

SOUND OFF

Millennials

and the **Impact of Social Brand Perception**

September 2015



SMX Sound Off: Sound bits (of advice) and bites (of research) from Ipsos SMX – Ipsos’ social media research division, dedicated to providing better ways to engage, interact and listen to consumers through collaborative, online communities and social intelligence, thus helping brands gain better insights to inspire and accelerate business growth.

“I FEEL CONFIDENT THAT I COULD MAKE A GOOD PURCHASE DECISION BASED ONLY ON SOCIAL MEDIA.”

— Lisa, Female, 23

“On Facebook I was able to check out [a large retail] brand. I had previously thought that it was a hyped up brand of lower quality clothes, but now it’s my favorite store to shop at! I can’t get enough of all the updates that they have on their page, super helpful.”

— Kristina, Female, Age 25

Today, knowing how your brand is perceived in social media is more critical than ever. Brand perception in social can influence everything from discovery to purchase behavior to overall brand loyalty, and this is particularly true among millennial consumers. Millennials actively use social media to discover and share information, including brand-generated (owned) content, UGC, and product reviews or endorsements from experts, influencers and peers.

In a recent Ipsos SMX study conducted with 542 millennial consumers, 3 out of 4 reported following official brand or company pages on social media. Of those who have recently discovered a new brand or product online, 78% say they use social media sites as a typical means of discovery, significantly higher than retail sites, forums/blogs or search engines.

3 OUT OF 4 MILLENNIALS FOLLOW BRAND OR COMPANY PAGES ON SOCIAL MEDIA.

85% SAY THEY WOULD “DEFINITELY” OR “PROBABLY” BUY A PRODUCT IF THEIR BEST FRIEND RECOMMENDED IT ON SOCIAL MEDIA.

How do you typically find out about new products or brands online?

“[Celebrity ads] always seem fake to me and turn me off of products I haven’t tried. I would take into account posts from actual people who have tried the product, and reviews.”

— Ariel, Female, 25



78%
Social Media Sites
(Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, etc.)



66%
Retail Sites
(Amazon, Best Buy, eBay, etc.)



56%
Search Engines
(Google, Bing, Yahoo, etc.)



49%
Forums or Blogs
(Tech, Celebrity, Fashion, Mommy, etc.)

Word of mouth and branded content are key drivers, with over half saying they have been introduced to a new product or brand through a friend’s post, by reading a product review or news, or by following an official brand or company page.

How are you introduced to new products or brands on social media?



ENGAGING WITH BRANDED CONTENT

In addition to using social media for discovery, millennial consumers also actively engage with products or brands on these channels. Well over half say they either visit the official company website or follow the official company page after discovering a new product or brand they find interesting. Additionally, over a third report sharing their discoveries by posting a photo, video, update or link, or sending a message to a friend.

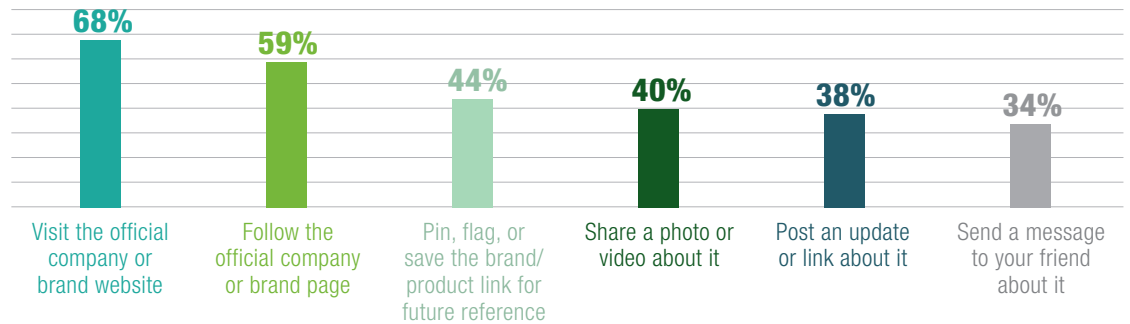
“[The CEO of my favorite footwear company] has posted a series of videos showing the process ‘behind the design’ on YouTube. I like that he chose to post the videos to share and inspire others. I respect that of him.”

– Hannah, Female, 26

Think back to a time when you discovered a new product or brand through social media that you found interesting. Which, if any, of the following did you do? (n=243)

“[My favorite cosmetics brand] has a core customer base of die hards who really love the products because of how well the company educates consumers on their values and how they source the quality ingredients that go into their products.”

– Kelly, Female, 29

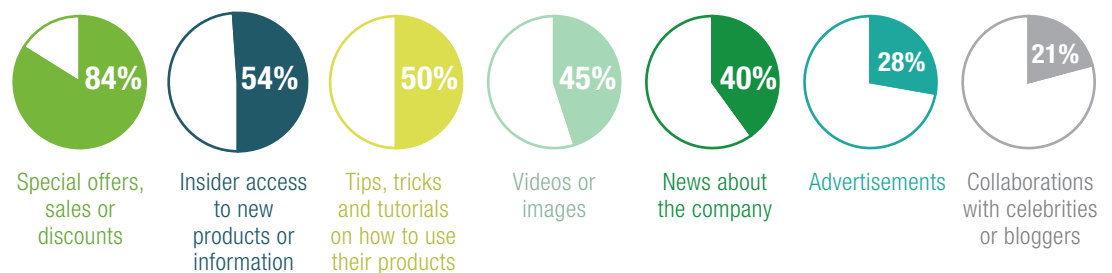


Millennials tend to favor useful and practical content posted by brands, such as special offers, sales or discounts; insider access to new products; and tips, tricks and tutorials.

Think of your favorite brand or company that you follow on social media. Of the content they post, what types have captured your attention the most? (n=403)

“[If I were a marketing executive] I’d post content comparing different new products and technologies so as to make them approachable to consumers. A lot of times marketing just throws new products at you without telling you why it is better than the current stuff out there.”

– Joshua, Male, 32



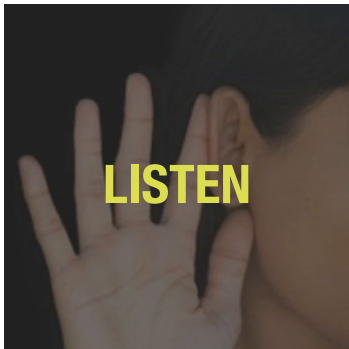
MAKING AN IMPACT ON SOCIAL

So how can brands go about understanding and optimizing perception and performance on these increasingly influential social channels?

At Ipsos, we approach social channel performance analysis with consumer motivations at the core, to provide recommendations that are prescriptive, actionable and uncover opportunities for growth.

- Empower your brand to maximize **IMPACT**
- Evaluate your digital footprint in comparison to the competition
- Assess conversations in your category across key platforms
- Identify stated gaps in the consumers' digital experience
- Diagnose how communications align with the motivations of your target

OUR APPROACH



LISTEN

Social Channel Performance

An evaluation of Earned Organic Discussion and Owned Channel Performance reveals what drives the discussion, sentiment and motivations behind the conversations, with an emphasis on competitor comparison



FRAME

Motivation & Messaging Alignment

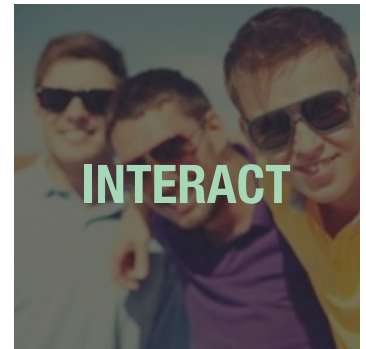
Framing the social conversations in the context of consumer motivations determines strategies that are working, and potential gaps or opportunities



ACT

Prescriptive Recommendations

All of the social analysis is integrated into a final report designed for action, so you can implement right away



INTERACT

Consumer Collaboratory

Answer questions, stretch or strengthen ideas that come up through interactive discussions with your target consumer

CASE STUDY

Our client in the skincare category wanted to better understand their brand's digital footprint across earned and owned media in comparison to the competition. Specifically, as their media spending continued to move increasingly into digital, they were looking to ascertain how well their social activity was engaging with consumers and leading to action.

SOCIAL CHANNEL PERFORMANCE

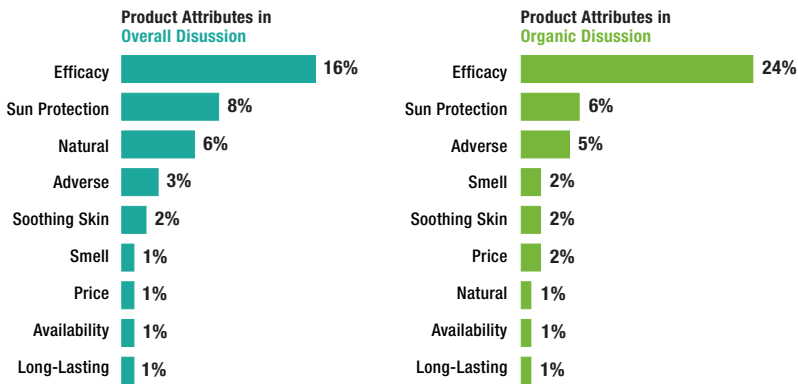
EVALUATING EARNED ORGANIC DISCUSSION

First, we evaluated organic consumer discussion in three stages:

- **EXPLORE** earned organic discussion, drilling into peaks to determine discussion drivers, determine relevant content by channel and explore top authors.
- **INCORPORATE** buzz volume, key topics/drivers, product attributes, fan engagement, sentiment, where discussion is happening, and influencers.
- **REVEAL** themes that are the “golden nuggets” or “weak signals” that can lead to the greatest insight

In addition to understanding discussion volume compared to their competitive set, we coded conversation against key product attributes in their category — this helped to inform the reasons most people were talking about their brand versus other brands in their competitive set, as well as the key drivers for discussion related to their brand.

EFFICACY CONTINUES TO REIGN SUPREME AS THE MOST DISCUSSED PRODUCT ATTRIBUTE
This reiterates the need to better communicate **solutions, not tips** as a way to build on the organic discussion focused on how your products work to address consumer needs.

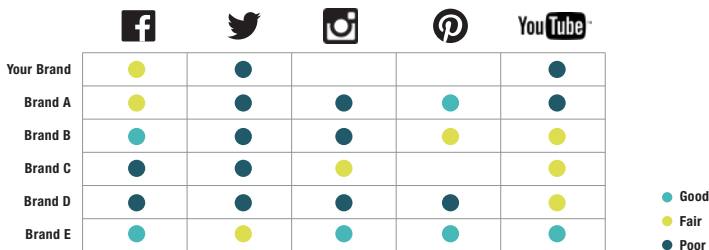


REVIEW OWNED CHANNEL PERFORMANCE

Next, we evaluated the brand’s owned channels to assess performance across social media with an emphasis on competitor comparison. We looked at comparative engagement by incorporating a composite score of both fans/followers plus fan action, which allowed us to provide insight around promotion, content and activity.

OVERALL, YOUR BRAND IS CATCHING UP, BUT OTHERS ARE INVESTING IN THE SPACE, PARTICULARLY INSTAGRAM

Strong performance lands your brand in the center of the fan engagement matrix. Competitors are investing heavily in the space. In particular, Brand D, which showed poor marks in the past report and still trails, is developing the infrastructure and fan base to compete in the near future.

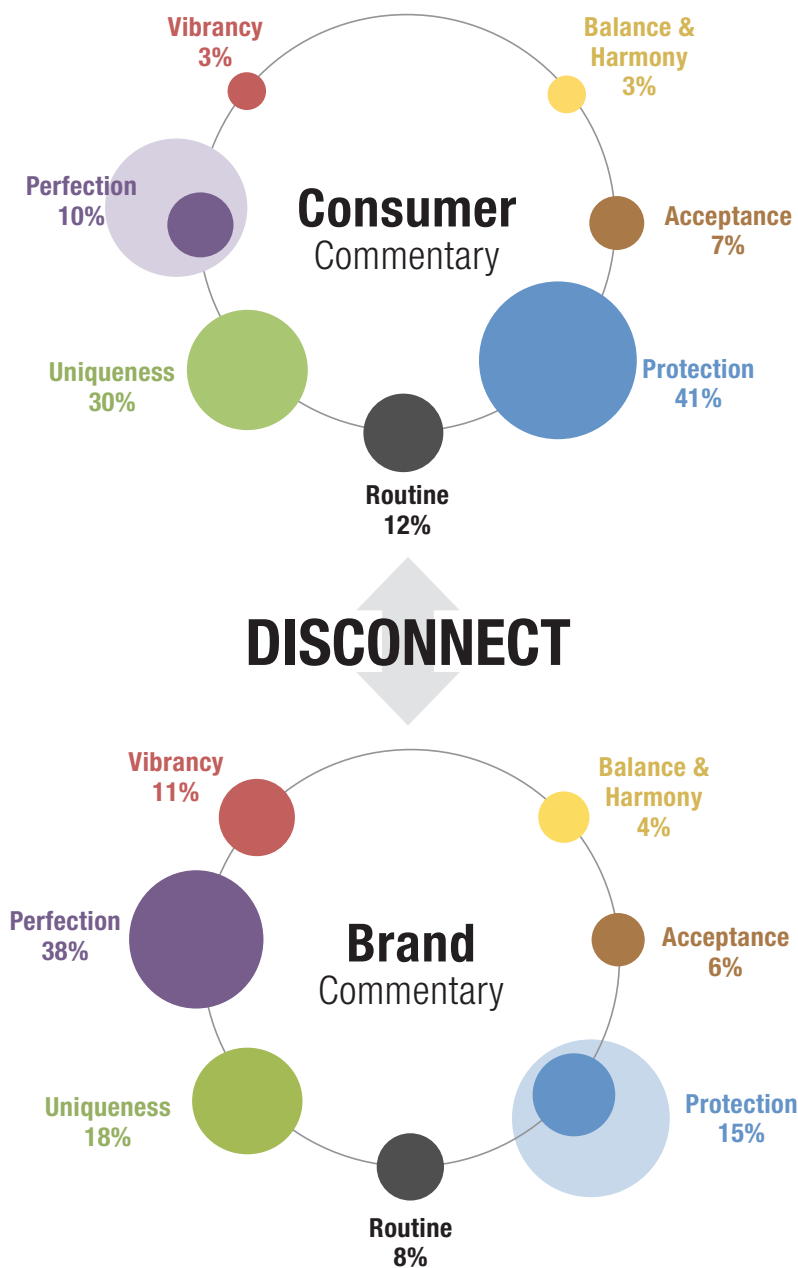


MOTIVATION AND MESSAGING ALIGNMENT

Our framework allowed us to take a deeper look at consumer motivations to compare to the brand's content and communication.

We framed the data against consumers' deep-seated motivations and needs in the category to:

- Uncover gaps between owned and earned channels
- Learn from consumer motivations to inform brand strategy and social communication
- Effectively shift and track emotional profiles in the right direction while maintaining precision and comparison across markets






CONSUMER COLLABORATORY

If there's ever a disconnect, question or opportunity to stretch or strengthen an idea that comes up, our online collaboration sessions provide the perfect forum to interact with consumers to illuminate the 'why' behind the 'what', and implement right away. A collaboratory includes:

- Private and closed social forum encouraging member interaction and organic insights.
- Seasoned moderators trained to probe, monitor and analyze the feedback to understand and uncover the unarticulated needs, delights and habits.
- Opportunity to link quantitative survey with qualitative feedback for a holistic learning plan.

With a device-agnostic platform, and a variety of engaging activities that can be customized and leveraged to best address your needs, our collaboratory was designed with consumers in mind. We make it easy for them to engage, so you can get faster, better insights.

BRAND A		BRAND B	
 PARTICIPANT WHO WOULD FAVORITE	 PARTICIPANT WHO WOULD RETWEET		
DIVE DEEPER INTO KEY EMOTIONAL DRIVERS IN THE OVERALL CATEGORY "I am personally trying to be happy and healthy, and I would want my customers to feel the same way!"		EXPLORE WHAT EVOKES EXCITEMENT ABOUT YOUR PRODUCTS "Well this cleanser is the best thing I have ever found... This doesn't dry out my skin, it works quickly and a tiny bit goes a long way because it's really thick and creamy!"	
UNDERSTAND THE WHY BEHIND SPECIFIC CHANNEL PERFORMANCE "Instagram is a daily look at the intimate lives of people and the products that they love."		INVESTIGATE DELIGHTS AND UNMET NEEDS IN YOUR CAMPAIGNS "[Brand A] really seems to trust and encourage reviewers to rave about their favorites right on their website and tell their friends."	

5 SOUND BITS OF ADVICE

1

Keep an eye on your social performance in regards to both owned and earned media. Millennials not only look to your brand to provide useful content but also actively share it among their peers.

2

Be authentic and creative in your communications. Today's consumers are keenly aware of marketing jargon and gimmicks which can result in fewer followers and a loss of respect for your brand.

3

Establish a two-way dialogue. Millennials value companies who listen and respond on social media and who clearly demonstrate that they value consumer opinions and honest reviews.

4

Tailor your content to specific channels. Social media users switch seamlessly between channels when seeking product information and take multiple sources into account in their purchase consideration.

5

Engage respected bloggers and industry luminaries. In addition to friends and family, millennials are highly influenced by those whom they trust for expert advice.



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