



GLOBAL SOCIAL MEDIA MARKET SURVEY 2020





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INTRODUCTION

Mastering social media analytics is the end game for every marketer across the globe right now. And if you talked to 2,621 of them, you'd end up with almost as many perspectives on different aspects of it, because there are many moving parts in the online analytics puzzle.

One thing they all agree on: the golden ring of analytics is capturing accurate audience insight to inform strategy. And whatever budget each is working with to accomplish this task right now comes with a correspondingly aggressive, bordering on excessive, ROI requirement. And this is particularly true in light of COVID-19 concerns.

Marketers are not only feeling the pressure to connect meaningfully with segments and move them through the purchase funnel, but also to find tools that will help them make the most of the massive quantities of data available to them. Tools that can capture and/or integrate the structured and unstructured data sources they have to contend with, and map it all out in a way that informs strategic decision making.

In this report, we'll see how marketers, spanning a wide swath of categories, are using social analytics to generate awareness and grow businesses in these challenging times.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Listening online is something everyone is doing, to some extent—but few are doing it in a way that justifies the spend, which leads some to question devoting any spend to it at all! Even those deriving seemingly significant insight from their efforts are leaving potential consumers, and cash, on the table, because they're not getting everything they could out of the process.

Understanding the importance of accuracy and how powerful social analytics can be when done well is something every CEO should brush up on, and increasingly—they are.

This study surveyed 2,621 senior marketers across the globe to explore how they're using social to move businesses forward. We have insight from expert professionals who are using social to inform campaign strategy and measure results; monitor brand health; manage customer care; respond to crises; generate exceptional ROI and identify influencers. But many are also (unintentionally) leaving wiggle room for competitors to swoop in. We'll be highlighting that too!

FINDINGS

- 35% of our respondents are agencies, able to capture a wide variety of brand categories at clients, thanks to social data destroying learning curves.
- There were many industries poised for growth at the start of 2020. Right now, with this 'new normal,' it's really anyone's game, assuming they master the associated online component.
- Risks to global business are growing and changing daily, with technology figuring prominently in a variety of ways.
- Digital transformation is happening at an accelerated rate, with brands finding themselves thrust into a landscape with unanticipated needs and new competitors for a leery consumer base.
- Competition is fierce, with 472 million entrepreneurs worldwide attempting to start 305 million companies last year and struggling harder than ever to stay afloat this year.



- Businesses are failing because they're unable to understand/meet shifting market needs in light of COVID-19. Social analytics would change that.
- Nearly 60% of respondents use social analytics to inform strategic decisions
- 13% aren't using social analytics for campaigns at all, and that leaves an opportunity for competitors to best them in a very basic way.
- Of our respondents, fewer than 50% are using ad hoc, home grown or free options, which is akin to using none at all. But the good news? It's a 10% gain over last year!
- 85% agreed that measuring the impact of social media is key to the success of any campaign
- By 2021, it's predicted that 4 billion people will be using social media, so the eventuality of every audience inhabiting some social platform seems likely.

BUSINESSES RETHINK POSITIONING, THANKS TO PANDEMIC

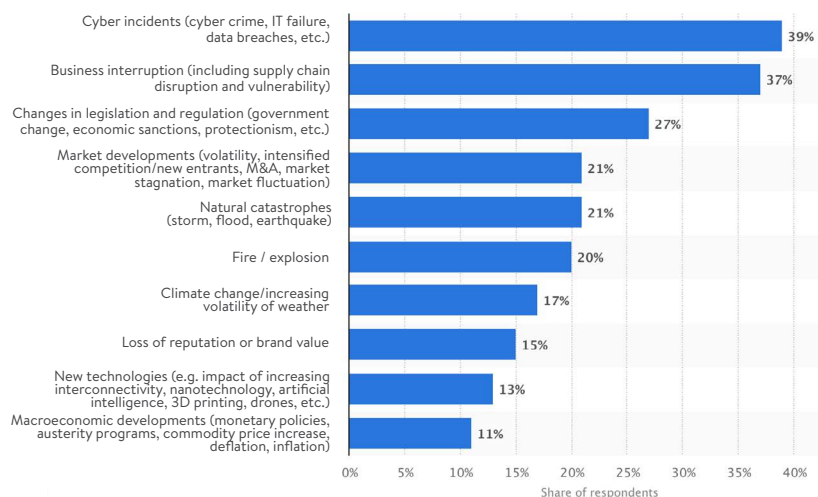
As we reported last year, business around the world was booming, with the 2,000 largest public companies found in 61 different countries across the globe.¹ And beyond COVID-19, which has been a destructive force for many, there are additional risks to global business that are growing as well. And, among them, we see technology figuring prominently in a variety of ways:²

With technology as both an entry point and risk to businesses, if your brand hasn't tapped into the online global marketplace (powered by social listening), it's high time to get on board. Here's why:³

- *You can extend the sales life of existing products and services by finding new markets to sell them in.*
- *You can reduce your dependence on the markets you have developed in whatever geography you currently inhabit.*
- *If your business is plagued by destabilizing fluctuations in your markets due to seasonal changes or demand cycles, you can explore markets with different or even countercyclical fluctuations.*
- *You'll learn how to compete against foreign companies-and even take the battle to them on their own ground.*

Operating on leaner, meaner budgets is always important—and technology has helped make that happen, in general. More specifically, online has created the ability to generate greater ROI—but this only happens when it's done right—and particularly right now. With advertisers **investing ever more money into digital properties**, despite cutting spending everywhere else, you can be sure they know something you don't. And the message is clear: get your digital strategy in order—or else. It's predicted that “social media ad spend will grow 23% in the third quarter and 32% in the fourth quarter.”

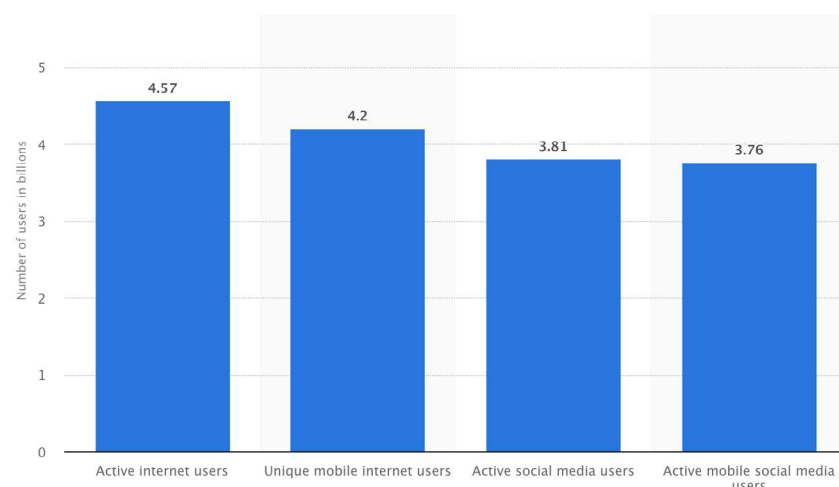
Figure 1. Risks to global businesses in 2020



So how do you get in on this place to be? With informed understanding, as the short-term introduction can be scary. Marketing online actually costs more than many businesses expect/budget for. And those who have come to recognize that the long-term gain associated is well worth the investment have pulled out ahead of competitors.

Digital transformation has either begun for businesses or they have closed—possibly permanently, as the world moves online at an ever-faster rate. There's little choice as they cannot transact business in-person as before. And with 4.57 billion people active online globally, which is approximately 59% of the world's population, brands in the know are eager to connect with consumers there. And they're making meaningful, brand loyalty-inducing connections with their (and your) customers right now:

Figure 2. Global digital population as of July 2020 (in billions)⁴



But the outlook is far from bleak. Offering an inversely proportional ROI, thanks to outreach tactics able to scale as fast as the business it generates, online marketing powered by artificial intelligence is a disruptive force. With it, brands can identify white space and swoop in to capture new audiences. It's ripe with and expanded audience offering amazing opportunities for success.

Touted a top sector to invest in,⁵ eCommerce continues to explode, with no end in sight—and now mCommerce (mobile commerce) as become part of the online marketing nomenclature.

Just looking at who is running the digital components of the businesses surveyed speaks to this trend. There's a growing understanding of the critical importance of social and companies making changes to how they run their businesses as a result.

¹ **Global 2000: The World's Largest Public Companies** [source: <https://www.forbes.com/global2000/#67a7936e335d>]

² **Risks to Global Business in 2020** [source: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/422171/leading-business-risks-globally/>]

³ **How to Take Your Company Global** [source: <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/159252>]

⁴ **Source:** <https://www.statista.com/statistics/617136/digital-population-worldwide/>

⁵ **8 Fast-growing Industries to Invest in Right Now** [source: <https://www.fool.com/slideshow/8-fast-growing-industries-invest-right-now/?slide=10>]

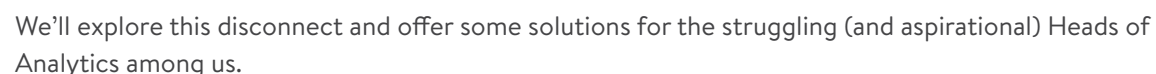


It's important to start with who we surveyed for this report, as the range of duties these marketers are responsible for has permanently shifted. In previous years, we'd see a larger number of entry-level employees responsible for social at a business. Today though, respondents ranged from managers coordinating efforts for niche business units within a company to a number of CMO and COO functions.

And there's a noticeable shift, a proclivity brands demonstrate of late, toward attracting these highly specialized brand managers by labeling their contributions accordingly. We're seeing mostly managers and directors or higher heading social analytics efforts. And their titles speak to this targeted focus, including Digital Engagement Managers, Insights Analysts, Integrated Media Managers, Strategists, Social Intelligence Leads, Marketing Intelligence, Research Managers, Shopper Insights Managers and even a Sociologist and a Research Professor, speaking to how amazingly in-tune social analytics are with society as a whole.

Marketing Sciences has expanded its purview even beyond Data Science to include Media Directors, Digital Producers, AR Managers (yes, augmented reality) and Audience Director. And we always have Founders, Presidents and Innovators. The titles defy neat organization.

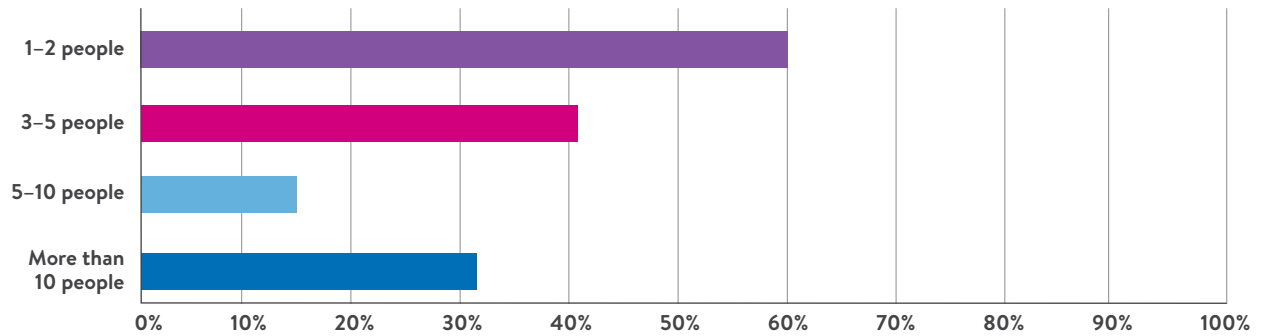
Figure 3. The amount spent on social analytics tools today



6



Figure 4. The number of people in organizations using social analytics on a regular basis



Although we see that many businesses only task 1–2 people with social, there’s a significant 32% of those surveyed making social analytics the purview of many. This can either speak to a drive to break down silos, along with an amazing appreciation of in-depth analytics, captured in compelling dashboards and discussed at daily team meetings—or it could signal a large group adopting a scattershot approach.

The ways social is being used across these organizations offers insight around each approach. We’ll speak to that very soon.

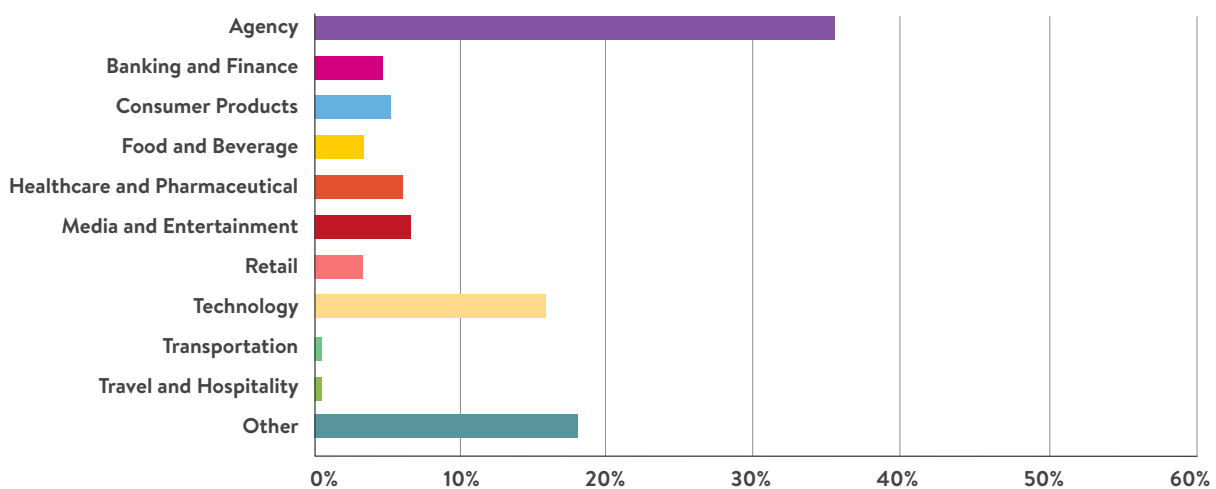
But which companies are we talking about in this report? Our survey respondents spanned a wide range of industries, generating an equally impressive range of revenue.

INDUSTRIES AND REVENUE REPRESENTED

Depending on where you look and how you slice the data, there are many industries poised for growth in the coming years. And it’s really anyone’s game, assuming they master the associated online component. In a world where Pet Rocks can go viral,⁶ creating and capturing buzz is paramount.

In this report, we’ve surveyed a representative sample of industry leaders in Banking and Finance, Consumer Products, Food and Beverage, Healthcare and Pharmaceutical, Media and Entertainment, Retail, Technology, Transportation, and Travel and Hospitality.

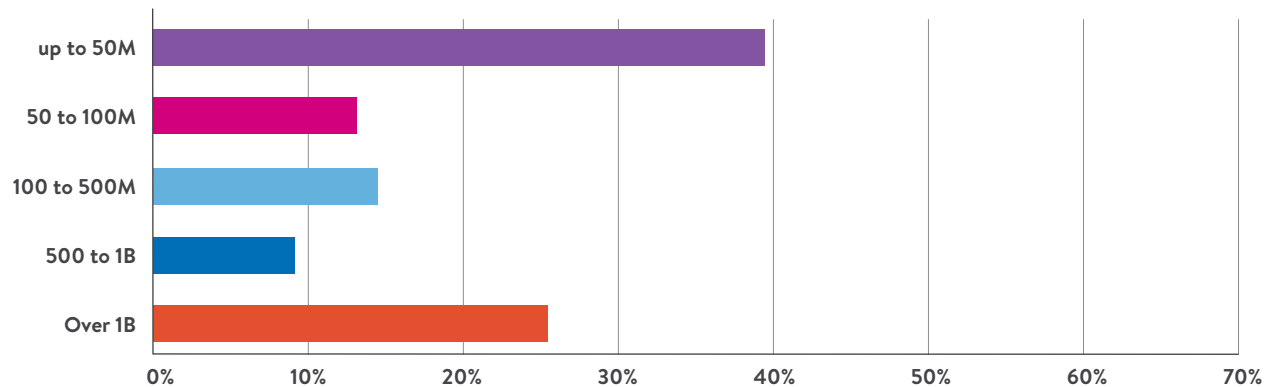
Figure 5. Industry



Nearly 60% of our respondents were from companies reporting more than 50 million in annual revenue, so they have lots of skin in the game. And there are quite a few competitors at their heels, with nearly as many potential disruptors coming in to view, reporting revenues under 50 million, with an eye toward expansion.

According to one estimate,⁸ there are “472 million entrepreneurs worldwide attempting to start 305 million companies, [and] approximately 100 million new businesses (or one third) will open each year around the world.”

Figure 6. Size of company by revenue



SETTING BRANDS & AGENCIES AHEAD OF COMPETITORS

We see 35% of our respondents identifying as are agencies, which rarely fall neatly into one category and a solid stealth showing from our “other” category at 18%. In the past, these agencies (and “others”) would have been forced to very narrowly specialize in one niche area to be able ensure relevant guidance/ mastery of the vertical, but this is far from necessary today.

Social makes every category accessible, every learning curve quickly manageable. “I can align pitches with my customers thinking.”

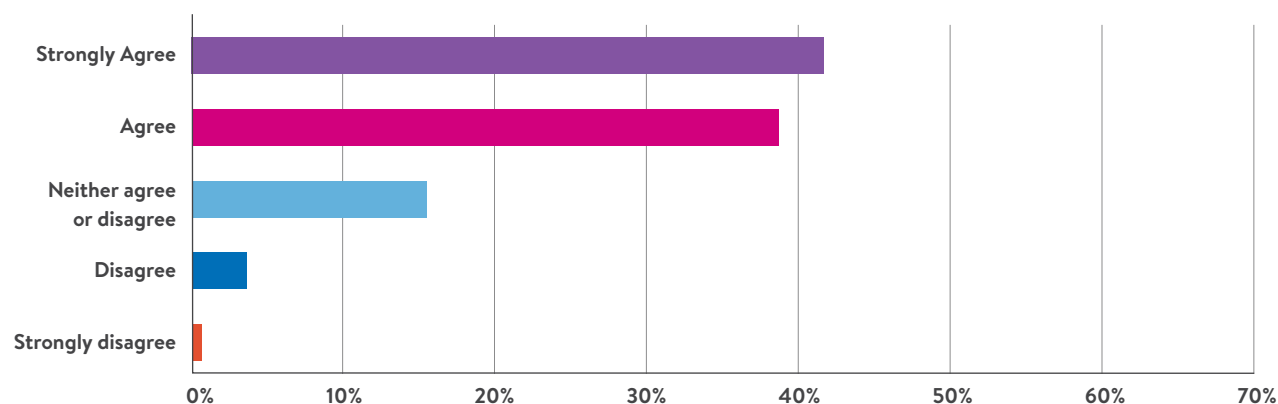
We’ll explore how and why this is true very soon, but for now it’s good to know that social insight not only supports brands in their quest for audience understanding, but also agencies when pursuing niche engagements that they wouldn’t have a chance landing otherwise. It offers a competitive advantage.

And both brands and agencies have lots of competition to worry over. Online has made every industry global, so brands now expect agencies to be on the cutting edge of marketing technology advances, and be experts in everything “online.” It’s what they’re paying for:

⁶ **Pet Rocks** [source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pet_Rock]



Figure 7. The % of brands that expect agencies to provide social media analytics as standard for the roll-out of any campaign



But that doesn't mean that most brands actually practice what they preach. They may want social insight, but they aren't paying enough attention to it. We'll explore the odd disconnect around this a bit further in the report.

And—hold on to your hats—social analytics could have helped with just about all of the reasons why many businesses fail. The percentages below indicate causes for failure—and most could have been informed by (and avoided) using AI-powered social analytics:²

- o No market need: 42%
- o Ran out of cash: 29%
- o Not the right team: 23%
- o Got outcompeted: 19%
- o Pricing / Cost issues: 18%
- o User un-friendly product: 17%
- o Product without a business model: 17%
- o Poor marketing: 14%
- o Ignore customers: 14%
- o Product mistimed: 13%

Now imagine what will happen if/when these failing businesses master social listening and direct that newfound audience understanding toward creating products and services the market craves—and that investors clamor to support?

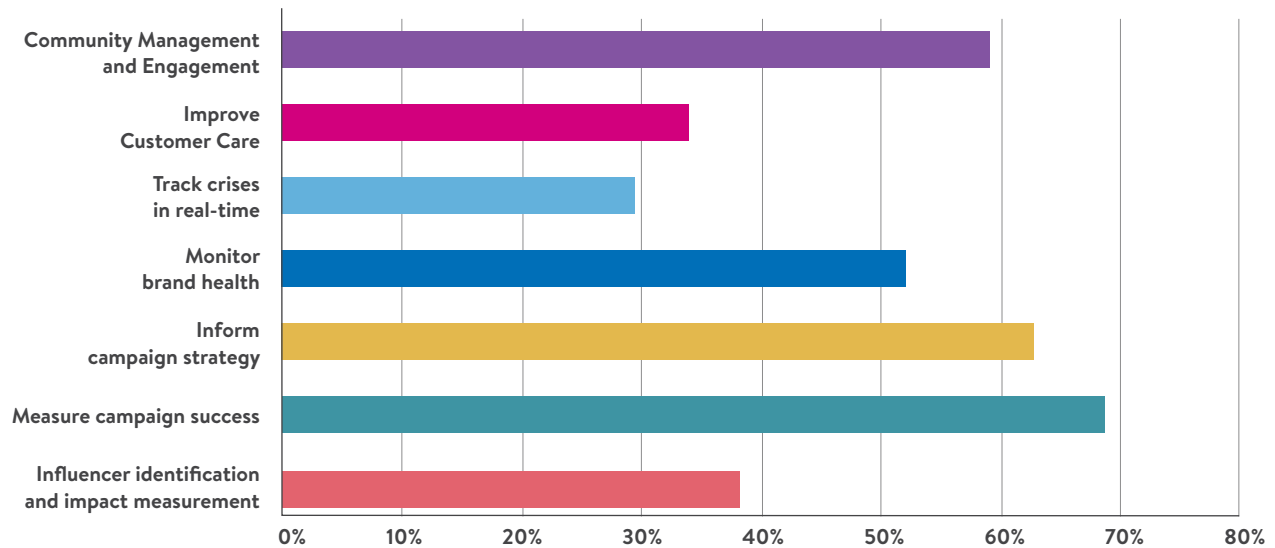
Let's just hope that doesn't happen ahead of existing brands making sense of it all and capturing that competitive advantage.

HOW SOCIAL ANALYTICS KEEPS MARKETS MOVING FORWARD

The marketing experts and industries surveyed comprise an array of categories and geographies, but those differences melt away when asked to share their primary uses for social analytics data. They all agree that social analytics data is what keeps markets moving forward—and we'll share how this looks for each way surveyed (below), along with a few others.



Figure 8. The primary uses for social analytics data



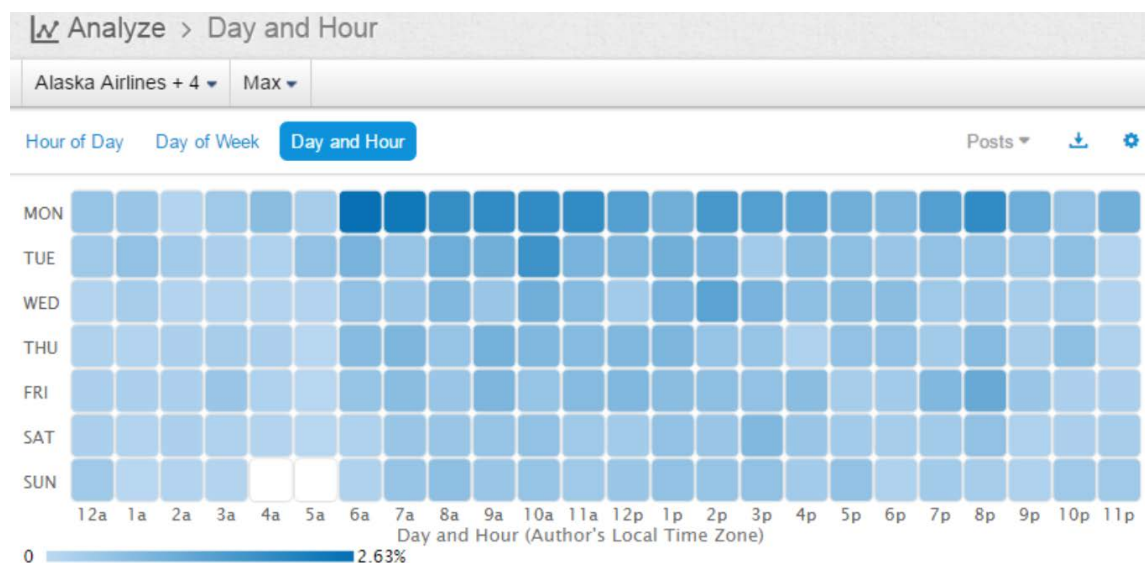
COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT & ENGAGEMENT

Community management can mean lots of things, but as we have customer care as its own activity, we'll focus on how it uncovers the unmet needs of current and prospective customers, while generating meaningful and brand-beneficial engagement.

It's usually our top selected social analytics activity, unseated by campaign planning and measurement. And either way, our survey respondents had lots to say about community management and engagement in the open-ended portions of our query. That's because general outreach, brand-building and awareness top every marketer's 'to do' list each day. Well, that and attracting qualified leads, of course.

"It helps you understand your audience and develop more effective content for them." And it also helps solve the mystery that forever plagues marketers—when to post for maximum impact:

Figure 9. Analyzing when to post for maximum impact

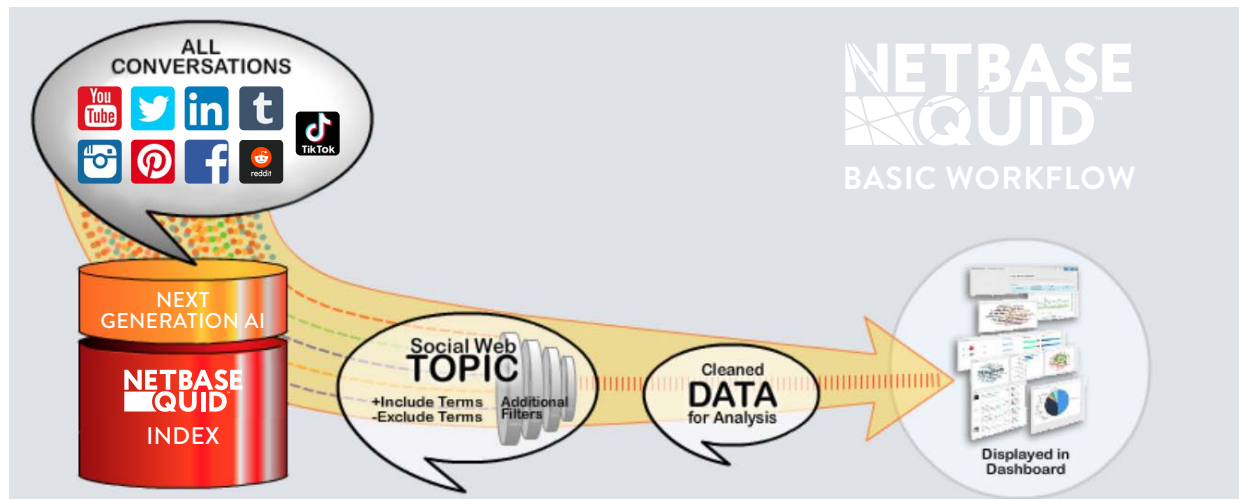


“It offers better insight into what people are talking about, and when, as well as helping us to uncover trends that we previously had no way of identifying.”

Before delving in to day and hour data, brands have framed the topics they want to explore, of course. And they accomplish this, by asking themselves:

- o What aspects of this category are important for our business or industry right now?
- o What part of our business do we want to improve and what part is possible to improve right now?
- o What do we already know from other data sources? What existing ideas, assumptions, or theories do we want to validate or elaborate in this category?
- o What areas of this category can we explore to find new ideas or innovate? Which elements of the category are most authentic with our brand?

Those answers are used to generate topics for powerful online searches that are combined with existing data that can be aggregated and analyzed to inform campaign strategies!

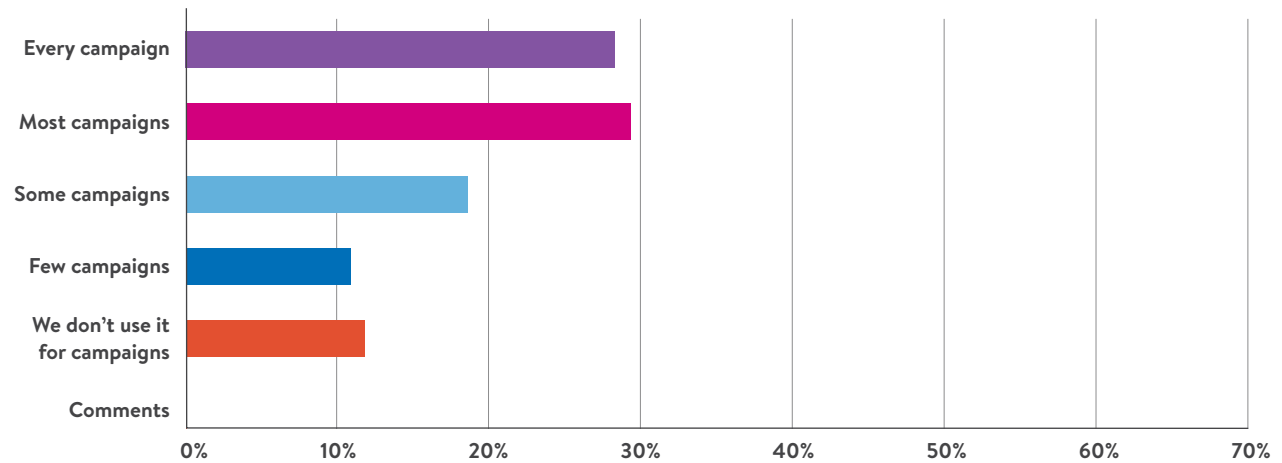


INFORM CAMPAIGN STRATEGY & MEASURE SUCCESS

Strategic decisions must be made in real-time to stay competitive—63% of respondents shared they use social analytics data to inform campaign strategy, but as with most things—intent does not translate to actual usage.

We see 57% of respondents claiming to use social analytics for every or *most* campaign strategy planning session. And 30% only for ‘few’ or ‘some’ of their campaign planning, with 13% not using it for campaigns at all. And that leaves an opportunity for competitors to best them in a very basic way.

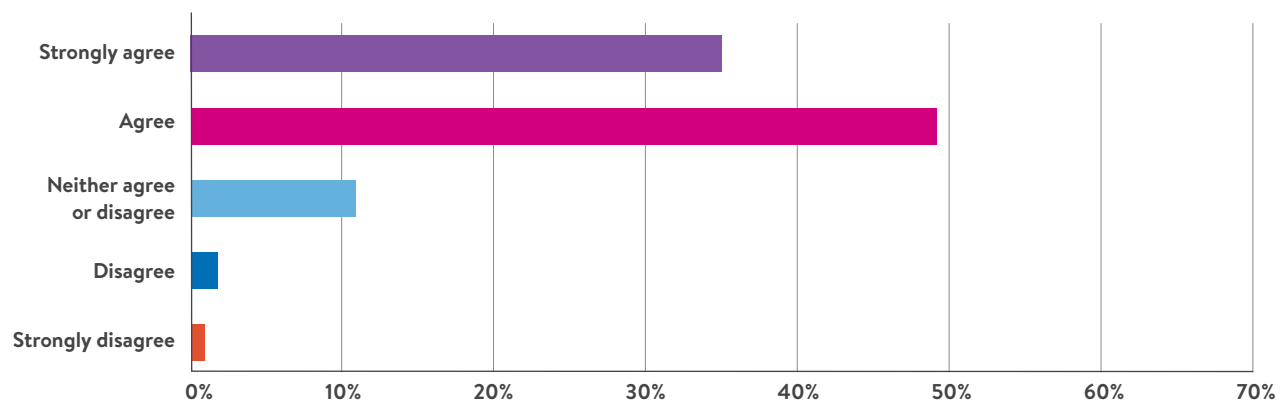
Figure 10. The percentage of time social media analytics is used in campaign strategies



Having a level of comfort with actually using social analytics to inform strategy (and not just intending to use it for big rollouts) is important for analyzing results as you go.

How else are they measuring campaign success? We see that most agree, to strongly agree, that social media impact is an important metric to inform strategic decision-making:

Figure 11. The importance of social media as a metric in informing strategic decision making



And their open-ended elaborations bear this out:

“We are able to learn from our mistakes and tweak future campaigns to ensure better results,” shares one astute respondent. “Data is the basis for all strategy,” and it “provides more accurate estimates of spend/ result and where diminishing returns begin.”

And why wouldn't they? With campaign overview stats like this available, it would be hard to explain why one wasn't using them to inform strategic planning:



Figure 12. Campaign Overview (as share of total Brand Conversation)



It's challenging to understand how marketers are accurately capturing these results, to understand what is working and what isn't, otherwise. And our findings indicate, some just aren't!

Figure 13. The social analytics tools being used in 2019

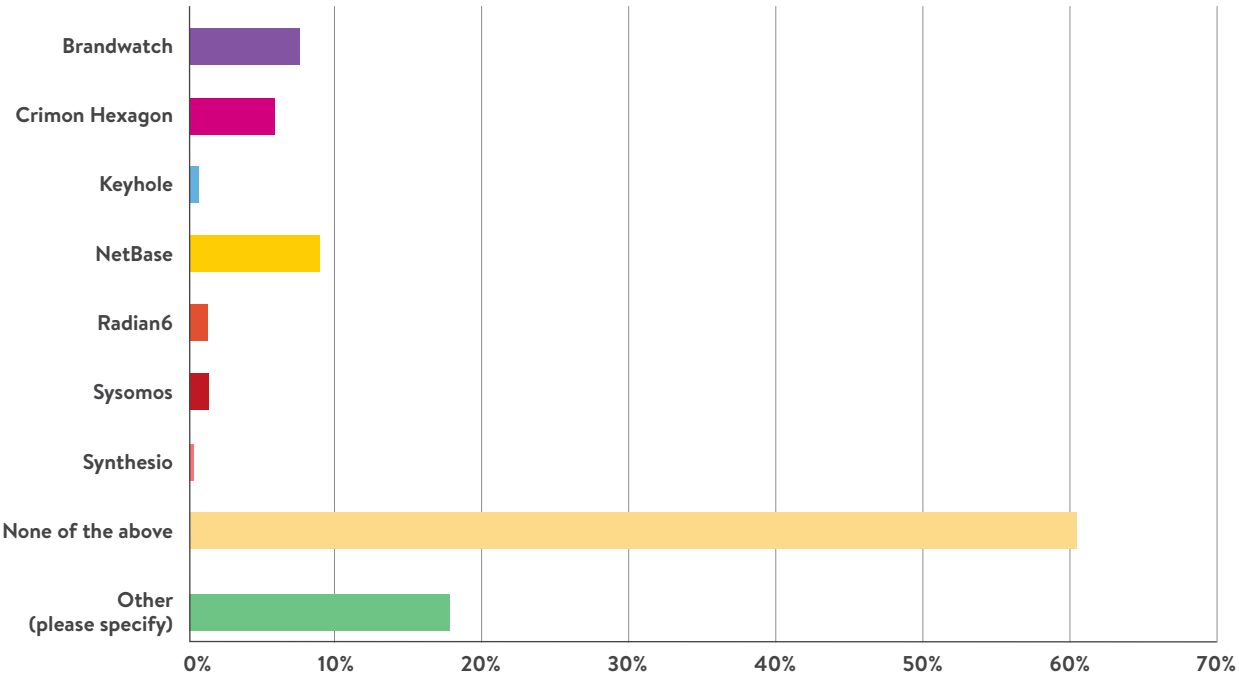
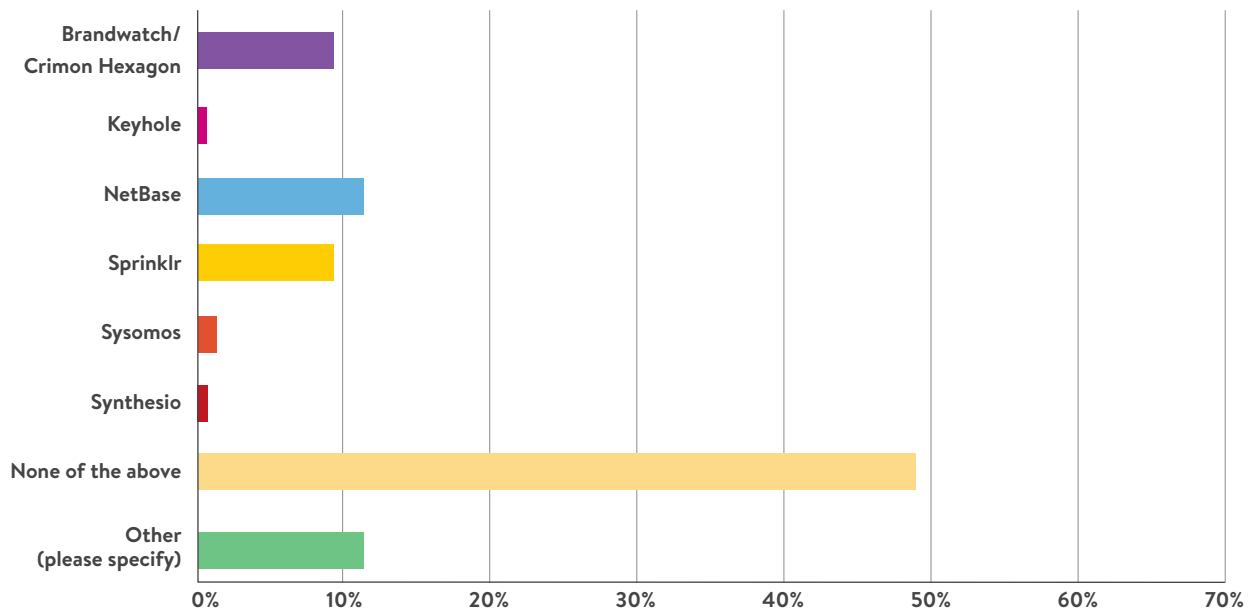


Figure 14. The social analytics tools being used in 2020



Compared to last year, when a full 60% of our respondents were using ad hoc, home grown or free options, which is akin to none at all—this year, there’s less than 50% going that route. These numbers point to brands recognizing the amount of structured and unstructured data flowing constantly and at breakneck speed online requires powerful processing for proper—and meaningful—analysis. The latter feeding NetBase’s dominance in the market, as shown above. As brands become more sophisticated about what next generation AI-powered analytics offers, they’re finding us and are incredibly happy with what they see.

Social media, and online marketing as a whole, is only as beneficial as you make it. It offers ways to find and develop deep connections with consumers—to uncover affinities and opportunities for collaboration that you never knew existed. Or to publicly muck it all up—that requires social analytics too, and we’ll get to crisis management is a bit. But first, customer care, which is the flipside of the “brand health” coin.

MONITOR BRAND HEALTH

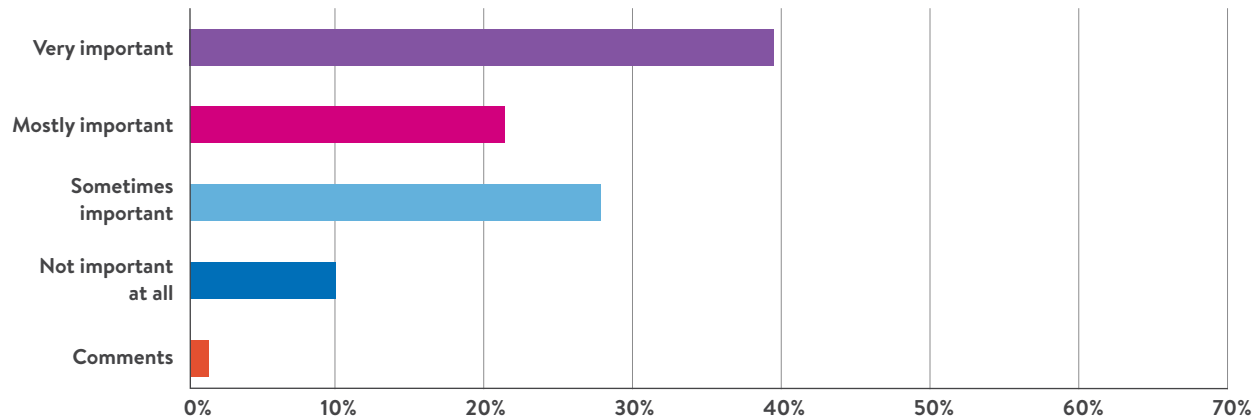
Understanding “inflight optimization and awareness [is crucial] to brand safety,” so say we all. And respondents agree. “Monitoring brand health” came in fourth on our list of “social analytics activities” brands undertake, with 53% giving it a resounding, “hell, yes.”

Brand health can be further broken down into categories around understanding competitors and capturing new ideas, as it all forms a holistic brand identity, but the most impactful indicators when talking social analytics involve customer and care and crises management. Because nothing can destroy a brand faster, regardless of footing, than viral missteps in either area.

Our “very important” and “mostly important” respondents (62%) to the question (below) about the importance of responding to negative comments on social media in real-time appear primed and ready. Let’s hope the rest are still listening and sorting out replies, but aren’t hip to the speed of social just yet, because seeing what is said and preparing some response really is a necessity.



Figure 15. The importance of responding to negative comments on social media in real-time



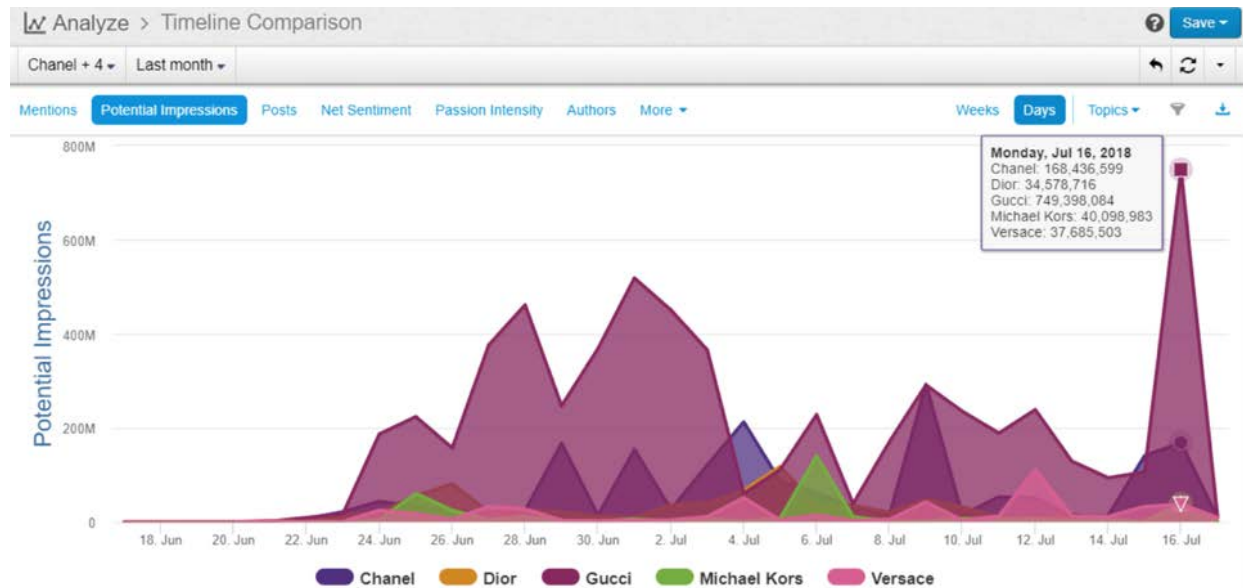
IMPROVE CUSTOMER CARE

You can be certain customers expect online customer service. And whether or not you're seeing what they're saying is irrelevant to them. If you're not responding, it's a loss for you and a win for competitors waiting to pick up the ball and run with it.

Your company's customer service can make or break you. Of almost 1,000 consumers polled, 92% say they would stop purchasing from a company after three or fewer poor customer service experiences.⁹

And setting alerts around keywords and sentiment spikes (or dives) is important as well, particularly when it comes to tracking and responding to crises.

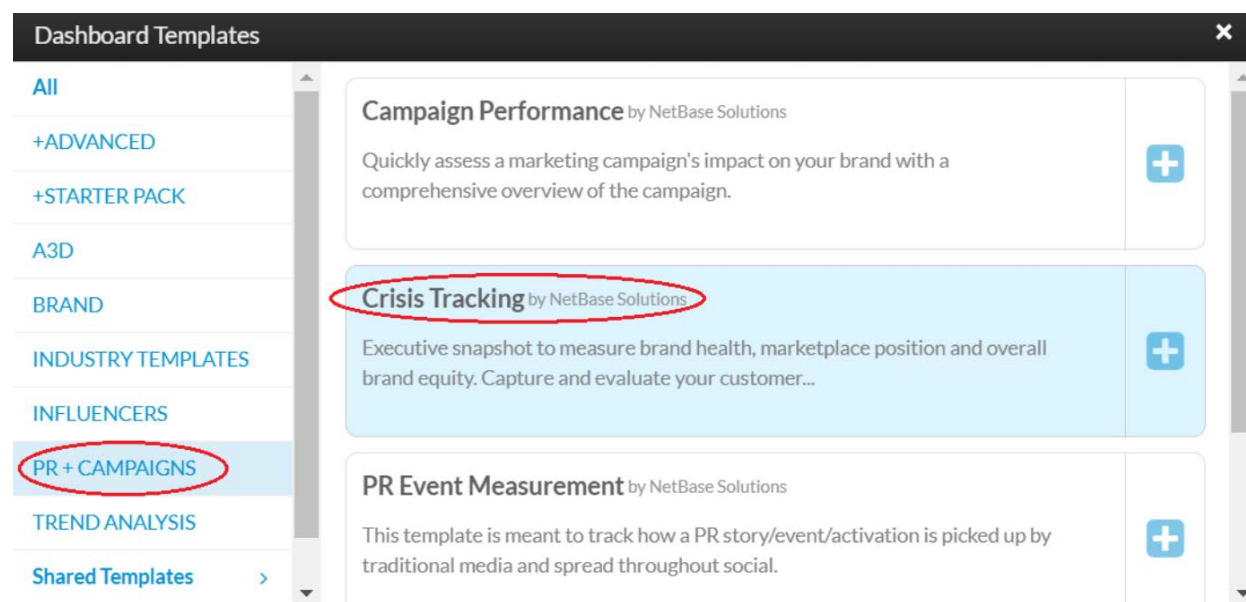
Figure 16. Tracking sentiment, keywords and other spikes



TRACK CRISES IN REAL-TIME

One of the most compelling use cases for social analytics revolves around its predictive capabilities and trendspotting—both of which can help brands head off crises. “Understanding what topics to include in our campaigns, what to stay away from” helps brands stay a step ahead.

Figure 17. Use dashboards to spot and head off crises



Having feedback from a variety of sites, not limited to social media, including forums, review sites, news and any number of integrated sources, brands can quickly create crisis/issue tracking dashboards that help answer the following:

- o How big is the overall conversation related to the issue?
- o How big is the issue-related conversation compared to previous issues?
- o What percentage is the issue-related conversation of the overall brand?

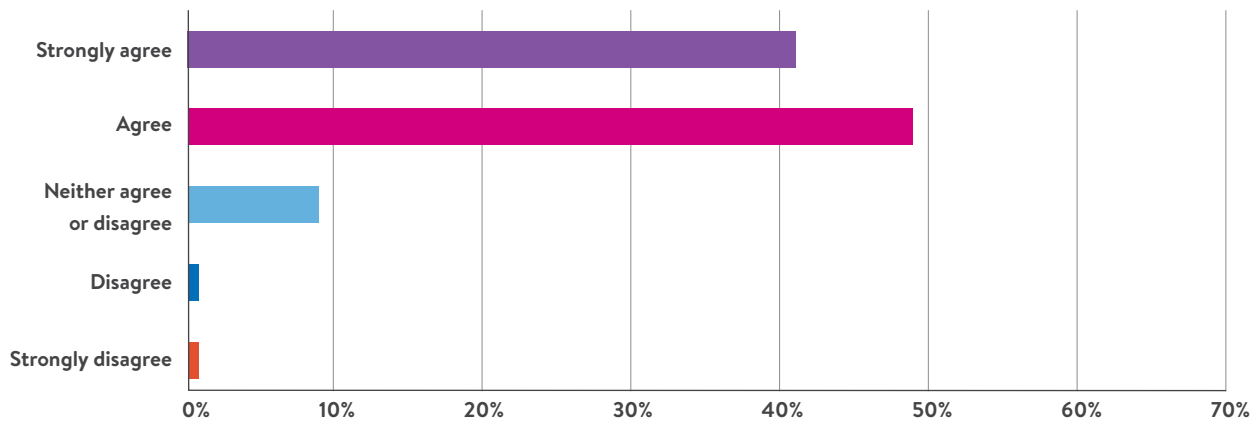
This helps brands decide what response is needed, to whom, and when, which is particularly crucial for agencies, because when brands are blindsided by something they could’ve headed off, it typically results in a new PR team getting hired!

So all of this leads respondents to the conclusion that success hinges on social analytics, right?
Not entirely . . .

But first, let’s see where marketers are finding the best bang for their social buck (a quick spin around the socialsphere), followed by an exploration of the ROI of social and why measurement matters, and may be powering a disconnect we’re seeing. Because, most marketers agree that social media analytics helps brands connect with consumers more effectively:

⁹What Customers Want and Expect [source: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/shephyken/2018/08/05/what-customers-want-and-expect/#4c38dc547701>]

Figure 18. The percentage that agree that social media analytics enables brands to connect with consumers more effectively

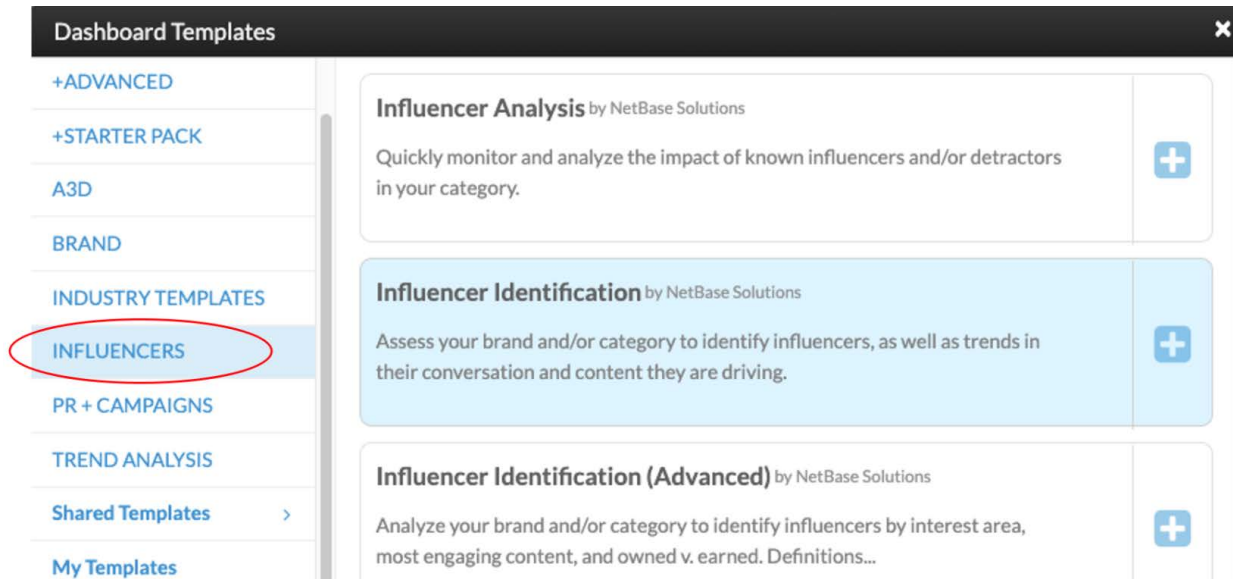


And a powerful way they can do that is through influencer identification and collaboration, which is an activity that is decidedly channel-specific.

INFLUENCER IDENTIFICATION

When socially savvy brands seek to connect meaningfully with consumers, they know that a sales pitch won't cut it. Instead, they use social analytics to identify influencers in their category in general, and those relevant to their brand, specifically:

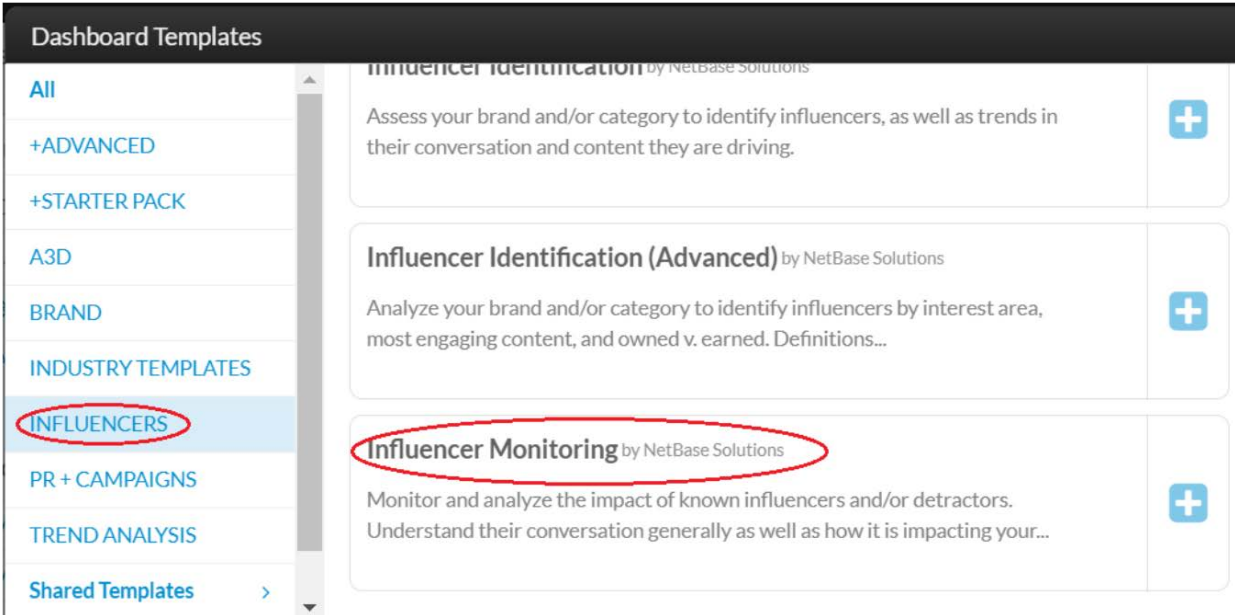
Figure 19. Identify influencers that pertain to your brand



Using up to 51 months of insight, brands can fully vet potential influencers to avoid inflaters (fake influencers) and those that might have a history of posts that could prove damaging to the brand. This is super important to have in mind today, as the last thing your brand needs is a PR crisis caused by an influencer that has your audiences' ear!

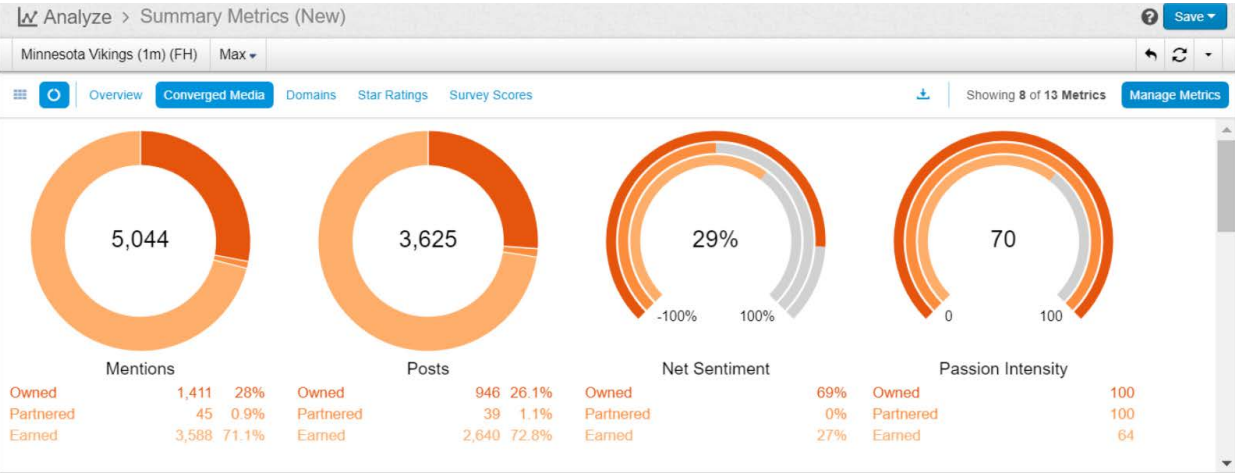
And in NetBase, brands can monitor influencers' engagement to ensure it's a beneficial arrangement:

Figure 20. Track influencer activity and engagement



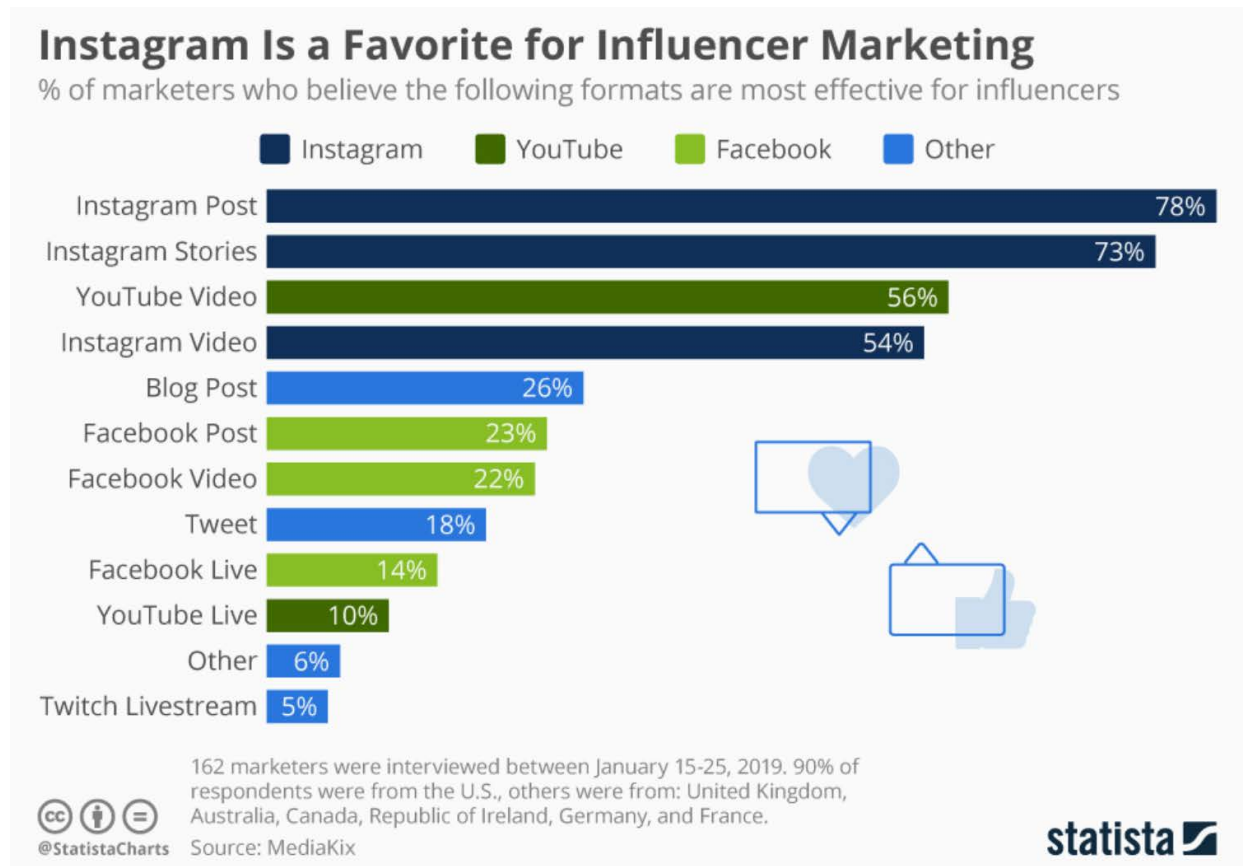
And can monitor Owned (your brand channels), Partnered (influencers and other collaborations) and Earned impact:

Figure 21. Measure owned, partnered and earned impact



And once they've identified and connected with relevant influencers, it's time to start interacting with consumers. But, where?

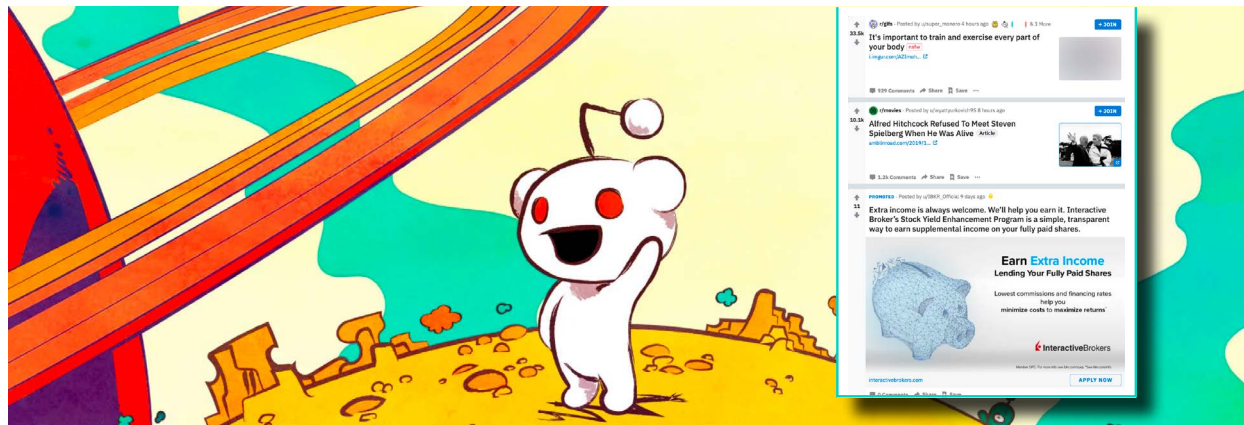
Figure 22. Instagram and Influencers¹⁰



SOCIAL CHANNELS MARKETERS VIEW AS MUSTS

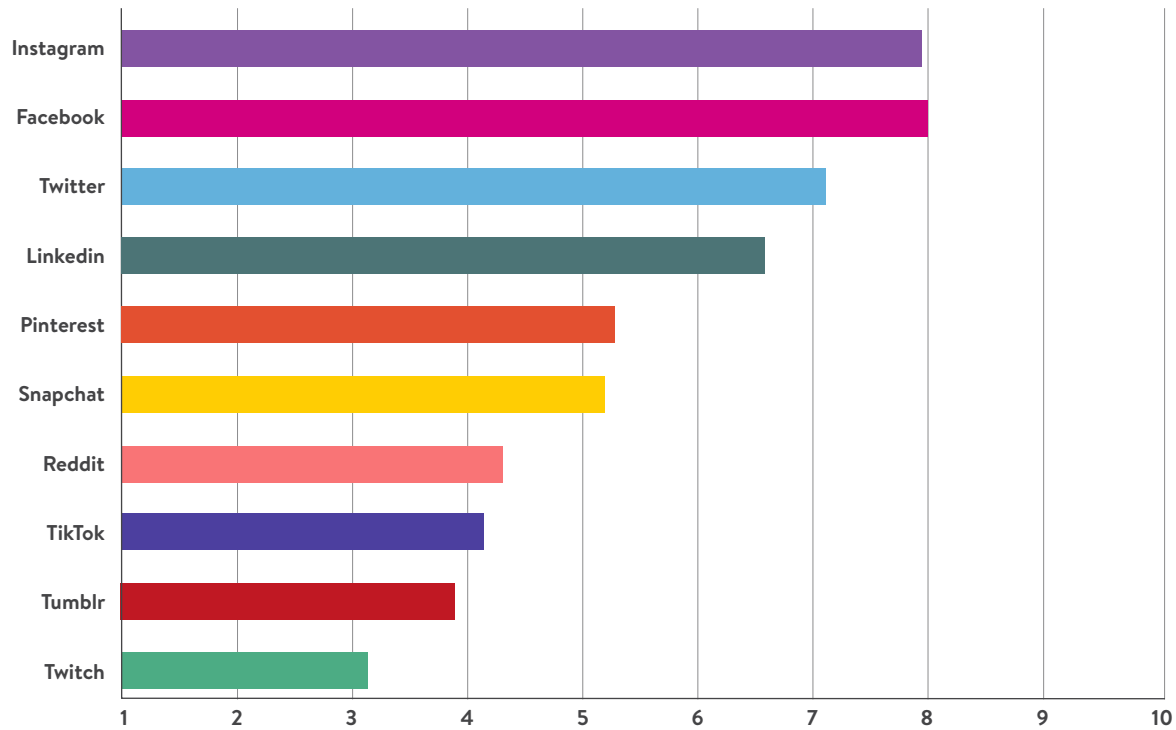
“The majority of our campaigns are integrated across channels—each tells a different story.” And, as such, understanding those channels—and the audience segments inhabiting each is pretty helpful.

Facebook, Instagram and Twitter and the typical top three for this global market, and LinkedIn is viewed as a solid choice for the business set. But, note that Reddit captures a significant showing as well for an off-the-grid, anonymized option for connecting authentically with consumers:



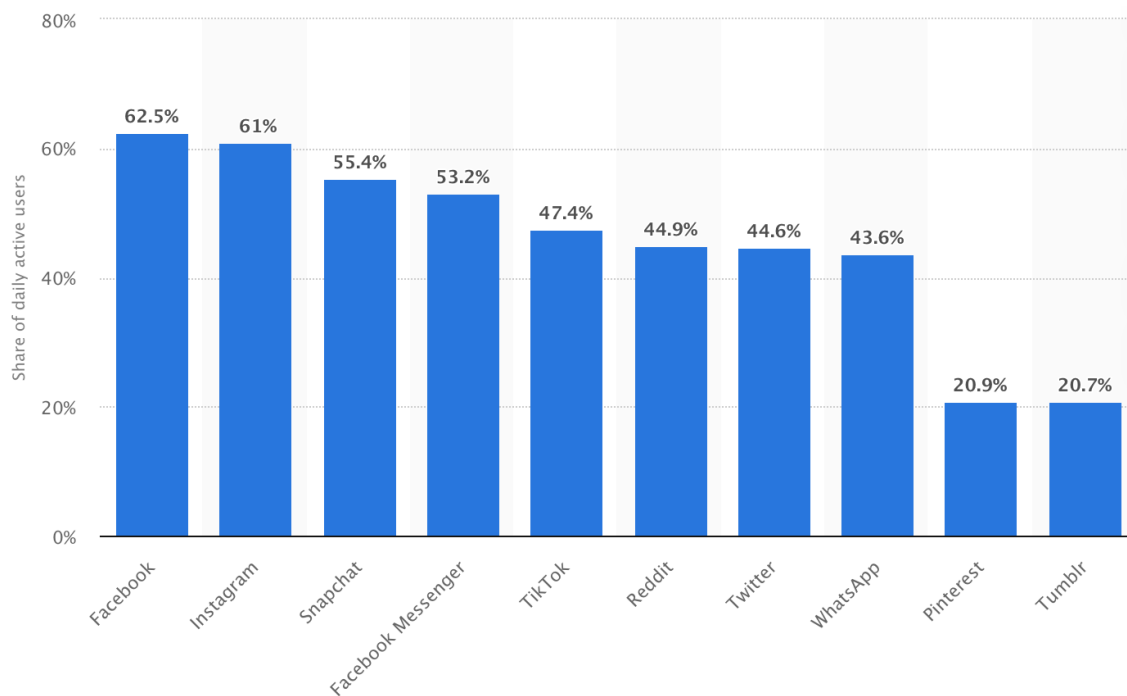
¹⁰ Source [https://www.statista.com/chart/19551/instagram-for-influencer-marketing]

Figure 23. The rankings of social media channels in order of importance to campaigns and engagement



And then the power of Snapchat, TikTok and Twitch is interesting to note here as well. The top social sites used by marketers above, are interesting when viewed through the lens of where their audience lives. Exploring usage data for mobile Android users as of June 2020, Instagram and its parent company, Facebook rule the roost, with Snapchat running a close second and LinkedIn is nowhere to be found:

Figure 24. Daily engagement rate of selected mobile social media apps¹²



So, marketing on these sites, particularly Instagram, is essential for most brands—and that requires a tool that keeps pace with its ever-evolving API changes.

In previous years, we've seen many frustrated folks posting online about experiences where third-party tools broke or were woefully unprepared for Instagram and other API changes. Most unfortunate of all, were stories of woe shared when the updates hit during the 2018 holiday season in the U.S. So many were without valuable analytics during this extremely busy season.¹¹

This sort of behavior can certainly impact a brand's ROI, which is the exact opposite of what any marketer needs in this particularly challenging landscape!

MEASUREMENT MATTERS & MISUNDERSTANDING ROI

Marketers aren't trusting their analytics—and this is often due to an accuracy problem with many tools. Or it can also just be because they're aren't using a tool at all, as mentioned earlier on.

Either way, “social analytics only work if you measure, adapt, and redo,” and inaccuracies in any of the three throw the results out of whack and result in misinformed campaigns. And misinformed campaigns are the worst.

Performing brand/competitor analyses as you go offers critical insight around many KPIs and informs strategic brand positioning online, gathering insight around:

- o Who is talking about my brand and what is their demographic profile?
- o Where are people talking about my product or service—on which channels, sources, and in which geographical areas?
- o Why do people buy my product or service? What need are they satisfying with their purchase?
- o How much are people talking about my brand and how much they are talking about competitors' brands?
- o What is my competitive share of voice—overall and in key markets?
- o What is the range of sentiment around my brand over time? How does sentiment for my brand compare to sentiment for my competitors' brands?
- o How do conversation volume and sentiment differ when segmented by sources, channels, or product attributes (such as quality or pricing)?
- o How are people expressing sentiment in conversations that mention both my brand and my competitors' brands?
- o What are the underlying reasons for positive or negative brand sentiment—what is driving emotions, behaviors, and other attributes emerging from conversations about my brand?
- o How is my brand's owned media impacting conversation among key influencer groups or media contacts?
- o Who are my competitors' advocates and how can I identify and engage with them?
- o How are competitors positioning and messaging about their products?

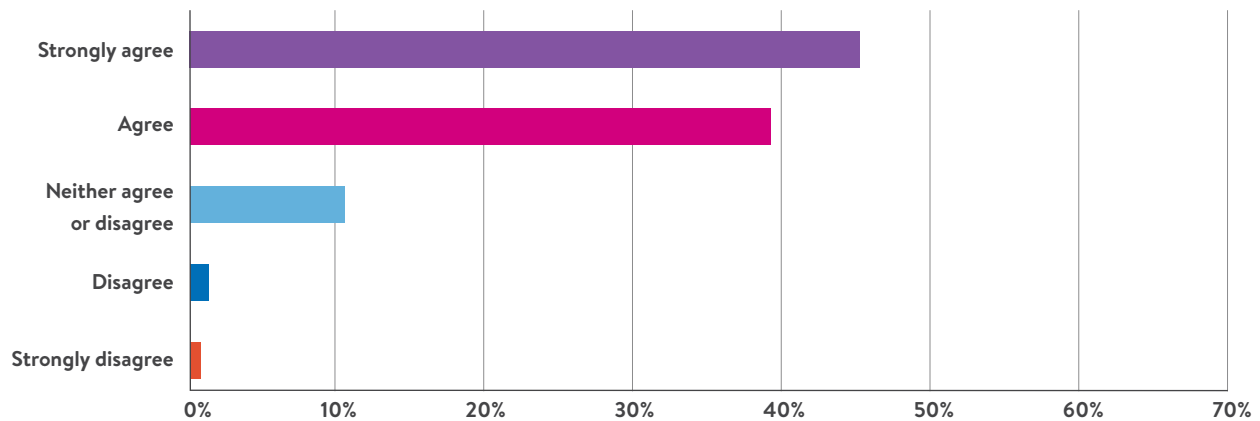
And “measuring the impacts and conversions” of an effort allows marketers to “set realistic targets and to make improvements,” as most respondents (85%) agreed:

¹¹ **When Instagram Changes Faster Than Your Analytics Tool** [source: <https://www.netbase.com/blog/when-instagram-changes-faster-than-your-analytics-tool/>]

¹² **Source:** www.statista.com/statistics/290492/mobile-media-apps-daily-engagement-rate-of-us-users



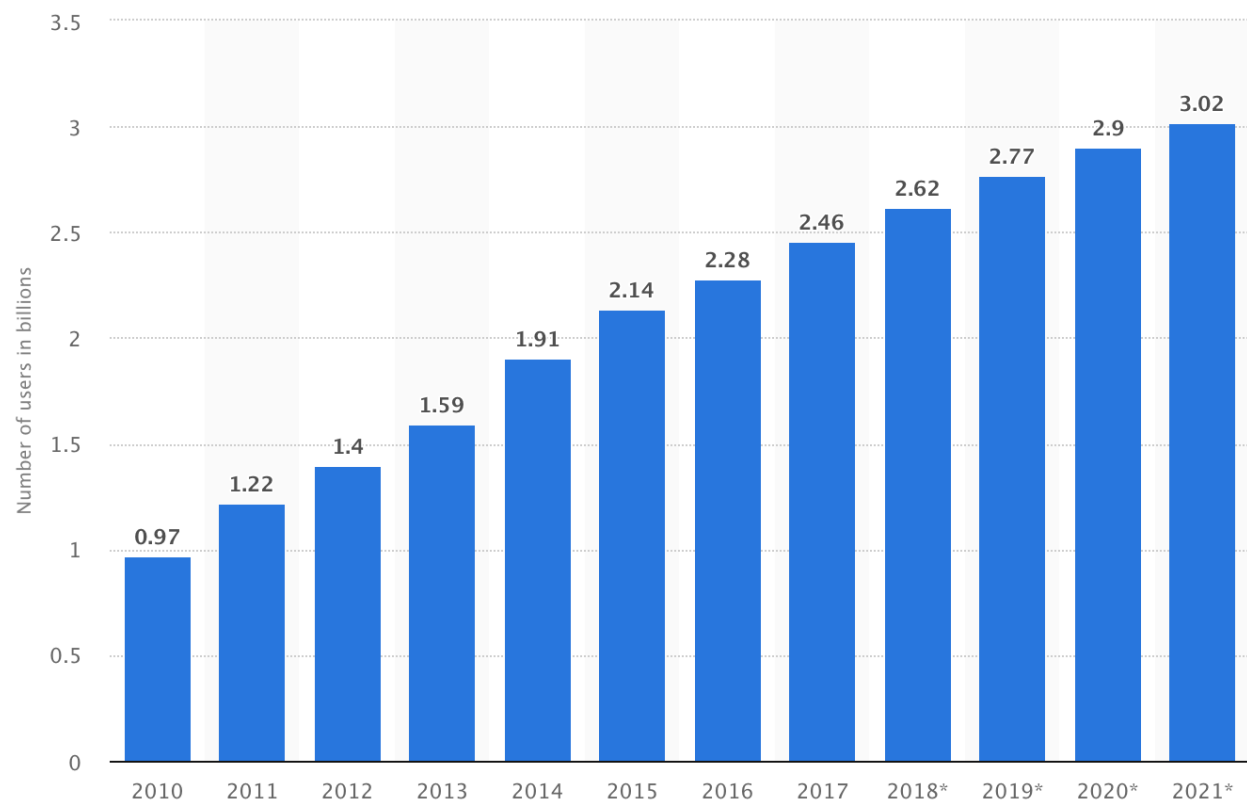
Figure 25. The percentage agreement that measuring the impact on social media is fundamental to the success of any campaign



But why “most”—why aren’t all marketers on board the social analytics train?

The disconnect may be around measuring social sites, as many brands believe their audiences just aren’t there, and that may be true. But with worldwide figures increasing year-over-year and numbering in the billions, the eventuality of every audience inhabiting some social platform seems likely:

Figure 26. Social media usage growth



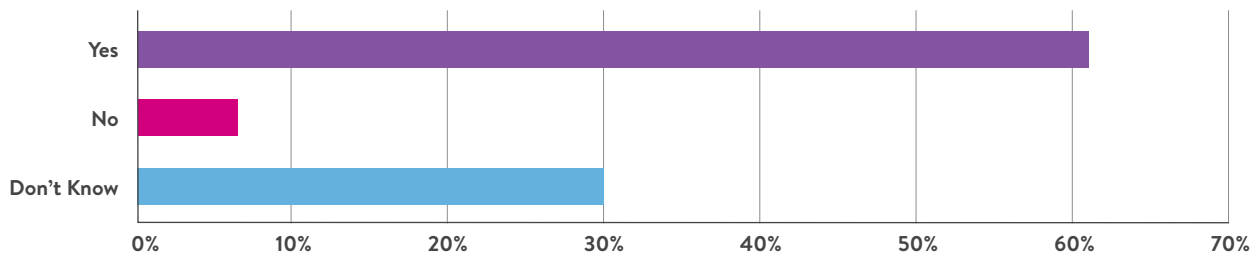
So what’s the final verdict?



CONCLUSION: SURVEY SAYS—SUCCESS HINGES ON SOCIAL ANALYTICS?

Yes and no. Respondents share their excitement around the many necessary ways they use social data, but then we start to see an important disconnect surface. Although they're certain social analytics are necessary and help with everything already mentioned, they're not attributing the success that analytics offers to *the analytics*.

Figure 27. The percentage that believe that using social media analytics make campaigns more successful



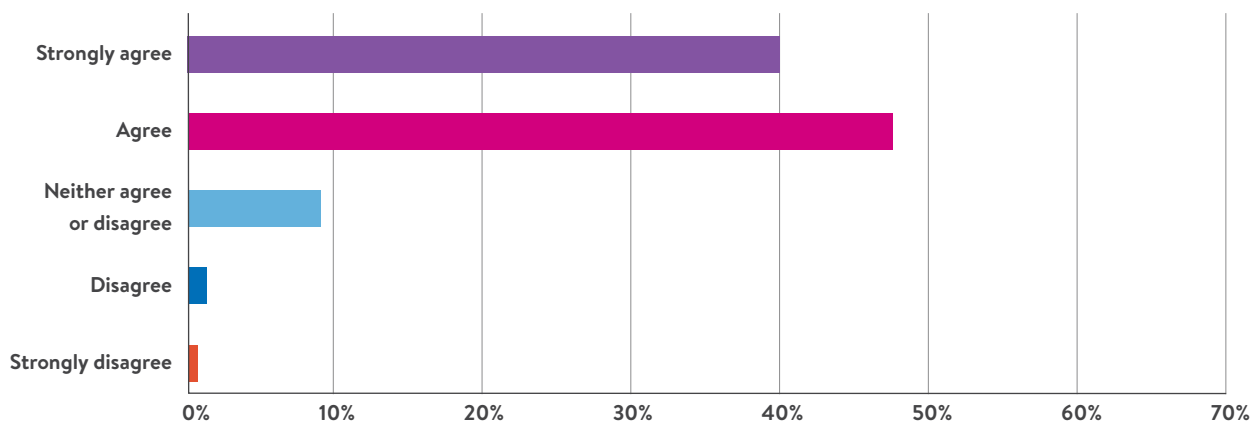
It's an interesting revelation, and based on respondents' comments, it can be tracked back to two overarching concerns:

- o A distrust of the data analytics offers; questioning its accuracy
- o Unclear measurement protocols, due to insufficient benchmarking

Making sure you have a solid baseline is key, as we've mentioned, but if the accuracy isn't there the baseline is irrelevant. This is why so many marketers face challenges closing the loop on securing necessary budget for social analytics tools.

They understand the importance of social, but aren't using tools to aggregate and analyze, so how much is their ad hoc analyses doing for them? Not as much as they want it to, as one of the biggest fears marketers share about social analytics tools revolve around trusting its accuracy.

Figure 28. The percentage that agree on social media analytics as an essential business development tool for all communications agencies



Imagine how much better they could be doing if they did! The difference between driving a car and riding a bike on a 30-mile commute is one way to consider it.

The first has you arriving ten minutes early, ready for that meeting with potential clients, while the other sees you running in, a sweaty, frazzled mess with some solid ideas but certainly not professional. And not winning the sale.

Having been burned before, or just not walked through clear report/dashboarding options, many brands and agencies feel abandoned after the sale. And regardless of the tool they're using, it requires training and support to master. So here are some key questions to ask when considering a social analytics tool:

- o **How transparent is your data?**
- o **Can you demonstrate an example of this transparency—one that relates specifically to my company/category?**
- o **How accurate is your data?**
- o **Can you demonstrate an example of this accuracy—something that takes us beyond surface insight?**
- o **How well does your artificial intelligence parse context? Emojis? Sarcasm?**
- o **Tell me about your image recognition capabilities.**
- o **Demonstrate your alert/notifications mechanism.**
- o **How does your reporting dashboard(s) look, and are they updated in real-time?**
- o **How often is your tool updated?**
- o **Were Instagram API changes made available to your clients the day they were released? Why not?**
- o **Is your tool user friendly?**
- o **When are account reps available to help me?**

And what are your plans for your tool in the future?

AFTERWORD: THE FUTURE IS NOW

Possibly the most telling question we asked on this survey was around marketers' wishlists for options they'd like social media analytics tools to provide—because many of the items are already available.

“WHAT PROBLEM WOULD YOU LIKE SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYTICS TO SOLVE THAT IS NOT YET POSSIBLE?”

Although much of what's desired is available, it maybe needs to be done better – and some of it is unlikely (unrestricted personal data about consumers).

The rest of it offers an interesting view into where marketing is headed. These movers and shakers will undoubtedly see that their needs are met, of course—so you can expect analytics tools to bring forward their “A game,” with NetBase chief among them.

A master wishlist gleaned from respondents' comment data follows, with an asterisk* next to available options (at least from NetBase)—and italicized items as unlikely due to platform/privacy constraints.



As deeper insights are available, we'll be ready to capture it and keep our clients' capabilities moving forward as fast as social changes. And we're always busy anticipating trends toward these changes, so our offerings are ready to go as soon as the industry is!

Check to see if your wishlist items are included—and if they're already available. We bet you'll find more than a few that are:

- Clearer customer intent tracking
- Age group of visitors
- Actual customer data
- Creating campaigns for actual and aspirational fan bases
- Ability to detect nuances in tone/sarcasm/etc. as they relate to sentiment and emotion
- Better engagement with users
- Third-party integrations/CRM
- Ability to gauge soft mentions where people do not tag your brand on social channels but mention you in some form or another
- Ability to have a 360° view into paid, owned, earned metrics
- Better way to track sales
- API & Algorithm change updates
- All-in-one service
- Analytics on data picked up on social and across the web
- Analyze photos
- Attribution to offline activity
- Audience segmentation
- Average percent of interactions with brand, rather than engagement
- Benchmarking and awareness lift
- Monitoring for bad buzz
- Be able to analyse in-depth competitor activity, including paid social activity
- Behavior change
- Being able to tell why someone did not interact with a post even if they follow our page
- Determining fake data from real
- Being able to track multiple posts in a campaign, rather than individual posts and measure them against each other
- Actual ROI
- Ad over-saturation and audience fatigue
- Analysis for CPL in LinkedIn and Facebook
- What made a customer not sign up for a lead
- Block spam
- Brand Impact on organic social
- Brand recognition in new markets
- Brand safety and viewability
- Real-time consumer psychographic trends and behaviors
- Competitor analysis
- Competitor benchmarking & deep insights on sector specific analytics
- Competitor followers analytics
- Connect in-store sales with social media campaign
- Contextual responses
- Customer feedback on our performance
- Deciphering what platforms are primary and secondary
- Determine which media channel will be the most successful for a campaign & where to direct budget
- Monitoring sentiment over time
- Effect on actual sales, how much is sold purely due to social media exposure
- Effectively measure conversion
- End-to-end measurement that's more accurate



- Better engagement strategies
- Accuracy of information and analysis
- Understanding and capturing slang
- Forecasting future digital trends
- Fully accurate and predictive engagement modeling
- Deep insight into audience behaviors and keywords
- Identify upcoming competition
- Finding influencers and qualified team members
- Genuine users vs biased users
- Gap analysis
- Generate customized reports
- Impact on brand awareness and consideration
- Get insight of the “industry mood”
- Machine learning as it relates to tone/sarcasm
- Harvesting social media data globally and have precise split across demographics
- Help grow B2C customers and opportunities
- Help monitor/take down fake reviews
- Identify fake accounts
- Help us better define and shape our products
- Understand how lurkers interact
- How many active users are using the same device/login
- How my audience is interacting in real-time
- How to drive a campaign
- Conversion tracking and attribution
- Lead acquisition
- Lead generation
- Lead qualification
- Improve conversion to sales
- Helping to scale custom audiences
- How community management efforts affect overall brand sentiment
- Tell us how useful our content is to the reader
- Hyper local geolocational data
- Hyper targeting for B2B audience
- I would love to be able to see if I was able to get my message/content in front of the specific people I’m trying to reach
- Comments by region/state/country
- Attach to in-store sales
- Identify patients in a confidential manner
- Influencer recommendations
- Insights into people on the receiving end of content
- Offers insight into where our readers come from
- Integration to rental housing software
- See analytics dating way back on our Instagram page
- More audience analysis—i.e. profiles & interests
- More micro-targeting and audience demographics
- Definitive ROI insights
- Different segments of healthcare professionals
- Accuracy
- Ability to weed out unreliable data
- Comprehensive demographic data
- Transparent metrics
- Greater consistencies between platforms
- Numbers that have some semblance of reality
- Advanced converged media metrics





NetBase Quid is the next generation consumer and market intelligence platform, delivering contextual insights to reveal business trends, connect with consumers, and understand the story behind competitors and the market.

The platform uses advanced artificial intelligence to process billions of indexed resources across all forms of structured and unstructured data, empowering our brand, agency and consulting services customers to make smart, data driven decisions accurately, quickly and efficiently.

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