



WORLDCOM PUBLIC RELATIONS GROUP

Social Media B2B Study - Executive Summary

It is official: social media has taken the world by storm.

Across the globe, hundreds of millions of people spend their days tapping on their keyboards and thumbing the screens of their smart phones. News breaks on Twitter feeds. Advertisements sprout from Facebook pages. Entertainment streams on YouTube channels. And commentators debate on the pages of their blogs.

Businesses, too, have jumped into the digital fray, engaging with consumers, marketing their products and services, and touting their brands on the web. Indeed, one recent survey showed that close to 80 percent of Fortune 100 companies are using social media tools to connect with potential customers and longstanding clients. And the trends are pointing upward: more than two-thirds of respondents to a new *Harvard Business Review* poll believe the use of social media tools will grow significantly over the next few years.

Innovative digital tools have truly revolutionized the world, bringing life and work, commerce, media, entertainment and marketing online in exciting and previously unimaginable ways. As the first-ever **Worldcom Social Media B2B Study** shows, the business-to-business (B2B) industry has staked its claim on the Net, and is uniquely positioned to flourish in the new media environment.

An Eye Towards the Future

In April 2011, the Worldcom Public Relations Group—the world’s leading partnership of independently owned public relations firms—polled 123 B2B company leaders , primarily in North America and Western Europe, about their use of social media.

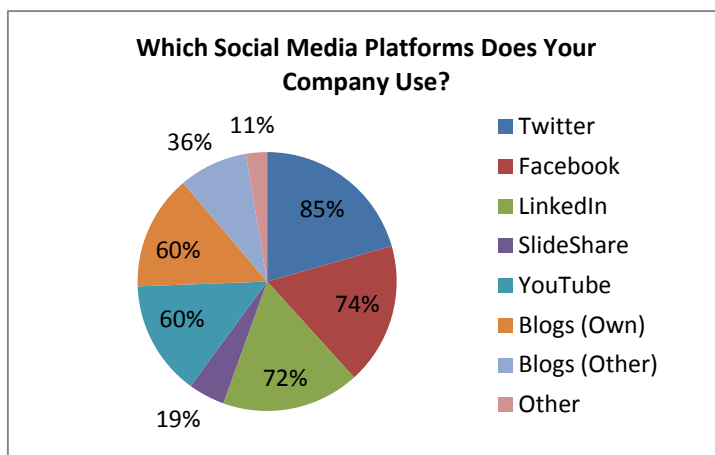
Nearly all of those firms surveyed—an impressive 83 percent—use social media to communicate with their target audiences, and close to nine-in-ten agency executives believe social media will increase in value for their firms over the next year. With those projections in mind, it comes as no surprise that more than half of firms surveyed intend to boost spending on social media for the coming year.

Tweet First, Find Friends Later

The bulk of social media resources, it appears, are being directed towards Twitter, with 85 percent of respondents active on the micro-blogging site. Facebook comes in second, with 74 percent of firms taking advantage of its rich content capabilities and massive social network, followed LinkedIn (72 percent), YouTube (69 percent) and corporate blogs (60 percent).

Continental Divide

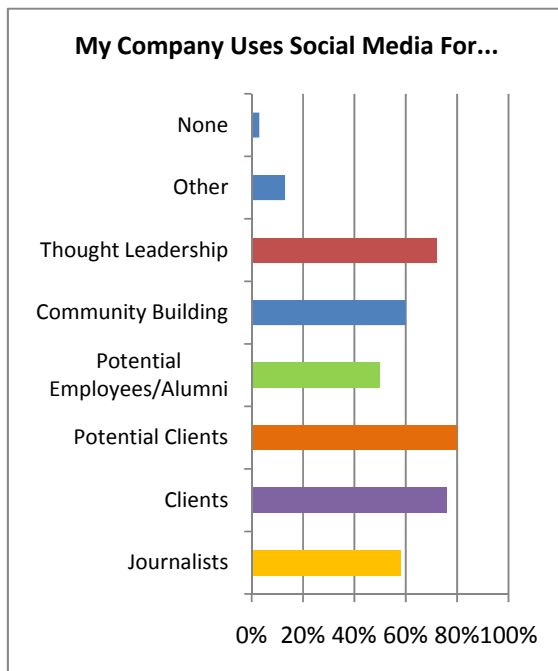
Geographic location turns out to be a major indicator of social media goals: Among B2B agencies in North America, promoting “thought leadership” is the key reason to use social media (30 percent); an ocean away, Western European



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B2B firms use the social web to engage new and existing clients (31 and 25 percent, respectively). Interestingly, thought leadership fails to even register in Europe.

Not surprisingly, to achieve their respective goals, firms in different regions favor different social platforms: 31 percent of agencies in the United States, Canada and Mexico favor Twitter (followed by Facebook—25 percent—and LinkedIn—19 percent); in Western Europe, the same percentage favor Facebook (with Twitter and corporate blogs listed next, garnering 25 percent each). Furthermore, in the United States, more than nine-in-ten firms use Twitter, while just six-in-ten Western European agencies do.



Building Business

Despite differences in priorities and platforms, there are some goals that most firms worldwide share: 80 percent of B2B companies are using social media tools to interact with potential clients, and 76 percent work online to engage existing clients, suggesting the digital space is ripe for finding and sustaining business.

Companies also log on to social networks to build extensions of their own company web sites (60 percent), to communicate with journalists (58 percent) and for employee recruitment and alumni communications (50 percent), though none of these uses were cited as “most important.” That distinction was cited for agencies looking to communicate their thought leadership (26 percent), communicate with clients (23 percent) and communicate with potential clients (20 percent).

Muddle in the Middle?

Company size turns out to be quite a strong indicator of social media adoption. When broken down by revenue, small companies—those under \$50 million—and large companies—those over \$1 billion—prove to be leaders in the digital media sphere. Some 80 percent of small companies and 88 percent of large companies have been using social media for more than one year, compared to just 57 percent of mid-sized firms—and just over a third of mid-sized companies have been using social media for more than six months. Furthermore, less than half of medium-sized companies will boost their social media budgets for the coming year, as opposed to nearly three-quarters of small companies.

Business to business companies have a robust opportunity to include social media tools into their marketing communication strategies – whether it be to access client communities, focus on new business sales or dialogue with journalists. The evolution is ongoing and we expect it only be enhanced in the coming year.

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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