

# Top 10 Social Media Research Studies for Public Relations Professionals

---

For the Second Half of 2013

Tina McCorkindale, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Communication, Appalachian State University  
Research Editor, IPR Social Science of Social Media Research Center

Marcia W. DiStaso, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Public Relations, Pennsylvania State University  
Research Editor, IPR Social Science of Social Media Research Center

May 2014

## 1) Social Media Update: 42% of Online Adults use Multiple Social Networking Sites, but Facebook Remains the Platform of Choice

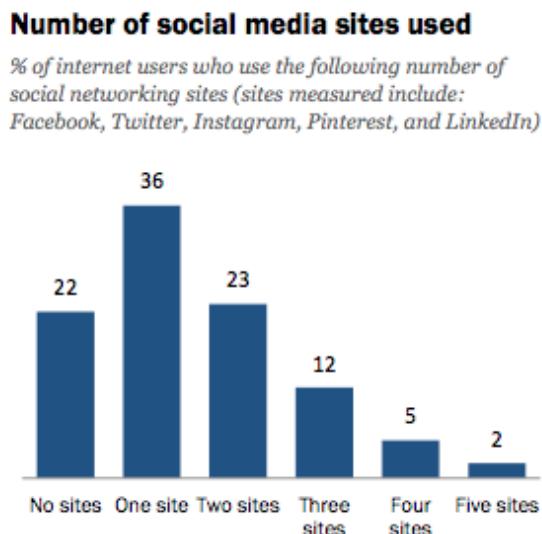
Pew Research Center  
Aaron Smith, Maeve Duggan

**Why this research is important:** This study reviewed the use of social networking by online adults in 2013. The findings can be used as insight for companies, firms and practitioners to develop and execute an efficient social media plan or campaign.

**Method:** Princeton Survey Research Associates International conducted telephone interviews with 1,801 adults over the age of 18 from August 7 to September 16, 2013.

### Key findings:

- Nearly two-thirds of online adults (71%) used Facebook, and usage among seniors has increased significantly in the last year.
- Over 60 percent of Facebook users log in on the site at least daily and 40 percent log on multiple times per day.
- Out of all social networking sites, not only does Facebook have the highest percentage of online adult users, but its users were also the most engaged.



Pew Research Center's Internet Project August Tracking Survey, August 07 –September 16, 2013. N=1,445 internet users ages 18+. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish and on landline and cell phones. The margin of error for results based on all internet users is +/- 2.9 percentage points.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

---

Link: [http://www.pewinternet.org/files/2013/12/PIP\\_Social-Networking-2013.pdf](http://www.pewinternet.org/files/2013/12/PIP_Social-Networking-2013.pdf)

## 2) *The State of Social Business 2013: The Maturing of Social Media into Social Business*

Altimeter

Brian Solis and Charlene Li with Jessica Groopman,  
Jaimy Szymanski and Christine Tran

**Why this research is important:** Survey results show social media is expanding in organizations and strategies are maturing. The research reveals how social media is evolving within enterprise organizations, including year-to-year comparisons to illustrate growing and declining trends.

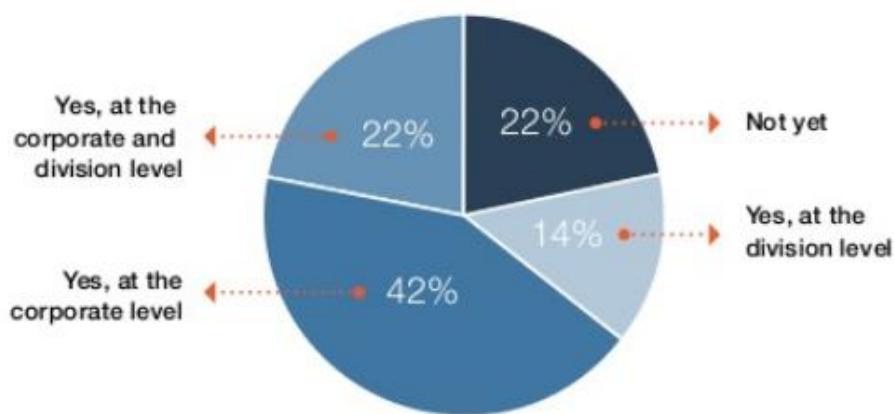
**Method:** Altimeter Group conducted an online survey of social media strategists and executives from companies with more than 500 employees in the year of 2013 and 1,000 employees in the past years of 2010 to 2012.

### Key findings:

- Most organizations were “intermediate” in social business maturity, with only 17 percent that are strategic in executing social strategies.
- Most social media teams continue to report to Marketing (40%) or Corporate Communications/PR (26%), but more departments within organizations had dedicated staff to work on social initiatives.
- Measurement of the organization’s social media efforts was maturing, as over 50 percent of companies reported having the ability to track the influence of social efforts.

**Figure 4: Three-Quarters of Companies Have a Dedicated Social Media Team**

Q. Does your company have a dedicated social media team that serves the entire company or division as a shared resource? (Q3 2013)



**Link:** <http://www.slideshare.net/Altimeter/report-the-state-of-social-business-2013-the-maturing-of-social-media-into-social-business>

### 3) From Social to Sale: 8 Questions to Ask your Customers

Vision Critical

Alexandra Samuel, David Sevitt, Lena Lam, Cheryl Loh

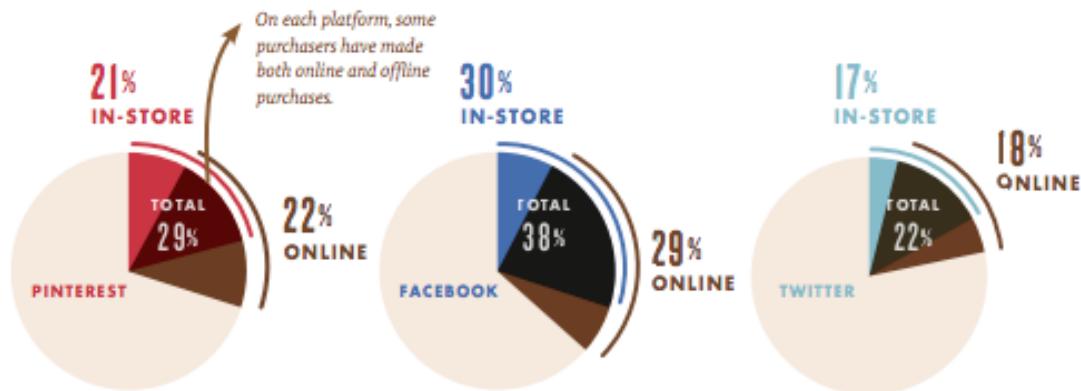
**Why this research is important:** With the expanding use of social media in business, it is critical for the industry to measure the precise impact social has on consumer purchasing. We know it makes a difference, but how much?

**Method:** The data in this report was taken from 5,657 online surveys conducted from February 2012 to June 2013 (17 months).

#### Key findings:

- Four in 10 social media users have purchased an item online or in-store after sharing or favoriting it on Twitter, Facebook or Pinterest.
- Half of social media-related purchasing took place within one week of sharing or favoriting the ultimately purchased item.
- Pinterest was the network most likely to drive spontaneous purchasing. Twitter and Facebook purchasers were more likely to make social media-related purchases of products they were already researching or considering.

#### SOCIAL PURCHASING BY NETWORK



*Have you ever purchased an item – either in-store or online – after you shared or favorited it? / Asked April 2013*

Link: <http://www.visioncritical.com/sites/default/files/pdf/whitepaper-social-to-sale.pdf>

## **4) Social Media Education for Employees: Reduce Social Media Risk and Activate Employee Advocacy for Scale—How Leading Companies Prepare Employees for Social Media Success**

Altimeter

Charlene Li, Ed Terpening with Christine Tran

**Why this research is important:** The average corporate social business program was established more than three years ago, and can be found throughout 13 departments. Research finds those without “social” in their title often lack understanding of the organization’s social business strategy—and in some cases do not know how to use social media safely or effectively. Therefore, education programs are important.

**Method:** Altimeter Group conducted both qualitative and quantitative research using online surveys, interviews, and briefings on corporate social media education. Thirteen managers of corporate social media educational programs were interviewed between February and June 2013. A quantitative study of 130 executives and social strategists was conducted at companies with more than 1,000 employees. A qualitative study of 65 digital strategists was conducted at companies with more than 500 employees.

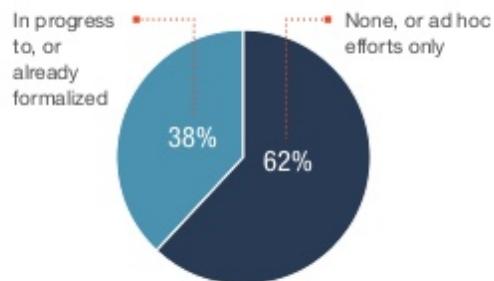
### **Key findings:**

- More than 60 percent of companies reported having no program or only ad hoc social media education programs.
- Developing social media education was the second most important priority for most organizations, with 43 percent planning to develop education and training in the next year.
- Half the companies had only one full-time employee to manage social media education.

### **62% of Companies Have No Social Media Education Program, Yet It's a Top Priority**

**Fig. 1.1**

Q. “Do you currently have a formal social media education program?”



**Fig. 1.2**

Q. “In 2013, what are your top three internal social strategy objectives?” (Select up to three choices.)



Source: Altimeter Group’s Survey of Digital Strategists, Q4 2012 (n=130) and Q2 2013 (n=65)



**Link:** <http://www.slideshare.net/Altimeter/report-social-media-education-for-employees-li-terpening>

## 5) *The Social CEO: Executives Tell All*

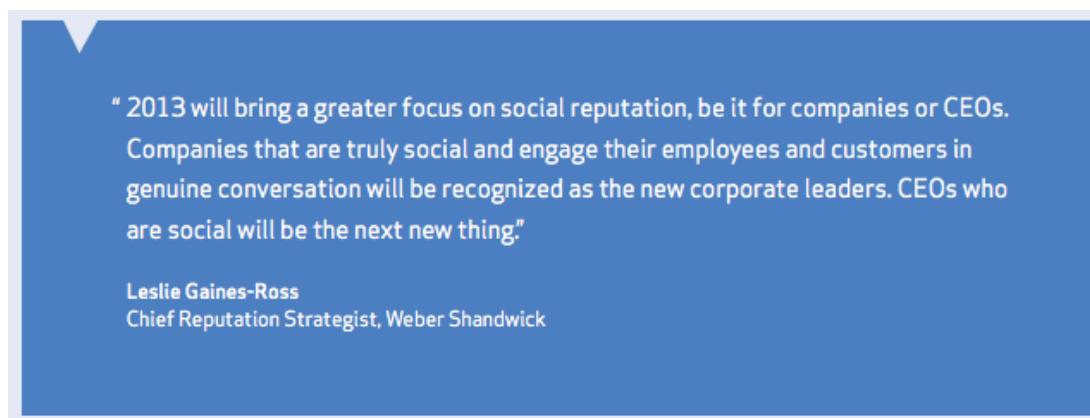
Weber Shandwick, KRC Research

**Why this research is important:** Weber Shandwick and KRC research provide insight on the rise of the social CEO. Together they explore what other executives in the C-suite think about the growing trend of CEO sociability. This research explored the perceptions of professionals, ranging from managers to the C-suite, regarding the social participation of CEOs by exploring reputational upsides and downsides of their online engagement with the public.

**Method:** A survey was conducted with 630 professionals, ranging from managers to the C-suite (excluding CEOs), about the social participation of CEOs. Participants represented 10 countries across North America, Europe, Latin America and Asia Pacific.

### Key findings:

- CEO social engagement is inevitable and employees want their CEOs to be social.
- Most global executives (76%) want or believe it is a good idea for CEOs to be social.
- CEO sociability has a positive impact on many factors that drive company reputation, and CEOs that blog magnify this positive effect more than any other social media outlet.
- CEO sociability maximizes stakeholder reach, but comes with risk.
- A 50 percent increase in CEOs who participate in social media is expected by 2018.



**Company Intranet**  
Improves the reputation of the workplace



**Company Website**  
Enhances the credibility of the company



**Social Media**  
Demonstrates innovativeness and helps build CEO/media relationships

Link: <http://www.webershandwick.com/uploads/news/files/Social-CEO-Study.pdf>

## 6) 2013 Social@Ogilvy Brand Advocacy Study

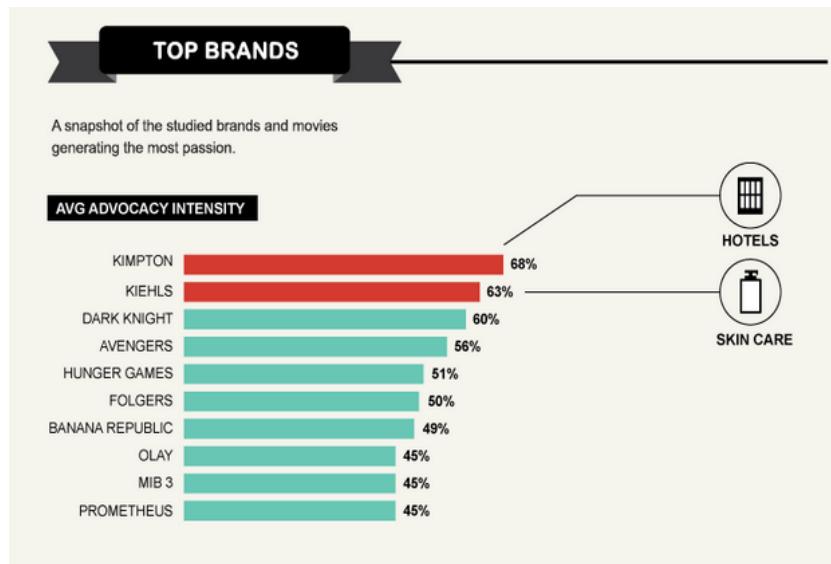
social@Ogilvy

**Why this research is important:** This study explored how people talked about the brands they love and provided insights for how to build a global passion brand. This study is beneficial for organizations to understand how social advocacy works to help brands organically drive conversation on social media. Five recommendations for how brands build advocacy and amplify passion were included.

**Method:** A content analysis of seven million mentions of 22 brands (and 8 feature films) spanning four countries was conducted during the first six months of 2012 and published in 2013.

### Key findings:

- Few brands are driving true passion, and overall brands have an enormous social advocacy gap.
- Practicality wins over emotion in that advocates were more likely to talk about product features than benefits, cost, customer service, or ads.
- Advocacy represented 15 percent of all mentions, with the remainder being neutral or negative mentions.
- China had the highest level of brand advocacy.
- Sheraton and Estee Lauder garnered the “highest advocacy” while Kimpton and Kiehls generated the “highest passion.”



Link: <http://www.slideshare.net/socialogilvy/socialogilvy-advocacy-studyjuly2013-1>

\* Special thanks to Heather Taylor for sharing this one with us.

## **7) Social Media Risks and Rewards**

Grant Thornton LLP, Financial Executives Research Foundation Inc.

**Why this research is important:** While social media has developed many new opportunities for organizations to communicate and interact with its publics, it has also created new forms of risk. This research revealed the importance of social media utilization within the organization, but also the need to monitor risk involved.

**Method:** A 32-question online survey was completed by 111 senior-level executives from public and private companies during May and June 2013. Seven in-depth interviews with executives were also conducted during June 2013.

### **Key findings:**

- More than half (55%) of participants felt social media will be an important part of future corporate marketing efforts.
- More than half (59%) of companies surveyed did not perform a social media risk assessment, but more than a third of participants (36%) said their company had social media training.
- While more companies may be addressing social media governance and risk, many are not conducting risk assessment.

---

**Figure 5: Concern about potential risks**



Survey data has been rounded to whole numbers; as a result, some of the totals may not equal 100%.

**Link:** <http://www.grantthornton.com/~/media/content-page-files/advisory/pdfs/2013/ADV-social-media-survey.ashx>

## **8) PWC's 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Digital IQ Survey: The Five Behaviors that Accelerate Value from Digital Investments**

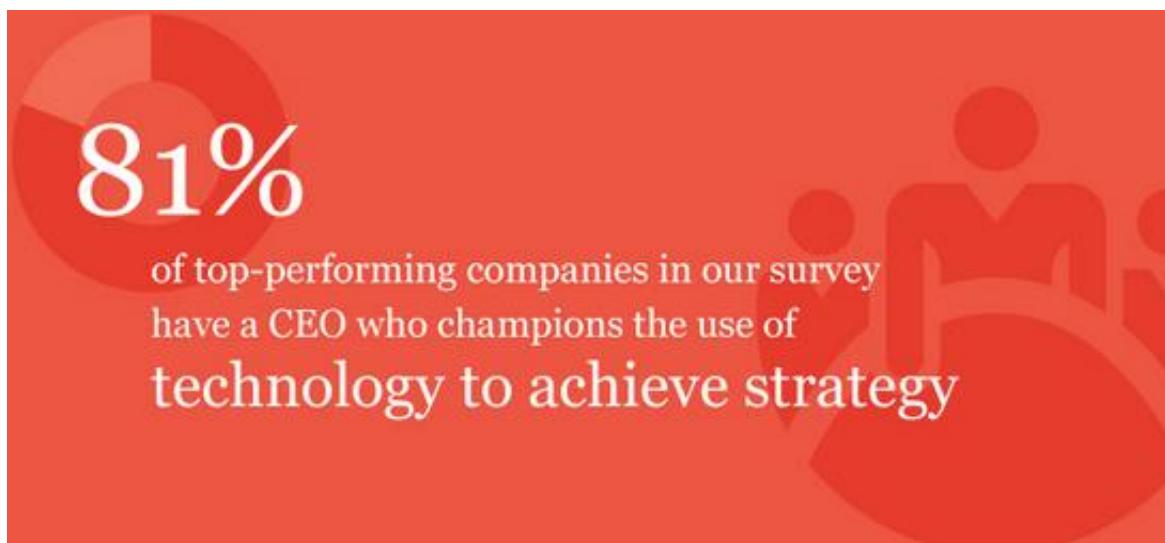
PwC

**Why this research is important:** Many companies claim to be a digital enterprise, but this research suggested only a minority are truly there. The culmination of a company's understanding, valuing and weaving of technology determines what PwC calls a Digital IQ. PwC's survey analyzed the perspective of both IT and business executives regarding the value digital technology adds to their businesses. The report identified five key behaviors to achieve a high Digital IQ.

**Method:** A survey in the fall of 2013 garnered 1,494 respondents from 36 countries throughout 11 industries. Two-thirds of participants worked in organizations with revenues of \$1 billion or greater and 37 percent have revenues greater than \$5 billion.

### **Key findings:**

- Only 20 percent of respondents in this year's survey rated their companies as having an 'excellent' digital IQ.
- It is important for CEOs to actively seek and use digital initiatives to achieve business strategy.
- Seventy percent of top performing Digital IQ companies say they have a strong CIP-CMO relationship.
- Companies that adopt the 5 Digital IQ behaviors are 2.2 times more likely to be top performers in revenue growth, profitability, and innovation.



**Link:** <http://www.pwc.com/us/en/advisory/digital-iq-survey/assets/6th-annual-digital-iq.pdf>

## 9) Bullish on Digital: McKinsey Global Survey Results

McKinsey & Company

Brad Brown, Johnson Sikes, and Paul Willmott

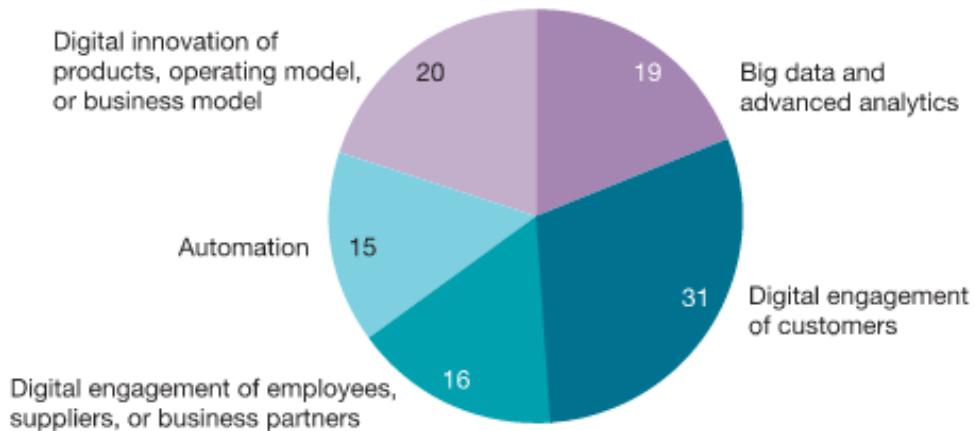
**Why this research is important:** C-level executives are stepping up their own involvement in shaping and driving digital strategies. This survey looked at company adoption and focused on five digital-enterprise trends: big data and advanced analytics; digital engagement of customers; digital engagement of employees; and external partners, automation, and digital innovation.

**Method:** An online survey was conducted April 2-12, 2013 with responses from 850 C-level executives representing the full range of industries, regions, and company sizes.

### Key findings:

- Fifty-six percent of executives surveyed say that digital engagement with customers is at least a top-ten company priority.
- Leadership is the most important factor for a digital programs success or failure.
- CEOs are more likely to sponsor digital initiatives compared to 2012.
- Of the ways companies can use digital, customer engagement promises the most potential value.

% of expected increase in income, related to digital business,  
that is attributable to 5 digital trends<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup>Figures do not sum to 100%, because of rounding.

**Link:** <http://www.slideshare.net/GaldeMerkline/mckinsey-bullish-on-digital>

## 10) 2013 Social Journalism Study: How Journalists View and Use Social Media and their Relationship with PR

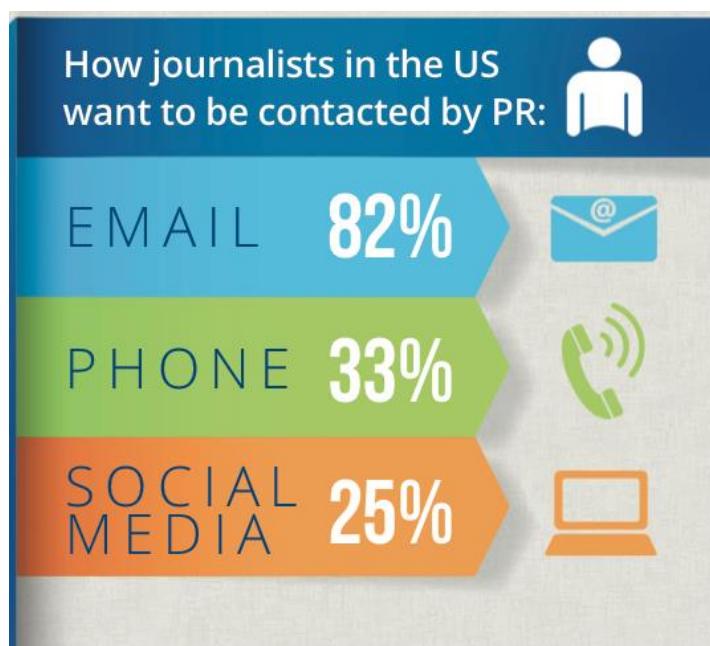
Cision

**Why this research is important:** This research gives insight into how journalists view and use social media in regard to public relations. Not only does the survey indicate public relations professionals were the second most popular opinion for journalists when sourcing a story, but it also found email was the primary communication channel used. While social media was still not the primary channel of communication, respondents showed an increasing use of social media over the past year.

**Method:** An online study was compiled from over 3,000 journalists' responses from 11 countries: U.S., Canada, Australia, France, Germany, UK, Finland, Sweden, Italy, Spain and the Netherlands. Countries were ranked in relation to media involvement, practice, knowledge, and attitudes.

### Key findings:

- Email was the dominant communication channel between journalists and PR professionals.
- In the U.S., 82 percent of journalists prefer to be contacted by email, 33 percent prefer phone and 25 percent prefer social media.
- Canadian journalists use social media the most across their professional practices.



**Link:** <http://us.cision.com/thought-leadership/2013-social-journalism/>

