Social Media in the SME Business to Business Environment

and Toolkit

Northumbria University NEWCASTLE

MARKETINGTRUST

Contents

Foreword

The internet and social media are driving fundamental changes in society and the way in which consumers and businesses interact with themselves and each other. Associated disruptive technologies are changing business models and the eco-systems in which businesses and consumers connect and communicate forever. Increasing internet speeds, enhanced technology, WEB 3.0 and the planned launch of 5G, are providing new opportunities for social media to play a key role in the development of virtual brand communities, innovation and co-creation. Although the volume and value of business-to-business (B2B) transactions arguably exceed business to consumer (B2C) interactions, social media research has almost entirely been conducted in a B2C or consumer to consumer (C2C) context. However there are many challenges and opportunities for understanding and using social media in a B2B context. This is especially true for SMEs that often don't have the resources to employ a digital marketing expert, or the time to develop skills in this area themselves. As a result many businesses are confused and missing out on the tremendous opportunities that nascent digital technologies provide.

This much needed report summarises the results of an 12 month project conducted by leading academics at Newcastle Business School and focuses on an area that is relevant for both academics and.practitioners: The role of social media in a business-to-business environment. Based on a comprehensive review of literature and reports as well as focus groups and a survey of small and medium sized enterprises, the findings summarise key challenges that small businesses face when using social media in a B2B context. Examples of best practise are provided and a toolkit developed for businesses seeking to change the rules so they can compete and thrive in the future. The Marketing Trust played a key role in supporting and funding this project.

Professor Fraser McLeay
Sheffield University Management School

Introduction from the Marketing Trust

The Marketing Trust commissioned this report because we believed that the use of Social Media in a business to business context was widely misunderstood. The SME B2B sector was dabbling with this fast-changing world of communication because they felt they had to, rather than because they believed it was good for their business.

We wanted the academic rigour that a University research team would bring to the subject. However, we were clear in our brief to make sure that the summary report of their findings would not be written in the usual academic style. It is written in such a way as to be helpful and useful to the very large and vibrant SME B2B sector, which is so important in our overall economy.

The report identifies social media barriers and enablers which has informed the preparation of the toolkit, which we hope will help small businesses to get started or to focus their efforts.

There is one over-riding finding, and that is, the basics of marketing still apply in this dynamic and increasingly important medium. Whoever is tasked in an organisation with handling social media, they must know their target market, be knowledgeable about their product or service, remember that communication is a two-way street, and respond quickly.

The summary of the focus groups and interviews (see appendix 1 pages 60-63, in separate file) and the key research summaries on page 7 of the report confirm our original understanding, and perhaps, are best read first to get a clear picture of the current position.

My final message on the central conundrum is that social media should be handled by the Marketing team not the Information Technology team.

I hope you find this Summary Report as absorbing and enjoyable as I did.

Mary K Davies
Chairman, Marketing Trust

Executive summary

This report responds to the growing appetite for businesses to gain a better understanding of social media marketing and the associated benefits. Over the last twelve months, we have spent time exploring the concept of social media marketing and the impact it can have on B2B campaigns. Academics from Newcastle Business School have spent time talking to SMEs and their marketing teams to help identify and successfully navigate some of the most common challenges surrounding B2B social media marketing.

As a consequence of this study, we present a framework of integrated marketing communications (IMC), incorporating social media. This framework underpins the B2B Social Media Toolkit, which is the main outcome of this report.

The research findings have been presented using the Social Media Honeycomb developed by Kietzmann et al. (2011). This has allowed us to distil our findings into seven distinct themes, which are presented on the right.

The B2B social media toolkit is a practical and easy to follow guide for anyone wanting to improve the effectiveness of their social media activity or a good starting point for any business that has yet to incorporate social media into their wider marketing plan.

Key Research Findings from this Study

1 Identity

Many SMEs stated that they were unsure whether social media communication should come from the company itself or an individual employee. Our research identifies that individuals can be powerful brand advocates for your business, providing you give them a platform to contribute to, and enhance, the reputation of the organisation.

2 Presence

Our research discovered that while Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn are used by most SMEs across a variety of sectors, video- and image-based content are underutilised within the B2B context. Findings acknowledge that many SMEs need guidance in determining which social media platforms are most relevant to their audience.

3 Relationships

Our research found that social media can be a powerful relationship enabler, providing sufficient structural processes are in place. Once you have established procedures, it is also critical to ensure that your objectives of social media adhere to your overall marketing strategy.

4 Reputation

Companies can no longer whitewash their reputation across their website. Any form of social media content (created either by yourself or someone else) can impact your brand's reputation. Sticking to the brand guidelines and ethos is essential in reducing the risk, and also in helping you to respond to troublesome enquiries effectively.

5 Groups

Our research proves that social media is a powerful tool to build online communities and also co-create content that is likely to be of interest to existing and prospective customers. The key to driving engagement through social media groups is by creating content that either is of importance to, challenges the beliefs of, or resonates with, your target audience.

6 Conversation

The art of conversation has never been more critical. Our research highlights the need for content to be considered as authoritative and trustworthy, and that tells stories, appeals to emotion and sparks discourse.

7 Sharing

The only way for businesses to guide the conversation is to be a part of it. Our research demonstrates that sharing content that creates value for stakeholders can lead to higher levels of engagement when compared to self-promotion.

BRANDING

• EVALUATION
• RESOURCES

STRATEGIC
PLANNING

RESPONSE

INTEGRATED
MARKETING
COMMUNICATIONS

CREATIVE

COMMUNITY
BUILDING

MEDIA

B2B Social Media Framework.

About Newcastle Business School

Northumbria University creates and applies knowledge for the benefit of individuals, communities and the economy. Newcastle Business School is recognised as a professional and international business school. In 2015 we won the coveted Times Higher Education Business School of the Year award. Academics from Newcastle Business School engage proactively with SME's through to Multinational organisations through research informed engagement including Knowledge Transfer Partnerships, Consultancy and the award-winning Business Clinic.

This study was delivered by a team from the Marketing Subject Group, who have an academic- and practice-based experience of social media and marketing communication.

Craig Bradshaw
Dr. Julie Crumbley
Kirk Dodds
Dr. Alan Shaw
Dr. Matthew Sutherland

1 Introduction

The Prevalence of Digital Technology

The world around us is evolving at such a rate that we are now practically connected to the web on an almost continuous basis, with UK internet users averaging over six hours' worth of time online each day (Global Web Index, 2018). Thanks in no small part to the vast array of devices we can now connect to; from smartphones and tablets, through to smart assistants and even fridges. The possibilities are endless!

How "Social" is Social Media?

One of the most significant catalysts behind our continued online migration is the widespread consumption of social media. In the last year alone, there was a 13% increase in active social media users worldwide, rising to nearly 3.2 billion (We Are Social, 2018). These cultural and technological shifts are transforming both the consumer (B2C) and business-to-business (B2B) markets.

The much-lauded benefits of social media for B2B are almost too numerous to mention, but include, a new way to target customers, increased brand awareness, competitive advantage, conquer new markets and increased profits! Although these benefits are indeed feasible, social media isn't the silver bullet that it is sometimes portrayed to be. Anyone that tells you that it is probably has a strong whiff of snake oil about them!

That said, social media still presents B2B organisations with many unresolved questions about how best to use social media, such as:

• Which social media platforms are the most effective to utilise within B2B?

• How do we communicate using these platforms?

• How do we drive engagement on social media within a B2B setting?

• Who within the organisation should be responsible for social media?

• How effective is the use of social media platforms as part of an integrated marketing campaign?

"The digital world is where you manage trends – start them, understand them. People communicate differently. They want info in a different way, trends get started in digital space, products sourced/researched. Things have changed, rules have changed."

RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

How has this report answered the key questions about the role of social media in a B2B environment?

A detailed systematic academic literature review considering the major theme of B2B use of social media. From the literature review the Kietzmann's social media honeycomb is used to structure the report using the themes of: Presence, Relationship, Reputation, Groups, Conversation, Sharing and Identity.

A survey instrument was created using themes of technology acceptance derived from the literature review. This resulted in 259 completed survey responses from individuals that utilise social media within B2B settings, and subsequent analysis.

Focus groups and interviews were conducted with twelve users of social media within a B2B setting, across a range of organisations and sectors: social enterprise, technology, local agency supporting business, engineering and charities. The outcome of these interviews were analysed by academics using a staged thematic analysis.

The themes of web hosting were analysed using social listening to identify best practice of business-to-business use of social media.

Utilising the research a social media tool kit for B2B marketers was created.

The Five Myths of B2B Social Media

The ubiquity of social media, combined with confusion as to how to utilise it, has led to a lot of preconceived ideas about B2B social media (which aren't necessarily true).

The five most common myths that we hope to debunk through the report are:

Social media is free.

The new graduate/intern should run social media activity.

Social media will generate leads for your business.

The number of followers you have is the metric of social media success.

You need to be on every social media platform regardless of industry.

Device

The amount of time users spend on social media has grown significantly, and the importance of mobile phones to access social media has increased nearly threefold in recent years.
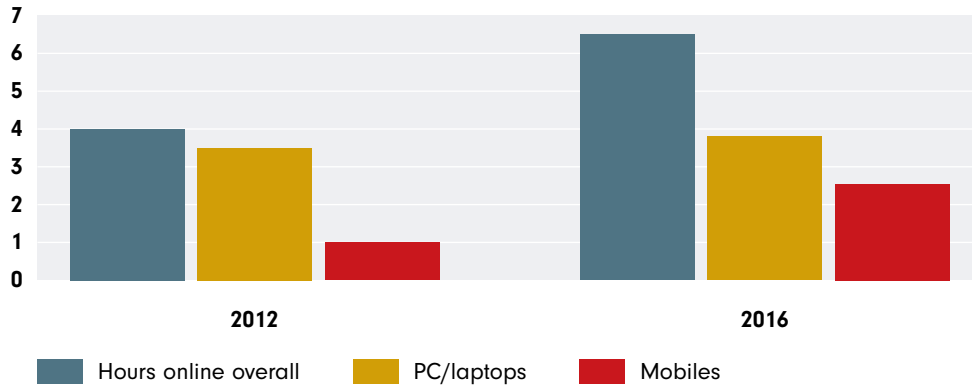
Average time spent online by device | Source: Global Web Index 2017

Legend: Hours online overall | PC/laptops | Mobiles

- B2B firms are more likely than B2C firms to have their blogs optimised for mobile devices *(Social Media Examiner, 2016)*.
- Time spent reading online press overtook traditional print media in 2012, and has continued to increase ever since *(Global Web Index, 2017)*.
- B2B customers are more likely than the average internet user to access social media on their mobile devices *(Global Web Index, 2017)*.

Medium

You have probably heard of five or six of these networks, but do you know which ones are the most effective for your organisation?
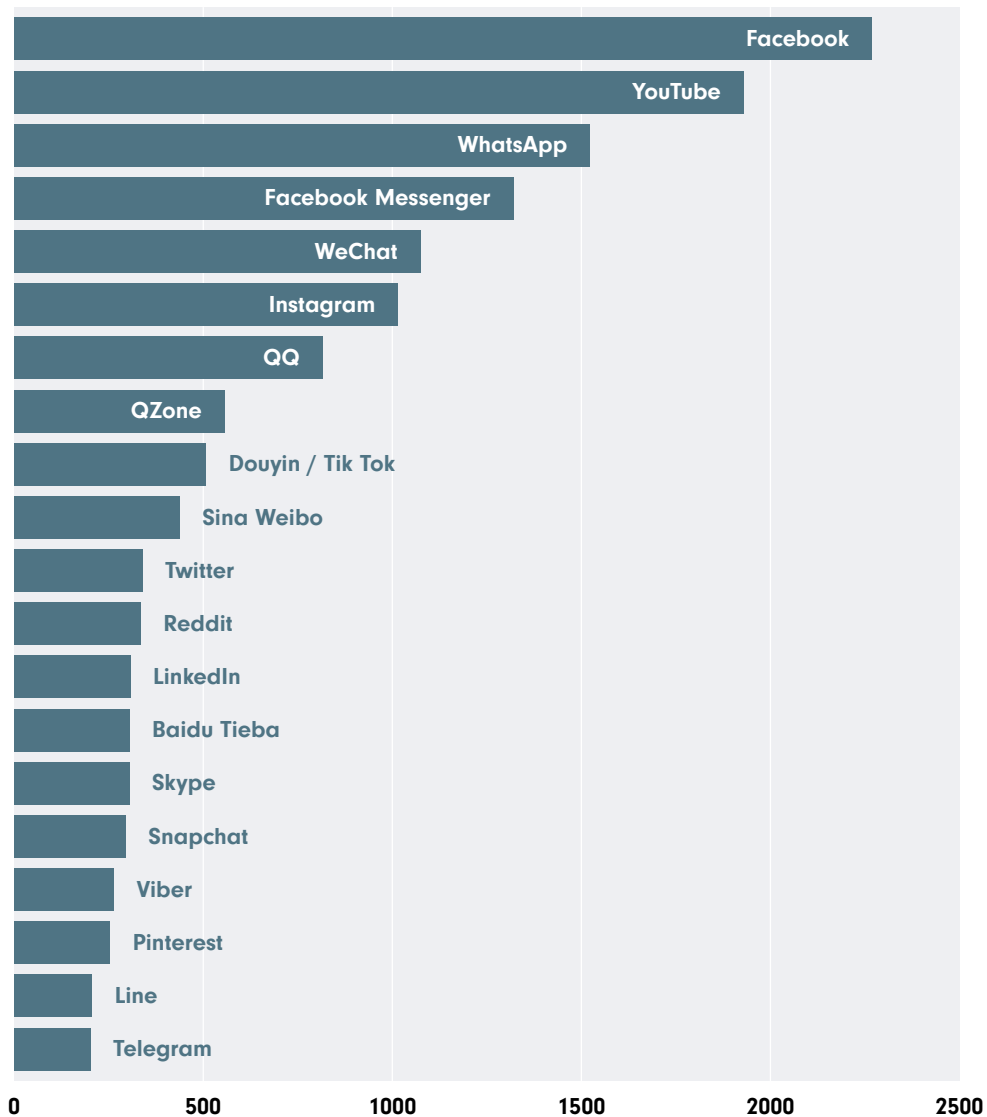
Most famous social network sites worldwide as of October 2018, ranked by number of active users (in millions) | Source: Statista 2018

- Careful consideration of social media channels is essential so that it is used in a way that is in line with overall marketing objectives: lead generation, higher ROI, increased click-through rate, or better engagement with clients/stakeholders.
- 92% of marketing professionals agree that social media marketing has generated more exposure for their companies *(Social Media Explorer, 2018)*.
- 72% of marketing professionals also believe that social media can increase customer loyalty *(Social Media Explorer, 2018)*.

Content

Not all platforms are equally effective for B2B and B2C content:
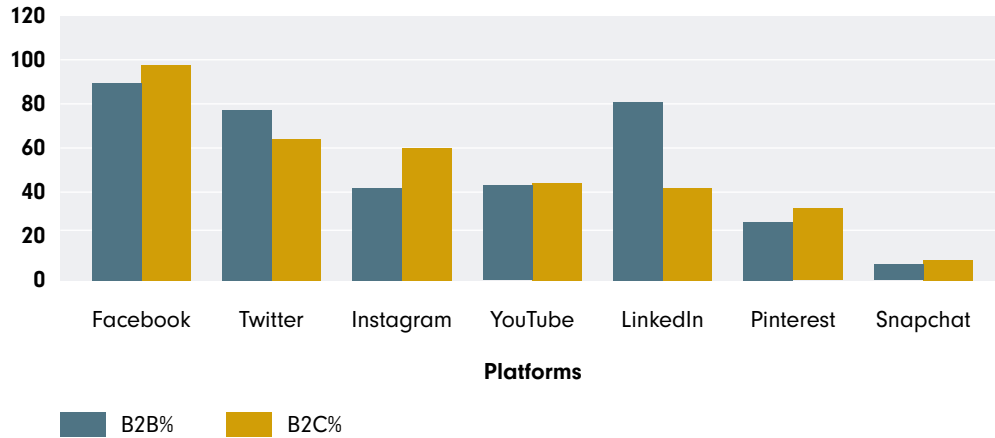
Readership percentages for B2B and B2C users by platform | Source: Social Media Examiner 2017

- Creating engaging content was a challenge for 60% of B2B marketers *(Content Marketing Institute 2016)*.
- Consistently creating content was a challenge for 57% of B2B marketers *(Content Marketing Institute 2016)*.

Communication Channels

How does social media compare in importance with more traditional channels of communication for B2B buying decisions?

Channel	Value
Social media	~5.4
Adverts	~5.2
Websites	~4.9
Sales presentation	~4.9
Whitepaper	~4.8
Events (in person/virtual)	~4.4
References	~3.8
Direct interaction	~3.8

Types of seller communication that influence B2B buying decisions | Source: Harvard Business Review 2015

- Professional buyers expect to "explore, evaluate, engage with, and experience" a product or service, using a combination of face-to-face, print, and online communications *(Harvard Business Review, 2015)*.
- Social media is part of the decision-making process; customers appreciate friendly relationships with potential suppliers based on engaging content *(Harvard Business Review, 2015)*.

2 The Elements of the Social Media Honeycomb

The birth of social media has brought with it new opportunities for businesses to share and present information. Gone are the days where information was posted ad-hoc in the hope that other companies would see it. Now firms can access and display information that can significantly impact a business's national and even international reputation, much of which is down to the rise in the application of social media marketing.

Today, social media provides a platform that allows firms to expand their network, improve their reputation and win new business. In this report, we present a well-documented original social media honeycomb framework developed by Kietzmann et al. to help you consider and understand every aspect of B2B social media marketing. Core areas of the framework include identity, conversation, sharing, presence, relationships, reputation and groups, which Newcastle Business School have supplemented using a combination of primary and secondary data.

We have outlined each key area for you below. For a detailed explanation of our findings and what they mean for your business, see Section 3. However, if you wish to go straight to the B2B Social Media Toolkit then go straight to Section 6.

Social Media Honeycomb: Kietzmann et al. (2011)

3 Putting the Honeycomb Model into Practice - using Integrated Marketing Communications

To help you effectively plan your marketing campaigns, it is often useful to take a structured approach and immerse yourself in the world of Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC). In a nutshell, IMC is about communicating a consistent message using various channels (both online and offline) in an accountable manner.

There are many strengths to utilising this technique, and IMC is already popular within the realms of B2B. However, when it comes to social media marketing, IMC is still surprisingly under-utilised. This is due to a lack of knowledge around the core tenets of IMC, and how businesses can effectively adopt them.

In response, we have put together an easy-to-follow process of starting and completing the various stages involved in a successful IMC plan, which incorporates six critical functions of IMC planning: branding, strategic planning, creative, media, community building, and response. To help you harness the real potential of IMC planning, we have also mapped each element against the seven components of the social media honeycomb, as well as point you in the direction of the top tools to help you get the job done. The combination of the social media honeycomb, an IMC planning framework, and practical tools, will ensure you fully consider every aspect of B2B social media marketing before embarking on a campaign.

To account for the cyclical nature of B2B marketing, we have also incorporated two additional functions that should run through the entirety of the plan to monitor effectiveness and inform resource allocation for social media marketing. This information can also be particularly useful for benchmarking purposes, as well as for gaining approval (sign-off) for future campaigns.

To apply these principles and get the most out of an IMC social media plan, you can find practical guidance on each of these six core elements within Section 6 of our report, The Toolkit. Regardless of whether this is your first or fiftieth marketing campaign, our toolkit will provide you with useful hints, tips and tools for making the most of your campaigns.

BRANDING

•EVALUATION

•RESOURCES

STRATEGIC PLANNING

RESPONSE

INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS

CREATIVE

COMMUNITY BUILDING

MEDIA

B2B Social Media Framework (Adapted from Kietzmann et al., 2011)

Overview of the B2B Social Media Toolkit

IMC Stage	Honeycomb Themes	Tools
Branding	Reputation Identity	**1** Brand Guidelines **2** Adobe InDesign **3** Opinion Mining
Strategic Planning	Reputation Presence Sharing Conversation Groups Identity Relationships	**4** Persona Research **5** ASA **6** Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) Plan **7** The Law
Creative	Conversation Identity Sharing Reputation	**8** Video **9** Imagery
Media	Groups Conversation Sharing Identity Presence	**10** Conversation Control Tools
Community Building	Groups Conversation Sharing Identity Presence Relationships Reputation	**11** Following policies **12** Internal advocates **13** Influencers **14** Social Listening
Response	Reputation Conversation Sharing Relationships Groups Identity	**15** Policies & Procedures **16** Google Analytics **17** Proprietary Platforms **18** SimilarWeb **19** Supermetrics **20** Google Data Studio

B2B Social Media Framework (Adapted from Kietzmann et al., 2011)

4 Decoding the Social Media 'Honeycomb'

In the following section, we present a framework to help you consider every aspect of B2B social media marketing. Core areas of the framework include identity, conversation, sharing, presence, relationships, reputation and groups, which have been developed using a combination of primary and secondary data.

We have provided a detailed explanation of each of the seven elements and what they mean for your business in this section.

4.1　Identity

Definition: "Identity represents the extent to which users reveal their identities in a social media setting; this can include disclosing information such as name, age, gender, profession location, and also information that portrays users in certain ways" *(Kietzmann et al., 2011, p. 243).*

———

According to the ECIS, there are many internal challenges associated with the use of B2B social media concerning identity. Our research also echoed this sentiment, by highlighting the professional/personal dichotomy. By this we mean 'who is seen to be posting' The individual or the organisation? Also, how much information should an individual disclose?

Unfortunately, there is no definitive answer to this question. Where there are corporate social media accounts managed by individuals, then the content needs to reflect the views and values of the organisation rather than the individual. Despite this, there will often be cases where individuals within your organisation want to use their personal accounts to either promote or highlight work that they have done for your organisation, which is fine. However, you need to ensure that any content posted is within the realms of acceptability for your own social media policy (if you don't have one, consider this a poke in the ribs and check out our toolkit for how to create your own). For example, you might be happy to have pictures of a somewhat productive staff training session circulating social media, but you may draw the line at antics from the Christmas party! When used correctly, there are plenty of instances where social media can be used by individuals to contribute to, and enhance, the reputation of the organisation through thought-leadership content - i.e. by liking, sharing and commenting on organisational issues.

When it comes to how much information individuals are happy to disclose about themselves on social media, this varies from platform to platform. For example, a LinkedIn user may be happy to reveal their age, occupation and professional skills, but they are much less likely to have this on their Facebook page. For SMEs, this does provide the opportunity for you to use some of the disclosed information to identify a relevant audience for your products/services. To illustrate, you could research a list of procurement managers within a geographic region on LinkedIn, or use Twitter to search for people with the keyword "engineering" in their bios, which may help you to narrow down on people who are likely to be more interested in your content. Some platforms may allow you to do this using a free profile, but there may be paid upgrades required to access a greater network of users.

"I don't think social media can work as a platform as one individual if you're using it as a company. I think you can really benefit from it when you've got buy in from other colleagues and they will support the promotion of posts and activity."

RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

4.2 Presence

Definition: "Presence represents the extent to which users can know if other users are accessible" *(Kietzmann et al., 2011, p. 245).*

Whenever we go on holiday or a city break, we spend a considerable chunk of time researching the places to be, whether it's restaurants, bars, hotels or cultural attractions. In some ways, the world of marketing is no different, and right now social media is one of the most exciting places to be. The Small Business Institute identified that businesses who expand online and use social media marketing are much better able to increase brand awareness and attract more customers. Our research showed while SMEs are relatively comfortable using Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn, they are failing to utilise social media to its full-potential by neglecting to incorporate video and image as part of their creative strategy. Our study further indicates that many SMEs find it hard to identify which of the social media platforms are most relevant for their audience and content. Not all of the standard platforms will be equally useful in this context. If you specialise in employment law, why waste your time on Snapchat? The social networks that you choose are dependent on where your target group are, your budget, and the overall aim of your campaign.

Social listening can be invaluable when trying to establish which particular channels you should focus your social media marketing efforts on, as well as helping you to identify key influencers to aid you in improving your reputation. There are also a number of paid tools, such as BuzzSumo and FollowerWonk, that can make it easy for you to identify where your audiences are. As you can see from the example below, social media users interested in "leadership development" are more likely to be active on Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter, as well as more likely to be interested in content of an educational nature.

"If you're using social media that is linked to a library of content, that then brings you to the website, that then collects leads, that is then linked to email marketing, that by far is the most successful way of using social media."

RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

Content analysis for "leadership development"
Max 10k articles (Jan 13, 2015 - Jan 13, 2016)

6,940	**583,162**	**84**
Articles analysised	Total shares	Average shares

Average shares by network

Facebook   Google+   Twitter   LinkedIn   Pinterest
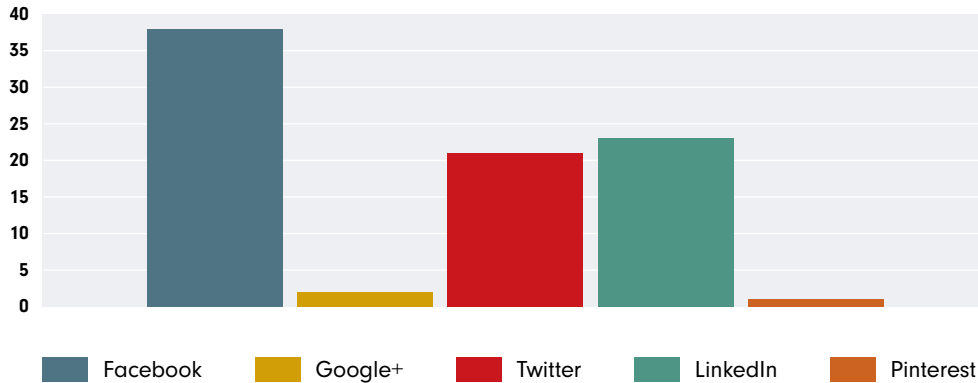
Average shares by content type

Facebook   Pinterest   LinkedIn   Twitter   Google+
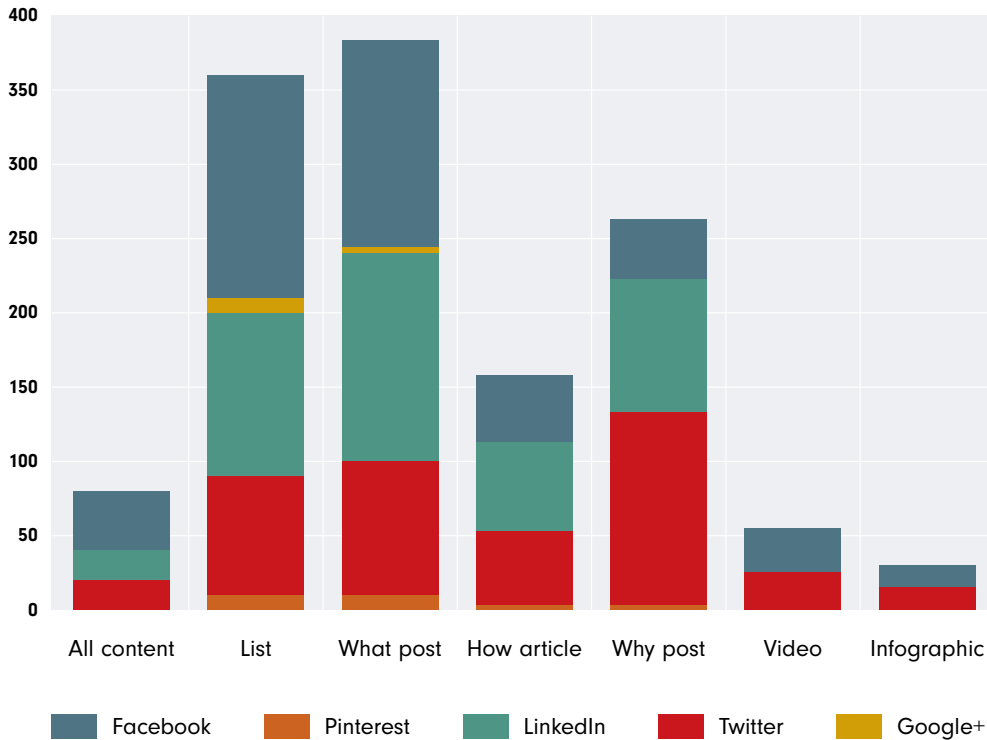
Graphs and data recreated from BuzzSumo.com

4.3 Relationships

Definition: "Relationships represent the extent to which users can be related to other users. By 'relate,' we mean that two or more users have some form of association that leads them to converse, share objects of sociality, meet up, or simply list each other as a friend or fan" *(Kietzmann et al., 2011, p.246).*

———

People need each other. Humans exist to form relationships. At the most primal level, huddling together increases our chances for survival. When it comes to social media, relationships are less about a way of avoiding potential animal attacks, and more about nurturing a 1:1 connection with consumers.

In today's social media world, these relationships can stem from a conversation on a given social media platform, and take the form of the sharing of content (posts, image, video, comments, retweets, likes). In most cases, this leads to both parties listing each other as online friends, fans or connections. However, in some cases, these initial interactions can develop into more meaningful relationships, either online or in person. At this point we should point out that if you think you have accidentally downloaded a copy of the manual to online dating, the same basic principles apply in business; however, the 'benefits' take a slightly different form, i.e. sales & leads!

Our research found (see appendices) that social media can be a powerful relationship enabler, due to its ability to facilitate conversations between not only an individual and an organisation (one-to-many) but also between multiple individuals and multiple organisations (many-to-many); in some cases, organisations are not even a part of the conversations being held peer-to-peer.

However, for many businesses with hundreds, if not thousands of customers, building 1:1 relationships is incredibly tricky, as espoused in "Dunbar's Number". By studying the habits of humans through the ages, Dunbar developed "Dunbar's Number", which defines the number of social relationships that any one person can meaningfully maintain, roughly around 150. Thankfully, social media allows us to overcome our cognitive limitations and build larger and larger communities, which is one of its principal benefits. We are now able to understand not only the identities of people but how they relate to us and each other.

With consumers increasingly demanding personalised relationships and experiences, the key to nurturing relationships with consumers at scale is critical. They expect you to understand their wants and needs, and to be constantly aware of their past interactions with your brand. Also, via the 'always on' channels of social media, they expect you to do it immediately.

Despite the ability to relate to one another through social media, many B2B organisations use social media in a way that is akin to direct marketing, i.e. one-directional communication. This represents a missed opportunity to engage an audience as opposed to indulging in self-promotion.

There is a need for organisations to not only add value to conversations but also to ensure that there are structural processes in place to monitor and respond to inbound communications from individuals. However, there is also another need for organisations to empower employees to build and nurture meaningful relationships on behalf of their brand. Employees can then become brand advocates and ambassadors, connecting and engaging directly with customers.

"I find that lots of the key stakeholders and decision makers in the business don't really understand it. They haven't realised the power of it yet"

RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

4.4   Reputation

Definition: "Reputation is the extent to which users can identify the standing of others, including themselves, in a social media setting" (*Kietzmann et al., 2011, p.247*).
———

Organisational Reputation

It goes without saying that social media is a channel that can enhance your organisation's reputation through thought-leadership or other value-added content. In fact, according to the Small Business Institute, one of the top reasons for businesses to use social media is to enhance their own reputation. However, it can also damage or undermine your best efforts to carefully curate your brand reputation if the reality doesn't match the hype. The reputation of your business is no longer something you can control through advertising or on your company website but is now laid bare (warts and all) for all to see across social media.

Despite many organisations being under the impression that social media is far removed from traditional marketing communications, we actually believe that they are essentially one and the same; albeit using some of the additional benefits that our always-connected society brings. Any content created through any media can impact your brand's reputation; whether instigated by you, your staff, or your stakeholders. Adherence to brand guidelines and mission statement is essential in reducing the risk of any potential fallout from discordance with your brand values.

Reputation in focus

Consumers and businesses alike are all-too-aware of the detrimental impact that a negative review can have on the reputation of an organisation. Glassdoor has taken a leaf out of TripAdvisor et al.'s book, by turning the mirror on employers and allowing prospective-, current-, and former-employees to post anonymous ratings and reviews.

With over 500,000 businesses registered in its database, the average rating for companies is between 3.2 and 3.4 out of a possible five. Although not necessarily disastrous, this amounts to a considerable number of disgruntled employees out there, who now have the digital tools to vent their anger. Even more surprisingly, however, is that less than 1% of all the businesses ranked on Glassdoor have signed up for premium accounts that help them manage their online reputations. We can certainly expect this percentage to rise in the near future.

Stakeholders/Influencers

From our research, we have identified that no particular stakeholder group is driving us to use social media. However, if your customers and competitors are using it, can you afford not to? The fear of missing out (FOMO) is a feeling of anxiety that others might be having rewarding experiences from which one is absent. Although commonly associated with consumers, this phenomenon is all-too-real in a B2B setting also. Thankfully, social listening can help to mitigate this fear of missing out on what others are doing, saying and experiencing. Social listening is a process that looks at the conversations on social media, and it may provide you with an ability to hone in on the conversations that are worth being a part of, and filter out the remaining noise. This can be particularly useful when identifying potential influencers who could help promote and enhance your company. Influencer marketing is common practice in the B2C environment, so should be extended into B2B industries. Finding the right influencer for your organisation will help you to be seen as more authentic and trustworthy, and will also generate shareable content to help you broaden your audience.

Although it may seem like a daunting task, identifying and understanding potential influencers can be relatively easy to do, and there are plenty of tools you can use to help automate the process (See our toolkit). The trick lies in determining what it is that constitutes real influence, and what you can do about it. Many businesses are seduced by a large follower count when it comes to identifying influencers, which although useful, can also be a potential pitfall. We would advise that you consider what it is exactly what you need your influencers to do for you. For example, if you are a relatively new startup looking to increase brand awareness, then a relevant influencer with a strong following would be advisable. However, if you are in fact looking to increase trust and reputation in the value of your products/services, then you may prefer to collaborate with an influencer that has a great deal of credibility within your field. If you are considering paying influencers to help promote your business, which is common in B2C, then we would advise you proceed with caution. There are numerous examples of influencer campaigns that have violated the Advertising Standard Authority's (ASA) guidelines, as influencers have failed to disclose that they are sponsored posts.

"Social media is not a fad anymore, it's not something that's going to stop, it needs to be ingrained into every business' strategy now, no matter how big or small they are. Even with a really small budget, you can still reach the key people."

RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

4.5 Groups

Definition: "Groups represent the extent to which users can form communities and subcommunities" (*Kietzmann et al., 2011, p.247*).

———

Research from Fast Company shows that 93% of marketers use social media for business, meaning that standing out from the rest of the crowd can be a daunting task. Surprisingly, a study from 2014 found that the main reason why B2B marketers chose not to use social media was because they didn't understand its relevance for their particular industry.

However, when you consider that LinkedIn gains two new members every second, social media is a rich source of like-minded users looking for information and conversation, as well as those who want to connect to others in their industry. Finding and joining (or even creating your own) relevant groups or communities can act as a great source of information, and provide numerous opportunities to forge and maintain (both commercial and non-commercial) relationships with an ever-expanding user-base, which, in the case of our own research, was an oft-cited reason why B2B marketers wanted to use social media in the first place. In fact, our research identified that social media is a powerful way of building online communities, and also co-creating content that is likely to be of interest to stakeholders. However, as always, the key to engagement is adding value to the conversations and groups you are part of, and not merely using it as a means of self-promotion. The methods of communication may have changed, but the reasons to join a group have not; content we share socially is still that which either interests us, challenges our beliefs, or resonates with us.

When it comes to finding groups, social listening can be a great way of finding and prioritising relevant groups, as well as helping to identify what particular groups are talking about. As you can see from the visuals below, data taken from TrackMaven shows that although audience size varies by industry, there is still a ready-made audience that is likely to find your content of interest, no matter what sector you operate in.

"It's the opt-in element of social media that I really like. For example, if you found something and you recognised it as something that would affect you, your department, the wider sector, then you might start a thread."

RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

B2B social media audience size by industry

Median audience size by channel
By thousands of followers

■ LinkedIn   ■ Facebook   ■ Instagram   ■ Pinterest   ■ Twitter
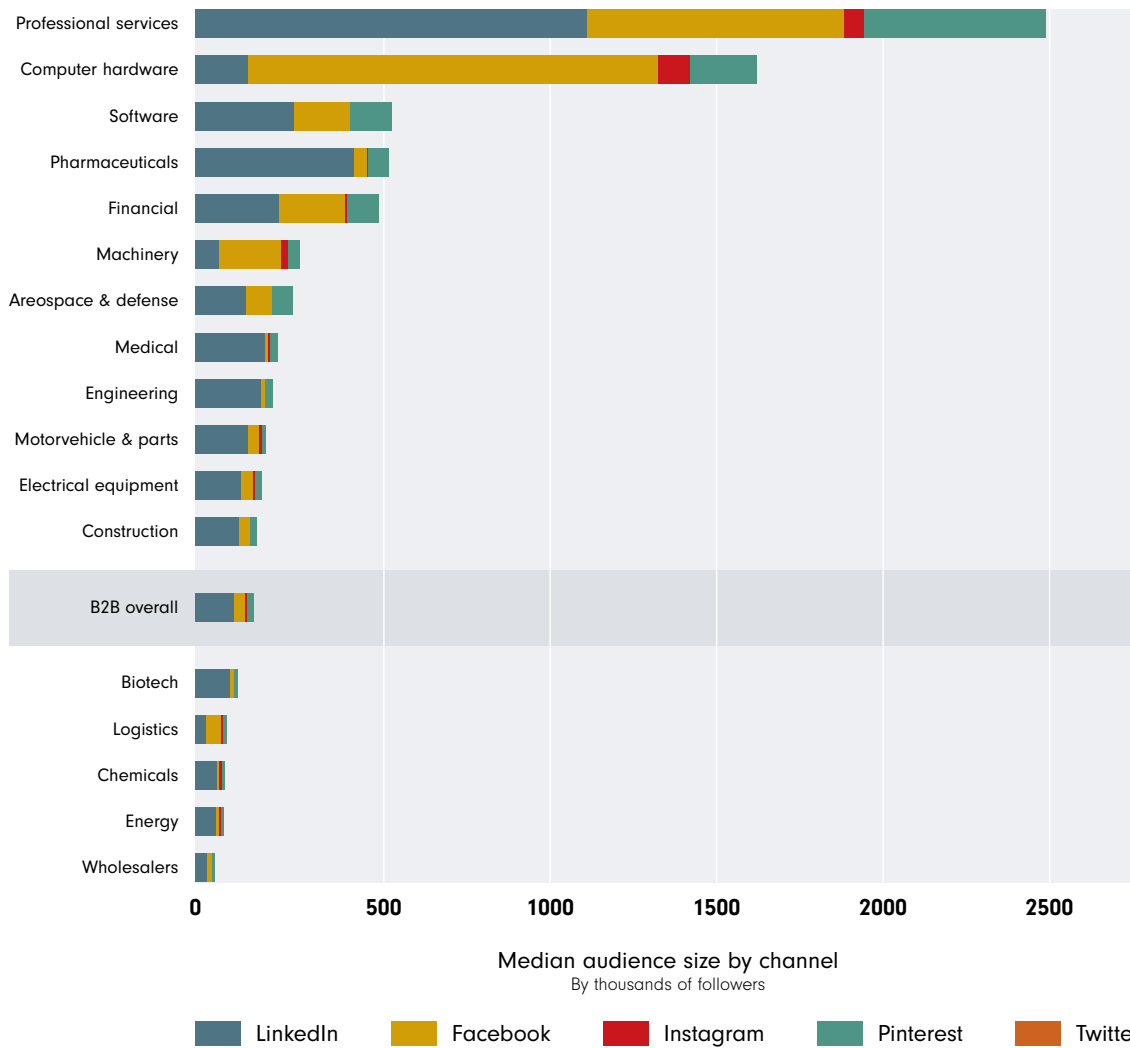
Analysis based on social media accounts for 316 B2B brands across Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, and LinkedIn from January 1, 2015 through December 31, 2015.

Data and graphs recreated from TrackMaven.com

You can also see that there appears to be a skew towards levels of engagement from Instagram across all industries, suggesting a growing trend for visual content. However, one thing to bear in mind is that our findings have shown that engagement is affected by both the number of followers you have, as well as your sector. For example, a Tweet with an image from a hospitality company with 10,000 followers is always likely to gain more engagement than an Instagram post from a pharmaceutical firm with ten followers.

B2B social media engagement ratio by industry

The graph below displays the engagement ratio — measured as the average number of interactions per post per 1,000 followers — on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, and LinkedIn.
In other words, the bigger the bubble, the more engagement a brand in the industry gets on that social network.
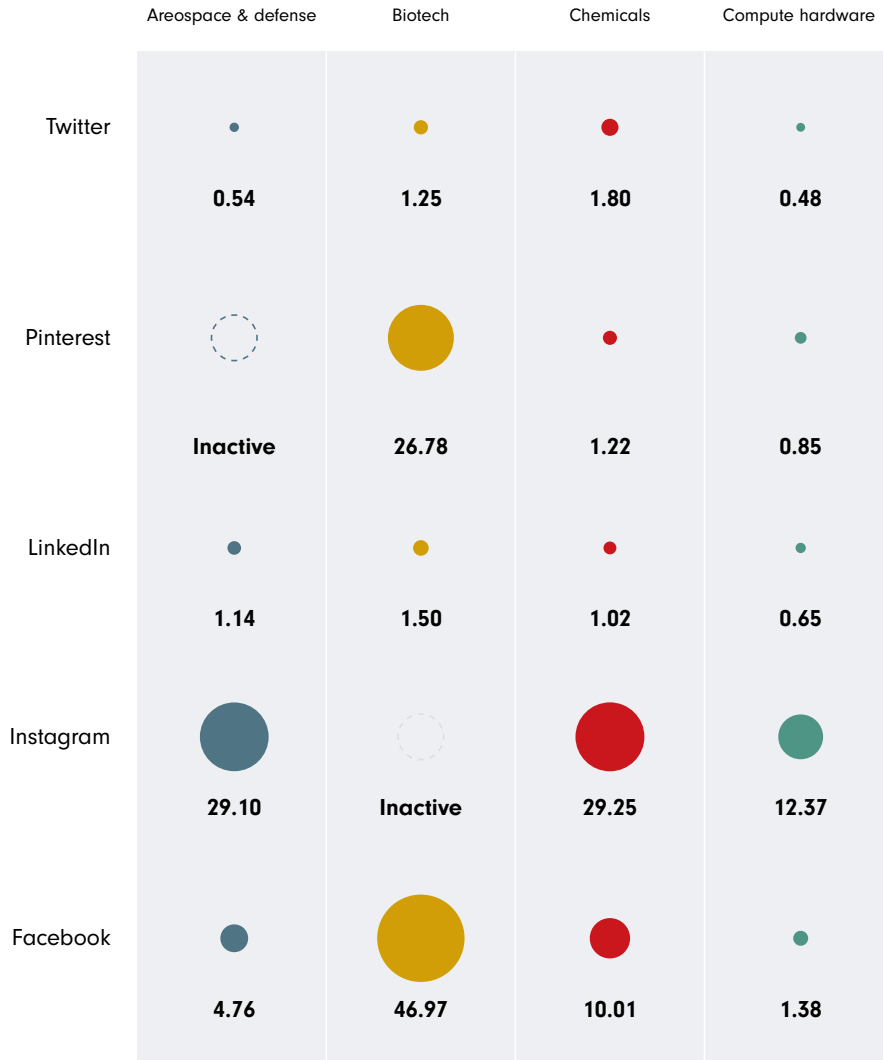
	Areospace & defense	Biotech	Chemicals	Compute hardware
Twitter	0.54	1.25	1.80	0.48
Pinterest	Inactive	26.78	1.22	0.85
LinkedIn	1.14	1.50	1.02	0.65
Instagram	29.10	Inactive	29.25	12.37
Facebook	4.76	46.97	10.01	1.38

Data and graphs recreated from TrackMaven.com

Construction	Electrical equipment	Energy	Engineering	Financial
0.57	1.08	0.89	1.91	0.35
20.67	2.91	6.87	1.77	69.92
1.21	0.67	1.41	1.38	0.59
24.69	18.31	29.38	44.13	17.43
5.15	2.60	7.02	4.92	3.34

Data and graphs recreated from TrackMaven.com

4.6 Conversation

Definition: "Conversation represents the extent to which users communicate with other users in a social media setting. Many social media sites are designed primarily to facilitate conversations among individuals and groups. These conversations happen for all sorts of reasons. People tweet, blog, et cetera to meet new like-minded people, to find true love, to build their self-esteem, or to be on the cutting edge of new ideas or trending topics" *(Kietzmann et al., 2011, p.244).*

———

When most people think of a conversation, they think of a quick chat about last night's episode of Game of Thrones over a cup of coffee. You won't be surprised to find out that social media conversation is no different (except you'll just have to imagine the smell of the coffee). Let's consider the two elements of conversation: talking and listening.

TALKING
Posts, videos, comments, tweets, videos, images, emojis, hashtags, memes, gifs

LISTENING
Monitoring, replies, comments, re-tweets, likes, shares, emojis, hashtags, memes

The rise of social media has brought with it a new language. Research participants have identified three key challenges when it comes to social media conversations: namely knowing what to say, how to say it and where to say it.

A recent study in the Marketing Management Journal stated that despite the interest in social media, companies continue to focus on using digital tools for one-directional communications. However, our research found that simply talking about yourself in a self-promotional manner doesn't lead to any form of real engagement (in this case defined as "the number of people who acknowledge agreement or preference for content, or those who participate in creating, sharing, and using content"). A study done by the Content Marketing Institute and Marketing Professionals showed that B2B marketers are in love with LinkedIn, with 94 % of B2B marketers using it to distribute content. Unfortunately, this doesn't lead to any substantial engagement for businesses. In contrast, starting conversations that add value in the form of incentives, offers and deals can create a buzz in the form of Re-tweets and Replies as opposed to an endless stream of motivational quotes from The Shawshank Redemption.

Conversation **in focus**

A well known multinational operating in a range of business sectors from healthcare to oil and gas, decided to embrace social media further. Seeing the growing importance of video, the organisation decided to develop beyond transactional and develop the brand story across both Facebook and Youtube. The organisation created a series of videos highlighting the work of their employees to educate the public about some of the lesser-known work the company does, such as their work on healthcare in developing countries. Going beyond using social media to get new leads, and instead tell the brand's story, resulted in B2B audiences engaging within the conversation at a deeper level.

Generally speaking, our research participants felt that "less is more" when it came to posting B2B content on social media, predominantly due to the nature of the audience being time poor. This point is also amplified when you consider that a 2017 Boston Consultancy Report found that mobile played a significant role in over 60% of B2B purchases, which is a clarion call for businesses to ensure their content is optimised for mobile.

The Content Marketing Institute found that being creative with your message was a challenge or perhaps inappropriate when it came to B2B social media. However, our research highlighted the need for content to either be an opinion leader for the sector and industry, or create content that tells stories, appeals to emotion and sparks conversation.

Many B2B marketers are under the impression that you need to create separate content for separate platforms. We at Northumbria believe that this is not necessarily true and given the pressures and resources on many B2B SMEs, repurposing one piece of content across multiple platforms is not only possible but desirable. That being said, you do need to take into account the individual nuances of each particular platform i.e. make use of the visual nature of Instagram by using appealing images; taking into account the 140 character limit of Twitter; and not exceeding the maximum video length on Snapchat.

4.7 Sharing

Definition: "Sharing represents the extent to which users exchange, distribute, and receive content. The term 'social' often implies that exchanges between people are crucial" *(Kietzmann et al., 2011, p.245).*

─────

When it comes to social media, sharing is the new form of word of mouth (WOM) communication. It cascades information through a variety of channels to a range of stakeholders; any time and anywhere. It can be seen as a double-edged sword, as not only can it help to promote your organisation through carefully planned messages and campaigns, but it can also impede your carefully-honed brand reputation as mistakes and negative reviews can also be shared in this environment. Content can be created and controlled both internally by the organisation, and externally by anyone with a vested interest and a reliable internet connection.

Businesses no longer have the choice of opting out of social media, as their stakeholders will use it in a way that WOM communication always has, by discussing the positives and negatives of a product or service. However, in the realm of social media, this is public and amplified to a much wider audience. As a result, the only way for businesses to guide the conversation is to be a part of it. One additional point for companies to consider is that although social media is often viewed as another form of "free" advertising, implying a one-way approach to communications, stakeholders may consider your social media channels as another means to contact you. In the same way that you wouldn't let a potential sales call go unanswered, an excellent social media strategy would include appropriate monitoring and replying to any form of enquiry.

Businesses must also consider their strategy for diffusing content. Our study has shown that merely creating posts that self-promote the organisation is not going to engage with your wider stakeholder groups. As one of our respondents eloquently puts it: "People get involved because they want to, not because they're being forced to."

Sharing in focus

A mobile phone provider actively encourages employees to co-create ways to improve processes, redesign products, and optimise their workplace. Taking the suggestions box to the next level through a platform, employees promote their ideas through a website that allows others to comment upon the suggestions through a rewards scheme. Within three years this rollout has led to 93,000 ideas being posted, one-third of all employee contributions or comments, the implementation of more than 7,500 ideas, and an additional €600 million in earnings or savings.

You need to develop content that stakeholders see as adding value so that they will want to share it with their networks. Examples include free trials, money-off offers, thought-leadership and educational content. There may also be an opportunity to co-create both content and actual products or services with your stakeholders, by seeking support or expertise through your planned campaign.

With over 350,000 tweets posted each minute, the thought of filtering through for relevant conversations about your business can be a daunting prospect. However, with the proliferation of social listening tools such as Hootsuite, Crowd Control, Google Alerts and Buffer (to name but a few!), finding and filtering conversations about you is relatively straightforward. Social listening allows you to monitor your brand effectively and efficiently, but also further highlights our opinion that social media needs to be part of an overall marketing strategy, as there needs to be a process in place to decide how to respond to both positive and negative content. That's why we have put together the below guide to social listening.

"Through social listening tools, I have tabs on both our organisation's name and our competitors to see what people are tweeting about, what people are posting about and if they mention our organisation in a positive or negative light."

RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

Social Listening:

Social listening is a process that allows individuals or businesses to review the discussions relating to keywords, topics or individuals that are taking place in social media. It is an ideal way of identifying what people are saying about you (your brand), your competitors and/or the marketplace in general. It can help identify key influencers, gain market intelligence or establish how successful social media campaigns are (measured by engagement: likes, retweets, comments, replies etc). The example illustrated below is a review of the words "Web Hosting" on Twitter during a 24 hour period on Monday 8th October 2018. It generated 2384 messages, made up of 1538 Tweets, 796 retweets and 50 replies.
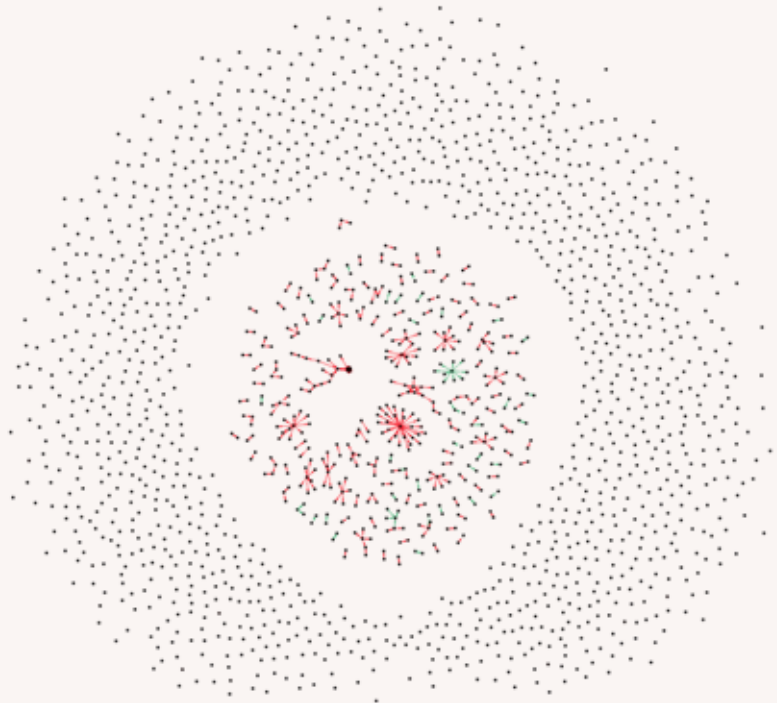
A graphical representation of the term "Web Hosting" viewed on Twitter over a 24 hour period* | Monday 8th October 2018
*Retweet and Replies to and from the same handle are only represented as one line.

When viewing the graph above, readers will note two discrete segments. The first being the outer ring which illustrates those tweets that had no engagement or interaction. The second is the inner circle which has red (retweets) and green (replies) edges or connections.

On further investigation it was identified that the outer ring contained tweets that were primarily messages of self-promotion. The inner circle contained tweets that had some form of 'value' attached to them. These 'value items included discount codes and free trial, i.e., a mechanism to engage with the user. However, we also found that engagement was much more likely to happen if you had a high following.

Conclusion

Don't slavishly post blatant promotions of your brand. Look to add value by providing some that the users would appreciate or find interesting. Build up your community, look for like-minded users and use the social listening process to identify individuals who could act as influencers.

5 Conclusion

Social media within the context of the B2B setting has attracted several myths. This report systematically investigates the reasons for the growth of social media and the critically important need for the business to harness the power of social media in line with the rest of the marketing communications strategy. It's no longer a 'what if we use social media', but a missed opportunity if not acted upon.

The resulting report utilizes a social media honeycomb themes developed by Kietzmann et al. (2011): Conversation, Sharing, Reputation, Relationship, Identity, Presence and Groups. These themes have been used to uncover essential answers to some of the most critical questions that B2B organisations had on how to use social media effectively: to draw out insight for business-to-business on using social media.

1. Which social media platforms are most useful to utilise in B2B?

There is no one platform for B2B SMEs. The social networks you choose are dependent on where your target group are, your budget and the overall aims of your campaign. Across a range of sectors, although Facebook, Twitter, Linkedin and Blogging are utilised in a B2B context, one of our surprising findings is that Twitter is the most widely used platform across the sectors we analysed.

2. How do we communicate using these platforms?

Our study confirms that the rise of social media has brought with it a new language. Rather than talking in a traditional sense, on social media we post, comment, tweet and hashtag. When we listen, we like, share, retweet and comment.

Research participants have identified three key challenges when it comes to social media conversations; namely knowing what to say, how to say it, and where to say it. Our research highlighted the need for content to be an opinion leader for the sector and industry, or to create content that tells stories, appeals to emotions (even in a B2B context!) and sparks conversation.

Our research also shows that despite popular belief you do not need different content for every social media platform; repurposing one piece of content across multiple online and offline platforms and media is recommended for an efficient, consistent brand message.

With over 350,000 tweets posted each minute, getting yourself heard by your target audience can be a challenge. Therefore, our research shows that you need to develop content that your stakeholders see as 'adding value' so that they will want to share it with their networks, e.g. free trials, money-off offers, thought leadership and educational content.

3. How do we drive engagement on social media within a B2B setting?

Our research found that social media can be a powerful relationship driver, due to its ability to facilitate conversations between not only an individual and an organisational (one-to-many) but also between multiple individuals and multiple organisations (many-to-many); in some cases, organisations are not even a part of the conversation being held peer-to-peer. With consumers increasingly demanding personalised relationships, social media enables this to be done at scale when it is used appropriately. There is also a need for organisations to empower employees to become brand advocates and ambassadors, which will allow them to connect more meaningfully with customers.

4. Who within the organisation should be responsible for social media?

Our research identified potential conflict within organisations over who is responsible for social media. The 'new technology' aspect means that in some organisations social media is seen as the role of the IT department and those who are technologically savvy. However, our research revealed that effective social media content needs to be driven by product/service experts that have been empowered by the marketing team. It is challenging to find the holy trinity of employees who are literate in digital marketing, have a wealth of product/service knowledge, and who have social media as an explicit part of their role description. All-too-often, the marketing intern or youngest member of the team is tasked with driving the social media campaign on the basis that they use social media. Our research rejects this approach and recommends organisations need to take social media campaign planning more seriously to reap the benefits.

5. How effective is the use of social media platforms as part of an integrated marketing communications campaign?

Until social media is taken seriously as part of an IMC plan, organisations are destined to find its effectiveness hard to assess. Our research shows it is not enough to measure the number of followers; it is more important to understand who is following you and how you are adding value to them. Our research showed that understanding effectiveness is over-simplified, as to evaluate the efficacy you must first define what you want to achieve through social media, which many B2B organisations fail to do.

The seven B2B social media themes discussed in this report have been used to devise a social media toolkit, which should help businesses to practice what we have preached. The kit incorporates the various elements of the social media 'honeycomb' and combines them with a range of practical tools, templates and platforms, to form an updated Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) framework. As well as debunking some of the most common myths about B2B social media, this framework will help B2B marketing professionals to either use social media for the first time or help them integrate their broader marketing strategy.
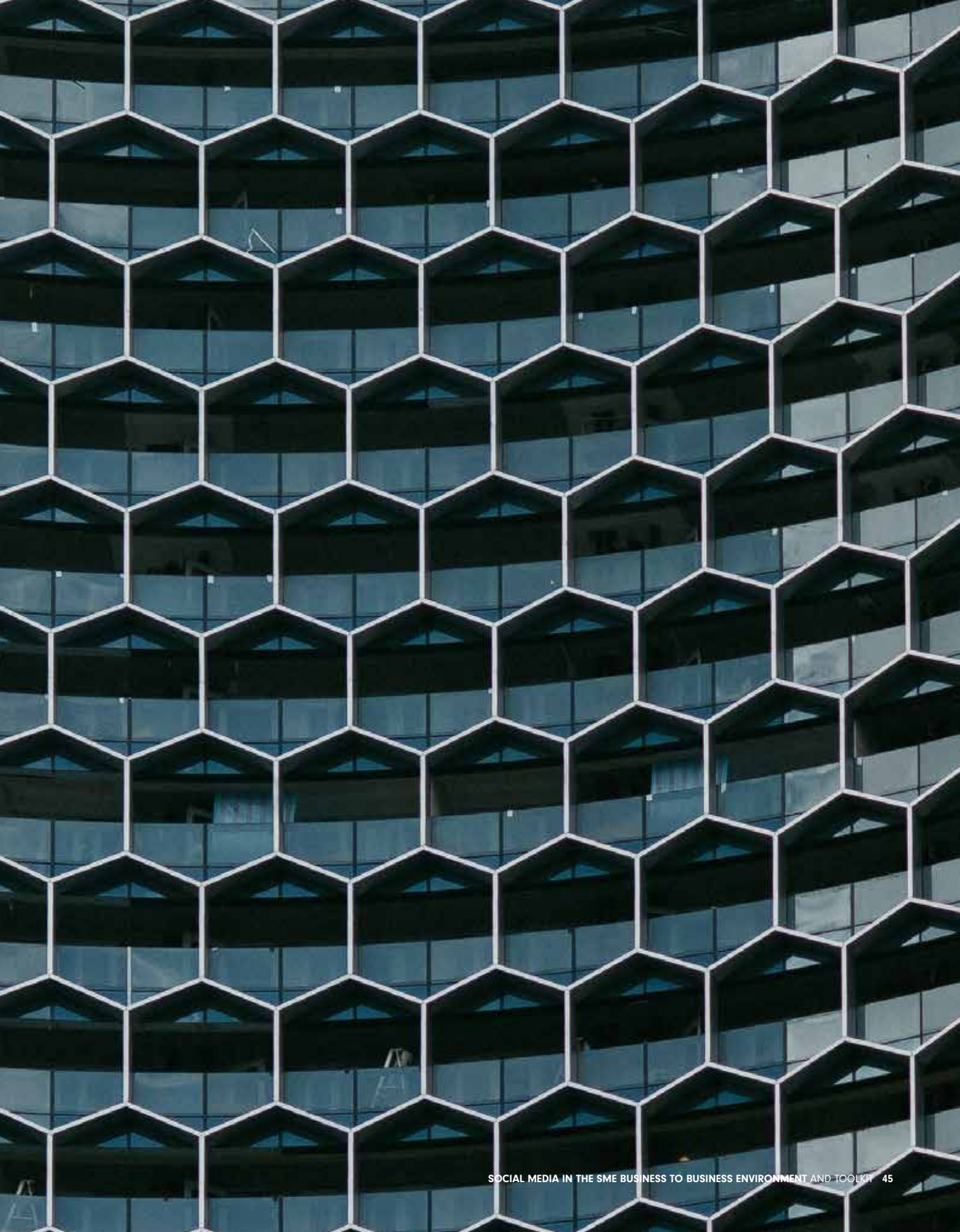
6 The B2B Social Media Toolkit

Now you have a detailed understanding of the key elements of B2B social media, your next step is to put them into practice. Regardless of whether this is your first or fiftieth marketing campaign, our toolkit will provide you with useful hints, tips, and techniques for making the most of your social media campaigns.
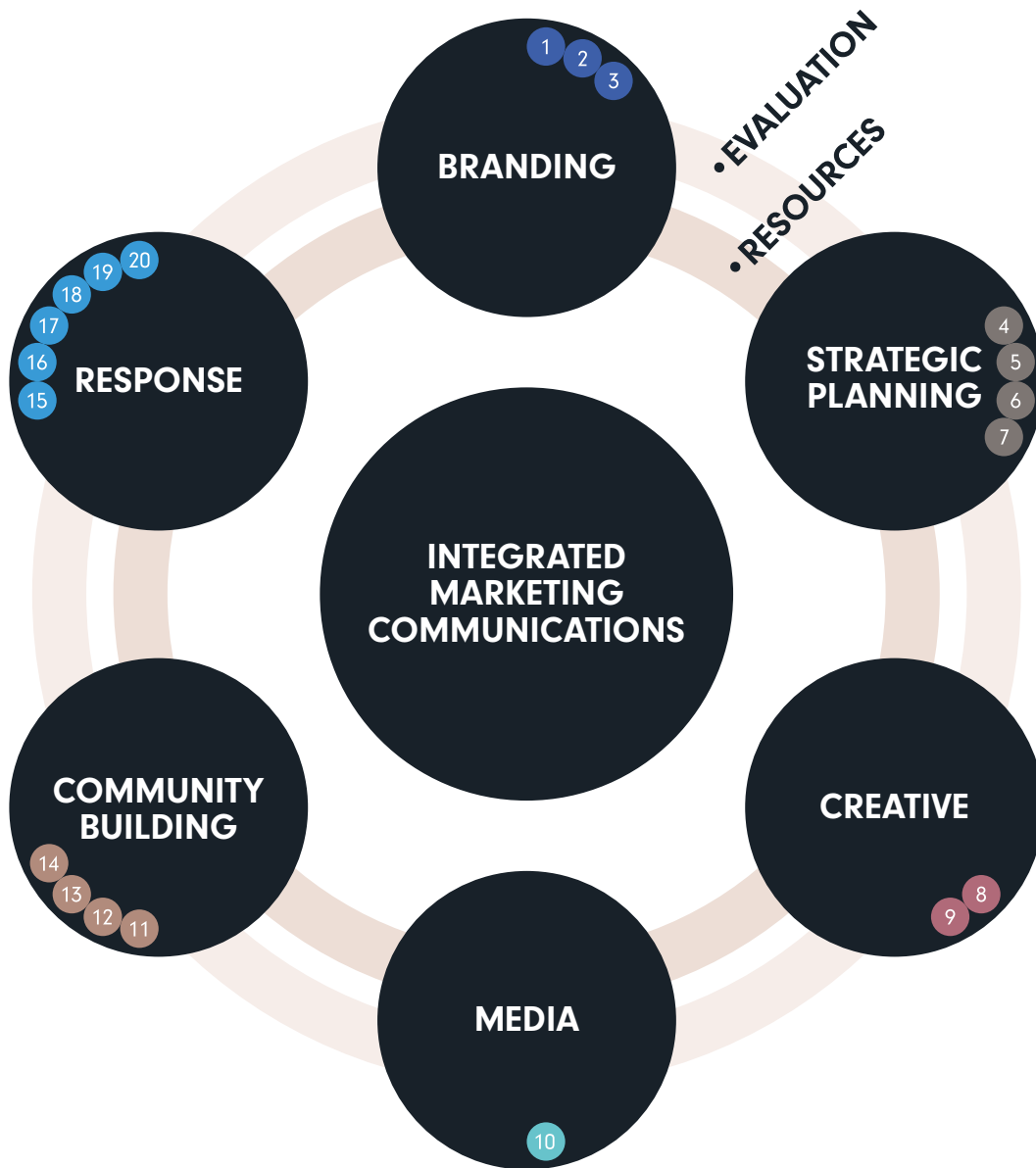
BRANDING

1. Brand Guidelines
2. Adobe InDesign
3. Opinion Mining

STRATEGIC PLANNING

4. Persona Profile
5. ASA
6. IMC Plan
7. The law

CREATIVE

8. Video
9. Imagery

MEDIA

10. Converstational Control

COMMUNITY BUILDING

11. Following policies
12. Internal advocates
13. Influencers
14. Social Listening

RESPONSE

15. Policies & Procedures
16. Google Analytics
17. Proprietary Platforms
18. SimilarWeb
19. Supermetrics
20. Google Data Studio

6.1 Branding

1. Brand Guidelines

Brand guidelines are the central document, which outlines key elements of the brand. They should govern the composition, design, along with the general look-and-feel of a company's branding. Brand guidelines can drive the communication of the content of a logo, blog, social media content, website, advertisement, and similar marketing collateral. The brand guidelines offer a consistent approach to the brand and we recommend including:

- Overview of the history, vision, and personality.

- Mission statement - what is the organisation purpose along with the role of social media.

- Brand message - to include examples of the tone of voice.

- Logo guidelines - how and where the logo can appear, the do and don'ts with regards the logo. The software Adobe Indesign can be used to create a logo and other marketing materials such as posters, flyers, brochures, magazines, newspapers, presentations, books and ebooks.

- Persona - who is the customer, further details within the market research element of the toolkit.

- Colour palette - for both online and offline purposes. The website Coolors.co will assist you in selecting colour palettes that work together, this makes devising a colour scheme easier.

- Editorial style guide - the style of writing and tone of verbal communications.

- Typography - details about the font and font families to be utilised for online and offline purposes. The website dafont.com allows to search fonts and review potentially suitable fonts for your brand.

- Social media post - examples of social media post to include tone, language, imagery.

2. Adobe InDesign

Adobe InDesign is a one-stop-shop for desktop publishing and typesetting software, which can be used to create posters, flyers, brochures, magazines, newspapers, presentations, books and ebooks, as well as a plethora of social media-ready content.

- Adobe InDesign: https://www.adobe.com/uk/products/indesign.html

3. Opinion Mining

There is a range of tools that will help you to understand your online reputation, and use this information to provide actionable insights. Autosuggest is a technical term used for the search suggestions you see when searching for a specific phrase in a given search engine; by typing your organisation's name into a search engine, you can see what potential opinions people have of your organisation. AnswerThePublic works in the same way but allows you to see multiple results at once (as well as download the data). Glassdoor is a platform that allows you (as well as potential employees) to read up on what current and past employees say about the company with which they have/had a working relationship. They allow you to manage all of your separate social media accounts (LinkedIn, Twitter etc.) centrally and also provide a mechanism to share access with various people within your marketing team, or wider organisation. These platforms can be found here:

- Google autocomplete: https://svupport.google.com/customsearch/answer/4542657?hl=en

- AnswerThePublic: https://answerthepublic.com/

- Glassdoor: https://www.glassdoor.com/employers/products/free-employer-account.htm

6.2   **Strategic Planning**

4. Market Research

No matter how many marketing campaigns we run, the process of understanding your audience never seems to get any easier. Yet, it's not actually all that complicated. Giving yourself plenty of time to understand your market helps, of course, but at the end of the day the science of consumer research comes down to two simple operations. First of all, there is quiet observation of your intended audience. Thankfully, there are a vast array of online tools that can be used to help you understand customers, such as GlobalWebIndex, SparkToro and BuzzSumo. These tools help you to gain valuable insights into audiences, trends, content and influencers, which should aid you in the development of a social media marketing campaign. Social listening and monitoring can also help you to identify and assesses what is being said about a company, individual, product or brand on the Internet. Tools such as Hootsuite and Buffer allows businesses to understand what engages an audience online.

Second of all, there is judicious decision-making based on the information available. There is no additional magical element to the process – it is simply about paying attention. However, compiling all your information into a persona template like the one below can be a surefire way of ensuring you launch social media campaigns with a laser-focus on the needs and wants of your target customer segment.

- GlobalWebIndex: www.globalwebindex.com/
- SparkToro: https://sparktoro.com/
- BuzzSumo: https://buzzsumo.com/
- Hootsuite: https://hootsuite.com/en-gb/
- Buffer: https://buffer.com

About them

Persona name

Quote

Age	Location	Industry

Primary language(s)	When are they online

Interests	Affinities

Goals	Frustrations

Brands they love

Influencers they follow

Platfroms they use

5. The ASA

The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) and the Committee of Advertising Practive (CAP) provide advice and guidelines on using social media. It does not constitute legal advice. It does not bind CAP, CAP advisory panels or the Advertising Standards Authority. They focus on:

- Paid for ads
- Own social media
- Interactions with User-Generated Content (UGC)
- Third party channels

This information can be found here:
https://www.asa.org.uk/advice-online/remit-social-media.html

6. Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) Plan

Effective B2B Social media campaigns require planning in the same way as you would do other marketing activities. Many businesses don't regard social media in the same way as they do traditional advertising and therefore fail to plan. Recent research finds that much of B2B social media activity can be categorised as sporadic and ad-hoc. Seasonality is also an influence on SME's social media, because of increased competitor campaign visibility. Therefore, you should really plan your B2B social media activity using a strategic process, as illustrated by this framework:

B2B Social Media Framework (Adapted from Kietzmann et al., 2011)

7. The Law

The vast majority of people who use social media are individuals from the general public. The vast majority are decent, intelligent, inspiring people. There is, however, a small minority, as in society, who spoil it for everyone else, businesses need to understand the legal, moral and ethical implications to their posts and use of social media. The House of Lords has produced guidelines for their own members which B2B users can use:

https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201415/ldselect/ldcomuni/37/3704.htm

6.3 Creative

8. Imagery

The images you use in social media can be purchased or created by your team. There are many royalty-free sites, the two that we recommend are Pixels for photographs and Vector Stock for vector images (drawn). You may want to adapt or enhance these images, again there is a range of platforms to consider. The market leader is Adobe, and they have a range of options. Luminar from Skylum is a cheaper option for photo editing, whereas Gimp is a free open source package. Canva is an easy to use platform that allows you to compose your image. It has templates for most of the social media channels and is ideal for creating Memes (i.e., a virally-transmitted cultural symbol or social idea).

- Pexels: https://www.pexels.com/
- Vector Stock: https://www.vectorstock.com/
- Photoshop: https://www.adobe.com/uk/
- Skylum's Luminar: https://skylum.com/new-luminar
- Gimp: https://www.gimp.org/
- Canva: https://www.canva.com/

9. Video & Animation

Social media allows users to post, text content, images and/or video. The videos can be in an animated format, but some B2B organisations feel that this would take time or cost a great deal. Here are two examples of animation tools that don't cost an arm and a leg.

- Biteable: https://biteable.com
- Raw shorts: https://www.rawshorts.com

These tools use artificial intelligence video editors and text to video makers that helps businesses make explainer videos, animations and promo videos for the web and social media. The other option is to use 'real-life' or a mixture of 'real-life' and animated video. A possible option is Camtasia

- Camtasia: https://www.techsmith.com/video-editor.html

In terms of the tools needed to capture video, camcorders, Digital SLRs, Mobile Phones and/or Go-Pro devices can all be used.

6.4 Media

10. Conversation Control Tools

Hootsuite & Buffer provide a range of tools that will help you to get the most out of your social media marketing campaigns and content management. They allow you to manage all of your separate social media accounts (LinkedIn, Twitter etc.) centrally and also provide a mechanism to share access with various people within your marketing team, or wider organisation. These platforms can be found here:

- Hootsuite: https://hootsuite.com/en-gb/
- Buffer: https://buffer.com

We advise businesses to use the paid versions as this will give you the option of adding team members to the account, ensuring you have control of the main passwords.

6.5 Community Building

11. 'Following' policies

Over the course of any social media campaign, you are likely to organically acquire new followers and fans. We recommend that you put guidelines in place that establish how to respond to changes to your social graph. Smaller companies may wish to follow individuals back in order to grow social media presence. Whereas organisations with a larger social following may decide not to follow everyone that chooses to follow them and instead try to optimise their social graph so that they can hone in on the right type of audience. You may also wish to decide what sort of people you choose to follow on behalf of your organisation; you may wish to follow customers, suppliers, clients (either existing or potential), or follow trustworthy sources of news and information that are relevant to your industry.

12. Internal advocates

Smarp is a tool that allows organisations to manage their internal and external content, as well as allowing employees to digest and share company and industry news. This can also be a great way to empower employees to act as brand advocates, by helping them to improve their thought leadership, build their networks, and be more successful in what they do. Not only will this help individuals to build their professional brand, but it will also increase your organisation's reach and credibility by generating meaningful conversations about your business.

- SMARP: https://www.smarp.com/

13. Influencers

Social media influencers can be a great way of persuading consumers that your organisation is the right choice for them. A survey from Nielsen showed only 33% of consumers trust advertisements, while 90% trust peers recommendations. Whether they're a journalist, product reviewer, industry expert, trusted source of information, or a blogger, your social media influencers are unique to your field and product or service.

For example, if you're trying to find a social media influencer in the aerospace sector, you'll want people such as:

• Science editors

• Aerospace editors and journalists

• Aerospace engineers

• Prominent aerospace personalities (i.e. astronauts)

No matter what industry you are in, the best way to find your social media influencers is by thinking about whose voice you trust. Thankfully, there are some tools that can help you with this, which we have highlighted below.

BuzzSumo is a content marketing tool that can help you to discover, measure and monitor content to understand what content resonates with your industry. It can also be used to help you find the top writers, bloggers and publications in your field. If you ever need to find someone that is an expert in your industry, this is the tool. Followerwonk is a tool that helps you to explore and grow your Twitter social graph. As well as helping you to gain a solid understanding of your followers (who they are; where they are located; when they tweet etc.), you can also search Twitter bios to connect with anyone of relevance to your organisation, as well as compare your Twitter account with those of your competitors to find overlaps and identify new influencers. You can also use the tool to match your social media activity with gains and losses in followers to help you understand what your followers like best.

• BuzzSumo: http://buzzsumo.com/

• Followerwonk: https://followerwonk.com/

14. Social Listening

Social listening tools can help you to monitor digital conversations to understand what people are saying about your brand and industry online. This can be a great way to identify customer pain points and uncover feedback that could help you to differentiate your brand, product, or service from competitors. It can also be a fantastic way of identifying key influencers within your industry, by looking at which individuals are generating the most engagement from the content they are posting.

Mention combines social monitoring, analytics, and competitor espionage. It's a paid service, but when you maximise the resources it has to offer, you can be sure you'll get every penny's worth.

• Mention: https://mention.com/en/

6.6 Response

15. Policies & Procedures 24/7

Given that social media is a platform for many-to-many communication, it can be extremely difficult for organisations to predict when and how enquiries are likely to come in (especially if you operate globally or seasonally). If you are unprepared to deal with enquiries during busy periods or outside traditional business hours, then this can have a serious impact on both customer satisfaction and your reputation.

One way to deal with this is to set realistic expectations for any enquiries that come from social media i.e. aim to respond within 1 hour between 9-5, and within 12 hours outside of these hours. You can also automate responses through tools such as Facebook Messenger or MailChimp, which can let individuals know that their enquiry is being dealt with. However, you also need to make sure that you have sufficient resources in place so that you can effectively handle enquiries quickly and efficiently (and in line with your brand guidelines!).

• Free Social Media Policy Template: https://bit.ly/2sw3TRQ

16. Google Analytics

Google Analytics is a freemium web analytics service that allows you to track and report website traffic. This can be crucial when the objective of your social media campaign is to encourage people to visit your website. Google Analytics is the most widely used web analytics service on the web, which isn't surprising when you consider the wealth of data that you can collect about your website visitors. Most importantly, given that B2B buying behaviour can be particularly drawn-out, Google Analytics can ensure that social media is gaining appropriate credit for sales and leads generated as a result of any campaigns.

• Google Analytics: https://analytics.google.com

17. Proprietary Platforms

Regardless of what social media channels you choose to use for your campaigns, you need to ensure that you can establish whether or not your campaigns are doing what they need to. Thankfully, each social media platform has their own proprietary analytics platform that can provide you with valuable insights and handy dashboards on how a given campaign is performing. We would advise that you familiarise yourself with each platform before trying to understand the data, as the metrics provided by Facebook will be different to those provided by LinkedIn (even though the overall theme of the metrics will be extremely similar).

• Facebook for Business: https://en-gb.facebook.com/business

• Twitter Analytics: https://analytics.twitter.com

• LinkedIn Reporting Analytics: https://business.linkedin.com/marketing-solutions/reporting-analytics

• Instagram Business: https://business.instagram.com/

18. SimilarWeb

SimilarWeb is a tool that will help you to benchmark your own social media performance against your competitors and your industry. As well as providing valuable data on competitors, it can also help you to identify emerging trends and discover potential partners, leads or influencers.

- SimilarWeb: https://www.similarweb.com/

19. SuperMetrics

As we mentioned earlier, social media can provide you with a wealth of metrics on the performance of your campaigns. However, this can make compiling data from multiple platforms somewhat arduous. Thankfully, SuperMetrics is an add-on for Google Docs that can put all of your marketing metrics into one spreadsheet; it is a reporting automation tool that can collect social and web analytics data, to help you create powerful marketing reports.

- Supermetrics: https://supermetrics.com/

20. Google Data Studio

In a similar vein to SuperMetrics, Google Data Studio can help you to put all of your marketing metrics into one place. However, it has an additional ace up its sleeve in that you can also use it to turn the data you have collected into informative reports and dashboards that are easy to read, easy to share, and fully customisable. Thankfully, both Supermetrics and Google Data Studio are compatible with each other; meaning you can have the best of both worlds!

- Google Data Studio: https://datastudio.google.com

but first, coffee

Online Additional Data

References

Broekemier, G., Chau, N. N., & Seshadri, S. (2015). Social media practices among small business-to business enterprises. *Small Business Institute Journal*, 11(1).

Contentmarketinginstitute.com. (2016). [online] Available at: https://contentmarketinginstitute. com/wp content/uploads/2015/09/2016_B2B_Report_Final.pdf

Dahnil, M.I., Marzuki, K.M., Langgat, J., & Fabeil, N.F. (2014). Factors influencing SMEs adoption of Social Media Marketing. *Procedia - Social and Behavioural Sciences*, 148, 119-126.

Globalwebindex.com. (2017). 2017 Trends: Research on Consumer Trends, Brands & Media - *GlobalWebIndex*. [online] Available at: https://www.globalwebindex.com/reports/trends-17

Harvard Business Review. (2015). *What Salespeople Need to Know About the New B2B Landscape.* [online] Available at: https://hbr.org/2015/08/what-salespeople-need-to-know-about-the-new-b2b-landscape

Järvinen, J., Töllinen, A., Karjaluoto, H., & Jayawardhena, C. (2012). Digital and social media marketing usage in B2B industrial section. *Marketing Management Journal,* 22 (2), 102-117.

Jussila, J., Kärkkäinen, H., & Aramo-Immonen, H. (2014). Social media utilization in business-tobusiness relationships of technology industry firms. *Computers in Human Behaviour,* 30, 606-613.

Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of Social Media. *Business horizons,* 53(1), 59-68.

Kärkkäinen, H., Jussila, J., & Väisänen, J. (2010). Social media use and potential in businessto- business companies' innovation. *In Proceedings of the 14th International Academic MindTrekConference: Envisioning Future Media Environments,* 10, 228– 236.

Kietzmann, J. H., Hermkens, K., McCarthy, I. P., & Silvestre, B. S. (2011). *Social media? Get serious! Understanding the functional building blocks of social media. Business horizons,* 54(3), 241-251.

Kuikka, M., & Äkkinen, M. (2011). *Determining the challenges of organizational social media adoption and use.* ECIS 2011 Proceedings.

Lacka, E., & Chong, A. (2016). Usability perspective on social media sites' adoption in the B2B context. I*ndustrial Marketing Management,* 54, 80-91.

Social Media Examiner (2016). *2016 Social Media Marketing Industry Report.* [online] Social Media Marketing | Social Media Examiner. Available at: https://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/social-media-marketing-industry-report-2016/

Social Media Examiner (2018). *2018 Social Media Marketing Industry Report.* [online] Social Media Marketing | Social Media Examiner. Available at: https://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/social-media-marketing-industry-report-2018/

Statista (2018). *Global social media ranking 2018 | Statistic.* [online] Statista. Available at: https://www.statista.com/statistics/272014/global-social-networks-ranked-by-number-of-users/

Swani, K., Brown, B., & Milne, G. (2014). Should tweets differ for B2B and B2C? An analysis of Fortune 500 companies' Twitter communications. *Industrial Marketing Management,* 43(5), 873–881.

We Are Social UK - Global Socially-Led Creative Agency. (2018). *Digital in 2018: World's internet users pass the 4 billion mark - We Are Social UK - Global Socially-Led Creative Agency.* [online] Available at: https://wearesocial.com/uk/blog/2018/01/global-digital-report-2018.

Appendices

Appendix 1   **Research Process.**

The interviews and focus groups were recorded and transcribed. The transcriptions were firstly summarised individually, then analysed holistically looking for any emergent themes that cut across the texts. A number of key themes emerged which have both informed the writing of this report and provided insights into practice of B2B social media.

Text summaries

Each interview and focus group was summarised to understand the essence of the discussion.

Interview/Group	Essence
Focus Group 1	We're aware of SM, we engage with it, we try to plan for it, but we're really not sure what we're doing has benefit for the audience or the organisation.
Focus Group 2	More positives than negatives; however the role and benefits of SM are not always understood at different levels in the organisation.
Focus Group 3	SM works best when you have buy in from all levels in an organisation and when you have someone with product and technical knowledge to lead on it.
Interview 1	Very positive about the use of SM but lack clarity on impact externally and how it is managed and developed internally.
Interview 2	SM can stimulate internal conversation; it can also be a quick way for customers to access help and feedback from organisations.
Interview 3	SM is a very useful tool (but I'm not sure how I should use it to get the best outcomes). I'm worried about unintended consequences of posts.
Interview 4	SM done right can project the personality of an organisation and is a great way to start conversations.
Interview 5	SM not a fad – it needs to be part of every business strategy to build relationships.
Interview 6	SM is integrated into our marketing communications and sales plans.
Interview 7	SM is an important and effective way to engage with audiences.

Emergent themes

A number of themes emerged though the analysis; these can be categorised as Impact, Relationships, Here to Stay, Strategic Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC), Social Media Planning, How it is Operationalised, Best Practice, Assumptions, and Barriers. Interpretations of each of these themes are indicated in the following table:

IMPACT	• Used effectively SM can impact positively on hard and soft business operations and create competitive advantage; • It has a growing importance in B2B communications; • SM done well or badly can have an effect on organisational reputation; • Can humanise a business; add personality (differentiation) or convey personality; • B2B SM may be more effective in smaller organisations, yet examples of it working very well in larger ones too;

RELATIONSHIPS	• It's great for building and growing networks;
	• SM can aid diffusion of content through connections;
	• Can be a relationship enabler
	  • it stimulates conversations/good for conversations between org and audience or between members of the audience, or indeed internally between staff
	  • SM doesn't replace face to face contact but good at promoting events and follow ups (prolong contact/conversations)
	  • SM conversations can be the building blocks to building relationships
	  • build online communities between suppliers and customers
	  • can be a way of co-creating content with clients/customers and building relationships
	  • way to have and record professional conversations
	  • needs to be based on trust not rules
	  • openness to using SM to engage in 2-way comms.

HERE TO STAY	• SM is here to stay; • Not being here means missing out; • Pace of change can be fast and organisations need to be flexible to adopt new technologies and platforms (and drop those that cease to be effective) and to trend shifts;

STRATEGIC IMC	• B2B SM can be misunderstood; it needs to be 'marketed' internally; its importance (Power) needs to be recognised;
	• It should be deployed strategically (not seen as an afterthought) and integrated with broader campaigns;
	• marketers need to drive the activity, ideally a designated SM role (or explicitly defined within a role), but work with organisational 'experts' for the content; one person can't do it effectively;
	• Quite a confused situation with understanding how SM fits into Marcomms:
	  • what it can deliver (objectives)
	  • who does it (organisation)
	  • is it technology led (IT) or content led (marketing and/or product/service delivery depts.)
	  • what its impact is (evaluation of objectives)
	• how it is controlled (signed off), especially if there are multiple contributors (and blurring between professional and personal persona) it is less controllable than traditional media (and that's probably OK)
	• organisations should have an SM policy;
	• over bureaucratic structures can stifle responsiveness of SM
	• some organisations do organise effectively for SM;

	• SM should be planned as part of an integrated campaign (IMC) but has a real benefit in its ability to be deployed responsively and flexibly in response to the environment (but needs quick decisions in these circumstances); • For those active in B2B SM the key to success is good Marcomms planning and being integrated into the strategy **Objectives** • These need to be clearly articulated and understood and impact measured against them • SM good for awareness and presence • Can help build trust • Maintain relationships • Support sales function (and have wider reach than sales team) • Conflation of objectives and evaluation? **Target audience** • Know who you want to speak to, but can be hard to define • SM can be good for targeting and connecting to right audience • Don't overload audiences (wear them out) • Be sensitive to how SM is viewed (post Facebook scandal) • Like all media, audiences can choose not to engage • But customers do respond and engage with SM; if they use it so should you • Internal use can aid communication and also upskill staff • Can reach wider audiences – wastage or useful engagement? • People like to use # (connector, virtual conversation) and to co-create content **Message** • SM needs a new language (visual language?); B2B messaging needs to be different • Content and platform need to complement each other • Content needs to be planned and managed and created for platforms (not just recycled or regurgitated) • Content needs to engage audience/s • Concise messaging better • Can B2B be engaging? • Assumption less creativity for B2B yet examples where campaigns have been very creative • Very positive feedback on use of SM for thought leadership (this is mentioned a lot) and added value of commentary • Campaigns can create a subtle story/content • Think outside the box **Media** • Can be hard to know which platform is best for reach • Use different platforms for different audiences (LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram etc.); not all equally useful in B2B • Is it in keeping with brand reputation • Personally familiar platforms may not be best for professional SM messaging • SM one tool in an orgs Marcomms armoury • Consumers use SM in decision making so it should be included in comms plans • SM can amplify campaigns **Resources** • Not 'free' advertising • B2B advertising may not have large spends, but SM should have a budget
SM PLANNING (positioned at Message row)	

SM PLANNING (cont)	**Evaluation of impact** • Needs to be planned • Reach can be wide and SM posts can attract those beyond scope of commercial relationships • Often impact not understood; Effect/awareness impact created yet impact on sales measured • Can be hard to evaluate 'softer' outcomes • Metrics can be measured • Harder to measure emotional responses in B2B • Can be more effective than email in getting response **Responsibility for delivering, monitoring and reviewing** • Those responsible need to know it's their role to create content and feel encouraged/enabled to do it as part of their 'day' job

HOW IT IS OPERATIONALISED	• It's challenging to find the 'holy trinity' of staff members who are digitally literate, have marketing understanding and product/service (content) knowledge – but expectation is that these exist
	  • Some colleagues don't want to create content (not my job)
	  • Others not digitally literate
	  • Need enthusiasm/commitment
	  • Need the right people (and invest in training them)
	  • It's a skilled activity
	  • Orgs over-rely on those with technical experience at expense of product/service/organisational knowledge or marketing understanding
	• Unlike other marketing activities big overlap between individual and corporate; professional and personal (SM skills, technology, persona)
	  • When you post whom are you representing? Your views, the organisation?
	  • Effective B2B SM needs to be delivered in the professional (not personal) realm
	• Future workforce will come with SM 'employability' skills and be professionally digitally literate;

BEST PRACTICE	• It is relevant for B2B use but organisations need to understand what it is and how it can be used professionally (as opposed to personally); posts need to maintain a professional persona in line with organisational reputation; • Effective SM is a science and an art;

ASSUMPTIONS	• There are some assumptions that
	  • all staff could/should contribute content; it is an endemic activity
	  • many staff aren't digitally literate (but no thoughts that they need training and skills development)
	  • personal SM experience and/or youth, are the preconditions for successful B2B SM
	  • B2B SM is different in terms of planning and implementation than B2C
	  • B2B SM can't be creative; it's too risky
	  • Relationships not important in B2B
	• most people don't see business SM as their responsibility; resistance to creating content (when not perceived as part of role);

BARRIERS	• Technology and content aspects can get confused;
	• Is SM taken seriously enough within an organisation?
	  • Not invested in/resources
	  • Not properly evaluated so impact hard to define
	  • Seen merely as 'free advertising' by some but some platforms require paid for access
	  • Needs champions
	  • Needs to be explicitly in someone's role description
	• Impact of GDPR on SM activity misunderstood (used as an excuse?); not a barrier in itself;

Appendix 2   The Perceptions Of B2B Organisations And Their Use Of Social Media.

When it comes to technology or more specifically social media there are eight factors that can potentially drive usage:

1. **Performance Expectancy:** do businesses think the use of social media will be useful for them.

2. **Effort Expectancy:** it is easy for businesses to use social media.

3. **Social Influence:** how key stakeholders to the business perceive the value of using social media within a commercial context.

4. **Facilitating conditions:** those factors that make the use of social media easy within a business.

5. **Hedonic Value:** the pleasure associate with applying social media in within a commercial context (note: the authors took the decision not to apply this variable for this study).

6. **Price Value:** an economic perception of applying social media within a commercial context.

7. **Behaviour Intention:** the likelihood of applying social media within a commercial context.

8. **Actual Use:** how businesses apply social media within a commercial context.

Where did the research come from?

A team from Newcastle Business School (Northumbria University) undertook a 12 month study for the Marketing Trust.

What kind of research was this?

This was a quantitative study focusing specifically on SME B2B organisations based in the UK.

What did the research involve?

259 SMEs took part in the survey. These were segmented into 8 discrete groups: Manufacturer, Wholesaler, Marketing Agency, Recruitment Agency, Logistics / Supply Chain, Professional Services (Accounting, Legal and HR services), Third Sector and Other (see figure 1).
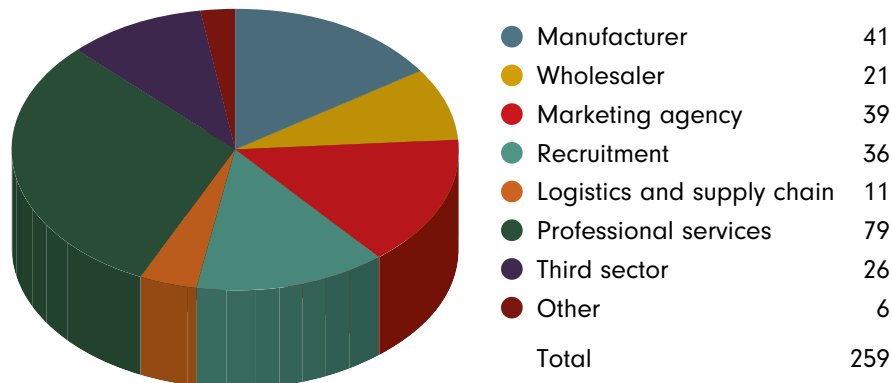

● Manufacturer	41
● Wholesaler	21
● Marketing agency	39
● Recruitment	36
● Logistics and supply chain	11
● Professional services	79
● Third sector	26
● Other	6
Total	259

Figure 1: B2B social media survey participant breakdown.

What were the basic results?

The great thing we found was that most B2B SMEs have procedures in place (see figure 2). There are a small number who don't so we will be providing some help with how to put this in place in the toolkit.

Use procedures.

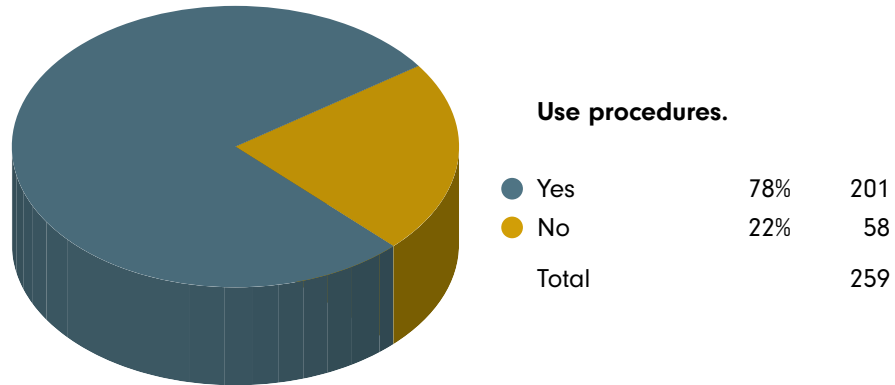|			
🔵	Yes	78%	201
🟡	No	22%	58
	Total		259

Figure 2: A breakdown of those businesses who have procedures for using social media.

We also identified that most B2B SMEs understand the legal implications of using social media (see figure 3). Again,there are a small number who don't so we will be providing some help on what should be be considered in the toolkit.

Understand legal implications.

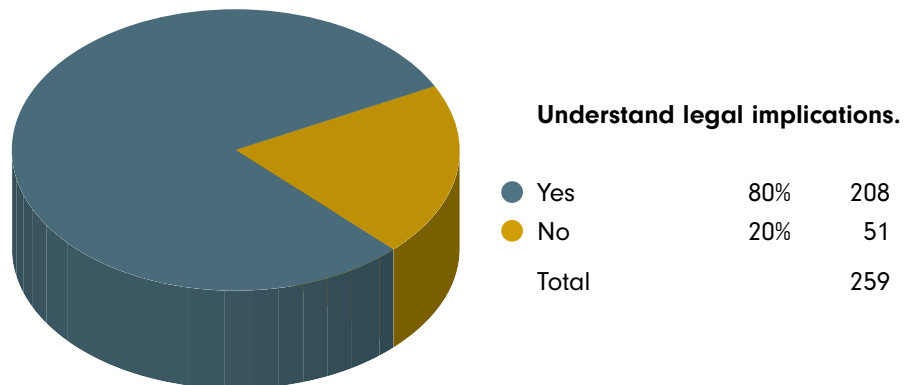|			
🔵	Yes	80%	208
🟡	No	20%	51
	Total		259

Figure 3: A breakdown of those businesses who understood the potential legal implications of using social media.

Similarly, a question asking, 'do you understand the regulatory implications of using social media?' was also reviewed (see Figure 4). Again, a section within the final toolkit has been included.

Understand regulatory implications.

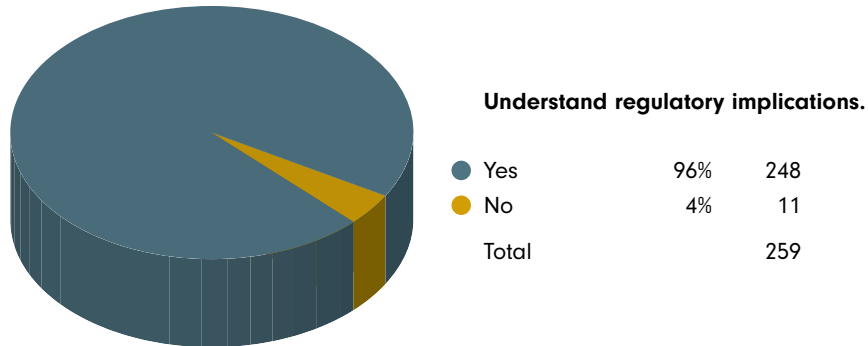|		
● Yes	96%	248
● No	4%	11
Total		259

Figure 4: A breakdown of those businesses who understood the potential regulatory implications of using social media.

The majority of B2B SMEs we spoke to had procedures to monitor social media (see Figure 5). Again, a section within the final tool kit has been included.
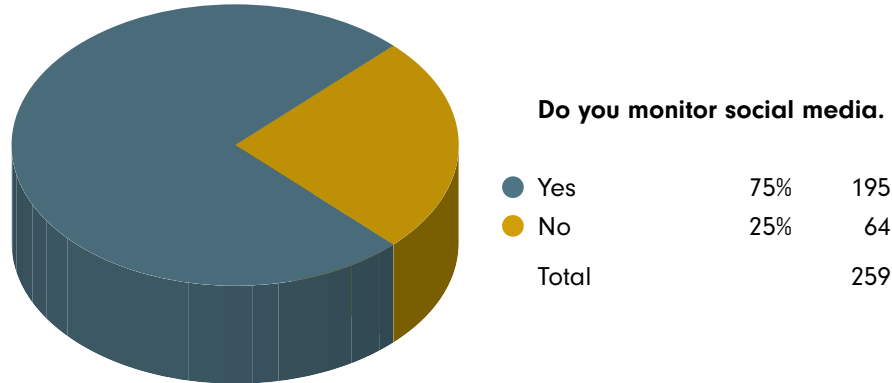

Do you monitor social media.

● Yes	75%	195
● No	25%	64
Total		259

Figure 5: A breakdown of those businesses who monitor the use of social media.

Interestingly 11% of the respondents did not how their social media was monitored, but 39% used some form of external platform which was great (see figure 6). To help those unfamiliar with such platforms we have included some options in the toolkit.

How social media is monitored.

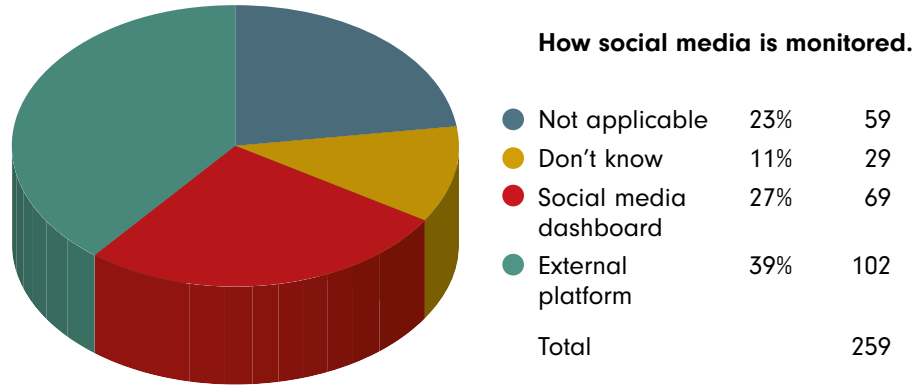|		
● Not applicable	23%	59
● Don't know	11%	29
● Social media dashboard	27%	69
● External platform	39%	102
Total		259

Figure 6: How social media is monitored.

Figures 7 and 8 demonstrate what SMEs spend on advertising and if they think it is effective. Figure 9 illustrates what percentage is spent on social media. We at Northumbria University would like to emphasize the importance of considering social media as another form of advertising.
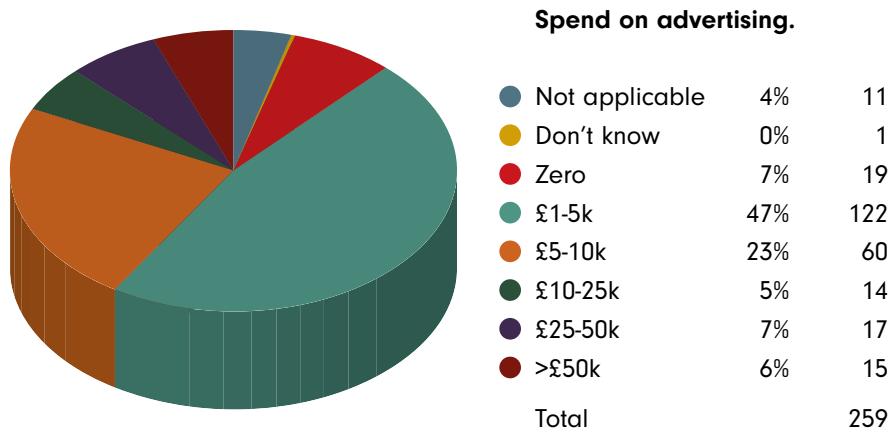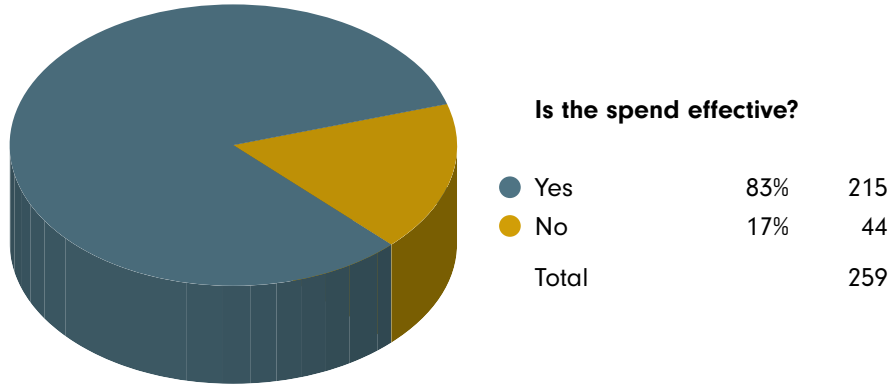

Spend on advertising.

● Not applicable	4%	11
● Don't know	0%	1
● Zero	7%	19
● £1-5k	47%	122
● £5-10k	23%	60
● £10-25k	5%	14
● £25-50k	7%	17
● >£50k	6%	15
Total		259

Figure 7: How much do you spend on advertising.

Is the spend effective?

● Yes	83%	215
● No	17%	44
Total		259

Figure 8: Is the advertising spend effective.

% of advertising spend on social

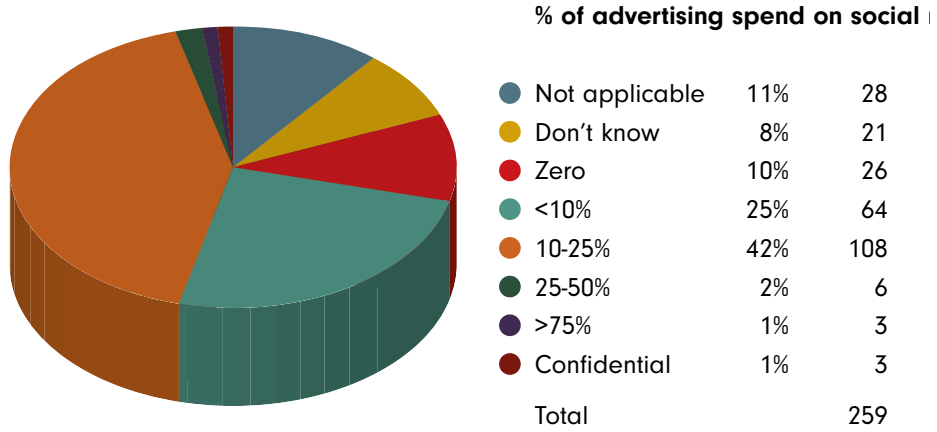|		
● Not applicable	11%	28
● Don't know	8%	21
● Zero	10%	26
● <10%	25%	64
● 10-25%	42%	108
● 25-50%	2%	6
● >75%	1%	3
● Confidential	1%	3
Total		259

Figure 9: The percentage of advertising spend effective on social media.

How did the researchers interpret the results?

For B2B SMEs we identified that the only variables driving the use of social media were:

1. **Performance Expectancy.**

2. **Effort Expectancy.**

3. **Price Value.**

Performance expectancy had the highest 'effect' on driving this behaviour intention, with effort expectancy demonstrating a low 'effect' and price value a very low 'effect'. This means that in order to support the Marketing Trust's aim of identifying 'what role can social media play in enhancing the B2B buyer-seller experience?' we, at Newcastle Business School, need to focus on demonstrating social media's usefulness and how B2B enterprises can use such tools more effectively and efficiently. That is why we have produced a tool kit as an output of this research.

We also identified that there were no significant differences between the different categories of B2B SMEs.

Conclusion

Developing a social marketing process the demonstrates performance is the key factor that most SMEs aspire to. Next is the effort associated with the process, so we have focused on this in our toolkit for you.

Appendix 3   An example of a 'Social Listening' exercise.

Social listening is a process that allows individuals or businesses to review the discussions relating to keywords, topics or individuals that are taking place in social media. It is an ideal way of identifying what people are saying about you (your brand), your competitors and/or the marketplace in general. It can help identify key influencers, gain market intelligence or establish how successful social media campaigns are (measured by engagement: likes, retweets, comments, replies etc).

Where did the research come from?

A team from Newcastle Business School (Northumbria University) undertook a 12 month study for the Marketing Trust.

What kind of research was this?

This type of research is called Netnography or Social Listening. It examines how a specific keyword is being used on social media.

What did the research involve?

The example illustrated in figure 10 is a review of the words "Web Hosting" on Twitter during a 24 hour period on Monday 8 th October 2018 using NodeXL as the interface. It generated 2384 messages, made up of 1538 Tweets, 796.

A thematic analysis (searching for themes within the posts) helped to categorise the tweets. These were then analysed using a statistical analysis call MANCOVA (multivariate analysis of covariance) to identify if any specific message category would drive user engagement (i.e., retweets, likes and/ or resplies).

Messages were also analysed using a process call social network analysis.

What were the basic results?

There is no magic formula that can be applied to social media to help you increase engagement. We did find however that messages with an 'added value' (things like discounts or promotions) were more likely to have higher engagement, but it was dependent on the number of followers a user had. There was no significant difference in engagement if their text, image or videos were used.
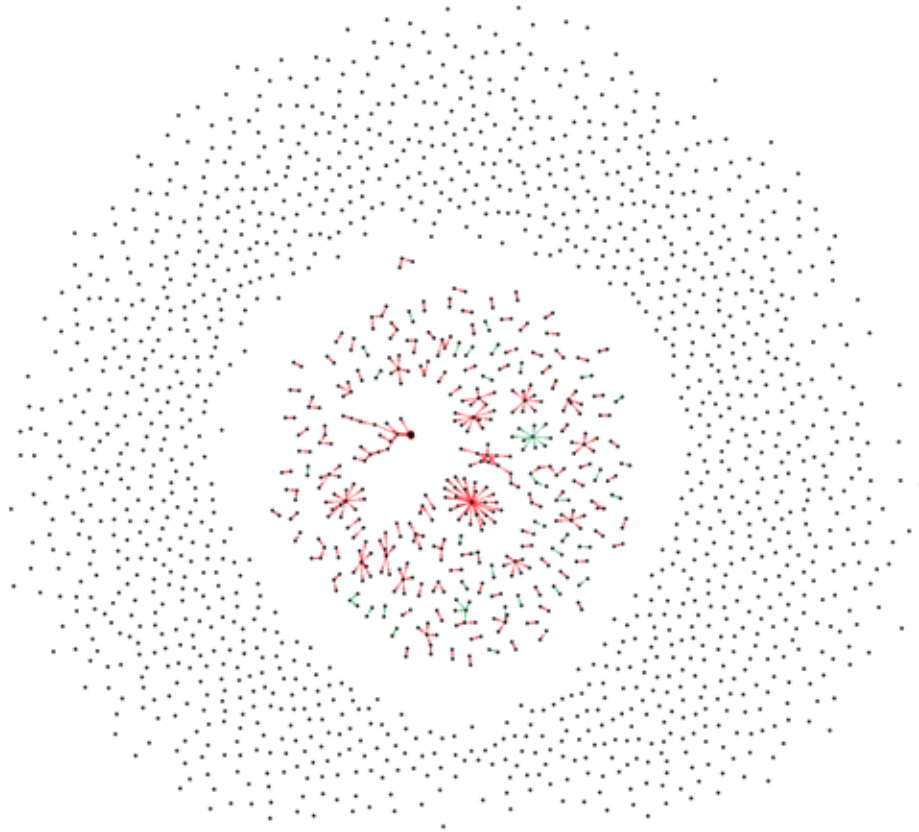
Figure 10: A graphical representation of the term "Web Hosting" viewed on Twitter over a 24 hour period.

Note: Retweet and Replies to and from the same handle are only represented as one line.

How did the researchers interpret the results?

When viewing figure 10, readers will note two discrete segments. The first being the outer ring which illustrates those tweets that had no engagement or interaction. The second is the inner circle which has red (retweets) and green (replies) edges or connections. On further investigation it was identified that the outer ring contained tweets that were primarily messages of self-promotion. The inner circle contained tweets that had some form of 'value' attached to them. These 'value items included discount codes and free trial, i.e., a mechanism to engage with the user. A detail statistical analysis confirmed the significance of this finding but there was a caveat: engagement was moderated by the number of followers a user had (i.e., engagement was more likely to happen if you had a high following.

Conclusion

Don't slavishly post blatant promotions of your brand. Look to add value by providing some that the users would appreciate or find interesting. Build up your community look for like minded users and use the social listening process to identify individuals who could act as influencers,

Appendix 4   Core Research Articles That Review B2B Social Media Marketing.

Source	Methodology	Key Findings
Author Broekemire, Ghau and Seshadri. **Year** 2015. **Journal** Small Business Institute. **Context** A national sample of business-to-business (B2B) small businesses was surveyed regarding their attitudes toward and usage of social media in their marketing efforts. **Country** America, focusing on Northeast, Midwest, South, and West) was generated using the Lexis-Nexus database to provide national coverage and serve as the sampling frame.	**Research Approach** Online survey instrument, using Qualtrics **Sample** 81 B2B SMEs **Analysis** Descriptive statistics, association tests (e.g., Chi-Square, Kendall's tau-b, Somers' d, and Gamma) and t-tests were conducted to identify any differences among B2B companies in terms of social media usage. **Theoretical Underpinning** This paper builds upon the literature on social media and B2B marketing in the small-and-medium-sized Business (SMEs) sector	National sample of business-to-business (B2B) small businesses was surveyed regarding their attitudes toward and usage of social media in their marketing efforts. Many B2B small businesses utilize social media in their marketing efforts (54%). Four main purposes for using social media: (1) improving company reputation, (2) increasing customer interest, (3) increasing customer awareness, and (4) promoting business to new customers. Among the 46% not using social media, a substantial proportion (81%) had no intention to do so in the near future. A quarter of those who do use social media report that they do not know the effectiveness of their marketing efforts. Still a need among small businesses to gain more knowledge of how to most effectively integrate social media into their marketing plans.

Source	Methodology	Key Findings
Author Jussila, Karkkainen and Aramo-Immonen. **Year** 2014. **Journal** Computers in Human Behaviour. **Context** This study contributes to the emerging B2B digital marketing literature by providing a realistic overview of the usage, measurement practices, and barriers surrounding digital marketing in the era of social media. **Country** Finland.	**Research Approach** Empirical survey of 125 business-to-business companies in the Finnish technology industry sector. **Sample** Data was collected fi-om a random sample of Finnish B2B companies drawn fi-om a Finnish contact information database. N=125 SMEs. **Analysis** Descriptive analysis: In measuring the activity of digital marketing and barriers to utilization, the anchors were 1 (strongly disagree) and 5 (Strongly agree). **Theoretical Underpinning** A review of digital marketing tools and core objectives.	Significant gap between the perceived potential of social media and social media use with customers and partners in business-to-business companies. Under 30% of B2Bs using SM - 29.6% Of the studied B2B's used social media in overall (internally 28.8%), and externally social media was used by less than half of the overall and internal use, 12.8% (partner/customer use). (B2Bs use SM more internally than externally). Due to the nature B2B communication, the B2B context includes "severe information security risks, potentially limiting the use of social media in ways that are not necessarily similarly problematic in B2C social media" (p.608). Barriers: The most common reasons for not using social media were, in order of popularity other projects being more important and the companies not being able to measure or assess the benefits for business.

Source	Methodology	Key Findings
Author Karkkainen, Jussila and Vaisanen. **Year** 2010. **Journal** In Proceedings of the 14th International Academic MindTrek Conference: Envisioning Future Media Environments. **Context** This paper focuses on bridging this gap with a survey of social media use, potential and challenges, combined with a social media - focused innovation literature review of state-of-the-art. **Country** Finland.	**Research Approach** we present and analyze the results of our empirical survey of 122 Finnish companies. **Sample** Empirical survey of 122 Finnish companies **Analysis** Descriptive statistics **Theoretical Underpinning** The paper starts by defining of social media and web 2.0, and then characterizes social media in business, social media in business to- business sector and social media in business-to-business innovation.	The article suggested that there is a significant gap between perceived potential of SM and the use of SM in innovation. They identified the main barriers which could potentially explain the low use of SM by B2Bs (11%): Lack of understanding possibilities of SM in innovation. There was difficulty assessing financial gain. Lack of evidence from similar cases using SM in innovation. It also suggested that lack of knowledge was the most prominent factor keeping B2B back from adopting SM. Content creation and creativity are ultimately restricted due to such things as legal contracts and Intellectual Property Rights.

Source	Methodology	Key Findings
Author Lacka and Chong **Year** 2016 **Journal** Industrial Marketing Management **Context** This study investigates the usability of social media sites when adopted for B2B marketing purposes in the one of world's largest social media market: China. **Country** China.	**Research Approach** Online survey instrument **Sample** N=181 responses **Analysis** SEM **Theoretical Underpinning** Specifically, by extending the Technology Acceptance Model with Nielsen's Model of Attributes of System Acceptability, we assess the impact of usefulness, usability and utility on the adoption and use of these sites by B2B marketing professionals.	Study investigates the usability of social media sites when adopted for B2B marketing purposes in the one of world's largest social media market: China. By extending the Technology Acceptance Model with Nielsen's Model of Attributes of System Acceptability, we assess the impact of usefulness, usability and utility on the adoption and use of these sites by B2B marketing professionals. Marketers' perception of the usefulness, usability and utility of social media sites drive their adoption and use in the B2B sector. The usefulness is subject to the assessment of whether social media sites are suitable means through which marketing activities can be conducted (found that PU, usability and utility of SM drove marketers' adoption and use in the B2B sector).

Source	Methodology	Key Findings
Author Swani, Brown and Milne. **Year** 2014. **Journal** Industrial Marketing Managemen. **Context** The paper investigates how marketers use Twitter differently across contexts and predict key factors likely to influence the message strategies used in each. **Country** N/A.	**Research Approach** A longitudinal content analysis and logistic regression support the assessment of a sample of more than 7000 tweets by Fortune 500 companies. **Sample** 500. **Analysis** logistic regression to test the hypotheses along with Content analysis. **Theoretical Underpinning** Social media communication theory.	Study investigates the usability of social media sites when adopted for B2B marketing purposes in the one of world's largest social media market: China. By extending the Technology Acceptance Model with Nielsen's Model of Attributes of System Acceptability, we assess the impact of usefulness, usability and utility on the adoption and use of these sites by B2B marketing professionals. Marketers' perception of the usefulness, usability and utility of social media sites drive their adoption and use in the B2B sector. The usefulness is subject to the assessment of whether social media sites are suitable means through which marketing activities can be conducted (found that PU, usability and utility of SM drove marketers' adoption and use in the B2B sector).

Source	Methodology	Key Findings
Author Siamagka, Christodoulides and Michaelidou and Valvi. **Year** 2015. **Journal** Industrial Marketing Management. **Context** This study contributes to the current dearth of knowledge on the potential of social media as a marketing tool in industrial settings, by focusing on factors that determine social media adoption by B2B organizations. **Country** UK.	**Research Approach** Online survey instrument. **Sample** 148 fully completed questionnaires were returned (3% response rate), 105 were retained as these represented B2B organizations. **Analysis** Factor analysis. **Theoretical Underpinning** The paper develops a conceptual model, which draws on the technology acceptance model and resource-based theory, is developed and tested using quantitative data from B2B organizations in the UK.	The study used TAM2 to understand factors that determine SM adoption by B2B firms. Their findings suggest that PU of SM within B2B organisations is determined by image, PEU, and perceived barriers. SM adoption was also found to be significantly affected by organisation innovativeness and PU (Siamagka et al., 2015). Findings by Siamagka et al. (2015) also indicate that non-users were likely to face increased pressure from buyer's (prospective and existing) who may wish to interact via this platform, as well as indirectly from competitors. This study discovered that most companies using SNS did not evaluate their effectiveness in supporting their brands (53%).

Source	Methodology	Key Findings
Author Jarvinen, Tollinen, Karjaluoto and Jayawardhena. **Year** 2012. **Journal** Social and Behavioural Science.s **Context** The purpose of the paper is to review the academic literature on factors that drive social media marketing adoption in SMEs and organization. **Country** N/A.	**Research Approach** Secondary data review, contextual paper. **Sample** N/A. **Analysis** N/A. **Theoretical Underpinning** N/A.	A realistic overview of the usage, measurement practices, and barriers surrounding digital marketing in the era of social media. Investigated 145 B2B firms from various industries. Despite the interest in social media, companies continue to focus on one-directional communications with established digital tools. Results indicate that the advances in digital measurement tools remain largely unexploited, and the firms lack the human resources and know-how to make the most of opportunities provided by the developing digital environment. Study suggests that B2B companies should update their capabilities with respect to digital marketing usage and measurement in order to adapt current practices to fit the characteristics of today's digital media landscape.