

# Expert Panel: Applying Social Media to B2B Solutions Marketing

Part Two of Three: Challenges and Best Practices  
from the  
Social Media Marketing Survey,  
February 2016

*Presented by Solutions Insights  
in Partnership with  
Institute for the Study of Business Markets*

INSTITUTE  
FOR THE  
STUDY OF  
**BUSINESS  
MARKETS**

Solutions Insights



# Table of Contents

---

- About the Survey
- Expert Panelists
- Survey Questions and Panel Discussions
- What's Next?

# Is Social Media Critical for Marketing B2B Solutions?

## Survey Background

- Solutions Insights invited a range of online communities to participate
- Our survey partner, ISBM (Institute for the Study of Business Markets), opened the survey to their members
- Over 100 respondents took part in the survey representing a range of well-respected B2B companies across multiple industries.



# A wide range of global companies participated in the survey.

## Participating Companies – Partial List

- Alcatel Lucent
- Accenture
- Arkema
- Arizona State University
- Avanade
- Avery Dennison
- BMC Software
- Cisco
- Corning Incorporated
- Dell
- Deloitte
- Dimension Data
- Eastman
- EMC
- Ericsson
- Extreme Networks
- GE Digital
- General Motors
- HCL Technologies
- Hewlett Packard Enterprise
- IBM
- Infosys
- Intel
- Kendall Electric
- Kodak
- LinkedIn Technology
- Marketo
- Northrop Grumman IS
- OTE Group
- Phillips
- Pitney Bowes
- ProSys
- PTC
- PwC
- Schneider Electric
- Siemens
- Sigma Group
- Tata Communications
- UCB
- VCE Corporation

# We asked leading B2B social media practitioners for their insights about the survey results.



**Randi  
Alterman**

Digital Marketing Leader, GE Digital, which connects data to analytics and people for industrial companies. Randi is responsible for digital footprint, showcasing thought leadership, accelerating sales cycle and [ge.com/digital](http://ge.com/digital).



**Paul  
Dunay**

Financial Services Marketing Leader, PwC, the world's largest professional services network. Paul's role is to lead the Financial Services Marketing team in the Americas across the Assurance, Advisory and Tax lines of business.



**Ronan  
Gruerbaum**

Dean of Undergraduate Programs, Hult International Business School. Ronan has experience in e-commerce, digital marketing, mobile technologies and social media. He is the author of "Making Social Technologies Work: Leveraging the Power and Managing Perils of Social Technologies in Business."



**Chelsea  
Hunersen**

Social Media & Community Growth Manager, HubSpot, a n Internet marketing company has developed an inbound marketing software platform. Chelsea manages social media and community growth.



**Suzanne  
Lavin**

Executive Director, The Institute for the Study of Business Markets (ISBM,) headquartered at Penn State, is the world's only think tank focused on advancing the art and profitability of B2B marketing.

## Survey Question: What is *not* working for you in social media marketing for solutions? What, if anything, has become a disappointment? (Open-ended, N=38)



### Expert Panel Question:

## The inability to measure impact and ROI of social media is the biggest challenge. Is this a surprise?

#### Paul Dunay

"I'm surprised that strategy isn't higher. When you have 'shiny objects syndrome' and everyone's jumping in because everybody's doing it, it usually means there will be a lack of strategy so I'm surprised it's that low a figure." "Also, the 'omni-channelness' of social and this lack of integration between marketing and sales gets to that point. I'm surprised no one mentioned the difficulty in synchronizing all content. [Customers] just want it to be a unified experience."

#### Suzanne Lavin

"Another thing that's not here is – we're going to put up social media and we're going

to execute it like a media buy. We're going to put the ad together. Running a social media program is part of your culture – you have to be committed to it, work at it constantly, respond on a moment's notice and do it authentically. It's really hard to build a team that is indoctrinated and not just bringing leadership along with them."

#### Ronan Gruerbaum

"One of the biggest challenges is integration of the entire social media message as part of the entire marketing mix, not as an add-on but as part of your marketing -- going

through the traditional marketing processes (positioning, content, distribution on channels.) Social media channels are part of the distribution channels, not separate, to be integrated into the mix. The integration is a fundamental part that needs to happen and I hope to see it happen, but it will probably be a slow, uphill progress for many."

#### Randi Alterman

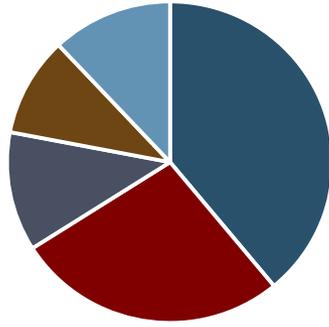
"You never want to take the low road that can downward spiral and bite you. We never do a competitive threat in social -- we only say why we're great, we don't say we're better than...." "The problem with social is

that you can't control it. Most companies are finding they can't control their brand as much any more. Your messaging is now being re-messaged and repurposed, shared in different ways by others."

#### Chelsea Hunersen

"'Omni-behavior' is where someone might see one thing on one channel and also see it on Twitter but share it on Facebook. They cross channels and behave differently. We do a lot on channel performance but there's not a lot of good insight into how it should go to the rest of the world and how it's being received."

## Survey Question: What is a best practice(s) in social media marketing for solutions that you've seen either inside or outside your organization? (Open-ended, N=27)



- 39% Customer engagement
- 27% Content creation
- 12% Integration across channels
- 10% Understanding target audience's use of social in buying
- 12% Other

### Expert Panel Question

#### Do you consider these areas to be outstanding examples of social media?

##### **Suzanne Lavin**

"The 12% is interesting to me. Everyone has a challenge with silos within marketing. Integrating everything is a challenge period. B2B organizations are not always great at really understanding the voice of the customer, the target audience and finding out what their needs are."  
"What's been disappointing is the ability to measure your brand, how you manage issues and crises using social media."  
"There's also corporate social responsibility (CSR) where organizations use social media to show their more human side

and use CSR to improve their brand, position and attributes."

##### **Paul Dunay**

"I'm going to piggy back on that. We use share of voice (SOV) around a particular topic which is also an easy one to do. SOV would be a best practice for me."

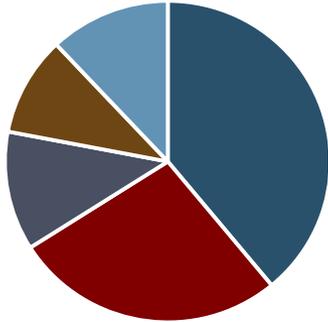
##### **Randi Alterman**

"I see great examples of social media in consumer. One of the amazing things about social is the timing -- real-time marketing and being where you need to be when you need to be. One of

that we have day-to-day jobs. It's not someone's job to watch what's going on in social so you can't react quickly enough."  
"For example, a person waiting in line for 40 minutes at a hotel Tweets his/her annoyance. The hotel down the street answers the Tweet and says, 'sorry, you're having such an experience. Our hotel is right down the street. Maybe you can check it out next time but for now, here are some links to great things to do in this area.' So, immediately adding value to that customer, The customer is going to remember that other chain the next time."

"That's comforting to see. There's a pharmaceutical organization as an example, subject to strict regulation on how they can communicate or market their drugs. They asked their salespeople to engage simply as observers to community discussions around a particular disease. After a year, they were tasked with gently introducing themselves. They're not allowed to actually sell their products, but there was a way to engage with people. Sometimes it's a question of engaging and seeing what they need and using it as market research."

# Survey Question: What is a best practice(s) in social media marketing for solutions that you've seen either inside or outside your organization? (Specific Examples)



- 39% Customer engagement
- 27% Content creation
- 12% Integration across channels
- 10% Understanding target audience's use of social in buying
- 12% Other

## Best Practice Examples from the Expert Panel and Survey Respondents

### Randi Alterman

#### Customer Engagement

“GE works on ‘smart factories’ so we’re trying to find just the right [expert] people. We promoted an industry expert in blogs, she had a Twitter account, a strong profile on LinkedIn. As a result potential customers contacted her directly with their challenges as opposed to filling out a form. Develop advocates or champions that people can relate to. Only when your expert is proven, truly gets the issues, will someone say, ‘I want to hear about it.’”

#### Supporting Quote

#### Customer Engagement

“We have seen good success in other divisions from customer

of an online community, plus personal interactions -- as I see this being more impactful in the B2B environment vs social media alone.”

#### Supporting Quote

#### Customer Engagement

“Social Media marketing is only one element of an effective market mix for B2B solutions. As most clients at the business level are quite unique, it means that the primary goal of B2B social media is NOT to convince them to buy a specific solution, it's to get them to pick up the phone or write an email and say ‘I'm intrigued, come and tell me more’ so that we can engage in a fruitful conversation with them

path forward might work best.”

### Ronan Gruerbaum

#### Content Creation

“Some in corporate communications or marketing produce content that is very formal for B2B for example in a brochure or on a website.”

“With social you can't do that. It has to have a human voice – it has to be a person speaking.”

“When you have social media content being produced by a PR company, you've failed completely. If you can't find someone in the company who can produce content, maybe you don't produce it or hire someone new. I can see why they aren't seeing relevant

blurb.”

### Paul Dunay

#### Integration Across Channels

“My favorite example is the pumpkin spice latte promotion on Twitter from Starbucks, on Facebook, on their website, in their stores – it's perfectly orchestrated.”

#### Supporting Quote

#### Understanding Target Audience's Use of

“Create a strong buyer's journey and ensure that you create content for each of the stages. Have a strong call-to-action on each of your thought leadership blogs and tie these together with your buyer's journey.”

# Would you like to learn more about using social media to market solutions?

- Look for the next in this series, Part Three: “Five Things You Need for Successful Social Media B2B Marketing.”
- You can get connected by joining the Solutions Marketing LinkedIn group: [Solutions Marketing Community](#)
- If you would like to learn more about the results of the survey, or discuss how it relates to solutions marketing in greater detail, please contact:

Steve Hurley

Managing Director

[shurley@solutionsinsights.com](mailto:shurley@solutionsinsights.com)

[www.solutionsinsights.com](http://www.solutionsinsights.com)

Tel: 781-929-8570

Twitter: @stphurley15

