge 86% of companies have two or more people working on social media (32% have 6 or more). This seems to put beyond doubt the importance of social media for large companies. We have moved beyond having one or two people ‘testing the water’ to a fundamental acceptance of the utility of social, expressed through the large scale assignation of human resource to the issue.

However, there appears to be a consensus building that there is no need for staff to work exclusively on social media – that it can be integrated into existing roles as a ‘part time’ assignment. Whilst it’s true that the majority of companies have one or more people working *solely* on social media, far more of them have significantly larger teams who work *part time* as social media practitioners.

41% of companies have no-one working solely on social media, whilst another 21% have only one executive working on it. However, a massive 86% of companies have 2 or more people working on social media as part of their role, compared to 38% with the same amount working full-time on social.

When one comes to compare US and European team sizes, there is very little to tell the two regions apart. However – there is one interesting discrepancy. In Europe, significantly more people work exclusively on social media (64% compared to 50%). Is one able to therefore assume that the role of ‘social media manager’ is more entrenched in Europe than the USA?

## Seniority of Social Media Practitioners



One can assume that an increasing number of representatives from the higher echelons of executive management working on social media indicates an increasing integration of social activity into a business's operations.

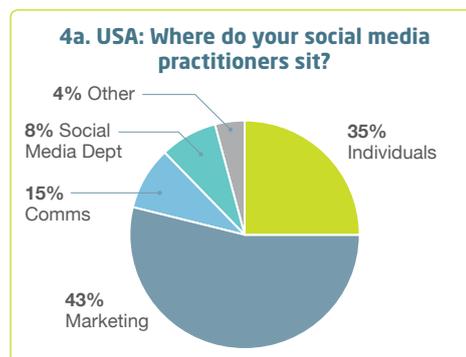
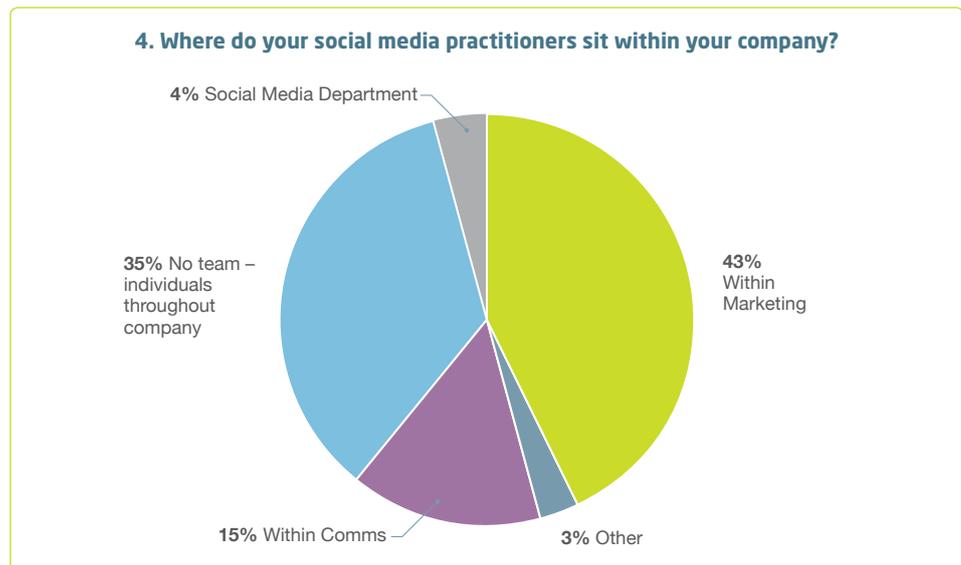
And one can see that social media is indeed taken seriously by the highest echelons of management. 8% of companies have CEOs who work directly with social media, whilst only 14% have social media practitioners stopping at 'executive' level.

However, there is significantly further to go. We can assume that social media is still in the early stages of adoption, considering the most senior person working on it for 60% of companies is still only manager-level.

Again, when you compare the US and Europe there are more similarities than differences. The most common seniorities for both are manager, followed by director. However, the US does have more senior executives working with social on a day to day basis – with 54% of Directors or higher, compared to 36% in Europe.

This final observation is part of a continuing trend one will see across these charts - namely that social media adoption within business is at a more advanced stage in the US than Europe. Admittedly it's a common view -and one that is mentioned with frequency in conversations that take place at our conferences - but it is reassuring to see it borne out in this survey.

## Location of Social Media Practitioners



The final set of charts in this section covers where companies tend to place their social media expertise. It's a common issue, and it's reassuring to note that the vast majority of companies have made at least one decision – that a siloed 'social media department' is a bad idea. Only 4% of respondents indicate that this is structure used within their business.

Far more common is placing social media expertise within the marketing department. A huge 43% of companies have decided that this is the most appropriate location for social media practitioners. Again, this is hardly surprising when one considers what social is primarily used for by business today.

Interestingly, the second most common response is having social media expertise scattered across the company, sat in a variety of departments

If one reads slightly more deeply into these results, the prevalence of placing social media in marketing indicates that we're still at the early stages of the relationship between social media and business. The vast majority of companies are still limiting their social involvement to enhancing and augmenting marketing campaigns. However, the strong showing for "scattering social media expertise across a variety of departments" suggests that corporates are starting to appreciate that social media can be of use for more than simply branding and marketing. Chart 8 backs up this hypothesis, and more will follow on this issue in the analysis of that chart.

## Chapter Conclusions

**The opening sessions at both of our 2010 conferences focused on how to structure social media expertise within your business. We chose this topic to open the conference because it's a critical part of social media success for a company. Without a clear, well thought out structure, a company will always be handicapped.**

It's not an easy decision to make and there are plenty of options – do you have a separate social media team, silo the expertise and give that team the responsibility to evangelise throughout your organisation? Or is it better to scatter experts throughout various departments? It's a very real challenge, with very real impacts on your business.

Our survey responses allow us to set out the most common structure and organisation of social media within large corporations. Whilst this is not necessarily appropriate for all businesses, it is reassuring to note that there is now a broad 'default'.

The typical organisation of social media within business features:

- 1** A group of 2-3 people working on social media daily. The majority of this group do so as part of a broader role.
- 2** Social media practitioners will tend to sit either within the marketing department, or scattered across a variety of teams and departments throughout the company
- 3** There tends not to be a specific 'social media department'
- 4** The most senior social media practitioner at a company will tend to be a manager, though there's a 20% chance they will be a Vice-President or even CEO

# Corporate budgeting for social media

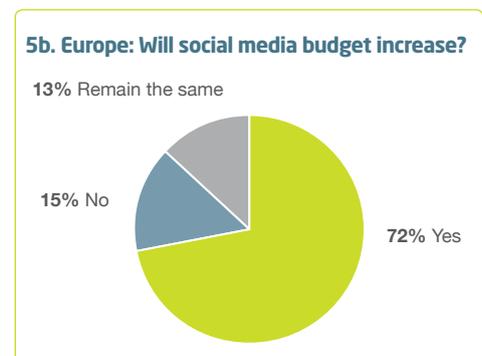
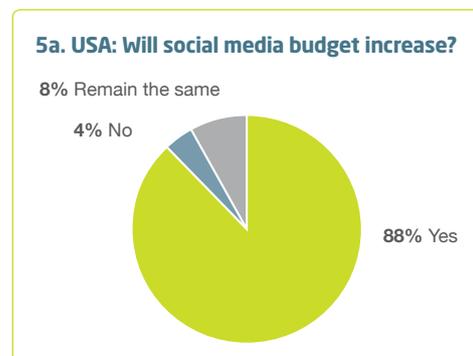
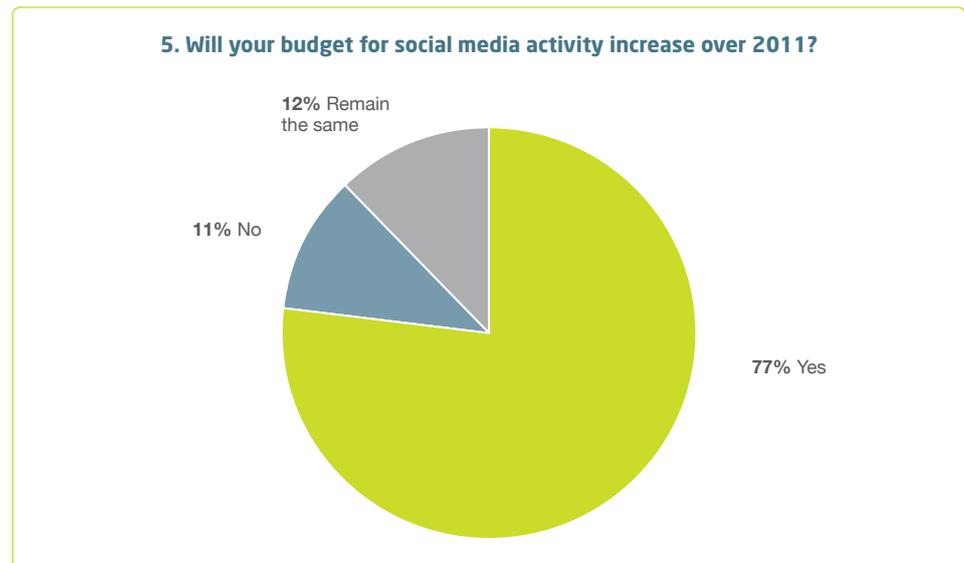
## Introduction

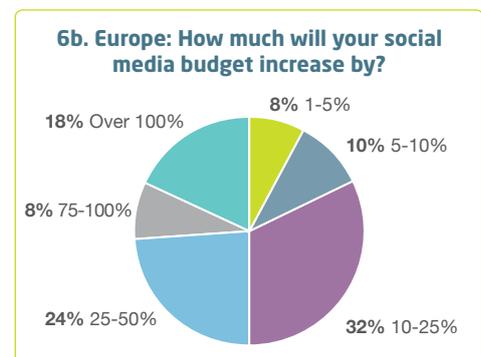
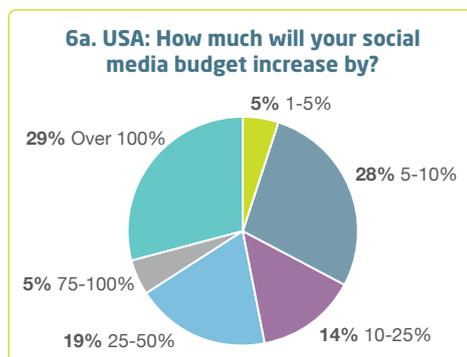
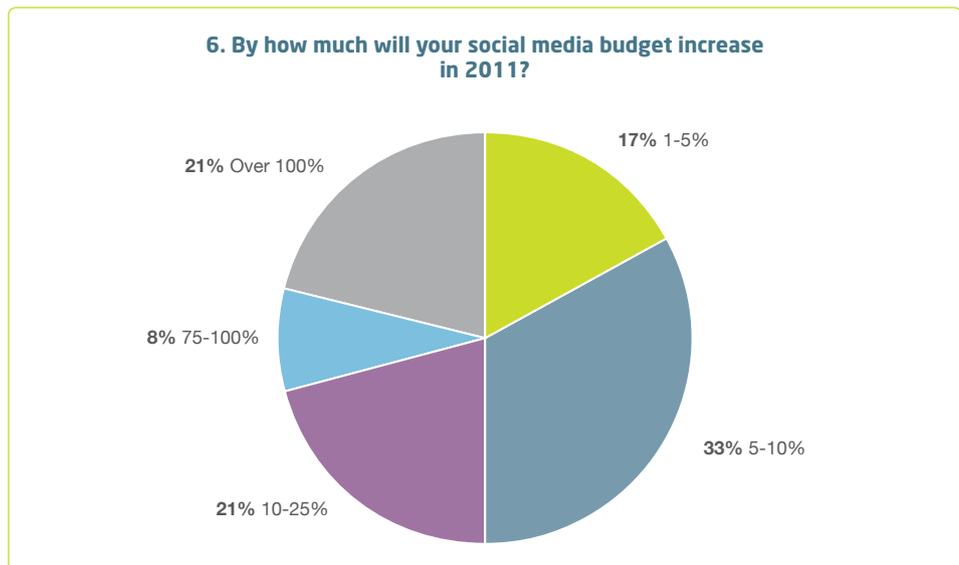
Anyone with an interest in social media has noticed its widespread adoption by business over the last few years. No-one can seriously doubt it is growing in importance for corporates. There are a plethora of statistics and trends to indicate this and there is no need to cover that ground again.

The core measures of the importance of a topic to a business is the amount of resource assigned to it; whether that amount is growing; and at what rate. We have already discussed the assignation of human resource to social media, and in this chapter we will look at how companies are assigning financial resources to the issue.

We will cover both whether companies expect budgets to grow, and (perhaps more importantly) by what amount.

## Predicted Budget Growth





There is no doubt that social media is growing in importance for business worldwide. A huge 77% of respondents say that their company’s budget for social media activity will grow over 2011. The US results are more emphatic, 88% of respondents predicting a budget growth.

When one looks a little deeper however, a slightly different picture emerges. Whilst the vast majority of respondents expect a boost in budget, the amount of that boost is, in the main, small: 10% was the most common response.

Again there’s a subtle difference between Europe and the USA – with far more people in the US expecting this smaller growth than in Europe. Again, this is compatible with the view that social media is more advanced in the US than Europe – the majority of the US investment has already taken place.

However, when we get to the upper end of the spectrum, US practitioners expect more spending power – 29% expecting their budget will more than double, compared to 18% in Europe.

## Chapter Conclusions

It's interesting to note that a huge 50% of respondents will increase their social media budget by less than 10%. Is this indicative of the "End of the Beginning" of social media adoption by big corporates?

Considering the previous information on team size, can one conclude that has the majority of social media hiring has finished? Has the major investment already been pumped into social media for companies?

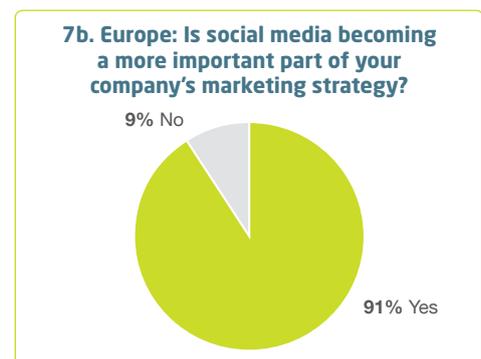
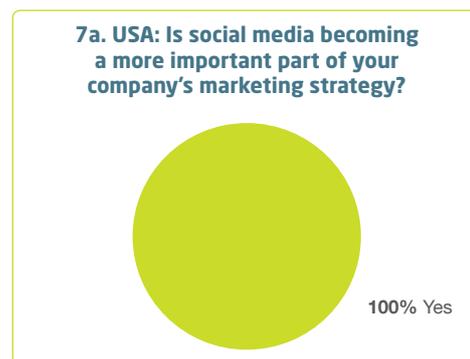
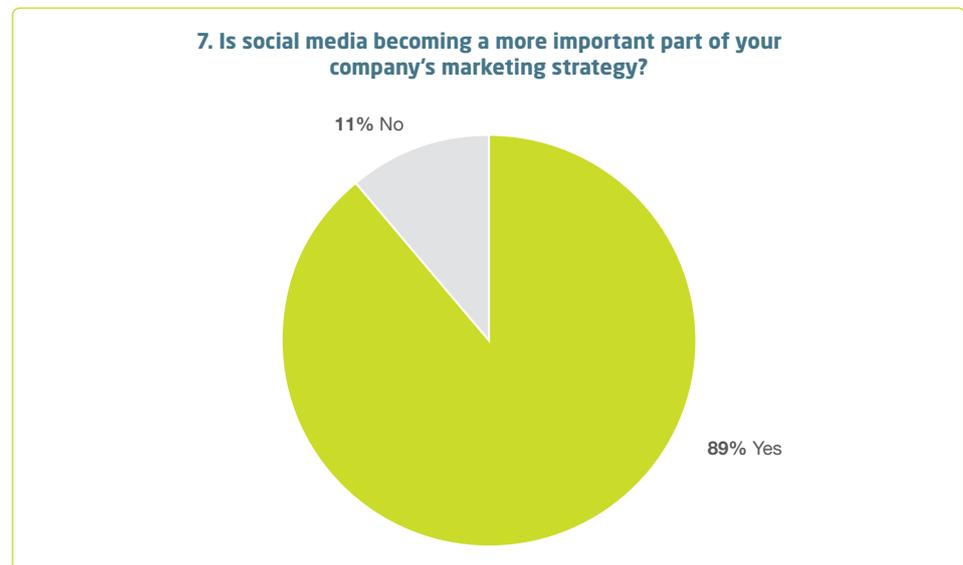
If that's a correct reading of the data, then we should be in for an interesting 12 months. Social media practitioners are getting used to their jobs, and pushing forwards with their internal agenda. Considering the majority are not employed within a specifically marketing-based role, we should see a lot fuller integration of social into all aspects of business through 2011.

## How will corporate social media use change over 2011?

From the charts we have already seen, it is becoming apparent that perhaps companies are starting to look beyond social media as simply a marketing tool. The majority of practitioners now do not sit within the marketing team.

This chapter will investigate the strength of this hypothesis. First we'll cover the relative importance of social media to marketing, but following this we cover the most interesting of the charts in this briefing – looking at how the role of social is changing within major corporations.

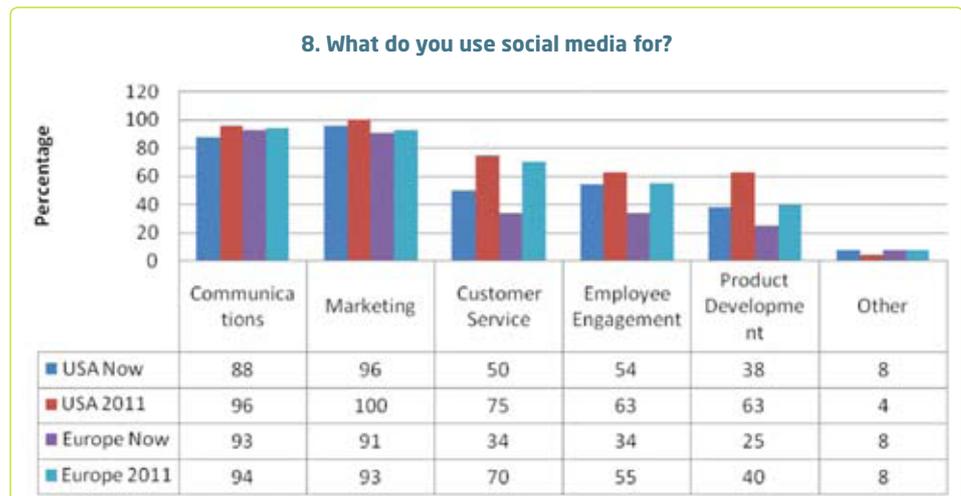
### Social media's importance to marketing campaigns



First, a look at how important our respondents view social media as part of marketing strategy. The results are emphatic. The importance of social media to marketing departments is increasing all the time. A huge 89% of our respondents have said so.

As is becoming a theme, the chart comparison above suggests that the US is taking social media more seriously, and it's incorporation into business planning is more advanced, than in Europe.

## Social media is being used for more than just marketing



NB: The 'Other' column includes investor relations, recruitment, competitor analysis, brand engagement, customer satisfaction analysis, PR, philanthropy and 'nothing yet'. The figures above are percentages.

The chart above tells us an awful lot.

### The current state of play

First, the basics. The vast majority of companies currently use social media for marketing and communications. The results from Europe and the USA are so similar in this regard, one cannot draw any conclusions from the slight differences. The expectation over the next twelve months is only growth – from an already very high figure.

One can also see that a significant proportion of our US respondents are already using social media for customer service (50%), employee engagement (54%) and product development (38%). Whilst the numbers are less impressive in Europe, they are still significant.

## Changes ahead

The chart shows an interesting year is ahead for corporate social media. Whilst marketing and communications retain their dominance as the main reason companies use social, customer service, employee engagement and product development all see significant growth on both sides of the Atlantic.

It seems most companies expect customer service to be the next big social media growth area. The US expects a 25% growth, ending with 75% of companies using social media for customer service by the end of the year. In Europe the increase is even more dramatic – from 34% using social for customer service now to 70% by year end.

Employee engagement is the next big growth area – 63% of US companies expecting to use social media for this by the end of 2011, and 55% of Europeans. Product Development will be just as popular in the US – 63%, whilst in Europe only 40% expect to be using social media to develop next products in 2011.

## Europe / USA Difference

The difference between the US and Europe is obvious. In every respect, the Europeans are lagging behind. Only 34% are using social media for customer service at this point – compared to 50% in the USA. 34% are using social media for better employee engagement – versus 54% in the USA. And only 25% are using social media for product development – compared to 38% in the USA.

Statistics like these put beyond any doubt the fact that the US is way out in front of Europe when it comes to corporate social media use.

However, the European social media practitioner expects as busy a year as their US counterparts. Their predicted use of social by the end of the year is admittedly still less diverse than the US – only 55% of companies planning on using it for anything other than marcomms compared to 67% over in the USA.

But the rate of change in Europe broadly matches the US. 36% more companies expect to be using social media for customer service in Europe by the end of 2011 – the figure is 25% in the USA. 21% more expect to be using social for employee engagement – only 9% in the US. And 15% more predict their company will be using social media to enhance product development by the year's end – 25% more think so in the USA.

In short, we can expect a markedly different picture of corporate social media use by the end of the year – both in Europe and the USA.

## Chapter Conclusions

Considering social's continuing importance as a marketing channel, one would hope that 2011 sees real progress in putting together viable social media metrics, and real comparisons of social ROI vs typical online/offline marketing efforts.

However, social media is maturing, and the social media practitioner is looking beyond marketing and communications at the future capacity for social media to affect (and improve) how a business does business.

You can see clearly that over the next 12 months, companies plan on making a real push into using social for customer service and engagement. Following the lead of companies like BestBuy, Eurail and Southwest Airlines, nearly 70% of companies expect to be using social media for customer service in 2011. That's almost a doubling over 12 months. For corporate social media watchers, this is where the most interesting innovations will happen.

But things don't end there – social media for employee engagement will also see far more widespread adoption over 2011, and social media for product development (see Mountain Dew's DEWmocracy for the current leading case study in this space) is also set to grow – more than 40% of respondents expect to utilise social for this over the next year

"The very best social media conference I've attended in the last year, bar none"

Stacy DeBroff, CEO, Mom Central

Useful Social Media



# Get best practice on corporate social media direct from corporate leaders!

Are you working on social media for a large corporation?

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## 1 Best practice and insight

from 20+ leading industry practitioners

## 2 An agenda focused on the key social media issues

with 20 hours of best practice and case studies

## 3 Fantastic opportunities to network:

with 150+ corporate peers

## 4 Proven track record

and 95% approval rating

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BAE Systems	DONG Energy	Microsoft	Southern Company
Barrick	E.ON	NASCAR	Sunny Delight
BASF	Frito-Lay	Nationwide	Timberland
Bmi	General Mills	Nokia	TomTom
Cadbury	Gulf Power	Panasonic	US Bank
	Halliburton	PepsiCo	Visa

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"I've definitely learned a lot from the amazing folks you had on board"

Lisa D'Aromando, Social Media Manager, Sprint

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## The measurement of social media success

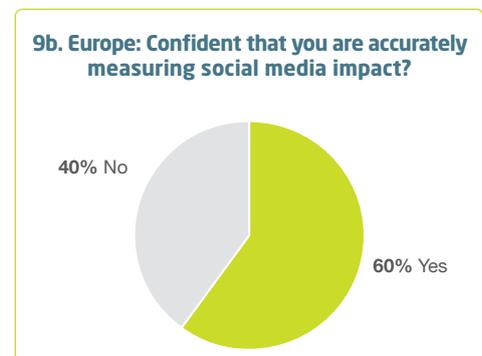
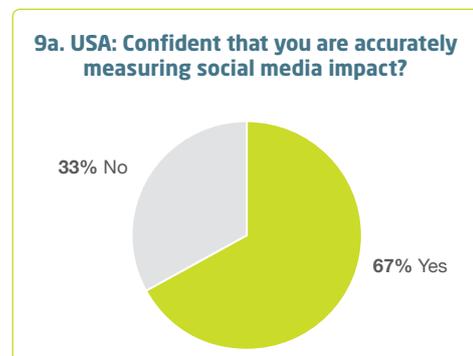
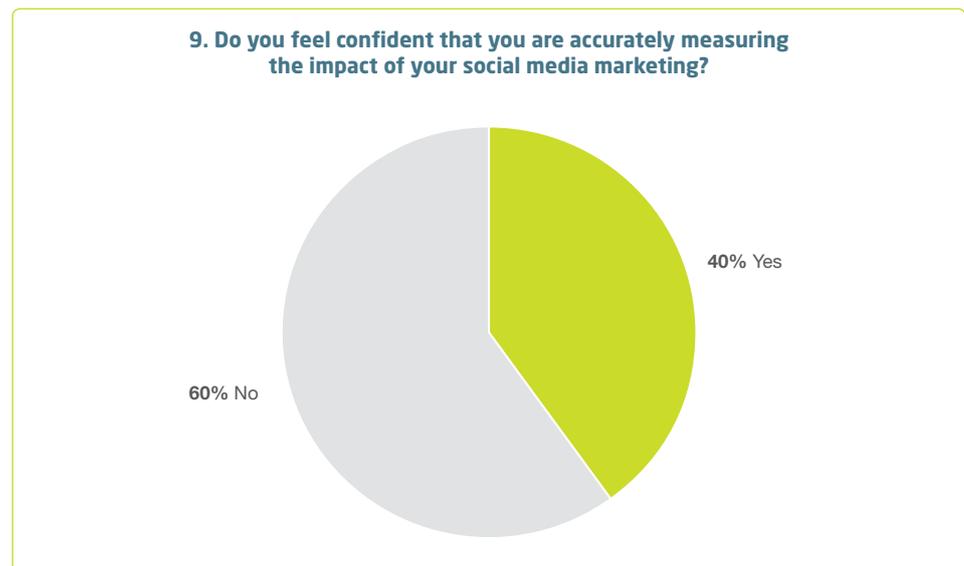
### Introduction

Social media measurement was a huge issue in 2010 and one can only expect it will become more pressing in the year ahead. As the period of big spending on social draws to a close, the board is expecting to see bang for their buck.

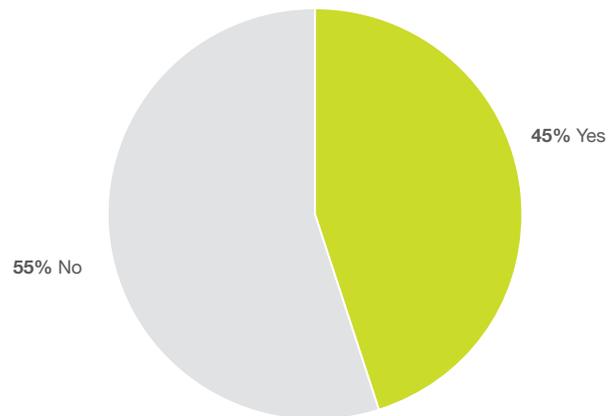
Establishing the impact of a social media campaign – be it for marketing, customer service or employee engagement – is a huge challenge and will continue to be so. Moving forward, determining the ROI of individual social media efforts is often seen as the ‘holy grail’. Efforts to establish benchmark expectations of social media ROI are continuing.

The charts below were designed to assess the confidence of the social media practitioner in their ability to measure impact and ROI.

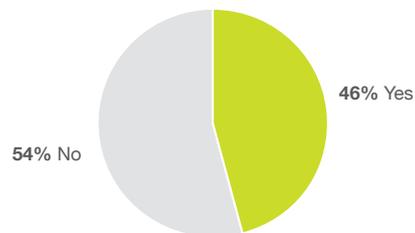
### Confidence in measurement



**10. Do you measure the ROI of your social media marketing campaigns?**



**10a. USA: Do you measure social media ROI?**



**10b. Europe: Do you measure social media ROI?**



That 45% of respondents are now measuring social media ROI is not surprising. Perhaps we made an error with the question, and should have inserted a ‘successfully’ between ‘you’ and ‘social media’.

The first question is phrased better – and the confidence one can glean from the ROI chart is reflected here too. 40% of respondents are confident that they accurately measure the impact of their social media strategy.

There is some difference between Europe and the US – the US are more confident, but this is to be expected considering where the two regions are on their journey.

## Chapter Conclusions

### **This is the most surprising set of charts in the whole briefing.**

That 40% of respondents feel confident that they're accurately measuring social media impact reflects a bullish attitude not in evidence over the conversations we've had with practitioners over the last twelve months.

However, it is not a heart-stopping surprise, simply an indication that companies are further along the path than one would expect.

It's interesting to compare the results from Europe and the USA. One can see a clear difference in terms of progress between these two locations – interesting, considering respondents tended to be working at multinational corporations. This seems to suggest that big corporates are still struggling to share best practice across not only departments but business units.

With further investigation, it would be interesting to see what respondents mean by 'impact'. Evidently, the measurement of ROI is seen as simpler than the more holistic 'impact' – with a full 45% of respondents measuring against this metric.

## Corporate relationships with the vendor community

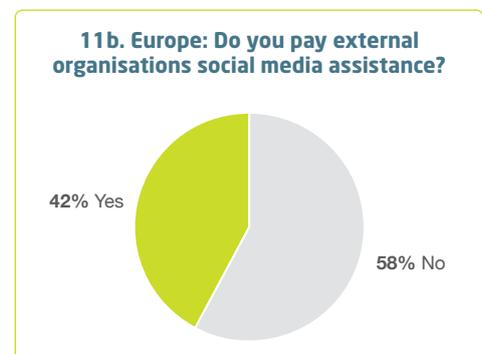
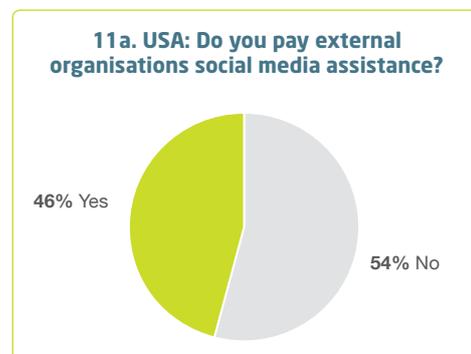
### Introduction

The growing confidence of a corporate audience in social media should be dealt with with an amount of trepidation from service providers to the industry. It stands to reason that the more confident the in-house team, the less help will be required from external consultancies and social media agencies.

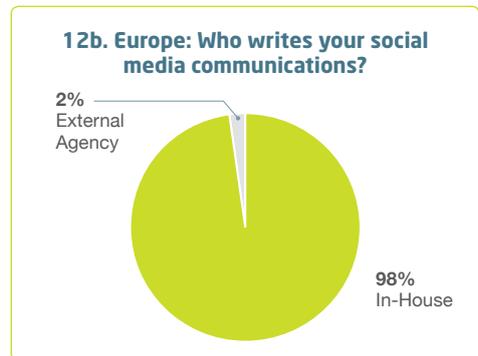
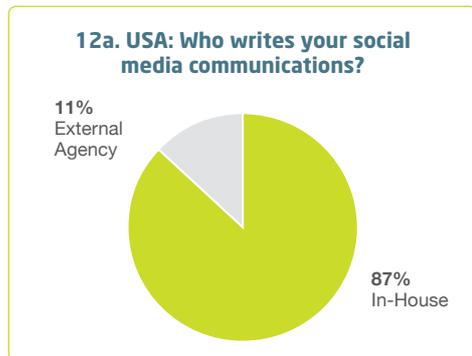
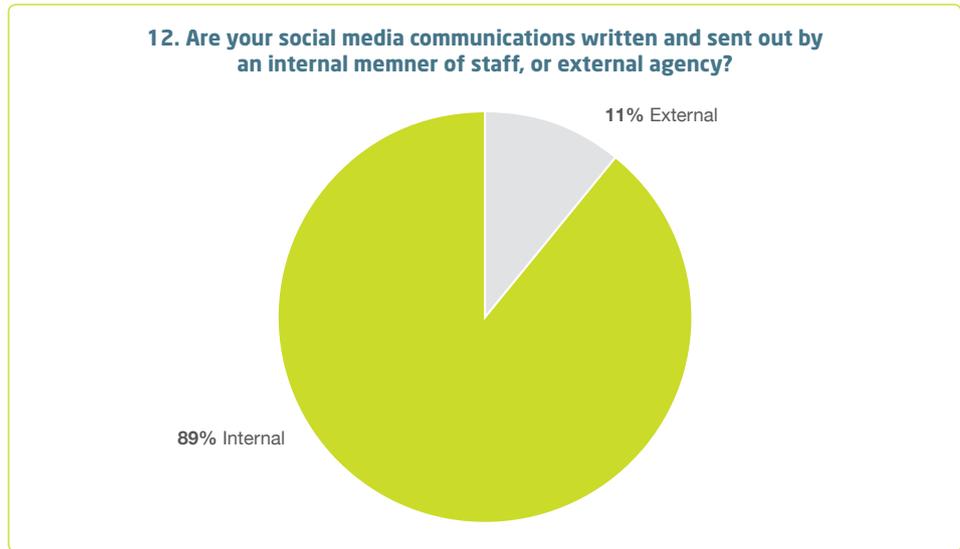
Of course, the vendor community is larger than this, and is made up of various monitoring tool providers and communications agencies too.

In this chapter, we'll look at the relationship between the vendor and end-user communities.

### External assistance with social media



## Authentic corporate voices



## Chapter Conclusions

The first point to raise is a reassuring one for those looking for better corporate social media examples. An enormous 89% of companies are solely responsible for the content of their social media messaging. The voice one sees from these companies on Twitter, Facebook and the like is authentic and entirely their own.

This is a big change – within the last twelve months it was not uncommon to meet with corporates whose social media accounts were not managed in-house. But the view that an authentic voice is critical appears to have won through. Surprisingly, the result is even more emphatic when one looks exclusively at Europe.

The ‘social media agency’ community should be worried. Companies are learning to stand on their own two feet.

However, when one looks back at the first chart, the figures are slightly more comforting for the rest of the vendor community. 43% of companies are paying external organisations for help and advice. One would expect this 32% difference (to the 11% of companies that pay agencies to write their communications) is made up of companies who have paid for social media marketing and monitoring tools.

From discussion at our conferences, it seems the prevailing wisdom is that companies starting to do corporate social media do not need to pay for monitoring solutions – the free tools out there will suffice. But as your social media strategy becomes more complex, paying for measurement tools/assistance becomes more desirable.

## The leading companies in the space

The final question we asked in our survey was for respondents to suggest peers who they felt were leaders in the corporate social media space.

The names in the chart below aren't particularly surprising. For anyone following corporate social media best practice, all these companies are familiar players

They're also all B2C companies. Which indicates a few things:

- 1 The fact that social media success so far has predominantly gone on marketing campaigns which look to leverage massive amounts of responses, rather than small, targeted groups
- 2 That B2C companies have pushed forward much more effectively than B2B over the last year – no surprise if you consider the main use of social so far has been mass consumer marketing
- 3 That B2B companies are struggling to find successful case studies in their own back yard. Over half of our respondents were from B2B businesses, and yet none of the top 16 'leading companies' hail from their side of the tracks.

Anyway, the list is below. By the way, if you're interested in getting some free case studies on Dell, Starbucks, Ford, Dell and PepsiCo, (all on the list below) you can download a white paper full of them at [www.usefulsocialmedia.com/whitepaper](http://www.usefulsocialmedia.com/whitepaper).

- = 1 Dell
- = 1 Starbucks
- 2 Ford
- 3 Coca Cola
- 4 Google
- 5 Apple
- 6 Best Buy
- = 7 Comcast
- = 7 General Motors
- = 7 Intel
- = 7 Kodak
- = 7 Microsoft
- = 7 Nike
- = 7 P&G
- = 7 PepsiCo
- = 7 Southwest Airlines

### Honorable mentions:

Aflac Duck	Air Asia	Alcoa	ASOS.com
Autonation	Avaya	Betfair	BMI
Chase Jarvis	Cisco	Delta	Domino's
EA	ESPN	Fiat	IBM
JetBlue	Kiki L'Italian	KLM	Monsanto
NPR	Porsche	Procter & Gamble	Red Bull
Skittles	Victoria's Secret	Whole Foods	Xerox
Zappos			

## What have we learned?

### Our Top Ten Conclusions

**So, what can we learn from this survey? Below is a short list of conclusions we are confident can be drawn from these raw materials:**

- 1** The 'social media department' is an unpopular concept, and largely ignored by corporations.
- 2** Social media is often added to existing corporate roles. Few companies have staff working exclusively on social media, though 90% have one or more people working on social as part of their role.
- 3** Social media practitioners still tend to sit within the marketing department (43%), though a fuller integration of social responsibilities within a variety of different departments is now gaining popularity (35%).
- 4** The majority of companies expect social media to become integrated into more than just marketing throughout 2011.
- 5** The vast majority of companies expect social media budgets to increase over 2011 (89%), though the increase will be less dramatic than in previous years, with 71% expecting an increase of 25% or less.
- 6** Currently, corporate social media is used largely for marketing and communications (88% and 93% of respondents say they use social media for communications and marketing respectively). However, a significant proportion are already using social media to enhance customer service and engagement.
- 7** Over the next year, the biggest change in corporate use of social media will be the growth of companies using it for customer service (73% by the end of 2011). Using social for employee engagement (59%) and product development (52%) will also become more popular.
- 8** Whilst a significant proportion of companies are now confident that they are measuring social media impact, the majority still feel there is work to be done – a view that's particularly prevalent in Europe.
- 9** Social media expertise has been brought in house. 57% of companies don't pay any external service providers, and a huge 89% of companies write all their own social media communications.
- 10** Whilst B2B companies are taking the adoption of social media equally as seriously as their B2C counterparts, it is the B2C companies that have experienced most success in the eyes of their peers.

## Final Thoughts

### **So, what can we say after considering the results in this briefing?**

It would be easy, from the budgetary figures in chart 6, to assume the pace of innovation in corporate social media is slowing. Budgets are increasing – but not by much in the vast majority of cases. Is this a sign of a growing doubt in the mind of senior executives about the merits of social media for business?

The answer is no.

It's true that there is certainly an increased pressure on corporate social media practitioners to deliver on investment – there's an ever more pressing need to demonstrate ROI, along with progress against other crucial KPIs.

But this simply represents social media being treated as a regular business investment – good news for those worried that this was a fad into which companies were being reluctantly dragged.

More than simply acceptance, there is now clarity that corporate practitioners 'get' social media – and its opportunities moving forward.

The next year is one in which the adoption of social media by companies will affect our lives in ways far more varied than Facebook Like buttons and entreaties to share marketing messages on Twitter.

Whilst social media will continue to be a fundamental part of marketing strategies across the world, it will now be leveraged for a variety of other issues – enhanced customer engagement and service at the head of a crowded field.

We can look forward to an interesting year.

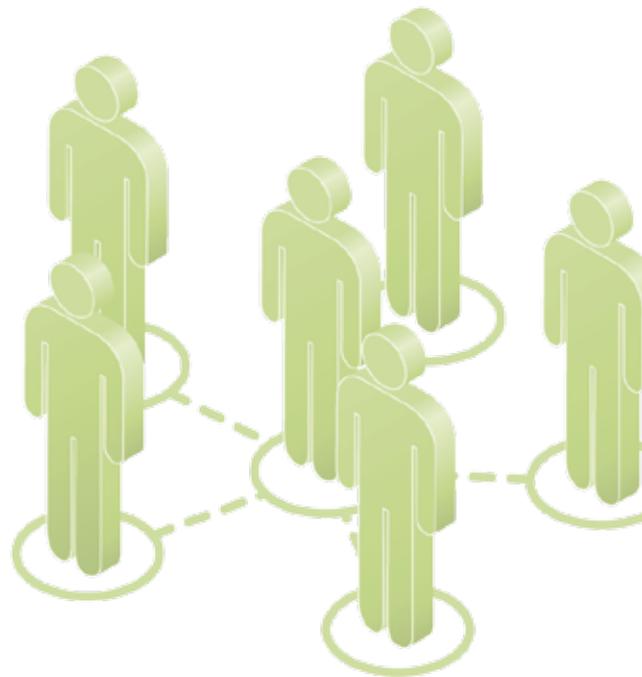


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