

Social Media Presence More Important Than Social Media Ads

Contributed by eMarketer
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Yet marketers have concerns with the communities they've built on social sites

Social media marketers feel that having a presence on social sites is more important than advertising there, but there are still challenges related to keeping a community running online.

In July 2011, Microsoft Advertising and Advertiser Perceptions surveyed social media marketers in six countries around the world and found that 74% of them thought it was very important to have a presence on Facebook, but only 57% felt the same way about advertising there.

On Twitter, presence also carried more weight, with 47% of respondents saying they thought it was very important. But in Twitter's case, there was not as much of a difference between presence and advertising, at 42%.

Of the marketers surveyed, 72% agreed that measuring return on investment from social media was too hard, an oft-cited challenge of social media overall. More specific to having a brand page or account, 56% of marketers said turnover was too high and 52% said their fan or follower base was not target-appropriate.

Looking at social media budgets gives more insight into how marketers are keeping their communities engaged online.

Social media marketers reported that 48% of their budgets are used to attract new members to their pages, with 28% focused on social sites such as Facebook or Twitter, and 20% from off of these sites.

On the other hand, 19% of budgets are used to keep current Facebook or Twitter communities engaged, and an additional 20% of budgets are spent on paid media to maintain existing fan bases.

Continually working to keep social communities engaged will help marketers reduce turnover. And as social media marketers become more mature in their outreach and social networks improve their platforms, marketers can work to better target advertising to reach the right audience and track and measure success using better metrics.

Time and experience with social media will help marketers overcome the challenge of maintaining communities at social sites.

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