

New Dads Are Big-Time Social Media Users

Contributed by eMarketer
Monday, 09 April 2012

Marketers targeting dads should reach out to them as parents first, dads second

While moms used to be the social network standard-bearer of the family, fathersâ€”particularly first-time fathersâ€”are engaging in the same types of social media activities that new moms enjoy, according to a February 2012 survey by Edelman and The Parenting Group.

The study showed that 42% of new US dads who use social networks write family-related status updates on a daily basis. It further found that 56% of new dads post family photos at least a few times a week, while 21% post family-related videos.

The study defined â€œnewâ€• dads as those whose oldest child was age 2 or younger. The results were similar for the surveyâ€™s overall population of US dads with at least one child under the age of 12.

There was even one area in which dads were actually ahead of their female counterparts: Millennial dads have more online friends than millennial moms. These dads reported an average of 96 online friends, while moms averaged only 70.

The results donâ€™t surprise Mark Wildman, vice president and group publisher of magazine and digital media company The Parenting Group. Pointing out that one out of six fathers are stay-at-home dads, he said that male parents today are more likely to view themselves in a broader way than they did in the past. â€œI donâ€™t just view myself as a provider,â€• Wildman, the father of preschool twin girls and a younger boy, told eMarketer. â€œThe nurturing, the cooking, the food buyingâ€”I am doing it in partnership with my wife.â€•

Indeed, even shopping activities like following brands on social networks, long considered the purview of the woman of the house, are being embraced by dads. A study by Arbitron and Edison Research found that, even over a year ago, in February 2011, US dads on social networks were catching up to moms, with 25% following a brand.

How should marketers reach these new dads on social networks? Present messages as a â€œmosaic,â€• Wildman said, drawing on his own experience with the Parenting.com site. â€œThe parent should feel like whatever he [the dad] is doing, who he is and his method of parenting will resonate because the advertiser isnâ€™t defining what the roles are in the family.â€•

Instead the advertiser should communicate â€œthe essence of the brand in a thoughtful way that demonstrates that itâ€™s an enabler of a lifestyle,â€• Wildman advised. â€œYou can mention a brand, but it cannot dominate the conversation.â€•

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5 April 2012