



ONLINE INSIGHTS

Expanding the Conversation

Leveraging Social Media for Brand Interaction

April 2013

Overview

Turn on the television or open up your local newspaper. Chances are you will see brands highlighting one or more of their social media assets—if not outright promoting them—in the various ads they have placed across “traditional” media.

Lately, marketers have become increasingly savvy in extending their social clout beyond digital borders. For example, one-half of the 52 national television spots that ran during the 2013 Super Bowl broadcast included a Twitter hashtag in the ad—a significant increase over the 2012 Super Bowl broadcast, where only 1-in-5 brands included a hashtag in their ads.*

In March 2013, Burst Media surveyed 2,577 U.S. online adults aged 18 or older to understand how and why respondents use social media to interact with a brand—and gauge the effectiveness of socially-empowered brand messaging across digital, broadcast, print and outdoor advertising media.

Key Findings

The majority of web users are social. Two-thirds (65.4%) of respondents have at least one personal social media account from providers including Facebook, Google+ and Twitter—and 3-in-5 (58.6%) use their account(s) at least once a day.

Social media users rely on smartphones and tablets. One-third (32.3%) of respondents say either a smartphone or tablet is the primary way they access their social media account(s).

Brands are increasing their social visibility. Respondents say they notice the promotion of a brand’s social account online (27.2%), on the television (24.1%) and in print (21.2%).

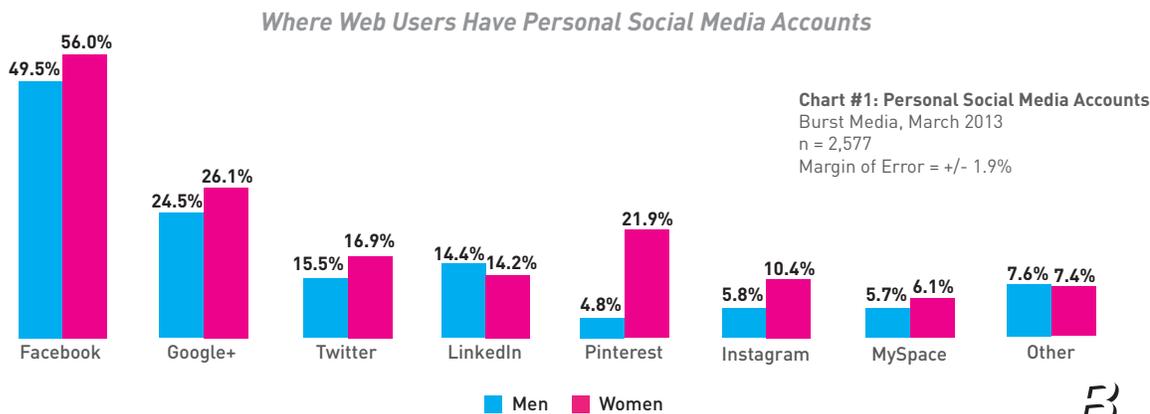
Digital and TV ads prompt social interaction. Three-fifths (60.9%) of respondents say ads appearing online, on tablets or on smartphones are effective in encouraging brand interaction via social media—and 58.7% say TV ads are also effective.

The majority of women are socially active with brands. More than one-half (54.2%) of women and 48.6% of men have engaged in a brand-related social sharing activity based on something seen on or in an ad.



*Twitter Advertising Blog: “The #AdScrimmage 2013 winner and the top Super Bowl ad hashtags.” February 6, 2013.

Insight #1: The Majority of Web Users Frequently Interact with Social Media



Two-thirds (65.4%) of survey respondents have at least one social media account set-up for personal use, and not surprisingly Facebook—at 53.0%—is by far the leading provider. Google+ follows a distant second, with one-quarter (25.6%) of respondents reporting they use the up-and-coming platform.

More women than men (56.0% versus 49.5%) have a Facebook account. [See chart #1.] Interestingly, while equal percentages of men and women aged 18-34 report having a Facebook account (56.7% and 56.1%, respectively), there is a notable difference among 35-44 year-olds: three-fifths (61.6%) of women have a Facebook account versus one-half (52.6%) of men.

Visually-Based Social Media

According to our survey, Pinterest and Instagram—as image and photo-driven social platforms—both skew towards a female audience. One-fifth (21.9%) of female respondents have a Pinterest account, versus only 4.8% of men. The disparity of Pinterest use between the sexes is even greater among 18-34 year-olds: 1-in-4 (25.5%) women in this segment have a Pinterest account, versus just 3.6% of men this age.

Instagram’s audience also skews more female than male—10.4% versus 5.8%, respectively. Again, the gender gap is biggest among respondents aged 18-34: 20.8% of women this age have Instagram accounts, versus 8.4% of men in this segment.

Frequency of Social Interactions

Three-fifths (58.6%) of our respondents use their social media account(s) at least once a day, and another one-fifth (22.3%) check in at least once per week. Nearly one-third (30.1%) of women say they check in several times per day, as do one-quarter (26.4%) of men.

Not surprisingly, men and women aged 18-34 are the most frequent social media users. More than 2-in-3 (69.3%) men and 62.7% of women in this segment interact with their social accounts at least once per day. The greatest divide is among respondents aged 55 or older—55.2% of women this age sign in to social accounts at least once per day, versus two-fifths (40.2%) of men.

Insight #2: Smartphones and Tablets are Emerging Social Platforms

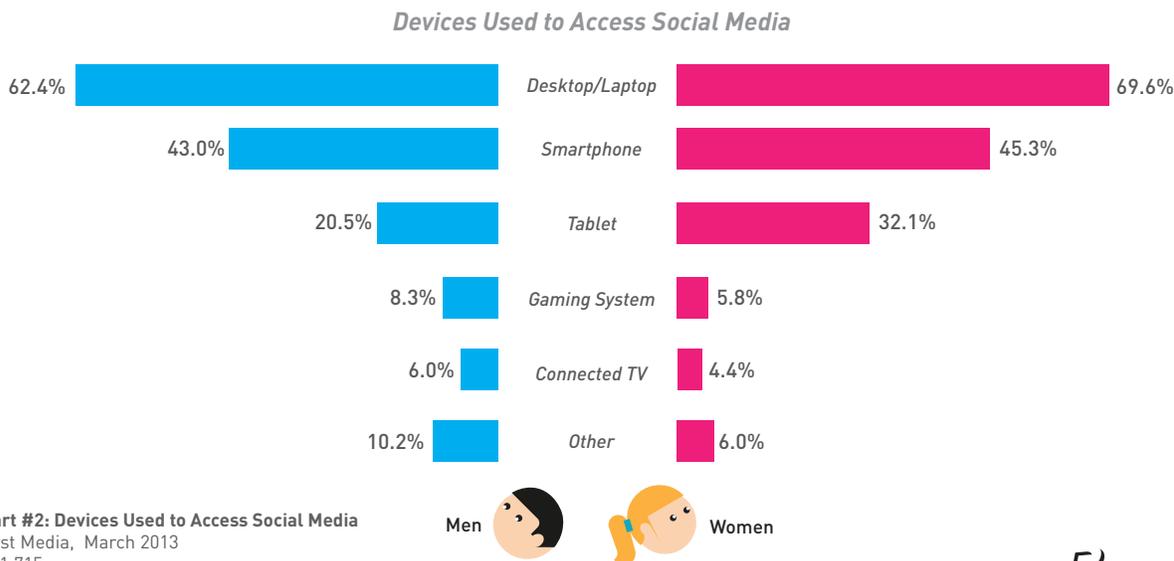


Chart #2: Devices Used to Access Social Media
 Burst Media, March 2013
 n = 1,715
 Margin of Error = +/- 2.4%



Two-thirds (66.2%) of respondents use desktop computers or laptops to access their personal social media accounts. Mobile devices—in the form of tablets and smartphones—closely follow among all respondents: more than two-fifths (43.0%) of men and 45.3% of women access social media with a smartphone, and one-third (32.1%) of women and 20.5% of men use tablets to access social accounts. (See chart #2.)

Male respondents aged 18-34 use smartphones (49.5%) and desktops/laptops (38.7%) to access social media accounts. Among women aged 18-34 there is significant multi-platform access when it comes to personal social media accounts: 59.3% use a desktop/laptop computer, 54.9% use a smartphone, and 36.2% use a tablet device such as the iPad or Amazon Kindle. Surprisingly, only 12.0% of men in this age segment use tablets to access social media.

Interestingly, among respondents who report a household income (HHI) of \$100,000 or more, two-thirds (65.7%) use smartphones and 45.3% use tablets to access their social accounts.

Going Mobile as a Primary Means of Access

One-half (51.7%) of all respondents say a desktop/laptop computer is the one device primarily used to access social media accounts. However, one-third (32.3%) say a mobile device—including either a smartphone (24.0%) or tablet (8.3%)—is the primary way they connect to social media.

Perhaps a sign of what’s to come: male respondents aged 18-34 are more likely to cite a mobile device (smartphone or tablet) than a desktop/laptop as the primary way they access social accounts. Nearly one-half (46.2%) primarily go mobile; 24.3% primarily use a desktop/laptop. Women aged 18-34 are also quite mobile: 40.9% primarily use smartphones and tablets; 39.1% primarily use a desktop/laptop.

Insight #3: Brands Are Increasing Their Social Visibility

Over the last few years, the marketing and promotion of brand-related social media assets—including Facebook pages and Twitter handles—has been creeping into advertising messages placed on media outside of the digital realm. Consumers are catching on as a result.

In thinking about all the advertisements they are exposed to, respondents to our survey notice when brands promote their own social account. More than one-quarter (27.2%) notice brand-related social media assets in online banner ads—and interestingly a near equal number (24.1%) of respondents say they have seen such promotion in the ads that appear on television.

Print ads are also a significant source for social visibility: one-fifth (21.2%) of respondents notice brands promoting their social own social accounts in the likes of magazines and newspapers. Radio ads (11.4%) and outdoor media (9.5%) including bus stop ads, billboards, etc. do not rank as high.

Insight #4: Digital and TV Ads Prompt Social Interaction

Effectiveness of Advertising Media in Prompting Social Interaction with Brands

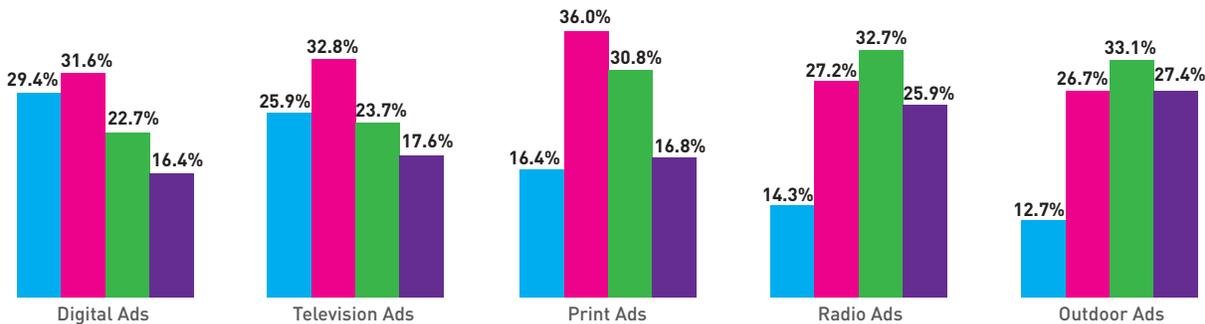


Chart #3: Media Effectiveness
Burst Media, March 2013
n = 763
Margin of Error = +/- 3.5%

Very Effective Somewhat Effective Neutral Ineffective



While it is important for brands to create awareness of their social media assets in their advertising and messaging, it is equally as important (if not more so) that those ads and messages prompt an interaction with the brand. In the aforementioned example of the “hashtag enhanced” television spots that aired during this year’s Super Bowl, Twitter measured more than 300,000 mentions of the hashtags on Super Bowl Sunday alone—a 273% increase from 2012 of ad-related hashtag mentions on game day.

Three-fifths (60.9%) of respondents who recall brands promoting their social media presence in advertisements say digital ads—whether viewed on a PC, laptop, tablet or smartphone—are either very or somewhat effective in encouraging brand interaction on social media. [See chart #3.] Television ads are also cited by 3-in-5 (58.7%) respondents who recall social cues in advertisements as very or somewhat effective prompts for social interaction with brands.

An interesting finding in the results is among the “social influencer” segment—respondents aged 18-34 years old. Among this segment, online ads are cited as having a greater effectiveness than television ads at driving social engagement—67.6% versus 60.6%, respectively. This difference is most apparent with women aged 18-34 years, among whom three-quarters (73.9%) say digital ads that feature prompts to social media assets are effective at spurring them to take action. This compares to 59.1% who say television ads are effective.

Print, radio and outdoor media do not fare as well as digital and television for prompting social interaction. Print ads are cited by one half (52.4%) of respondents as either very or somewhat effective at prompting social action, two-fifths (41.4%) of respondents say radio ads are effective; and 39.5% say outdoor ads are effective.

Insight #5: The Majority of Women are Socially Active with Brands

Reasons Users Interact Socially with Brands

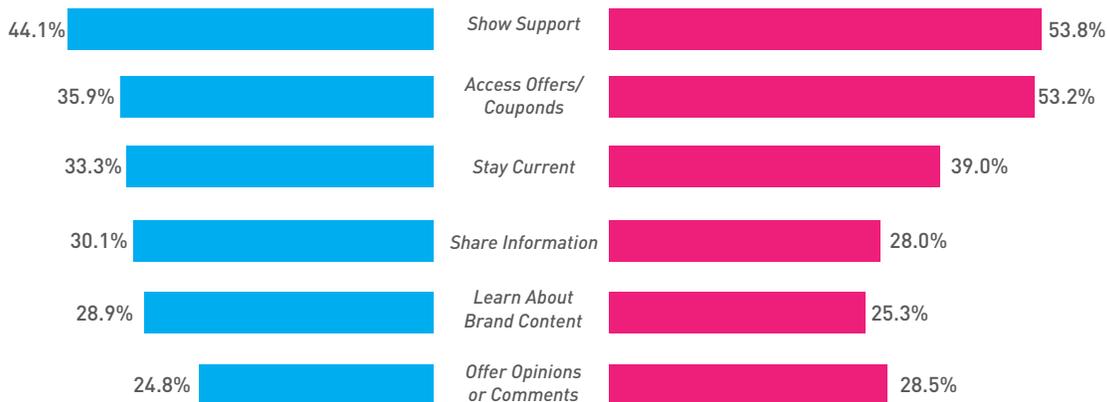


Chart #4: Reasons for Social Interaction
 Burst Media, March 2013
 n = 473
 Margin of Error = +/- 4.5%



More than one-half (54.2%) of women and 48.6% of men have engaged in a brand-related social sharing activity based on something seen on or in an ad, including liking a brand’s Facebook page, using a brand’s Twitter hashtag and/or posting a brand-related picture to Instagram.

Women aged 35-44 in particular are active in this regard: 2-in-3 (65.3%) have engaged in a brand-related social sharing activity. Nearly three-fifths (56.9%) of all respondents aged 18-34 are also active, including 3-in-5 (59.8%) men aged 18-24 years.

Reasons Users Interact Socially with Brands

One-half (49.5%) of respondents who have been prompted to interact with a brand’s social assets by social cues in advertising cite “to show my support for a brand that I like” as a reason for doing so. However, there is a notable spread among men and women: 53.8% of women versus 44.1% of men cite this as a reason. [See chart #4.]

The gender divide is even wider with the next most-cited reason, which is to access special offers, coupons and/or promotions: more than one-half (53.2%) of women versus just over one-third (35.5%) of men cite this as a reason. Interestingly, two-thirds (66.7%) of 35-44 year-old women cite the access to offers/coupons as a reason to interact with a brand’s social assets. Additionally, only 45.5% of women in this age segment cite “to show my support” as a reason—a figure that is 8.3% below our finding for all women (53.8%).

Other reasons users interact socially with brands include staying current with the brand’s latest offerings (39.0% women; 33.3% men), sharing brand-related information with friends and family (28.0% women; 30.1% men), learning about brand-related online content (25.3% women; 28.9% men) and offering opinions or comments about the brands for others to see (28.5% women; 24.8% men).

How You Can Use This Information

The playing field for social media marketing has expanded beyond digital media. It now includes a host of broadcast, print and outdoor venues. Consumers connect to their personal social accounts from a variety of devices as well, going well beyond desktops and laptops. And this opens up a host of cross-platform opportunities for brands.

Marketers that leverage social sharing and interaction prompts in their advertisements—especially in digital media and on television—can create authentic interactions that drive action and further engagement. On the digital front in particular, display, mobile and/or sponsored online content campaigns that use social prompts can virally and exponentially extend reach through consumer status updates, likes, tweets, pins and more.

In addition, socially enhanced advertisements that include a very specific social media call-to-action—such as a hashtag-based coupon offer or a prompt to share brand-related content with friends—are the ones that will reap the biggest rewards. Coincidentally, they are also the ones that are the most measurable across both digital and “traditional” media.

Case Study: Sponsored Blog Posts Make the Sale with Moms

BACKGROUND

A national apparel retailer of price-conscious clothing was looking to promote its annual in-store sale of children’s clothing to moms of kids (including babies) aged 11 or younger.

The brand was looking to drive in-store traffic through coupon redemptions, raise awareness of the sale among bargain hunting moms—and have them spread the word through social media channels.



SPONSORED BLOG POSTS SOLUTION

Burst’s campaign managers leveraged our relationships with coupon and deal-centric mom bloggers—and put Sponsored Blog Posts into action.

Elements included:

- **Sponsored Messages.** Bloggers promoted the retailer’s annual in-store sale directly to their readers—and included a store coupon in their posts.
- **Social Media Extensions.** The coupon element included social sharing functionality, allowing blog readers to easily share the coupon with friends and family.

RESULTS

- **2.3+ million** total social media impressions* were delivered
- **1+ million** Facebook and Twitter impressions drove further value for the sponsored posts
- **86,000+** coupon images loaded for moms to print and redeem

**Total Impressions = # of participants x # of blog comments/Facebook posts/Tweets x total # of followers & friends*

About Burst Media

Founded in 1995, Burst Media represents thousands of independent web publishers. Through a select group of vertical channels, built around areas of specific interest, Burst connects advertisers with audiences across the web's most dynamic communities in a social, engaging way. A wholly owned subsidiary of blinkx PLC (LSE AIM: BLNX), Burst is headquartered in Burlington, Massachusetts, with sales offices throughout the United States and in the UK.

Visit us at www.burstmedia.com or call +1 (781) 852 5200 for more information.



@BurstMedia



www.facebook.com/burstmedia



www.linkedin.com/company/burst-media

About Online Insights

Trends in Internet use and consumers' online purchasing behaviors are constantly evolving, so it can be very difficult to stay up to speed. That's why Burst Media publishes Online Insights—our research series that highlights emerging trends in online media and ecommerce. Findings reported in Online Insights are based on an online survey fielded across our collection of sites.