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Corporate Social Media Spend to Increase among B2B Companies Globally According to Worldcom Public Relations Group Survey

-- Twitter Most Popular B2B Channel Overall, Facebook Most Popular in Western Europe --

New York, NY – May 11, 2011 – According to a survey by the [Worldcom Public Relations Group](#), the world's leading partnership of independently owned PR firms, more than half (54%) of companies surveyed plan to increase spending on social media in 2011. This bodes well for Twitter, the most popular channel, used by 85 percent of global respondents, followed by Facebook (74%), LinkedIn (72%), YouTube (69%) and corporate blogs (60%).

The survey of more than 100 business-to-business (B2B) company leaders confirmed the significant increase in the use of social media. Nearly all companies (83%) are using social media to communicate with target audiences, and 66 percent have been doing so for more than a year. Most executives (89%) believe social media will increase in value for their company over the next year, and 58 percent expect the increase to be significant.

"Digital communities are an integral part of any business-to-business marketing strategy," said Cortney Rhoads Stapleton, chair of the [Worldcom B2B Practice Group](#) and EVP at [BlissPR](#) in New York. "The survey shows that nearly all companies recognize the importance of social media, but many are still unsure how to use the medium to humanize their brand. We expect to see a much higher comfort level with social media by this time next year as companies devote additional resources and personnel to this area."

These findings are from the **Worldcom Social Media B2B Study** which examined the use of social media at B2B companies primarily in North America and Western Europe. The survey was conducted by independent market research firm [Persuadable Research](#) in April, 2011.

Other major findings of the Worldcom Social Media B2B Study:

North America and Western Europe Differ in Social Media Approach. The biggest difference between social media use in North America and Western Europe is the approach to "thought leadership." In North America, thought leadership promotion is the primary use of digital tools (30%); but it was not mentioned by any of the respondents in Western Europe. European companies focused primarily on social media to communicate with potential clients (31%) and current clients (25%).

"In Western Europe, companies are using social media as a source to actively find new contacts and business leads," said Antonia Contato, program director of the Worldcom B2B Practice Group and

account director at [HBI Helga Bailey GmbH](#) in Germany. “Our counterparts in the U.S. take a different approach, promoting company thought leadership via social media in order to draw leads in.”

This is also reflected by the difference in platforms used. In North America, 91 percent of respondents were using Twitter compared to only 62 percent in Western Europe. Facebook is the most used platform for Western European companies (31%) followed by Twitter (25%) and corporate blogs (25%). In North America, Twitter was used most (31%) followed by Facebook (25%) and LinkedIn (19%).

Companies Expect Social Media to Drive New Business. More than 80% of companies surveyed globally are using social media to communicate with potential clients, and when asked about the “most important” use of social media, 26 percent cited communication of their company’s thought leadership, followed by “communicate with clients” (23%) and “communicate with *potential* clients” (20%). Companies are also using social media to build a community as an extension of their website (60%), communicate with journalists (58%) and communicate with potential employees or alumni (50%), but very few cited any as a “most important” use.

Mid-Sized Companies Lag Behind. When broken down by revenue segment, small (under \$50 million) and large (over \$1 billion) companies emerged as the social media leaders. Nearly 80 percent of small companies and 88 percent of large companies have been using social media for more than a year, compared to only 57 percent of mid-sized companies. In fact, 34 percent of mid-sized companies surveyed have been using social media less than six months. Mid-sized companies are still grappling with the role that social media will play in their communication and business development strategies, and only 46 percent plan to increase social media spending this year compared to 68 percent of small companies. Many companies still lack a dedicated team of experts in this area and are unsure as to which platforms make the most sense for their business.

About the Worldcom B2B Practice Group

The Worldcom Public Relations B2B Practice Group is a multi-national partnership of PR firms with broad and deep experience in business to business communications that helps clients achieve competitive advantage. Made up of both specialist and generalist firms led by seasoned senior practitioners – most of whom are agency principals – the group combines strategic thinking with a “get-it-done” philosophy. Members share proprietary research, tools and robust thought leadership while providing tactical expertise and client support. Clients benefit from a cohesive network of geographic and market expertise, along with assured confidentiality and agreed-upon standards of practice. Among the industries served by the B2B Practice Group are professional services, financial services, manufacturing, chemical & Industrial, technology and healthcare.

About the Worldcom Public Relations Group

Worldcom Public Relations Group is the world's leading partnership of independently owned public relations counseling firms. Worldcom has 112 offices in 93 cities in 46 countries on five continents, more than 2,000 employees and revenue in 2009 of more than US \$220 million. Established in 1988, Worldcom was formed so that the strongest, most capable independent public relations firms could serve national, international and multi-national clients while retaining the flexibility and client-service focus inherent in independent agencies. Through Worldcom, clients have on-demand access to in-depth communications expertise from professionals who understand the language, culture and customs of the geographic arenas in which they operate.

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