

# Using Social Media Strategically

DECEMBER 21, 2009

## Transitioning beyond trial

As marketers become more comfortable and more experienced using social media, they move from the trial phase of their marketing efforts toward strategic use of the channel. While the largest group of marketers is still somewhere in between, according to the “2010 Social Media Marketing Benchmark Report” from [MarketingSherpa](#), about one-quarter of social media marketers have made it to the strategic phase of their efforts.

Gaining maturity means improving the ability to tie objectives to specific metrics. Marketers in the strategic phase are significantly more likely than those in earlier phases of the process to measure their success across all objectives. An increase in Website traffic was the No. 1 objective targeted and measured by all marketers.

### Social Media Marketing Objectives that Are Targeted and Measured by US Marketers, by Social Media Marketing Lifecycle Maturity, November 2009 (% of respondents)

	Phase I: trial	Phase II: transition	Phase III: strategic
Increase Website traffic	58%	76%	88%
Increase lead generation	32%	53%	75%
Increase sales revenue	40%	56%	71%
Improve search engine rankings	42%	56%	69%
Improve brand or product reputation	20%	29%	54%
Increase brand or product awareness	21%	35%	54%
Reduce customer acquisition costs	11%	20%	45%
Improve public relations	18%	31%	44%
Improve customer support quality	15%	32%	36%
Reduce customer support costs	7%	20%	32%

Note: n=2,317

Source: MarketingSherpa, “2010 Social Media Marketing Benchmark Report,” December 11, 2009

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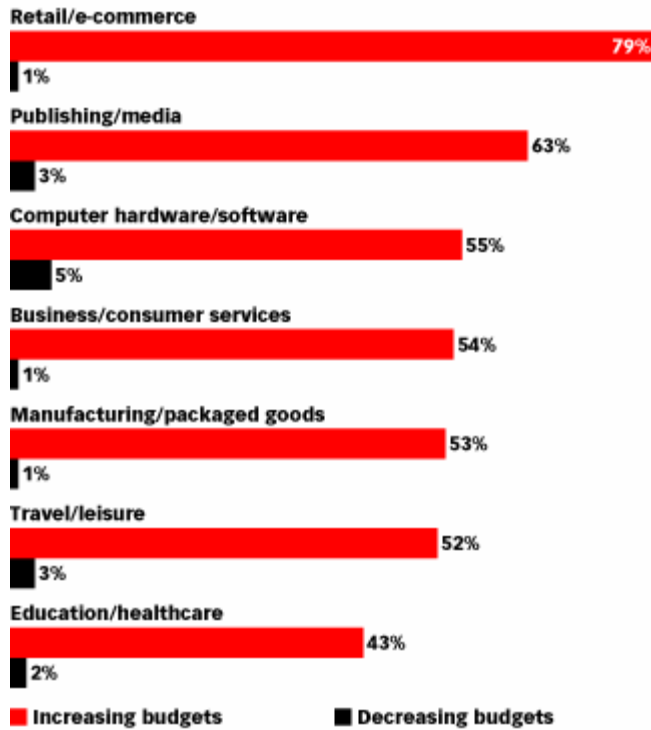
“Defining specific objectives for a social marketing initiative is only half the battle. The other half is aligning those objectives with corresponding metrics,” according to the report. “This alignment is important because it enables an organization to measure its progress in achieving the objectives and proving ROI.”

MarketingSherpa found that retail and e-commerce marketers were more likely than any other industry to be increasing their social media marketing budgets next year, followed by publishing and media. Education and healthcare lagged, with less than one-half of marketers in the industry planning to up social media spending in 2010.

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**Change in Social Media Marketing Budget in 2010  
According to US Marketers, by Industry (% of  
respondents)**

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Note: n=2,317

Source: MarketingSherpa, "2010 Social Media Marketing Benchmark Report," December 11, 2009

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Most social marketing dollars (60%) next year will go toward staff salaries for activities such as blogging, content development and monitoring of social channels. Another two-fifths will be spent on outside help from agencies, consultancies and service providers.

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