



SOCIAL INFLUENCE: MARKETING'S NEW FRONTIER



Ipsos MediaCT

The Media, Content and Technology Research Specialists



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30%

of millennials' media time is spent with content created and curated by their peers. How do brands fit in to this peer-created future?

When compared with other forms of advertising, a recommendation from a trusted peer has by far the greatest influence on our purchasing decisions, as is noted in Nielsen's widely cited [Trust in Advertising Report](#). Today, these same recommendations can be broadcasted publicly via social media channels, giving them exponentially greater reach in the form of shares, likes, reviews, photos, comments and blog posts. As each piece of content reaches a consumer's network of trusted friends, it creates a wave of social conversation that can influence product discovery and purchase intent beyond any form of media in history.

Many of these conversations are driven by the Millennial Generation (defined as those born between 1977 and 1995), which is forecasted to have record-

breaking purchasing power ([\\$1.4 trillion US by 2020](#)). Unlike previous generations that consumed professionally-created content in magazines and on television, millennials spend 30% of their media time on content created by their peers or the trusted sources they follow on social networks.

While this dramatic shift to user-generated content (UGC) provides new opportunities for brands, much of this content is difficult to control given how vast, fragmented and organic it is. Instead, smart marketers seek to influence this content by joining the conversation and empowering their consumers to tell their brand story. But how? This white paper will explore why and how marketers can influence the conversation by addressing:

WHAT'S INSIDE:

- The importance of social influence
- **New Ipsos research:** UGC wins millennials' time & drives influence
- Strategies to drive social influence
- Best practices to influence the social conversations

The Importance of Driving Social Influence

In-flu-ence: (*noun*) the power to affect someone or something

Influence is the power to affect someone or something. Apply this same power to swaying consumer opinions about products, and you're left with the fundamental goal of almost all marketing.

Traditional media (TV, print and radio) was once the most influential channel to deliver advertising messages. Today, consumers can avoid these messages through subscription services and digital recording devices. When these messages do get through, millennials' trust ranks low, as cited by both [Nielsen](#) and the Ipsos research featured below.

This state of traditional advertising is contrasted by millennials' insatiable appetite for peer-created social content or user generated content (UGC), which they trust above other types of media.

Since the early days of social marketing, technologies have enabled marketers to listen to brand-related conversations and content as well as manage the delivery of ads around them. But how do brands influence this dialogue and inspire more consumers to create content and participate?

SOCIAL LISTENING



Listening to social conversations

SOCIAL MANAGEMENT



Managing brand posts and campaigns

SOCIAL INFLUENCE



Inspiring consumers to market with brands

Smart marketers are inspiring their consumers to create and share more content about the brands they love, influencing social conversations and winning the hearts and minds of consumers. **This is social influence.**

Ipsos Research: Peer-created content’s critical role in driving social influence

Crowdtap partnered with Ipsos MediaCT in January 2014 to survey 839 millennial men and women online. The study explored their media consumption habits, how they perceive information from various sources and how these same media sources impact purchasing decisions.

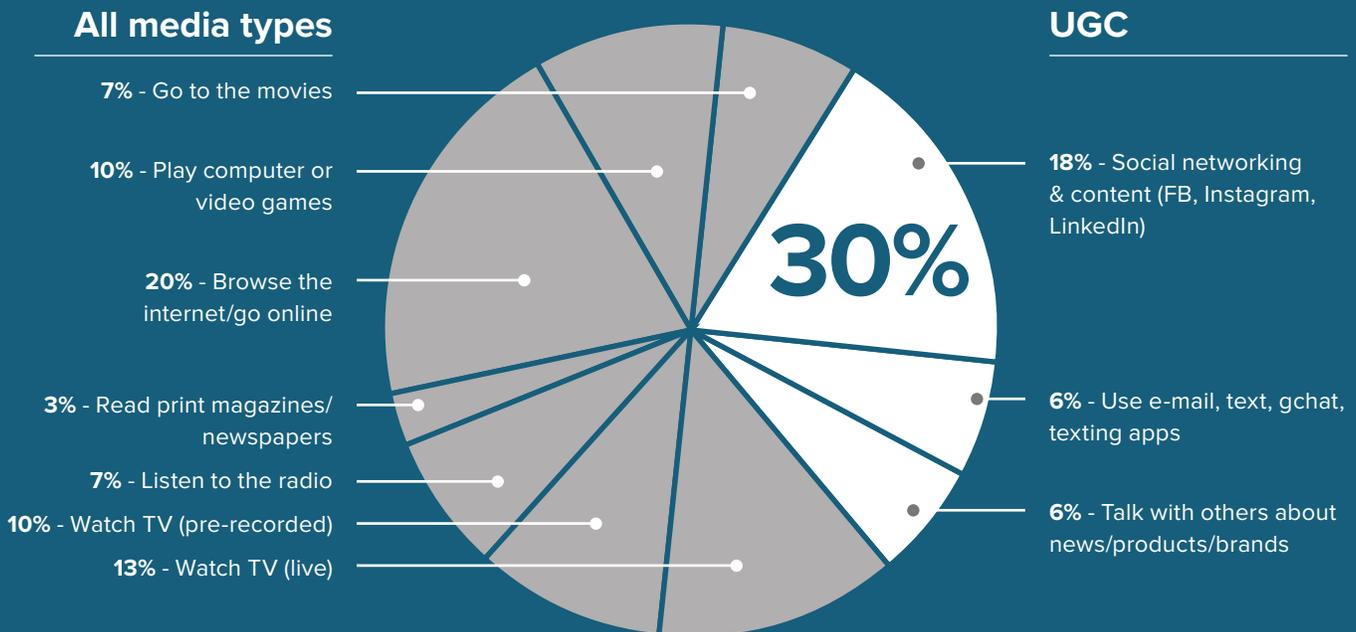
BREAKING NEWS: Millennials spend more time with User Generated Content than with TV

In aggregate, millennials reported spending roughly 18 hours of their day engaged with media, often viewing multiple devices simultaneously. So what are they consuming?

Whether it’s called peer-created content, consumer content or user generated content (UGC), Ipsos’ research finds that millennials spend 30% of their media consumption time with content that is created by their peers (UGC).

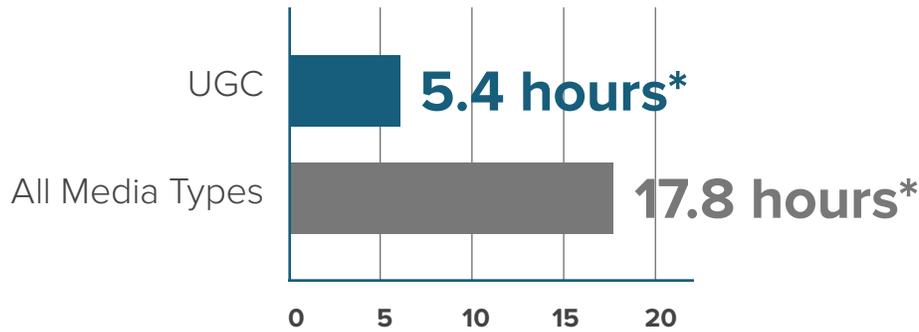
This exceeds television consumption and is rivaled only by the time spent with all traditional media types (TV, print, radio), a combined 33%. Millennials are also committed to engaging with social media on a daily basis above all other media types.

Share of Daily Media Time by Media Type



Source: Ipsos MediaCT/Crowdtap Jan 2014

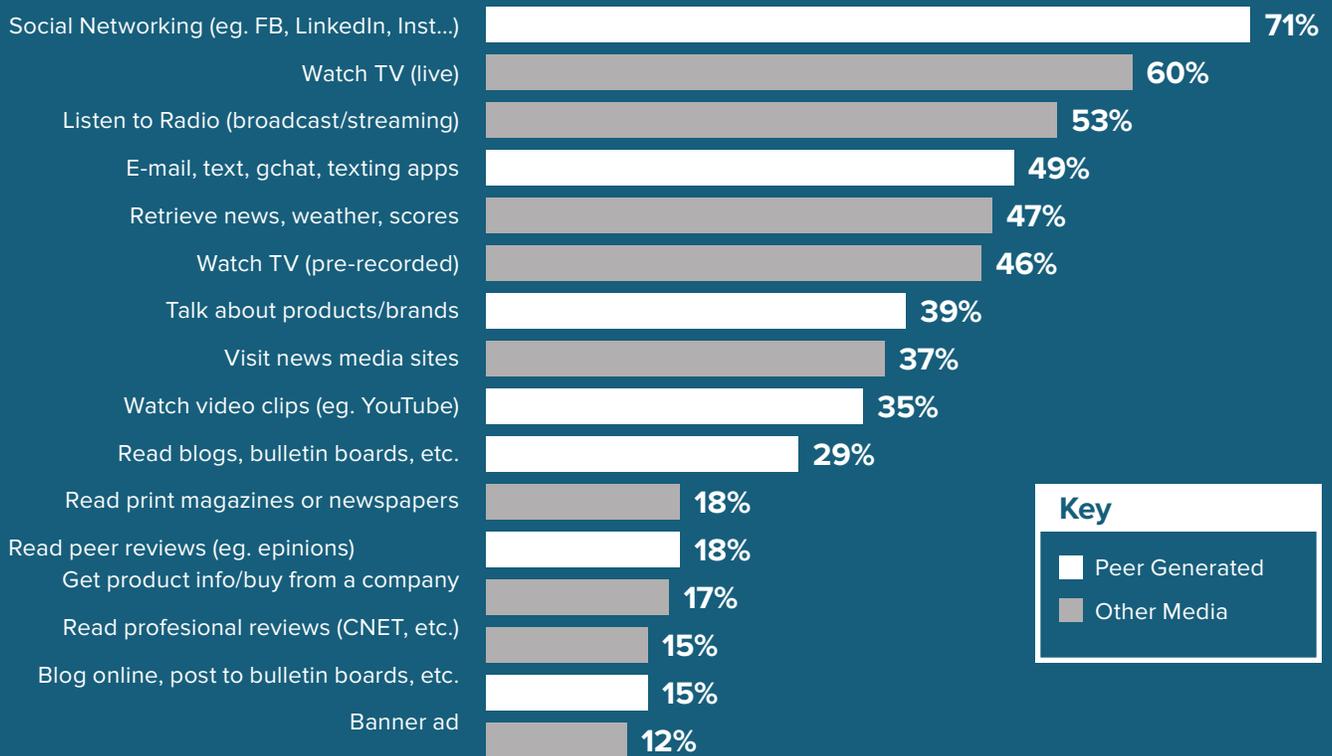
Average Time Spent with Media Type per Day



*Media hours are not mutually exclusive

Millennials Prioritize Social Networking Above Other Media

Daily Use of Media Types



Key

- Peer Generated
- Other Media

Source: Ipsos MediaCT/Crowdtap Jan 2014

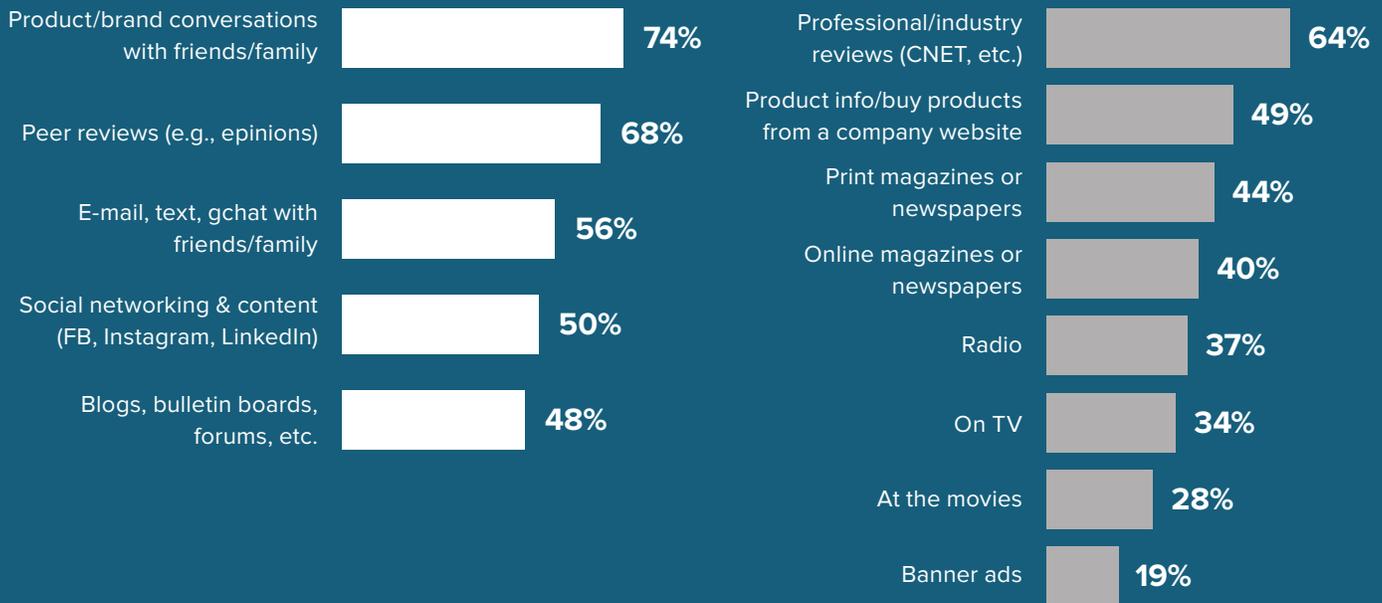
UGC Trusted More Than Traditional Media

Media Trustworthiness

UGC **59%**



Other media **39%**



Source: Ipsos MediaCT/Crowdtap Jan 2014

Given millennials’ advertising savvy and skepticism around media, it is important to deliver a message through trusted sources. Millennials tell us that information they receive through UGC is highly trustworthy and trusted 40% more than information they get from traditional media sources (TV, print & radio), including newspapers and magazines.

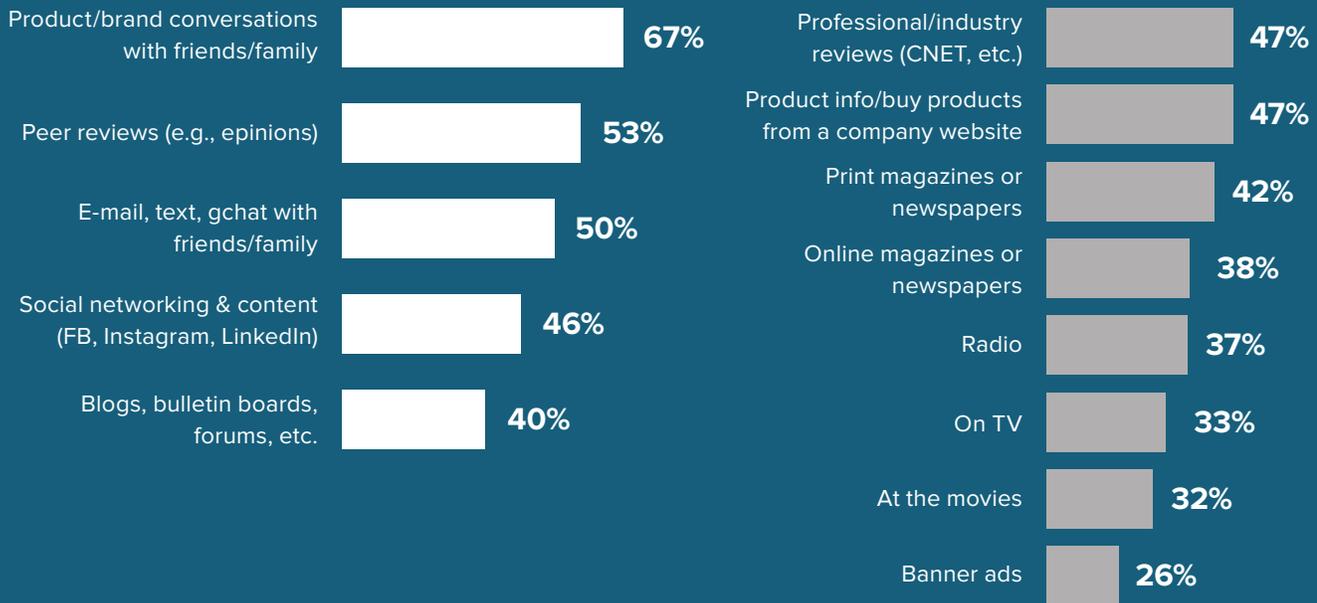
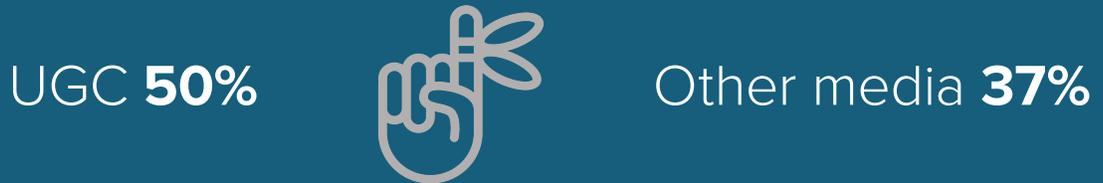
Specifically, conversations with friends and family are the most trusted UGC format, followed by peer reviews. Conversations with friends and family are trusted 2:1 over TV and radio and almost 4:1 over

banner ads. Brands looking for consumers to trust their marketing can no longer rely on traditional media to communicate their messages to consumers. In today’s landscape, it’s peer-created content, or “consumer to consumer marketing,” that drives trust.

So how is trust linked to influence? The correlation between the two is revealed in the [2013 Annual Edelman Trust Barometer Study](#), which finds that trust leads to influence. The more trusted the source of a message, the more likely it will have a positive impact.

UGC Content is More Memorable Than Other Sources

Percent Who Find Media Type Memorable

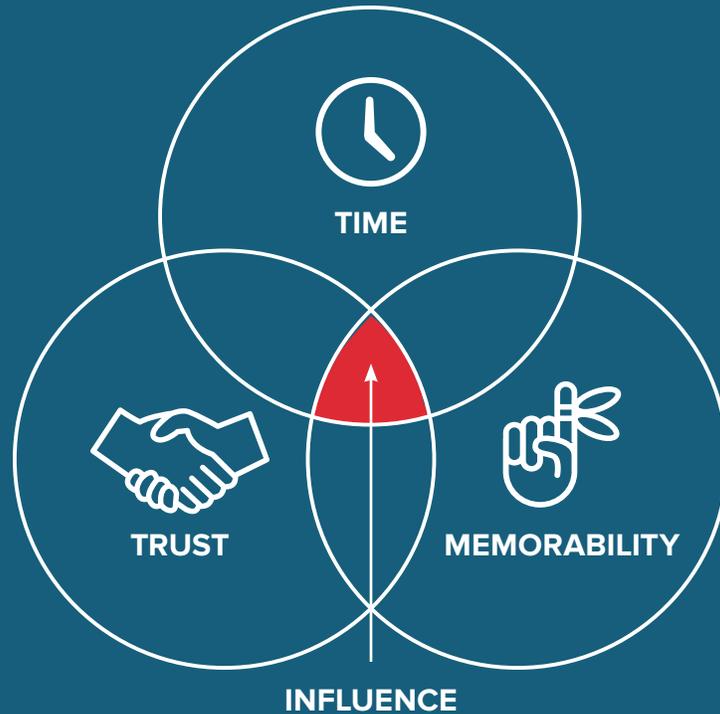


Source: Ipsos MediaCT/Crowdtap Jan 2014

With 18 hours of media consumption a day, across multiple screens, with channel flipping, tabbing and page turning, it's a wonder anything stands out and makes a lasting impression. Marketers rely on creative to break through the clutter, but often it's a

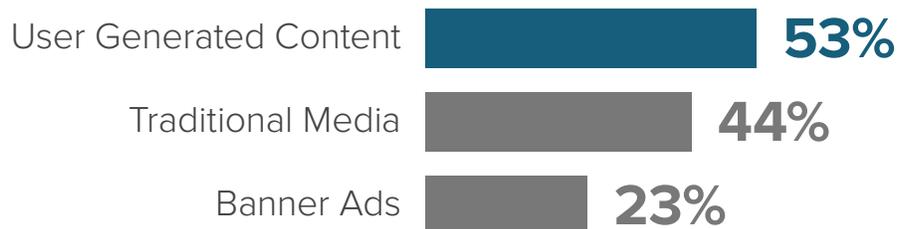
combination of creative and the right delivery channel. For millennials, user generated content is more memorable than non-user generated content, with peer-created content, including conversations with friends/family and peer reviews standing out the most.

Win Access to Millennials: Time, Trust and Memorability



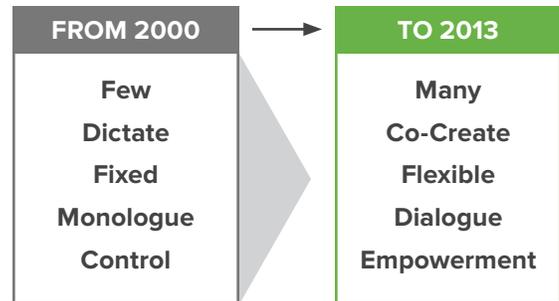
UGC uniquely provides marketers greater access to millennials’ time, a trusted channel to deliver brand messages and a memorable experience. The combination to deliver all three makes UGC more influential on millennials’ product choices and purchase decisions than traditional media.

Percent of millennials who say media type has influence on purchase decision



Strategies to Drive Social Influence

If millennials now spend more time with, place greater trust in and are more likely to remember peer-created content, brands should adapt their strategies to become part of this content stream. While marketers can “pay to play” in social content feeds, these ads can come off inauthentic and therefore less influential. The most effective strategy is to market with consumers by empowering them to post in these channels on the brand’s behalf.



Edelman’s chart above highlights how brands can evolve toward marketing *with* consumers.

Recent strategies to drive social influence are focused on two schools of thought:



TOP DOWN
Topic Influencers

BOTTOM UP
Peer Influencers



Top Down:

The term “influencer marketing” is often assumed to take a top down approach, where marketers leverage expert bloggers or “professional influencers” to drive social influence down to consumers. Malcolm Gladwell’s widely acclaimed book *The Tipping Point* first drew attention to the idea of uber-influencers who set major trends in motion.

With their large followings (or [Klout scores](#)), these “influencers” are hot allies for CMOs today. This strategy employs a network of professional influencers who review brand products and then create quality product-related content to share out to their large followings.

FOR EXAMPLE, Ford Fiesta engaged [hundreds of influencers](#), including bloggers, tweeters and some celebrities, by providing them with Ford Fiestas for 6 months (including gas, parking and insurance). In exchange, these influencers created quality, shareable content to be featured in Ford’s TV and print ads. This campaign has engaged a younger audience for Ford and resulted in more than [6,000 pre-ordered cars](#) for general sales. These were viewed as impressive figures for a new model to the market.

Bottom Up:

As cited by Ipsos and as discussed in [Nielsen’s Trust in Advertising Study](#), the most influential recommendations come from the people closest to the consumer, such as friends, family members and colleagues. A “consumer influencer” strategy employs word-of-mouth marketing via crowds of consumers who drive social influence up through social channels.

Columbia researcher [Duncan Watts](#) argues against the top down approach. He promotes a bottom up strategy

that employs the “pass-around power of everyday people” to drive viral sharing and social influence.

Companies like Dunkin’ Donuts bring this idea to life with thousands of their fans and [consumers sharing their Dunkin’ experiences](#) across social media. This strategy often leverages technology platforms, like [Crowdtap](#), to make it easy for even low-involvement brands to inspire and manage consumers’ participation.

FOR EXAMPLE, Verizon had a robust social presence, but wanted to scale engagement. The brand leverages [Crowdtap’s platform](#) to inspire a crowd of consumer influencers to create and share content across their social channels, spark conversations, and provide insights.

Combining the Two:

Professional influencers have the reach and resources to create and share quality content. Consumer influencers have personal relationships that enable their recommendations to carry weight. Together, this combination can drive both reach and powerful influence.

We have only begun to scratch the surface of synchronizing both professional and consumer influencers. As brands continue to aggregate types of influencers and refine their strengths, these programs will likely become a fundamental component of most marketing strategies.

FOR EXAMPLE, J.Crew’s Madewell brand recently leveraged both strategies for their “Flashstagram” program, in which 500 Madewell employees, customers, expert bloggers and editors shared their best denim shots with the hashtag #denimmadewell in one simultaneous blast. The campaign resulted in more than millions of social impressions within their niche target audience.

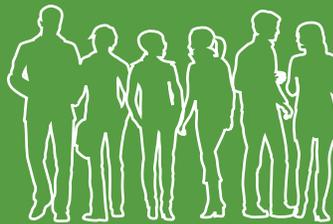
Proximity of Consumer to Source of Influence:



Traditional Media



Professional Influencers



Consumer Influencers
(Friends & family, colleagues)



Target Audience

Trust, Memorability, Influence

Low



High

Best Practices For Stronger Influence

As dollars continue to shift away from traditional media, social is anticipated to receive the highest spend increases, according to [Adperceptions](#) (eMarketer), with 47% of marketers and agencies expecting to increase social investments this year. As brands increasingly leverage social channels, here are a few suggested practices to drive social influence more effectively.

Marketers Expected to Increase Spend in Social Media

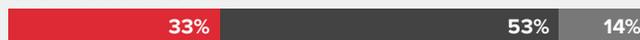
Social media



Video sites (Hulu, YouTube)



Video ad networks



Ad networks



Publishers (content)

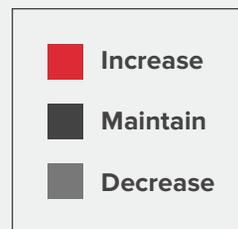


Portals



Change in Digital Ad Spending According to US Advertisers, by Channel, Spring 2013

% of respondents



Note: over the next 12 months; includes client-side marketers and agencies

Source: Advertiser Perceptions, "Advertiser Optimism Index wave 19, Spring 2013," Sep 24, 2013

1 Create conversations over content

In today's real-time world, in which everyone is a publisher, having fresh content is highly important, but it's becoming increasingly difficult to drive social engagement by simply pushing out messages and updates. Since the dawn of Tupperware Parties, inspiring consumers to have conversations about the brands they love has been an effective method of driving up purchase consideration. Today social media broadcasts these conversations publicly, giving them tremendous reach.

Leveraging a social listening platform enables brands to explore the dynamics of online conversations about their brand (this is content, too). The goal being to identify what sparks advocacy, then to partner with consumers to create more authentic content and drive conversations that can influence opinions.

2 Source influence from people that love the brand

There is a myth in marketing that there are specific people, called “influencers”, who have the ability to move opinion in mass across a wide variety of subject matter. In truth, brands are better served by identifying and partnering with the people that truly love a brand.

The brand’s existing customer base is a great place to start. Companies can leverage their CRM system to invite consumers to join an insider team and engage them with programs that inspire user generated

content creation. Don’t worry if these members only have 300 Facebook friends—they have incredible influence within their network, and brands can attain scale by amassing a crowd of them. For added reach and additional content creation, companies can complement this effort by recruiting professional influencers that love the brand. New platforms like [Crowdtap](#) make it easy to grow and inspire a crowd of consumer influencers.

3 Think long-term, not short

Marketing has long focused on campaigns and metrics like impressions and reach that align with short-term goals. Influence, on the other hand, is a long-term proposition that is grown and nurtured over time. In order to succeed in a world in which consumers increasingly learn about products and services through their social connections, marketers should invest in building long-term relationships with consumer and professional influencers. These influencers are best viewed as true friends of the

brand. A friend would never say “I’ve had so much fun hanging out last quarter. I’ll call you in six months.” Treat them right and they will be there for all marketing initiatives, come to a brand’s defense during PR challenges and seed virality of a great TV spot.

New platforms like [Crowdtap](#) make it easy for brands to put consumers at the heart of their marketing, creative a two-way dialogue in which they can contribute to a brand’s products and marketing.

4 Invest in your influencer relationships and reward them thoughtfully

Influencers (both consumers and professionals) enjoy being recognized for the time they put into quality content creation. With this in mind, marketers can drive more authentic influence by employing a model that recognizes influencers with more of what they love: access to a brand’s products and services.

Include them in VIP programs, events, product samplings, valuable referral programs and free products. Give them publicity by featuring them on the brand’s website or in ad campaigns. An influencer will feel inspired by the brand’s thoughtfulness and engagement.

Conclusion

Social media has taken on the most powerful form of marketing, a recommendation from a peer, and given it nearly limitless reach. As this new Ipsos research reveals, millennials not only trust and remember this content more than they do traditional media, they are also spending 30% of their media time (5 hours/day) engaged with it.

Through commenting, sharing, blogging, and following, consumers are having conversations about brands. In response, smart marketers are tapping new platforms to influence these conversations by inspiring consumers to co-create content and share more about their brands. They are evolving away from marketing at their consumers, to marketing with them, entering the new frontier: social influence.

Credits

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About Crowdtap

[Crowdtap](#), the People-Powered Marketing Platform, is a new operating system for brands powered by the people who love them. Our platform makes it easy for brands to put consumers at the heart of their marketing to drive product ideation, inform marketing strategy and create authentic content that fuels earned media.

corp.crowdtap.com

Empower the
people who love
your brand.

