

# SOCIAL MEDIA REPORT FOR 2014 FROM SOCIAL MEDIA EXAMINER

Provided for you by your marketing expert Marilyn Dayton

## Major findings

Here's a quick summary of our primary findings:

- ❑ **Marketers place very high value on social media:** A significant 92% of marketers indicate that social media is important for their business, up from 86% in 2013.
- ❑ **Tactics and engagement are top areas marketers want to master:** At least 89% of marketers want to know the most effective social tactics and the best ways to engage their audience with social media.
- ❑ **Blogging holds the top spot for future plans:** A significant 68% of marketers plan on increasing their use of blogging, making it the top area marketers will invest in for 2014.
- ❑ **Marketers want to learn most about Google+:** While 54% of marketers are using Google+, 65% want to learn more about it and 61% plan on increasing Google+ activities in 2014.
- ❑ **Podcasting on growth trajectory:** Only 6% of marketers are involved with podcasting, yet 21% plan on increasing their podcasting activities in 2014—a more than three-fold increase—and 28% of marketers want to learn more about it.
- ❑ **Facebook and LinkedIn are the two most important social networks for marketers.** When forced to only select one platform, 54% of marketers selected Facebook, followed by LinkedIn at 17%.
- ❑ **Most marketers aren't sure their Facebook marketing is effective:** Only 34% of marketers (slightly more than one in three) think that their Facebook efforts are effective.
- ❑ **Original written content is most important for social media marketing:** A significant 58% of marketers stated that original written content is the single most important form of content, followed by original visual assets (19%).

## Top 5 social media questions marketers want answered

The **top social media questions marketers want answered can be summarized in the following keywords: tactics, engagement, measurement, tools and audience**—in that order. As the social media marketing industry continues its massive expansion, the needs of marketers shift. Below are the top issues marketers are facing today with social media marketing. At least 83% of marketers surveyed felt they are struggling to answer all of the following questions:

### #1: TACTICS: What social tactics are most effective?

The number-one question marketers want answered (91%) is which tactics work best. This high number is likely in response to the constant changes taking place across many social networks.

### #2: ENGAGEMENT: What are the best ways to engage my audience with social media?

Figuring out how to best connect with people remains high on the list of questions marketers want answered (89%). As more businesses become social, those that best engage will stand out.

### #3: MEASUREMENT: How do I measure the return on my social media marketing?

A significant 88% of marketers want to know how to measure their return on investment for social media activities. This question has been top of mind for marketers for the last four years. Clearly very few marketers have figured this one out.

### #4: TOOLS: What are the best social management tools?

As interactions increase and newer social networks continue to grow, the need for tools to simplify social media marketers' jobs becomes more important. A whopping 85% feel like they don't know what tools are best.

### #5: AUDIENCE: How do I find my target audience with social media?

Figuring out how to target customers and prospects is a big concern for marketers (83%). Because of the enormous size of social networks combined with ever-changing ways to connect with people, marketers need guidance.

## Effectiveness of Facebook marketing

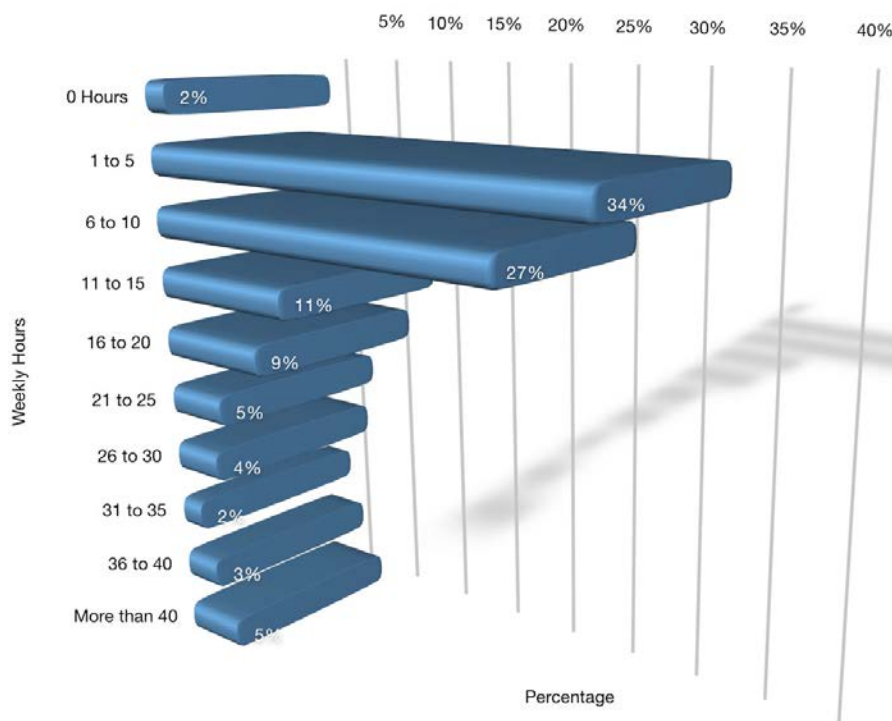
We asked marketers if they agreed with the statement: "My Facebook marketing is effective."

Only 43% of marketers feel like their Facebook efforts are working, an increase from 37% in 2013. However, most marketers either don't know or indicated that their Facebook marketing is NOT working.

B2C marketers were far more likely to agree or strongly agree (50%) than their B2B peers (34%). Larger businesses were much more likely to agree that their Facebook marketing efforts were effective. For example, 52% of businesses with 1000 or more employees agreed, compared to only 34% of the self-employed.

## Weekly time commitment for social media marketing

A significant 64% of marketers are using social media for 6 hours or more and 37% for 11 or more hours weekly. This is a slight increase over 2013, when 62% reported 6 or more hours a week. It's interesting to note that nearly



### The experience factor

There's a direct relationship between how long marketers have been using social media and their weekly time commitment.

For people just beginning with social media (less than 12 months of experience), 51% spend 5 or fewer hours per week.

However, of folks who have been doing this for 2 years or longer, at least 65% spend 6 hours or more per week on social media activities.

### Age factor

There's a direct relationship between a marketer's age and the time spent marketing with social media. The younger the marketer, the more time he or she spends on social media.

Notice the green and blue segments taking up a significant portion of the bar in the higher weekly hours below. Of those spending more than 40 hours per week doing social media marketing, 68% are under the age of 40.

## Benefits of social media marketing

The top two benefits of social media marketing are increasing exposure and increasing traffic. A significant 92% of all marketers indicated that their social media efforts have generated more exposure for their businesses. Increasing traffic was the second major benefit, with 80% reporting positive results.

Most marketers are using social media to develop loyal fans (72%) and gain marketplace intelligence (71%).

**Changes since 2013:** Marketers reported increased benefits across all categories since 2013. The largest increases were developing loyal fans, which increased to 72% from 65% in 2013, followed by increased sales, which jumped to 50% from 43% in 2013.

### Improved sales

It takes time to develop relationships that lead to sales. However, a large percentage of marketers who take the time find great results. For example, more than half of marketers who've been using social media for at least 3 years report it has helped them improve sales. More than half who spend 6 or more hours per week find the same results and 74% of those who spend 40+ hours earn new business through their efforts.

Conversely, 50% of all marketers taking this survey report social media has not helped them improve sales (see prior page). This may be because they lack the needed tools to track sales.

### Increased exposure

With as little as 6 hours per week, the vast majority of marketers (95%+) indicated their social media efforts increased exposure for their businesses.

Nearly all marketers (93%+) who've been employing social media marketing for one year or longer report it generates exposure for their businesses.

### Grew business partnerships

The more time marketers invest in social media, the more they gain business partnerships. More than half of marketers who've invested at least 1 year in social media marketing report that new partnerships were gained.

More than half of those investing as little as 6 hours per week in social media were able to build new partnerships.

Marketers selling to other businesses were more likely to achieve this benefit (61%) than those selling to consumers (54%).

### Generated leads

By spending as little as 6 hours per week, 66%+ of marketers see lead generation benefits with social media.

More than half of marketers with at least one year of social media experience were generating leads with social platforms.

### Reduced marketing expenses

Nearly half of those who spend at least 6 hours per week on social media efforts saw a benefit of reduced marketing expenses.

At least 57% of businesses with 10 or fewer employees agreed social media reduced marketing expenses, while only 40% of businesses with 1000 or more employees agreed.

### Improved search rankings

Improved search engine rankings were most prevalent among those who've been using social media for one year or longer, with 58%+ reporting a rise.

At least 60% of those investing a minimum of 6 hours per week in social media marketing saw improvements in search engine rankings.

## Increased traffic

A significant 84%+ of participants found that increased traffic occurred with as little as 6 hours per week invested in social media marketing.

And those who've used social media for 1 year or more reported substantially better results (79%+ reported benefits) compared with those with less experience.

## Provided marketplace insight

Of those with at least 1 year of experience, 69% or more found social platforms provided marketplace insight.

At least 74% of those spending at least 6 hours per week were more likely to gain marketplace insight.

## Developed loyal fans

B2C marketers (77%) were much more likely to develop a loyal fan base through social media than B2B marketers (64%).

Of those who have been using social media for at least 1 year, 69% found it useful for building a loyal fan base.

Time invested makes a difference. Of those spending at least 6 hours a week, 78% found benefit compared to 56% of those spending 5 hours or fewer per week.

## Commonly used social media platforms

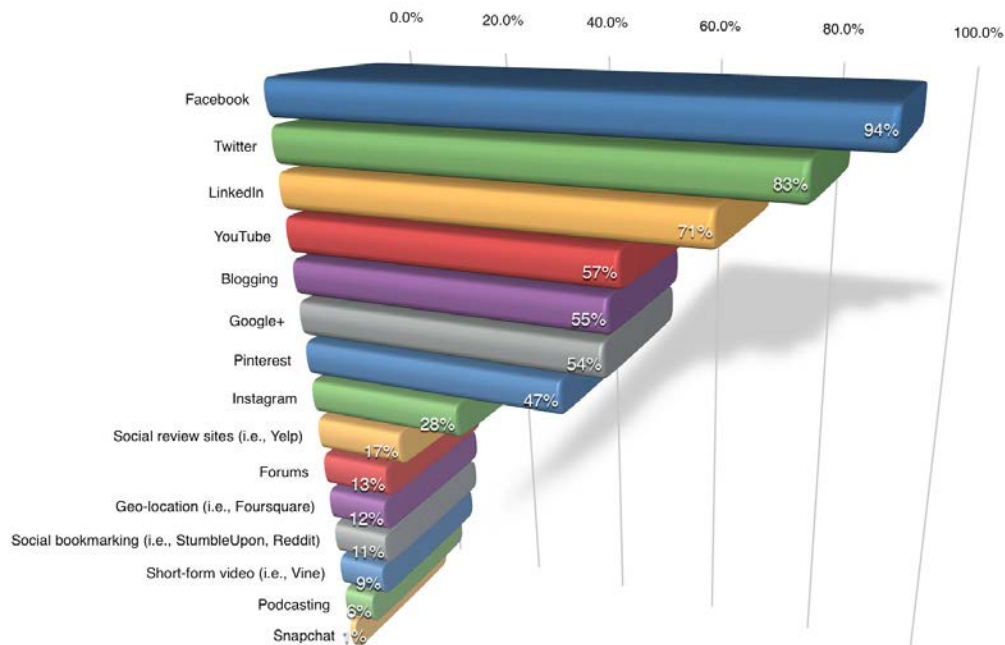
Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, blogging, Google+ and Pinterest were the top seven platforms used by marketers, with Facebook leading the pack. All of the other platforms paled in comparison to these top seven. The top six in the chart below have remained virtually the same since 2012.

We added a few **new categories** this year, including social review sites (like Yelp), shortform video (such as Vine) and Snapchat. We also retired daily deals (like Groupon) and Q&A sites (like Quora).

### CHANGES SINCE 2013:

Most of the social networks increased by a few percentage points. Blogging declined slightly to 55% from 58%, allowing YouTube to take the number-four slot. Instagram rose to 28% from 18% in 2013.

Self-employed marketers were significantly more likely to use blogging (62%) than large businesses (50%).



Here is a close examination of which social channels experienced social media marketers are using compared to those just getting underway.

### **Platforms used by those with less than 12 months experience**

Those just getting underway with social media marketing select Facebook as their number-one choice (by a long shot), followed by Twitter and LinkedIn.

### **Platforms used by those with 1 to 2 years experience**

For marketers who have been employing social media marketing for 1 to 2 years, Facebook and Twitter remain the top two choices.

Notice that YouTube is used by half of marketers in this group.

### **Platforms used by those with 2 to 3 years experience**

Facebook and Twitter are the two standouts among the tools used by social media marketers with 2 to 3 years experience.

YouTube passes Google+ to take the number- four slot for this group.

### **Platforms used by those with 3 to 4 years experience**

Nearly all marketers with 3 to 4 years of social media experience use Facebook (98%).

This group is also very active with YouTube (68%) and blogging (64%).

### **Platforms used by those with 4 to 5 years experience**

As marketers gain experience, their marketing efforts seem to expand across all major social platforms.

### **Platforms used by those with more than 5 years experience**

Those with the most social media marketing experience also put the highest focus on content creation including YouTube (74%), blogging (71%) and podcasting (15%).

### **Platforms used by those who commit small versus large amounts of weekly time to social media**

This shows where marketers putting in the least time are investing versus those putting in the most time. There are a few interesting findings here.

Marketers investing 40+ hours per week are much more focused on Instagram (46% more), Google+ (41% more), YouTube (38% more), Pinterest (37% more) and blogging (26% more) than those investing 6 or fewer hours a week with social media.

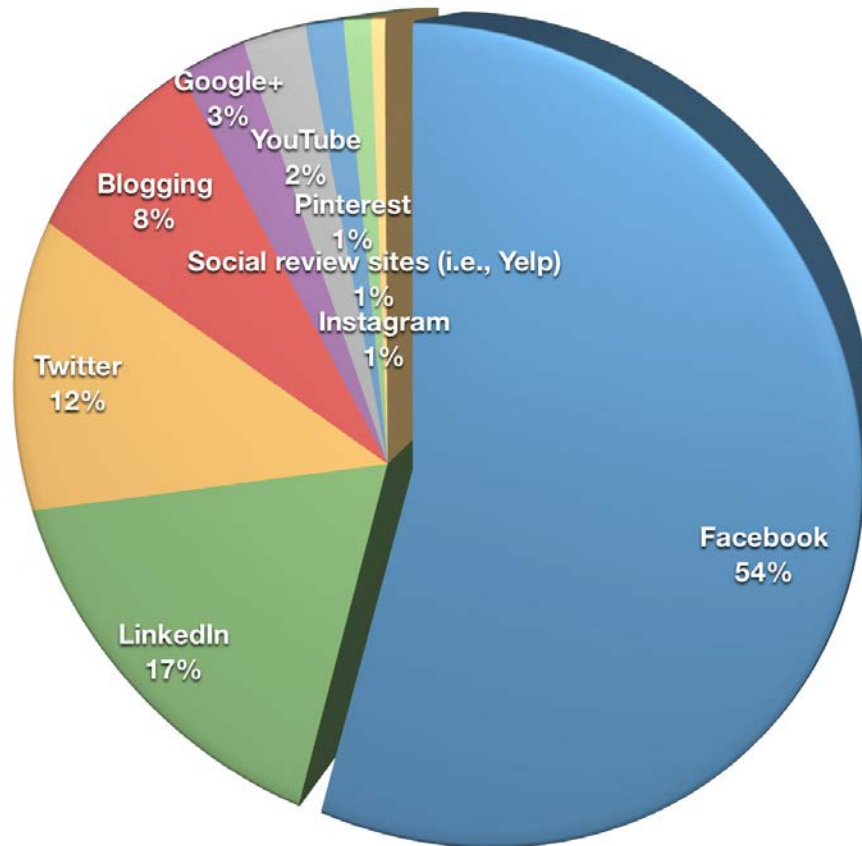
### **Platforms used by B2B versus B2C**

This shows how B2B social media use differs from B2C-focused marketers. B2C are more focused on Facebook, YouTube, Pinterest and Instagram. B2B are more focused on LinkedIn, Google+ and blogging.

## The most important social platform for marketers is...

We asked marketers to select the single most important social platform for their business. Because only one choice was allowed, the findings are revealing.

More than half of marketers (54%) chose Facebook as their most important platform, followed by LinkedIn (17%), Twitter (12%) and then blogging (8%). This chart clearly reveals Facebook is the powerhouse platform for marketers. However, it is interesting to note the importance of blogging.



### CHANGES SINCE 2013:

Facebook increased in importance, up to 54% from 40%.

LinkedIn slightly increased to 17% from 16%.

Blogging declined to 8% from 18%, allowing Twitter to take the number-three slot, remaining at 12%.

### B2B vs. B2C

There are fascinating differences between B2B- and B2C-focused marketers.

Clearly Facebook dominates in the B2C space (68% of marketers select it as their number-one choice).

However, for B2B marketers, LinkedIn passes Facebook, while blogging and Twitter play a much more important role.

## How will marketers change their future social media activities?

We asked marketers to indicate how they will change their social media use in the near future. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they will increase, decrease, remain the same or not utilize various social media channels.

Marketers plan on increasing their use of blogging (68%), YouTube (67%), Twitter (67%), LinkedIn (64%) and Facebook (64%), in that order. A significant 85% said they have no plans to utilize Snapchat. Sixty-eight percent have no plans to utilize geo-location.

**Note:** We rounded the results on the following pages, but ranked the order based on results that are not rounded.

Here is a breakdown by social media channel:

### #1: Blogging

Not since 2010 has blogging topped our charts as the number one area of increased activity for marketers. Blogging has incrementally increased from number four in 2012 to number three in 2013 and now to the top spot for increased activity.

B2B marketers are more likely (74%) to increase blogging activity compared to B2C marketers (63%).

### #2: YouTube

For the first time since 2011, YouTube has slipped (barely) from its number-one spot.

A significant 67% of marketers plan on increasing their YouTube marketing.

### #3: Twitter

A majority of marketers (67%) will increase their activities on Twitter, up from 64% in 2013. Twitter moved from the number-five slot in 2013.

### #4: LinkedIn

A significant 64% of marketers plan on increasing their use of LinkedIn.

As expected, B2B marketers are significantly more likely to plan on increasing their use of LinkedIn (77% of B2B vs. 54% of B2C).

Social media newcomers (72%) were more likely to increase their use of LinkedIn.

### #5: Facebook

Our research shows the beginning of a decline in the use of Facebook among marketers. It moved from the number-two slot in 2013.

Also, 7% of marketers plan on decreasing their use of Facebook.

However, as shown earlier, Facebook is still the most important social network to most marketers.

Only 4% of marketers surveyed do not plan to utilize Facebook. Sixty-nine percent of B2C plan on increasing Facebook efforts, compared to only 54% of B2B.

Social media newcomers (73%) were more likely to increase their use of Facebook.

### #6: Google+

Google+ is on the radar for many marketers. Most businesses (61%) plan on increasing their Google+ activities (up from 53% in 2013), and slightly more than 1 in 5 have no plans to use Google+.

It is possible that marketers who are decreasing their Facebook activities are increasing their Google+ activities.

Sixty-six percent of B2B marketers will increase Google+ activities, compared to 58% of B2C.

## **#7: Pinterest**

Half of marketers plan to increase their use of Pinterest. This number dropped only slightly from 51% in 2013.

B2C marketers are significantly more likely to increase Pinterest activities (54%) versus 44% of B2B.

Female marketers (53%) are also more likely to increase their use than male marketers (45%).

## **#8: Instagram**

Forty-two percent of marketers plan to increase their use Instagram (up from 38% in 2013).

B2C marketers are significantly more likely (49%) to increase activities than B2B marketers (32%).

## **#9: Short-form video (i.e., Vine)**

More than a third of marketers (35%) plan on increasing their use of short-form video services like Vine in the marketing. Considering how new short-form video is, this finding is significant.

## **#10: Forums**

Forums, perhaps the oldest form of social media, saw a decline from 2013, where 29% planned on increasing activities and 47% had no plans to use forums.

B2B marketers plan on increasing their forum use more (30%) than B2C marketers (23%).

## **#11: Podcasting**

While only 6% of marketers are currently involved with podcasting, a significant 21% plan on getting involved this year—**more than a three-fold increase!**

This is a significant finding and likely fueled by (1) the global adoption of smartphones, (2) Apple's introduction of CarPlay, an in-car system that will allow playing podcasts via car dashboards and (3) major auto manufacturers opening up the dashboard to third-party apps.

B2B marketers are more likely to increase activities (25%) compared to B2C marketers (18%).

## **#12: Social review sites (i.e., Yelp)**

Only 21% of marketers plan on increasing activities on social review sites like Yelp.

B2C marketers plan to invest more on social review sites (23%) compared to B2B marketers (17%).

## **#13: Social bookmarking**

A mere 18% of businesses plan on increasing their social bookmarking activities with sites like StumbleUpon, while 64% have no plans to use social bookmarking.

## **#14: Geo-location**

Only 12% of marketers plan on increasing their use of geolocation services like Foursquare, down from 16% in 2013 and 23% in 2012.

## **#15: Snapchat**

A significant 85% of marketers have no plans to use Snapchat.

Only 7% of marketers plan on increasing their activities on Snapchat.



## Social media platforms marketers want to learn more about

We asked marketers which social media platforms they most want to learn more about. Google+ took first place as the platform marketers most want to learn about, displacing blogging as the leader from the 2013 report.

Blogging decreased to 50% from 62% in 2013. Facebook dropped slightly from 59% in 2013.

B2C marketers are more interested in learning about Facebook (60% B2C vs. 50% B2B), Pinterest (51% B2C vs. 39% B2B) and Instagram (47% B2C vs. 35% B2B) than their B2B counterparts. And B2B marketers are far more interested in learning about LinkedIn (65% B2B vs. 52% B2C).

What follows are social platforms marketers are interested in based on how long they've been using social media marketing.

### **Marketers with less than 12 months social media experience:**

Google+ (68%), LinkedIn (65%) and Facebook (64%) are the top social networks new social media marketers want to learn about.

### **Marketers with 3+ years social media experience:**

For experienced pros, Google+ (64%) tops the list, followed by YouTube (52%) and LinkedIn (52%). It's interesting to note that in 2013, blogging took the second spot with 53%; now it has dropped to 46%.

## Paid social media

We asked marketers to identify which forms of paid social media they regularly use.

The overwhelming majority use Facebook ads (90%), followed by LinkedIn ads (20%) and Twitter ads (17%).

B2C marketers are using Facebook ads more (94%) than B2B marketers (82%).

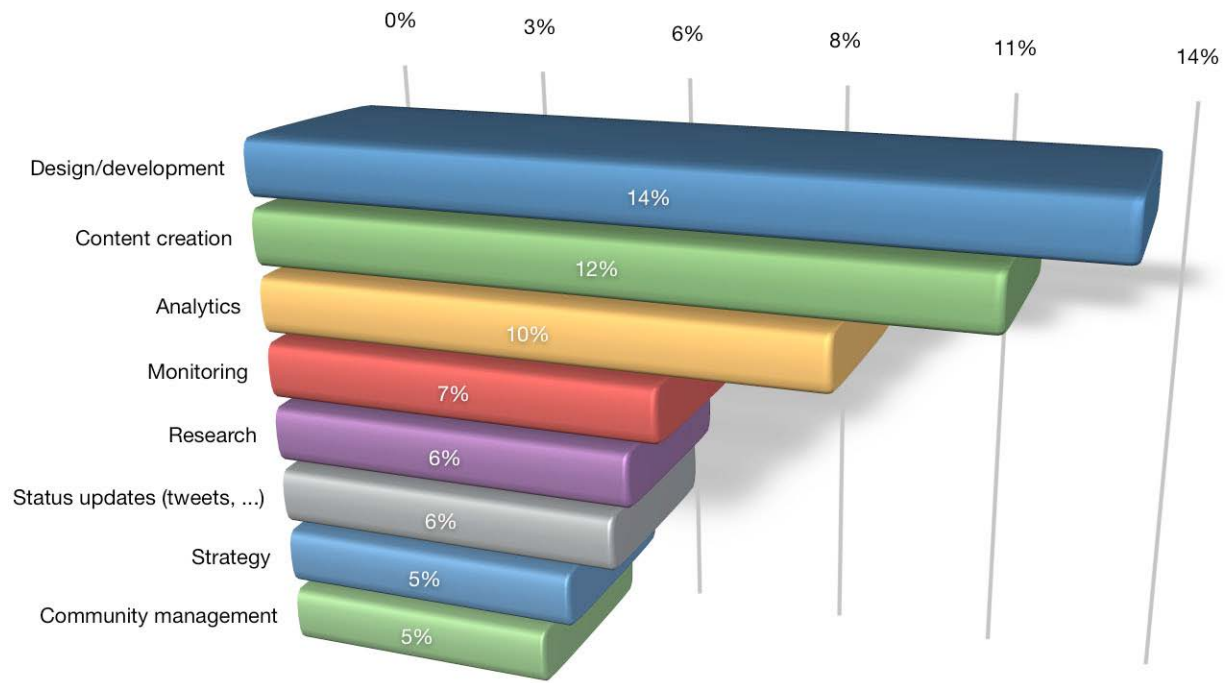
## Social media outsourcing

We asked marketers if they were outsourcing any of their social media marketing efforts. The overwhelming majority said no. Those outsourcing increased slightly to 27% from 26% in 2013.

The outsourcing trend seems to have flatlined. In 2012, 30% of marketers outsourced.

These are the tasks that marketers are outsourcing to third parties:

Design and development, content creation and analytics are the top three areas that social media marketers are outsourcing.

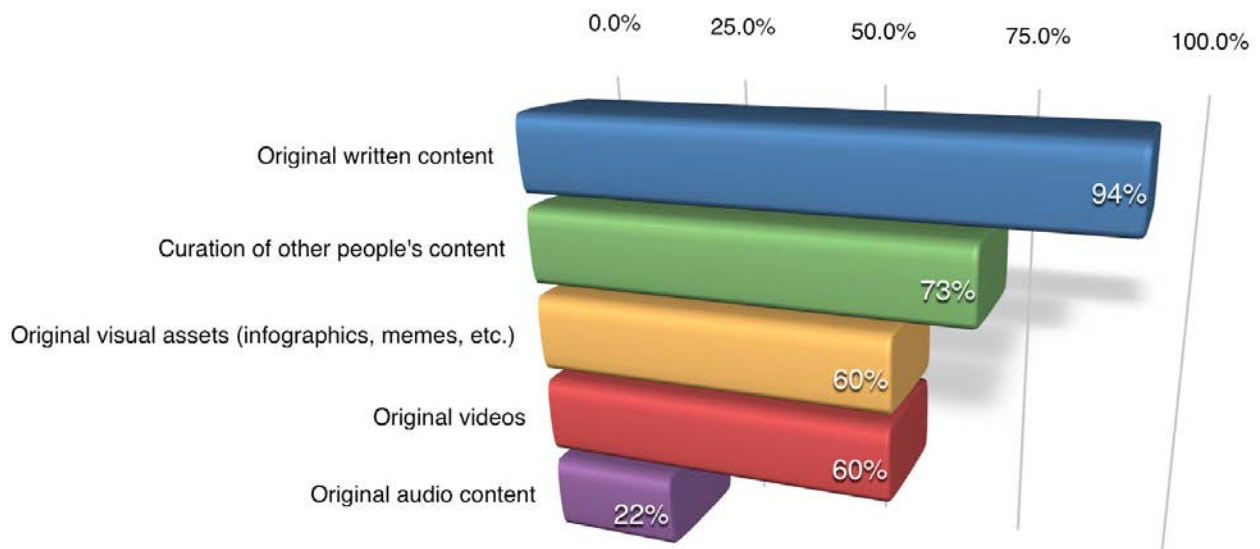


## Commonly used content in social media marketing

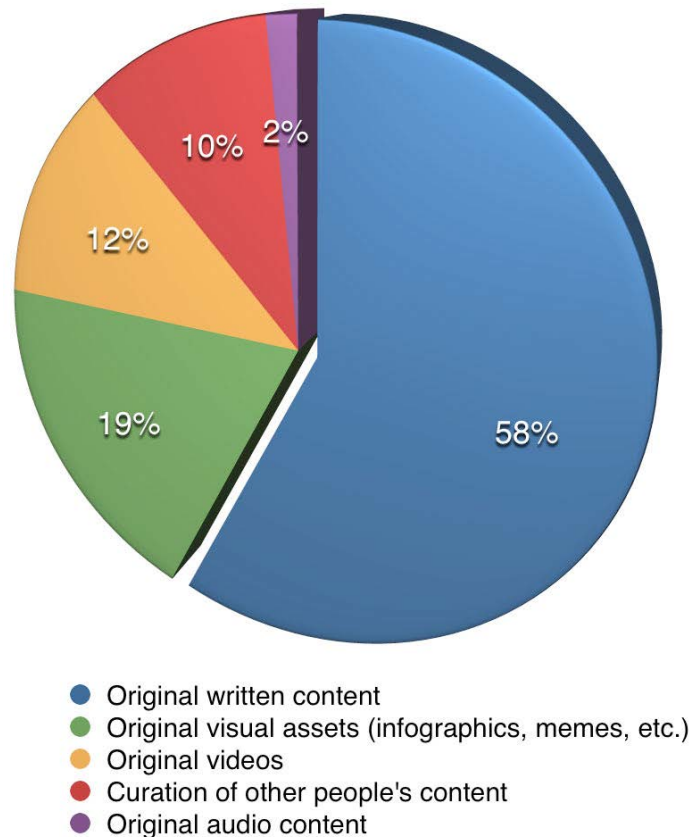
We asked marketers to identify the types of content they use in their social media marketing.

The overwhelming majority of marketers (94%) use original written content as part of their marketing efforts. Curation of other people's content is also popular (73%) among marketers.

B2C marketers are more likely to use original videos (63% B2C vs. 56% B2B) and original visual assets (63% B2C vs. 56% B2B). B2B marketers were more likely to use curated content (78% B2B vs. 69% B2C).



## The most important content for marketers is...



We asked marketers to select the single most important form of content for their business. Because only one choice was allowed, the findings are revealing.

More than half of marketers (58%) selected original written content as their most important content, followed by original visual assets (19%) and then original videos (12%).

This chart clearly reveals the importance of the written word and blogging. Original written content is more important for B2B marketers (65% say it is the most important) than B2C marketers (52% claim it is most important). B2C marketers place more importance on original visual assets (24% say it is the most important) than B2B marketers (only 12% claim it is most important).

## How will marketers change their future content activities?

We asked marketers to indicate how they will change their use of content in the near future. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they will increase, decrease, remain the same or not utilize various forms of content.

Marketers plan to increase their use of original written content (81%), original videos (73%), original visual assets (like infographics) (70%), curation of other people's content (46%) and original audio (33%), in that order.

Here is a breakdown by form of content:

### #1: Original written content

The written word rules. A whopping 81% of marketers plan on increasing their use of original written content.

### #2: Original videos

Video is a large area of focus for marketers. Nearly 3 in 4 plan on increasing their use of original videos.

### #3: Original visuals

The use of original visuals (like infographics and memes) is a key part of most marketers' plans in 2014, with 70% planning on increasing their use of visual images.

### #4: Curated content

Curated content is the process of sifting through other people's content to find useful information for an audience.

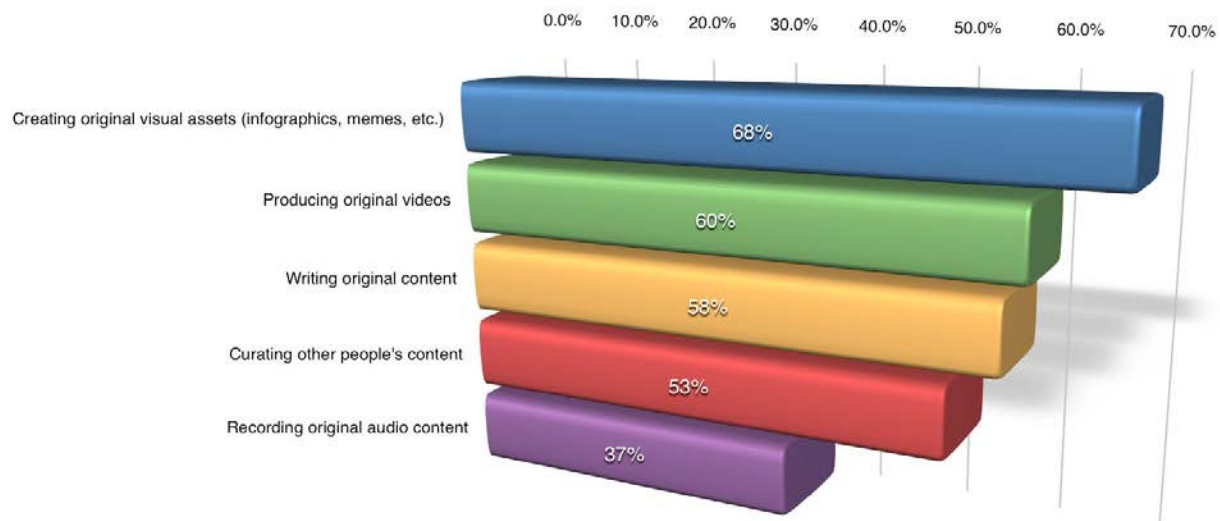
Many marketers (46%) plan on increasing their use of curated content in 2014.

### #5: Audio content

A third of marketers plan on increasing their use of original audio content. This likely means starting podcasts or increasing appearances on other people's podcasts.

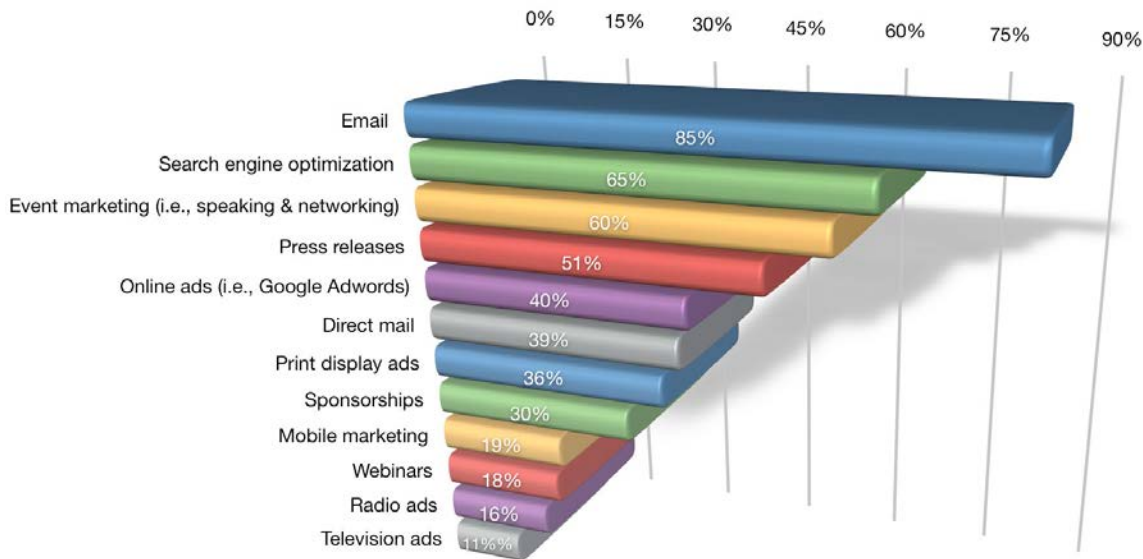
## Content forms marketers want to learn more about

We asked marketers which forms of content they most want to learn more about. Creating original visual assets took first place as the area marketers most want to learn about, followed by producing original videos.



## Use of other forms of marketing

We asked social media marketers what other types of marketing they were using. The top three were email marketing, search engine optimization and event marketing—the same top three as 2013, 2012 and 2011. Female marketers (62%) are more likely to use event marketing than males (56%).



## Survey participant demographics

We leveraged social media and email to find participants for our survey. We started with a tweet in January 2014. It simply said, "Take the 2014 Social Media Marketing Industry Survey. Participants get free copy" and included a link to the survey. The message was retweeted hundreds of times by other marketers. In addition, many people posted links to the survey on social media platforms. We asked survey participants to help spread the word about our study.

Finally, we emailed a list of 230,000 marketers and asked them to take the survey. After 9 days, we closed the survey with **2887 participants**.

Here are the demographic breakdowns:

### Survey participants

The largest group that took the survey work for small businesses of 2-10 employees (34%), followed by the self employed (19%). Twenty-one percent of people taking the survey work for businesses with 100 or more employees.

More than half (59%) of survey participants focus primarily on attracting consumers (B2C) and the other 41% primarily target businesses (B2B).

### Age of participants

Most survey participants (71%) were between the ages of 30 and 59. The median age was 40 to 49.

### Gender

Females edged out males, representing 62% of all participants.

### Country

Most participants (60%) were based in the United States, followed by United Kingdom (8%), Canada (7%) and Australia (5%).