National Institute for Social Media

2016 Social Media Job Study

2016 SOCIAL MEDIA JOB STUDY

In 2016, the National Institute for Social Media conducted a job study to answer key questions associated with the role of the social media strategist in the workplace. The goal of the study was to procure critical information about the primary responsibilities of social media strategists in a variety of work settings across the United States.

HOW TO USE A JOB STUDY

NISM conducted its first job study in 2011 when hardly anyone had heard of Instagram and you could still poke someone on Facebook. The collection of data was initially used to create the first social media strategist exam and training materials and served as the backbone for providing materials for social media professionals. The latest survey will be used in similar ways, but instead of being solely focused on content creation, we have the opportunity to use the information to update current tools and resources as well as continue the practice of creating new and interesting educational materials for individuals working in social media.

One distinct difference the 2016 NISM job study offers readers that wasn't present in previous editions is insights, discussion questions, and quotes from live follow-up interviews conducted with online survey participants. For this version, we wanted to provide readers with more than raw data. We wanted to help social media professionals around the world start a conversation.

Guide Employers

For years we've heard a common set of questions from employers across all industries looking to integrate full- or part-time social media employees to their teams:

- How much should they be paid?
- How much and what kind of education and experience should we look for?
- What should their job description include?
- Once they're hired, how will we know if they're successful?

We gathered some of this information in our online survey, some in our individual interview, and more still through external resources. In this study, we've discussed these questions and have aggregated responses from around the country. We have also provided sample text and tools that can be used directly or easily modified to create resources that can be used specifically within your organization.

Help Employees

While employers and employees have similar questions, their interest and approach to finding a solution is – as you might guess – slightly different. From social media employees, we're more likely to hear questions like:

- How can I secure a job in social media that pays what I'm worth?
- What kind of education and experience should I focus on?
- How and where do I get the education and experience I need?
- How can I explain to my boss, peers, customers, and anyone else I'm working with the value of the work I'm doing?

This same job study that can help employers create and manage an environment that hires the right social media staff and supports them effectively can provide help for employees as well. Seeing what other social media professionals are saying and doing can be one of the best resources for making decisions in your own unique environment.

Support Consultants

Social Media Consultants have their own set of challenges – often a hybrid of social media manager and employee questions.

- What should I charge for my services?
- What kind of support will clients be interested in?
- How and where do I get the education and experience I need?
- How can I explain to my client the value of the work I'm doing?

Consultants have the advantage of the outside perspective or "fresh take" on any business and many organizations find that appealing. But they are also often the first ones cut from the budget, especially if they were never able to establish their contribution to the organization.

Other questions and challenges are shared by all social media professionals – adoption across the organization, managing negative feedback, social listening, etc. These topics are addressed throughout the study as well.

WHAT'S INCLUDED IN THE JOB STUDY

Modeled loosely after the information found on the Bureau of Labor Statistics website, professionals engaging in social media can find the following information:

- A brief history of marketing and social media
- The online job survey details (process, questions, results, etc.)
- Analysis and comparison of data in key areas such as pay and education

The goal of the 2016 NISM Job Study is to provide readers with multiple views of today's social media job market that will support the continued evolution of social media marketing as a critical element for any business. For additional information or to share your insights related to this job study or social media in general, please visit our website at www.nismonline.org.

The data, discussion questions, and expert insights shared in the NISM 2016 Social Media Job Study are meant to be shared.

Invite your friends to join the conversation.

#NISM2016JS

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SURVEY PROCESS AND DEMOGRAPHICS

The following information was gathered from each survey respondent. A full list of the survey questions and limitations can be found in Appendix A.

- Respondent Demographic Information (state, age, gender, education)
- Respondent Organizational Information (industry, position, organization name)
- Respondent Position Information (years in social media, job title, salary/budget)
- Tasks completed by social media professionals, their importance and time spent
- Interest in social media education, including course topic suggestions

Data Collection Process

Online survey responses were collected in 2 ways.

- Paid responses. Paid responses were gathered through Survio, an online survey service.
- Volunteer responses. Members of the NISM network were asked to share the survey with leaders, social media consultants, and social media professionals in their network. They shared the survey through email campaigns, networking groups, and by posting the information on social media platforms.

Additionally, 20 of the online survey respondents participated in an additional interview via phone. The researchers explored the participants' answers in greater depth and collected further information about their experience as social media professionals.

Data Analysis Process

Once the data was collected, researchers reviewed the information in the following ways:

- Objective data collection. The researchers compiled all of the available objective data (number of participants, gender, years of experience, etc.) and reported it numerically and pictorially.

  Additionally, the researchers compiled lists of objective data when appropriate (such as job titles) and completed a small amount of text analysis of open-ended responses in an attempt to identify informative patterns in language.

- Subjective data collection. Throughout this study, the researchers shared their subjective conclusions, supported by data collected and external resources.

- Previous results comparison. Data collected in this survey was compared to previous survey results and data collected from external sources when possible to demonstrate relevant change or constancy.

- Category cross-comparison. Analysis parameters were adjusted to identify potential patterns and areas of interest that might be helpful to readers. For example, all pay data was analyzed as a whole and then analyzed again by geographic region.

Data Sharing

After the data analysis was complete, the researchers compiled their findings in the following ways:

- Objective data was shared in a numerical format and as a chart or graph (as appropriate).
- Quotes from interviews were shared with related objective data when possible.

The goal of sharing the data in the manner described above was to meet the learning styles of as many different people as possible and help the data "come to life" in whatever way is most beneficial to readers.

Research Limitations

As expected with any research project, the team encountered a few limitations during the research process. While these limitations were minor, we wanted to share them here so the reader can be aware of them when reviewing the data. It is also our hope that they might spark additional research ideas that will continue the much-needed conversation of the value of social media.

Geography

While we did reach survey participants in many states (43), there were some states not represented in the survey. Also, several states had significantly higher participation than others, such as Minnesota (15%), New York (10%), and California (8%).

Survey Completion Percentage

The survey was large, with completion times ranging, on average, from 30-60 minutes. Because of that, the survey completion rate was 57%.

The researchers included data from all surveys, even if they were noted to be incomplete. This decision was made carefully and it was determined that information shared in one category should not be dismissed simply because the participant elected not to complete additional sections of the survey.

Difference Between 2012 Survey and 2016 Survey

The researchers elected to modify some of the questions from the 2012 survey in an attempt to shorten the still-lengthy survey. In most instances, survey questions were combined to shorten the overall length of the survey while still capturing the spirit of the question(s).

MEET THE RESEARCHERS

Dr. Amy Jauman – Project Manager

Dr. Amy Jauman is the Chief Education Officer and Owner of Remotely Smart, a virtual company that provides professional development support to remote and traditional organizations. She worked as the Learning and Development director of a Fortune 500 company for nearly a decade, designing and managing education programs for an international remote work force before creating her own consulting firm. Since she began her work as Remotely Smart, Amy has worked with every size organization from Fortune 100 to solopreneurs – meeting each where they are by supporting development programs to meet their educational needs.

Amy has a master's degree in experiential education and a doctorate in organization development. Amy's doctoral research focused on exploring how the learning styles of remote workers and the educational delivery methods of their organizations affected employee happiness and productivity. Since completing her research, she's had the opportunity to manage the development of a fully online program currently being delivered in developing countries, support the conversion of an MBA program from a traditional to a blended format, and create and deliver multiple social media and virtual teams' courses online and in a traditional classroom.

Amy is also a Certified Social Media Strategist and Instructor with the National Institute of Social Media. Previously she was the Social Media Director for Women Entrepreneurs of Minnesota (WeMN) and she currently serves as the marketing director for the Minnesota Chapter of the National Speakers Association. She is also an adjunct professor in the St. Mary's University of Minnesota MBA program.

Sean Pavelich

Sean is currently a Financial Analyst and Controller in Training at Bluestone Physician Services located in Stillwater, Minnesota. Before that, he was an auditor at a Big 4 accounting firm in Minneapolis. Sean has experience dealing with a wide variety of companies as he has audited clients with revenues in the hundreds of millions and is now playing a key role in a rising healthcare start up. He is currently pursuing his MBA in Finance at St. Mary's University of Minnesota with an expected completion date in the Summer of 2018. Sean graduated with an accounting degree from St. Mary's in 2014 while playing college hockey, supervising a dorm as a resident assistant, and working three jobs. He also has a minor in Spanish.

Alysson Pehoski

Alysson Pehoski is the Global Business Operations Lead at myON, a division of Capstone Publishing. myON is an award-winning personalized literacy environment that provides PK-12 students with anytime, anywhere access to over 10,000 enhanced digital titles. While working at myON, Alysson has supported a team of company and independent Account Managers, and worked primarily in process improvement, LMS course implementation and management, data analytics, and Salesforce administration. Before working at myON, Alysson worked as a Business Analyst at Vizient (formerly VHA), where she worked closely with a contracting team to provide cost-saving opportunities to 38 non-profit healthcare organizations. Alysson has a bachelor's degree in International Business and Spanish from Concordia College in Moorhead, MN, and is expecting to complete her MBA program from St. Mary's University by December, 2016.

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

The following information is associated with the NISM Job Study survey. The results of the two online surveys are combined here.

GEOGRAPHY

In what state or U.S. territory do you currently live?

Participants were given the opportunity to choose from the 50 U.S. states, several U.S. territories, or "other" (which allowed them to enter a country/territory not listed).

Survey Participants by State

	Number	%		Number	%		Number	%
Alabama	5	1	Kentucky	1	<1	Oregon	4	<1
Arizona	3	<1	Maine	2	<1	Pennsylvania	14	3
California	41	8	Maryland	15	3	South Carolina	3	<1
Colorado	8	2	Massachusetts	9	2	South Dakota	2	<1
Connecticut	6	1	Michigan	11	2	Tennessee	8	2
Delaware	6	1	Minnesota	82	15	Texas	25	5
District of Colombia	23	4	Missouri	6	1	Utah	3	<1
Florida	36	7	Nebraska	3	<1	Vermont	1	<1
Georgia	13	3	Nevada	1	<1	Virginia	24	5
Hawaii	1	<1	New Hampshire	2	<1	Virgin Islands	1	<1
Idaho	2	<1	New Jersey	12	2	Washington	2	<1
Illinois	16	3	New Mexico	1	<1	West Virginia	1	<1
Indiana	4	<1	New York	51	10	Wisconsin	9	2
Iowa	2	<1	North Carolina	12	2	Outside U.S.	43	8
Kansas	2	<1	Ohio	11	2	**Total**	527	

Most Represented Regions:

Minnesota (82)
New York (41)
California (41)
Florida (36)

Which of the following best describes the principal industry of your organization?

Participants were given the opportunity to choose from Advertising & Marketing, Agriculture, Airlines & Aerospace, Automotive, Business Support & Logistics, Construction, Machinery & Homes, Education, Entertainment & Leisure, Finance & Financial Services, Food & Beverages, Government, Healthcare & Pharmaceuticals, Insurance, Manufacturing, Non-profit, Retail & Consumer Durables, Real Estate, Telecommunications, Technology, Internet, & Electronics, Transportation & Delivery, Utilities, Energy, & Extraction, or "I am currently not employed."

Most represented groups:

Advertising & Marketing (23%)
Education (12%),
Telecommunications,
Technology, & Electronics (10%)

Survey Participants by Industry

	%	#
Advertising and Marketing	23	123
Agriculture	<1	1
Airlines and Aerospace	<1	1
Automotive	<1	5
Business Support & Logistics	6	31
Construction, Machinery, and Homes	4	21
Education	12	63
Entertainment & Leisure	3	17
Finance & Financial Services	4	21
Food & Beverages	2	13
Government	4	21
Healthcare & Pharmaceuticals	5	26
Insurance	<1	5
Manufacturing	5	26
Nonprofit	9	47
Retail & Consumer Durables	7	36
Real Estate	1	7
Telecommunications, Technology, Internet, & Electronics	10	51
Transportation & Delivery	<1	4
Utilities, Energy, and Extraction	<!	1
I am not currently employed.	2	13
Total	97	533

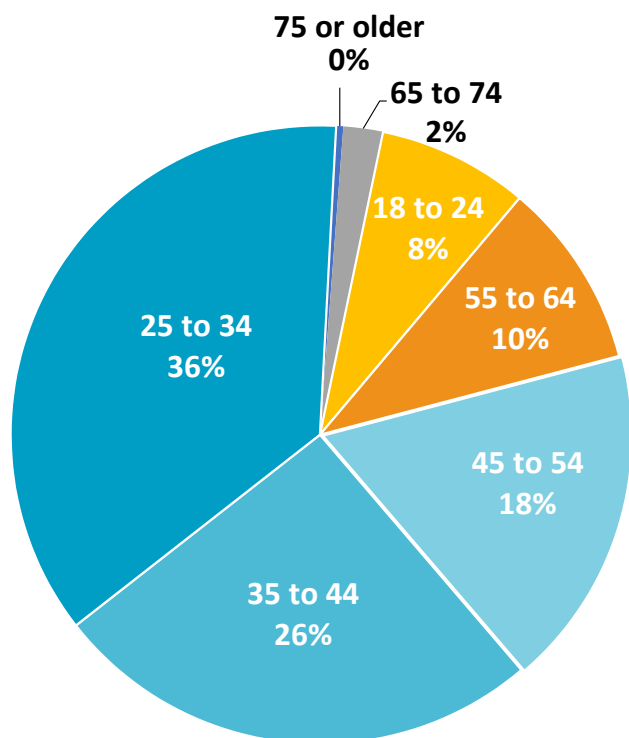*Due to rounding, the percentages fall just short of 100%.

Survey Participants by Industry
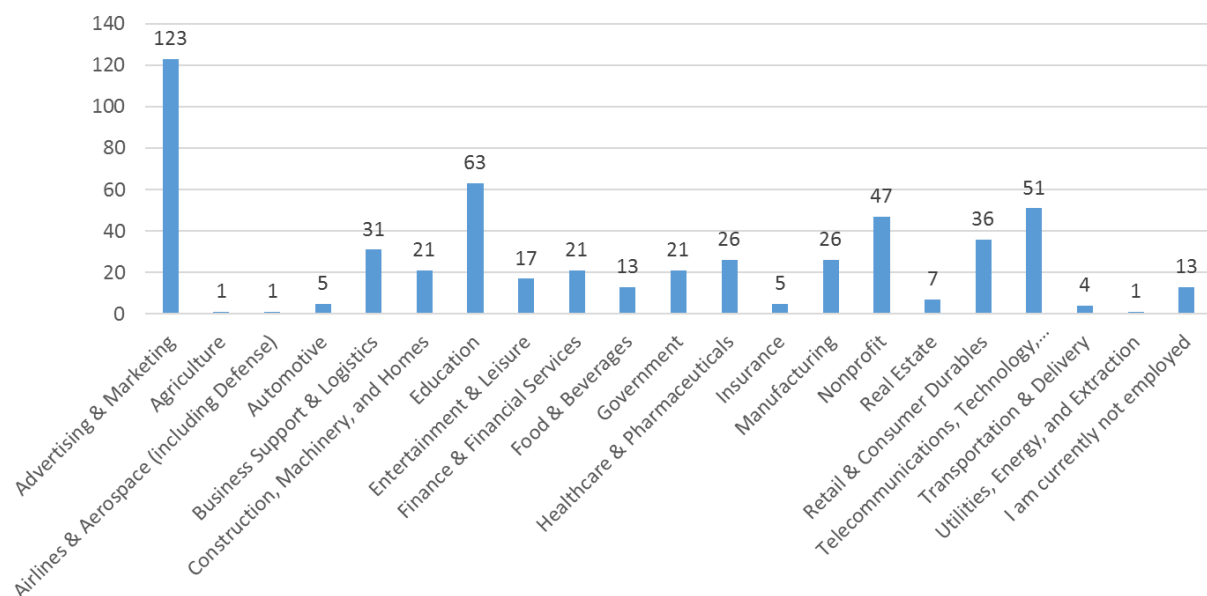
AGE

What is your age?

Participants were given the opportunity to choose from the following age categories: 18 to 24, 25 to 34, 35 to 44, 45 to 54, 55 to 64, 65 to 74, and 75 or older.

	Number	Percentage
18 to 24	42	8%
25 to 34	194	36%
35 to 44	137	26%
45 to 54	95	18%
55 to 64	52	10%
65 to 74	11	2%
75 or older	2	<1%
Total	533	100%

GENDER

What's your gender?

Participants were given the opportunity to choose male or female.

	Number	Percentage
Female	323	61%
Male	210	39%
Total Responses	533	100%
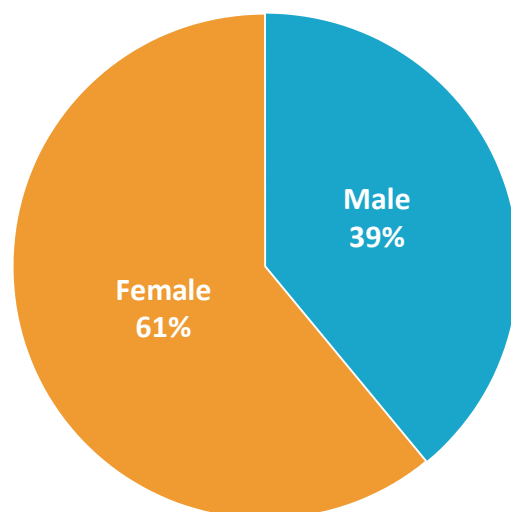
LEVEL OF EDUCATION COMPLETED

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

Participants were given the opportunity to choose from the following age categories: Graduated from high school and/or completed a GED, 1 year of college, 2 years of college, 3 years of college, Graduated from college, Some graduate school, Completed graduate school.
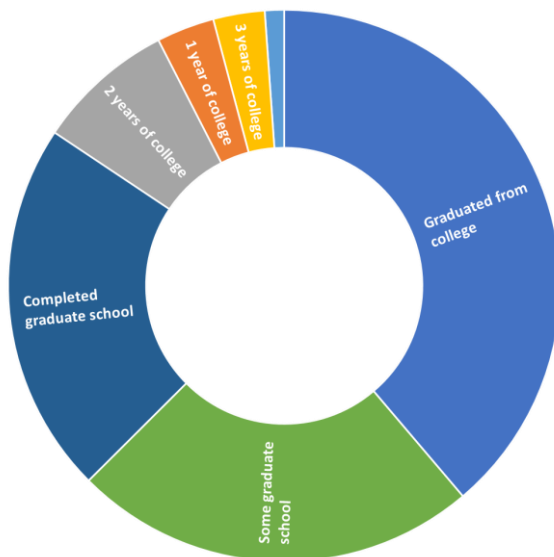
	Number	Percentage
Graduated from high school and/or completed a GED	6	1.1
1 year of college	18	3.4
2 years of college	43	8.1
3 years of college	16	3
Graduated from college	206	38.8
Some graduate school	126	23.7
Completed graduate school	116	21.8
Total	**531**	**99.9**

College graduates and individuals who completed some or all of graduate school made up 84.3% of the social media professionals who responded to the online survey despite the lack of social media-specific degree programs available in the United States.

PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCE IN SOCIAL MEDIA

Survey participants were asked to share their employment role (manager, employee, or consultant) and the number of years of experience they have working in social media.

What is your job title?

Participants were given the opportunity to enter their job title in an open textbox. Though we heard from a lot of social media and marketing professionals specifically, we also heard from people who identified as writers, bakers, accountants and stylists. This was not surprising – it reaffirmed our belief that social media is a critical aspect of any business and that small businesses especially have non-marketers managing their digital presence. (tweet this!)

The most common words (including derivatives) used in the job titles submitted by our survey participants were:

- Manager
- Director
- Owner
- CEO
- Marketing
- Consultant
- Human Resources
- Administrative Assistant

How many years of experience (working directly or managing) in the social media industry do you have?

Participants were given the opportunity to choose from the following categories: less than 1 year, 1-1.5 years, 2-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-15 years, More than 15 years.

Do you work as a full-time/part-time social media employee, consultant or manager? (If you do one or more of these, please select the option that best describes your role.)

From this question, participants completed one of three possible tracks: Manager, Consultant, or Employee.

> "Anything that we do that is social, whether it is Facebook, or Twitter, or Pinterest, or Reddit, I run all of those campaigns for clients."
>
> - Social Media Employee

ROLE & YEARS IN ORGANIZATION

Manager of a Social Media Employee(s), Consultant, or Social Media Employee

	Manager	%	Employee	%	Consultant	%
< 1 year	5	1%	50	10%	8	2%
1-1.5 years	5	1%	34	7%	5	1%
2-5 years	31	6%	126	26%	13	3%
6-10 years	28	6%	108	22%	11	2%
11 – 15 years	8	2%	23	5%	0	0%
> 15 years	2	<1%	22	5%	1	<1%
Total	79	16%	363	76%	38	8%

> "For every client, I say give me 60 days and if you're not happy we can part as friends."
>
> - Social Media Consultant

PAY

For managers:

If you manage a full-time employee who has social media management as part or all of their required work, what is the pay range for your social media staff? If you manage multiple social media professionals, select all that apply.

For employees:

What is your current pay range?

Participants were given the opportunity to choose from Under $30,000, $30,000 - $39,999, $40,000 - $49,999, $50,000 - $59,999, $60,000 - $69,999, $70,000 - $79,999, $80,000 - $89,999, $90,000 - $99,999, Over $100,000, or "I do not manage a full-time employee who has social media management as part or all of their required work.

	Number	Percentage
Under $30,000	56	16%
$30,000-$39,999	36	10%
$40,000-$49,999	59	17%
$50,000-$59,999	54	15%
$60,000-$69,999	37	11%
$70,000-$79,999	36	10%
$80,000-$89,999	22	6%
$90,000-$99,999	14	4%
Over $100,000	38	11%
Total	352	100%

How do employers decide on pay for social media professionals? – Click to tweet this question!

"I think entry level for that, like 40K, 45K, as a salary, is completely fair when you consider the ROI of doing that well. And, how much it increases the success of longer term, broader marketing campaigns, right? For me, to manage three accounts and do what I did, which is, like, posting regularly and interacting and doing lead gen. is like $3,000 a month for the three accounts."

- Social Media Consultant

Pay Self-Reported by Consultant

> "So budgets get placed, get established, on a number of different criteria. One is contractual. (Client name) requires us to spend a certain amount, just overall, in our marketing. They don't specify how much on social media, but they specify overall in marketing how much we spend. And then we look at what our revenue goals overall, and then we look at our revenue goals by region."
>
> **- Social Media Leader**

What do you charge clients on average? (either hourly or by project)

This was an optional question, but many of the consultants were willing to share not only what they charge, but how they charge. Like many consulting arrangements, social media experts support their clients in a variety of ways. The approaches most commonly discussed are:

- Hourly
- Monthly
- By project
- Salaried (typically an internal consultant)

The most common responses we received were:

Hourly
- $25-50/hour (12)
- $50-100/hour (8)
- $100-150/hour (12)

> "…a consultant's phone is pretty much always on 24/7. Even if you don't reply…you're always aware of what's going on."
>
> **- Social Media Consultant**

Monthly

There was a wide range of responses for monthly payments with differences in rates and offerings. Some examples included:

- Around $3,000 per month for PR services, but it's not all social media
- I have 3 tiers of payment
- Monthly retainer. Varies with the client and our 'immersion' in their business.
- Depends. One example: $600/mo for 3 channels and post(s) every day

By Project

The overwhelming majority of consultants who shared that they priced by project didn't share ranges or examples. Common responses were similar to, "varies greatly upon service (project based)." This is understandable, of course, considering the wide range of social media support that could potentially be provided.

> "I'm not going to take them on as a client if they're not going to get behind (sic) and make real changes."
>
> **- Social Media Consultant**

ADVICE FROM THE FIELD

In our survey comments and during our follow-up interviews, we were able to talk to talented consultants, employees, and leaders in social media across the United States. We asked them to share some advice and here's what they had to say:

HOW DO YOU BUILD YOUR CUSTOMER BASE (AS AN INTERNAL ADVISOR/LEADER OR EXTERNAL CONSULTANT)?

"For every client I say **give me 60 days and if you're not happy we can part as friends**. Within that 60 days you can set out what you're trying to do. And then you can showcase results in that period. If we're trying to get more hits from this age group or this location. And you can measure it from day 0 all the way to 14, to 30, anywhere in between. So **it's just setting up proper expectations** on what is your on-target percentage, just getting where things go."

"For most of my clients, **everyone can use another set of eyes** on their bio and their editorial calendar. I've been working with a lot of really early stage and other solopreneurs, and they just really can't do it. My first year, I actually managed people's social media accounts for them. So, **I would work with them really closely, figure out their goals and what they were selling, and I would do the posting and engaging and lead generation.**"

"A big part of what I do that I didn't mention is educational training. And kind of marketing trainings. So we do a webinar every week."

"Sometimes what we see as problem issues, they don't really see that yet. And **it takes massaging to get them to understand that A affects B and C, and so forth**. I had a client ask for one very specific thing and I said we can't do that effectively unless you do these other things. And they didn't want to pay for that so I said find a high school kid or a college intern or something. **It's always a negotiation.** "

WHAT MAKES A GREAT SOCIAL MEDIA EMPLOYEE?

"You have to get some **hands-on experience**. ([tweet this advice!](#)) Whether it's in an internship or whether it's in your first job taking on social media projects, or volunteering to get involved in projects that require you to do social media, It would be very difficult to get a social media position without having any formal social media experience. You can get social media internships; and you can land those for part-time jobs and smaller roles in which you start to volunteer for social media opportunities without having experience."

"I would say we don't look at a degree really, almost at all. We look at what experience they have on their resume. So, I don't care if someone has a degree in law or they're a biology undergrad. I don't really care as long **as they have worked with social media in some regard**

How do YOU build your customer base (as an internal advisor/leader or external consultant)?

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and have helped manage a brand. I'm sure for internships, degrees sometimes matter, but from a hiring manager's perspective, experience is all that matters."

"They have to have a high learning orientation. So, they have to be someone that is willing to learn new things because social media is constantly changing. Obviously you want them to be someone that works hard and is able to put in lots of hours, lots of enthusiasm, but that's with any job. But, with social media, there's not going to be textbooks and the exact formula for success, so being a self-starter, as someone who's creative and a problem solver, very analytical and detail oriented is going to be super important."

"If you're managing a brand, and you're not detail oriented, and you make spelling errors or you make even worse errors - like you've probably seen people who are sending something that they meant to send out from their personal account and it goes out to a big brand. These are errors that happen because people are not detail oriented and that is a big risk for an organization. I would definitely say that anyone who is not detail oriented should probably stay away from social media."

"What you need to be successful in social media is someone, a whole function of people, whatever that might be, that's committed to continuous learning and continuously improving, looking at data, making data-driven decisions, and kind of moving forward one day at a time."

"The things that I look for and will look for (are) people that are going to be successful at it - ones that understand objectives and goal setting and measurement of those goals and then are able to translate how the things you do with social media are going to help the business meet those goals. So people that can help to interpret that kind of data, that firehose of data that comes from social, and that can speak to it in a somewhat layman's way to an executive or to a lawyer or to the varied people you're going to have to speak with on a day-to-day basis at your company, – I think can be really successful at it."

"The other thing that I really suggest is creativity. There's a lot of problem solving and use of creativity when it comes to social media because the channels present something unique. You have marketers that come into it and go, 'OK, this is what we've always done with marketing.' You do your audience assessment, you do some testing with focus groups on the messaging and pictures. And then you go and print the thing and mail the thing and then you sit back and twiddle your thumbs and wait for some metrics to come in. And nowadays, you have these channels that are a one-to-one-to-many, and they're both proactive and reactive, and that formula doesn't work. So being able to sit back and go, 'OK, our business wants to do this. How could I creatively leverage Twitter or Snapchat or whatever channel to do that for our company?' And then layer on some sort of creativity of like, 'OK, we can go into Facebook and see what those audiences look like. And we can do that within 30 minutes, and then we can go back and make ad A, B, and C and test those within 24 hours. So suddenly, we've not only come at it with a more creative approach, but we've also shortened the amount of cost and time to do a lot of the steps that marketing tends to do. People that can really take problem solving and creativity well, can do well with social media because it lends itself really well to that – to thinking outside the box."

"You have to work with people. So if you want to call it customer service skills or just being personable, I think that's the number one. You have to like people because if you don't like people, I'm not sure how you can succeed in this industry because you're going to be dealing with them all day, every day, because it's what you do."

"People need to know how to write. And I don't mean good grammar. They need to know how to connect to people. How to capture that tone and style that is going to make people want to do business with you. They need to know how to write." (tweet this tip!)

"And the third is how to **understand analytics**. I know what I'm doing, but I'm always looking to take my knowledge up a notch or two. Be able to understand analytics and then taking what you can see from the analytics and then adjusting your strategy to what is happening."

Leaders said…

"We're looking for someone who has some **writing experience** and background."

"Mostly their **willingness and their aptitude as proven to us in their trial period**, as to what they can do, how they can do it." ([tweet this!](#))

"I don't want to discriminate and ask a full-blown college degree with like bachelor's or master's but I do want to see people who have been **really interested in the industry** and know exactly what they have to do."

"There are so many variables that go into answering that kind of question because it really depends on the position and what I needed and what level of experience I was looking for to say what I would look for. Personally right now **I need someone who could roll up their sleeves and jump in**."

"Probably a **marketing background**, and to tell you the truth from where I came from, I would hire anybody that was **eager to learn and to grow in their careers**. You know it I would really put it all down to their eagerness of wanting to learn something."

Consultants said…

"If anything was more important, it's a basic understanding of **customer service**."

"There's no formal training. Although a strong grasp on **writing and communications and professionalism** is definitely necessary."

"Honestly, a high school grad should maybe **intern with someone**. There's so many kids who are, like, beauty bloggers who are getting paid to do sponsored posts. They didn't learn anything, they just have this hobby that they're passionate about and it happens to be content that companies need. Because consumerism has changed so much that the buy-in that a prospective customer is going to have, because there's this regular kid who's using it and using it really well. That's so much more than a TV commercial."

WHERE DO EMPLOYERS FIND GREAT SOCIAL MEDIA HIRES?

"I'd say about 50% of the people that we come to hire are from **internal referrals** from people that we know, and people that we know that they know, and that does come often via **social media** because someone will see a post on Facebook and tell their cousin that this is a great company and they should work for us. But the other 50% comes from that straight-up outreach saying, "Hey, we have a listing. We're here, and we're looking for these people.""

"As a matter of fact, the last time we posted for a digital marketing professional, for more of a managerial role, we posted it on **Craigslist** and we

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From what YOU'VE seen, what do you think makes a great social media employee?

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got great candidates - I believe there were three that we ended up interviewing and two of them were outside of the metro area."

"Generally we hire folks on as **contractors** first. We try before we buy, of course. But then we get to a specific spot."

"A lot of people use Craigslist. I would use **LinkedIn**. I trust it, and I think it's a great way to find media people - a lot of media people on there."

HOW SHOULD SOCIAL MEDIA TEAMS INTERACT WITH THE REST OF THE ORGANIZATION?

Employees said…

"One thing I've tried to do with kind of a **center of excellence** approach is – we don't really have a large team. There's two of us really dedicated to social, but then there's lots of half and quarter people in other departments that have social in their responsibilities. And that is sometimes when the rubber meets the road, where the theory of COEs fall apart a little bit, to be perfectly blunt."

"The things that happened well was **building alliances**, especially at large organizations or really any organization. You have to know the landscape, you have to know people's history and so we did a lot of auditing and interviewing and then really tried to adapt whatever. **I think we spent a lot of time as kind of translators** of like, 'OK, we know what the best things are to do in social media, and we know there's a million things we could do, but what are the things that we are going to focus on doing from social media that will also match the expectations and hopes of our business partners?' So by taking that approach of understanding the needs of our business partners, really listening to them, and then really trying to just focus and present them the few things that we can do to gain some traction and help them meet their expectations, I think that was the early-on things."

"One of our big things over the past year was actually launching **social customer service** and really **empowering our customer service team** to do what they do so well, but just on Facebook and Twitter."

Leaders said…

"They all **establish a social media calendar** of the topics most pertinent to their marketing plans. They then push to our public relations manager and our public relations manager is the one that does the actual posting and monitoring. We also have somebody in creative services who does— essentially our webmaster. And they do some of the **monitoring and web analytics** on our social media as well."

"We leverage a **partner model**. ([tweet this!](#)) So, when my individual marketing team has a budget, they develop a global marketing strategy, they get it signed off, and then they have a tactical execution team here that builds out an integrative marketing plan. I can talk about my whole marketing philosophy and how we structure things, but essentially, **everybody has a quarterly marketing plan**. An integrated marketing plan has to have multiple components including social media, direct marketing, digital marketing, events, internal marketing, sales training, partner training - multiple facets to a campaign. So I leave it to the individual marketing team to determine how much of a budget they want to spend on those individual components."

"When we go out and we select partners, **we look for people who have a well-established relationship within our target audience**. They have a good reputation and they clearly understand the market. They are people who have a passion for it. And that's a big part of how we select people because even though it's somewhat not measurable, we know partners who are the most successful are those who have a passion about what we're doing. And they are the ones we find most successful."

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Consider effective teams you've worked with. How do you think social media teams should interact with the rest of the organization?

Survey Feedback

Based on the 6 Content Domains of the
NISM Social Media Strategist Exam

Each survey participant was asked to consider multiple pieces of the six content domains of the NISM Social Media Strategist Exam and indicate how important the task is and how much time they spend on the task.

The six content domains are:

- Strategic Planning
- Compliance & Governance
- Project Management
- Marketing & Communications
- Community Management
- Research & Analysis

54.5% of participants ranked planning and goal setting as a task of high importance. This is an increase of 34.3% from the 2012 study.

25.9% of those surveyed spend more than 10 hours each week on project management tasks.

Each content domain increased in importance from 2012 to 2016.

The most important task within Marketing & Communications was

Branding

66.5% identified it as highly important.

The NISM 2016 Social Media Job Study

43 states.
20 industries.
533 men and women.
Managers, employees and consultants.

68.8% of participants cited acting appropriately without direction as highly important. It was perceived as important in 2012 as well, but only 43.6% chose **highly important.**

Responding to comments increased from low to high importance between 2012 and 2016.

#NISM2016JS

Content domains explored through the job study are the same as the SMS exam.

Project Management
Governance & Compliance
Marketing & Communications
Research & Analysis
Strategic Planning
Community

The value of 2-way communication with customers increased from medium to high importance.

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NISM 2016 SOCIAL MEDIA JOB STUDY HIGHLIGHTS

From the 2012 to the 2016 job study, we were pleased to see only positive change in the perception of the social media profession. Despite new platforms and changes in technology, individuals and businesses across all industries continue to value social media professionals and are expressing an increased interest in investing in their digital presence.

There are still plenty of budgets that don't account for social media costs because it's still perceived as a free tool. There are still cases of leaders hiring their niece to run the company's social media – because she's young so she must know how all of it works. And we're still seeing a lot of professionals struggling through the learning curve associated with interpreting and discussing social media analytics. But overall, the social media professionalism is moving in a positive direction.

The following are some of our observations from the NISM 2016 Social Media Job Study. It is a combination of observations that make us hopeful, concerns that we'd like to address and questions that we're excited to explore in greater detail. We encourage you to consider our observations and add your own.

In each of the 6 content domains (Marketing & Communications, Community, Research & Analysis, Governance & Compliance, Strategic Planning and Project Management), the perceived value of associated tasks primarily increased. We interpret this is as a very positive sign indicating the value of social media is increasing.

The ability for social media professionals to be self-directed and independent continues to be a highly valued trait.

- If social media professionals are too independent, do they risk lack of buy-in from their team simply because others don't understand what they are doing? (tweet this question!)
- Are social media professionals able to consistently and accurately describe the work they are doing in a meaningful way so they can ensure adequate budget allocation? (tweet this question!)
- Could this preferred style of independence lead to other issues such as loneliness or feelings of isolation in the workplace? (tweet this question!)

Writing RFPs and RFQs is still identified as one of the less important tasks social media professionals complete. This could be simply because the field and therefore the need for wider support is still growing. But it could also be an indication of a wider concern – that businesses aren't getting the professional help they need and are continuing to rely on ad hoc approaches to social media management.

How users engage with your content on mobile devices remains a critical consideration for any social media strategist. (tweet this!)

This affects social media strategy several ways. A strategy that had been focused on still images or influential language now needs to consider how those same concepts can be transferred to video.

Social media professionals are interested in strategic planning and analytics training. (tweet this!)

Additional topics people expressed an interest in included paid marketing campaigns for specific platforms and business applications for platforms like Instagram and SnapChat.

Pay for social media professionals continues to be a challenge. We found that social media professionals struggled to articulate how much they felt they should be paid and hiring managers struggled to justify their salaries. The perception that social media is free seems to continue to make securing a social media budget difficult.

Even in comparison to other marketing positions, pay for social media professionals seems to be consistently lower. Could this be because of the association with what many people perceive as free marketing? Might it be that social media professionals aren't articulating the value of what they contribute?

Apologizing if necessary was given high importance in 2012 by 53.1% of participants and 65.9% in 2016 (an increase of 12.8%). (tweet this!)

Despite expressing that research and analysis is an important part of a social media professional's job, very little time is devoted on a weekly basis to these tasks.

click to tweet

Join the conversation #NISM2016JS

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TOPIC IMPORTANCE AND TIME SPENT ON TASK

Please review and respond to each of the following tasks that might be completed by a social media professional within your organization.

For each category, participants were asked to respond to the above question in the following two areas:

- How important is this task?
(Does not complete task, Low importance, Medium importance, High importance)
- Time spent (per week)
(Do not complete task, <1 Hour, 1-2 Hours, 3-5 Hours, 6-9 Hours, 10+ Hours)

COMPARISON

Responses to each summary are reported as an aggregate with the most common response highlighted in yellow. When applicable, the summary of responses to the same or comparable question from the 2012 survey are reported and the percentage of change in the category with the most common response for the current survey is noted.
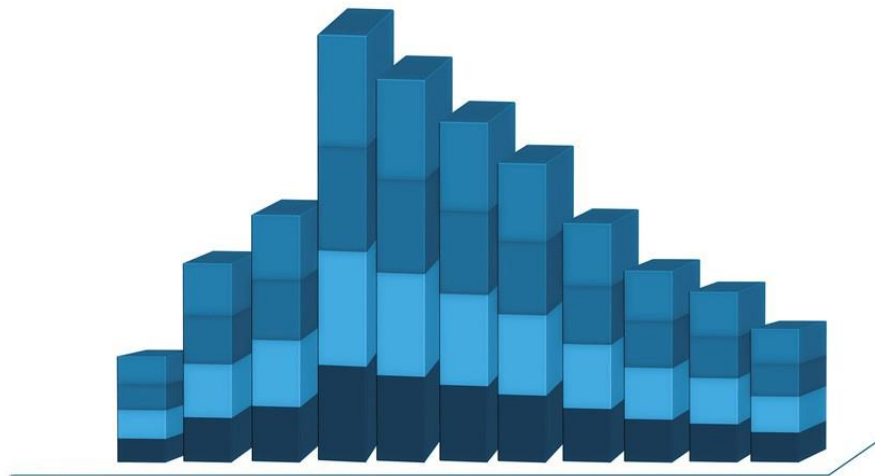
> **"I would contend that 75 percent of my job and really, anybody that's a leader of social media at a company or especially at an enterprise company, 75 percent of their job is education. And it's really the drum beat and the road shows of: here's what social is, here's what it isn't, here's what it can do for us, how do we implement it in your section of the company and make sure that it's aligned to business objectives and not just vanity metrics."**
>
> **- Social Media Manager**

How important is this task?

Strategic planning refers to a social media professional's understanding and use of broad strategies and visions for the organization and then drilling down to specific tactics and tools. Strategic planning is where the foundation is set for social media.

	Does not complete the task	Low importance	Medium importance	High importance	Notes
Perform STP Analysis	106	52	29	62	
Percentage of Total	42.5	20.8	11.6	**24.8**	
2012 Study	83	35	42	18	
Percentage of Total	46.6	19.6	**23.5**	10.1	
Create project plan /SMART goals	27	16	47	108	
Percentage of Total	13.6	8	23.7	**54.5**	
2012 Study	56	37	49	36	
Percentage of Total	31.4	20.8	**27.5**	20.2	
Determine KPIs for activities	56	63	94	154	
Percentage of Total	15.2	17.2	25.6	**42**	
2012 Study	67	53	35	23	
Percentage of Total	37.6	**29.8**	19.7	12.9	
Select and evaluate tools	47	71	116	118	
Percentage of Total	13.4	20.2	33	**33.5**	
2012 Study	61	51	36	30	
Percentage of Total	34.3	**28.7**	20.2	16.9	
Create a strategic plan	33	39	50	232	
Percentage of Total	9.3	11	14.1	**65.5**	
2012 Study	47	37	48	45	
Percentage of Total	26.6	20.9	**27.1**	25.4	

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Time Spent Per Week

	Do not perform task	<1 Hour	1-2 Hours	3-5 Hours	6-9 Hours	10+ Hours	Notes
Perform STP Analysis	120	60	42	46	10	21	
Percentage of Total	40.1	20	14	15.4	3.3	7	
2012 Study	85	16	19	30	23	3	
Percentage of Total	48.3	9.1	10.8	17	13.1	1.7	
Create project plan /SMART goals	71	51	68	64	19	32	
Percentage of Total	23.3	16.7	22.3	21	6.2	10.5	
2012 Study	65	17	32	44	13	7	
Percentage of Total	36.5	9.6	18	24.7	7.3	3.9	
Determine KPIs for activities	79	93	58	60	14	23	
Percentage of Total	24.2	28.4	17.7	18.3	4.3	7	
2012 Study	74	21	29	32	15	4	
Percentage of Total	42.3	12	16.6	18.3	8.6	2.3	
Select and evaluate tools	71	65	82	47	19	22	
Percentage of Total	23.2	21.2	26.8	15.4	6.2	7.2	
2012 Study	69	25	32	34	13	3	
Percentage of Total	39.2	14.2	18.2	19.3	7.4	1.7	
Create a strategic plan	55	46	55	70	36	46	
Percentage of Total	17.9	14.9	17.9	22.7	11.7	14.9	
2012 Study	58	18	32	34	24	10	
Percentage of Total	33	10.2	18	19.3	13.6	5.7	

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Online Survey

- Posting, Community Building, Community Relations (Responding, Commenting, Engaging, etc.)

- All are critical to what we do for our clients

- Competitive intelligence, social media messaging and engagement, planning/hosting Twitter chats, serving as agency's internal expert on social media and marketing strategies.

- Monitor competition, look for wider elements that could benefit the marketing team such as new events, adding prospects.

- The strategic plan is the blue print for the success & growth of a brand - This is the most important thing aside from implementation

- Strategic Planning is done annually, then executed. Hard to talk about time per week. It's more of a seasonal deluge of work, then nothing for about 8 months, then the cycle repeats.

- Strategic phase of my role is less, as we have defined our strategy and are in activation/ amplification mode.

- I essentially just came into this role six weeks ago. They need the strategy first before they can really set goals to build from. It's about wrangling 15 accounts down to five useable ones

Follow-Up Interviews

"When it comes to recruiting, especially, we have the numbers to back up what we do. People are four times more likely to click on a link that comes from someone that they know. So it's also about leveraging existing employees to use social to help in those regards."

- Social Media Employee

"I send my recommendations to the client, they either approve or say we can't do that. If they approve, we go on to the next step, which is crafting the ad itself which is headline, copy, imagery that is suitable for the market. Because an ad that might word in Florida might not be an ad that's going to work in Omaha, just because you have very different target demographics. And that takes some time to figure that out."

- Social Media Employee

"It really is important. And when I do have a customer who's really like, 'We want to do this. We want it fully and fast.' I get to show them numbers within six months that blow their minds. It makes it worthwhile. I'm telling you, (sic), I know that you don't know why you should do this or why you should be putting $25,000 into my agency. But then when they do and I get to show them how people view them digitally, all of a sudden, they're like, 'Holy shit, why didn't we do this 2 years ago?' It's incredibly gratifying."

- Social Media Employee

WHICH SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS DO YOU USE?

"I'm in business to business marketing, so we really rely heavily on LinkedIn, but someone else might keep using Twitter and getting a ton of success, or Snapchat or anything. We actually have a lot of success with **Twitter and Facebook and LinkedIn**, but we haven't been able to devote the time and energy to YouTube, Instagram, or Snapchat. It's not that one platform is better than another, generally, **it just depends on your organization is and what type of content you have and who your audience is**."

"**Facebook** is where the bulk of my efforts are. It's where I monitor the most, it's where we interact with our customers the most. But we're also posting and trying to generate engagement on **Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn** a little bit. LinkedIn is my least favorite network. I don't like it, but it's there so we have to use it. We've been playing around with **Snapchat** a little bit."

"We spend most of our social advertising dollars on **Facebook**, just because it's the easiest platform to advertise on. It also has the largest user base. We also feel like there's a better return there because of the targeting tool that you can use. So, for us, especially in recruiting, you can target based on job title or industry. Also, we can have access to our clients' Facebook pages as an advertiser, so you don't have to worry about the billing getting all screwy because it bills directly, which is a huge bonus."

"(**Facebook**) just seems to be the place where I'm able to connect with people more, probably because I'm a talker, and on Twitter, you're limited to 140 characters and there's so much noise there that breaking through all of that noise is a challenge unless you're using the right hashtag or unless you're at a conference."
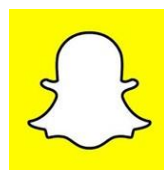
"Say when I'm at a conference or a tweet chat, (**Twitter**)'s huge. Everybody's responding because everybody's looking for you, whereas if you're just online and you say, hey I just wrote this blog post. (tweet this!)I write a lot of blog posts and I don't get a lot of people responding to it or retweeting it unless I mention them, whereas on **Facebook**, I can be more wordy and say, like, hey, I had this exciting experience, and I'm sharing it with you, here's why you should read it, and they will. It's more interactive for me."

"If they're corporate, we're seeing a lot of **LinkedIn**. If they're general, more all-purpose, **Facebook** is good for them. I'd say, in general, our clients are very enthusiastic about the opportunities inside of social media." (tweet this!)

"Right now, it's hard to argue with **Facebook** and the general results that you can get. If you told me I could only pick one, that would be the one that I'd pick. For audiences, sometimes **LinkedIn** is better. We're just starting to get into **Snapchat** to reach some of the younger audiences because Facebook is kind of falling flat with younger, millennial folks. In general, Facebook is still, the ability to target exactly the right people, and to hit them with just the messages that you want, and to be able to turn it on and off, just the demographic, the quality of intelligence and targeting that you can do with Facebook is pretty hard to beat."

"I would say Instagram - not really, because Instagram is sort of a hard platform, there's not ways to DM or like post that much so I would say **Twitter**, or **Facebook**. I mostly prefer Facebook if I had to choose between one or the other."

"I like [**Facebook**]. Because I kind of like helping people in general. So if I see a question pop up and I'm like, 'Oh, I know that one.' And I'll chime in. But it's also kind of a captive audience for people who are there doing that for the same reason."

"You can do it and it's free advertising and just like I say, everybody's on social media now. We had a guest here last week and we asked folks to fill out a form and one of the ways they found us was through **Facebook**. "

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How important is this task?

Compliance and governance refers to the development of policies and establishment of legal limitations for a social media team. Growth can quickly be stifled by legal obstacles, particularly when businesses use external social platforms, so careful management of this aspect of a social media account is critical.

	Does not complete the task	Low importance	Medium importance	High importance	Notes
Monitor Terms of Service/IP interests	118	72	59	107	
Percentage of Total	33.1	20.2	16.6	**30.1**	
2012 Study	65	36	40	25	
Percentage of Total	39.2	21.7	**24.1**	15.1	
Create/Maintain social media policy	49	83	95	128	
Percentage of Total	13.8	23.4	26.8	**36.1**	
2012 Study	61	43	43	19	
Percentage of Total	36.7	**25.9**	**25.9**	11.4	
Explain how to converse in various situations	77	83	80	123	
Percentage of Total	21.2	22.9	22	**33.9**	
2012 Study	61	43	43	19	
Percentage of Total	36.7	**25.9**	**25.9**	11.4	
Act appropriately without direction	21	35	53	240	
Percentage of Total	6	10	15.2	**68.8**	
2012 Study	19	33	41	72	
Percentage of Total	11.5	20	24.8	**43.6**	

Time spent (per week)

Compliance and governance refers to the development of policies and establishment of legal limitations for a social media team. Growth can quickly be stifled by legal obstacles, particularly when businesses use external social platforms, so careful management of this aspect of a social media account is critical.

	Do not perform task	<1 Hour	1-2 Hours	3-5 Hours	6-9 Hours	10+ Hours	Percentage of change
Monitor Terms of Service/IP interests	125	84	18	29	13	21	
Percentage of Total	43.1	29	6.2	10	4.5	7.2	
2012 Study	71	17	29	29	17	3	
Percentage of Total	42.8	10.2	17.5	17.5	10.2	1.8	
Create/Maintain social media policy	76	118	32	33	11	22	
Percentage of Total	26	40.4	11	11.3	3.8	7.5	
2012 Study	48	34	31	30	17	6	
Percentage of Total	28.9	20.5	18.7	18.1	10.2	3.6	
Explain how to converse in various situations	78	86	56	34	15	21	
Percentage of Total	26.9	29.6	19.3	11.7	5.2	7.2	
2012 Study	68	18	30	34	11	5	
Percentage of Total	41	10.8	18.1	20.5	6.6	3	
Act appropriately without direction	39	38	43	55	21	97	
Percentage of Total	13.1	12.8	14.5	18.5	7.1	32.7	
2012 Study	27	19	27	44	19	28	
Percentage of Total	16.5	11.6	16.5	26.8	11.6	17.1	

COMPLIANCE & GOVERNANCE

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Online Survey

- In work with students who do assessment and recommendations to nonprofit clients in my classes, we offer steps to follow in small-shop nonprofits who have small staff with multiple responsibilities.

- I believe in the power of sharing with those who will have an impact for your online community. Connect, engage, and share

- In a big organization, let's face it, what's put on social media will be reviewed by many people, including legal, so autonomy isn't a facet of the job. ([tweet this!](#))

- In my capacity as an educator and trainer, I am unaware of the time spent by the social media professionals who manage the areas of compliance and governance at my institution or specific client organizations.

- We work very closely with our legal team to review any policies we have in place.

> "It's evolved quite a bit over the last six years that I've been doing it. When I started on the social report team, there were only five of us. I was the only girl. Every single response that we sent out had to go through our legal team first. Can you imagine the amount of delay?"
>
> **- Social Media Employee**

> "We did things like make friends with the lawyers first because I think every social media manager would probably say, 'OK, one of the struggles you have is with legal.'
>
> Because they're going to tell you, 'No, you can't do anything.'
>
> And you're going to say, 'Well, the rest of the world is doing this on social media, and consumers are forcing us to do this, so we're going to have to do it eventually.'
>
> So we just slowly get closer and closer to the middle where we both compromise and can do something."
>
> **- Social Media Manager**

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

How important is this task?

Project management includes the coordination of many different people, the completion of many tasks in a precise sequence, and acquiring or outsourcing to key talents to implement the vision, plan, or campaign.

	Does not complete the task	Low importance	Medium importance	High importance	Percentage of Change
Negotiate KPIs with management	67	66	101	121	
Percentage of Total	18.9	18.6	28.5	**34.1**	
2012 Study	62	27	58	19	
Percentage of Total	37.3	16.3	**34.9**	11.4	
Manage multiple clients/projects simultaneously	58	46	80	173	
Percentage of Total	16.2	12.9	22.4	**48.5**	
2012 Study	50	39	44	33	
Percentage of Total	30.1	23.5	**26.5**	19.9	
Respond to competition	46	96	124	87	
Percentage of Total	13	27.2	**35.1**	24.6	
2012 Study	46	45	56	19	
Percentage of Total	27.7	27.1	**33.7**	11.4	
Delegate activities to others	56	71	105	120	
Percentage of Total	15.9	20.2	29.8	**34.1**	
2012 Study	63	38	40	25	
Percentage of Total	38	22.9	**24.1**	15.1	
Write/Issue RFP or RFQ	132	88	66	66	
Percentage of Total	37.5	25	18.8	18.8	
2012 Study	72	54	25	15	
Percentage of Total	43.4	**32.5**	15.1	9	

Project Management

Time spent (per week)

Project management includes the coordination of many different people, the completion of many tasks in a precise sequence, and acquiring or outsourcing to key talents to implement the vision, plan, or campaign.

	Do not perform task	<1 Hour	1-2 Hours	3-5 Hours	6-9 Hours	10+ Hours	Percentage of change
Negotiate KPIs with management	82	81	59	47	10	22	
Percentage of Total	27.2	26.9	19.6	15.6	3.3	7.3	
2012 Study	69	25	26	29	13	3	
Percentage of Total	41.8	15.2	15.8	17.6	7.9	1.8	
Manage multiple clients/projects simultaneously	71	27	25	74	26	78	
Percentage of Total	23.6	9	8.3	24.6	8.6	25.9	
2012 Study	49	18	22	40	25	11	
Percentage of Total							
Respond to competition	63	83	67	45	17	20	
Percentage of Total	21.4	28.1	22.7	15.3	5.8	6.8	
2012 Study	50	46	26	32	9	3	
Percentage of Total	30.1	27.1	15.7	19.3	5.4	1.8	
Delegate activities to others	66	64	83	57	13	24	
Percentage of Total	21.5	20.8	27	18.6	4.2	7.8	
2012 Study	73	19	21	34	15	4	
Percentage of Total	44	11.4	12.7	20.5	9	2.4	

Time spent (per week) (Continued)

2012 Study	58	33	40	26	8	1
Percentage of Total	34.9	19.9	24.1	15.7	4.8	<1
Write/Issue RFP or RFQ	136	55	34	30	17	18
Percentage of Total	46.9	19	11.7	10.3	5.9	6.2
2012 Study	75	18	25	30	13	4
Percentage of Total	45.4	10.9	15.1	18.1	7.9	2.4

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Online Survey

- To train every employee in every campaign
- Maintain and upkeep the social media sites. Write, develop, get content approved, then ready to submit into social media would be a large task as well. Also, likely that this is not the sole responsibility for a person in the org.
- We develop a weekly, monthly, and quarterly plan as opposed to a daily plan.
- Adjust activities in response to competition - time spent is as needed; Delegate activities - time spent is as needed
- Create Content - HIGH, Train others (Executives and staff) - HIGH
- We outsource a lot of our writing to freelance bloggers.

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How important is this task?

Marketing & communications includes priming the marketplace, gauging audience interest, sharing stories, and preparing for campaigns and/or sharing your campaign announcements via internet-driven technology. Blogs, RSS, web video productions, podcasts, and social networking platforms are essential to the content of social media marketing.

	Does not complete the task	Low importance	Medium importance	High importance	Percentage of Change
Advertisements on platforms	57	91	97	126	
Percentage of Total	15.4	24.5	26.1	**34**	
2012 Study	57	47	46	31	
Percentage of Total	31.5	**26**	25.4	17.1	
Branding consistency	18	35	67	239	
Percentage of Total	5	9.7	18.7	**66.5**	
2012 Study	41	41	51	48	
Percentage of Total	22.7	22.7	**28.2**	26.5	
Written/Video content is brief, concise, and accurate	17	21	63	259	
Percentage of Total	4.7	5.8	17.5	**72**	
2012 Study	28	41	55	56	
Percentage of Total	15.6	22.8	30.6	**31.1**	
Identify who company customers are and report progress	42	62	105	151	
Percentage of Total	11.7	17.2	29.2	**41.9**	
2012 Study	58	45	51	27	
Percentage of Total	32	24.9	**28.2**	14.9	

How important is this task? (Continued)

Percentage of Total	22.8	26.7	**28.9**	21.7
Read, comment, and respond to industry peers	25	80	123	133
Percentage of Total	6.9	22.2	34.1	**36.8**
2012 Study	28	68	50	34
Percentage of Total	15.6	**37.8**	27.8	18.9

Time spent (per week)

Marketing & communications includes priming the marketplace, gauging audience interest, sharing stories and preparing for campaigns and/or sharing your campaign announcements via internet-driven technology. Blogs, RSS, web video productions, podcasts and social networking platforms are essential to the content of social media marketing.

	Do not perform task	<1 Hour	1-2 Hours	3-5 Hours	6-9 Hours	10+ Hours	Percentage of change
Advertisements on platforms	77	59	61	57	15	37	
Percentage of Total	25.2	19.3	**19.9**	18.6	4.9	12.1	
2012 Study	68	24	26	34	21	4	
Percentage of Total	38.4	13.6	14.7	**19.2**	11.9	2.3	
Branding consistency	41	69	75	59	30	46	
Percentage of Total	12.8	21.6	**23.4**	18.4	9.4	14.4	
2012 Study	43	31	44	29	21	10	
Percentage of Total	24.2	17.4	**24.7**	16.3	11.8	5.6	
Written/Video content is brief, concise, and accurate	32	46	53	78	38	53	
Percentage of Total	9.4	15.3	17.7	**26**	12.7	17.7	
2012 Study	35	36	54	30	20	6	
Percentage of Total	19.3	19.9	**29.8**	16.6	11	3.3	
Identify who company customers are and report progress	65	70	71	62	12	27	
Percentage of Total	21.2	22.8	**23.1**	20.2	3.9	8.8	
2012 Study	65	33	27	30	16	6	
Percentage of Total	36.7	**18.6**	15.2	16.9	9	3.4	

Time spent (per week) (Continued)

Publish content to company platforms and social networking platforms	38	27	55	79	46	67
Percentage of Total	12.2	8.7	17.6	**25.3**	14.7	21.5
2012 Study	48	29	42	121	42	7
Percentage of Total	16.6	10	14.5	**41.9**	14.5	2.4
Read, comment, and respond to industry peers	42	74	84	54	20	37
Percentage of Total	13.5	23.8	**27**	17.4	6.4	11.9
2012 Study	33	41	46	36	15	8
Percentage of Total	18.4	22.9	**25.7**	20.1	8.4	4.5

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Online Survey

- Engage c-suite in social and help them be advocates
- Participate in Twitter chats & social media events
- It is important to me to constantly support my digital community and tribe - building, creating brand awareness for my clients and personal brand
- I also have to create all of the creative social assets: video, images, branded images, etc.

Follow-Up Interviews

"You are building brand envy, you're creating brand sentiment, you are doing all these things that are long-term very important. But because you can't necessarily deliver that immediate, 'this is why this is important.' I think a lot of companies have a tendency to want to shy away from spending money on developing those things."

- Social Media Employee

"There are certain positions that are great to advertise on social and some that are not so great. Like executive-level roles don't do that well on Facebook, but retail does great."

- Social Media Employee

"I would say we do our best by first having really good writers on product marketing."

- Social Media Manager

"We're actually building an influencer base right now, but if I have a few influencers, who, when they publish something online, I will immediately share it out and encourage others to share it. We all kind of feed into that. I'm not the one who does it the most, but I do have people I push out there."

-Social Media Employee

"You have to be proactively publishing, otherwise everyone else tells your story for you."

- Social Media Manager

COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT

How important is this task?

Built around a foundation of quality content, community management is the process of ensuring that the two-way online communication between the organization and its customers / stakeholders always flows smoothly. The manager serves as a professional representative for the organization's products or services, while simultaneously gathering feedback for further development of products or services for evaluation.

	Does not complete the task	Low importance	Medium importance	High importance	Notes
Comment & respond to customers	15	29	63	260	
Percentage of Total	4.1	7.9	17.2	**70.8**	
2012 Study	19	44	49	81	
Percentage of Total	9.8	22.8	25.4	**42**	
2-way conversations with customers	22	52	95	193	
Percentage of Total	6.1	14.4	26.2	**53.3**	
2012 Study	38	46	68	42	
Percentage of Total	19.6	23.7	**35.1**	21.6	
Reach out & engage with audience	12	30	77	244	
Percentage of Total	3.3	8.3	21.2	**67.2**	
2012 Study	11	41	58	84	
Percentage of Total	5.7	21.1	29.9	**43.3**	
Apologize if necessary	24	38	61	238	
Percentage of Total	6.6	10.5	16.9	**65.9**	
2012 Study	14	42	35	103	
Percentage of Total	7.2	21.6	18	**53.1**	

How important is this task? (Continued)

Recognize accomplishments of those in your network	17	71	88	184
Percentage of Total	4.7	19.7	24.4	**51.1**
2012 Study	13	50	63	68
Percentage of Total	6.7	25.8	32.5	**35.1**

Community Management

Time spent (per week)

Built around a foundation of quality content, community management is the process of ensuring that the two-way online communication between the organization and its customers / stakeholders always flows smoothly. The manager serves as a professional representative for the organization's products or services, while simultaneously gathering feedback for further development of products or services for evaluation.

	Does not complete the task	Low importance	Medium importance	High importance	Notes
Comment & respond to customers	15	29	63	260	
Percentage of Total	4.1	7.9	17.2	**70.8**	
2012 Study	19	44	49	81	
Percentage of Total	9.8	22.8	25.4	**42**	
2-way conversations with customers	22	52	95	193	
Percentage of Total	6.1	14.4	26.2	**53.3**	
2012 Study	38	46	68	42	
Percentage of Total	19.6	23.7	**35.1**	21.6	
Reach out & engage with audience	12	30	77	244	
Percentage of Total	3.3	8.3	21.2	**67.2**	
2012 Study	11	41	58	84	
Percentage of Total	5.7	21.1	29.9	**43.3**	
Apologize if necessary	24	38	61	238	
Percentage of Total	6.6	10.5	16.9	**65.9**	
2012 Study	14	42	35	103	
Percentage of Total	7.2	21.6	18	**53.1**	
Recognize accomplishments of those in your network	17	71	88	184	
Percentage of Total	4.7	19.7	24.4	**51.1**	
2012 Study	13	50	63	68	
Percentage of Total	6.7	25.8	32.5	**35.1**	

RESEARCH & ANALYSIS

How important is this task?

Research and analysis should take place within each domain. However, the greatest value can be found when real-time feedback and monitoring solutions have been implemented, making trends and behaviors more concrete.

> "I think a lot of people kind of sell that short in that this is scientific, this is not just someone who can take a selfie and has a lot of Instagram followers."
>
> - Social Media Employee

	Does not complete the task	Low importance	Medium importance	High importance	Percentage of Change
Perform keyword analysis	62	82	103	113	
Percentage of Total	17.2	22.8	28.6	**31.4**	
2012 Study	46	27	53	41	
Percentage of Total	27.5	16.2	**31.7**	24.6	
Optimize KPIs	53	64	116	123	
Percentage of Total	14.9	18	32.6	**34.6**	
2012 Study	56	38	41	34	
Percentage of Total	33.1	22.5	**24.3**	20.1	
Summarize work in reports	46	65	120	137	
Percentage of Total	12.5	17.7	32.6	**37.2**	
2012 Study	60	47	37	25	
Percentage of Total	35.5	**27.8**	21.9	14.8	
Monitor competition	32	93	117	109	
Percentage of Total	9.1	26.5	**33.3**	31.1	
2012 Study	39	52	43	35	
Percentage of Total	23.1	**30.8**	25.4	20.7	

Research & Analysis

Time spent (per week)

Research and analysis should take place within each domain. However, the greatest value can be found when real-time feedback and monitoring solutions have been implemented, making trends and behaviors more concrete.

	Do not perform task	<1 Hour	1-2 Hours	3-5 Hours	6-9 Hours	10+ Hours	Percentage of change
Perform keyword analysis	80	75	67	45	18	18	
Percentage of Total	26.4	**24.8**	22.1	14.9	5.9	5.9	
2012 Study	51	25	28	43	14	5	
Percentage of Total	30.7	15.1	16.9	**25.9**	8.4	3	
Optimize KPIs	74	62	73	57	16	23	
Percentage of Total	24.3	20.3	**23.9**	18.7	5.2	7.5	
2012 Study	61	28	34	28	13	4	
Percentage of Total	36.3	16.7	**20.2**	16.7	7.7	2.4	
Summarize work in reports	67	63	89	50	18	26	
Percentage of Total	21.4	20.1	**28.4**	16	5.8	8.3	
2012 Study	63	21	34	31	17	3	
Percentage of Total	37.3	12.4	**20.1**	18.3	10.1	1.8	
Monitor competition	55	88	76	49	19	20	
Percentage of Total	17.9	**28.7**	24.8	16	6.2	6.5	
2012 Study	44	30	40	32	21	2	
Percentage of Total	26	17.8	**23.7**	18.9	12.4	1.2	

Time spent (per week) (Continued)

Research industry topics, posts, blogs, and other SM content	**51**	**51**	**76**	**77**	**27**	**32**
Percentage of Total	16.2	16.2	24.2	**24.5**	8.6	10.2
2012 Study	40	29	37	**40**	19	4
Percentage of Total	23.7	17.2	21.9	**23.7**	11.2	2.4
Identifying who or what influences buying behavior	71	45	**72**	60	22	34
Percentage of Total	23.4	14.8	**23.7**	19.7	7.2	11.2
2012 Study	42	28	34	**45**	14	4
Percentage of Total	25.1	16.8	20.4	**26.9**	8.3	2.4

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Online Survey

- Cross platform and deep brand knowledge.

- I outside source most of these activities as my time is limited and need an expert who specializes in this.

- Importance doesn't necessarily mean we've devoted resources to it, sadly

- Respond to community comments, questions and concerns. - high importance: 1-5 hrs. depending on size of community

- Most of my time is identifying influencers that could potentially help my clients brands or my own personal brand

- Product Managers and Marketing should be scanning the competitive horizon. The social media person should be familiar with competition, but primarily focused on how our company is being viewed and how well our SM works

- I only mark keyword analysis as medium because I would include it with other aspects of social listening, which is of high importance overall.

- Participate in industry conversations, research what is trending on various social media platforms.

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"I can show engagement numbers, like if your engagement went up 4%, but they don't really care about that. They care about, "Okay, we're spending $5000 a month on social. What are we getting?' And it's hard sometimes to tell them you are getting loyal followers, you are getting people who are interested in what you are doing. Even if they are not looking for a job right now, they're going to think of you if they are in the future."

- Social Media Employee

WHAT TOOLS DO YOU USE TO MEASURE SUCCESS ON SOCIAL MEDIA?

"I keep looking at the **native tools** that are in there. Like Facebook insights, the Twitter insights, how many 'Likes' are on Instagram. So I'm mostly going by what they're saying. I try to see if there's any traffic on the website, if I have access to that. It's just a conglomeration of how many shares, how many 'Likes,' how much interaction is there. And that's all pretty much done through the native apps themselves."

"**Facebook insights** are nice to see what kinds of posts seemed to resonate best with our audience. (tweet this!) It's kind of balancing and making sure we're not just tooting our own horn and just posting about what makes us so wonderful. But also posting things that staff alumni and student alumni like to see, which are often just pictures of campus. That, to our marketing group might not tell a story,
but they can get a feel when they go through comments on any given picture from our staff and student alumni."

"We use **Google analytics** to help us measure a lot of our social media, or media analytics. We have not gone to the depths of going out for Adobe's Omniture program or other analytics like that, because of their price, but often times it is anecdotally—comments that we get back from our audience. And they're very vocal if they think we're either being not direct enough or verbose."

"We have **internal surveys** for our employees and how they feel as well."

> ## What social media tools do you find most valuable?

"We measure positive and negative **sentiment**, which is our biggest thing. We have a meeting every quarter saying, here's how much our positive or negative sentiment has gone up or down and we measure our NPS score."

WHAT CHALLENGES DO YOU ENCOUNTER WITH MEASUREMENT?

"Well one of the things that I have written into my agreement is that **I do not promise** how many followers they will get, or 'Likes' or whatever, and I do not promise how many customers they will get from social media. I cannot make a guarantee. What I do guarantee them is that I will help them to increase community engagement. And I tell them, in the contract, I show them 3 ways that we'll be able to measure that. I know, without fail, that I have accomplished that with every client I've had."

"Because **it's not that traditional media type of spend**, where, if you bought an ad in a magazine or even just a digital ad, you can track immediately, 'I spent $5,000 and I got this.' With social, it's much harder to do that, because you can spend $5,000 and not necessarily see any results but they're there."

"I can show engagement numbers, like if your engagement went up 4%. But **they don't really care** about that. (tweet this!) They care about, 'Okay, we're spending $5000 a month on social. What are we getting?' And it's hard sometimes to tell them you are getting loyal followers, you are getting people who are interested in what you are doing. Even if they are not looking for a job right now, they're going to think of you if they are in the future because you've created this concept of, 'This is why these groups like to work at our company and this is why we're different from everybody else.' Every single time they have this special snowflake who is better and different than everybody else."

SIGNIFICANT CHANGES SINCE LAST JOB STUDY

As expected, significant changes have occurred in social media since the original job study was completed. Those changes are outlined below and should be considered individually and as a whole when thinking about what the social media job market looks like for professionals today.

CHANGES IN THE INDUSTRY

In 2012, when the original job study was completed:

- Facebook hit 1 billion users.
- Twitter was at 500 million users.
- Google+ was close behind with 400 million users.

In April of 2012, Facebook acquired Instagram and the world wondered if the platform – previously committed to no ads and no way to schedule posts in advance – would change as a result. By 2013, with their 100 million users and integration of video – we were pretty confident more changes would be coming.

On January 25, 2013, Vine, a short form video platform, was launched. Users created six-second loop videos – a significantly different approach to video sharing simply because of video length.

In October 2013, Instagram introduced sponsored posts. (tweet this!)

In March of 2014, Yik Yak launched as a message platform designed for communication only visible for users within a 1.5 mile radius. It quickly gained popularity with students on campuses across the United States, but received harsh criticism and was frequently banned on school campuses when the tool was used to bully students.

Also in 2014, Pinterest launched an 8-month beta test for promoted pins. The test must have gone well, because the opportunity to promote pins is open to all users today.

On March 26, 2015, Twitter launched Periscope, a live-streaming app that allowed users to broadcast their surroundings live to any of their followers. (tweet this!)

In addition to the changes in how users engage with sites both as marketers and end users, it's also important to consider the number of users around the world connecting on one or multiple sites.

As of September 2016, the top three most used platforms were able to report some impressive numbers.

- Facebook had an estimated 1,100,000,000 unique monthly visitors.
- YouTube had an estimated 1,000,000,000 unique monthly visitors.
- Twitter had an estimated 310,000,000 unique monthly visitors.

LinkedIn (255,000,000), Pinterest (250,000,000) and Instagram (100,000,000) also generate an impressive amount of unique visitors. But what typically surprises people is the activity associated with the social media platforms you hear less about like Reddit (85,000,000), Vine (42,000,000) and Meetup (40,000,000).

No matter what data you look at, it's clear social media use is increasing, platforms are creating paid marketing options, and businesses are capitalizing on the opportunities.

ADDITIONAL THEMES

In addition to the topics we asked about specifically in the online survey and follow-up interview, additional themes emerged. Those themes and related survey data are outlined below.

THE IMPORTANCE OF MEASUREMENT

Several interview participants discussed the importance of measurement on social media. Two specific areas of importance emerged:

- How do you measure the effectiveness of the content you create? (tweet this question!)

- How do you report social media return on investment (ROI)?

Social media managers, employees, and consultants all contributed the following suggestions:

What do you measure?

Three of the specific measurements (amongst others) that were discussed amongst our survey participants are explored here. For each, we've shared at least one of the quotes from our survey participants, as well as a brief description of the measurement.

Sentiment Analysis

Sentiment analysis – in social media as well as other areas of business and writing – is the examination of how an individual or group feels about a particular topic. Few people would disagree with you if you told them it's important for a business to know what people think of them. But how many of those people who genuinely value customer sentiment understand how to measure it? As we heard in many different ways from our survey respondents, identifying measurable components of this area of social media is critical in the explanation of sentiment that eventually allows you to demonstrate value.

> "Even just incremental shifts in (sentiment) — I use different tools to measure brand sentiment online. What are the types of things people are saying about working at (client name)? Are they saying mostly negative things? Are they saying mostly positive things?"
>
> - Social Media Manager

Consider, for example, the story of one of our interview participants. She struggles to help her employer understand how positive sentiment on social media helps recruiters get talented people to apply. 100 people might click on the Facebook post associated with the open position, but how many posts contributed to gain that initial candidate interest in the organization? That is impossible to measure with any certainty, but it isn't impossible to explain the general concept. We're all influenced by the marketing messages we see on social media and sometimes business owners just need to be reminded of what they've already experienced firsthand.

Depending on the tool, sentiment is measured by calculating the use of words that are determined to be positive, negative, or neutral. While it isn't an exact science, it is impressively accurate and most tools are rigorously maintained to ensure words are assigned their proper value and popular slang and catch phrases are properly identified.

Mentions

How often do people mention you by name? Even an extension of mentions like hashtags and key terms – slightly harder to measure, but manageable if you know what you're looking for – can provide tremendous insight into the effectiveness of your campaign or overall brand.

> "We measure how many times the hashtag works and if the hashtag is mentioned with (our company) during an event versus how many times the hashtag was mentioned without (our company) during the event."
>
> **- Social Media Manager**

During one interview, a social media manager shared with us the importance assigned to mentions by the social media team.

Her team sets up a hashtag for every event they're actively participating in and they follow it closely –who is using it and how? What other hashtags have emerged? What keywords are associated with each mention? Who are the biggest influencers engaged in relevant conversations?

Keeping track of mentions is easier than you might think. At an event, a social media team is typically so focused and engaged in various platforms, they catch mentions as they come through. But most platforms – Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram – provide users with the option to receive an alert if they are mentioned in any context.

Whether you're responding to an alert or engaging in a near-synchronous conversation, how you respond to a mention is critical. (tweet this!) Your options vary by platform, but each time a user reaches out above the noise on social media to talk to you specifically, you have a tremendous opportunity to connect with them and their community in a meaningful way.

> "We have clients that are doing mostly posts or mostly boosted posts for specific deliverables. So, getting them to a landing page on the website. Having them subscribe to an event. Having them try out something. Or getting them to some sort of a specific deliverable. So, that's where most of the digital marketing inside of social media goes. We don't do 'like; advertising."
>
> **- Social Media Manager**

Actions

This was almost too broad of a category or perhaps too obvious of a point to mention, but it came up so often, we had to include it. Success can be measured by the number of people who complete an action – any action – desired by the social media professional.

The most common desirable actions include:

- Purchases (click-through to purchase directly, event registration)
- Information sharing (sign-up for a newsletter, more information, etc.)
- Site traffic (website, other social media platform)
- Liking, sharing, commenting, etc. within the same platform

Actions prompted by social media can often be tracked through external tools or the individual social media platforms themselves.

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HOW DO YOU CONTINUOUSLY ENGAGE WITH YOUR FOLLOWERS?

"So you know **word of mouth and networking** is obviously important, we do have a social, we are on Twitter, we are on Facebook, we do have a … kind of a descriptive video on our website kind of giving a recap of what we do … should a family get referred to the center and want to know a little bit more about the services."

"I post pre-approved content and then I use the connections on LinkedIn and if anyone has a birthday or anniversary or new job, **I just send them a quick message**, 'Hey, congrats on the anniversary.' Basically the canned one, 'Hope you're doing well.' Sometimes they respond back, 'Oh, thank you very much' and I'm like, 'Yeah, great, hope you're doing well,' and then a LinkedIn discussion."

"We give first names and they'll always say, 'Hope to see you there,' or 'Tell them I sent you.' You **make them feel like they're already a customer**, even if they haven't or won't."(sic)

"The point of social media is to **be social**. People aren't going to, necessarily, remember whether or not you are the cheapest prices in clothes. But they will remember if you **help them out** because you didn't have their size but you took the time to ask them their feedback or help them find another store that might have their size. Even though you might lose them as a customer yourself, because you're now sending them to another store, they'll end up talking about you to everybody. You'll get that word-of-mouth referral, 'Oh my God, this company really helped me with this, and you should check them out.' And by doing that you're going to keep getting people. Most of my clients have come to me from **word-of-mouth**. I've never had to really advertise or do anything just because you act human. It should be a common thing but the more technologically-related we get, the less human we seem to be." ([tweet this!](#))

"With my Instagram, I **show behind-the-scenes stuff** too. So I don't necessarily always just show my product or my services. I'll show enjoying a night on the town to show that I'm a part of the community. It's a give and take, being able to say, 'I'm having coffee at this great coffee shop,' or shop local kind of thing. Just to show that it's not an automated response. We can provide great services but we can also just be there to listen."

"I think the point is all about engagement. If someone is going to take the time to respond something we've posted or commented on our services or anything like that, we want to engage with that person. **Even if they had a negative comment**. We want to show that we are engaged, we are present; we're not robots and to continue conversations in that regard. I think it's more just realizing it's a social platform, not just kind of post out and highlight ourselves. The intent is around engagement."

"If you look at some of the big people everybody follows, which are some well-known people both philosophically and commercially, and some of them don't reply to anybody ever. I always wonder why people waste their time following them because there's no interaction with them. And then you've got people like Peter Shankman, even Richard Branson who, granted they're not always replying but they are available to do so, and interact with people. So **if you're not interacting** and you're not owning up to the mistakes or trying to fix them or trying to help people, **then really, what is the whole point of your social media**?" ([tweet this!](#))

"…and we had to very quickly communicate that our whole system was down and even when we brought it back up, it was very variable. So sometimes it would work, sometimes it wouldn't for about a week. And so we had to kind of **constantly communicate** to our stakeholders and it was a combination of pretty carefully crafted messaging to our clients. But then more quick and dirty, if you will. But more simple and straightforward messaging to test takers and test centers and some of other stakeholders via

Facebook and Twitter, because that's where they were going. That's where they were expressing their frustration at not being able to register or getting to a test center and their test not being up and things like that."

"I have to deal with comments on ads because Facebook doesn't allow you to disable comments on ads. So the worst thing that I can do is have a client look at an ad that we're running and it's covered with, "This is the worst company in the entire world,' blah blah blah. That's not done. So I go in and I don't get rid of them. **Sometimes it's good to have discussions, if they are actually discussions**. Because a lot of times actual employees will come in and go, 'That's not true.' and those you want to leave because you don't want to make it look inorganic. But if someone is using foul language or they obviously just have an axe to grind, you take them down because the customers really don't like seeing that."

"The longer a negative post sits unanswered, the longer a question is unanswered, it is noticed by potential customers, as well as the person that has moved on to the next vendor or hotel or restaurant. Your website's always open. So if you have someone at your front desk, or your register for your business hours, think of those as your website. **Someone has to be ready to respond**." ([tweet this!](#))

"What are we trying for? We are not an advocacy organization and so we are mindful that while some individuals may have opinions, and strong opinions, that's not the space we're in. So trying to be objective and remember that we want to put information out, **we want to raise awareness** but we are not an advocacy organization."

"I've seen it where it's farmed out to companies that, the business is in Massachusetts, but the service is in Tennessee, and they kind of BS their way through it. But if you're not on the ground, if you don't **understand the business**, you really can't do it justice by social media. Every client I had, I was on site a couple months a year. Even

though we were operating year-round social, I would be there only two months of the year."

"Everybody I'm working with, the community, is essentially a fan base. So because that's the case, it's a slight twist on the typical business model where it's all about somebody buying the product. And, of course, in some situations, you want them to be repeat buyers. In the case of a musician, like myself, one of the reasons I want to engage with my fan base is that if I do a concert window, I want them to actually come and listen. Because if they don't come and listen, I'm sitting there screaming into a microphone all by myself. And that's not that much fun. So that becomes the typical scenario with me, with my clients. **The community is pretty much everything**."

WHAT LISTENING TOOLS ARE IMPORTANT FOR SOCIAL MEDIA PROFESSIONALS?

"One of the most important things, honestly, is having a **social listening tool**. You miss so much. My personal favorite is Sprout Social, because I can just set parameters. Anything that comes in is obviously tagged to the company I see, but also I can just put a listing around hashtags and things like that. Things that are related."

"To say, 'Well, this strategy worked and this strategy didn't work and here's one.' I can show them things that have changed along the way. I love using and **TrueTwit** and **TweetDeck** almost interchangeably. I've been using TweetDeck more because I've found that almost everything seems to be pretty mobile-friendly."

"I can use **Facebook page manager's app** on my phone with no problem."

"Twitter, for some reason, if I have **more than one account** that I'm looking at, which I do, I've found that Twitter doesn't seem to be really helpful for me on a mobile device. So I use TweetDeck a lot to give me a broad quick view of what's going on

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with the channel."

"…and I strayed away from TrueTwit for a while because it wasn't as helpful in a way. Like if you already have Facebook, you can schedule things, if you already have Twitter, you can schedule things right from the maintenance app. But then **when they added the Instagram option**, so that you could schedule that, I kind of went back to it."

HOW DO YOU MAINTAIN ONE VOICE ACROSS YOUR SOCIAL CHANNELS?

"Being mindful of that and always being prepared. That's also why we always work as a team. For one, we can have **a second set of eyes** before we post and hopefully avoid the situation. And then sometimes if we get a comment or if someone is confused about what position we have or something we've posted, we usually get whoever else is involved - if it's a program – we get that administrator involved, just to make sure that we have all the information on our end and can **respond in a thoughtful way** that has more information."

"If it's something where someone's coming at us as an organization, then **I usually want to know** because if we don't respond to something like a direct message on Twitter, pretty soon it's on our Facebook page, and our reputation starts to be at risk. And we have a really good reputation in our market, and we want to preserve that however we can."

WHAT ARE THE MOST CHALLENGING ROAD BLOCKS YOU ENCOUNTER?

"It comes back to **funding**. And so when we look at how our shared services is funded, it's funded by our largest brands."

"I think a lot of companies have a tendency to

want to shy away from **spending money** on developing [brand envy and brand sentiment]."

"…**restricted budget for social**. Marketing budget can be in the millions and not a lot is for social. It's usually crappy. Because **they just think it should be free**. Because obviously it's free to have a Facebook profile. But to hire someone to manage that profile, and to do all of your content updates, and to answer all the questions, and run campaigns. That is not a small task. Companies, even in the places I work at, are pretty fair but it's like you're asking them to give us their firstborn child. They're just baffled by the fact that this would actually cost money. They really think, 'I don't need to hire someone to do this, I can have an intern.' And that becomes problematic because companies that we see that are doing that or— and this is another problem, it's going to sound mean but it's not meant to—hiring people right out of college with no experience, whether it be in traditional marketing or social, they don't know what they're doing."

"When you're a Marketing Director, that's a $100,000 job. When you're a Social Media Director, you're doing the same amount of work, that's a $60,000 job. It's more getting the people who are creating budgets A. **the importance** and B. **the skills** that are required to do that job **should be in line** with anybody else running marketing for a company. **But they're not**."

"…you're 30 years in and you're **nearing retirement**, I have not had any success with meeting with that dynamic."

"It still seems to be something that they kind of outsource. I'll meet with the boss or the owner or whoever and they'll kind of get it. And then **they'll call over the 17-year-old** who just started working there and say, 'Okay, now this is your added responsibility.'"

"But if you're a vendor like, you know, HP or you're IBM or you're any of the bigger, established companies, it's really **hard to envision what**

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they're going to do with this in the grand scheme of it all. And I think they're still trying to figure that out too sometimes."

"What you run into sometimes is **cultural differences, country differences, language barriers**. Also, I found out once the same joke that I always think is funny in the American version of a movie doesn't always translate to the people overseas. You have things like that that also happen sometimes."

"'Oh, this is something that we can get an intern to do.' And it's like, 'No, it's not. It's really not.' We have a lot of clients to manage who are just like, 'Oh, we don't need help with social. We have interns doing that.' Because they think these are millennials and they know social so they could handle it. And **they don't really think about the fact that there's a ton of data analysis and strategy that goes into being able to properly run a brand on social**. And I think a lot of people kind of sell that short in that this is scientific, this is not just someone who can take a selfie and has a lot of Instagram followers… mid-level brands, and they just can't understand why they can't get an intern to post a couple of pictures on their social page and why they should be spending money on this."

"**Showcasing a direct line from the social media presence**, so offering some type of incentive to 'Favorite' or 'Like' or check in, allow them to trace it better, having a type of referral system so they can see where their leads are coming from. Otherwise they just say, 'Oh, well, you guys just take pictures? I could do that on my own.' Usually they can't. "

"Getting people to buy into **the importance of social media as a business tool**, not just as a nice-to-have marketing tool. It's really, there's no part of the business that can't benefit from utilizing social media in some way or another, even if that's just for research and learning. Anywhere from marketing to sales to leadership, brand awareness. There's so much that can be done with social media and people just don't quite understand that as a whole."

"Social media kind of gets segmented away from traditional marketing. If you are a social media subject expert, you kind of have to get a hold of just that. And I think it can be limiting when it comes to your **growth within your company**."

"…social is **not as cut and dry** as it is in other traditional forms of media."

"For whatever reason the last year or so has seen almost like a reverse so maybe it's just the clients we end up working with but **a lot of them really are not on anything**."

"It's definitely in **industry**, because people in manufacturing for instance are very behind on just well, almost anything that involves the public, I think. I said, 'The thing is, people still need to find you. And your business is still a worldwide need. And yes, you may need the same wood or the same metal that people do, but even so, there are things that are unique that you guys have and sell and do or whatever it might be that no one knows you do it.'"

"When you're talking to younger marketers, or people in the start-up world, they look at what we tell them and they're like 'no, no, there's a way that we can hack this.' No, you can't. It just doesn't work that way. You might be able to work it faster or get a number of people faster than the way I'm explaining, but the way you keep them is by progressing **and continuously providing the same service**. Not by peaking out and burning it up too fast."

"The marketing person came to me and said, 'We need your assistance because we're trying to break into the North American Enterprise market.' And I said, 'Ok, that's fine. I'm happy to work with you.' We set up a meeting for me to go. When I got there, the CEO and the marketing person are the ones I have the meeting with, which was fine.

The CEO, after about ten minutes of me going back and forth with them says, 'All right, **I don't care about all of that**. I need to know how we are going to get a big sale in the next 30 days.'"

"…and trying to encourage them to realize that **there's different ways**. And that they don't have to triple their workload either. Everything is interconnected kind of beautifully at this point. You can post a picture to Facebook and post the same one to Instagram if you want to just by giving an extra click of a button. It doesn't have to be 6 different pictures for 6 different social media things if it's too much of a burden for the client."

"With every single new customer I take on, I go, '**It cannot be your only marketing**.' If you think that social media is going to do your marketing for you then I'm not taking the job because it won't do it."

"Building that social presence **might not show you an immediate return**. So the hours that you're spending crafting content aren't necessarily going to give you the immediate—it's not an A to B projection. But you are building brand envy, you're creating brand sentiment, you are doing all these things that are long-term very important."

"Because it's something that they just, **they still don't understand**. And there isn't a question there are certain things you can do and you can trigger an almost viral-like effect in some cases, if you've already planned to get that far, you know? There's also the accidental one where you happen to do the video that everybody thinks is funny, great, whatever and that works but that's very rare. Most people actually create and design what they're posting with some thought ahead. Even so, it's like the old SEO. It's great you want your website on the front page. You can pay all the money you want, you're not going to get on that front page for a certain amount of time. You can also not pay any of that money, still get on the first page, but it might take you 60 days instead of 30 days."

"I think every social media manager would probably say, 'OK, one of the struggles you have is

with **legal**.' Because they're going to tell you, 'No, you can't do anything.' And you're going to say, 'Well, the rest of the world is doing this on social media, and consumers are forcing us to do this, so we're going to have to do it eventually.' So we just slowly get closer and closer to the middle where we both compromise and can do something."

HOW DO YOU CREATE CONTENT?

"When we select partners internationally, our partners are contractually bound with us to represent us and our clients the way we've asked them to. So they have **logo usage guidelines**, they have some strict criteria on how they use the brand that we represent."

"We have relationships and we establish **contracts** with them so that they represent us correctly. And then we have a person dedicated to international marketing who reviews content that they push to ensure it's accurate."

"We, in our department, are the ones posting. We may be posting across programs **but having our team be in charge of the posts**. (tweet this!) Then we can have that consistency. That's probably the main thing we do, is to make sure things go through the PR department."

"I always start my clients off with a **storyboard**. It can be just as simple as making sure that the logo is on everything. Hopefully their channels all have the same name."

"You have to be **proactively publishing**, otherwise everyone else tells your story for you. You have to be responding, otherwise you come across as tone deaf, just blasting out your messages without actually responding to anybody trying to talk to you. So all of these things you have to do. I don't think that there's a choice for companies using social media anymore. Any companies that try to make that choice will find themselves failing. So you have to try to start to resource that and make those businesses cases."

"I try to **create a content board** basically, saying, 'This is the name we're going to use

and if they're already existing, how can we get as close as possible to using the same name across all of them?' And is there going to be a consistent color? If your website is hot pink and then everything else—I know it's hard on some channels, you can't change Facebook's color and stuff like that—but you can change your cover image. And, if for some reason, your cover image is a drab greenish-grey and everything else is hot pink, why? If I'm jumping from platform to platform, I want to be able to, more or less, instantly recognize that I'm still within the same company. This is still the brand, this is people that I trust."

"**Bringing that outside perspective** and saying, 'Do you realize that you're sending mixed messages here?' And a lot of times they'll say, 'Whoa, no, I didn't.' So once you realize it for them, they seem pretty receptive."

"Facebook, we will monitor or deliver content on multiple sites based on the program because it's different audiences. Our approach is **we segment things based on the programs, based on the audience**, because the content is very different in each one. We'll provide third-party content on some of these sites that is relative to the interest of those unique audience."

"We spend time **thinking about our different audiences** and who they all are so that we can segment our newsletter and tailor a variety of posts and know who we're targeting with each post, therefore what we're going for and using the other metrics to know what has resonated before with those segments. The number one thing we've started asking is 'Who Cares?' when we're going to post something and making sure it passes that test. Why the target audience would care, might care, if we want to post from somebody or about something then we ask 'Who Cares' and think about that from the target population and decide what angle or what perspective we're going to post about."

"Also, no one wants to go to a party where someone's just talking about themselves all the time. That's not fun. That's not engaging.

That's really obnoxious and annoying. So, to understand that social media is a **constant conversation**. Once someone actually recognizes that, then they can be their authentic self and then they can represent their brand really successfully."

"What's going on with them? **What's going on with their everything**? Even weather could end up being a factor. It depends. A lot of times it seems to be bad timing. The events might have happened at 7 o'clock at night and you want to post right away, live video or live photos. But the people who were at the event are enjoying it. So they're not looking down at their phones and they're not looking at the content."

"If you only posted on Facebook, **maybe now you tweet out the images from last night's events** are here and link to the Facebook. How do you try to fix that kind of thing? I actually just had that happen last week. There were no 'Likes,' there were no comments …nothing. And I had like a whopping 6 people viewed or something like that. I was like, 'really?' We had 45,000 people at the event, what do you mean 6 people viewed this photo? So we're trying to repurpose it to other channels and see what we can do."

"It's a big batch of **intuition**. (tweet this!) And what I mean by that is my gut tells me if I post more of these things, they'll be attracted to my feed because that's similar to the music that I do or those kinds of things. That's just kind of gut-level stuff. Or intuitive things, like hey, I like this, maybe the people who follow me will like it too…And then the other piece of it is checking my actuaries. Just going in and saying, 'What's a good engagement?' Because as much as I am not about—my goal is not to have more followers, it's to have more people interested in my art. Even though that's true, I do know that having more followers can be a piece of that. So if I'm getting more engagement on my posts, obviously I'm going to attract people. And then when they see the post is about, 'Oh this guy writes songs,' and maybe they'll click on that."

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"We do our best by first having really **good writers** on product marketing. Product marketing, their number one deliverable is messaging. So they have to know the pulse of what's happening in the industry, they have to have the pulse of the customer in mind. And they have to build out their messaging. They're constantly refining that. They build what I call their Bible, which is their program messaging document, which contains everything from a 1,000-word description to a 25-word description. When it comes to specific issues, that they're dealing with social media, they are first responsible for developing a short, concise message of what they're trying to deliver which then goes over to our Public Relations specialist, who is probably a better writer and knows the tone to use and the social media genre that we're using, that would be appropriate, so she refines it even further."

"I think we use a **guideline** that if a blog post is over 250 words, we consider making a two-blog post and just expanding the content stretch out over two blog posts. On Facebook or Twitter, it's more **catchy headlines** and **driving to our website**." (tweet this!)

"There aren't really any, because it varies, so there aren't really any metrics that I put in place. It's kind of more of an intuitive thing. People's attention spans tend to be very short. So does it catch my attention? **Could it have been said in less words**? Was the photo sufficient? And sometimes, maybe, should a caption have been used because the photo wasn't sufficient to tell the story? It's more of an intuitive kind of thing. And sometimes that ends up being a back-peddling—you don't realize it until after the fact. You learn from it and you just fix it the next time."

HOW DO YOU SUPPORT SOCIAL MEDIA ADOPTION?

"They don't necessarily trust brands, so let's **let our employees be the channel of messaging** out that kind of brand sentiment for us if they want to."

"We've got our CEOs and our president and just all these different **executives** that are going to have somewhat of an official presence on social media for us. So how do we support them? And that's a huge thing from a strategic standpoint is not only are we managing the brand presence, but we have a whole strategy mapped out for our CEO and our COO and we have five plan presidents, and they're all tweeting and on LinkedIn and doing thought leadership and have a whole different objective than the brand objective, but **they complement each other**."

"Now we actually encourage our employees. We actually even have a **designated place** where they can go online. We give it to them. We say go here. Here's a bunch of great content."

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SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM 2016 FAST FACTS

What's happening with the major social media platforms in 2016? Here are some fun stats new additions!

Every second there are 20,000 people on **Facebook**. – Sprout Social ([tweet this fact](#))

As of 2016, there are 313 million **Twitter** users. – Statista ([tweet this fact](#))

LinkedIn is used in over 200 countries and territories. (70% of the usage is outside the U.S.!) – DMR ([tweet this fact](#))

Snapchat is on pace for 217 million users by end of 2017. – Chris Snider Design ([tweet this prediction](#))

For the 18-49 age group, **YouTube** has greater reach than any cable network. – MakeUseOf ([tweet this statistic](#))

As of 2016, one billion people are using **WhatsApp**. – WhatsApp ([tweet this fact](#))

Over 60% of **Instagram** users log in daily, making it the second most engaged network after Facebook. – Brandwatch ([tweet this fact](#))

There are 3 billion **internet** users globally. (That's nearly 45% of the world's population.) – Digital Information World ([tweet this statistic](#))

Google+ has demonstrated an average growth rate of 33% each year. – Statistic Brain ([tweet this statistic](#))

18-29 is the largest age demographic represented on **Pinterest** (34% of users). – Global Media Insight ([tweet this statistic](#))

In 2016, two-thirds of marketers use the automation technology profoundly in their marketing. (like **Buffer**, **Hootsuite** and **Sprout**) – Dreamgrow Digital ([tweet this fact](#))

"I would say that **webinars** are definitely utilized, but first and foremost definitely just coming from the head honcho, our executive Director, definitely filtering - this is what I want, this is what I want to see... you can take these couple webinars to kind of reinforce this is what I want and this is what I want to see, but I would say webinars are formal trainings and our director can take those learning opportunities to her discretion, but I would say first and foremost it comes from our executive Director."

"So, a lot of people used to be about their blog posts or about their Twitter feeds and now people are doing **more video posts**, even if it's short, videos and things like that."

"From a business development perspective I still leverage social media immensely even though the company as a whole doesn't quite follow my lead on it. But for me it's always paid off when you're with people and talking to people, **eventually you work out a trust with them**. They're willing to work with you when they need you."

"In the beginning, 'Liking' was kind of like, 'oh, cool, they saw that, they like it, they acknowledge it, and they're with me on it.' But now it's just almost like, hey, cool, somebody posts something about whatever, something meaningless, you're just 'Liking' it, acknowledging you read it. You're not really—I think it's evolved very differently. **If you commented on it or you shared it, that's a little different**."

"There's maybe not a regular posting schedule, and there's no immediate brand recognition. A lot of people who work for themselves sometimes don't really split up personal and professional personas. And they don't know the wealth of prospective clients that are available at their fingertips if they were to just, you know, talk to people and comment back. So, I think people in general, this is how to use social media ineffectively. It's just **post and ghost**. That's really not leveraging the power of it."

"What we have been doing is playing around with the **geofilters** a little bit. Using those in different situations like, the town that I live in here, Sedalia, is home of the Missouri state fair. And that just wrapped up last week. So we ran some geofilters on specific parts of fair grounds. People are going to be in from all over the state, let's try to generate some brand awareness. And it's a little frustrating to us that the only, really, brand objective you can complete on Snap Chat is brand awareness. There's no good engagement and the metrics they give you are crap. As I'm sure you're well aware, the only metrics that they give you after you run a filter are how much you spent, the uses it got, and the views that you got. So, you can run the numbers out of that and get cost-per-view, and cost-per-use, and use-per-use, and all that kind of stuff. But it doesn't really tell me a whole lot. Who are those people? Where were they? So that's really frustrating. And if they allowed those geofilters—if you're keeping wish list and you have Snap Chat's ear—make those geofilters clickable ASAP because that would make me more prone to use them. They are super cheap if you do them right and they are a great way to generate brand awareness."

Consider an organization you're familiar with that demonstrates social media adoption across the board. What do they do that makes the successful?

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HOW DO YOU APPROACH MARKET RESEARCH AND TARGETING?

"…**asking people**, say, 'What brought you here? How'd you find us?' Prompting front-end staff, and anyone who is answering a phone, to just ask that question, 'How did you find us?' The bed and breakfast that we did, their Google hits that we did—we set up a Google+ business page for them—and they're getting over the max, over the 999-10,000 hits a month."

"Not only am I setting up the ads and watching the ads, but I'm also monitoring all the ads. To make sure that we're putting our money behind the ones that are performing best, and optimizing the language, and taking a look at all the demographics. So any ads that I have running, **every morning for like an hour when I get to the office, I just review all of the different ad sets that we're running**. Make sure that everything is optimized as well as it should be."

"So sometimes our social media content can be related to, not talking about competition, but **understanding what the competition is**, what message they're pushing, and us countering that in a professional way on our social media. And then our external content comes from what is coming in from customer support, what is anecdotally coming in from these sales, and then also our teacher communities that we communicate with monthly."

"We're actually working with a group that is helping us with this so we're kind of in the midst of working on SEO and doing all the research. They're really doing it with us. We had to give them a lot of information, they did a lot of research and now we're looking into how to more **naturally optimize our blog posts** and learn different ways to be engaging and have a keyword."

"Figuring out **where we fit in the bigger picture**. It's looking at a lot of different terms." (tweet this!)

"All-around strategy. How do you put a strategy together that is **platform-agnostic**? Because the platforms don't matter."

What's your approach to market research and targeting?

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Training Requests

Each survey participant was asked to share specific training topics that would interest them. The following data includes:

- The most commonly requested topics from the online survey
- Feedback from the follow-up interviews about specific training topics

What training or certification topics would you like to participate in? (Please share as many ideas as you have!)

Currently, we offer a social media strategist certification. Would you be interested in any other specialized certification? If so, please include the specialty area(s) you are most interested in.

Two questions we asked our online and synchronous survey participants were directly related to what additional training courses or certifications would interest them. At NISM, we're interested in helping social media professionals develop in the areas that are most practical and beneficial.

We received a lot of expected responses – analytics, paid advertisements, specific platforms, etc. and the frequency of these requests was interesting. But we also picked up a few unexpected – and very interesting – requests from our social media professionals.

Following are the aggregated results of the training material requests as well as additional insights into some of the more popular topics:

- Strategic Planning (14)
- Analytics (12)
- Facebook (7)
- Google Analytics (6)
- Instagram for Business (6)
- AdWords (5)
- Twitter (5)
- Facebook Ads (4)
- Influencer Marketing (4)
- Live Video Training (4)
- SnapChat for Business (4)
- Social Selling (4)
- Video (4)
- KPIs (3)
- LinkedIn (3)

> **"So you have your tech people and your non-tech people. I think a lot of people, even if they're in a tech-related business, if they're in a corporate role, they may not be social media savvy."**
>
> **- Social Media Employee**

Other requests related to specific social media management platforms, social media for non-profits, Pinterest and newsletters.

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ANALYTICS

"How to use analytics. So whether it's **Twitter analytics** or **Facebook insights** or what have you – Google analytics, whatever. First of all, what information can you get from them and then when you get that information what does it really tell you? What should social media experts really be looking at and use as benchmarks and comparisons across the data that they have on their tools? It's easy to measure things like the number of people that follow us increased by 20 percent and so I get a lot of that. But I think there's a lot more information there that we could use and share. It's just hard sometimes I think for the people that are doing it to really understand how to use those very well. I think that would be helpful."

"Tool sets. So every social media manager I know has a set of tools. And the landscape for marketing out there right now is just enough to have you fall over and faint. There's just thousands and thousands and there's a new software company being created every day to make social media management easier, better… And anybody going in to social media, their eyeballs are going to roll back in their head. I would almost try to have a class that's something along the lines of **don't follow the shiny object**. It's not that complicated, and it's not that necessary. So how do you hone in and focus on the right tools and not getting – every social media manager I know, none of us answer our phones anymore because every phone call is just another vendor trying to sell us another tool that we don't need."

"We teach a lot of classes like how to find **common interests** among your groups, I mean amongst your connections, so that you can go in to a general prospect that you're looking at, go in to see what his interests are and then kind of tag a bunch of people that have the same interests. Create a message going all for them. I don't do a lot of proactive stuff and I think that's where I would need a lot of training. How do people

respond to that? How effective is it? And what are people doing that's not annoying? And it's more of a research question, like how effective is this? And what's the best way to engage to someone? Is it really through, maybe a direct message? Is it through, I don't know. We've had some kind of sessions on what you can do. You can go in and search what CEO is in the tristate area. It's just like, more of, without being a nuisance, kind of how to use it as a prospecting tool as opposed to, I'm cool with just using it as an outreach tool but I mean like what else can I do to further enhance my reach so that I can reach people that may be interested."

"Learning how to tell the difference between what **Google analytics** are telling me and what **Facebook Insights** are telling me, I really want to know how to reconcile what I'm seeing there When Facebook says you had 500 website clicks and my UTM code says, well, actually you had 250. Well, where the hell did the extra 250 come from, from Facebook? Who is telling me the truth? So that type of stuff would be really helpful to me. The **how to develop a strategy** and what to talk about, that's difficult but it's not super hard. Figure out what your business objectives are and talk about it. But the reading the tea leaves and figuring out customer behavior on the backend on my website, that would be fantastic.."

"I'd like to learn more about **analytics**, I'm sure, because, like I said, I'm not very good with numbers. But, it's like, really important, you know? And, I have a basic understanding of **SEO**, but I should probably study that a little more. The thing is, a lot of what's offered right now for people that do what I do and other solopreneurs is online classes, and that doesn't really work for me. I really like the in-person experience, which is why I design my workshop to be incredibly hands-on, because I'm trying to help the 40 and 50-year-old business owner, not a digital native, who recognizes that they should be posting specials on Facebook and having a lively Instagram account."

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TRENDS

"I think that every social media manager has high learning orientation, so I think the biggest thing would be, what are the trends right now? **What are people seeing?** A lot of the webinars that I attend are kind of like social media tips and tricks for this new platform that came out, or maybe ways to optimize things, ads, stuff like that. Anything that is, here's a better way to do something, or here's a trend that we're seeing. New stuff, you know? There is a place for social media 101, but it's not generally for a social media manager. We are already experts. We just want to have the discussion to dig deeper. And a lot of times, to be honest, we don't have the time to get together with other people, so webinars and those kinds of trainings or even conferences where you might be able to set aside some time and just go for the day or a couple of days are generally better than people trying on their own to learn these things, how to optimize something, or researching."

"I think it could be a class around **creative execution of content** for social media. It applies both creativity and logistics. We have a really decent to good creative studio in-house, but we still have to spend a ton of time teaching them, you can't have more than 20 percent text on an image for a Facebook ad. There's just like all these nuances for Facebook and Twitter and Snapchat and LinkedIn about how to do content well and effective and optimized. And then also be creative at the same time, that pulls that person scrolling through Facebook – what's going to make them pause and watch or listen."

PLATFORMS

"Training on the tools themselves, not so much Twitter or Facebook, but more things like **management tools**."

"On things like LinkedIn and Facebook, Twitter – kind of the most common used social media, what are **best practices**? How much more effective is it to use an image when you tweet something versus not having an image, or what kind of content plays best on LinkedIn. I mean, there's some common sense that we apply to it, but I see a lot more – like I've even started seeing political, I wouldn't say ads, but political rants maybe on LinkedIn, and I'm like, 'What are these doing on here?' That's for Facebook, I don't want that on LinkedIn."

TIME MANAGEMENT

"I just wish there was an option to **bundle** things a little bit better. I still feel like I have to look at Facebook and then look at Twitter and then look at Instagram. I just wish there was a one-stop, I could see everybody at once kind of thing. So I could just skim through it."

"It's a combination of everything in terms of social media, and then there's thinking. And some jobs put one over the other or a combination. So mine is definitely a combination, where **I kind of do it all**. I'm not the thinker who someone else is going to go do the doing. By that I mean, setting the strategy or thinking about audiences or setting budgets for paid campaigns - that type of thing. Versus the day-to-day management, actually interacting with people, composing a tweet, that kind of thing. So I do all of that.

"There's certain **restrictions** on what you can do on LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook so you cannot make a recommendation or a referral, or 'Like' something. On LinkedIn, the 'Like' button is disabled. You can comment. And if you want to share something it goes through pre-approval first. I've had a little bit of trouble with the commenting on someone's post. I stay away from it because I've had a little bit of issue."

"I set aside, I call it an hour in the morning, but sometimes it turns into a certain 90 minutes now. I've added another customer and so, frankly, **I'm going to have to figure out some ways to improve on my timing** there. But, basically, I spend an hour for my various clients and for

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my own account both responding to any direct comments, mentions - that kind of stuff. And also accumulating some good articles to post, in other words, content-selection. And then I try to limit it to three 15-minute segments the rest of the day. And I would say most days I manage that. Some days it probably sloughs a little bit over that. So, all in total, you can count it out, I'm spending 2 hours a day on social media."

"I look at everybody **separately** so that's one of the things that I don't count in those 2 hours. Some of my analysis time is outside that because that's pure content and response-driven stuff. What kind of hits are we getting? How much is going to the website? Those kinds of things. Because not all of my customers are looking to increase their 'Likes,' right? That is not what anybody cares about, no matter how much you might see those things. A lot of the people with social media, they're like, 'Oh, I'll get you more followers!' I don't want more followers. I want people who will buy the product. So the ups and downs just have to do with either actual payoff or perceived payoff of the services that I provide, or my own social media presence. People look at my 180-or-however-many-thousand followers I have on Twitter and they go, 'Oh you must rake it in from Twitter!' Uh, not so much."

"I do everything from analysis to advertising to the strategy to the content distribution. The content calendar. You name it. I do some graphics. **You name it, I do it**. So, social strategist was really a term that I used because I'm setting the strategy, I'm creating the strategy, I'm deploying it, I have one direct report, one person that reports to me, but basically doing most of it on my own. Does that answer your question? It's basically just another name for social media manager."

DELIVERY PLATFORM

What delivery format would you prefer for training? Select all that apply.

Participants were given the opportunity to choose from In-person, Fully online, Fully online, but with live webinar sessions, Fully online, but self-paced using videos and written content to acquire new information, or Blended (combination of in-person and online)
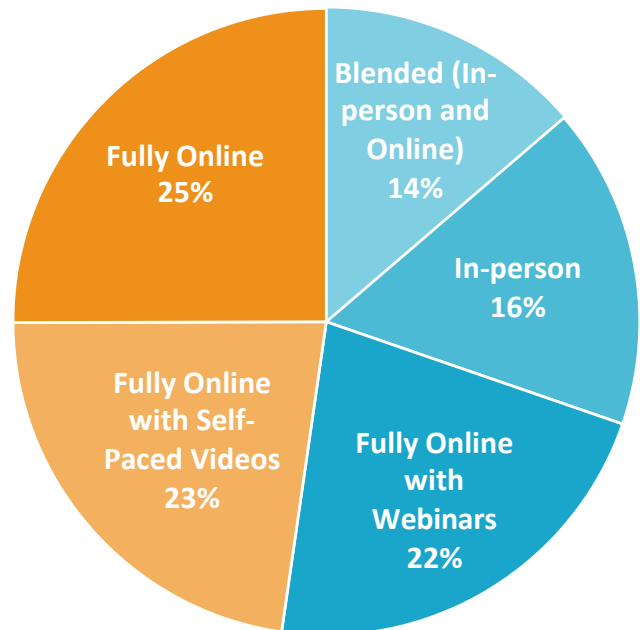
Learning and teaching is messy stuff, it doesn't fit into bubbles.
Michelle Forman

APPENDIX A: JOB STUDY SURVEY QUESTIONS

ONLINE SURVEY

1. In what state or U.S. territory do you currently live?

   a. Participants were given the opportunity to choose from the 50 U.S. states, several U.S. territories or "other" (which allowed them to enter a country/territory not listed)

2. Which of the following best describes the principal industry of your organization?

   a. Participants were given the opportunity to choose from Advertising & Marketing, Agriculture, Airlines & Aerospace, Automotive, Business Support & Logistics, Construction, Machinery & Homes, Education, Entertainment & Leisure, Finance & Financial Services, Food & Beverages, Government, Healthcare & Pharmaceuticals, Insurance, Manufacturing, Non-profit, Retail & Consumer Durables, Real Estate, Telecommunications, Technology, Internet & Electronics, Transportation & Delivery, Utilities, Energy, & Extraction, or "I am currently not employed"

3. What is the name of your organization? (This question is not required, but we would like to list the total number of organizations represented in our research. Your organization will never be identified specifically in survey results.)

4. What is your age?

   a. Participants were given the opportunity to choose from the following age categories: 18 to 24, 25 to 34, 35 to 44, 45 to 54, 55 to 64, 65 to 74, and 75 or older

5. What's your gender?

   a. Participants were given the opportunity to choose male or female.

6. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

   a. Participants were given the opportunity to choose from the following age categories: Graduated from high school and/or completed a GED, 1 year of college, 2 years of college, 3 years of college, Graduated from college, Some graduate school, Completed graduate school.

7. What is your job title?

8. How many years of experience (working directly or managing) in the social media industry do you have?

   a. Participants were given the opportunity to choose from the following categories: less than 1 year, 1-1.5 years, 2-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-15 years, More than 15 years.

9. Do you work as a full-time/part-time social media employee, consultant or manager? (If you do one or more of these, please select the option that best describes your role.)

*From this question, participants completed one of three possible tracks: Manager, Consultant, Employee

Managers

10. If you manage a full-time employee who has social media management as part or all of their required work, what is the pay range for your social media staff? If you manage multiple social media professionals, select all that apply.

    a. Participants were given the opportunity to choose from Under $30,000, $30,000 - $39,999, $40,000 - $49,999, $50,000 - $59,999, $60,000 - $69,999, $70,000 - $79,999, $80,000 - $89,999, $90,000 - $99,999, Over $100,000, or "I do not manage a full-time employee who has social media management as part or all of their required work.

11. If you manage a social media consultant, what is their hourly or project rate of pay? If you work with multiple consultants, please share each separately.

    a. Participants were given the option of filling in one to three blank text box(es).

12. If you manage a social media intern, what is their hourly or project rate of pay? If you work with multiple interns, please share each separately.

    a. Participants were given the option of filling in one to three blank text box(es).

Consultants

13. As a social media consultant, what is your area(s) of expertise?

    a. Participants were given the option of filling in one to three blank text box(es).

14. What are the most common topics clients ask for help in?

    a. Participants were given the option of filling in one to three blank text box(es).

15. What do you charge clients on average? (either hourly or by project)

Employees

16. Approximately what percentage of your time do you spend working on social media related tasks? (If the amount of time you spend varies greatly from week to week, give an average over the course of a year.)

    a. Participants were given the opportunity to choose from

        i. 100% of my time is spent on social media related work. It's my entire job.

        ii. About 75% of my time is spent on social media related work.

        iii. About 50% of my time is spent on social media related work.

        iv. 25% or less of my time is spent on social media related work.

17. What is your current pay range?

    a. Participants were given the opportunity to choose from Under $30,000, $30,000 - $39,999, $40,000 - $49,999, $50,000 - $59,999, $60,000 - $69,999, $70,000 - $79,999, $80,000 - $89,999, $90,000 - $99,999, or Over $100,000

18. If you're interested in participating, please share your contact information here.

Social Media Strategy Content Areas

For each of the following content areas, participants were asked to rank how important each task/ subcategory was (Does not complete task, Low importance, Medium importance, or High importance) and the time spent per week on the task/subcategory (Do not perform task, <1 Hour, 1-2 Hours, 3-5 Hours, 6-9 Hours, 10+ Hours).

Community

19. Please review and respond to each of the following tasks that might be completed by a social media professional within your organization.
    a. Read, comment, and respond to the content or comments of your customers
    b. Have two-way conversations with customers on social media platforms
    c. Find ways to frequently reach out and engage with your audience
    d. Apologize if you do something that offends someone, admit your mistakes and move on
    e. Recognize accomplishments of those in your network

Marketing & Communications

20. Please review and respond to each of the following tasks that might be completed by a social media professional within your organization.
    a. Take out advertisements on social media platforms
    b. Ensure branding consistency across all social media platforms
    c. Ensure all written and video social media content is brief, concise, and accurate
    d. Work with key stakeholders to identify who company customers are and report progress
    e. Publish content to company blog(s), microblogging platforms (ex. Twitter), and social networking platforms (ex. Facebook).
    f. Read, comment, and respond to the content or comments of your industry peers

Strategic Planning

21. Please review and respond to each of the following tasks that might be completed by a social media professional within your organization.
    a. Perform a Segment, Target, Position (STP) Analysis
    b. Create a SM project plan with specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time driven (SMART) goals
    c. Determine Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for activities
    d. Select and evaluate tools based upon the goals of the company and/or the SM campaign
    e. Create a social media strategic plan aligned with company goals

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Research & Analysis

22. Please review and respond to each of the following tasks that might be completed by a social media professional within your organization.
    a. Perform keyword analysis
    b. Adjust and optimize key performance indicators based upon data from analytical measurements
    c. Summarize social media work in regular reports
    d. Monitor social media of competition
    e. Research industry topics, posts, blogs, and other SM content

Project Management

23. Please review and respond to each of the following tasks that might be completed by a social media professional within your organization.
    a. Negotiate key performance indicators with management
    b. Manage multiple complex clients and projects simultaneously
    c. Adjust activities in response to competition
    d. Delegate activities to partners, or other team members with skill-sets that are applicable to the task at hand
    e. Develop a daily action plan to ensure a disciplined approach to social media activities
    f. Write or issue Request for Proposal (RFP) or Request for Quotes (RFQ)

Compliance & Governance

24. Please review and respond to each of the following tasks that might be completed by a social media professional within your organization.
    a. Monitor "Terms of Service" to protect company's IP interests
    b. Create and maintain social media policy as change occurs
    c. Create a procedure explaining how to participate and converse in a variety of situations
    d. Act appropriately without direction (self-starter)

Business Development

25. Please review and respond to each of the following tasks that might be completed by a social media professional within your organization.
    a. Organize a Twitter Party/Event Hashtag
    b. Offer social media content that your customers perceive as valuable as opposed to selling

26. What training or certification topics would you like to participate in? (Please share as many ideas as you have!)

27. Currently we offer a social media strategist certification. Would you be interested in any other specialized certification? If so, please include the specialty area(s) you are most interested in.

28. What delivery format would you prefer for training? Select all that apply.

    a. Participants were given the opportunity to choose from In-person, Fully online, Fully online, but with live webinar sessions, Fully online, but self-paced using videos and written content to acquire new information or Blended (combination of in-person and online)

29. I want to stay connected! Check all that apply.

    a. Participants were given the opportunity to choose from Enter me in the $50 Amazon gift card drawing, Send me a FREE copy of the survey results, or and/or Sign me up for NISM updates

FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interviewers were given the following instructions prior to completing the follow up interviews.

Goal: Gather additional information from online survey participants about the field of social media.

Process: Each participant will respond differently to the questions, so I encourage you to go with the flow while being careful to stay on task. A few tips you can apply to anyone include:

- Value silence. Sometimes people just need a minute to think. If you're struggling to stay quiet, you can always say, "If you need a moment to think about that, please take it. I'd really like to know what you think." No matter what, don't accidentally tell them what to say or finish their sentences.

- Tell me more. The three most powerful words you can use in any informational interview are "Tell me more…" They can be used at any time about any topic. They demonstrate interest and invite the participant to expand on their thought. Look for opportunities to use "tell me more…" throughout the interview. (Don't force it…if an opportunity doesn't appear, that's okay.)

The questions can be delivered in any order, but I recommend the following:

1. Introduce yourself and ask them to describe their job. The content here isn't actually important; it's just a way to get people comfortable talking! So don't dwell here, but take 3-4 minutes to chat so they begin to trust/like you. This investment will pay off in future questions.

2. Since you will have researched their responses, you'll know which area(s) they are most comfortable with. Begin with a small compliment ("I was reviewing your survey responses and it looks like you have the most experience in…") and then follow the corresponding "survey deep dive question" listed below.

3. Depending on how much they talk about each point, move through each of the survey topics. Begin by asking for more information about the topics they responded to and, if time permits, ask why the low/no-ranking topics aren't part of their focus in the organization.

4. Allow 5-7 minutes for some of the "additional questions" at the end of your interview. (Note that they vary by job type.) By this time, you will likely have a good rapport with your participant and will hopefully be able to capture additional candid thoughts about social media work.

Introduction (1-2 minutes)

- Confirm that this is still a good time and that they have 30 minutes to speak with you.
- Briefly (30 seconds) introduce yourself (including the fact that you're an MBA student).
- Thank them for taking the time to participate.

Warm-up Questions (2-3 minutes)

(All job types)

1. Tell me about your role in the organization.

    a) If necessary, ask for more information about their social media-specific tasks.

Survey Deep Dive Questions

*The category description is listed for your reference – I wouldn't read it to them unless they ask.

Review each participant's responses.

1. Identify which categories they are most familiar with/interested in (task importance and/or time spent).

2. Review any additional comments they shared.

3. Prepare to discuss their responses by crafting open-ended questions like this:

   "I reviewed your responses in the Marketing & Communications category and it looks like you/ your employees place a lot of value on concise content as well as publishing in general on blogs and social media sites. Can you tell me a little more about how that process works in your organization?

4. Remember to use "tell me more" when the opportunity arises! And encourage them to describe specific scenarios when applicable.

5. Allowing 5-7 minutes for the "additional questions," explore as many categories as possible in the time given.

Community

Built around a foundation of quality content, community management is the process of ensuring that the two-way online communication between the organization and its customers / stakeholders always flows smoothly. The manager serves as a professional representative for the organization's products or services, while simultaneously gathering feedback for further development of products or services for evaluation.

Marketing & Communications

Marketing & communications includes priming the marketplace, gauging audience interest, sharing stories and preparing for campaigns and/or sharing your campaign announcements via internet-driven technology. Blogs, RSS, web video productions, podcasts, and social networking platforms are essential to the content of social media marketing.

Strategic Planning

Strategic planning refers to a social media professional's understanding and use of broad strategies and visions for the organization and then drilling down to specific tactics and tools. Strategic planning is where the foundation is set for social media.

Research & Analysis

Research and analysis should take place within each domain. However, the greatest value can be found when real-time feedback and monitoring solutions have been implemented, making trends and behaviors more concrete.

Project Management

Project management includes the coordination of many different people, the completion of many tasks in a precise sequence, and acquiring or outsourcing to key talents to implement the vision, plan, or campaign.

Compliance & Governance

Compliance and governance refers to the development of policies and establishment of legal limitations for a social media team. Growth can quickly be stifled by legal obstacles, particularly when businesses use external social platforms, so careful management of this aspect of a social media account is critical.

Business Development

(No real description for this; just a list of tasks)

Additional Questions

Social Media Leaders

1. Describe the last time you hired a social media professional.
   a. What prompted the hire (what did you need)?
   b. How did you create the job description (what did you include as requirements and desired skills)?
   c. How did your search go? Did you receive resumes from many qualified applicants?
   d. In the end, why did you select the candidate you ended up hiring?

Social Media Consultants

1. Describe your last social media contract.
   a. What was your client looking for?
   b. How close was your client's initial request to the work you ended up actually doing? Did you do more or less work (and why)?
2. If you had the opportunity to complete additional education, what would you like to learn more about?

Social Media Employees

1. What's a typical day like for you?
   a. Can you walk me through, for example, what you did yesterday?
2. What's the most difficult part of your job?
3. If you had the option to complete additional training, what would you want to learn about?

Close

Thank you so much for participating! I'm going to submit our interview as complete and you'll receive your gift card within a few days.

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