



The Social Transformation Report

How modern organizations are growing brand value, operational efficiency, and business impact with social media

Hootsuite® + ALTIMETER®





Hootsuite Social Transformation Report

TINT Preface

Brands across the world have recognized that to build and deepen relationships with their audience, they need to create trust and demonstrate authenticity in their communications. You already know that social has dramatically changed the way companies do business and conduct their marketing, but what about in other functional areas of the organization?

TINT partner and social leader Hootsuite teamed up with research and advisory firm Altimeter to interview leaders at nine organizations and survey 2,162 respondents to understand how organizations with mature social media practices perform differently than those less mature in their transformation journey. The findings in this report demonstrate how widespread use of social media within organizations has immediate measurable benefits and prepares for broader digital transformation.

At TINT, we've seen this represented across our customers and their approach to omnichannel and omni-department enablement of social and user-generated content (UGC). Mature organizations go beyond simple social listening and publishing content, bringing the voice of employees and customers into the organization to build trust, authentic relationships, and advocacy – internally and externally.

An exciting future lays ahead with several unknowns. For many companies, the rapid change and continuously evolving social landscape will be challenging. It is worthwhile to consider opportunities within the organization to capitalize on the power of social to deepen relationships with fans, customers, stakeholders, and employees. This report is a good step in that direction.

We are delighted and honored to present the Hootsuite and Altimeter report on Social Transformation and trust that you will find it an excellent resource for the preparation and evolution of your companies' social strategy. We encourage you to contact us should you have any questions or comments regarding this report.

TINT is the UGC platform trusted by over 5,000 of the world's leading brands to find, curate, and display authentic user-generated content.
tintup.com



Keeping social media stuck in marketing misses its greater value.

Hootsuite partnered with Altimeter Group to better quantify how sophisticated organizations are using social to deepen customer relationships, increase brand value and media efficiency, and accelerate broader digital transformation. We surveyed 2,162 marketers and conducted in-depth interviews with leaders working in large enterprise organizations with complex social media strategies, answering three critical questions.

- What do organizations achieve when they broaden their use of social media beyond marketing and communications departments?
- How does social media impact customer, employee, partner, shareholder, and community relationships?
- As organizations expand their use of social media to influence these relationships, how does it prepare them to meet broader transformation goals?

This report helps to create a shared language in your organization for the types of business outcomes social media can help you achieve, offering an evidence-backed path you can follow to put social to work in marketing, sales, and HR functions.

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Executive summary

Social's place in the marketing mix is well established, with social now capturing 13-24% of the total marketing budget.¹ However, executives often underestimate social's economic, cultural, and transformative value. Understanding the true value and potential of social has become more imperative as organizations look for new possibilities in the post-pandemic economy.

According to Deloitte, 77% of CEOs report that digital transformation efforts have significantly accelerated—and 70% of CEOs are prioritizing changes to customer behavior as the most important factor setting their future direction.² With organizations looking to reimagine their business models and quickly adapt to more digital

ways of connecting with customers and employees, social has a vital role to play in the years ahead.

Our research found that mature organizations use social to realize broad cross-organizational benefits, while laggard organizations still primarily see social as a communications tool and marketing channel.

In this research, we help to quantify the economic benefits of social's role in organizational transformation, uncover how mature organizations are capturing more value and efficiency, and clarify the role of social as a catalyst for cultural change.

To fully realize the value of social media, organizations should:

- **Tap into social media's unique ability to develop and deepen relationships across multiple stakeholders.** Organizations have seen during the recent series of crises—from the global pandemic and economic uncertainty to the movement for social justice—how social media can maintain and strengthen relationships. The need for increased speed and real-time data has elevated social's role in staying connected with not only customers but also employees, partners, and the community.
- **Realize and extend social media's ability to drive efficiency and value beyond marketing and communications.** While social media's focus on customers is well known, its effect is also spreading throughout the organization. In particular, employee advocacy creates greater value in brand health and employee engagement and also improves efficiency in areas ranging from sales to recruitment.
- **Leverage social media's existing organizational structure and processes to catalyze digital transformation.** The spread of social media across the organization supports digital transformation, starting with executives and extending throughout the organization, especially with employee advocacy. Social media programs deployed to a broad set of employees and business functions raise employee skill sets, create value and new efficiencies, and get leaders educated, talking, and aligned around a comprehensive digital strategy.

Helping
organizations
build stronger
relationships
*is social's
unique power*





SOCIAL MEDIA HAS BEEN AROUND AS A TECHNOLOGY AND BUSINESS TOOL FOR ALMOST TWO DECADES,

evolving from early formats like blogs and forums to mobile-first, video-driven platforms like TikTok. While organizations adopting social media have historically focused on customer engagement, social has matured to become a staple of almost every marketing and communications campaign. It has also evolved to be primarily a reach-oriented media channel, especially as evidence has emerged around the effectiveness of paid advertising on social channels.

Along the way, we've lost sight of one of social media's most potent attributes: the ability to engage, have a conversation, and develop a relationship. Our research found that focusing on social's relationship power led to greater brand health and deeper employee engagement across all channels, not just social media.

Our research took an expansive view of relationships to include the many constituencies required to succeed in business, across customers, employees, partners, shareholders, and the broader community. Of course, relationships can change quickly in ways that are difficult to predict. They take nurturing and an understanding of mutual benefit. Events such as economic cycles and natural disasters test the strength of relationships.

As a digital platform designed specifically around the goal of connecting people, social media is uniquely positioned to help organizations respond rapidly to change and increase relationship resilience. We've seen this in our research, which took place during the COVID-19 global pandemic. Mature social media practitioners increased their social advertising investment, saw increases in brand sentiment, and remain connected to a diverse set of constituents through social media.

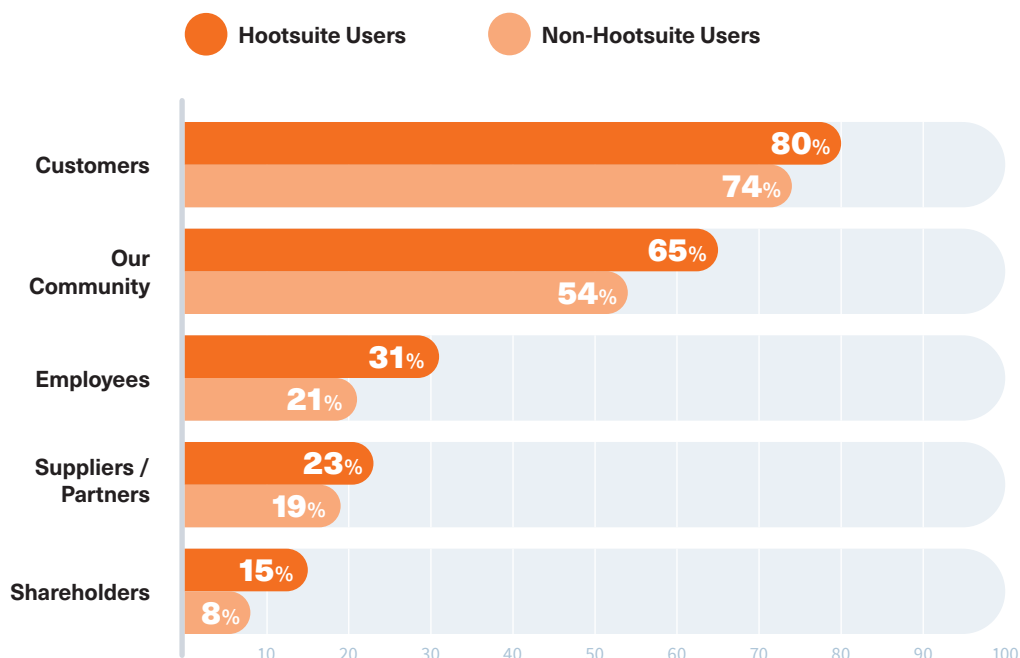
Mature organizations extend social's value beyond customer relationships

As expected, customers and community are the primary audiences for organizations' social media programs. We also found that Hootsuite users were more likely to have social media programs with more stakeholders than non-Hootsuite users. Making strong inroads are also employees and suppliers/partners. Programs for shareholders are less developed, primarily because of regulatory concerns.

At SODEXO, a global food services and facilities management company, addressing multiple stakeholders with a single social media strategy is at the core of their strategy. Social media at SODEXO sits with the communications team, which is responsible for both external thought leadership as well as employee engagement on social via Hootsuite Amplify.



Mature organizations extend social media to stakeholders beyond customers. This is particularly true for organizations who use Hootsuite.

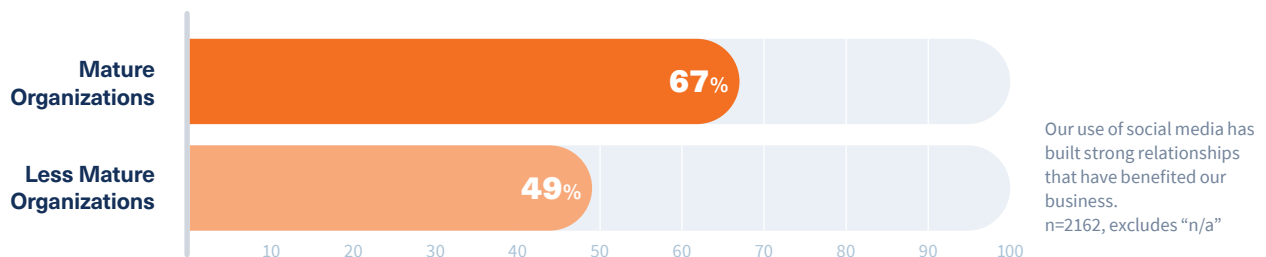


“We take a 360-degree approach to our communications,” explained Kim Beddard-Fontaine, SVP of digital and employee communications at SODEXO. “There isn’t a wall between internal and external.”

SODEXO’s business centers on large and complex deals, with some campaigns developed to focus on a single high-value prospect. The company recently ran a highly targeted social campaign to reach C-level executives at a single organization with social posts about SODEXO’s commitment to corporate social responsibility. To extend the reach of the campaign, the team promoted it with paid social posts, while employees with connections to executives at the prospect shared campaign content via Hootsuite Amplify to their personal social media networks. SODEXO confirmed that several of the prospect’s executives read and engaged with the post, which eventually played a significant role in winning the contract.



Mature organizations were more likely to agree that social media built strong relationships that benefited the business



HOW MATURE IS YOUR ORGANIZATION ON SOCIAL MEDIA?

In our study, we used Hootsuite’s Social Maturity Assessment to define mature versus less mature organizations. This assessment is a benchmark of over 1,000 enterprise organizations in 12 industries and covers every aspect of how organizations use social to create business value, including attribution practices, use of social data in customer journey mapping,

integration of social data into CRM systems, employee advocacy, paid media and influencer strategies, and workforce education programs.

To complete an assessment of your own organization’s social maturity, start here: hootsuite.com/maturity-matters

To deepen relationships, you need sustained engagement

While more than half of respondents (64%) agreed with the statement, “Our use of social media has built strong relationships that have benefited our business,” there was a significant difference between mature and less mature organizations, with mature customers 1.4 times more likely to build strong relationships.

To better understand why this is the case, in-depth interviews revealed that relationships develop with sustained engagements that lead to conversations across multiple channels, not just on social media.

For example, at Amway, a global producer of consumer products sold through millions of independent distributors, the organization uses social to recognize and call out their distributors. One everyday activity is to amplify a distributor’s post on Amway’s own social channels. “It’s like when Taylor Swift calls out one fan,” said Brad Van Houte, head of social strategy at Amway. “It shows that we’re listening. It shows that you know you’re being recognized, that your efforts are being rewarded.”



Relationships develop with ***sustained engagements*** that lead to conversations across multiple channels, not just on social media.

At Avidia Bank, a mutual community bank headquartered in Hudson, Massachusetts, the social media team sees social as an opportunity to understand customers better. “Social opens up that communication channel and it becomes a conversation,” explained Janel Maysonet, CMO at Avidia Bank. “It’s all about knowing the customer.” The social media team monitors social channels for mentions and reviews, and responds within one business day. The team is also launching a new customer relationship management (CRM) system that will enable them to quickly contact customers and follow up when they spot a negative review or critical post on social media.

Brand health improves with social media and employee advocacy

Organizations’ brand health closely reflects their ability to build deep, strong, relationships with customers. Eighty-four percent of mature organizations saw significant success in improving key brand health metrics, such as relevancy and positive sentiment.

At Ochsner Health, a health care provider based in Louisiana, a top objective of social is to drive brand awareness around innovation while also humanizing the company to combat any perception that it’s “too big to care.” Ochsner uses the Talkwalker integration in Hootsuite to track sentiment on social media, as well as to monitor mentions for brand health and risk mitigation.



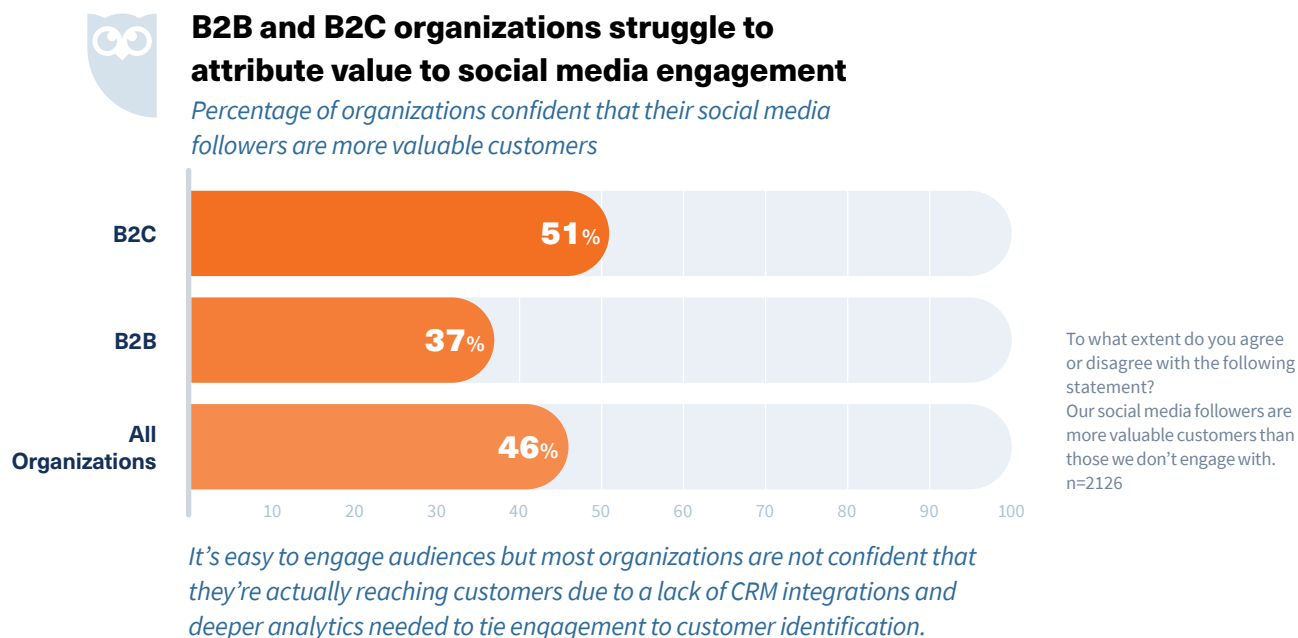
Employee advocacy also has a significant impact on brand health—primarily if executives are engaged. A third of mature organizations reported improved brand health because of employee advocacy.

For example, at Saint-Gobain, a French multinational corporation which produces a variety of construction, high-performance, and other materials, headquartered on the outskirts of Paris, the social media team built a strong community on Instagram around architecture lovers by posting videos on about their work in the field and community donations during the pandemic crisis. Employees amplified those posts and executives also engaged followers by asking questions that demonstrated their interest in having a conversation. This social strategy helped Saint-Gobain shift its reputation from being secretive about its operations to being focused on innovation.



Weak attribution and system integration hamper customer relationship development

Even though social media builds beneficial relationships, only 46% of all respondents agreed with the statement, “Our social media followers are more valuable customers than those we don’t engage with.” B2C organizations were more likely to attribute value to relationships developed via social media, with 51% of B2C respondents agreeing versus 37% of B2B respondents.



One of the primary reasons for this is that only 28% of all respondents believe they have mature social media practices in attributing value to business outcomes driven by social media. And only 10% feel they have mature practices around integrating social data into enterprise systems like Adobe, Marketo, or Salesforce.

But several organizations interviewed for this report shared that they were addressing this shortcoming by integrating their social media activities with their CRM platforms. Terry Coniglio, director of content strategy at Georgia State University, acknowledged the need, saying, “Without pushing every single engagement into some kind of database, it’s tough to then match it to other behaviors like donating or applying.” Georgia State University integrates engagement data from Hootsuite into Salesforce to connect social media engagement with other activities, regardless of whether a prospective student engages in person or via phone or chat after a social media engagement.



Key actions to take

Inform your strategy with social listening

Active listening to conversations and sentiment for each core constituency (customers, employees, partners, investors, and the community) is an essential element of an effective social media strategy, giving you real-time insights into shifting trends, consumer sentiment, competitive intelligence, and potential risks to brand reputation.

The best social listening programs are purpose-driven: that is, they have specific goals in mind, such as understanding a given customer segment. They also leave room for discovering insights you may not have been looking for. Leave room for that discovery—but as a foundation, create a picture of what relationship you wish to have with each core constituency, a profile of what they need, and a content and measurement program to track achievement of those relationship goals.

Integrate cross-channel data to map the customer journey

A key reason mature social media practitioners outperform less mature ones is that they understand their core constituents. Understanding how, where, and when to engage with various core constituents requires a clear picture of what motivates each, what they need, and how you can help them achieve their own objectives. It starts with building and communicating strong value propositions, and then reinforcing them through action.

To achieve this, create profiles or personas for those constituencies that integrate data and insights from marketing channels (including social), CRM, and the other sources you use to understand behavior that leads to action.

Social media
drives brand value
and operational
efficiencies





AS SOCIAL MEDIA STRENGTHENS RELATIONSHIPS,

it also creates operational efficiencies and contributes to key business results. While the practice of engaging customers is relatively mature, engaging employees is less so—even though our research uncovered significant benefits both internally and externally when employees use social media to advocate for their brand.

Organizations with mature social media programs for employees reported many benefits, including an increased sense of connection among employees, higher customer satisfaction, and improved overall brand health.

Social media is also part of a broader digital ecosystem that delivers essential efficiencies. Combining social media with other digital practices increases the efficiency of marketing campaigns by amplifying the impact of other digital channels such as websites and email marketing. From a sales perspective, our research showed that use of social media increased both brand differentiation and lead quality while reducing customer acquisition costs.

Driving brand value

Brand health is central to an organization's value—and 78% of respondents agree that the use of social media has improved brand health measures. Of those organizations that empower their employees to post company content through an employee advocacy program, mature social media practitioners were 2.3 times more likely to report that their employee advocacy program showed improvement in brand health, making it a cost-effective complement to other brand-building measures.

Mature users were also three times more likely to say they have improved brand sentiment during the COVID-19 pandemic, demonstrating resilience needed to weather economic cycles. In an environment of lockdowns, economic uncertainty, and civil unrest, social media use increased sharply as people sought new, digital ways to work, shop, unwind, connect, and advocate for change. During this period, mature brands with established social listening, analytics, and advocacy programs were able to respond quickly to shifts in consumer sentiment, accelerate strategic decision making, and deliver relevant and timely content to their audiences.

Driving media reach and marketing efficiency

Social media's vast audiences, advanced targeting capabilities, and cost effectiveness combine to make it a highly effective channel for reaching both new and existing customers. Mapfre, a global insurance company, uses social analytics to try to understand what people are thinking about and considering so that they can do better targeting and personalization of marketing campaigns. In some countries, the only media Mapfre buys is on social media because it is so inexpensive and targeted.



72%

of respondents agreed that social media helps them improve the efficiency of other media

78%

of respondents agreed that social media empowered them to reach prospective customers more efficiently than other media

Employee advocacy increases employee engagement

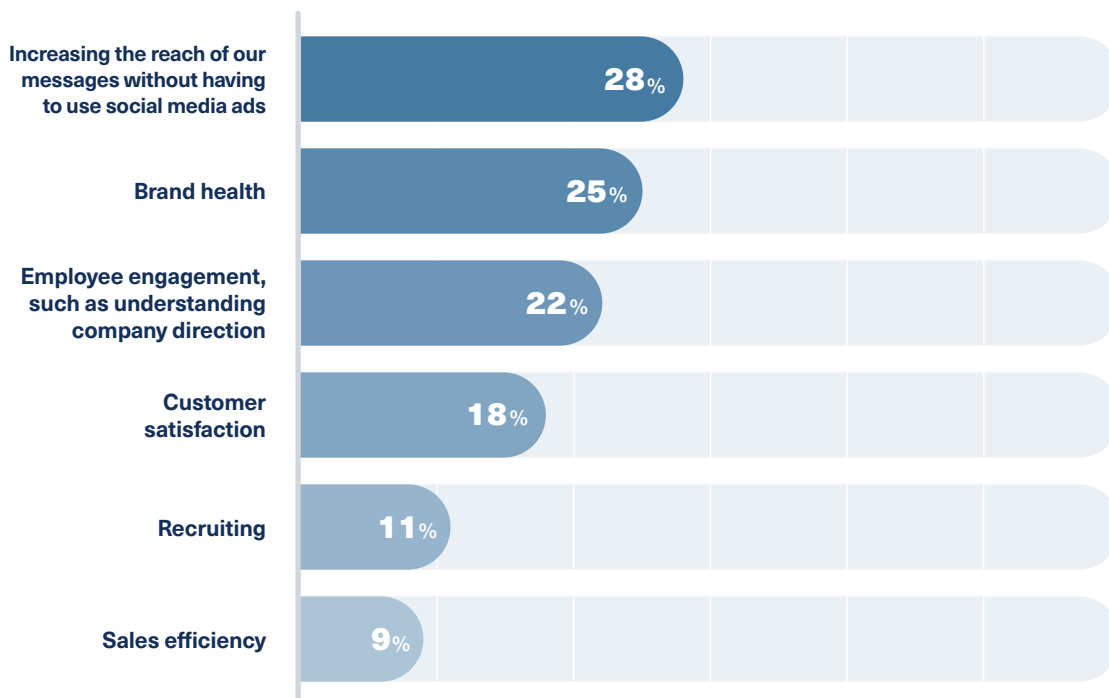
Of the organizations with an employee advocacy program, the most significant benefit seen by 28% of respondents was increasing the reach of messages without having to use social media ads. Even in cases where employees don't share posts on their personal social media channels, viewing posts about their colleagues and the company connected them more strongly to the organization, with 28% reporting increased employee engagement.

The employee advocacy program at Ochsner Health System has 300 brand ambassadors with a 40% adoption rate driven by engaging content that recently included a "COVID Hero Diaries" series, as well as a video featuring the CEO announcing free childcare for health care providers. "These are stories that they're proud of," explained Alexandra Gaudin, senior digital content specialist at Ochsner Health. "The stories resonate with our brand ambassadors, who are proud to work for a company that is doing that initiative."



Employee advocacy programs drive improvements in reach and brand health

Organizations reported improvements in the following areas:

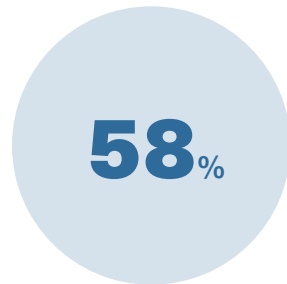


Our social media employee advocacy program has shown improvement in: (Please select all that apply). Excludes those without a social media advocacy program. n=2153

At SODEXO, the employee advocacy program started with 250 senior executives and drove substantial traffic, doubling the monthly average of new followers to the company's LinkedIn page. In the process, they discovered that the most frequent sharers didn't have the highest engagement. "The less frequent sharers were getting stronger engagement and therefore generating more trust versus just showing a lot of content on their social networks," explained Kim Beddard-Fontaine, SVP of digital and employee communications at SODEXO. Social media practitioners should create incentives that encourage quality engagement over quantity, keeping in mind the relationships each person wants to develop.

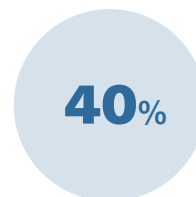
Using social media to drive sales

While it's getting increasingly difficult and expensive to reach new customers, social media provides a platform to acquire new customers at a lower cost. Mature users of social media can better attribute social media engagement to sales activity, providing yet another data point justifying social media investment. Overall, while 28% of all respondents reported that they can attribute value to business outcomes driven by social media (such as leads, sign-ups, donations, downloads, and purchases), mature users were 1.5x as likely to report they have tracked sales partially attributed to social media.



of mature organizations agree that they "have tracked sales that can be partially attributed to social media."

n=2162, excludes "N/A"



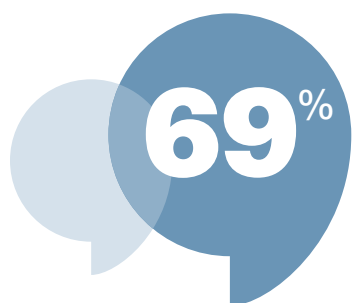
of less mature organizations agree that they "have tracked sales that can be partially attributed to social media."

At Avidia Bank, retail bankers and business development officers use Hootsuite Amplify to develop relationships with prospects. When a prospect engages with an article that an employee has shared on LinkedIn, the employee can contact them to share information about business banking services. That outreach was especially important with COVID-19, which substantially reduced opportunities for onsite visits.

Managing and minimizing business disruption during a crisis

The fast-moving crises of 2020 demonstrated the need for real-time data and responsiveness, areas where social media excels in helping businesses not only to stay connected to customers and employees but also to understand their changing needs. Social media's role in crisis communications couldn't be more crucial than it is today.

More than two-thirds of organizations surveyed shared that social media had prepared them for COVID-19's impact on business disruption by maintaining customer and audience relationships via social channels.



of respondents agree that **social media helped them prepare for COVID-19's impact on business disruption** by maintaining customer/ audience relationships via social

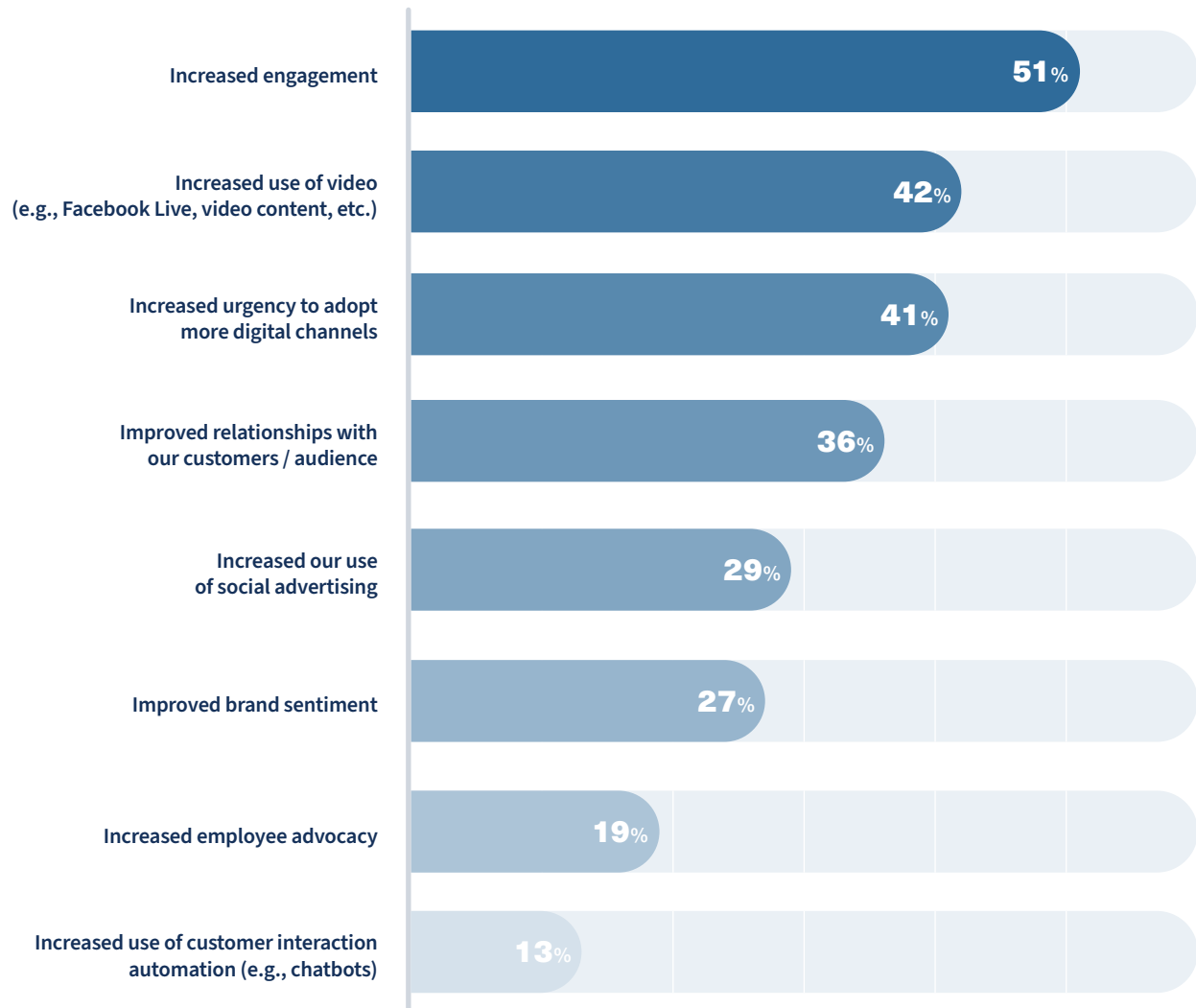
In every interview, organizations shared that social media played a significant role in updating and connecting with all stakeholders during the COVID-19 crisis. Terry Coniglio, director of content strategy at Georgia State University, shared that the community naturally turned to the university's social media channels for updates. "COVID wasn't any different from any other crisis, like a blizzard," she explained. "The first place you look for updates is social."

Similarly, Saint-Gobain relied on social media to feature its business operations, showcasing how their teams were working in the field in response to the pandemic. And SODEXO used social to amplify what its clients were sharing on social media—primarily posts highlighting and acknowledging SODEXO's support for frontline workers in hospitals hit especially hard by COVID-19.

Most organizations saw an increase in engagement, and amid growing urgency to adopt more digital channels, many increased their use of social advertising and video. Mature organizations saw increased activity and also reaped much higher benefits—for example, mature organizations were three times as likely to experience improved brand sentiment as less mature organizations.



Many organizations shifted their social media activities in response to COVID-19



During the COVID-19 pandemic, we have experienced the following:
(Please select all that apply).
n=2126



Key actions to take

Broaden use through alignment and education

Achieving efficiencies takes many different skill sets and extensive collaboration between teams, especially among teams that touch any core constituencies such as customers and employees. Broadening use begins with consensus and alignment of leadership, starting with education that makes the benefits of social media clear.

After building understanding, action requires well-orchestrated teams. To get teams working together, create a leadership steering committee that brings communications, marketing, sales, human resources, and other functions together, aligning leadership on social media goals and building shared responsibility for a common strategy that leaders can support.

Measure social success in context

Remember that social's strength is uniting your organization around modern customer engagement—not trying to prove the supremacy of social over other marketing channels. For example, measuring the impact of the reach of employees in social media requires defining that value in comparison to other marketing methods, such as advertising.

If you're not connecting social data to other channels, you're missing the complete story of social's far-reaching impact on customer buying decisions. Attributing sales outcomes requires sophisticated tracking techniques and understanding where social media adds the most value in the sales funnel.

Instead of trying to be a hero, be a helper. Work together with established and respected teams such as paid media, email marketing, and website optimization. Help them achieve their business goals, and then track how social is contributing.

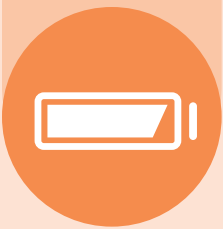
Plan for disruption

The COVID-19 pandemic was a wake-up call for many organizations, particularly those less invested and mature in social media practices. For example, organizations reliant on field sales forces have struggled to shift those teams rapidly onto digital platforms.

Making diverse teams more digitally ready takes time. To reduce risk, develop a game plan for disruption that includes social media response as part of your broader business continuity planning.

*Accelerate digital
transformation by
driving organizational
change with social*





FOR YEARS, ALTIMETER'S RESEARCH HAS FOUND

that the top reason why digital transformation projects fail is that they focus primarily on the “digital” technology and not nearly enough on the “transformation” of the organization. While social media and Hootsuite are seen as technology solutions, their deeper value lies in their ability to enable the cultural transformation that is crucial to digital success.

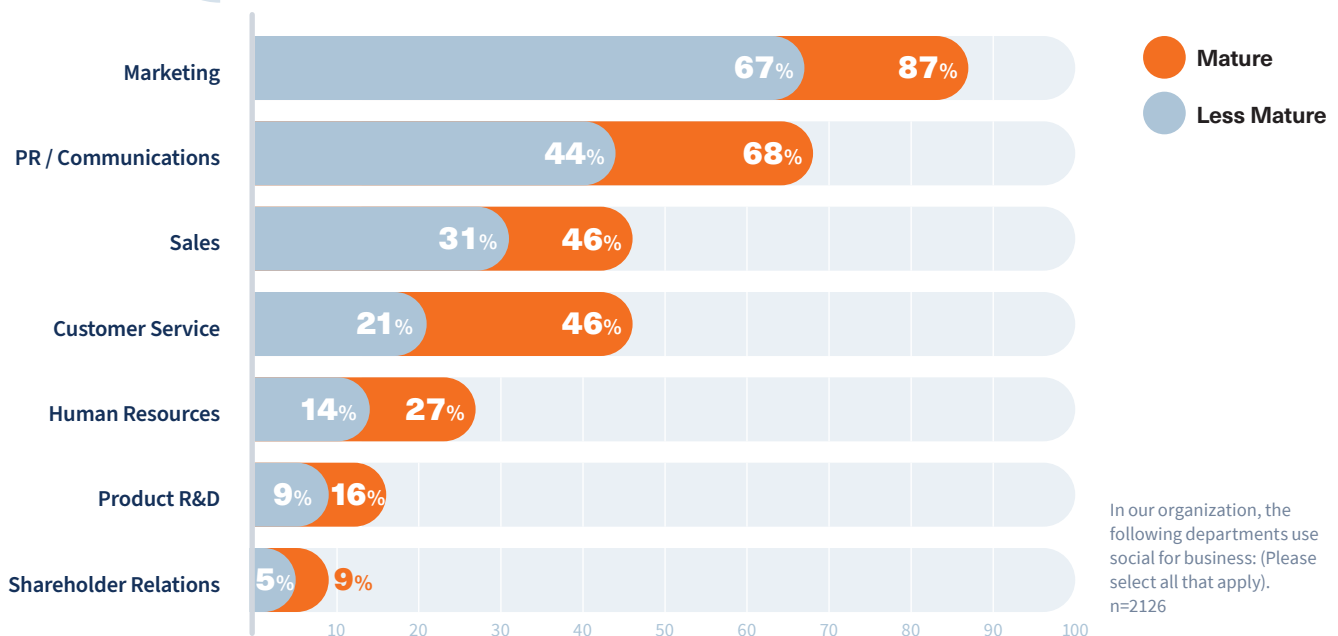
Social media brings customer and employee voices and digital behaviors to the forefront, helping the digital transformation leader align with their changing needs and pain points. Adopting mature social media practices is a stepping stone towards broader digital transformation.

Mature organizations have social media programs throughout the organization

The transformative power of social media begins with its widespread adoption across the organization. While it may start primarily in marketing or communications, many mature practitioners have seen other departments use social media. As expected, mature practitioners saw much higher adoption across the organization than less mature practitioners.



Mature organizations have extended social media programs beyond marketing and communications



Social executives lead digital transformation

One of the most critical impacts of social media is that it has made “being digital” a personal experience for executives. For years, many executives dismissed social as a business tool—but many interviewees shared that they had recently experienced a sea change in how executives viewed social media, with the visible business impact of social against top business objectives serving as a definitive turning point.

To highlight health care providers to patients, Ochsner Health created a series of videos featuring health care providers in casual coffee conversations, then used paid social ads to promote the video series. When the campaign resulted in a considerable increase in scheduled appointments, executives took note and substantially increased investment in social media.



“The intangible thing that you can’t measure is the trust that has been built with our department.”

TERRY CONIGLIO

Director of content strategy at Georgia State University

Several interviewees also shared that their executives started understanding the power of social media and digital because they began participating themselves. They shared that Hootsuite’s employee advocacy tool, Hootsuite Amplify, played a significant role in helping executives understand the value of social media.

The social team at Georgia State University started with the president and deans on Hootsuite Amplify, showing them how to be an influencer among their academic peers at other institutions. Seeing the engagement with their peers, they experienced greater ownership and involvement in the process. Soon, they were bringing the social team into more meetings for consultations about the strategic use of social media. Terry Coniglio, director of content strategy at Georgia State University, recalled, “The intangible thing that you can’t measure is the trust that has been built with our department.”

Broad adoption of social media prepares organizations for digital transformation

Implementing social media in organizations creates cross-departmental alignment, with social initiatives typically involving many departments from communications and marketing to sales and human resources.

Broad adoption of social media prepares organizations for the multi-disciplinary approach needed for digital transformation; with steering committees, working groups, and employee engagement already in place, organizations with mature social media practices can better support the organizational changes needed for digital transformation. Sixty-six percent of survey respondents agreed with the statement, “Our social media programs have helped prepare our organization for broader digital transformation.”

The need for governance and process is one of the reasons why 44% of Hootsuite users found that investing in Hootsuite helped with stakeholder alignment around their digital strategy. And 59% of Hootsuite users believed that the company was essential in assisting them to transform into a digitally savvy business.

A key reason for this belief is Hootsuite’s ability to tailor its solutions to the needs and maturity of the organizations it partners with. “Hootsuite plays more of a partner role to us versus being a platform,” explained Brad Van Houte, head of social strategy at Amway. “They’re willing to flex their platform in ways that are unique to us. They’re open and honest about what they can do and what they can’t do. And they won’t nickel and dime us on everything we have to do.”



66%

of respondents agreed that their social media programs have helped prepare their organization for broader digital transformation

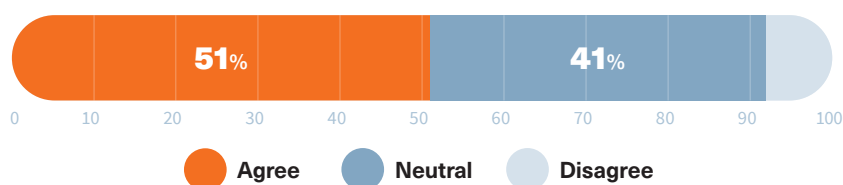
Ease of use spurs digital adoption

Scaling digital transformation requires the broad adoption of digital practice, so making social media accessible to everyone from salespeople to executives will increase their participation as digital citizens and create a digital culture shift. Ease of use was the top reason Hootsuite users decided to adopt the platform.

Several interviewees shared that they appreciated not only the ease of use of the Hootsuite platform but also the partnership with the organization. “Hootsuite has always been a partner,” said Terry Coniglio, director of content strategy at Georgia State University. “Whenever I have a problem, I know I can pick up the phone. I feel like I’ve always had a team who understands our situation, our goals, and what we’re trying to do.”



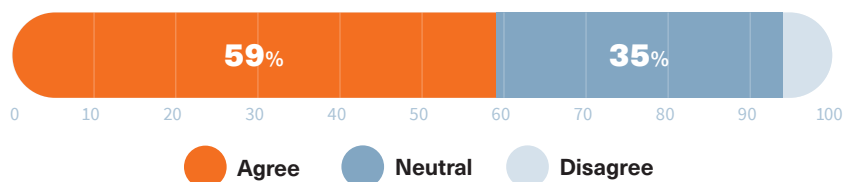
Hootsuite customers found investing in Hootsuite created better stakeholder alignment



Investing in Hootsuite has helped us better align stakeholders with increased collaboration and clearer understanding of our digital strategy.
n=1942, excludes “Don’t Know”, Hootsuite users



Hootsuite customers believe Hootsuite is an essential partner in digital transformation



Hootsuite is an essential partner as I help my organization transform to a digitally savvy business.
n=2167, excludes “N/A”



Key actions to take

Start with employee advocacy to build inroads to digital culture

Organizations that are already creating and publishing great content through branded marketing and communications channels have an opportunity to substantially increase reach and boost credibility by enabling employees to share content with their networks.

Effective employee advocacy programs have been shown to help employees feel more connected to their employers' mission—but empowering employees with content and a platform isn't enough. With many seeing advocacy as a blurring of the line between their personal and work life, training is key to build confidence and support employees as their engagement and use of advocacy mature. Successful programs that empower employees invest in training, monitoring for compliance, and measuring impact.

Use social teams' training expertise to accelerate digital transformation

Social media teams that have successfully launched social media programs—especially employee advocacy and social selling—understand the cultural and skill set shifts needed to succeed through educating employees.

Social media education programs can provide a strong starting point for helping organizations' broader digital transformation initiatives, but teams should prepare to re-engineer this curriculum, as social media is just one component of broader digital transformation. By repurposing the most effective elements of this training to encompass a more holistic and less platform-dependent curriculum, the social team can play a key role in increasing employee digital skills through broadening digital education.

Define success for your social executive program

Rather than simply use executives to promote the brand or share marketing messages, successful social executive programs target specific opportunities for executives to create meaningful change and drive business results.

Whether it's building a more social organization, expanding the reach of thought leadership, connecting with customers, or attracting and retaining talent, identifying specific and measurable targets for your social executive program sets you up to quantify results and prove success from the beginning.

Top 5 reasons why customers switched to Hootsuite

Finding the right partner is an important part of transforming with social. We asked respondents why they switched to Hootsuite from another social management tool. Respondents were given 10 options to choose from.

28%
Hootsuite's
industry
reputation

51%
Ease of use

26%
Reliability

24%
Fast deployment
and time
to value

25%
The breadth
of features
and tools



Summary

Widespread use of social media within organizations has immediate measurable benefits and prepares for broader digital transformation. Social media programs deployed to a wide set of employees and business functions elevate employee skill sets, create new efficiencies and value, and get leaders educated, talking, and aligned on broader digital strategy. As a mature, cross-functional tool, social media provides an effective path to broader digital transformation of organizations.

Organizations that reach social media maturity see compelling benefits. Organizations that mature beyond social listening and publishing realize much greater value than those that don't. For example, mature organizations report better brand health, increased internal efficiencies, resilience to disruption, and the ability to reach a broader set of core constituencies, including customers, employees, partners, shareholders, and the community.

Social media is and has always been about people and relationships. To maximize your investment in social media, recognize that it can do so much more to develop and deepen relationships, especially during these turbulent times.



Next steps

As our research uncovered, increasing your organization's social maturity leads to bigger, broader business impacts from social. Follow the guidelines below to start capturing more value from your existing social media programs. [You can also use Hootsuite's benchmarks](#) to chart your organization's social maturity against industry peers.

Listen longitudinally

Social media can provide a wealth of insights about the core constituencies that make organizations successful, including employees, customers, partners, shareholders, and the broader community. But most listening is done on a one-off basis with each point considered independently. Instead, listen longitudinally to reveal how the conversation with individual customers and employees shifts over time to gauge the health of the relationship.

Commit to measuring outcomes

The key to measuring efficiencies is connecting the dots between the many outcomes possible for social media. For example, measuring employee reach on social media requires defining that value in comparison to other marketing tactics such as advertising and attributing sales outcomes requires sophisticated tracking techniques to create an understanding of where social media adds the most value in the sales funnel.

Build digital skills and culture with social

The growing use of social media across an increasing range of departments means more employees are building the digital skills needed for transformation. To gain alignment, it's critical to educate leaders, preparing them for an overall digital transformation of their organization. To build transformation readiness at all levels, focus on both employee and leadership education.

Methodology

Altimeter and Hootsuite interviewed leaders at nine organizations and surveyed 2,162 respondents about the use and effectiveness of social media within their organizations. Highlights of the methodology include:

We interviewed and surveyed both social team managers and members, as well as the executives that oversee social media, to understand the changing scope of social media. Social team managers or members made up 71% of respondents.

We surveyed a wide range of organizations representing geographic diversity and a range of organizational sizes. Nineteen percent were organizations with over 1,000 employees; 17% had 100-999 employees; the rest were organizations with less than 100 employees. Geographically, 50% of respondents were in North America, 20% in EMEA, 9% in APAC, and 17% had global operations.

We analyzed differences between Hootsuite customers and others to understand the role of tool choice in achieving transformation goals. Hootsuite customers made up 64% of the respondents, meaning they use at least one Hootsuite product.

We sought to understand how organizations with mature social media practices perform differently than those less mature in their transformation journey. Sixty-seven percent of respondents are designated as mature social media users.

About Altimeter and the Authors

Altimeter, a Prophet company, helps leaders thrive by providing research and advisory on how to leverage disruptive technologies. Our analysts take a holistic yet pragmatic approach to understand the intersection of technology and the human side of business.

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About Hootsuite

Hootsuite is the leader in social media management, trusted by more than 18 million users and employees at more than 80% of the Fortune 1000.



To see how Hootsuite can help your organization succeed with social, visit hootsuite.com/enterprise

Our unparalleled expertise, customer insights at scale, and collaborative ecosystem help people and organizations succeed with social.

