

SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY

Benchmarks From The Agency Perspective

Agencies continue to be on the leading edge of social media trends. Your business can benefit from how agencies plan to overcome new obstacles to achieving important social media marketing objectives, based on their broad-range of client experience. Get the inside scoop in this report.



Marketing Automation Strategy Benchmarks for Small & Medium Business MarketCrest Presents Ascend2 Research Conducted in Partnership with SharpSpring

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Social media strategies agencies intend to use during 2015

In the sea of social networks and the millions of potential customers using them, it's time to start thinking strategically before planning tactically. What strategies will agencies use to achieve social media marketing success for themselves and their clients in the year ahead? What can small business learn from this research and how will it effect your current strategy?

To find out, SharpSpring and Ascend2 fielded the Social Media Strategy Survey and completed interviews with 327 marketing professionals; 156 of whom work for agencies that provide marketing solutions to other organizations and are represented in this report.

This report, titled Social Media Strategy Benchmarks from the Agency Perspective, presents a unique view of marketing challenges based on a variety of agency client marketing situations. We thank these busy agency marketers for sharing their valuable insights with you.



All the best,
Scott Berry, Managing Director



Social media used to be focused on lead gen and brand awareness, but now the top objective is to increase engagement with targeted audiences.

What are the MOST IMPORTANT OBJECTIVES for a social media strategy in the year ahead?

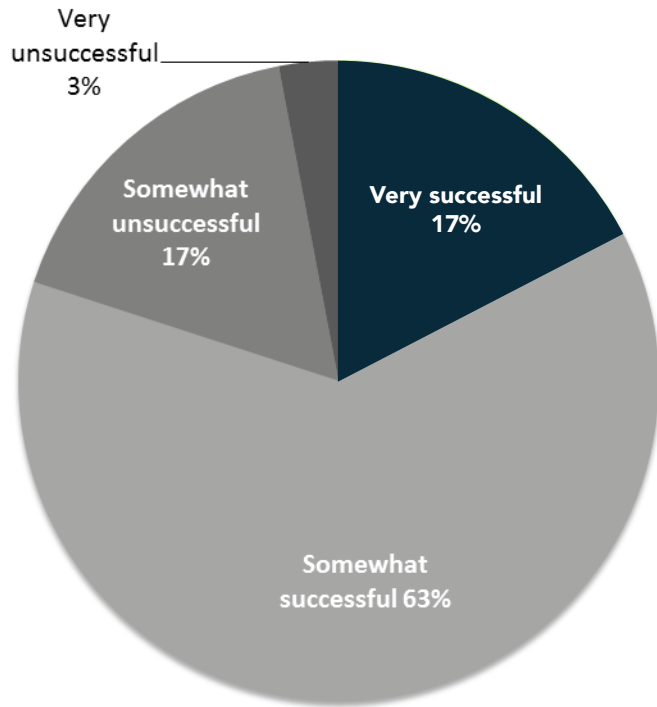


SPRING FORWARD

Different groups need a different message, even when the groups are all social, like Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter. Using dynamic content and behavioral-based tracking, serve each of these segments exactly what they're the most likely to respond to, which means a big lift in engagement.

Most agencies see some success with social media, but very few are capturing the full potential.

How do you RATE THE SUCCESS of social media marketing to achieve important objectives?

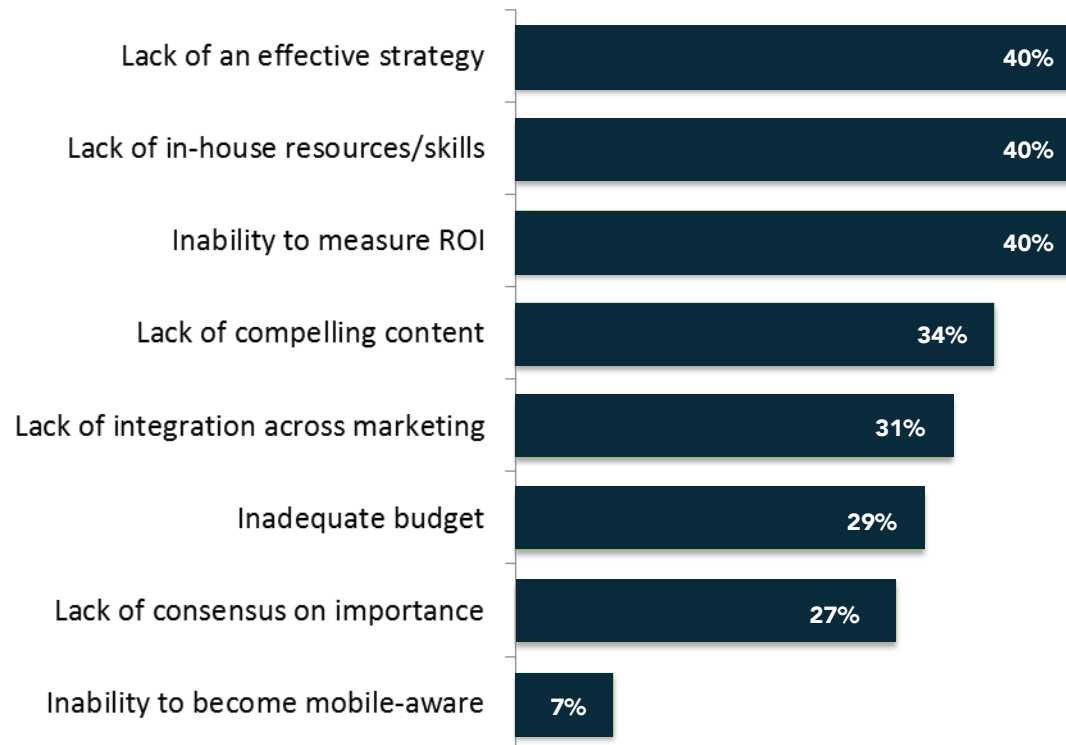


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Supercharge your social with content that matters to your audience. Did someone visit the site through Facebook? Send them a fun infographic with a social spin to it. From LinkedIn? Follow-up with a professional whitepaper. Segment your social audiences for special treatment, and watch engagement soar.

One of biggest roadblocks to social media marketing success for agencies is being able to measure ROI.

What are the MOST CHALLENGING OBSTACLES to social media marketing success?

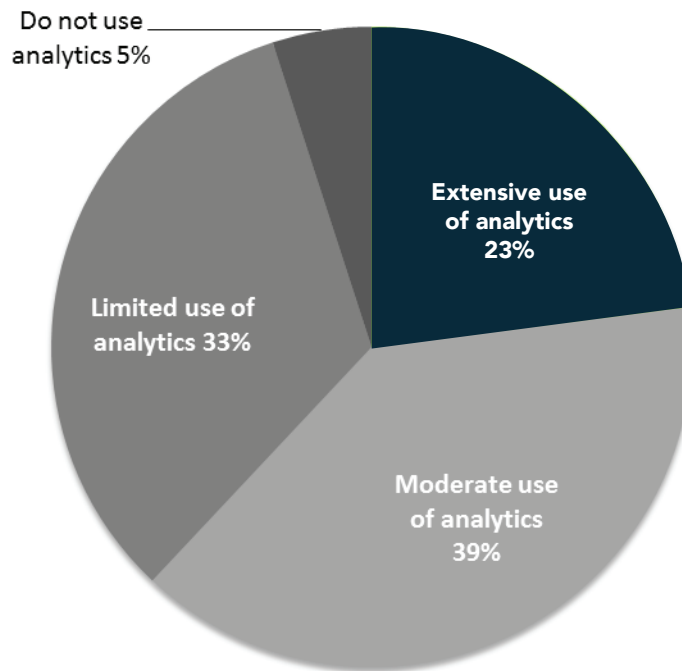


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This is an issue that permeates modern marketing: the lack of clear metrics for defining marketing success. Marketing automation is conquering the problem, though: follow leads from the very first site visit all the way through to closing the sale. This means a complete end-to-end ROI for every tactic, so you can double down on what works and axe what doesn't.

Agencies are incorporating analytics to track social media success, but there's still a lot that's being missed.

To what extent are ANALYTICS USED to gauge social media marketing performance?

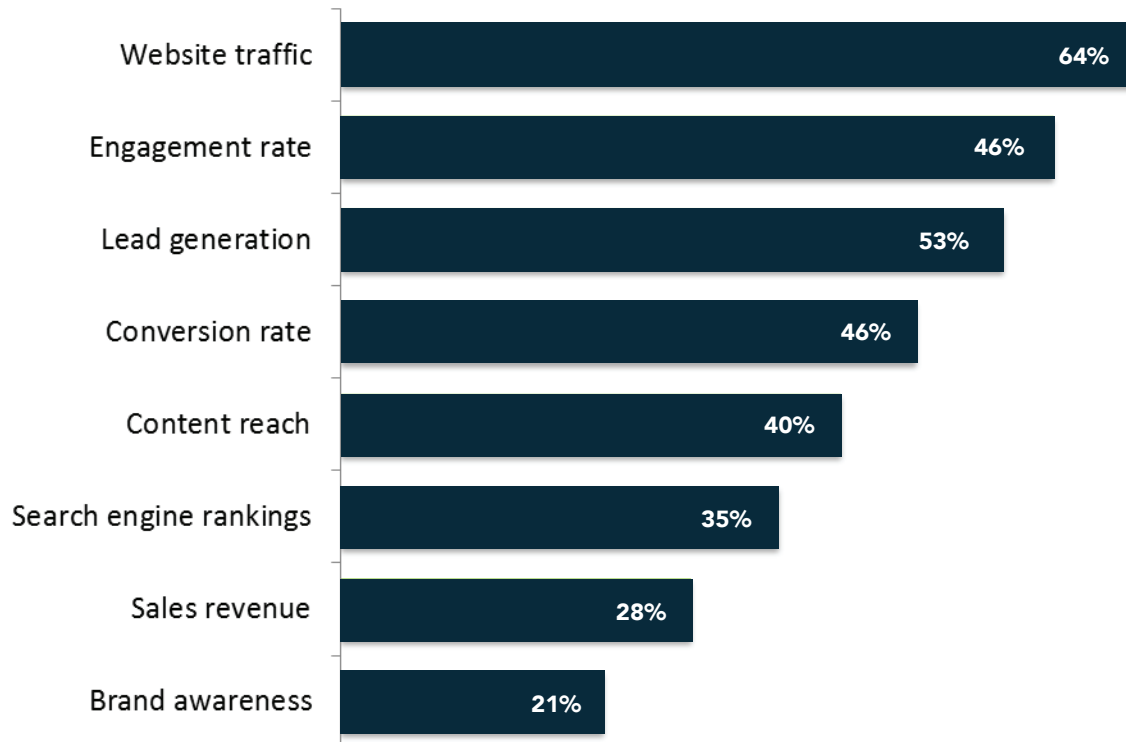


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It's no longer enough to just be able to say that a click came from Facebook or LinkedIn, which isn't a great indicator of potential revenue. You need to know how well those clicks convert on your landing page, how likely those conversions are to become a sale, and be able to A/B test social ads and landing pages to optimize your marketing. In short, what's expected is both full click-to-sale conversion so you know what's driving revenue, and proactive optimization so you can drive even more revenue with the stuff that works.

Traditionally agencies have relied mainly on website traffic to judge social media marketing performance because it is easier to track than some more relevant metrics like engagement, lead generation, and conversion rate. But that's changing...

Which of the following METRICS are tracked to gauge social media marketing performance

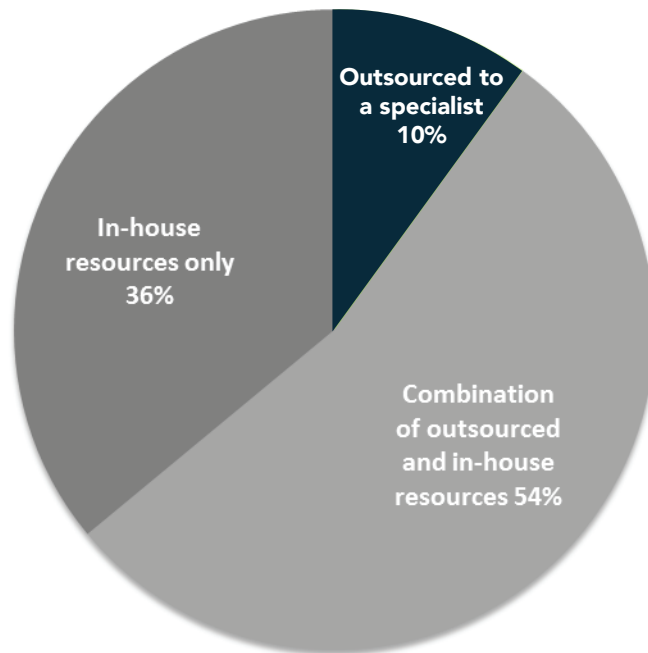


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Website traffic gives you a vague idea of whether all your marketing efforts together are working, but it doesn't give you the granularity to say 'PPC isn't working, LinkedIn is working and Facebook drives a lot of traffic but doesn't really impact our bottom line.' By tracking the behavior and source of visitors, you can accurately track engagement separately for each social source, as well as how likely a visit from a source is to generate a lead or sale. You can focus on quality traffic, not just raw traffic. That means you can optimize your marketing spend and get more for less.

Almost two-thirds of agencies rely on outsourcing to achieve their social media marketing goals.

*Which best describes the **RESOURCES USED** to perform social media marketing?*

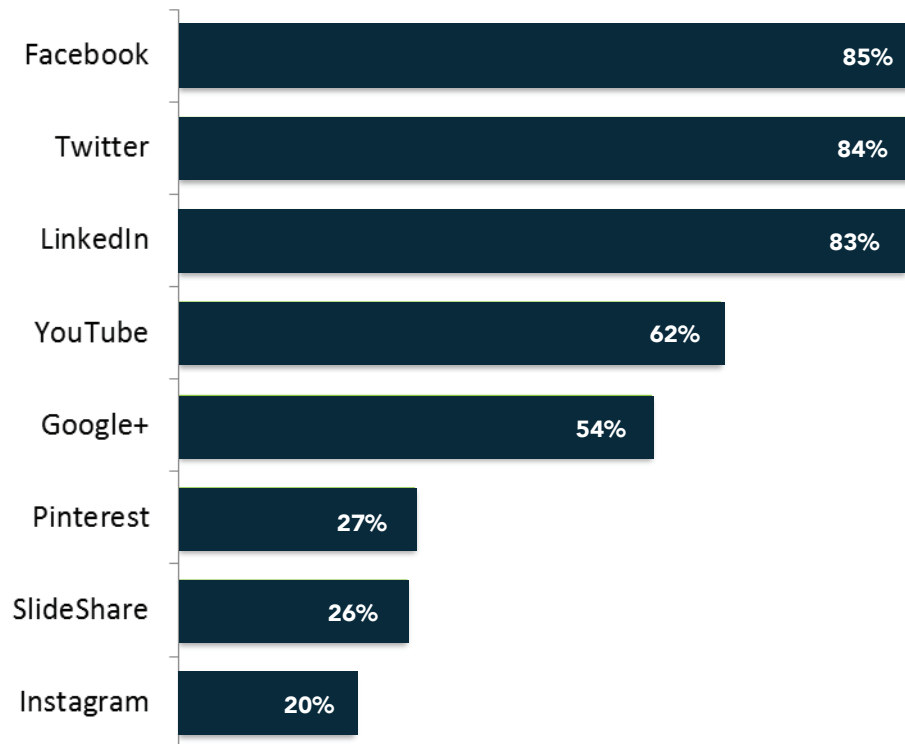


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A large part of why so many agencies rely on outside help to drive social media marketing forward is because the traditional tools to manage it are clunky, complicated and expensive. The trend is moving toward more integrated, intuitive and affordable. As the specialized tools of niche firms are made accessible to everyone, agencies are taking on more responsibility in-house, which means higher margins, more billable hours and stronger retainer-based relationships.

The three top social platforms that agencies market with are still Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, but YouTube is catching up as the 'Year of Video' continues.

Which of the following SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS does your company use for marketing purposes?

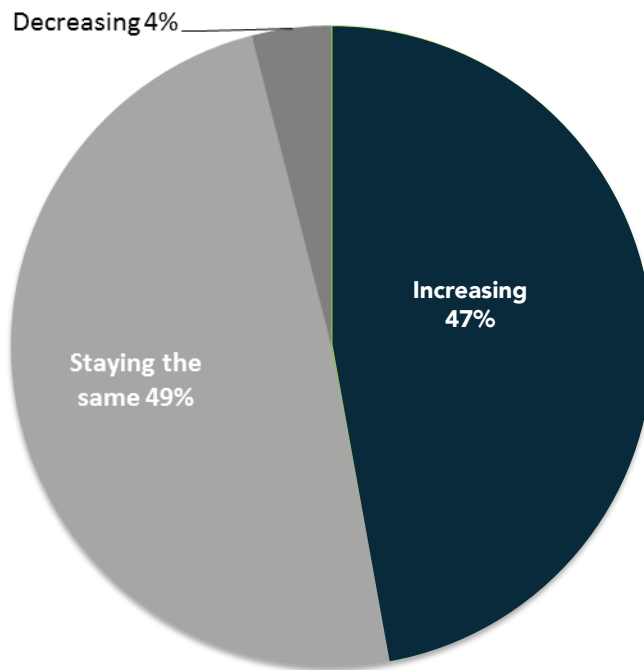


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Videos are the rising stars of lead nurturing this year. YouTube makes it easy to distribute easily digestible content, which helps move leads down the sales cycle. As YouTube becomes more interactive with linked content as part of the actual video, it will continue to grow as a powerful tool to promote engagement. Links in video also mean you can use marketing automation to actually see which parts of your videos are driving the most conversions (such as having the referral parameter of a link change ever 30 seconds).

Agencies are signaling with their wallets that social media is going to play a key role in driving engagement in 2015.

How is the BUDGET CHANGING for social media marketing?



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As agencies accelerate social media spending, it's even more important to know what those dollars are really buying. Track exactly which sources are driving conversions, which sources aren't but are pushing people down the sales cycle and wasting marketing dollars.

Research Methodology And Survey Demographics

Ascend2 benchmarks the performance of popular digital marketing strategies and practices using a standardized questionnaire, research methodology and 3-Minute Survey format. Findings are examined in a quantitative context by experienced analysts and reported objectively.

This survey was conducted online from a panel of more than 50,000 US and international marketing, sales and business professionals. The following is a breakout of the demographics represented in this report:

Agency Location

- North America 71%
- Europe 13%
- Other 16%

Number of Employees

- More than 500 11%
- 50 to 500 15%
- Fewer than 50 74%

Role in the Agency

- CEO / COO / CMO / CSO etc 53%
- Marketing VP / Director / Manager 21%
- Sales VP / Director / Manager 4%
- Marketing or Sales Staff 12%
- Other 11%

ABOUT THE RESEARCH PARTNERS



Helping Organizations Compete & Grow- Real world marketing and sales services to help your business reach, attract and win valuable clients.

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