

Marketers Still Can't Tie Social To Bottom Line

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Soft metrics still the most popular

Nearly nine in 10 companies in the US will market on social media this year, according to eMarketer, indicating that the channel has become almost a requirement for most brands. But measuring success beyond soft metrics like "engagement" is still far away for many, according to research.

Econsultancy and Adobe found in August that 57% of companies around the world said the deepest level at which they could track the effectiveness of social media marketing was in terms of engagement, such as the number of followers, comments and time spent on social pages. Even more agencies said this was the deepest metric their clients could track.

By comparison, few were able to track bottom-line effects on revenues (12% of companies and 16% of agencies), or even the influence social media had on other marketing channels like search. And one in five companies said they were still stuck on the most basic of metrics only.

Respondents were most likely to tell Econsultancy and Adobe that they were using social media as a brand awareness channel, with more than six in 10 agencies and companies indicating this. Even so, failing to measure beyond soft metrics can only bring a limited understanding of how social media might be affecting brand awareness.

The companies surveyed were most likely to be active on Facebook and Twitter (86% each), followed by YouTube and LinkedIn.

eMarketer estimates that among US companies with at least 100 employees, 83% will market on Facebook this year, compared with just 53% on Twitter and 36% on YouTube.

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