

# 2016 SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING INDUSTRY REPORT

*How Marketers Are Using  
Social Media to Grow  
Their Businesses*

MAY 2016

BY MICHAEL A. STELZNER

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# Letter from the author...

Hello fellow marketer!

Welcome to our **8<sup>th</sup> annual study!** Social media marketing is always evolving. And for businesses, social media marketing has become an important pillar, as you'll see detailed in this year's report.

This **56-page report** contains easy-to-digest insights into how marketers are currently using social media and their future plans.

If you're in charge of marketing your business, you'll want to closely **examine the 90 charts** on the following pages. I'll reveal the "not-so-obvious" findings in this data-rich content.

The report will uncover the "who, what, where, when, and why" of social media marketing.

More than 5,000 of your fellow marketers provided the kinds of insights you won't find elsewhere.

I hope you enjoy it! **If you find value in this report, please let your peers know about it.**

You can find the original page for the report here:  
<http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/report2016/>

All my best!



Michael A. Stelzner  
Founder, Social Media Examiner  
Host, Social Media Marketing podcast



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# Executive summary

This study surveyed more than 5,000 marketers with the goal of understanding how they're using social media to grow and promote their businesses. On the following pages, you'll discover:

- **The top social media questions marketers want answered:** We reveal the big questions marketing pros want answered about social media.
- **The time commitment:** We examine the weekly hours marketers invest in their social media efforts. This analysis will be helpful for marketers just getting started or those seeking support staff.
- **The benefits of social media marketing:** This section of our study reveals all of the major advantages marketers are achieving with their social media efforts. We also look at how weekly time invested and years of experience affect the results.
- **Most-used social media platforms:** Discover which platforms marketers are using and how their usage will change this year. We also examine which platforms experienced marketers are using.
- **Social media networks people want to learn more about:** In this section, we reveal the social platforms that marketers are most interested in learning about.
- **Other analyses:** We also examine the role of content in social media marketing, live video, paid social media, how marketers respond when new networks emerge, and how bloggers republish their content. In addition, we take a look at how business-to-business (B2B) companies differ from business-to-consumer (B2C) companies. We also highlight significant changes since our 2015 study.

**How to use this report:** Regardless of your experience with social media marketing, there's something here for you. If you're a beginner, take a look at the time commitment, benefits, and platforms that your peers are using.

If you're experienced with social media, compare yourself against other marketers, see which platforms they're looking at next, and determine whether you're achieving the same benefits as your more experienced peers.

# Major findings

Here's a quick summary of our primary findings:

- **Video has become essential:** A significant 60% of marketers use video in their marketing and 73% plan on increasing their use of video.
- **Live video is hot:** A significant 50% of marketers plan on using live video services such as Facebook Live and Periscope, and 50% want to learn more about live video.
- **Facebook and YouTube hold the top spots for future plans:** At least 63% of marketers plan on increasing their use of these social networks.
- **Snapchat is on a growth trajectory:** Only 5% of marketers are using Snapchat, yet 16% plan on increasing their Snapchat activities and 28% of marketers want to learn more about Snapchat.
- **Facebook is the most important social network for marketers by a long shot!** When asked to select their most important platform, 55% of marketers chose Facebook, followed by LinkedIn at 18%. Plus, 67% of marketers plan on increasing their Facebook marketing activities.
- **Many marketers are unsure about their Facebook marketing:** A significant 40% of marketers don't know if Facebook traffic has declined in the last 12 months and 35% aren't sure if their Facebook marketing is effective.
- **Facebook ads dominate:** A surprising 86% of social marketers regularly use Facebook ads, while only 18% use Twitter ads.
- **Tactics and engagement are top areas marketers want to master:** At least 90% of marketers want to know the most effective social tactics and the best ways to engage their audience with social media.

The above summary is just a taste of what's in this report.

On the following pages, you'll find 90 charts that visually convey some fascinating findings. For example, we look at which social networks are used by those who invest the most time in social media marketing, the benefits achieved by those who've been at this for years, how marketers respond to new social networks, and how bloggers republish their content.

# Top 5 social media questions marketers want answered

The **top social media questions marketers want answered** can be summarized with the following keywords: **tactics, engagement, measurement, audience, and tools**—in that order. These questions and their order have remained the same since 2014.

Below are the top issues marketers are facing today with social media marketing. At least 86% of marketers surveyed felt they're struggling to answer all of the following questions:

## #1: TACTICS: What social tactics are most effective?

The number-one question marketers want answered (92%) is which tactics work best. This isn't a surprise, given the constant changes taking place across many social networks.

## #2: ENGAGEMENT: What are the best ways to engage my audience with social media?

Figuring out how to best connect with people remains high on the list of questions marketers want answered (90%). Engaging with customers is becoming a unique competitive advantage.

## #3: MEASUREMENT: How do I measure the return on my social media marketing?

A significant 86% of marketers want to know how to measure their return on investment for social media activities.

## #4: AUDIENCE: How do I find my target audience with social media?

Locating ideal customers and prospects is a big concern for marketers (86%). Marketers are looking for guidance on sifting through enormous social networks and connecting with the right people.

## #5: TOOLS: What are the best social management tools?

Marketers want better tools to simplify their social media tasks. A surprising 86% don't know which tools are best.

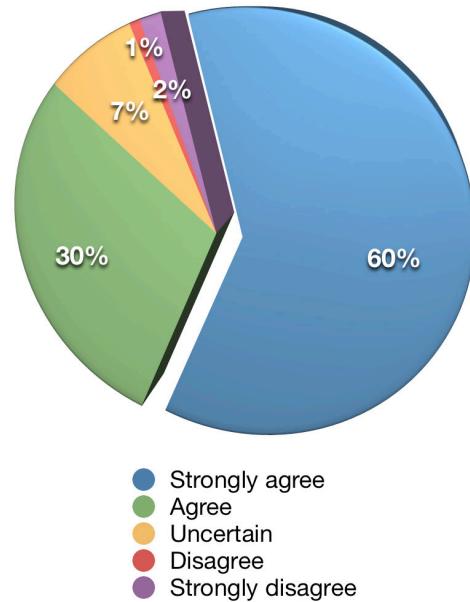
# Use of social media marketing

We asked a few questions to determine the survey participants' experience using social media to market their businesses.

## Social media is important for my business

A significant 90% of marketers said that social media is important to their businesses.

This is slightly down from our 2015 findings, where 58% strongly agreed and 34% agreed.



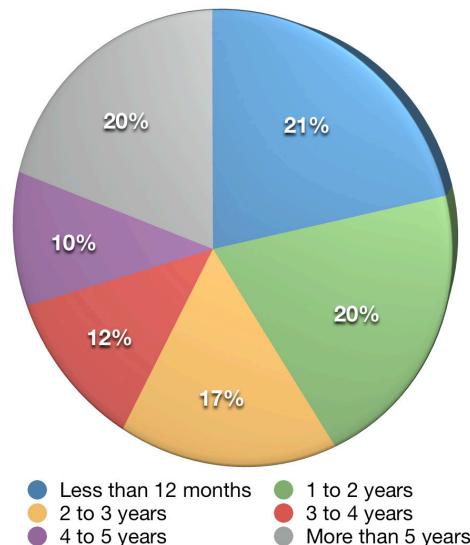
## Years using social media marketing

We asked participants how long they've been using social media marketing.

Fifty-nine percent of marketers surveyed have at least two years of social media marketing experience.

**Note:** For a detailed demographic breakdown of survey participants, see pages 53–55 of this report.

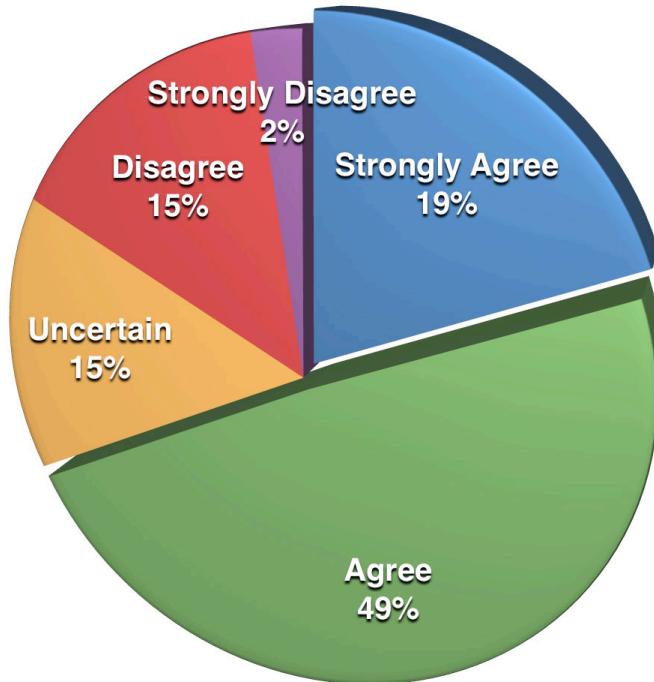
On the following pages, we asked marketers to rate their agreement with a few broad statements related to social media.



## Analyzing social media

We wanted to understand marketers' ability to analyze their social media activities, so we asked them to rate their agreement with the following statement: "I regularly analyze my social activities."

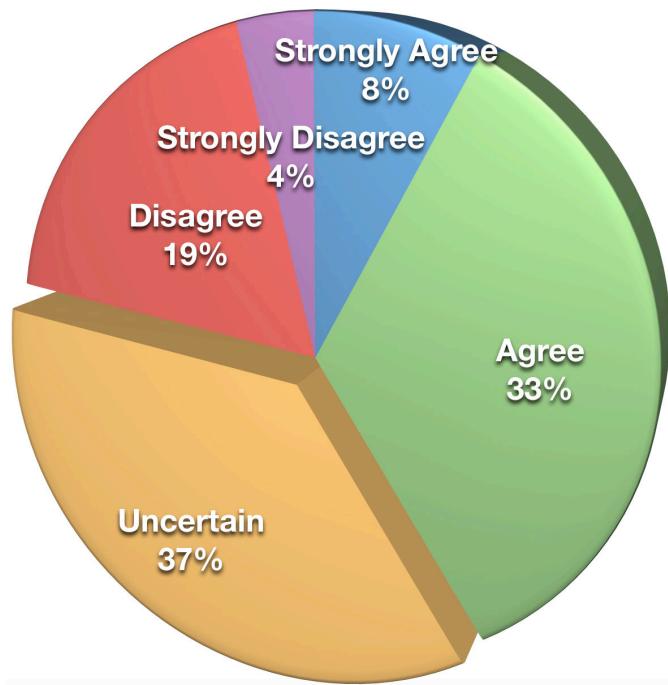
A significant 68% of marketers surveyed analyze their social media activities.



# Measuring social media ROI

We wanted to understand marketers' ability to measure their social media activities, so we asked them to rate their agreement with the following statement: "I am able to measure the return on investment (ROI) for my social media activities."

Only 41% agreed they're able to measure their social activities. The ROI issue has plagued marketers for years. In 2015, 42% indicated they could measure ROI and in 2014, it was 37%.



# Better Social Starts Here



## Let the data tell your story.

**Simply Measured** is the world's best social analytics platform designed to help marketers make informed decisions and drive real business value. More than 50 percent of the Interbrand 100 companies use Simply Measured to identify new opportunities, plan their social campaigns, optimize activities for better results, and report on their programs to prove the value of social.

**Simply Measured** is the only solution certified by Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, and YouTube to provide marketers with useful insights from the world's most popular social platforms. With integrations that include more than a dozen other social networks and data enrichments, Simply Measured is the most robust analytics solution designed specifically for marketers.

**Request a Trial Today**



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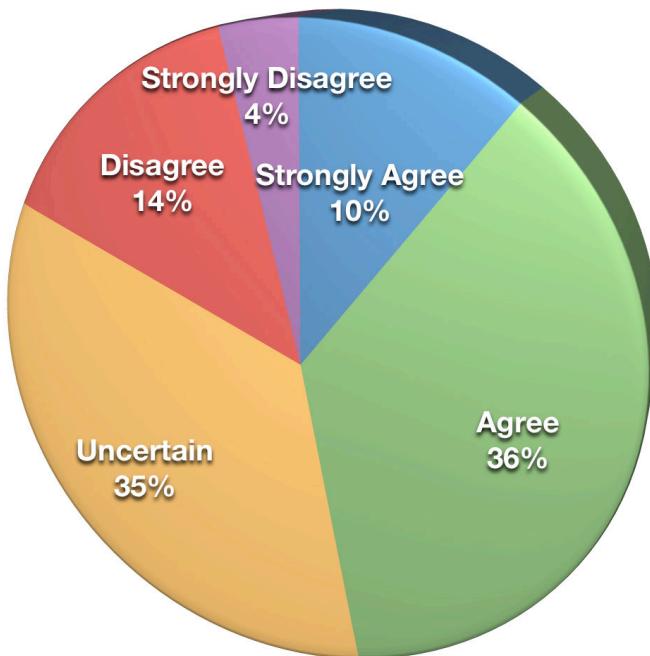
[simplymeasured.com](http://simplymeasured.com)

# Effectiveness of Facebook marketing

We asked marketers if they agreed with the statement: "My Facebook marketing is effective."

Only 46% of marketers feel like their Facebook efforts are working, a slight increase from 45% in 2015. However, most marketers either don't know or indicated that their Facebook marketing is NOT working.

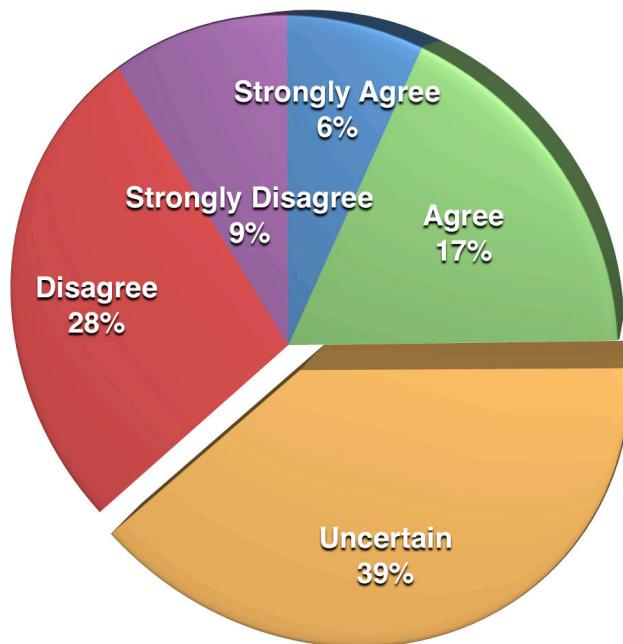
B2C marketers were far more likely to agree or strongly agree (52%) than their B2B peers (38%).



## Facebook traffic declines

We wanted to understand if marketers experienced declines in Facebook traffic, so we asked them to rate their agreement with the following statement: "Facebook traffic to my website has declined in the last 12 months."

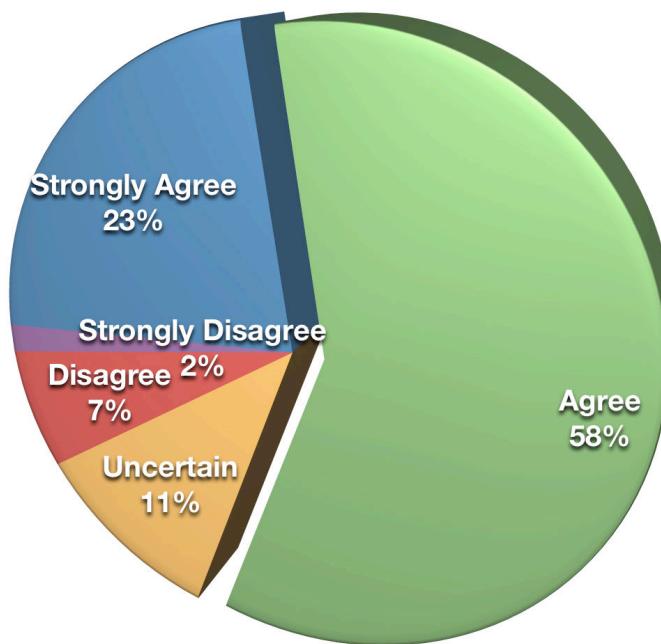
Only 23% reported a decline in traffic. However, a significant 39% of marketers surveyed were unsure. When combined, **62% of marketers either do not know or have seen a decline in Facebook traffic over the last 12 months.**



## Integrated social activities

We asked marketers to rate their agreement with the following statement: "I have integrated social media into my traditional marketing activities."

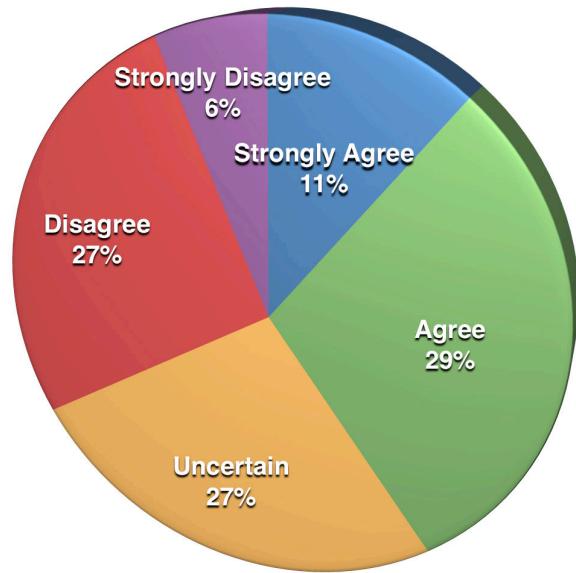
Eighty-one percent of marketers agreed that they have integrated their social media and traditional marketing activities, slightly down from 84% in 2015.



## Social media marketing difficulty

We asked marketers to rate their agreement with the following statement: "For me, marketing with social media is harder than it was 12 months ago."

Forty percent of marketers agreed that social media marketing has become more difficult in the last 12 months.



## How Marketers Get Things Done: The State of Agile Marketing in 2016

### Learn:

- ◆ The biggest challenges facing marketers
- ◆ How marketing teams are managing their work
- ◆ Common barriers to collaboration with other departments
- ◆ The most popular Agile methodologies & top obstacles to Agile adoption



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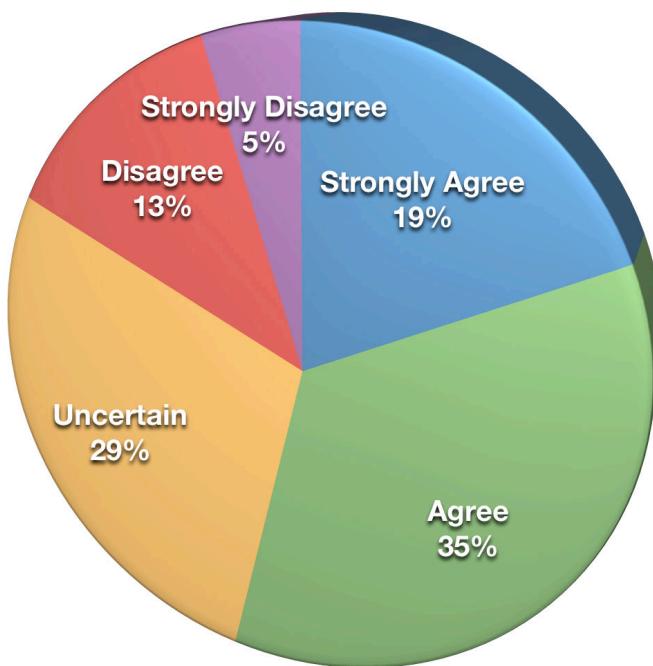
**Wrike**

## Mobile-optimized blogs

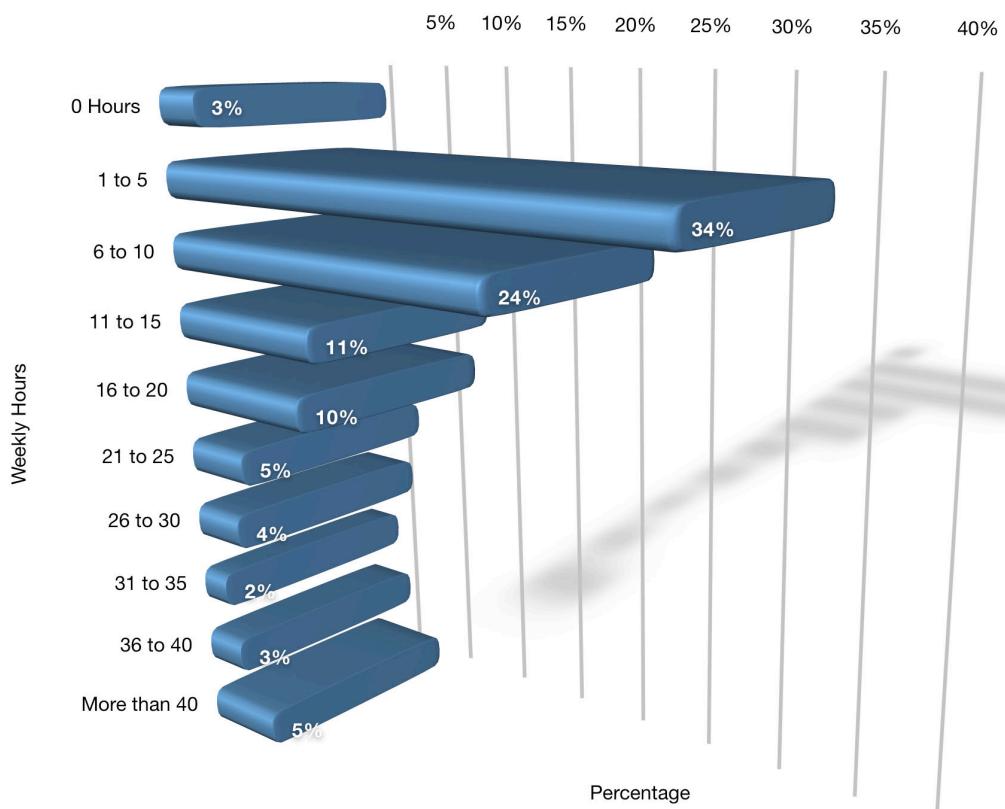
We asked those marketers who have blogs to rate their agreement with the following statement: "My blog is optimized for mobile readers."

Fifty-four percent of marketers surveyed have a mobile-optimized blog, up from 50% in 2015 and 43% in 2014.

B2B marketers were more likely to have their blogs mobile-optimized (62%), when compared to B2C marketers (51%).



## Weekly time commitment for social media marketing



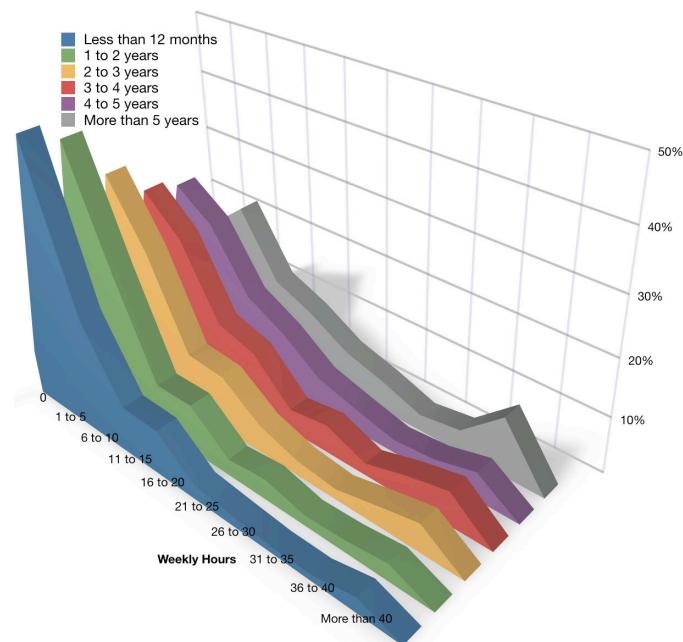
A significant 63% of marketers are using social media for 6 hours or more and 39% for 11 or more hours weekly. It's interesting to note that nearly **19% of marketers spend more than 20 hours each week on social media.**

## The experience factor

There's a direct relationship between how long marketers have been using social media and their weekly time commitment.

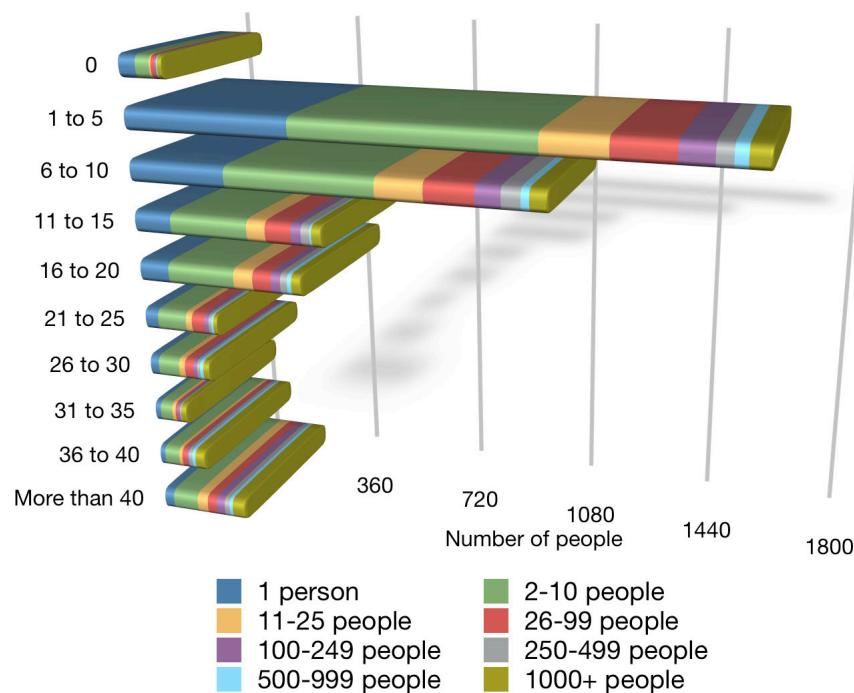
For people just beginning with social media (less than 12 months of experience), 54% spend 5 or fewer hours per week.

However, of folks who have been doing this for 2 years or longer, at least 64% spend 6 hours or more per week on social media activities.

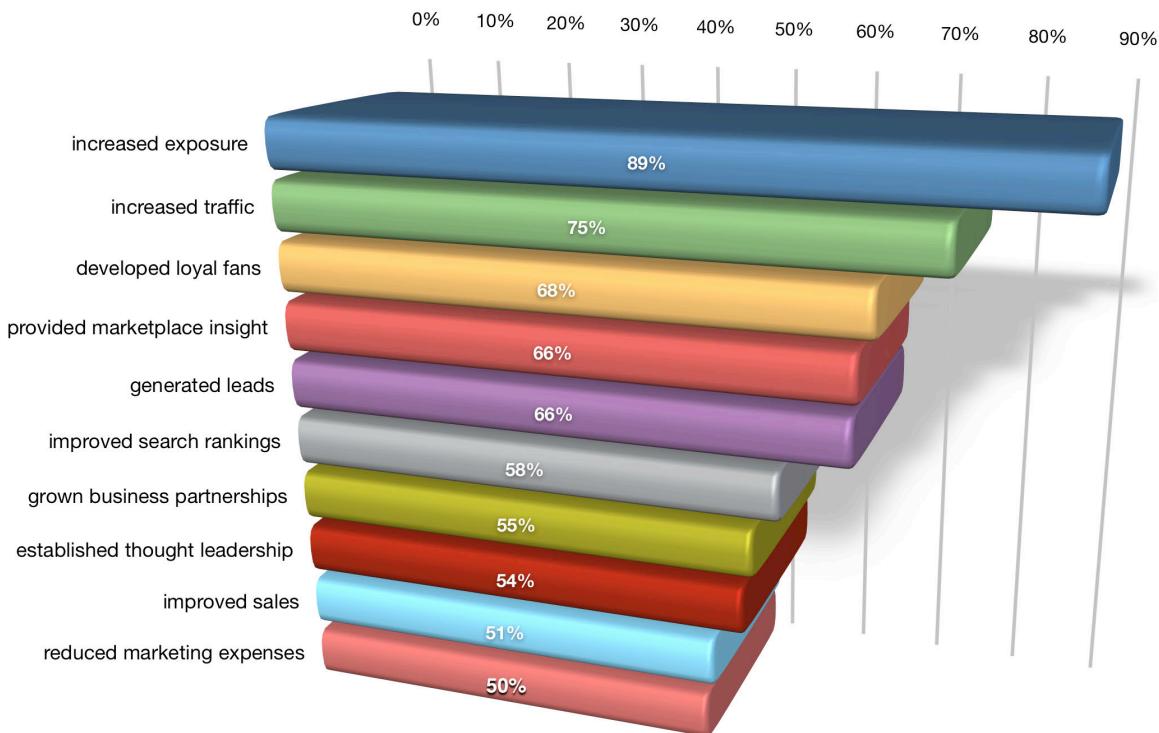


## How the time commitment varies with business size

This chart shows how different-sized businesses invest their time with social media activities.



# Benefits of social media marketing



The top two benefits of social media marketing are increasing exposure and increasing traffic. A significant 89% of all marketers indicated that their social media efforts have generated more exposure for their businesses. Increasing traffic was the second major benefit, with 75% reporting positive results.

Most marketers are using social media to develop loyal fans (68%) and gain marketplace intelligence (66%).

The order of the benefits has not changed since 2015, and for the most part the percentages have only changed 1 or 2 points.

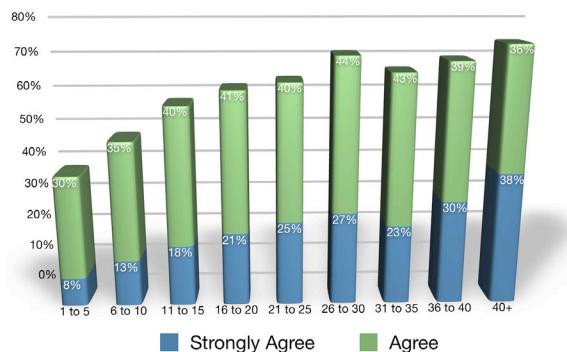
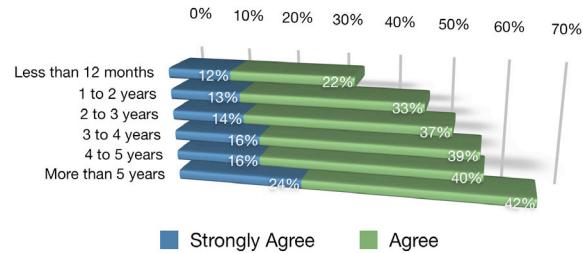
Some questions that naturally emerge from the above chart might include: "Can I achieve more benefits by investing more time in social media?", "Are marketers who've been using social media for years gaining even better results?", and "Is there a difference between B2B and B2C?" The following charts address these questions.

## Improved sales

It takes time to develop relationships that lead to sales. However, a large percentage of marketers who take the time find great results.

For example, more than half of marketers who've been using social media for at least 2 years report it helped them improve sales. More than half who spend 11 or more hours per week find the same results and 74% of those who spend 40+ hours per week earn new business through their efforts.

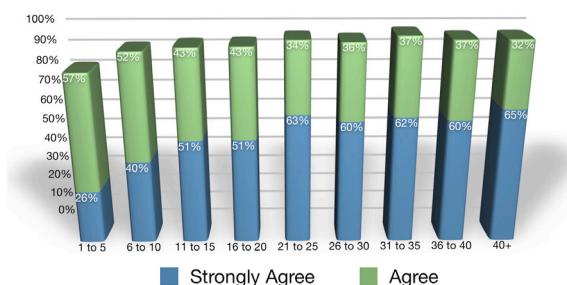
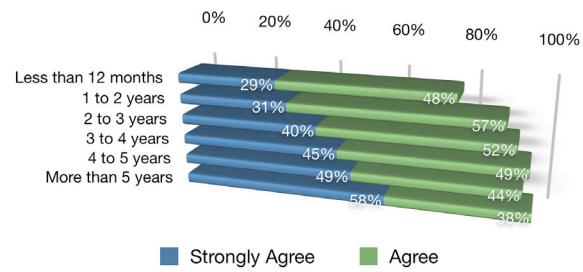
Conversely, 49% of all marketers taking this survey report that social media has *not* helped them improve sales (see page 17). This may be because they lack the needed tools to track sales.



## Increased exposure

With as little as 6 hours per week, the vast majority of marketers (92%+) indicated their social media efforts increased exposure for their businesses.

Nearly all marketers (88%+) who've been employing social media marketing for 1 year or longer report it generates exposure for their businesses.

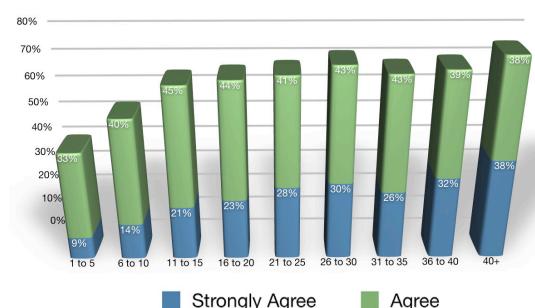
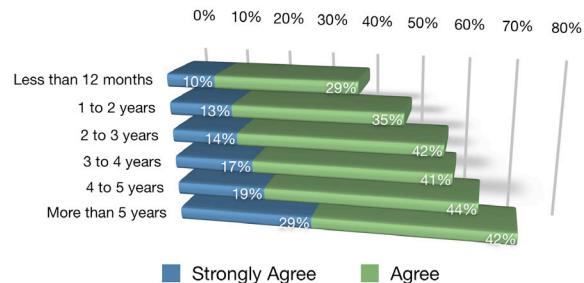


## Grew business partnerships

The more time marketers invest in social media, the more they gain business partnerships. More than half of marketers who've invested at least 2 years in social media marketing report that new partnerships were gained.

More than half of those investing as little as 6 hours per week in social media were able to build new partnerships.

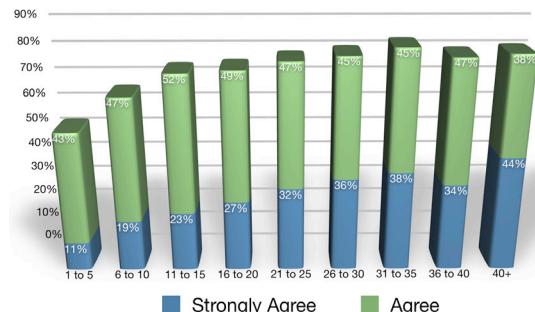
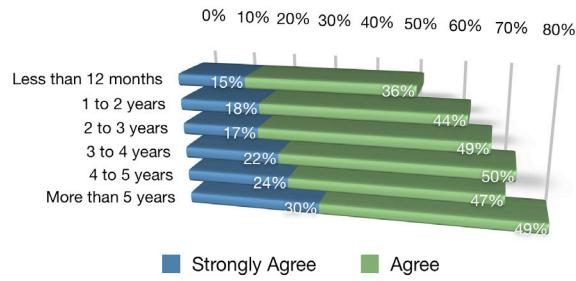
Marketers selling to other businesses were more likely to achieve this benefit (60%) than those selling to consumers (53%).



## Generated leads

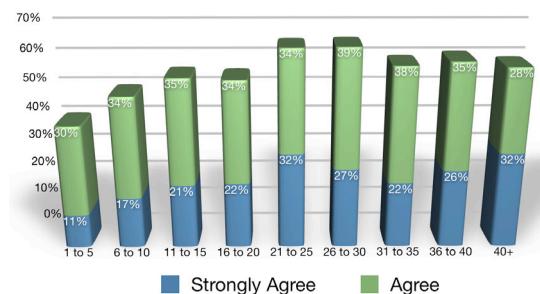
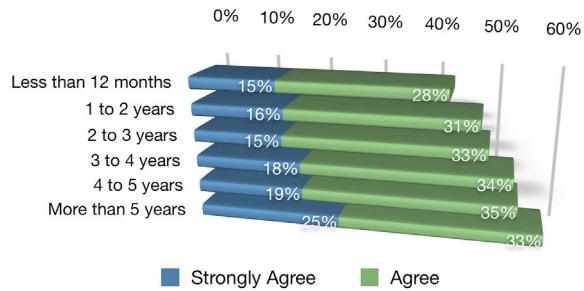
By spending as little as 6 hours per week, 66%+ of marketers see lead generation benefits with social media.

More than half of marketers with at least 1 year of social media experience were generating leads with social platforms.



## Reduced marketing expenses

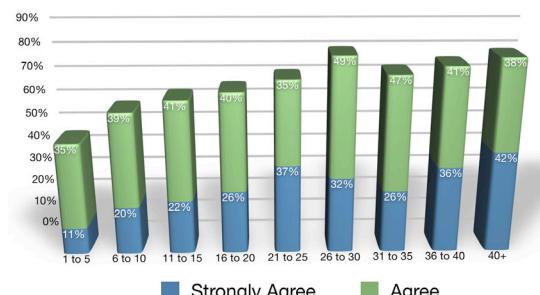
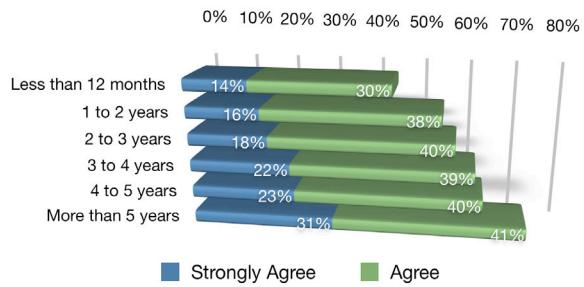
More than half of those who spend at least 11 hours per week on social media efforts saw a benefit of reduced marketing expenses.



## Improved search rankings

Improved search engine rankings were most prevalent among those who've been using social media for 1 year or longer, with 54%+ reporting a rise.

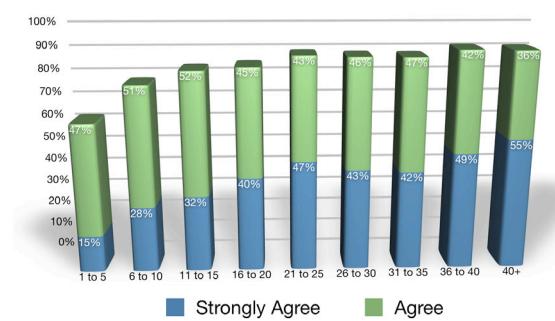
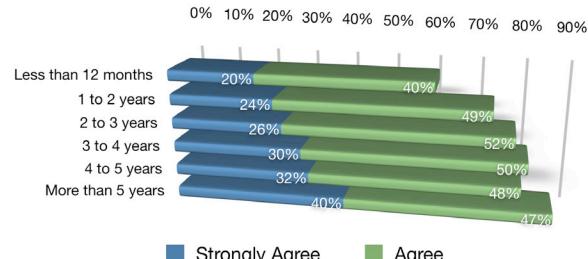
At least 59% of those investing a minimum of 6 hours per week in social media marketing saw improvements in search engine rankings.



## Increased traffic

A significant 79%+ of participants found that increased traffic occurred with as little as 6 hours per week invested in social media marketing.

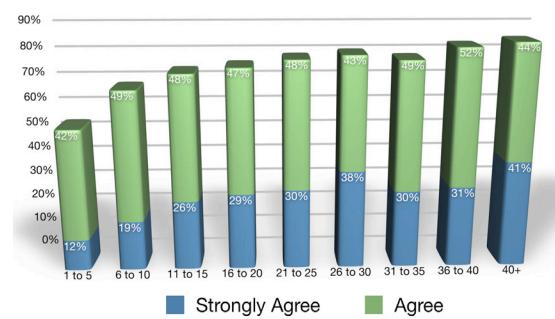
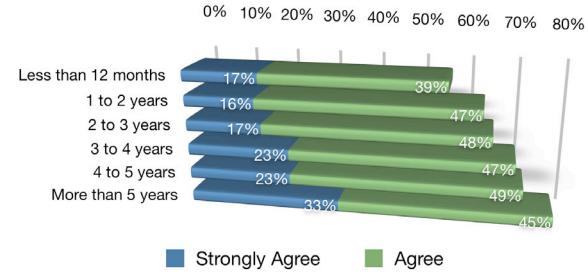
And those who've used social media for 1 year or more reported substantially better results (73%+ reported benefits), compared with those with less experience.



## Provided marketplace insight

Of those with at least 1 year of experience, 63% or more found social platforms provided marketplace insight.

At least 68% of those spending at least 6 hours per week were more likely to gain marketplace insight.

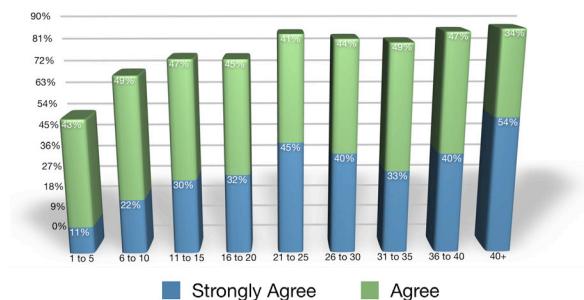
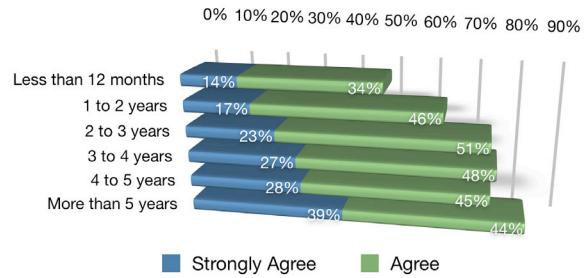


## Developed loyal fans

Of those who have been using social media for at least 1 year, 63% found it useful for building a loyal fan base.

Time invested makes a difference. Of those spending at least 6 hours per week, 71% found benefit, compared to 54% of those spending 5 hours or fewer per week.

B2C marketers (71%) were much more likely to develop a loyal fan base through social media than B2B marketers (62%).

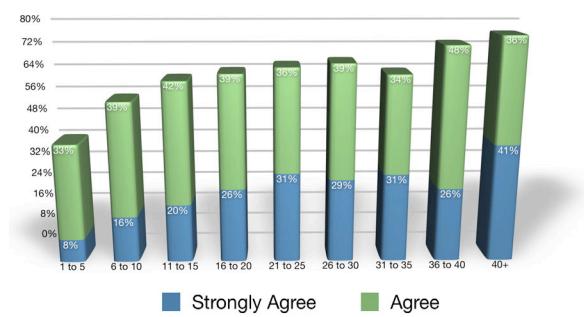
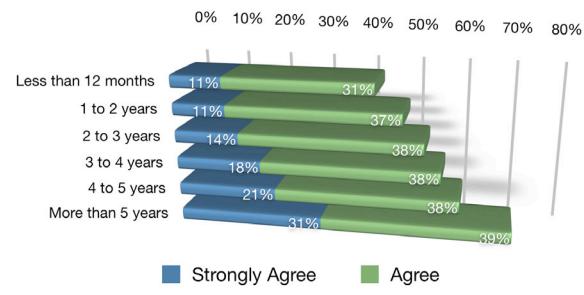


## Established thought leadership

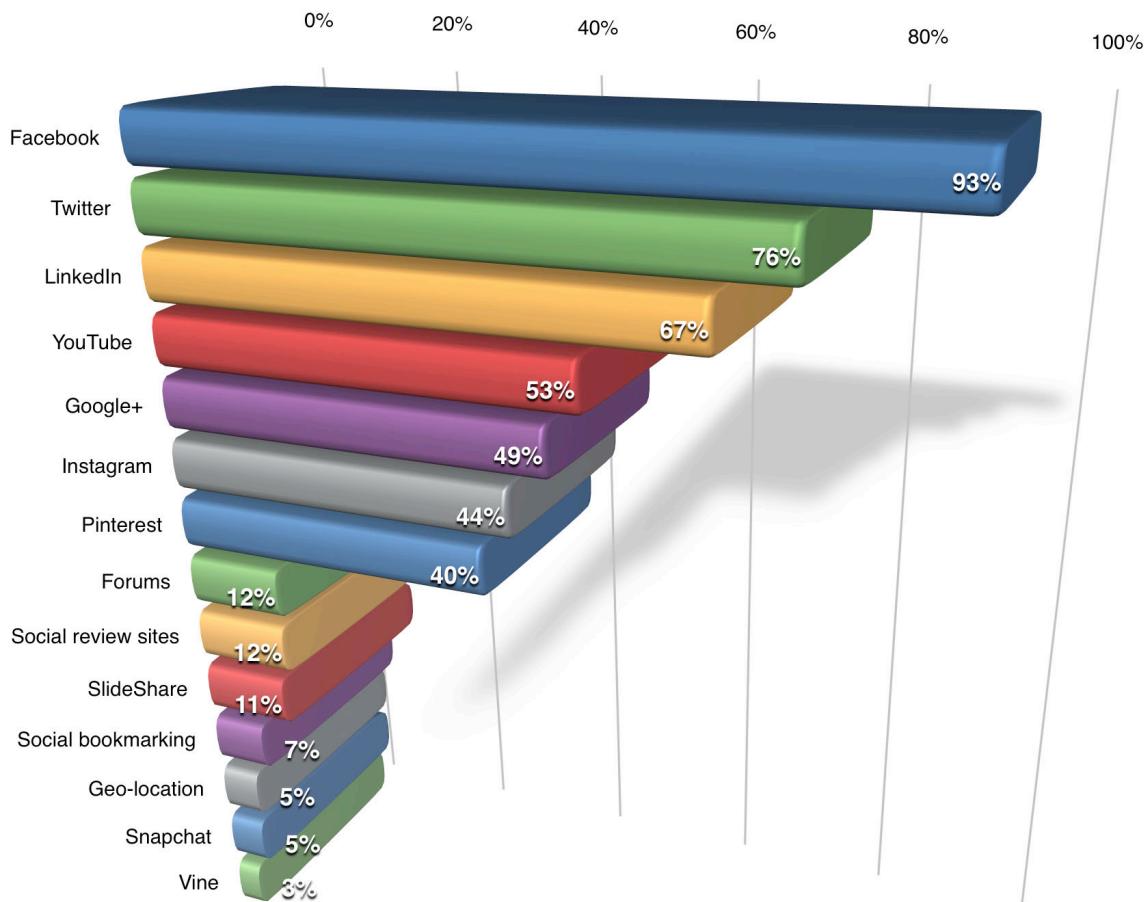
More than half of marketers who have been using social media for 2 or more years (52%+) have been able to establish thought leadership.

Most marketers (55%+) gained thought leadership with at least 6 hours per week.

B2B marketers were more likely (61%) to use social media to gain thought leadership than B2C marketers (50%).



## Commonly used social media platforms



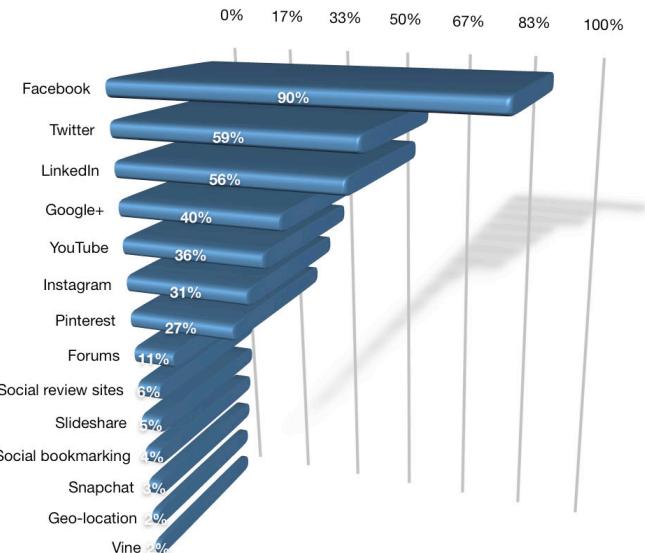
Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, Google+, Instagram, and Pinterest were the top seven platforms used by marketers, with Facebook leading the pack by a long shot. All of the other platforms paled in comparison to these top seven.

**CHANGES SINCE 2015:** Instagram jumped from 36% to 44%. Among the larger social networks, Twitter declined from 79% to 76%, LinkedIn dropped from 71% to 67%, YouTube went from 55% to 53%, Google+ declined from 56% to 49%, and Pinterest dropped from 45% to 40%.

Here's a close examination of which social channels experienced social media marketers are using, compared to those just getting underway.

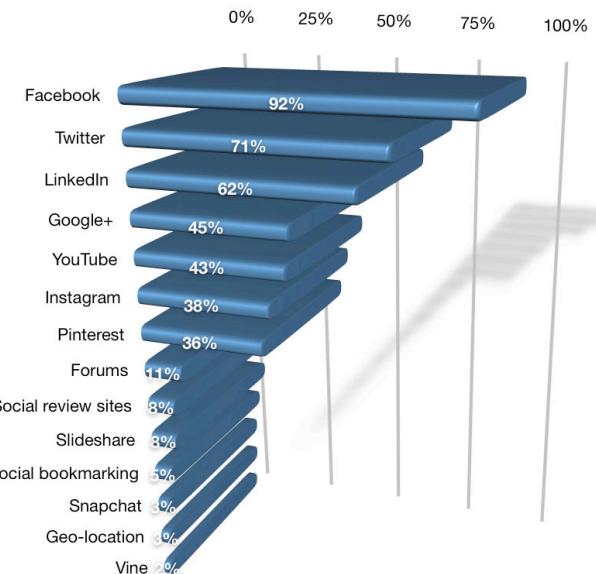
### Platforms used by those with less than 12 months experience

Those just getting underway with social media marketing select Facebook as their number-one choice (by a long shot), followed by Twitter and LinkedIn.



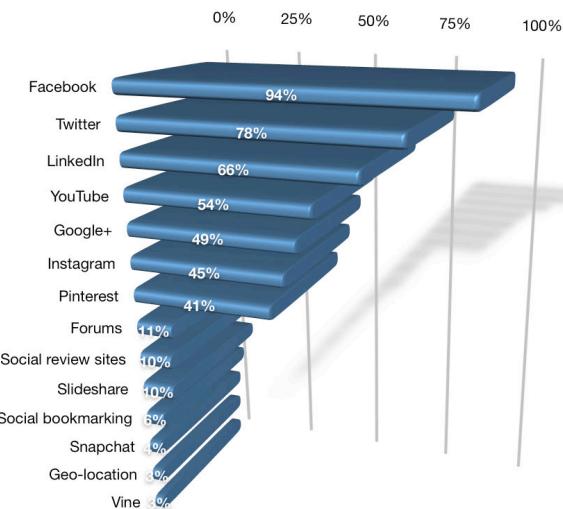
### Platforms used by those with 1 to 2 years experience

For marketers who have been employing social media marketing for 1 to 2 years, Facebook and Twitter remain the top two choices.



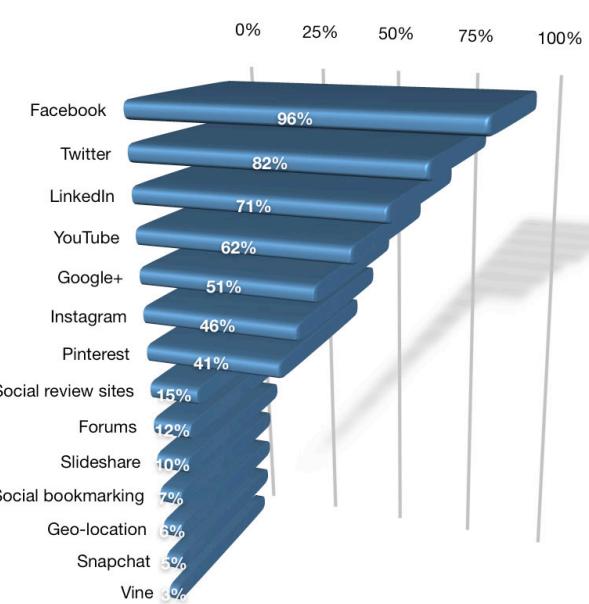
## Platforms used by those with 2 to 3 years experience

Facebook and Twitter are the two standouts among the platforms used by social media marketers with 2 to 3 years experience.



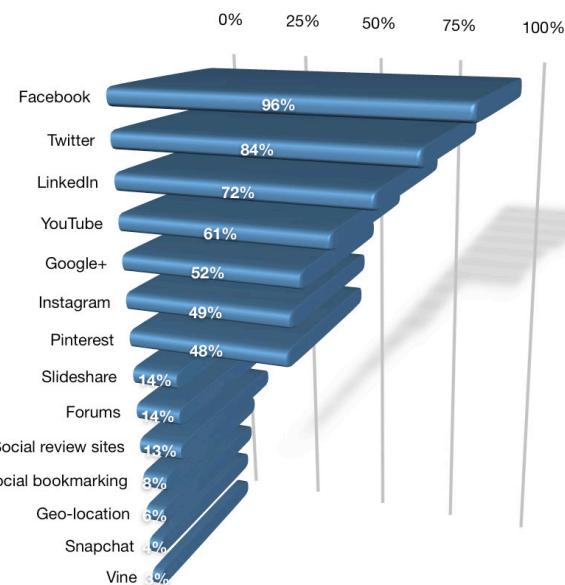
## Platforms used by those with 3 to 4 years experience

Nearly all marketers with 3 to 4 years of social media experience use Facebook (96%).



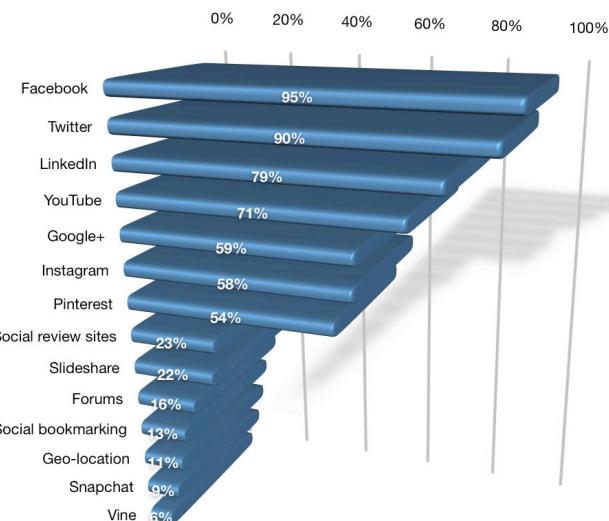
## Platforms used by those with 4 to 5 years experience

As marketers gain experience, their marketing efforts seem to expand across all major social platforms.



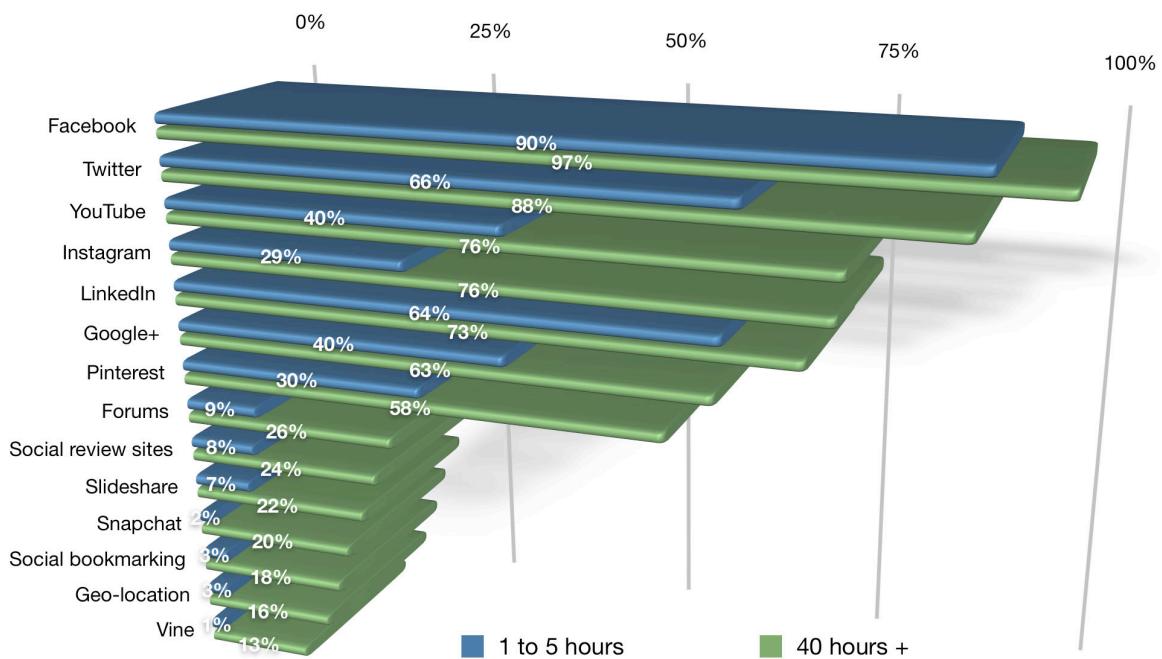
## Platforms used by those with more than 5 years experience

Those with the most social media marketing experience also put the highest focus on each of the social networks.



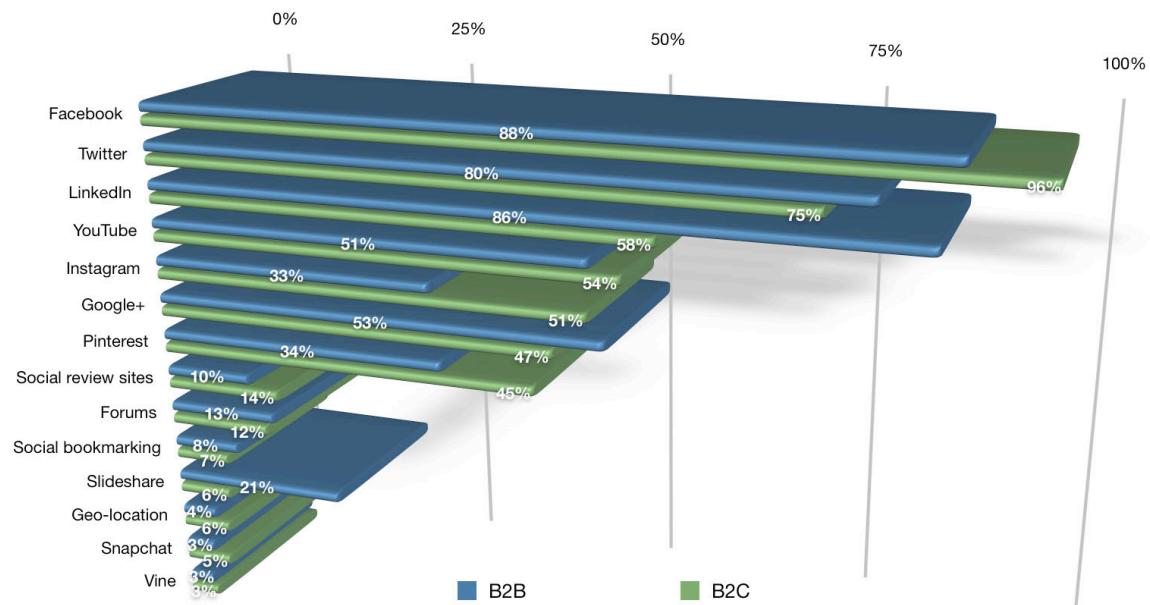
## Platforms used by those who commit small versus large amounts of weekly time to social media

This chart shows where marketers putting in the least time are investing versus those putting in the most time. There are some interesting findings here. Marketers investing 40+ hours per week are much more focused on Instagram (47% more), YouTube (36% more), and Pinterest (28% more) than those investing 6 or fewer hours a week with social media.

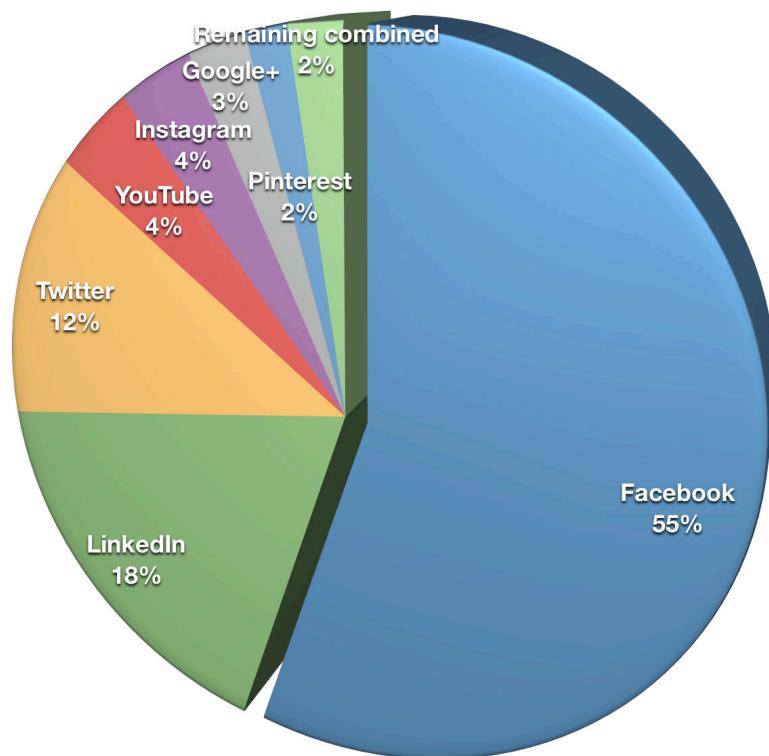


## Platforms used by B2B versus B2C

This chart shows how platform use varies between B2B- and B2C-focused marketers. B2C marketers are more focused on Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and Pinterest. B2B marketers are more focused on LinkedIn, Twitter, Google+, and SlideShare.



## The most important social platform for marketers is...



We asked marketers to select the single most important social platform for their business. Because only one choice was allowed, the findings are revealing.

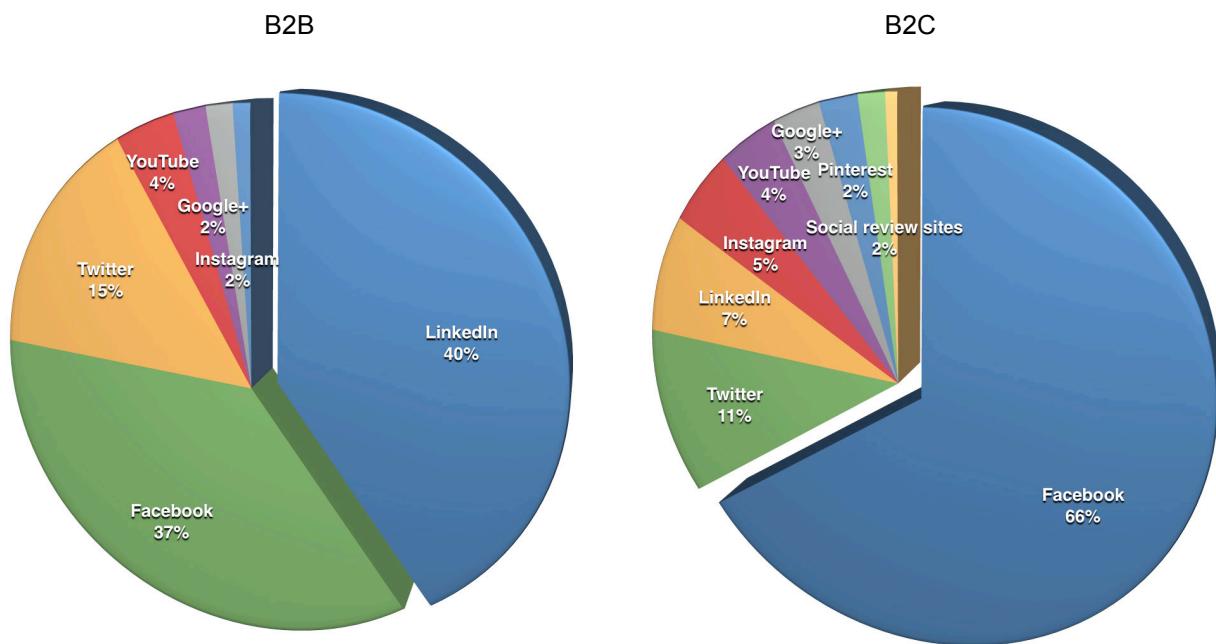
More than half of marketers (55%) chose Facebook as their most important platform, followed by LinkedIn (18%), Twitter (12%), and then YouTube (4%). This chart clearly reveals Facebook is still the primary platform for marketers.

**CHANGES SINCE 2015:** Facebook increased in importance from 52% to 55%. LinkedIn decreased from 21% to 18%. Twitter also decreased from 13% to 12%.

## B2B vs. B2C

Notice the fascinating differences between B2B- and B2C-focused marketers.

Clearly Facebook dominates in the B2C space (65% of marketers select it as their number-one choice). However, for B2B marketers, LinkedIn plays a much more important role, surpassing Facebook.



# How will marketers change their future social media activities?

We asked marketers to indicate how they will change their social media use in the near future. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they will increase, decrease, remain the same, or not utilize various social media channels.

Marketers plan on increasing their use of Facebook (67%), YouTube (63%), Twitter (61%), and LinkedIn (61%), in that order. A significant 74% said they have no plans to utilize Snapchat. Seventy-five percent have no plans to use Vine.

**Note:** We rounded the results on the following pages, but ranked the order based on results that are not rounded.

Here is a breakdown by social media channel:

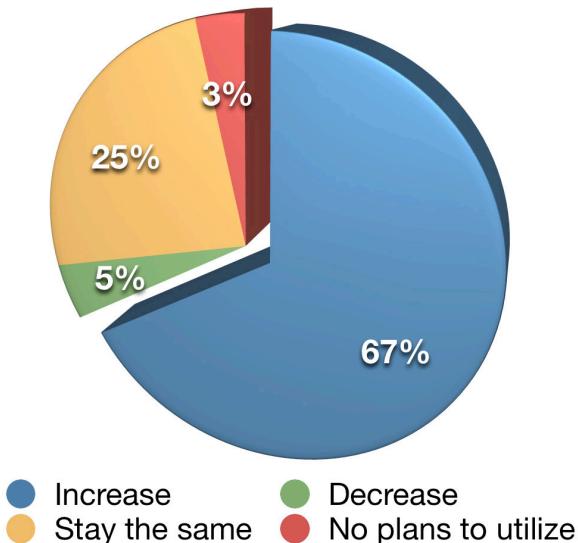
## #1: Facebook

Our research shows a significant increase in the use of Facebook among marketers. It moved from the number-four slot in 2015 with 62% of marketers increasing activities to the top slot.

As shown earlier, Facebook is still the most important social network to most marketers.

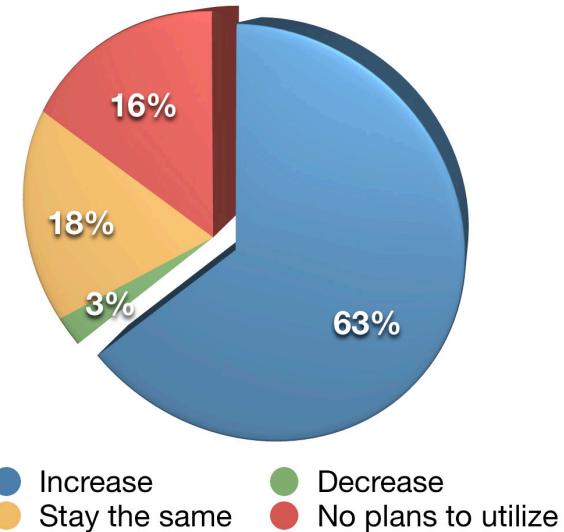
Only 3% of marketers surveyed do not plan to utilize Facebook.

Seventy percent of B2C plan on increasing Facebook efforts, compared to only 61% of B2B.



## #2: YouTube

A significant 63% of marketers plan on increasing their YouTube marketing. However, 16% have no plans for using YouTube.



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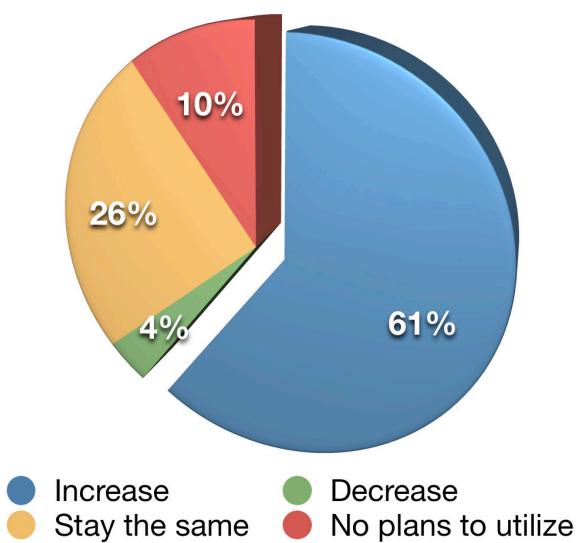
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A diagram illustrating social media integration. It features a laptop screen displaying a video player interface. Above the laptop, five social media icons are arranged in a circle: Twitter (top), YouTube (top-right), Facebook (bottom-right), Instagram (bottom), and Pinterest (left). Dashed lines connect these icons to a central 'f' icon, representing how different platforms can be interconnected or used together.

### #3: Twitter

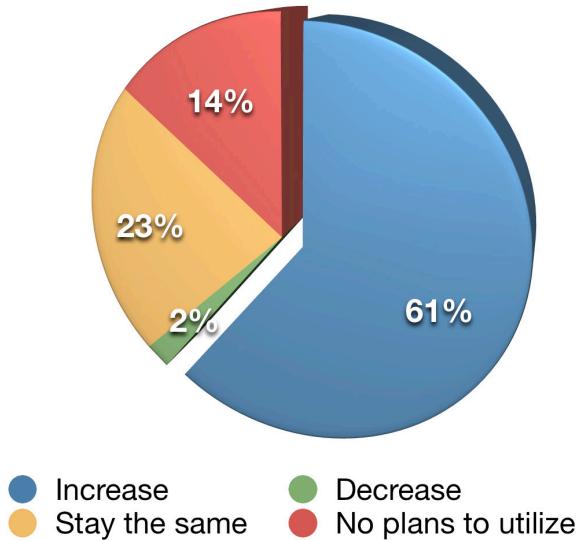
Twitter has experienced a decline among marketers, dropping to 61% in 2016 from 66% in 2015. Both Facebook and YouTube have unseated Twitter from its number-one slot in 2015.



### #4: LinkedIn

A significant 61% of marketers plan on increasing their use of LinkedIn, a decline from 66% in 2015.

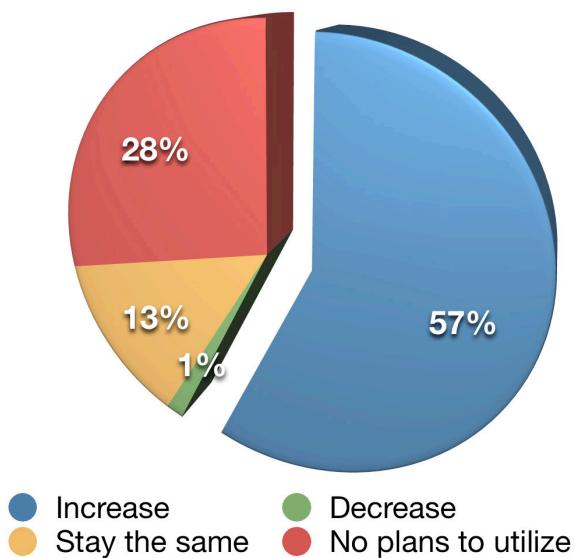
As expected, B2B marketers are significantly more likely to plan on increasing their use of LinkedIn (76% of B2B vs. 52% of B2C).



## #5: Instagram

Fifty-seven percent of marketers plan to increase their use of Instagram (up from 52% in 2015).

B2C marketers are significantly more likely (63%) to increase Instagram activities than B2B marketers (48%).

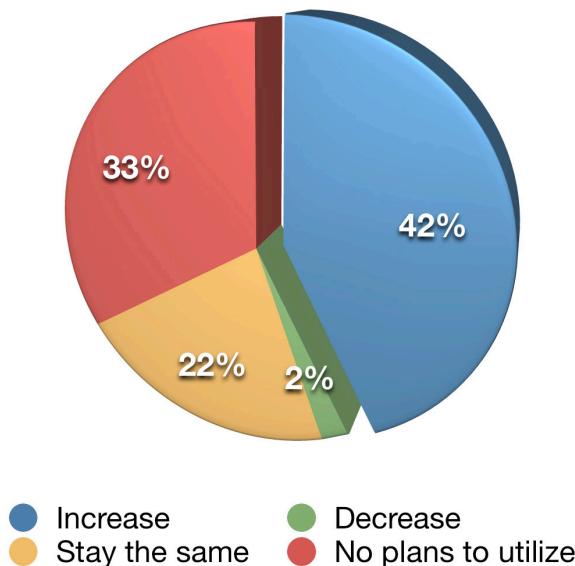


## #6: Pinterest

Forty-two percent of marketers plan to increase their use of Pinterest. This number declined significantly from 51% in 2015.

One in three marketers have no plans to use Pinterest.

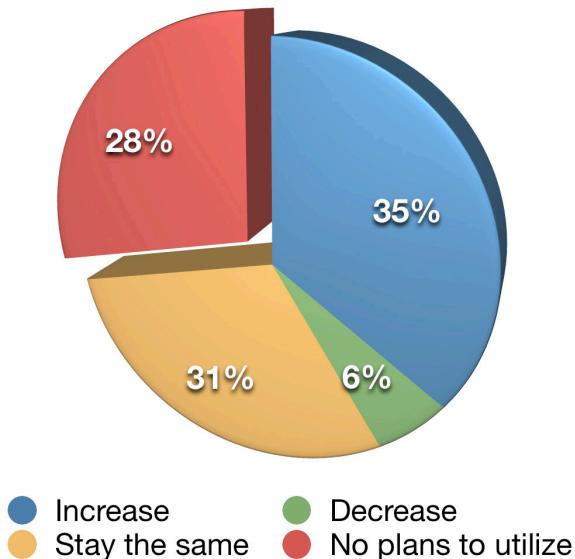
B2C marketers are significantly more likely to increase Pinterest activities (47%) versus 35% of B2B.



## #7: Google+

Google+ is on a significant downward trend. In 2016, only 35% of marketers will increase their Google+ activities. This is a major drop from 52% in 2015 and 61% in 2014.

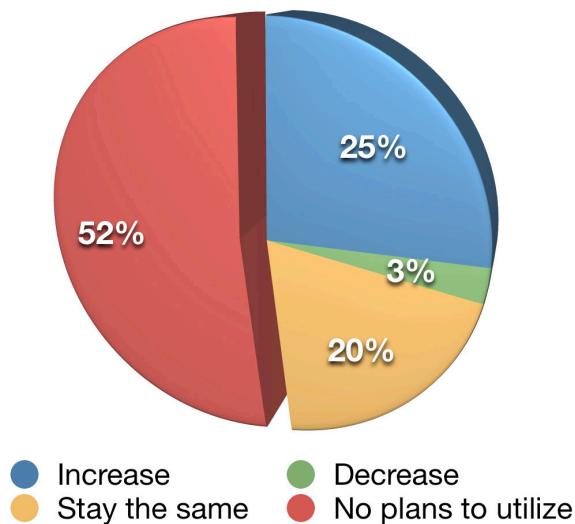
More than 1 in 4 have no plans to use Google+.



## #8: Forums

Forums, perhaps the oldest form of social media, saw a slight decrease from 2015, where 27% planned on increasing activities and 49% had no plans to use forums.

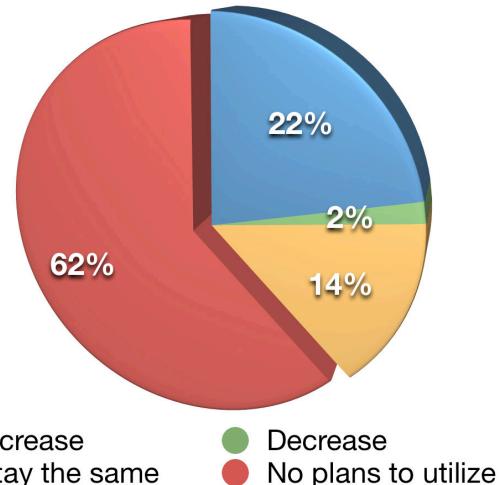
B2B marketers plan on increasing their forum use more (27%) than B2C marketers (23%).



## #9: SlideShare

Only 22% of marketers plan on increasing their SlideShare activities, a drop from 29% in 2015.

A significant 33% of B2B marketers will increase their SlideShare activities, compared to just 15% of B2C.

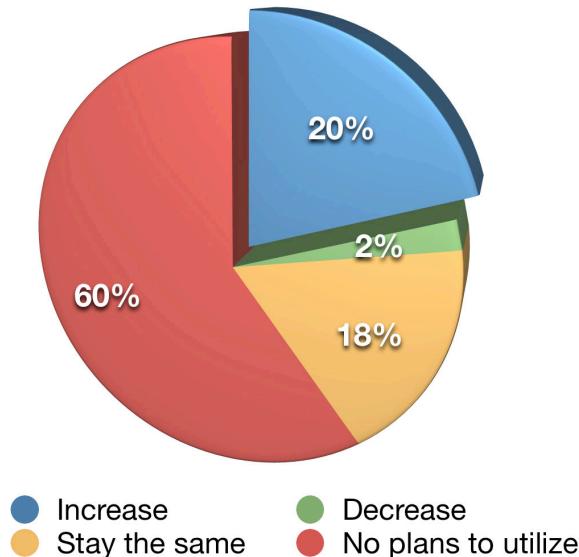


● Increase      ● Decrease  
● Stay the same      ● No plans to utilize

## #10: Social review sites

Only 20% of marketers plan on increasing activities on social review sites like Yelp.

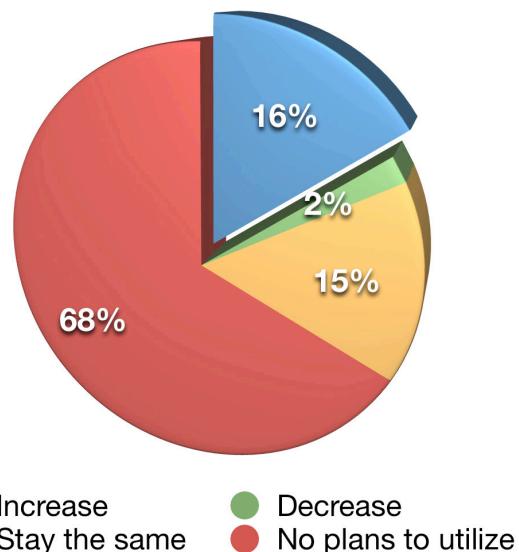
B2C marketers plan to invest more on social review sites (22%) compared to B2B marketers (17%).



● Increase      ● Decrease  
● Stay the same      ● No plans to utilize

### #11: Social bookmarking

A mere 16% of businesses plan on increasing their social bookmarking activities with sites like StumbleUpon, while 68% have no plans to use social bookmarking.

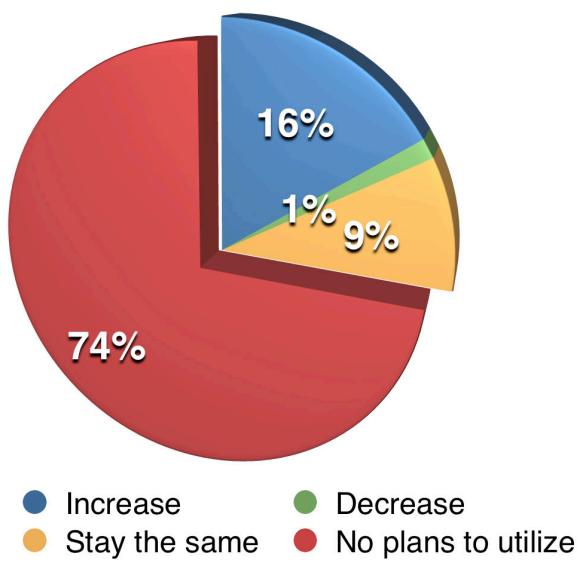


● Increase      ● Decrease  
● Stay the same      ● No plans to utilize

### #12: Snapchat

Snapchat is on an emerging growth curve. While only 16% of marketers plan on increasing Snapchat activities, this is up from 7% in 2015.

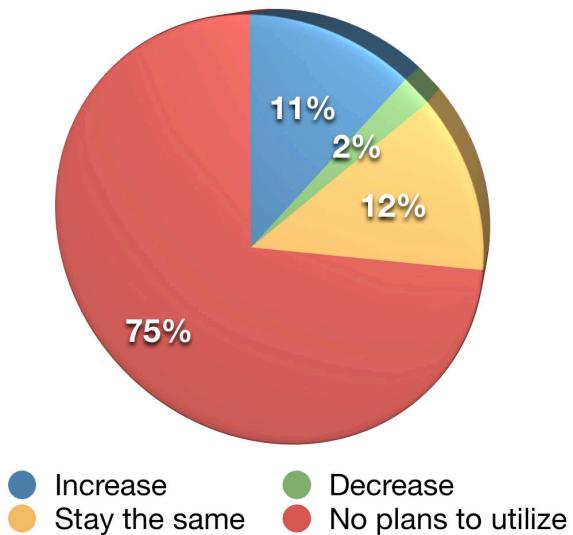
B2C marketers are more likely to increase their Snapchat activities (17%) than B2B marketers (13%).



● Increase      ● Decrease  
● Stay the same      ● No plans to utilize

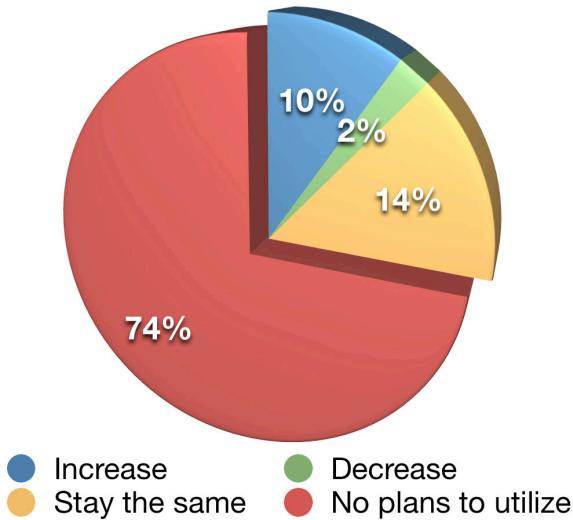
### #13: Vine

Only 11% of marketers plan on increasing their use of Vine, down from 15% in 2015.

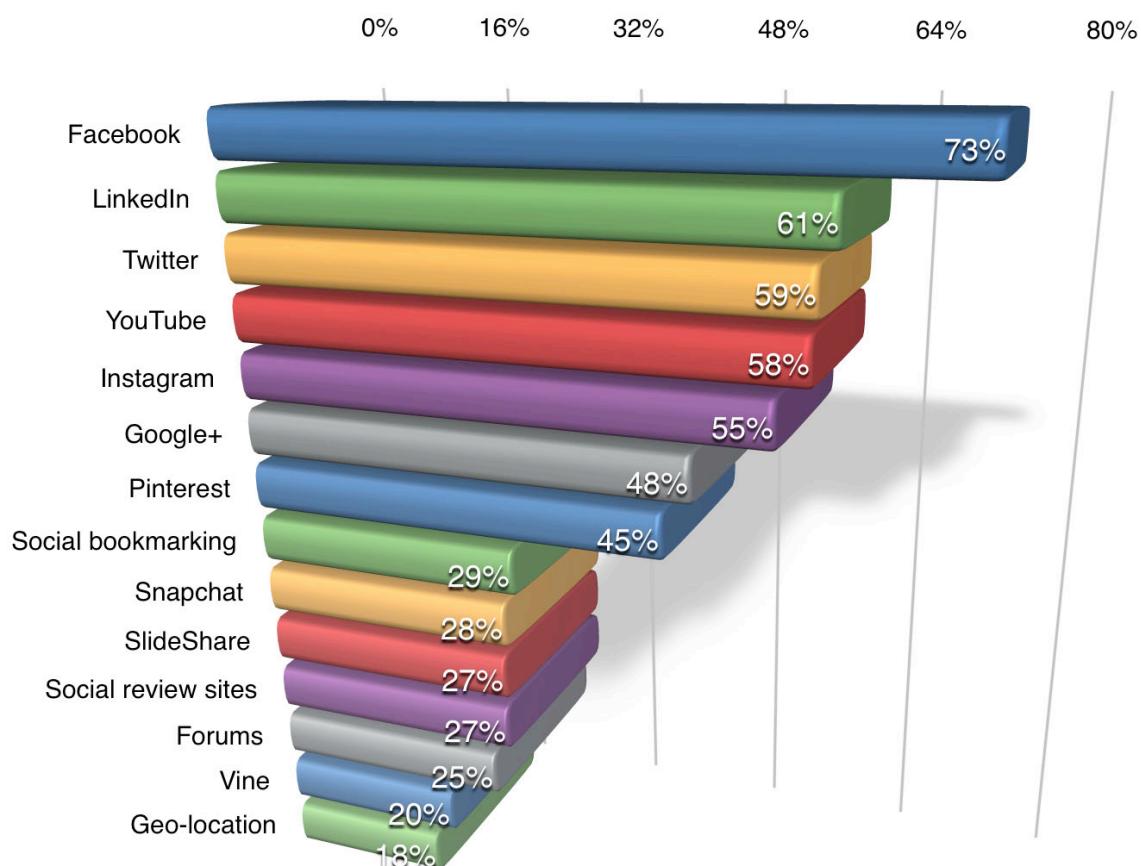


### #14: Geo-location

Only 10% of marketers plan on increasing their use of geo-location services like Foursquare.



## Social media platforms marketers want to learn more about



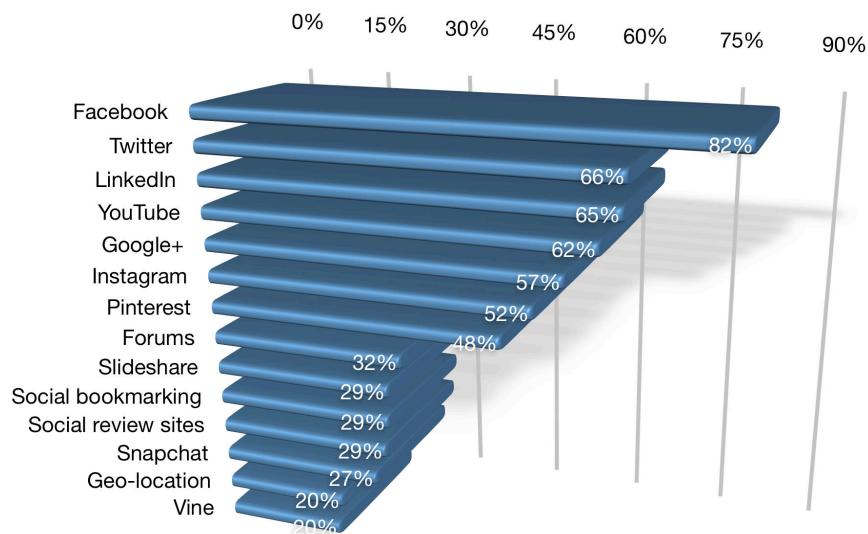
We asked marketers to identify social media platforms about which they most want to improve their knowledge. Facebook took first place, growing from 68% in 2015 to 73% in 2016. Instagram increased from 49% in 2015 to 55% in 2016. Snapchat also rose significantly, from 19% in 2015 to 28% in 2016.

B2C marketers are more interested in learning about Facebook (77% B2C vs. 65% B2B), Pinterest (49% B2C vs. 37% B2B), and Instagram (60% B2C vs. 47% B2B) than their B2B counterparts. And B2B marketers are far more interested in learning about LinkedIn (72% B2B vs. 55% B2C) and SlideShare (34% B2B vs. 24% B2C).

What follows are social platforms marketers are interested in, based on how long they've been using social media marketing.

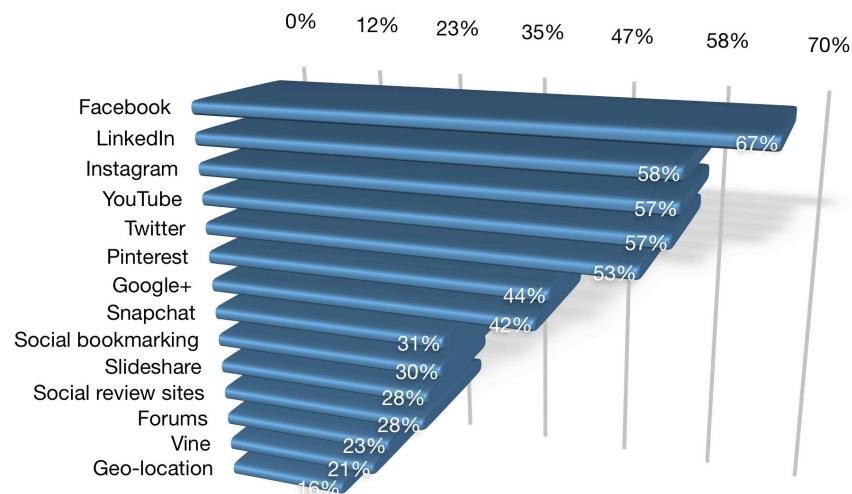
### **Marketers with less than 12 months social media experience:**

Facebook (82%), Twitter (66%), and LinkedIn (65%) are the top social networks new social media marketers want to learn about.

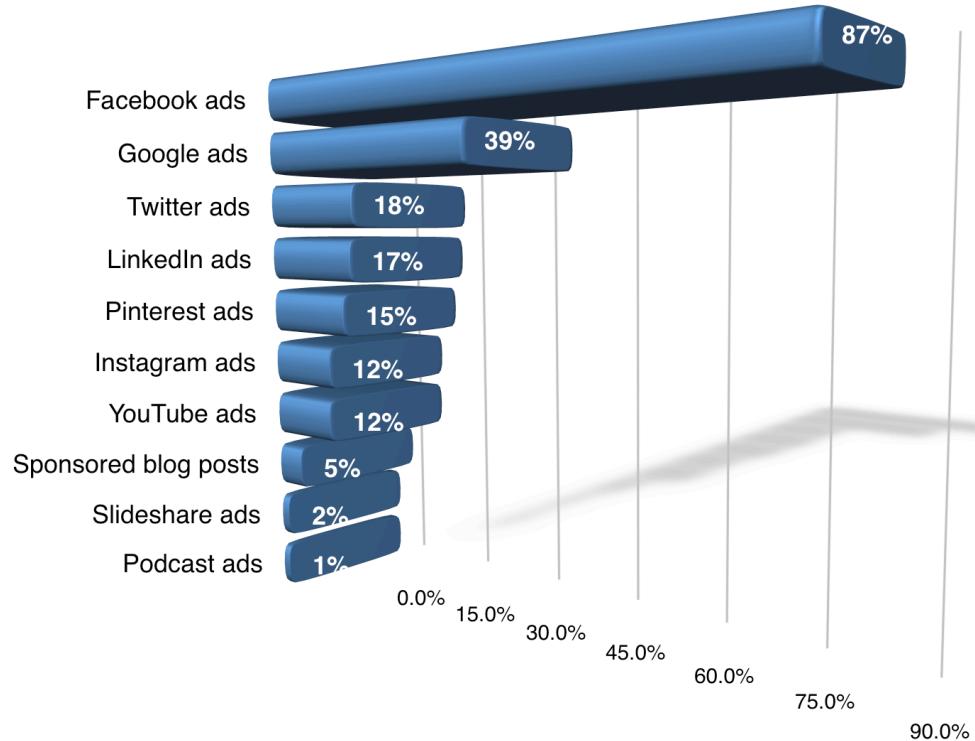


### **Marketers with 3+ years social media experience:**

For experienced pros, Facebook (67%) still tops the list, followed by LinkedIn (58%) and Instagram (57%).



## Paid social media



We asked marketers to identify which forms of paid social media they regularly use.

The overwhelming majority use Facebook ads (87%), followed by Google ads (39%) and Twitter ads (18%).

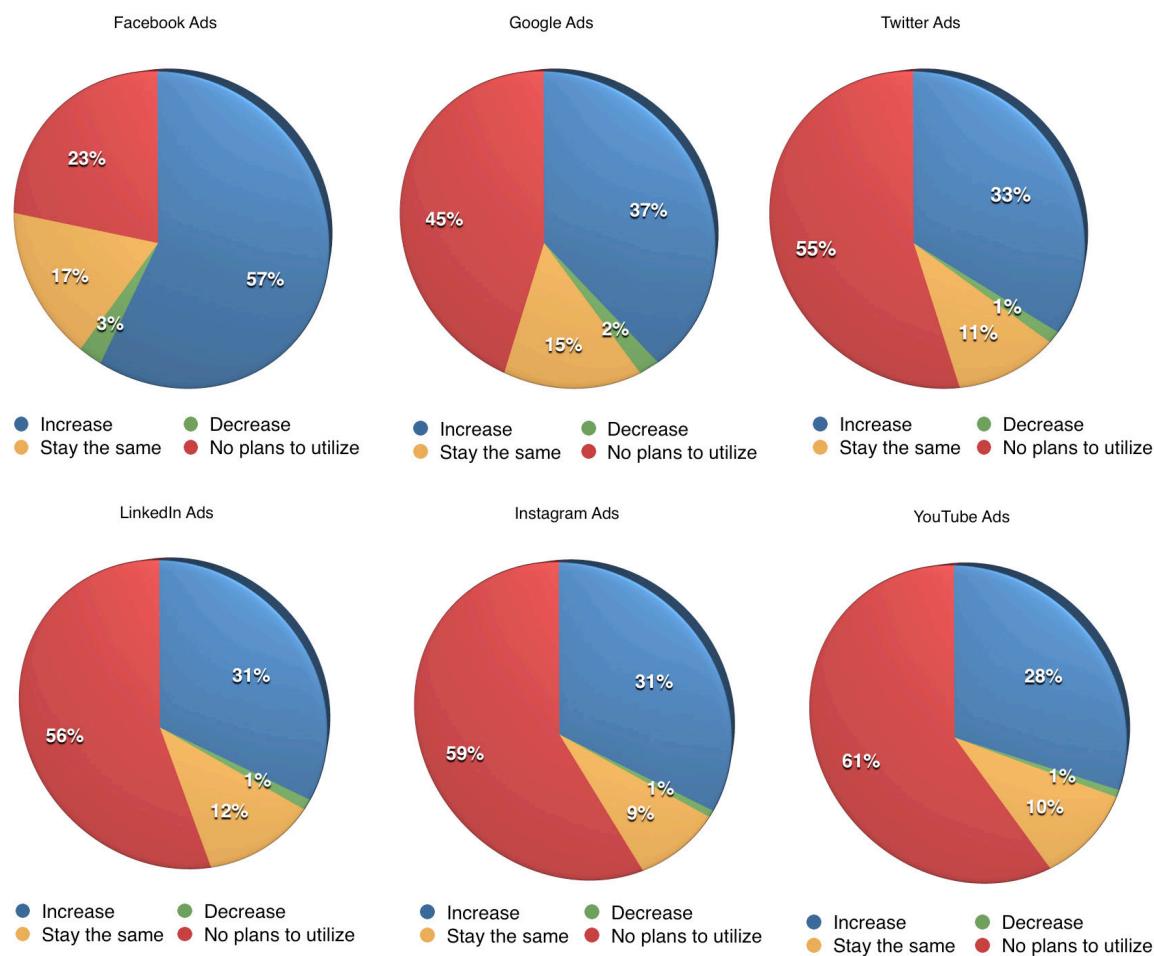
B2C marketers are using Facebook ads more (90%) than B2B marketers (79%). B2B marketers are using LinkedIn ads more (28%) than B2C marketers (11%).

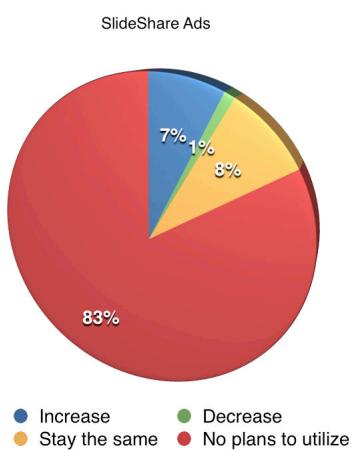
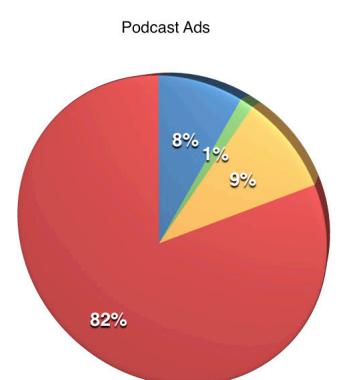
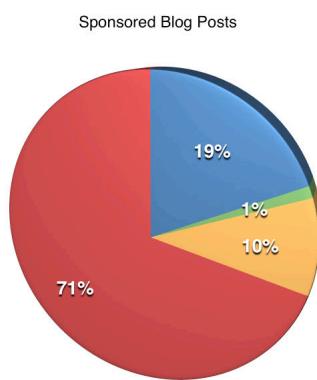
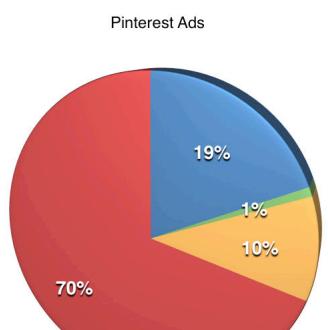
# How will marketers change their paid social media activities?

We asked marketers to indicate how they will change their paid social media use in the near future. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they will increase, decrease, remain the same, or not utilize various ad networks.

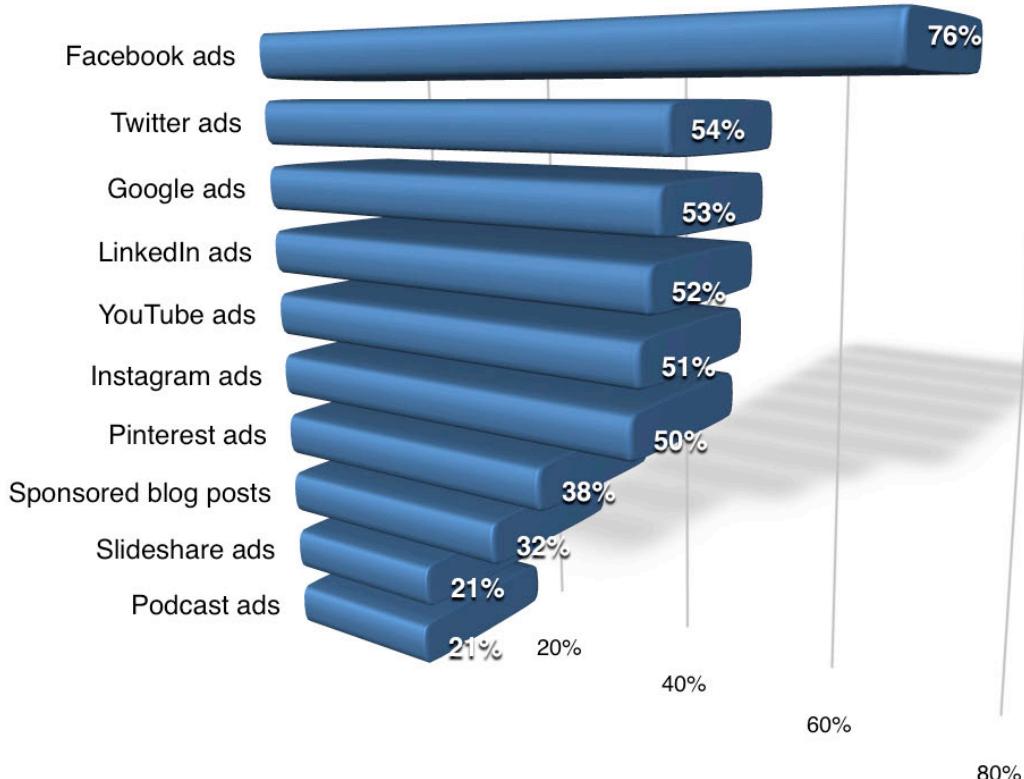
Marketers plan on increasing their use of Facebook ads (57%), Google ads (37%), Twitter ads (33%), LinkedIn ads (31%), Instagram ads (31%), and YouTube ads (28%), in that order. A significant 70% said they have no plans to utilize Pinterest ads.

**Note:** We rounded the results on the following pages, but ranked the order based on results that are not rounded. Here is a breakdown by ad network:





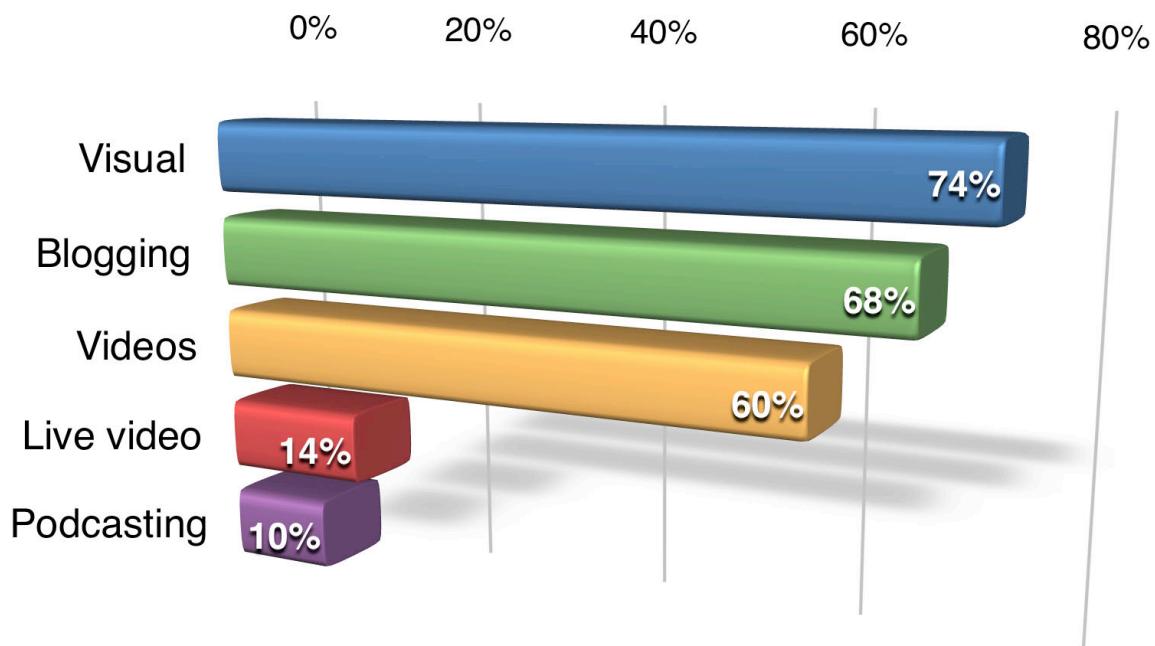
## Paid social media options marketers want to learn more about



We asked marketers to identify the paid social media options for which they most want to improve their knowledge. Facebook took first place at 76%.

B2C marketers are more interested in learning about Facebook ads (80% B2C vs. 68% B2B), Pinterest ads (41% B2C vs. 32% B2B), and Instagram ads (54% B2C vs. 40% B2B) than their B2B counterparts. And B2B marketers are far more interested in learning about LinkedIn ads (68% B2B vs. 43% B2C) and SlideShare ads (27% B2B vs. 18% B2C).

## Commonly used types of content



We asked marketers to identify the types of content they use in their social media marketing.

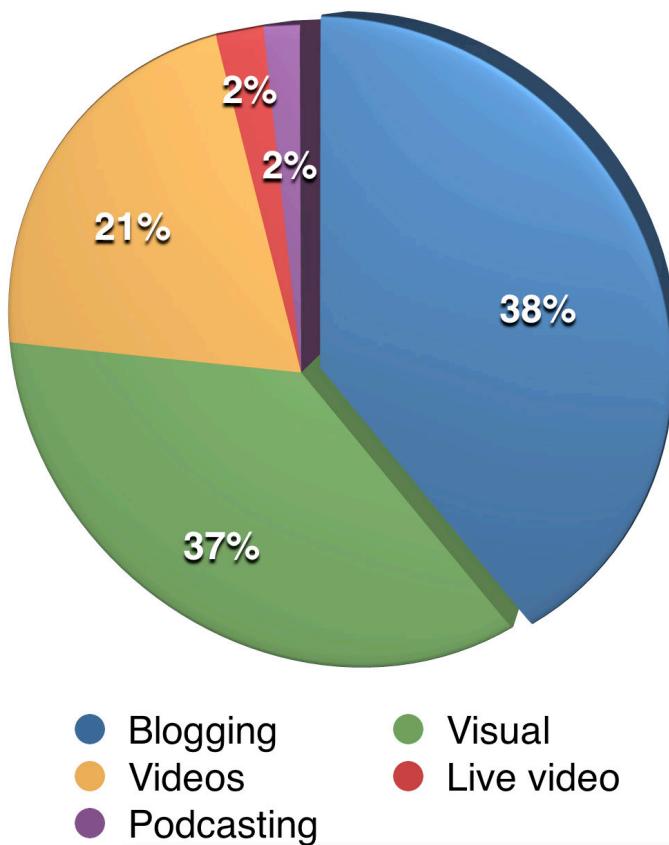
A large percentage (74%) use visual assets in their social media marketing, up from 71% in 2015. Close behind were blogging (68%) and video (60%).

Live video (such as Facebook Live and Periscope) is a new form of content in this year's report, with 14% of marketers using it.

Podcasting is only used by 10% of marketers and represents an opportunity.

B2B marketers are much more likely to use blogging (78%) when compared to B2C marketers (6%).

## The most important content for marketers is...



We asked marketers to select the single most important form of content for their business. Only one choice was allowed.

The top pick was blogging (38%). However this is a significant drop from 45% in 2015. Visual marketing was close behind (37%), up from 34% in 2015. Live video has tied podcasting for last place.

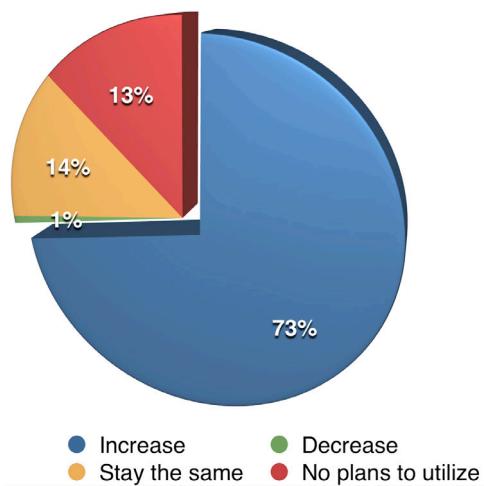
Blogging is more important for B2B marketers (49% say it is the most important) than B2C marketers (33% claim it is most important). B2C marketers place more importance on visual content (42% say it is the most important) than B2B marketers (only 27% claim it is most important).

# How will marketers change their future content activities?

We asked marketers to indicate how they will change their use of content in the near future. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they will increase, decrease, remain the same, or not utilize various forms of content. **Marketers plan to increase their use of videos (73%), visuals (71%), blogging (66%), live video (39%), and podcasting (26%), in that order.** Here is a breakdown by form of content:

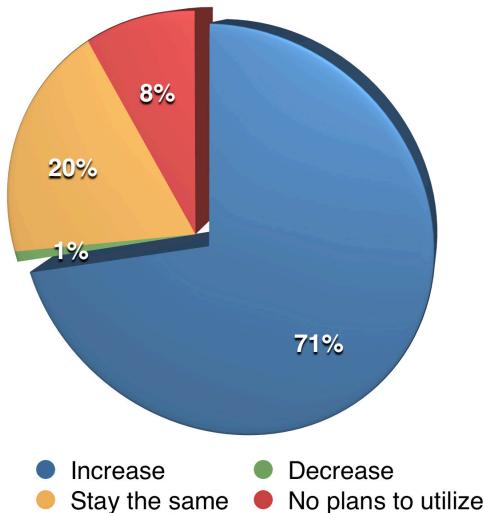
## #1: Video

The use of video is a key part of most marketers' plans in 2016, with 73% planning on increasing their use of videos.



## #2: Visuals

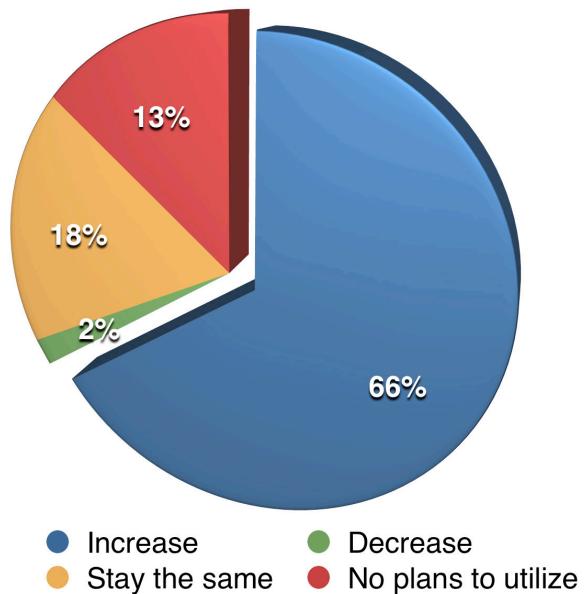
A significant 71% of marketers plan on increasing their use of visuals in 2016.



### #3: Blogging

The written word is still important for marketers. Two in three plan on increasing their use of blogging.

B2B marketers are more likely to increase their blogging (71%) than B2C marketers (63%).



Alexa

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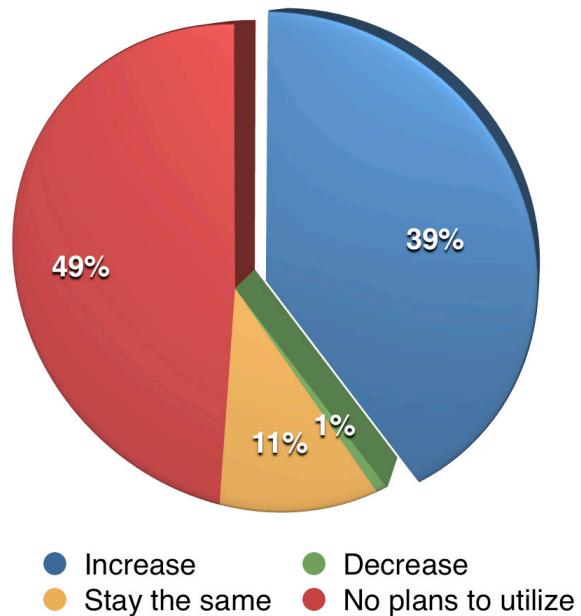
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#### #4: Live video

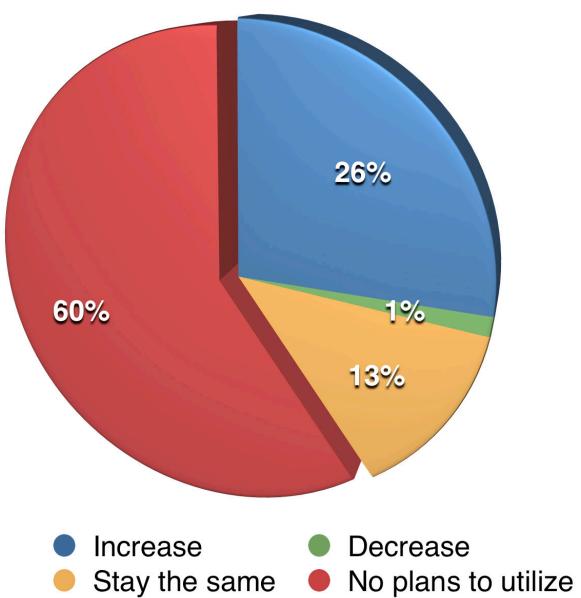
Considering that live video is a new content option, it's impressive that 39% of marketers plan on increasing their use of live video in 2016. When combined with the 11% that plan on keeping their live video activity the same, the combined total of marketers planning on live video activities in 2016 is 50%.



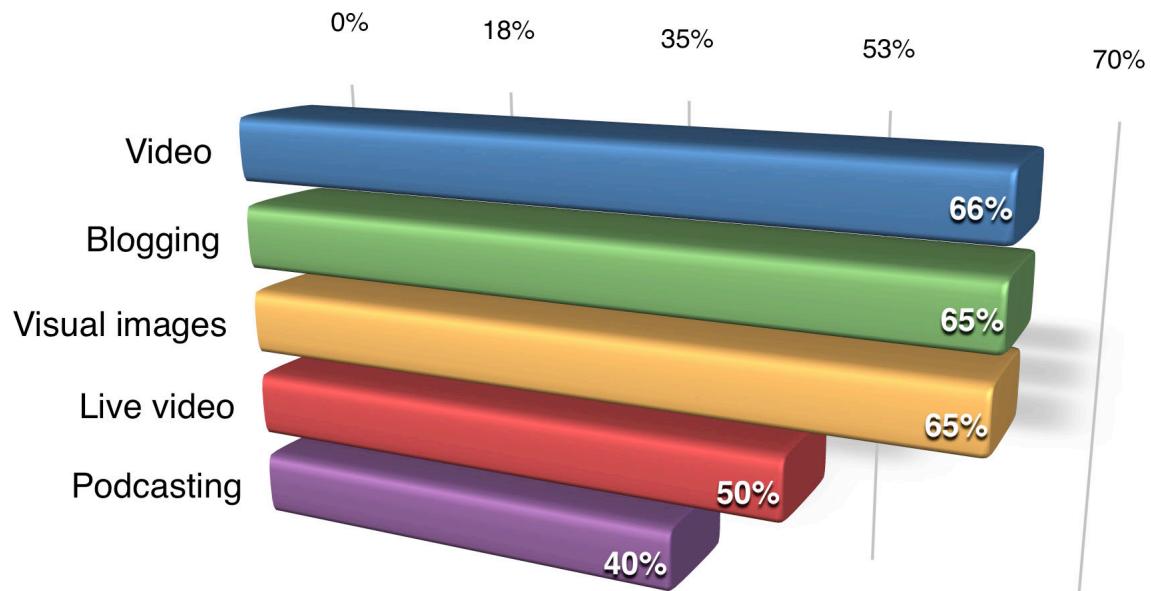
#### #5: Podcasting

Only 26% of marketers plan on increasing their use of podcasting and a significant 60% have no plans to get involved in podcasting.

B2B marketers are more likely to increase podcasting activity (30%) than B2C marketers (23%).



## Content forms marketers want to learn more about

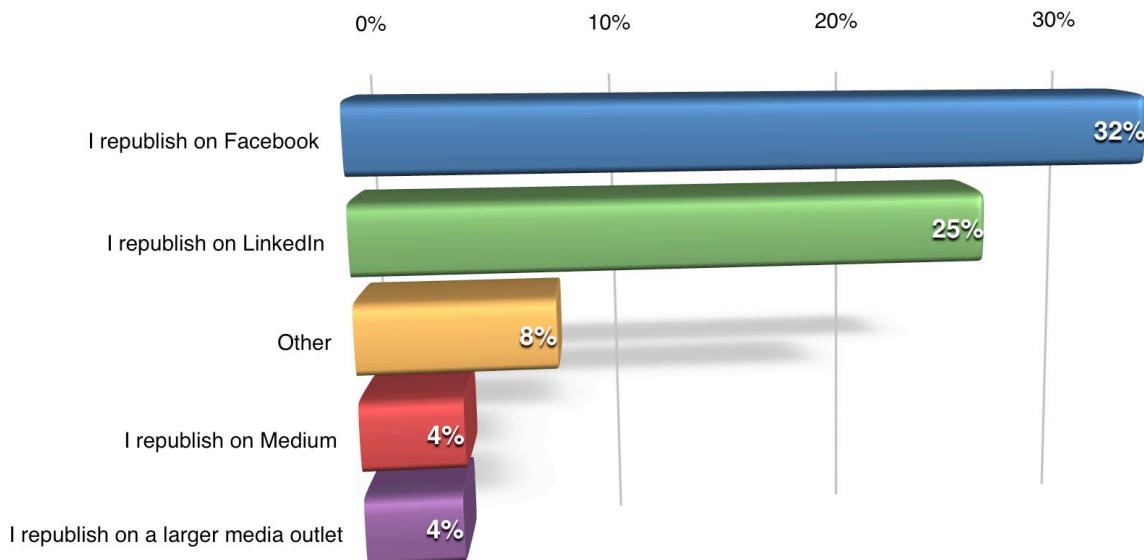


We asked marketers which forms of content they most want to learn more about. Creating videos took first place as the area marketers most want to learn about, followed by blogging and creating visuals.

It's also worth noting that 50% of marketers want to learn more about live video.

B2B marketers are more interested in learning about podcasting (44%) than B2C marketers (38%).

## Content republishing

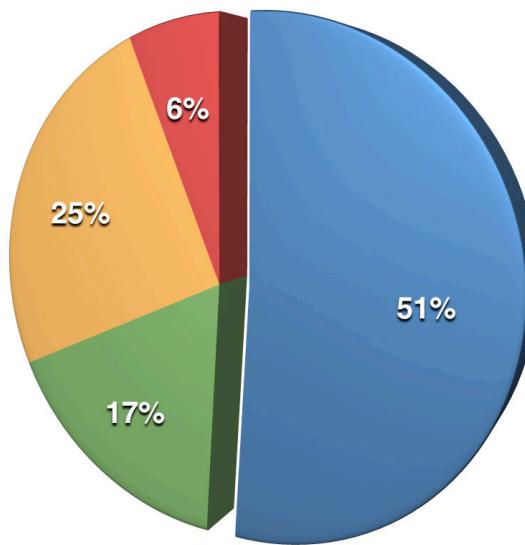


We asked marketers who blog if they republish their content. Twenty-eight percent of bloggers don't republish outside of their blog.

Among those who republish, the largest group does so on Facebook (32%) followed by LinkedIn (25%).

As expected, B2B marketers are more likely to republish content on LinkedIn (40%) than B2C marketers (17%).

## How marketers respond to new social networks



- I am skeptical and wait and see what happens
- I only register my handle/username on the social network
- I try to engage on the network, but don't evangelize my presence there
- I actively engage and evangelize my presence on the network

We asked social media marketers what they do when a new social network comes on the scene. The vast majority does nothing (51%) or only registers usernames (17%).

Only 6% of marketers actively adopt new social platforms.

# Survey participant demographics

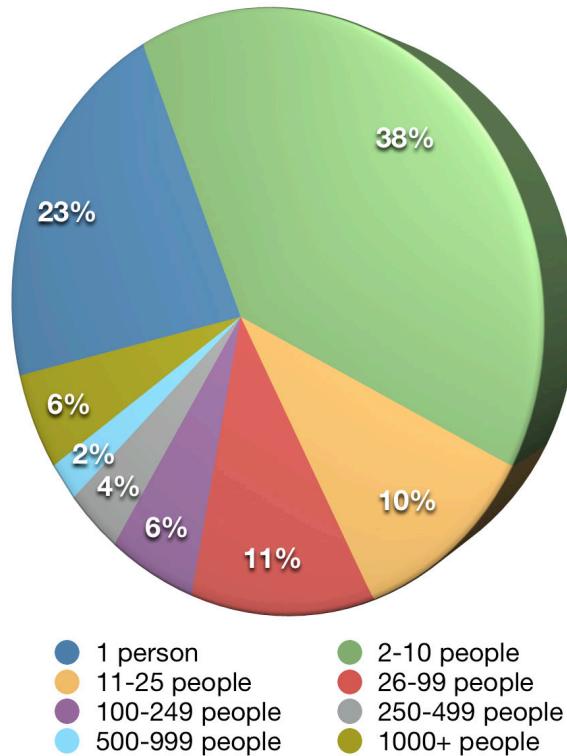
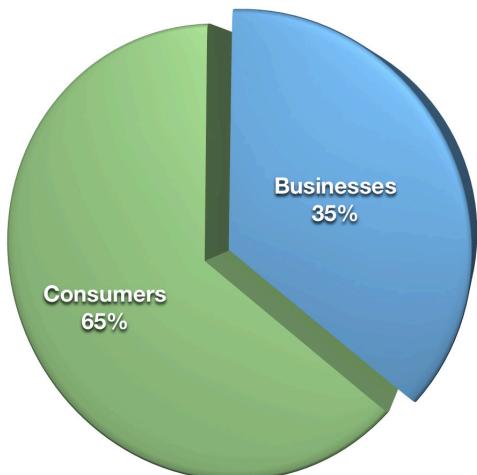
We leveraged email to find participants for our survey. We conducted this survey in January 2016 by emailing a list of 400,000 marketers and asking them to take the survey. After 5 days, we closed the survey with **5,086 participants**.

Here are the demographic breakdowns:

## Survey participants

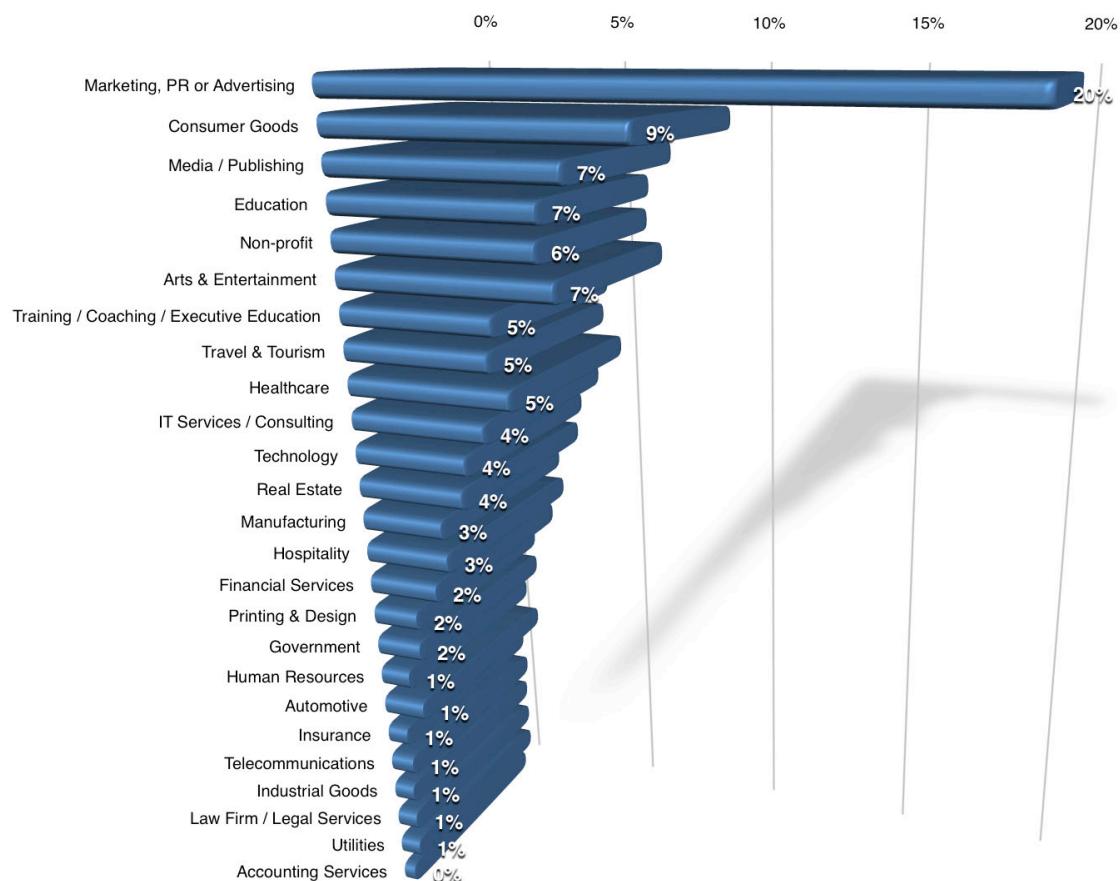
The largest group that took the survey works for small businesses of 2–10 employees (38%), followed by the self-employed (23%). Eighteen percent of people taking the survey work for businesses with 100 or more employees.

More than half (65%) of survey participants focus primarily on attracting consumers (B2C) and the other 35% primarily target businesses (B2B).



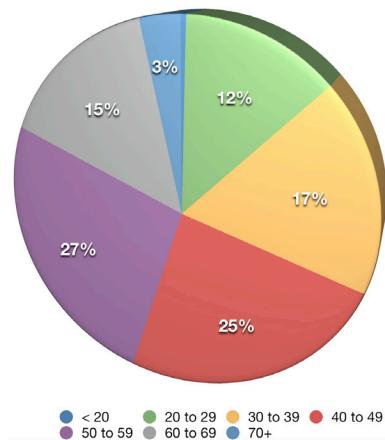
## Industry

Below are the different industries of survey participants.



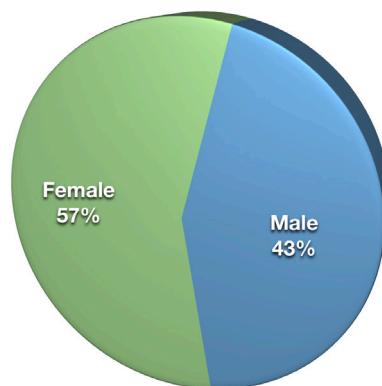
## Age of participants

Most survey participants (69%) were between the ages of 30 and 59.



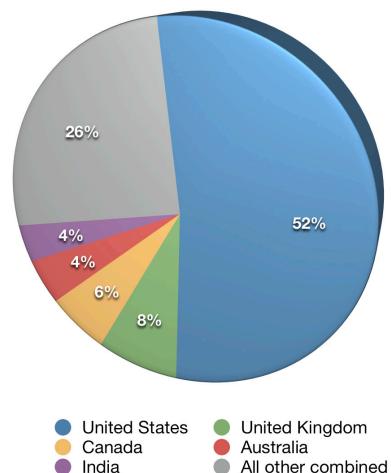
## Gender

Females edged out males, representing 57% of all participants.



## Country

Most participants (52%) were based in the United States, followed by United Kingdom (8%), Canada (6%), and Australia (4%).



# About Michael A. Stelzner

Michael Stelzner is the **founder of Social Media Examiner**, author of the books *Launch* and *Writing White Papers*, and host of the **Social Media Marketing podcast**—a top 10 marketing podcast on iTunes.

Follow Michael on Twitter at  
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