

Exhibitor Media Group's Social Media in Marketing Survey

Full Report

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EXHIBITOR MEDIA GROUP

2010 Social Media in Marketing Survey

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EXHIBITS:

- Survey Invitation
- Verbatim Responses to Open-Ended Questions

METHODOLOGY

Exhibitor Media Group provided all survey methodology, tabulation and reporting services.

Exhibitor Media Group in conjunction with GetSynchronicity conducted this survey to learn how companies use social-media tools sites and tools for marketing purposes, including exhibit and event-marketing campaigns. Published by EXHIBITOR Media Group, the study is made possible through sponsor support from the following companies: GetSynchronicity, Skyline Exhibits Inc., Echelon Design, and Exhib-It Tradeshow Marketing Experts.

The Social Media in Marketing Survey establishes benchmark data for the use of Social Media Marketing among EXHIBITOR magazine and Corporate EVENT magazine readers. Selected data points from this study appear in the January 2010 issue of EXHIBITOR magazine and the Spring 2010 issue of Corporate EVENT magazine.

Exhibitor Media Group broadcast this survey invitation to a sample of industry professionals via email and fielded using Zoomerang[®] survey software.

8,439 EXHIBITOR magazine and Corporate EVENT magazine subscribers with email addresses selected at random, were sent an invitation to take the online survey. This sample population included only “corporate” exhibit and event professionals responsible for their organizations’ trade show and event programs. Association contacts and suppliers to the industry were suppressed from the database of the survey population.

Prospective survey participants received an offer to receive an executive summary of the survey results and entry into a drawing for one of three \$100 cash prizes as an incentive to complete the survey. At the completion of the survey, three entries were selected at random to receive the cash prizes.

The invitation and link was broadcast on September 30th, and October 7, 2009. The survey was closed for tabulation on October 21st.

Of the 8,439 messages sent, 494 returned or failed, yielding a delivery of 7,945 messages (94.1%). There were 522 visits or survey sessions, resulting in a total of 383 complete surveys for tabulation and reporting.

The broadcast invitation yielded an overall response rate of 4.8%. With this response rate, results are felt to be very reliable and statistically valid. The response rate provides for a confidence interval of +/- 4.89% at the 95% confidence level.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND KEY FINDINGS

Data from this survey serves as a “benchmark” for data detailing EXHIBITOR magazine and Corporate EVENT magazine subscribers’ practices and perceptions of social media in business marketing.

Overview

Two-thirds of respondents have used social-media sites and tools for marketing purposes, including exhibit- and event-marketing campaigns. And while the majority of them are turning to social-networking sites such as Facebook, many others are utilizing professional networking sites such as LinkedIn, microblog services such as Twitter, video-sharing sites such as YouTube, and internal or external microsites and business blogs.

Those who are tapping into the marketing potential of social-media applications claim increased brand awareness, enriched relationships with clients and prospects, additional press coverage, increased event attendance, increased booth traffic, and even increased sales as direct results of their campaigns.

The so-called “free” services offered via social-media sites don’t come without their own fixed costs, as nearly a third of respondents currently using social media report spending six or more hours per week strategizing, executing, and monitoring their social-media presence. And nearly 10 percent of respondents dedicate 21 hours or more, per week, to their social-media campaigns.

Highlights

Thirty-one percent of respondents have incorporated social media into their exhibit-marketing efforts, along with 24 percent of respondents who have used social media as part of their company’s B2B and/or B2C corporate events.

Fifty-seven percent have used social media for more general marketing and branding purposes, excluding exhibits and events.

One-third of respondents who have used social media as an exhibit-marketing tool set measurable objectives prior to implementing their social-media campaigns. Nine out of 10 of those respondents indicated their social-media efforts met or exceeded those pre-show objectives.

Thirty-two percent of respondents believe social media has “limitless” potential in the context of exhibit and event marketing. An additional 58 percent believe it has “moderate” potential.

Twenty-two percent of companies that have not used social media as part of their marketing efforts cite “lack of time to dedicate to social media” as the primary reason.

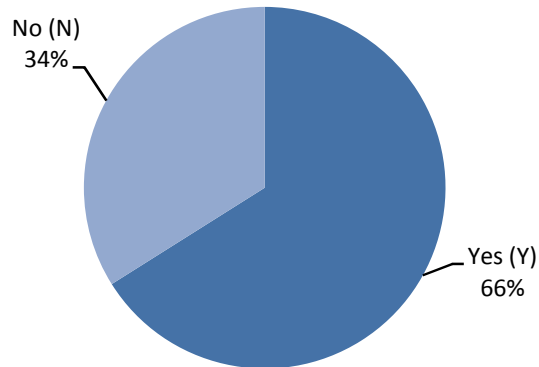
More than three-quarters of respondents expect the value and importance of social media as a marketing tool to increase “strongly” or “somewhat” in the coming year.

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING: GENERAL PRACTICES

Usage

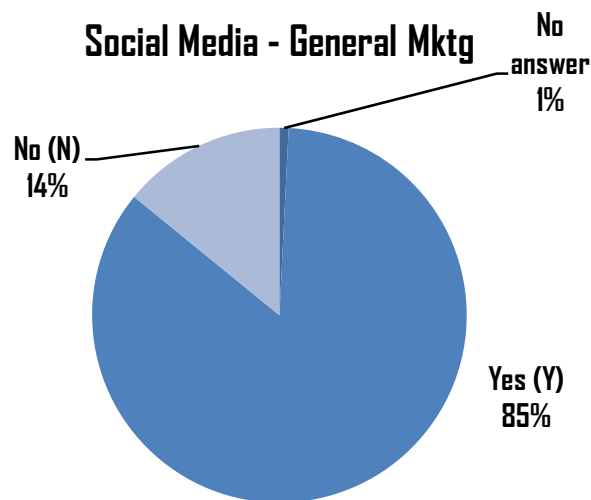
Does your company currently use social media for any purposes?

Currently Use Social Media



Two-thirds of survey respondents report that their company currently uses social media.

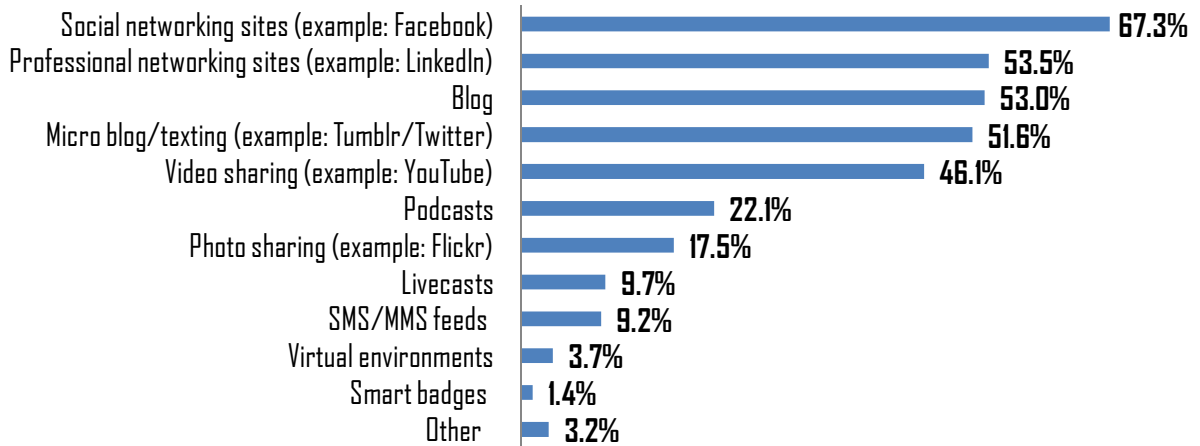
Has your company used social media as part of its general-marketing or brand-awareness efforts?



85% of all companies (who've used social media) have used Social Media marketing as part of a general-marketing campaign or brand awareness effort. (56.7% of all respondents)

Which of the following social media tools have you used for general-marketing purposes?

Social Media Tools - General Marketing

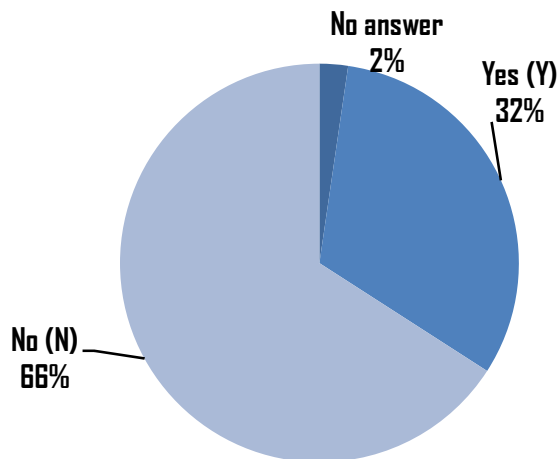


Social Networking sites, such as Facebook, represent the most common tool used by companies to support their general marketing efforts with slightly more than two-thirds of all companies active. Just over half of all companies use Professional Networking sites, Blogs and Micro blogs.

Measurement Practices

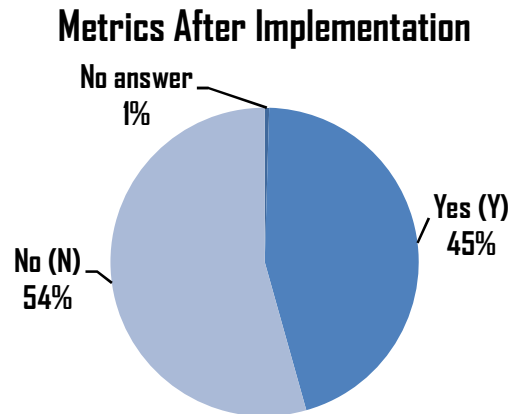
Prior to implementing social media, did your company set any measurable objectives to gauge the effectiveness of the tool(s) used?

Set Measureable Objectives



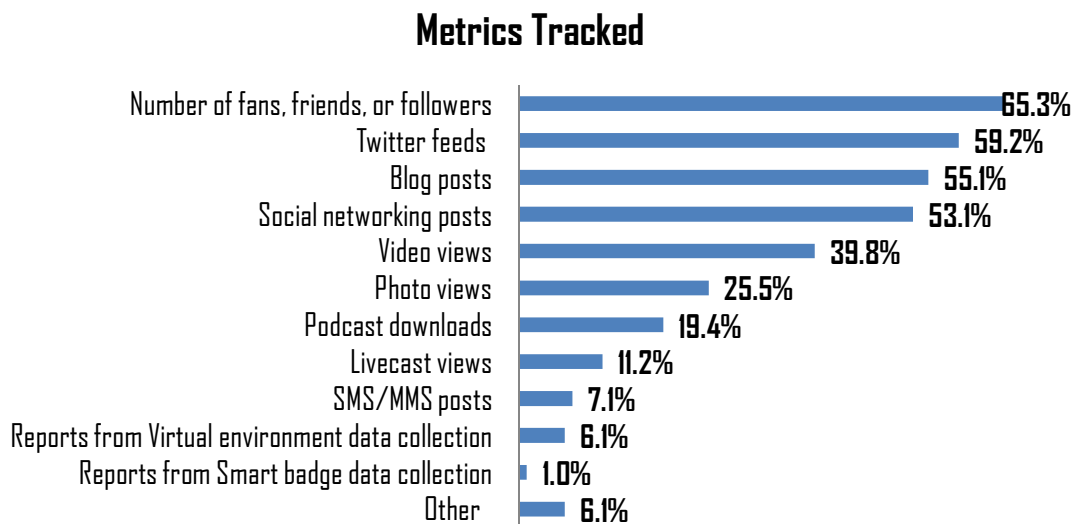
Nearly one-third of all companies deploying social media profess to setting measurable objectives prior to launching a marketing effort.

After implementing social media, did your company track any metrics related specifically to the use of social media as a marketing tool?



Less than half (45%) of all companies track metrics related to their general social media marketing efforts.

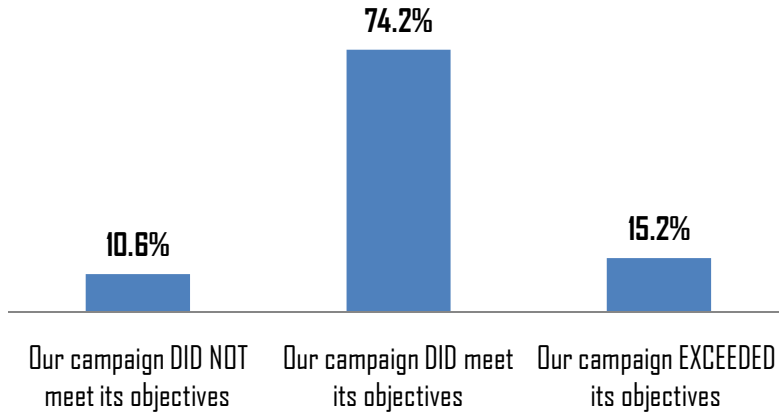
Which of the following metrics did you track/report?



Nearly two-thirds of marketers report number of participants as a method of tracking, followed by quantity of user-generated posts or feeds.

Did your social media campaign meet, not meet, or exceed those objectives?

Results - General Marketing

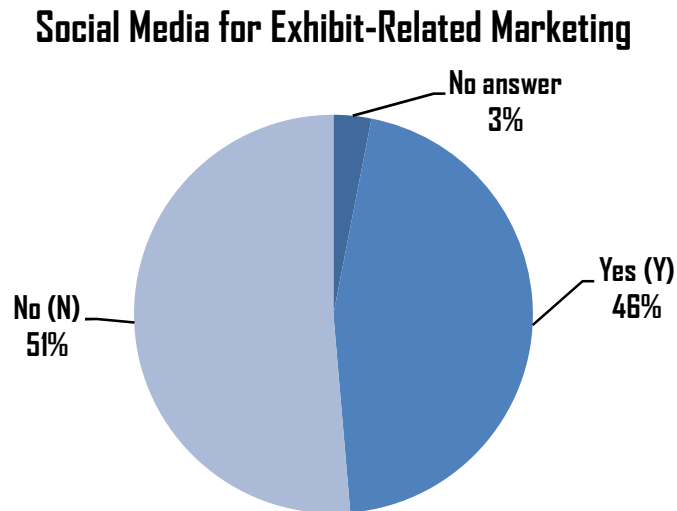


Nearly 90% of respondents feel their social media marketing campaigns are meeting or exceeding strategic objectives.

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING: EXHIBIT - MARKETING

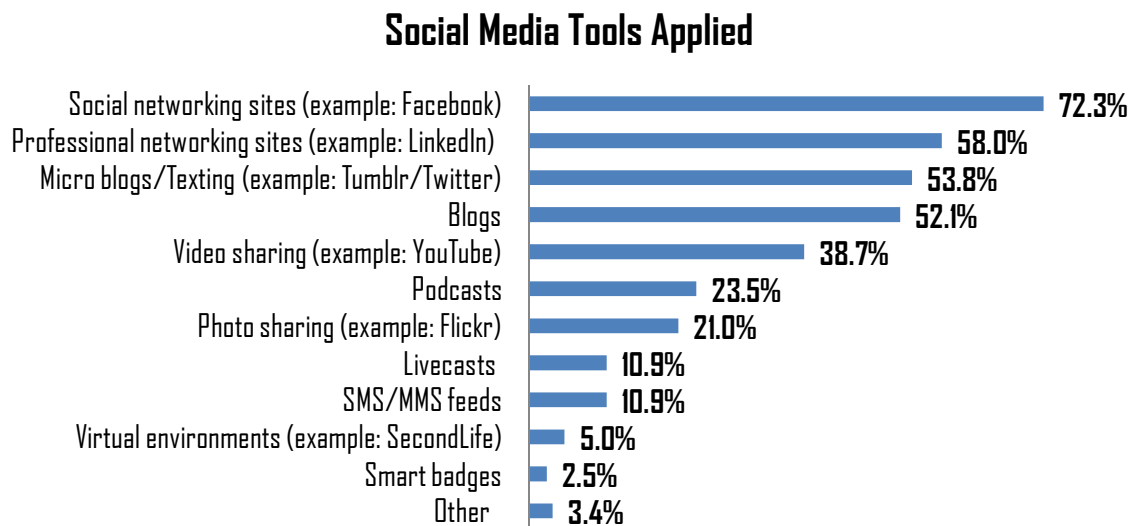
Usage

Has your company used social media as part of its exhibit-marketing efforts before, during, or after a trade show?



Currently, nearly half of all exhibiting companies (46%) report using social media for marketing as part of their exhibit promotion efforts.

Which of the following social media tools did you use as part of your exhibit-marketing efforts?

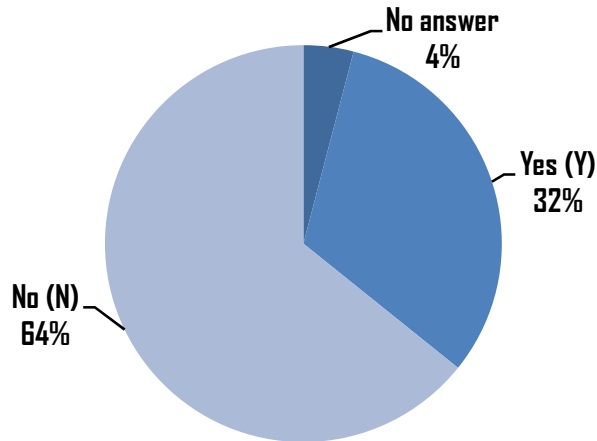


As seen with general marketing applications, social networking sites, such as Facebook, represent the most common tool used by companies to promote their trade show presence.

Measurement Practices

Prior to implementing social media as part of your exhibit-marketing efforts, did your company set any measurable objectives to gauge the effectiveness of the tool(s) used?

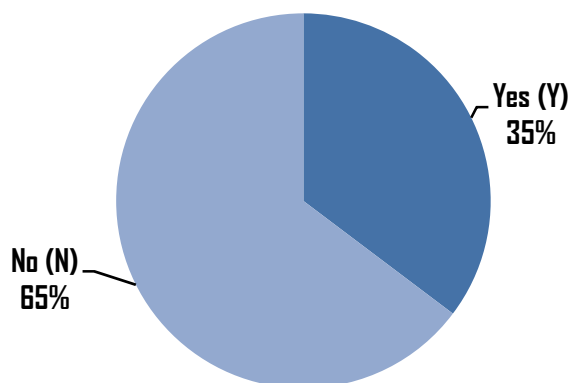
Set Measureable Objectives



Only one-third (32%) of companies, who've indicated that they employ social media for their exhibit-marketing, set measurable objectives prior to implementation.

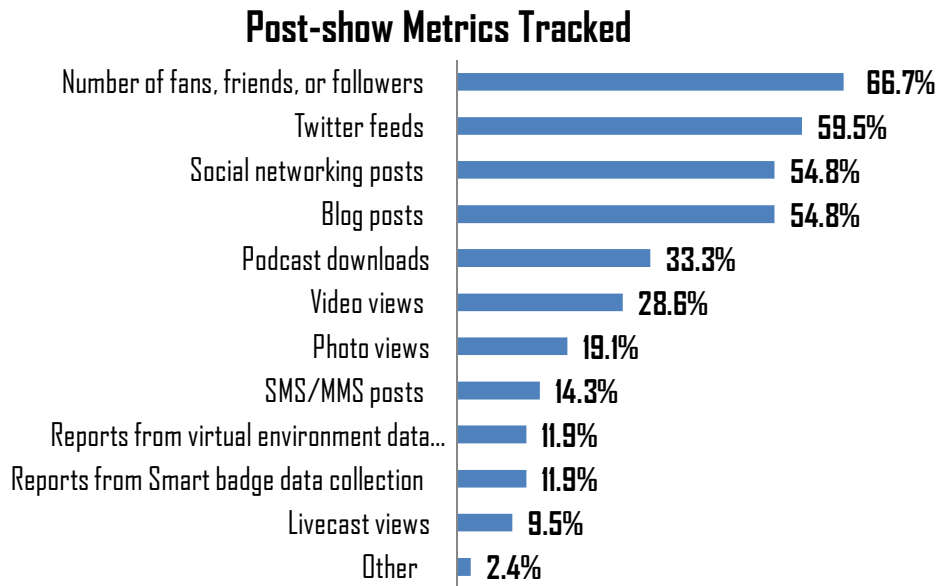
Following the trade show, did your company track any metrics related specifically to the use of social media as a marketing tool?

Post -show Metrics?



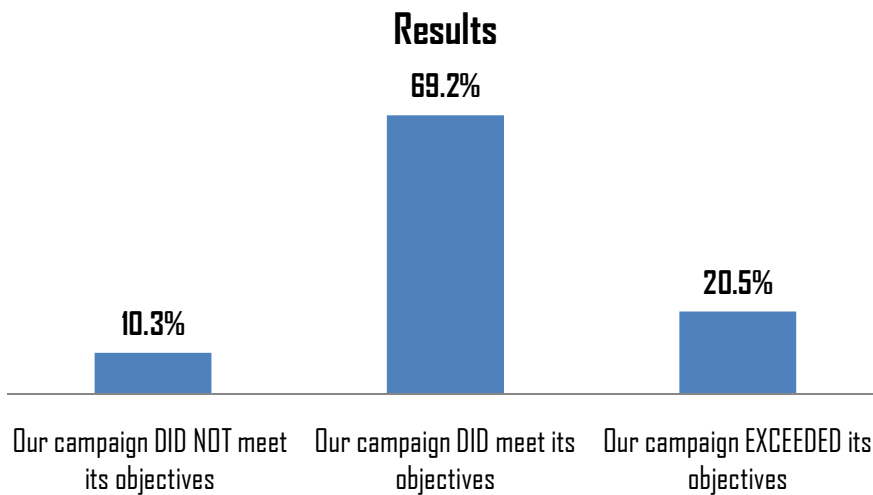
35% of companies who've used social media for exhibit-marketing, report that following a trade show, their company tracks or reports metrics related specifically to the use of social media as a marketing tool.

Which of the following metrics did you track/report?



As with general marketing, nearly two-thirds of marketers using social media for trade shows report number of participants as a method of tracking, followed by quantity of user-generated posts or feeds.

Did your social media campaign meet, not meet, or exceed your objectives?

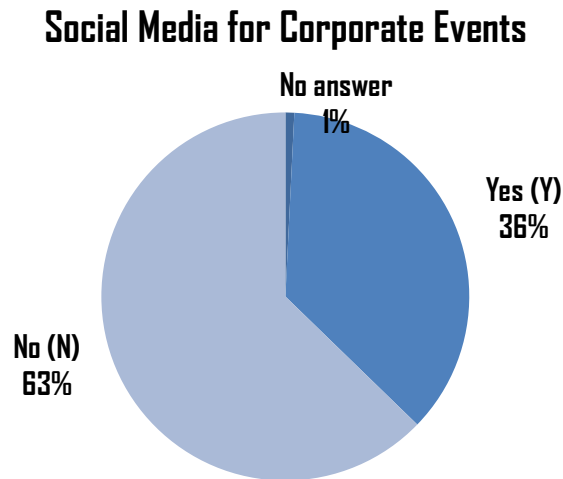


Nearly 90% of respondents feel their social media marketing campaigns are meeting or exceeding their trade show marketing objectives.

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING: EVENT - MARKETING

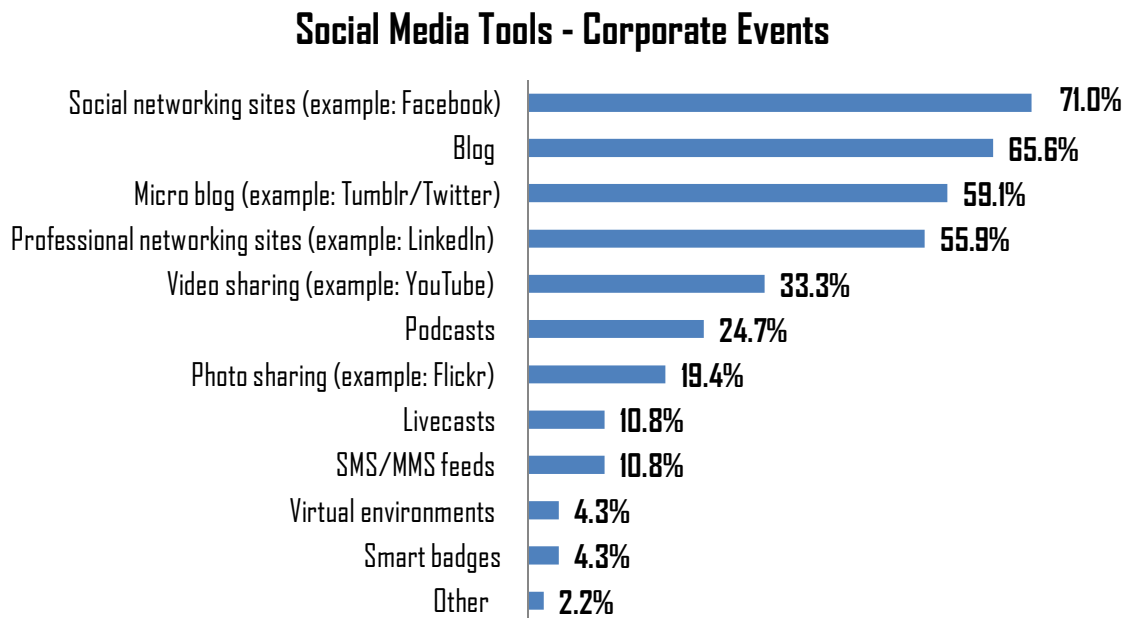
Usage

Has your company used social media as part of its event-marketing efforts before, during, or after a B2B corporate event?



36% report using social media as part of their event-promotion efforts.

Which of the following social media tools did you use to promote your event?

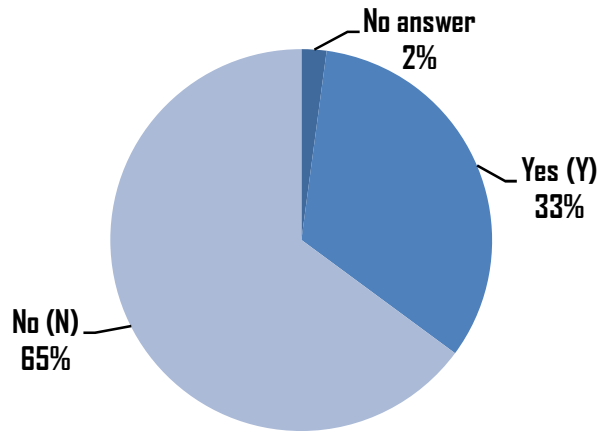


Social networking sites represent the most common tool used by companies to promote their corporate events.

Measurement Practices

Prior to implementing social media as a component of your event, did your company set any measurable objectives to gauge the effectiveness of the tool(s)?

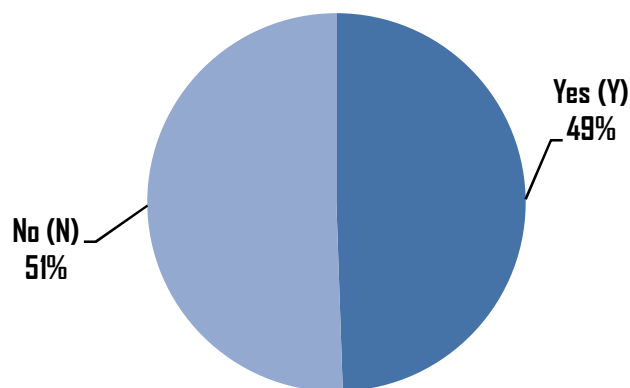
Set Measurable Objectives



One-third (33%) of companies, who've indicated that they employ social media for their corporate event-marketing, set measurable objectives prior to implementation.

Following the event, did your company track any metrics related specifically to the use of social media as a marketing tool?

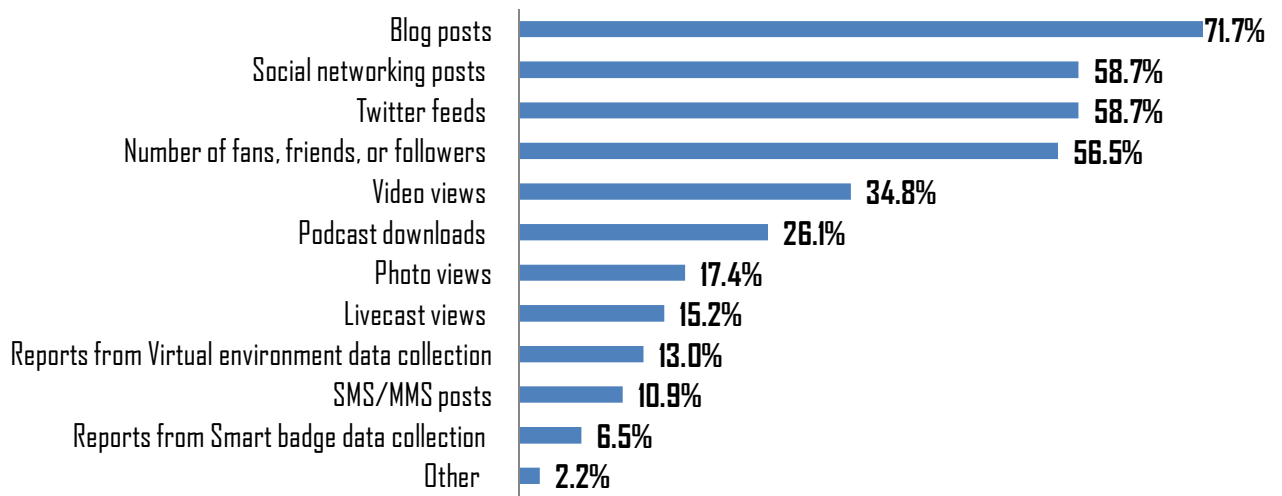
Post Event Metrics?



Nearly half of companies who've used social media for their events, report that following the event, their company tracks or reports metrics related specifically to the use of social media as a marketing tool.

Which of the following metrics did you track/report?

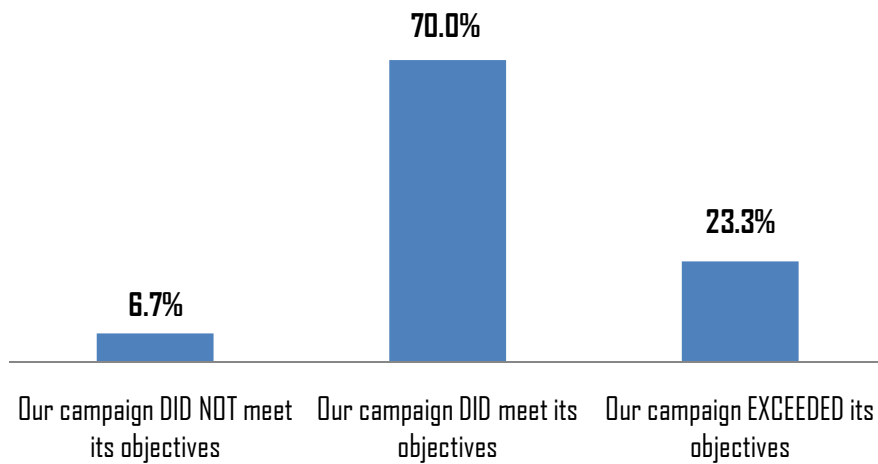
Post-event Metrics Tracked



Post event, Blog posts are the most widely-used metric applied to measuring social media.

Did your social media campaign meet, not meet, or exceed those objectives?

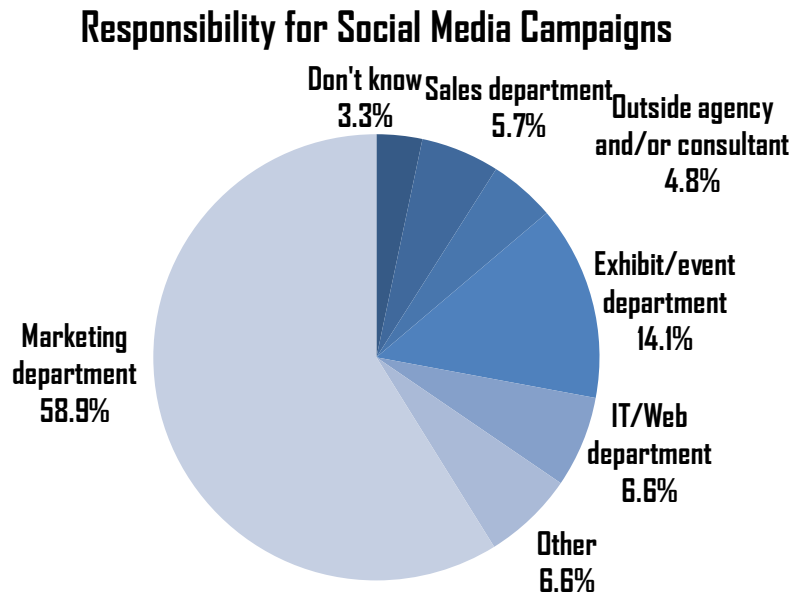
Results - Events



93.3% of respondents feel their social media marketing campaigns are meeting or exceeding their event-related objectives.

RESPONSIBILITIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

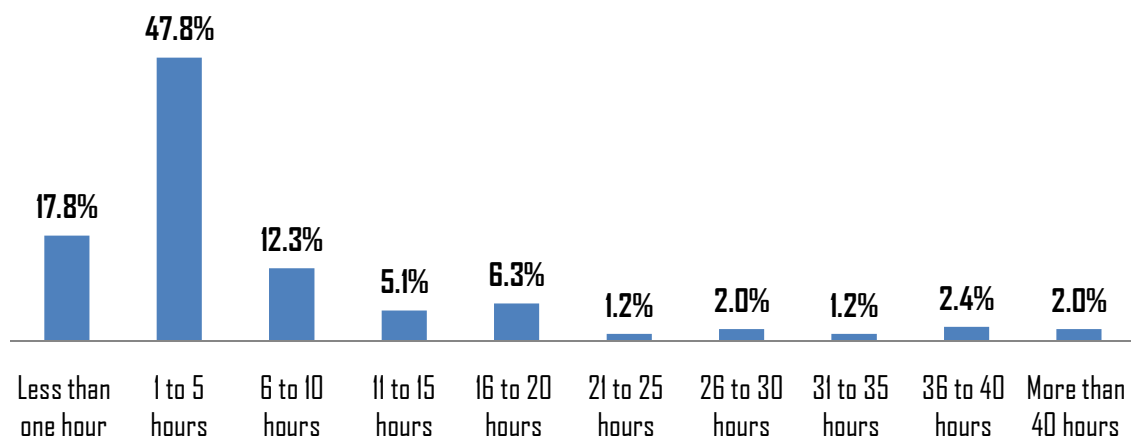
Who is responsible for your company's social media campaigns, as they relate to marketing objectives?



58.9% indicate that Social Media Campaigns responsibility resides with the Marketing Department.

On average, how many hours per week do you (or whoever is responsible for your company's social media efforts) dedicate to strategizing, executing, and monitoring your social media presence?

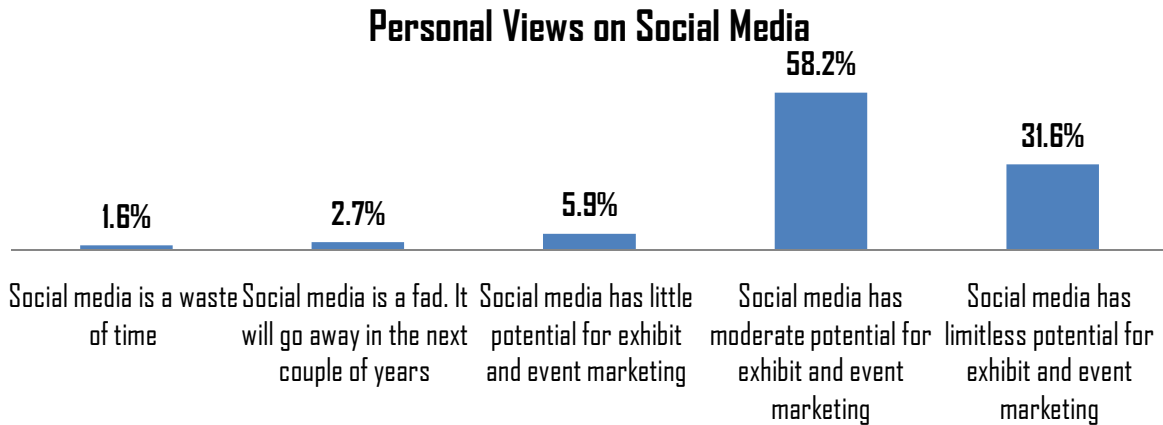
Time Spent per Week on Social Media Marketing



The average marketer spends five hours or less a week on Social Media Marketing.

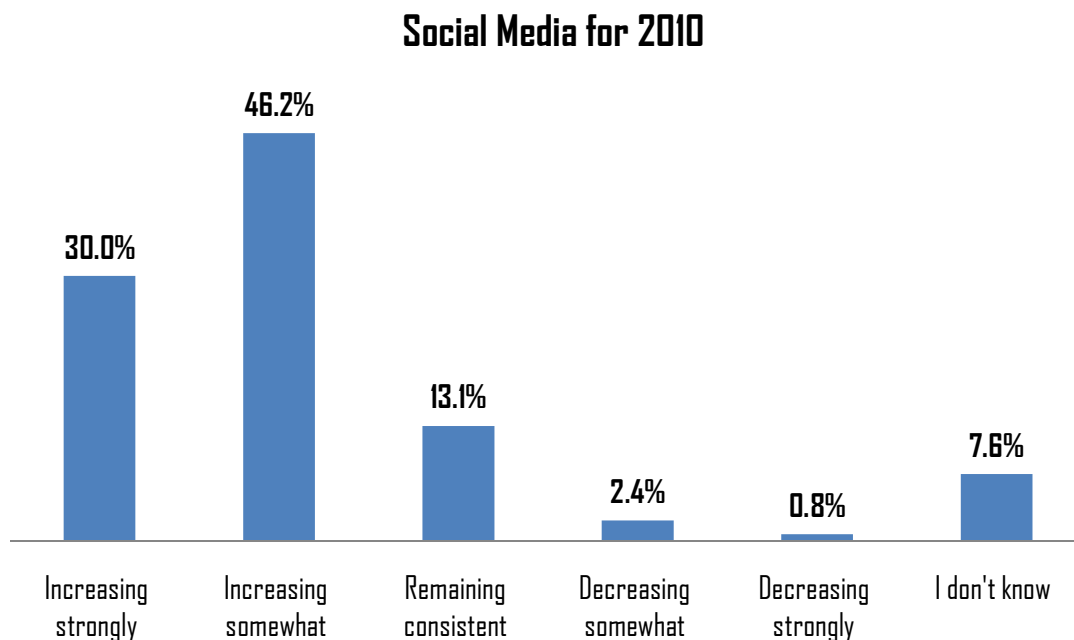
OPINIONS AND PERCEPTIONS

How do you personally view social media in the context of exhibit and event-marketing?



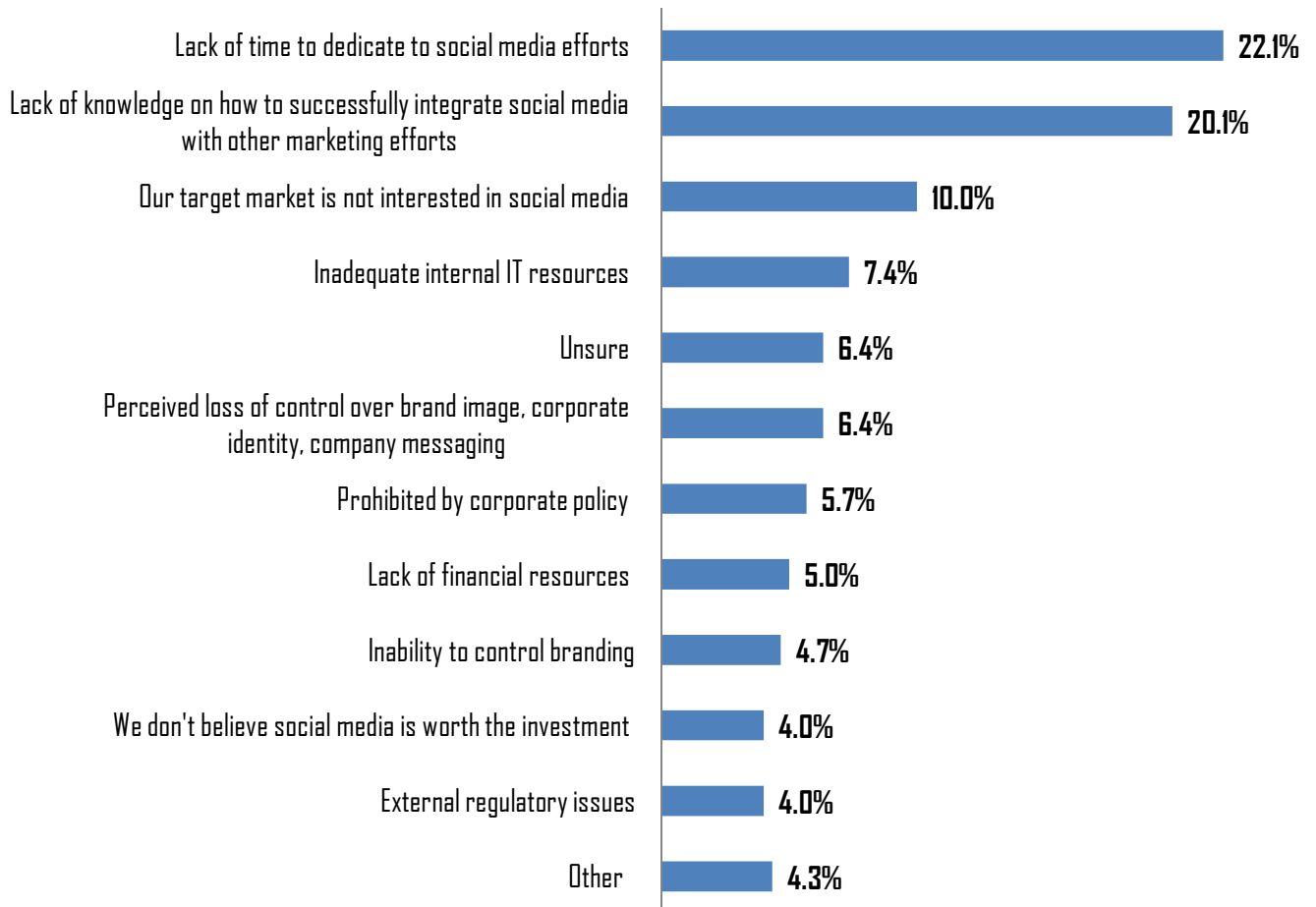
Overall, respondents who took this survey are strong advocates of social media in the context of exhibit and event-marketing. Nearly 9 out of 10 (89.8%) believe Social Media has moderate to unlimited potential for exhibit and event marketing.

Do you see the value and importance of social media as a marketing tool increasing or decreasing in the coming year?



If your company has never used social media as part of its marketing program, please indicate why not:

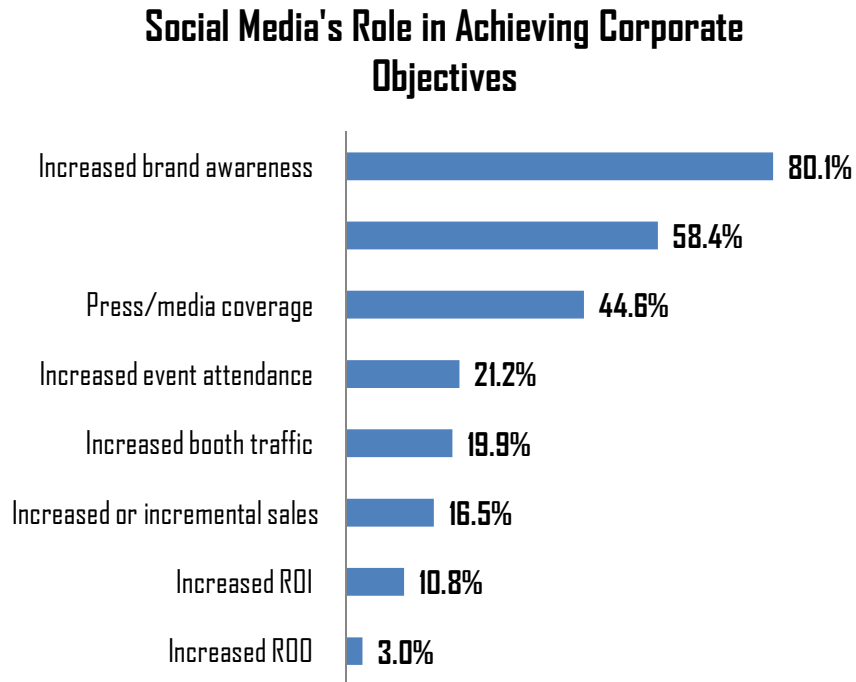
Internal Resistance to Implementing Social Media Marketing



The 34% of respondents to this survey who indicated that they do not use Social Media for Marketing cite a lack of time to dedicate to social media (22.1%) and lack of social media marketing knowledge (20.1%) as the top two reasons for not incorporating Social Media into their marketing efforts.

SOCIAL MEDIA'S ROLE IN ACHIEVING CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

Which of the following corporate objectives has social media helped you achieve?



Respondents to this survey indicate that Social Media, when employed for marketing purposes, can be a powerful tool for achieving Corporate Objectives.

80.1% of those using Social Media for Marketing claim increased brand awareness as a direct result. Other benefits include: improved relationships with clients and prospects (58.4%), media and press coverage (44.6%), increased event attendance (21.2%) and booth traffic (19.9%) and, increased or incremental increases in sales (16.5%).

Verbatim Responses to Open-Ended Questions:

The following quotes represent exhibit and event managers' responses to open-ended questions regarding their experience with and opinions of social media as a marketing tool.

"We have seen a huge uptick in Twitter usage lately. We have also seen more people checking out our live events online by logging in to Webcasts and listening to podcasts."

"Personally, I don't think social media is a good tool. I much prefer actually contacting people and feel that the whole social media world will be a passing fad."

"I wish I could see a better conversion from the time spent on social-media networking into real dollars."

"I think the value of social media really depends on what your company sells and who your target market is."

"For me, the most difficult part of social media is determining how effective it is, and when it becomes just another form of spam."

"Social-media participation is rarely an indicator of consumers' willingness to purchase. But it does allow us to stay connected to those consumers who wish to learn more about our products."

"We've placed some videos on Facebook and have a few followers. Social media is something that our company needs to be more involved in, and I'm sure a more formal strategy will be implemented soon."

"I have a sneaking suspicion that social media is more effective for business-to-consumer applications than it is for business-to-business marketing efforts."

"I don't really see any value to social media. It seems redundant with blogging and everyday Web-site applications."

"As much as I have read about social media, the benefits do not seem to apply to my company because our client base is not active in the online world."

"Using social media, we increased attendance at our regional meetings by 50 percent over prior years, and did so at about 50 percent of the cost."

"I'm not sure yet what companies are actually getting out of social media. There seems to be a huge cost, in terms of the time it takes to track/monitor social-media traffic. Am I really missing out on anything by not using it?"

"By using Twitter at a recent trade show, my company was able to drive brand awareness among attendees. We were also able to increase the amount of traffic to our booth."

"Every day I broadcast daily e-mail promotions on our Twitter account. We track clickthroughs and sales, and we can actually see incremental sales from our tweets. Twitter also allows us to extend our marketing reach to niche markets that aren't available to us otherwise."

“We have followers on Twitter and fans on Facebook, but I don’t think they’ve helped us increase sales. We don’t use those tools to their full potential, but partly because many businesses do not allow employees to visit social-media sites. So I think for business-to-business purposes, its value is limited.”

“Social media has increased our search engine optimization scores/rankings. We plan to continue using it as part of our marketing efforts.”

“I think social media is a joke, and don’t understand why are people so addicted to it.”

“It took us less than two months to generate over 65 followers via Twitter. That allowed us to directly interface with key local and trade industry media. This has increased our overall public relations efforts by 10 percent.”

“While the common blog has been around for awhile, I am finding it more useful in targeting our faithful customers and keeping them up to date on what is going on within our company. I also use it to tell them about new products/innovations we are considering so that we can get feedback from them.”

“I wish I had the extra time needed to learn more about social media and how to harness it properly for marketing purposes.”

“As a global company, we use most all of the available social-media tools and are constantly testing new things. Our proprietary blogs, with links to YouTube, have had the most reach and impact.”

“We filled seats at a sponsored event by using social media. Our direct-mail efforts cost money and filled three seats. Social media cost nothing and filled the remaining 17.”

“The use of a mix of social-media platforms has increased our booth attendance as well as increased participation in online events (Webinars, etc.) that translate directly into sales.”

“I’m not sure social media is ever going to become a powerful marketing tool. Blogs have shown some promise, as has Facebook, but I frown on people in my department surfing either of those, even in the name of research. It is too easy to get sidetracked and spend a significant amount of time to no end. We have found that even technically focused discussions tend to get off track before much good marketing or any real sharing of ideas has happened.”