

Building Trust Through Brand Monitoring

Contributed by eMarketer
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Getting involved in the community—the right way

According to Datran Media, nearly three-quarters of Fortune 500 companies and other top media and advertising firms around the world had a Twitter account in December 2009, and that proportion has likely risen since then.

Marketers hope that involvement in the microblogging site can bring them closer to their consumers and help them be part of conversations that build trust and brand engagement.

Research from Fleishman-Hillard suggests increased trust varies around the world.

While internet users in China overwhelmingly felt more comfortable with companies that microblog, those in North America and the UK were largely unmoved.

One problem could be that while there is high awareness of microblogging, usage is much lower. Edison Research found that while 87% of US consumers had heard of Twitter, only 7% used it.

A company's presence on a microblog may mean little to US internet users who have not taken part in the 140-character craze.

There was a more positive response toward the idea of companies monitoring microblogs for brand-related discussion.

Across all countries studied, a majority of internet users said they would be happy that a company was listening to them and responding to their problem.

However, there was also the potential for mistrust. In the US, about a fifth of respondents didn't believe companies were sincere about brand monitoring and that it was all for show.

A similar number thought brand monitoring had a creepy element and that marketers might be effectively eavesdropping on private conversations—public though they may be.

One way for brands to avoid concerns like these is to connect with brand advocates and depend on loyal customers and fans to respond to any negative buzz issues, rather than using the company Twitter account to address every concern.

Consumers tend to trust the voices of their peers, and a defense from a satisfied customer may be more persuasive and authentic.

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