



Eight out of ten American companies are present on Facebook

Key conclusions:

- High social media usage in American companies. The usage in the United States is higher than in Europe.
- Six out of ten American companies listen to consumer conversations on social media. Eight out of ten American companies answer client questions and complaints via social media.
- High usage does not imply true integration; the social media approach is too often disconnected from general company management.
- A digital gap is growing in the corporate world. Companies which are already investing a lot will do so even more in future. Companies which are currently not investing in digital media are also not planning to do so. These companies need to engage with their target audiences in order not to miss out on them.

Eight out of ten American companies are present on Facebook, 45% on Twitter

Not only consumers find their way onto the popular social network sites, an increasing number of companies also use it. 80% of the American companies use Facebook, 45% have a Twitter account, 48% are present on LinkedIn and 31% use YouTube. These numbers show that American companies have evolved further in their social media usage compared to companies in Europe.

61% listen to conversations between consumers on social media

Four out of ten American companies listen to what consumers say about them on social network sites. "Social media makes conversations between consumers very transparent. Companies can quite easily discover what people are saying about their products and services. An increasingly growing group is strongly interested (and with good reason) in this real-time feedback from the market," states Prof Steven Van Belleghem, partner at the research agency InSites Consulting.

US companies are very successful in answering questions via social media as 83% of companies indicate they always deal with questions or complaints sent to them via social media. Still, only 54% of the companies in this survey also talk to and actively participate in online conversations with consumers.

High usage but low integration of social media

The survey showed that companies find it very important to be present on social network sites. However, this does not always mean their strategy in doing so is well thought-out. A mere 11% of the companies are integrating their social media approach into their overall corporate strategy while 17% are currently mid-integration. More than 1 out of 4 (26%) of the American companies are not even doing anything on social media! The integration is at similar levels compared to the European status. "A huge number of companies feel external pressure to be present on social media. Unfortunately this very often results in static corporate pages where nothing really happens. It too often leads to mere presence, not engagement with people. In doing so, companies create enthusiasm among their customers which in the end turns into disappointment," declares Van Belleghem



A digital gap is emerging in the corporate world

Chances are that there will soon be a digital gap in the corporate world. This survey shows that companies which are already investing a lot in new media will do so even more in the future. Companies which are not investing much yet are not intending to do so. "Even though there is a clear digital evolution and pull among clients, there are still companies that are not convinced that they too have to go with the evolution. The risk for these companies is that, in a rather short term, they will miss out on an important target group in their market. It is time for these companies to observe, facilitate and join these conversations through e.g. consumer consulting boards or social media observation techniques", concludes Van Belleghem.

About the survey:

These conclusions come from a survey organised by InSites Consulting, together with sample and data collection partner SSI and the translation agency No Problem!. A total of 1,222 managers and business owners were interviewed from companies (+20 employees) in the US, Great Britain, The Netherlands, Belgium, Germany and France. <http://www.slideshare.net/stevenvanbellegem/the-4cs-of-the-conversation-company>

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InSites Consulting:

InSites Consulting was founded in 1997, and although a market research agency its founders never really had the ambition of being market researchers. InSites Consulting is in fact a crazy mixture of academic visionaries, passionate marketers and innovating researchers, all determined to tackle the status-quo of market research.

InSites Consulting turns ordinary consumer behaviour into extraordinary valuable insights for companies. Our mission is to activate consumers, clients and employees and act as change agents by closing the gap between consumers and the "boardroom". InSites Consulting has developed award-winning social media research methods like online communities, ethnography and nethnography / social media listening.

In the past 10 years the company has grown 35% every year. Today they are more than 110 collaborators in 5 offices (US, Belgium, the Netherlands, the UK and Romania). After establishing offices in Belgium, London and Rotterdam, InSites Consulting has recently opened an office in New York.

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