



2018 Social Spending Report

Introduction

As you go about planning your digital marketing strategy for 2019, it's worth considering the latest trends and shifts in social media budgets —which platforms businesses are spending the most money on, where they're seeing the best returns and how the lessons they've learned have changed their approach in this respect.

To help with this, we recently conducted a survey within the Social Media Today community to gain perspective on the latest trends in social advertising, and the experiences of our collective community. **Over 500 social media marketers** participated in this survey, providing relevant insights into a range of different factors.

In this report, we share the results of the survey to benchmark your 2019 social media spending plans against other leaders in our field.

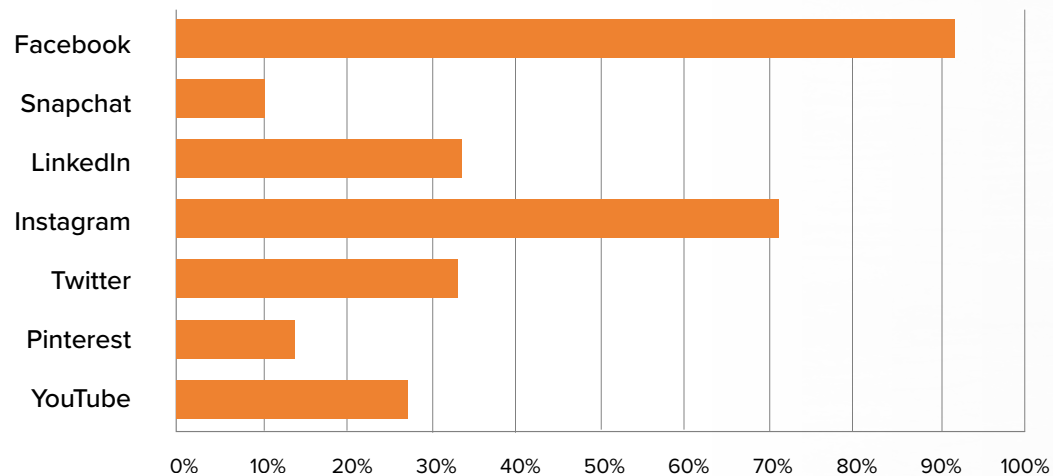
Here is what we cover in this report:

- 1 Key social media channels for marketers in 2018
- 2 Where brands plan to allocate ad dollars in 2019
- 3 Key goals for social media ad spend
- 4 Major organizational challenges for marketers

Part 1:

Key Channels of Focus

Which social channels are you currently advertising on?



Facebook	91.69%
Snapchat	10.39%
LinkedIn	33.95%
Instagram	71.13%
Twitter	33.26%
Pinterest	14.09%
YouTube	27.25%

In 2018, Facebook takes the lead in ad spend, with the fast-growing (and Facebook-owned) Instagram not far behind. These results come as no surprise; both Facebook and Instagram have the most users (2.2 billion and 1 billion respectively), so it makes sense for them to see the most ad spend. Facebook also introduced its 'people first' algorithm change early in the year, which pushed many businesses towards Facebook advertising to offset reach and referral traffic declines.

Part 1:

Key Channels of Focus

How will your advertising change on these channels next year?

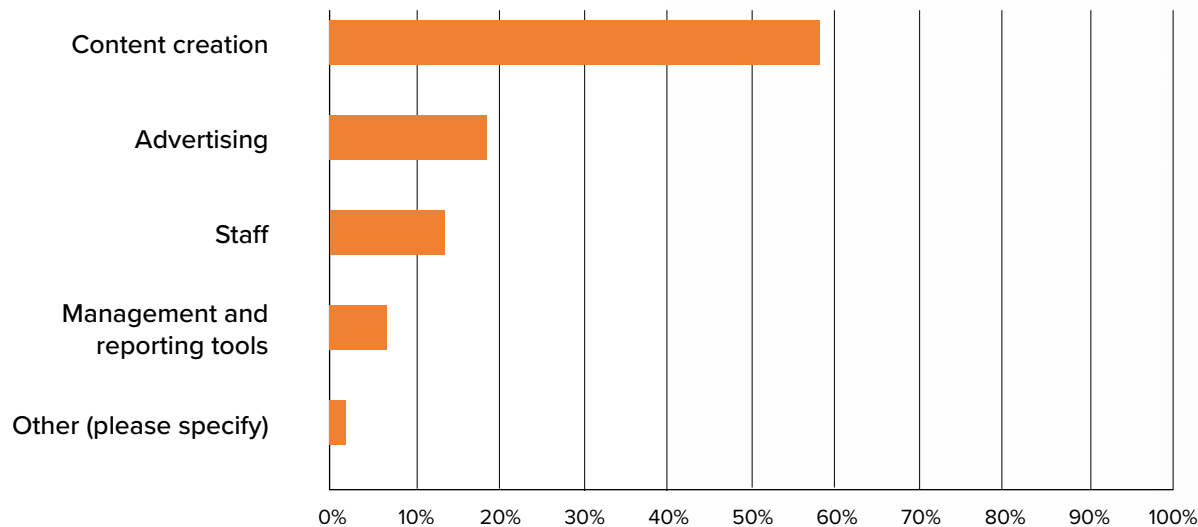
	Increase	Decrease	Stay the same
Instagram	74.02%	2.36%	15.49%
Facebook	60.66%	10.90%	24.64%
YouTube	49.20%	0.96%	22.51%
LinkedIn	44.21%	4.27%	21.65%
Twitter	32.39%	9.43%	28.93%
Pinterest	27.34%	4.50%	16.96%
Snapchat	17.09%	4.00%	18.91%

Looking forward to 2019, marketers are shifting their focus toward Instagram, with Facebook not far behind. It's no shock that Instagram is in the lead, given the success of the platform over this past year. We were a bit more surprised to see LinkedIn and YouTube moving up the ladder as a destination for increased ad spend.

Part 2:

Where to Allocate Your Social Media Marketing Budget

Where do you currently spend most of your social media budget?



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Where to Allocate Your Social Media Marketing Budget

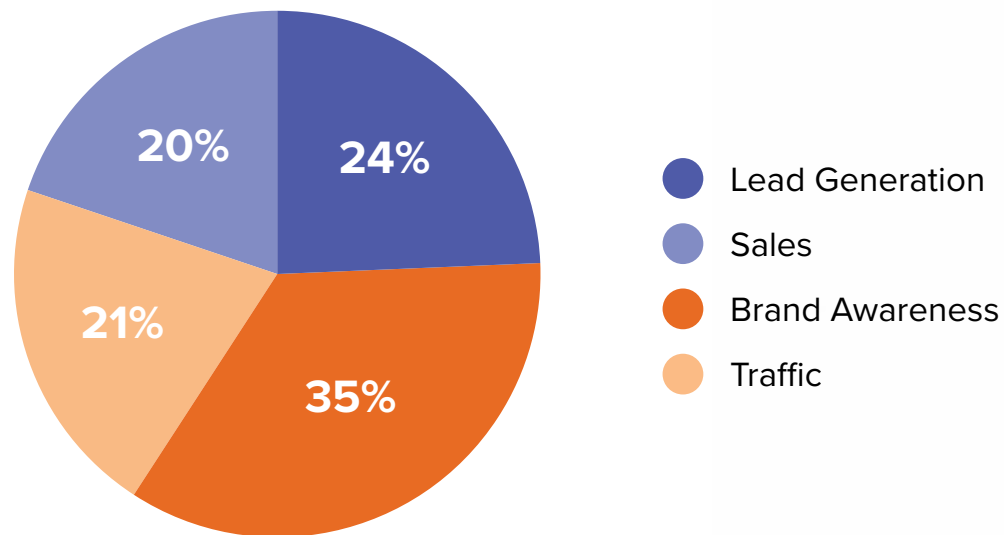
Compared to this year, how much do you plan on spending on social advertising?

68%

of respondents say they
plan to spend more on
social media ads in 2019

Part 3: Social Media Marketing Goals

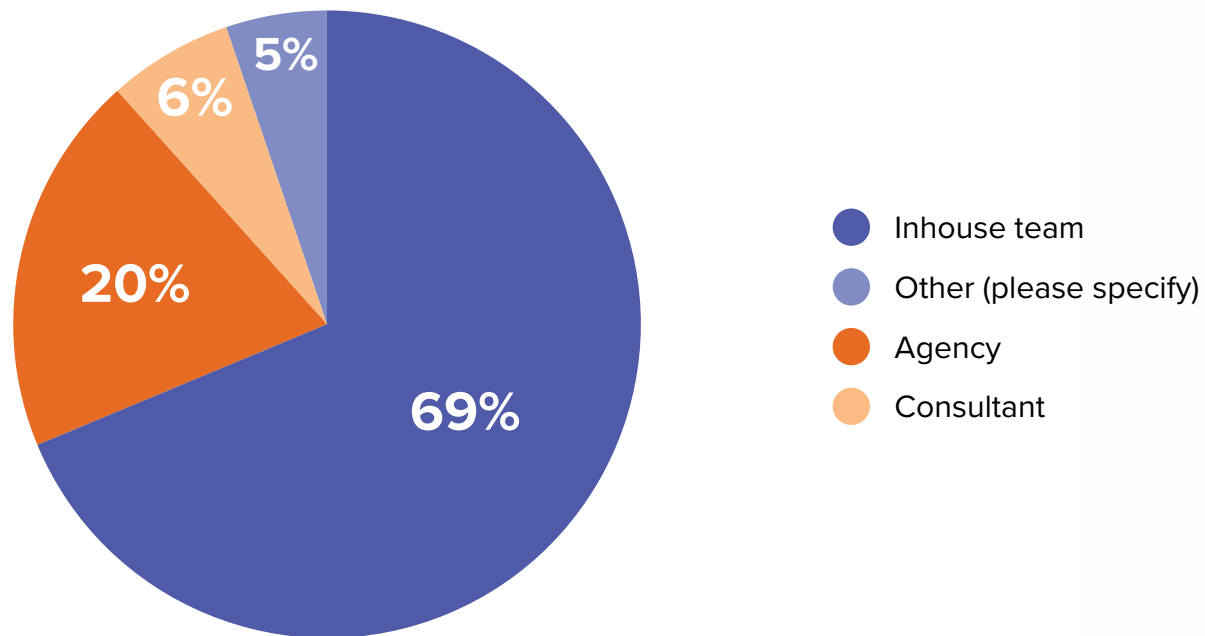
What are the primary goals of your paid social media campaigns?



Allocating a part of your budget to social media ads can help accomplish many goals. Brand awareness took the lead for the most valued marketing goal. Otherwise, the reasons for spending your ad budget on social media ads varied by business.

Part 4: Organizational Challenges

Who manages your social advertising?



Part 4: Organizational Challenges

What do you find to be the biggest struggle in social media advertising?



"Time management. It's easy to get carried away with content creation, engagement, and analytics to the point where you run out of time to do much else. Additionally, there is the question of emerging platforms. Do you get on board early and try to suss it out for yourself, or wait to see what everyone else does? Ultimately, this question will be answered by the needs of each business (or individual)."

DEBORAH SWEENEY
CEO, MYCORPORATION

"Scale, testing and human assumptions are the biggest struggle in social media advertising. I'm a firm believer in using AI technology to handle all of this. It can do it better, faster and stronger than people."

CHAD POLLITT
CO-FOUNDER, RELEVANCE

"Beyond the struggles associated with higher ad costs, Facebook this year has been removing a lot of ad targeting methods in response to the Cambridge Analytica scandal, such as Job Titles, etc. Additionally, their ads generate an enormous number of fake engagement from bots, particularly in the Audience Network, which is problematic."

LARRY KIM
FOUNDER & CTO, WORDSTREAM, INC.



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