

metapeople

Effective Online-Marketing



Social-Media-Marketing

Benefit from Social-Media worldwide

Version 1.0

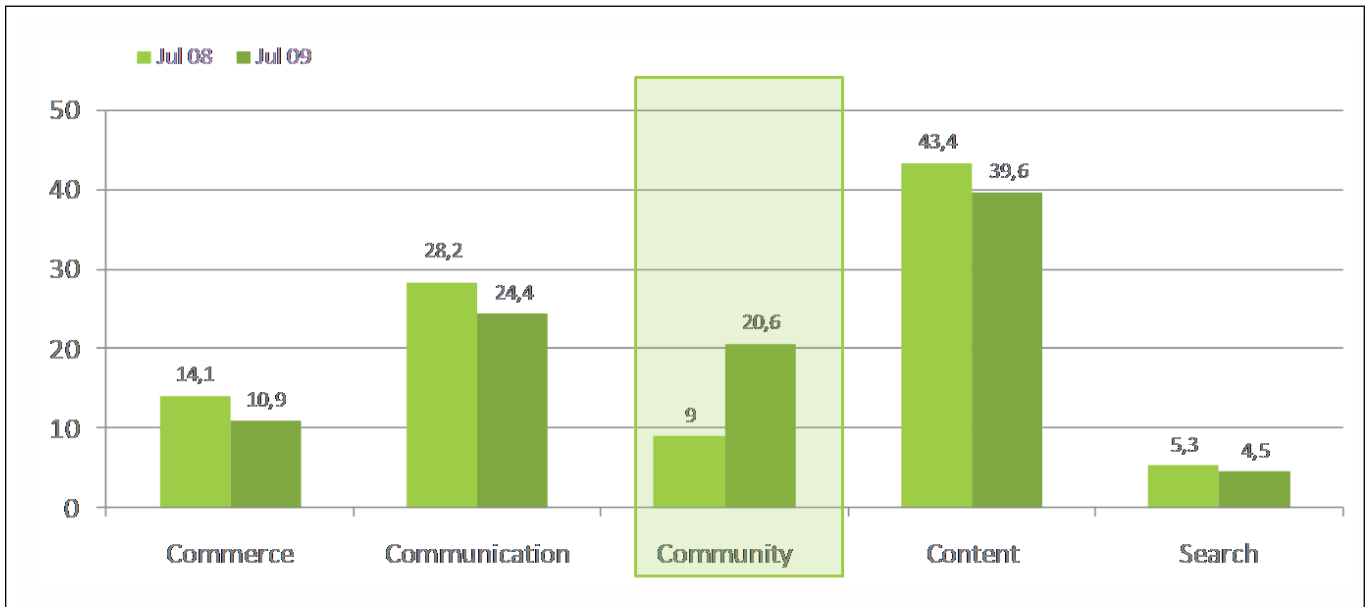
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Social-Media between hype and apathy

Social-Media is currently on everyone's lips. However, at the moment the debate is determined by two extreme positions. For some people Social-Media is the new golden calf that must be milked as quickly as possible. Others point out probable dangers and negative effects of the new communication possibilities and advice companies to strictly avoid any Social-Media activity. As usual, the truth can be found in the middle. Fact is that the utilization of the time spent at social networks has steadily increased in the last years. It is undeniable that Social-Media has changed the methods of communication worldwide and that this change has a significant impact on marketing and sales strategies.

Actually, most entrepreneurs recognize that Social-Media is not only a temporary hype, but rather a far-reaching shift of the ways of communication that will be a considerable influence on how companies will get in touch with their customers in the future. Therefore both B2C as well as B2B companies will no longer be able to afford to neglect Social-Media. But how do you find your way through the global jungle of Social-Media-Marketing? Is Social-Media in China just the same as it is in Europe? Is it enough to be merely present in social platforms, or does it require more fundamental know-how to use Social-Media globally for specific PR or sales purposes?



Usage and retention time of social portals is steadily increasing.¹

¹ Nielsen Net Ratings, Share of time spent online (%), 2009.

Social-Media-Screening²

Social-Media – what are we actually talking about?

Before you consider whether and how Social-Media can be harnessed for various marketing purposes, one must first be aware of what Social-Media really is. For a large part of the European and American internet users, Social-Media is primarily understood to be made of social networks. But other than that, Social-Media also consists of news pages, social bookmarks, video- and photo-upload-portals, blogs, micro-blogging services as well as rating platforms. In conclusion, Social-Media is everything that has to do with social interaction via the internet. This can be news as well as product ratings or video-uploads - the common ground between such diverse internet services is the opportunity for interaction. The involvement of users and exchange with each other differ in intensity and expression from platform to platform. This complexity of Social-Media portals implicates that each portal requires a different approach and allows pursuing different advertising objectives. With regards to these objectives, Social-Media-Marketing can be looked at from four angles, which operate separately, but are never completely separated, and enrich one another. Firstly, Social-Media-Marketing can be focused primarily on increasing the number of sales and supporting the sales channel(s), thus creating a sales-promoting effect. Secondly, a community surrounding the company and the brand or product can be established and maintained via Social-Media. This also includes the strengthening of the brand-name as well as the relationship with the target audience. Thirdly, Social-Media can be useful to stay aware of the reputation of a company, a brand or a product on the internet and possibly even influence it. Fourth, Social-Media activities – to some extent – affect the visibility of a company in the search engines and can therefore have a positive effect on search engine optimization.

Looking at the different forms of Social-Media, it appears that some offer more potential, for example, to influence the brand's reputation, while others are better suited to increase sales. Most Social-Media portals may be used for community building. Second to that, most portals offer an opportunity to verify brand or company

	Sales	Community Building	Reputation	SEO
Social Networks				
facebook	x	x	x	
linked in	x	x	x	
VZ	x	x	x	
xing	x	x		
Media Sharing				
last.fm		x		
myspace		x		x
youtube	x	(x)	x	
sevenload	x	(x)	x	
Blogging & Microblogging				
Blogspot	x		x	(x)
Twitter	x	x	x	
Wordpress	x		x	(x)
Social Bookmarks				
Mr. Wong		x		x
Delicious		x		x
Photo Sharing				
Picasa		x	x	
flickr		x	x	

Categorization and Impact of Social-Media³

reputation and possibly exert an influence on it. Sales promotion works especially well in social networks, blogging services and partially in video portals. From a SEO point of view, only some selected pages promise an added value.

Social networks are the most versatile portals. They allow pursuing different objectives such as sales activities and community-building as well as reputation management. Only Xing is not commonly used for reputation purposes, as the site does not have an active brand (product, service, etc.) discussion culture. Only search engine optimization does not profit from social networks, as link-building via social networks is not possible or is in fact of little use.

Media sharing portals create a variety of different effects suitable for commercial use, but they differ from portal to portal. According to usage patterns and site structure, Last.fm and Myspace are usable for community building. Myspace on the other hand can also have a positive effect on SEO, as the platform is one of the very few that are suitable for link-building.

In contrast, YouTube and Sevenload can help to increase sales and are useful for reputation management, because one can upload video clips, such as commercials or product information, and receive direct

²* The Social-Media-Screening is based on metapeople internal surveys. The data represents a snapshot as of July 2010.

³* Source: categorization and illustration by metapeople.

feedback from users, either again in video format or as a comment to your broadcast. Since the comment function is generally used rather infrequently or can be turned off by the channel operators, the two platforms only provide limited options for building an online fan community.

Blogging and micro-blogging services are primarily of interest as a sales channel and also allow reputation management. Twitter additionally offers the opportunity to establish a community. Blog services can generate a positive impact for search engine optimization.

The main benefits of social bookmarks are the development of a community and the recommendation marketing that takes place within this community. But social bookmarks can also be valuable from a SEO position, as they can help a company's presence in the search engines.

In conclusion, the various forms of Social-Media present a wide range of marketing opportunities, all of which promise to increase sales activities. Some portals are indeed closer to purchase as others, but at the end of the day, a commitment in all areas of Social-Media can create positive follow-up or cross-channel effects that ultimately strengthen sales figures.

Social-Media for B2B and B2C

As previously stated, Social-Media can be used for direct sales promotion, community building, reputation management and search engine optimization. Mostly, it is B2C businesses which are considering engaging themselves in the Social-Web, with the expectation of concrete benefits such as being able to connect better with their target audience. But with the right strategy and a proper implementation, Social-Media can offer a variety of marketing opportunities for both B2C and B2B companies.

In the following Social-Media-Screening, the current Social-Media activities of B2B and B2C enterprises are being analyzed. For the case studies, the B2B companies Airbus, as an example for an aircraft manufacturer, SAP, a software producer, and Thyssen, an automotive supplier, were chosen. As B2C representatives, we selected Lastminute and EasyJet, which are counterparts to Airbus for the tourism industry, Valve and Electronic Arts (EA), computer game producers comparable to SAP in the software sector, and Mercedes-Benz and VW, part of the Automotive sector like Thyssen.

Three popular channels were chosen as examples: Facebook, as a social network, YouTube, as a video portal, and Twitter, as a micro blogging service. Evaluation was based on two columns. Quantitative

criteria were used on the one hand, analyzing whether the company is using the channel at all, how many fans or followers it could win so far, how active it is (measured by the number of contributions) and in what language(s) the company communicates. On the other hand, since a strictly quantitative analysis of whether and how strongly a company is engaged in Social-Media does not allow evaluating whether the commitment also fulfills its purpose, quality criteria were used as well.

Therefore it was analyzed whether business-topics were the only themes addressed, or whether everyday events did find their way into the portal as well. Furthermore the type of speech was considered; whether the company communicates as a company, without giving the user information about the person who is speaking on behalf of the company, or whether the company is represented by an employee. For an evaluation of Social-Media engagement it is also important how users and company participate at the various portals. Is the social portal only used as a one-way street to a polished up company profile, or does it give the opportunity for users to interact with the company and other interested people? Another crucial question is whether Social-Media is primarily intended to build up and maintain a community and thus to strengthen the brand or whether sales goals are the main focus. Finally, it was also considered at what intervals the account was active. Hereby the frequency of posts or tweets of the respective companies on the portals were counted.

Photo-sharing portals are sparsely used by companies. For commercial purposes, they are suitable primarily for community building and reputation management, since the images published there can be annotated and circulated by interested users.

B2B quantitative

Company	Portal	Active		Follower/ Fans	Posts/ Tweets
		Yes	No		
Airbus	Facebook	x		34.034	many (English)
	Youtube	x		196 subs/ 3.187 channel visits	97 uploads (English)
	Twitter	x/o		2.591	0
SAP	Facebook	x		30.944	many (English)
	Youtube	x		596 subs/ 20.441 channel visits	lots of comments / >50 uploads
	Twitter	x		9.553	374 (English)
Thyssen	Facebook		x	ca. 400	private pages + wikipedia
	Youtube	x		1 sub/ 49 channel visits	7 uploads
	Twitter	x		391	928

The quantitative analysis of B2B companies shows that although Airbus created a Twitter account and was able to win more than 2,500 followers, it so far does not “tweet” to the apparently interested users. Similarly it stands out that Thyssen has no official Facebook page. As a result, Thyssen leaves it to individuals and the automatically embedded Wikipedia page, which only provides meager information about the steel

company, to represent Thyssen at Facebook. With its actions on YouTube and Twitter the company has so far only been able to inspire a small following of users. It’s the other way around at SAP: the software company has already won a large number of users on all three platforms by offering numerous articles and information. But SAP, as well as Airbus, communicates solely in English - even if users post reviews in other languages.

B2B qualitative										
Company	Portal	Content		Type of Communication		Participation		Sales vs. Community		Time interval
		Off Topic	On Topic	As Company	In Person	Interaction	One-way	Sales	Community/ Branding	
Airbus	Facebook	20%	80%	x		70%	30%	1%	99%	3-5 days
	Youtube		100%	x			100%		100%	weekly
	Twitter	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SAP	Facebook	20%	80%	x		90%	10%	30%	70%	2-3 days
	Youtube		100%	x		30%	70%	70%	30%	∅ 14 days
	Twitter		100%		x		100%	100%		daily
Thyssen	Facebook	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Youtube		100%	x			100%			irregular
	Twitter		100%	x			100%			daily

Using the initial results of the quantitative research, the qualitative analysis allows reviewing and deepening the analysis of Social-Media engagement of B2B companies. At first glance, it is obvious that all companies offer and discuss almost solely branch-related topics at the portals they are using. Only on Facebook, Airbus and SAP provide the possibility to discuss a small portion of topics which are not primarily dealing with the company's products.

Another similarity is that all B2B companies, except SAP via Twitter, act and communicate as an impersonal company only. Thyssen uses YouTube and Twitter merely as a one-way information distribution. On the Facebook page of Airbus, however, one can find a lively exchange between users and the company. The SAP Facebook page even sees the vast majority of interactions happening between users. SAP addresses users directly on both Facebook and YouTube, and gives them answers to questions or contributions. This allows the software group to use the two portals for distribution purposes as well as community building. On YouTube, SAP provides specific product information, promotes new products and offers the opportunity to discuss them. Twitter on the other hand is being used as a distribution channel only by the software producer, who presents specific offers to its followers. In addition, SAP uses the platforms, especially Facebook and Twitter, in an innovative way of recruiting staff.

Airbus' main objective is strengthening its brand with its Social-Media engagement as well as building and

maintaining a fan community. The aerospace company accomplishes these goals at Facebook and YouTube quite well due to relatively short intervals between posts. Thyssen can again be found amongst the weaker performers according to the qualitative analysis of its engagement. The one-sided communication undermines the logic of Social-Media and the irregular activities are evidence of a half-hearted commitment. As a result, the steel company neither manages to support its sales channels, nor to build an online community.

B2C quantitative

Company	Portal	Active		Follower/ Fans	Posts/ Tweets
		Yes	No		
Lastminute	Facebook	x		2.774	many (German)
	Youtube	x		18 subs/ 1.727 channel visits	6.026 uploads/ 115.097 watched uploads
	Twitter	x		2.129	1.114 (German)
EasyJet	Facebook	x		31.629	many (predominantly English)
	Youtube	x		49	8 uploads / 8.407 watched uploads
	Twitter	x		4.612	1.502
Valve	Facebook	x		71.719	0 (!) / only posts of user s
	Youtube			35185 subs/ 460.090 channel visits	26 uploads
	Twitter	x		3.916	7
Electronic Arts (EA)	Facebook	x		121.158	>100
	Youtube	x		143.511 subs/ 3.233.034 channel visits	>100
	Twitter	x		219.498	2.302
Mercedes-Benz	Facebook	x		421.031	many (English + German)
	Youtube	x		8.248 subs/ 810.705 channel visits	3.439.087 watched uploads/ lots of comments
	Twitter	x		3.263	106 (English / @MercedesBenz.tv)
VW	Facebook	x		394199 / 7.895	many (English)
	Youtube	x		3.046 subs/ 534.318 channel visits	3.592.314 watched uploads (English)
	Twitter	x		5.480	385 (English)

The first thing to notice from the quantitative review of the B2C cases is that all of the sample firms surveyed, across all economic sectors, are active in all three Social-Media portals. In comparison to the B2B companies, the B2C enterprises generally have a relatively diversified Social-Media engagement. Tourism companies Lastminute and EasyJet impress with many followers and many posts, especially on Facebook and Twitter. Lastminute however clearly acts more successful and engaged on YouTube than the airline does. EasyJet almost exclusively speaks English, Lastminute on the other hand only German. The game makers Valve and Electronic Arts (EA) have already been able to win a large number of fans on all portals. EA offers its fans a lot of posts across all platforms, whereas Valve surprises in this point: the gaming group is not really active at all on Facebook, but merely offers its users a platform for interaction. Similarly, only 7 tweets have been written for its over 3,900 Twitter followers. Valve is also extremely passive

on YouTube, with 26 uploads compared to the number of interested users and in contrast to its competitor, Electronic Arts, which offers more than 100 uploads. Consequently, EA succeeds to excite more users for its brand on almost every platform. Mercedes-Benz and Volkswagen, the two car manufacturers, are both very active in the three sample portals. Both managed to assemble a great fan base on Facebook, YouTube and Twitter and show a lot of activity to interested users. They communicate mostly in English; Mercedes-Benz on Facebook occasionally in German as well. The Social-Media activities of these two companies face competition, though, from official, national pages or websites, groups and the likes initiated by individuals.

B2C qualitative										
Company	Portal	Content		Type of Communication		Participation		Sales vs. Community		Time interval
		Off Topic	On Topic	As Company	In Person	Interaction	One-way	Sales	Community/ Branding	
Lastminute	Facebook	70%	30%	x (on first-name basis)		60%	40%	30%	70%	daily
	Youtube		100%	x			100%	99%	1%	weekly
	Twitter	90%	10%	x (on first-name basis)		10%	90%	30%	70%	several times a day
EasyJet	Facebook	90%	10%	x		60%	40%	30%	70%	2-3 days
	Youtube	55%	45%	x		1%	99%	1%	99%	> 1 week
	Twitter	90%	10%		x	99%	1%	20%	80%	several times a day
Valve	Facebook	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	100%	0%	n/a	n/a	n/a (only users)
	Youtube		100%	x			100%	100%		monthly
	Twitter		100%	x		10%	90%	90%	10%	weekly to daily
Electronic Arts	Facebook	80%	20%		x	20%	80%	90%	10%	daily
	Youtube	80%	20%	x	x	20%	80%	60%	40%	weekly
	Twitter	70%	30%	x		40%	60%	40%	60%	several times a day
Mercedes-Benz	Facebook	99%	1%	x		80%	20%		100%	every 3 days
	Youtube	99%	1%	x		20%	80%	1%	99%	2-3 days
	Twitter	1%	99%	x			100%	1%	99%	3-5 days
VW	Facebook	60%	40%	x (directly addressing)		99%	1%	1%	99%	VW daily/ users hourly
	Youtube	50%	50%		x (on first-name basis)	10%	90%		100%	weekly
	Twitter	50%	50%	x		30%	70%	1%	99%	several times a day

The qualitative analysis of the Social-Media engagement from the B2C case studies aims at successfully pointing out strategies and problem areas. A first general overview confirms the assumption made during the quantitative analysis that the B2C sample firms exhibit a much stronger Social-Media engagement on the average than the B2B companies. This confirms the previously mentioned, widespread claim that Social-Media is primarily used by B2C companies.

To a large extent, Lastminute and EasyJet give room to off-topic content on their Social-Media pages. On YouTube however, Lastminute broadcasts purely business-related holiday clips. Twitter and Facebook, on the other hand, are mainly used for dialog between the company and its fans. EasyJet too shows little interest in strictly thematic communication, but rather wants to provide space for interaction. With the exception of YouTube, Lastminute and EasyJet are quite successful in achieving interaction on their social

pages. Both companies cater to user contributions, answer questions, complaints and suggestions as well as encourage users to discuss their holiday experiences and leisure related topics. Communication on YouTube is more of a one-way street though. Lastminute for example offers exclusive clips with product related themes there. Both enterprises communicate primarily as a company in CI-compliant form. Lastminute speaks with users on a first-name basis, EasyJet introduces their Twitter spokesperson with some personal background. Lastminute as well as EasyJet use their Social-Media engagement for both sales and branding effects. Short intervals from between actions and convincing regularity help to establish credibility. The crucial difference between the two tourism companies is that Lastminute uses its YouTube channel primarily as a TV-like advertising channel, whereas EasyJet puts more emphasis on interaction and community building.

The official Social-Media-pages of computer game makers Valve and Electronic Arts see much traffic. The qualitative analysis confirms the previous impression of Valve remaining mostly passive. Only on YouTube and Twitter, the company takes action, but then again, nearly no interaction takes place, as Valve uses a rather sales-oriented one-way communication. The games developer provides purely topic-related information, unilateral and as an impersonal company. User interaction essentially only happens on Valve's Facebook page, where the gaming company does not participate in the discussions at all. Although a lot of discussions circle around games, technology and entertainment at Electronic Arts as well, forced reference to the product range is uncommon. EA introduces some of the employees who are speaking on behalf of the company on Facebook and YouTube, but continues to communicate in an official way on Twitter. Interaction takes place on all three EA-pages. In conclusion, the game developer successfully creates a well-balanced mix of sales promotion and community building. Facebook and YouTube are mainly used to increase sales, Twitter however is primarily a means of maintaining the community. Regarding the interval of action, EA convinces by frequent posts and tweets. Valve is behind the competition in that regard as well. The two automotive companies Mercedes-Benz and Volkswagen also confirm the first impression from the quantitative study in the qualitative consideration of their Social-Media activity: they are actively and heavily involved in Social-Media. At Mercedes-Benz the off-topic conversation clearly outweighs sales focused communication. Although many of the themes revolve around cars, products of the company are not necessarily at the center of discussion. More often topics such as lifestyle, technology or historical cars are being discussed. The car creator from Stuttgart generally contacts its fans and followers as an impersonal company. VW differentiates from portal to portal: on Facebook it communicates CI-compliant but in direct speech, on YouTube in person and on a first-name basis, via Twitter again as a group. At Mercedes-Benz' Social-Media ventures, interaction only takes place on Facebook. The car maker's actions on YouTube and Twitter are mostly unilateral. The Facebook page of VW is almost exclusively based on user interactions. On YouTube on the other hand, one-way communication dominates, whereas Twitter has quite a lot of interaction again. Both car companies have in common that they mainly use Social-Media to build and maintain an online community as well as for brand management. Sales pushing effects only play a

marginal role. Both impress with regular and frequent maintenance of their Social-Media pages.

Screening results

The Social-Media-Screening reflects the current state of the selected industry representatives in the Social-Web. It has been shown that Social-Media is being operated with varying levels of engagement, with different goals, different strategies and varying degrees of success. Although B2C firms generally appear more active in and more openly to Social-Media, the examples of SAP as well as Airbus demonstrate that a strong commitment to Social-Media can also have a tangible benefit for B2B companies. Furthermore, it became apparent that the different portals can be used for both sales and PR purposes. Therefore it depends less on the marketed product, but rather on the usage of the social service and whether the desired target group can actually be addressed there. The screening revealed that currently, as a rule, Facebook and YouTube tend to be used for community building and widely scattered marketing, while Twitter shall promote sales. Even though this rule is largely respected, the study has also shown that there are exceptions. Depending on the objectives, almost any company, regardless of what it sells, can use Social-Media with a focus on driving sales, or to strengthen the brand awareness, for reputation management and other uses, or even create a mix of these various intentions. Likewise, Social-Media provides an innovative way to recruit staff, to get in casual contact with the target audience and to maintain the customer relationship.

The social portals offer practical solutions for many marketing intentions, as previously shown in the impact analysis. The important thing is to always ensure that the realization of a Social-Media campaign matches the marketing goals. If, for example, one wants to build up a community around its brand and is considering to use Social-Media as an additional customer service or just to get a better bond with its target audience, the Social-Media engagement should not be based on one-sided communication or be used like TV or radio advertising. Social-Media always lives from interaction. A community can only develop where users can discuss, at best with each other, but at least with the company. Sales may benefit a little from YouTube-channels that are designed one-sided, successful Social-Media sales-promotion looks different though: an example could be to offer interesting or exclusive deals which at best get recommended by participants,

and are even drawing new users into the channel. Although YouTube is quite similar to TV as a medium, it has the great advantage of being able to get a direct feedback on the “broadcast”. Thus, even YouTube is as suitable as Facebook for customer interaction, even if many companies see the video portal primarily as their own television station at present and pass up on the distinct advantage of Social-Media: the ability to interact with customers.

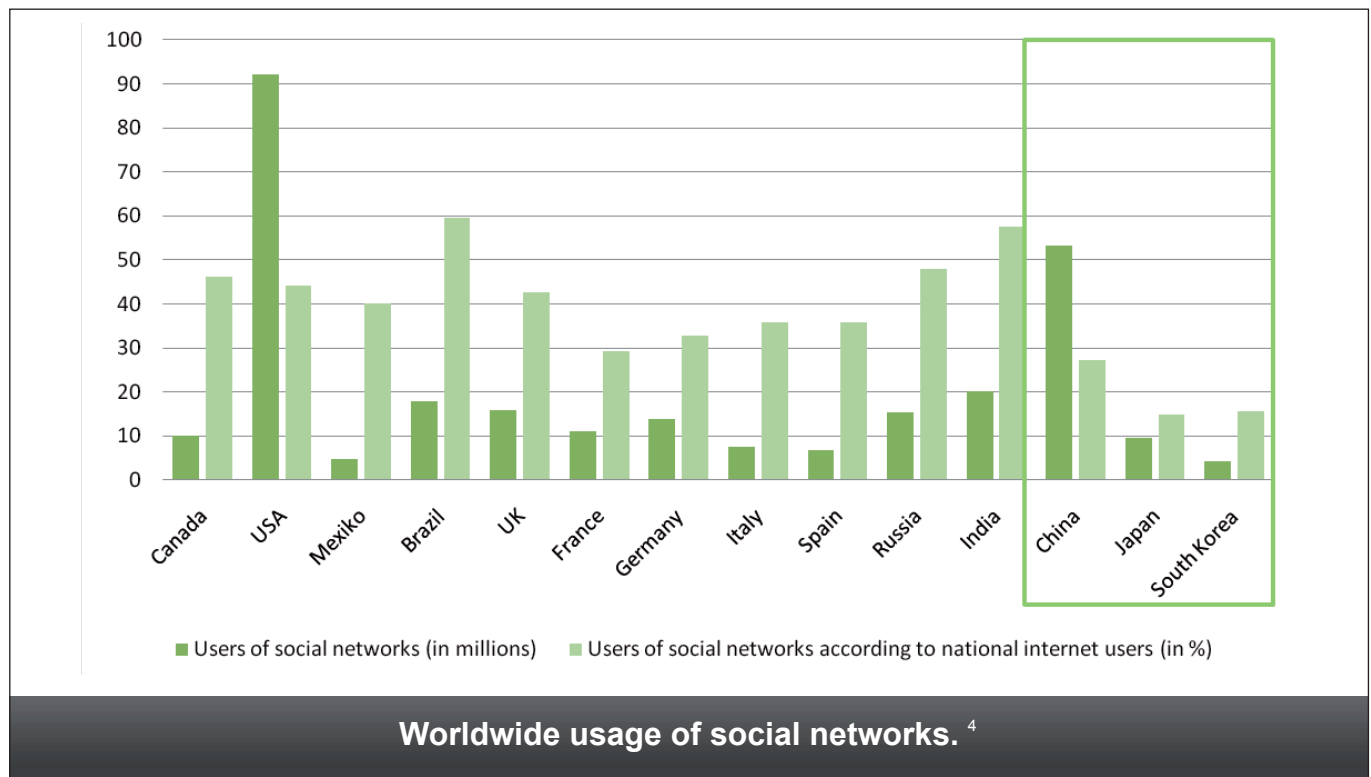
In conclusion, the screening shows that Social-Media has an impact on the brand, the reputation and sales – in both in a positive and a negative way. Sophisticated and cleverly designed Social-Media strategies can help to strengthen the brand awareness significantly with relatively little effort. Companies gain influence on their reputation and can offer additional customer care. Ultimately, sales can be encouraged through Social-Media-Marketing just as well as through other promotional commitments, either by directly opening up the channel as a distribution channel or by improving the brand recognition and thus ensuring additional sales through other means.

Social-Media worldwide

Although one of the great advantages of communication in the Web 2.0 is the possibility for international exchange in real time, most Social-Media-Marketing strategies are set up and executed nationally. Language barriers, lack of knowledge about market practices and internet usage in other countries and missing monitoring technologies are clearly the main reasons why many companies are only active in Social-Media monolingual or even just for one market. But Social-Media is a global phenomenon. World-wide use makes sense for every brand that operates globally and has customers on different continents. This poses challenges, not at least of which is communicating in several languages. More important are the seemingly insignificant differences in using social portals in different countries and regions. Factors like these may have a considerable influence on set up and implementation of global Social-Media strategies.

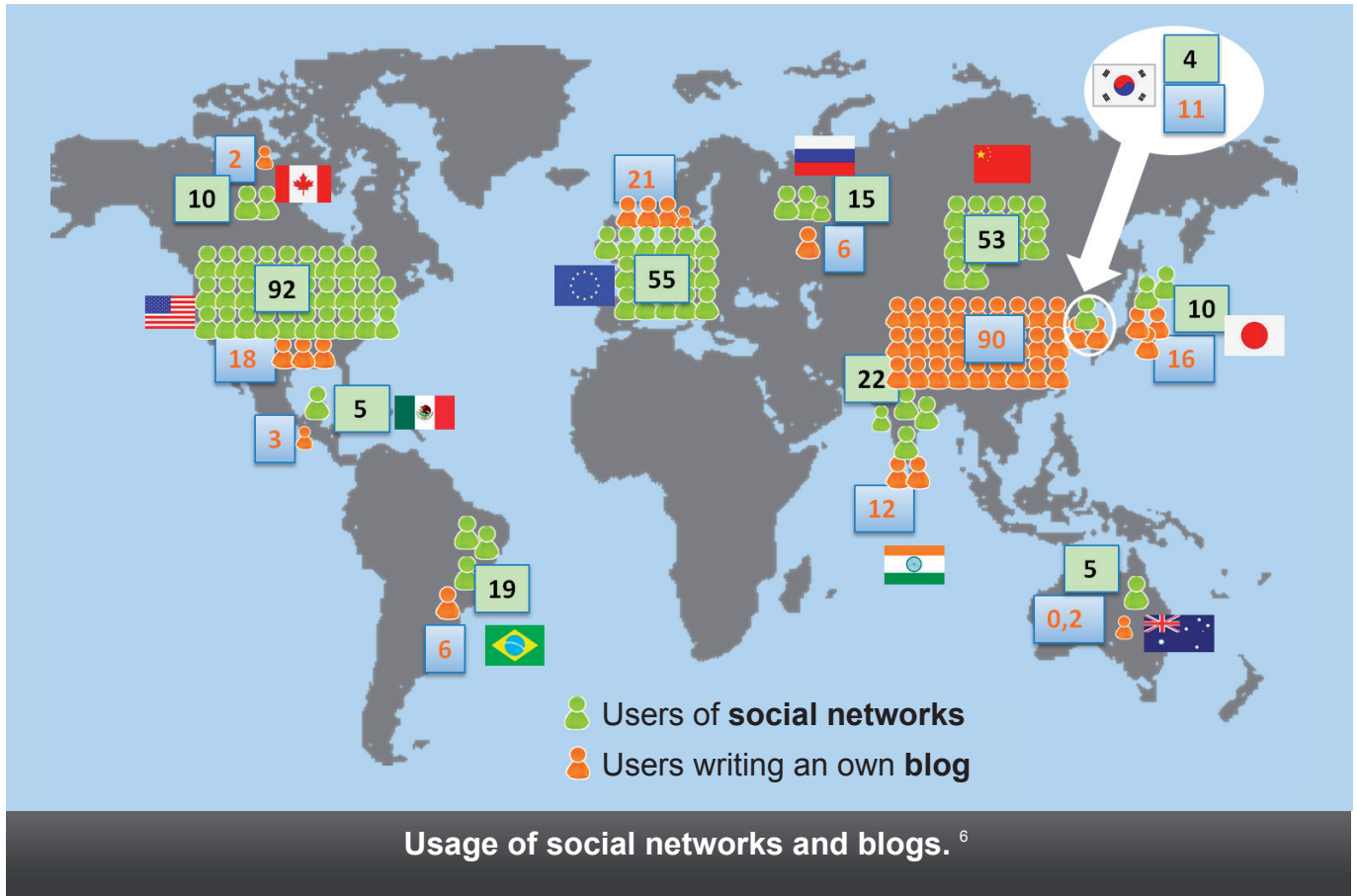
Social-Media plays a big role globally, but there are great differences in the ways of usage and communication between countries and regions. In America, Europe and Australia social platforms such

as Facebook are the centre of Web 2.0 communication. The use of such platforms is also widely spread in Asia and India, but the social exchange on the internet there was dominated by blogs and photo and video upload portals (data from 2009). In China, for example, about 60% of all internet users are actively uploading photos to the web, compared to only 32% in Germany and about 43% in the USA. The writing and reading of blogs is another example of internet use where India and China are taking a leading role. Well over 40% of Chinese and over 35% of Indian internet users write their own blog. With approximately 90 million bloggers, the Chinese are world champions in blogging, far ahead of the U.S. (approximately 17.6 million). Even micro-blogging portals are used more often in Asia and India than in the U.S. and Europe. Nevertheless, the social networks in the Asian and Indian markets are an interesting and still rapidly growing platform of mass communication and thus perfectly suited for advertising means. More than 53 million consumers can be reached via social communities in China and about 22 million in India – with an increased tendency.⁵



⁴* Source: Global Web Index, Social Web Involvement, 2009.

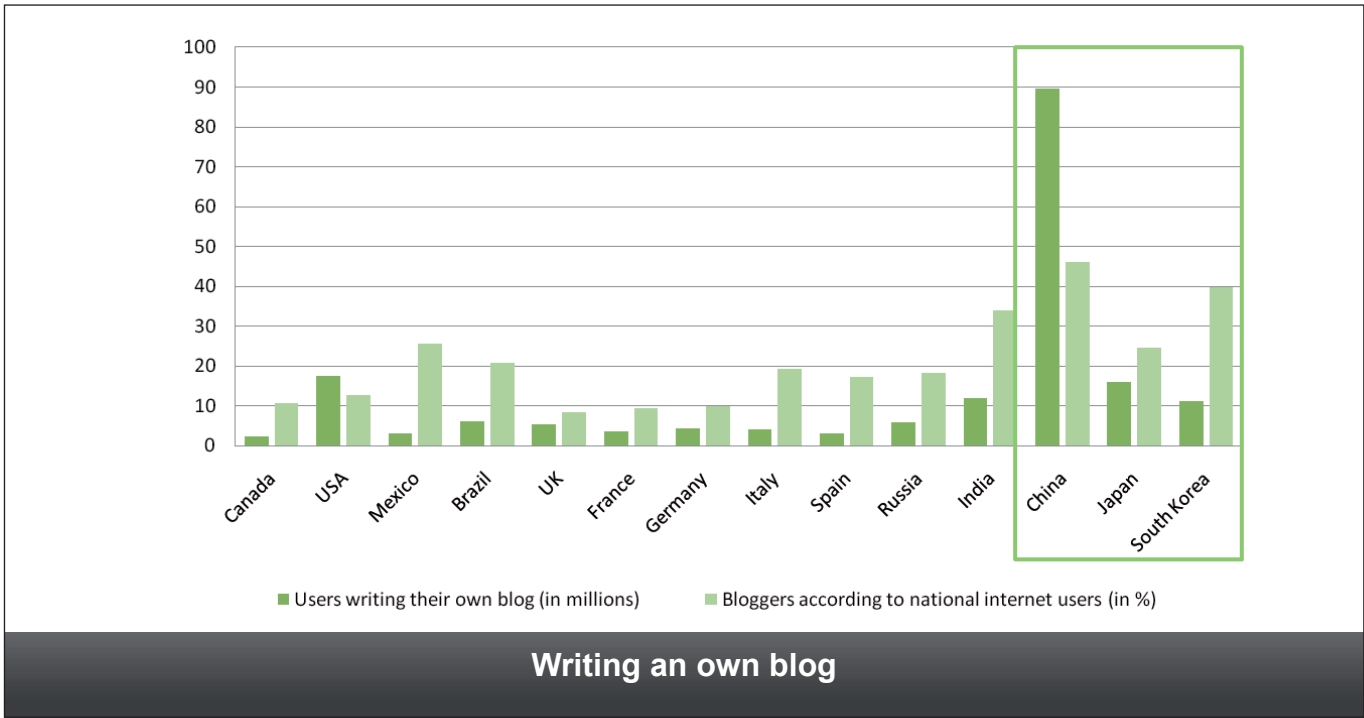
⁵* As of January 2010; Source: Global Web Index, Global Social Media Trends – Asia Impact, 2010.



The global comparison of social communication in the internet clearly shows that differences exist mainly between the Western and Asian cultural sphere. Not only differs the preferred type of communication platform, with social networks on the one side, and blogs, vlogs, etc on the other, but there are also regionally preferred platforms within each category of portals.

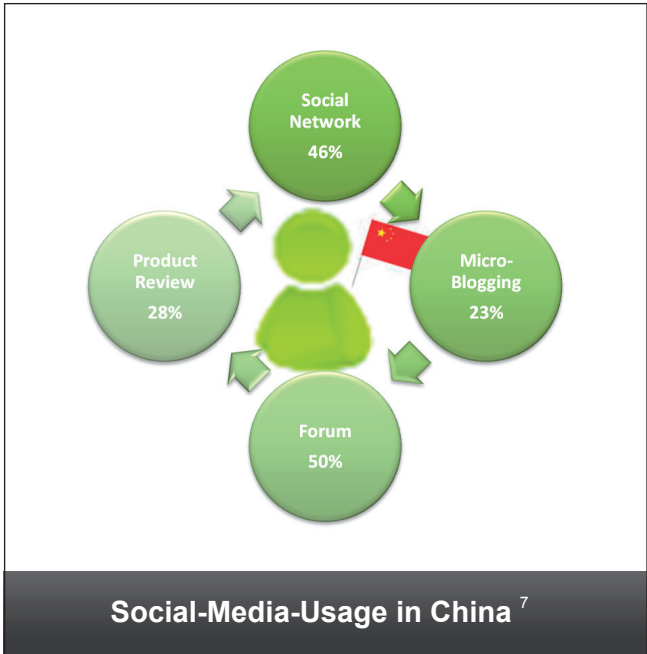
The Chinese market is a perfect example: Since the government blocks or partially censors many of the leading U.S. and European portals, the national market and the respective divisions of Social-Media are clearly dominated by Chinese portals. It follows that for the Asian and especially the Chinese markets, one has to move away from American and European Social-Media experiences and to open up to market-specific features.

⁶ The data stands for millions of users. The 55 million users of social platforms in Europe are made up as a comparison only, and combine the values for UK, France, Spain, Italy and Germany. The figures are illustrative and do not reflect the exact country values. Source: Global Web Index, Social Web Involvement, 2009.



Writing an own blog

Country specific deviations from worldwide usage patterns are not limited to China; Russia and Brazil are other good examples. These differences are particularly apparent on social networks. In the Western hemisphere, many already see Facebook as a new superpower. Indeed, the social network with its more than 325 million users is on a level with even the most populous countries in the world and would end up in the third place, before the United States and only behind China and India, in a population comparison. Facebook in China, however, plays no role at all, as the platform has been blocked there since mid-2009. In the same way, Facebook competitors could develop in various countries, whether due to political influence, rise of language barriers or simply because of regional particularities. In emerging markets such as China, Russia and Brazil, populous countries that are rapidly growing in terms of internet usage, the social networks QQ, VKontakte and Orkut have established themselves as the most commonly used platforms.



Social-Media-Usage in China ⁷

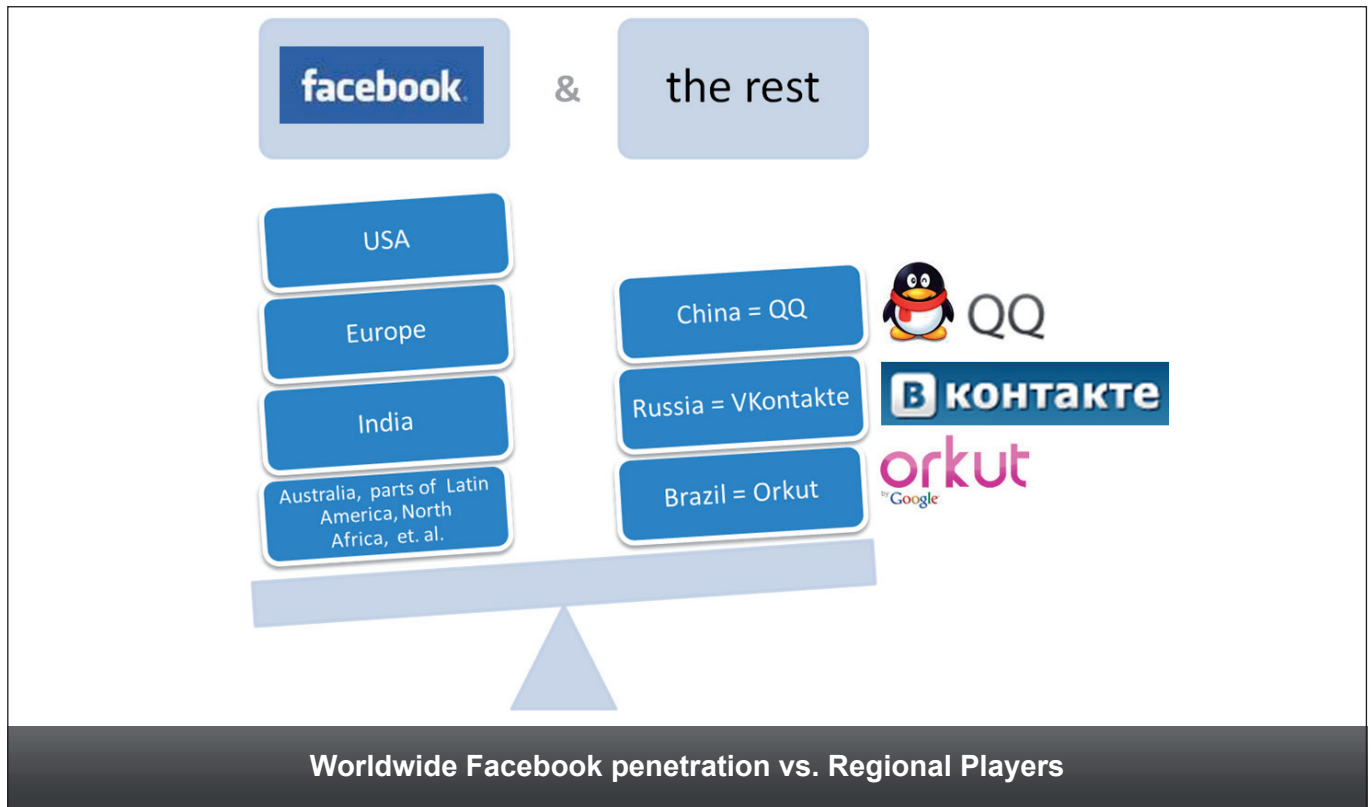
⁷* Percentages indicate the proportion of Chinese Internet users in general. Source: Global Web Index 2010

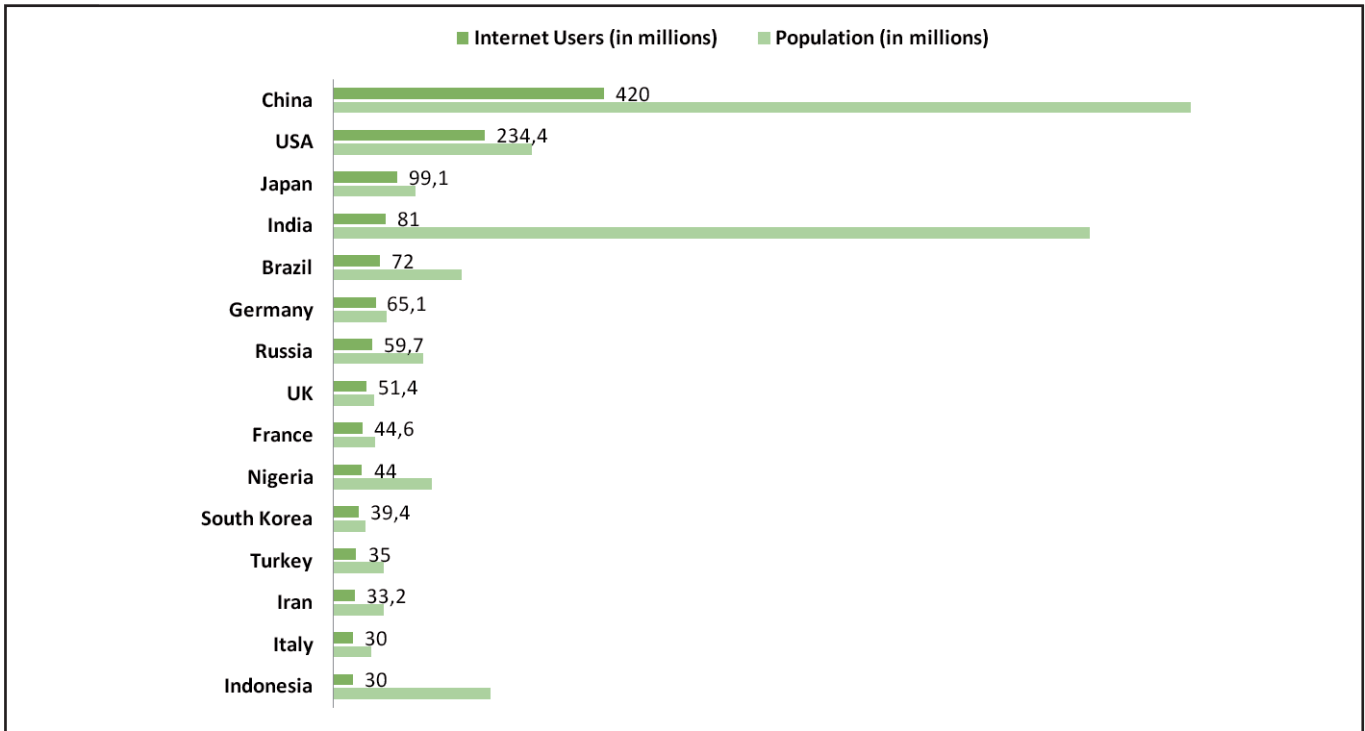
Although Facebook has the widest geographical spread and tops the list of social networks in most countries, in regards to the sheer number of users the Chinese portal QQ, which started out as an instant-messaging portal and now offers a varied Social-Media portfolio, has already passed them. Facebook has around 325 million users worldwide and QQ counts around 375 million active users just in China. If for no other reason, its rapidly growing internet user base alone makes China an extremely important market. Even today, the around 420 million Chinese internet users are the largest online nation in the world. If one takes into consideration the population figures, it appears that the Chinese internet market shows a nearly limitless growth potential.

Besides China, especially the emerging markets like India and Brazil, but also Russia, Nigeria, Turkey, Iran and Indonesia, must be regarded as markets

with a huge growth potential. In terms of the internet, and Social-Media in particular, language is the key to get in touch with users all over the world. It becomes obvious from a look at the languages spoken by most netizens that, again, the Asian market, and especially the Chinese, is of particular importance.

In conclusion, the global view on Social-Media reveals that social communication and interaction of users already makes up a substantial proportion of worldwide internet use. Regional differences in the ways of communication, but also in the preferred portals were identified. These regional distinctions need to be taken into consideration for successful commercial activities. In a nutshell, in North America, Europe and Australia social networks draw the largest user base. In Asia, however, blogs and microblogging services are still forming the core of Social-Media, even though social networks have started to gain importance and see rapid growth.

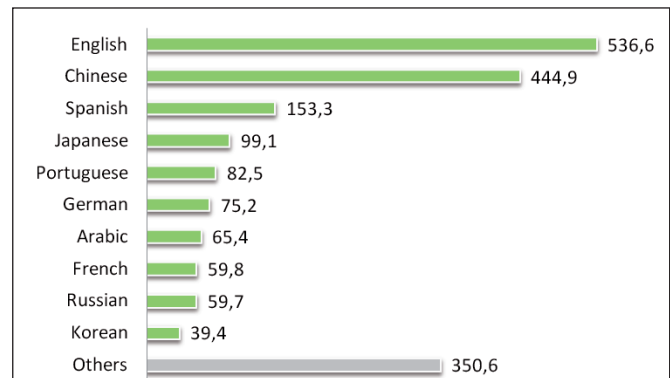




Top-15 countries: Internet-Usage vs. Population ⁸

Another important insight is that although English remains the most common language online, others, especially Chinese, become more and more important in global communication.

To draft a globally oriented Social-Media-Marketing strategy, or even just one that targets several markets, requires detailed knowledge of internet usage patterns as well as the ability to communicate in different languages. Last but not least, it takes technical solutions that enable to evaluate the multilingual communication taking place in a variety of portals.



Top-10 languages in the World Wide Web ⁹

⁸* Internet users and population figures in millions; Source: Internet World Stats, as of June 2010.

⁹* Bar chart scale in "millions of users"; Source: Internet World Stats, as of June 2010.

Making Social-Media measurable

With the rising expectations in Social-Media-Marketing, the demand for and market requirements of technical tools grows. It is necessary to be able to evaluate Social-Media under marketing considerations, in the same way as other Online-Marketing channels like SEO, SEA, Display-Media and Affiliate programs. Since Social-Media is primarily based on interaction with other users, a marketing commitment cannot be strictly evaluated by ROI considerations, as it is the case in other Performance-Marketing channels. Technical solutions, however, need to disclose both actions within Social-Media as well as cross-media influences on and from other marketing channels, to allow for effective Social-Media-Marketing.

The metapeople Group provides a tailor made tool specifically catered to the demands of Social-Media-Marketing with its self-developed “socialyzer”. The socialyzer is a permanently online, multilingual tool which analyzes Social-Media activities worldwide in real time. This allows it to capture Social-Media activities as they happen, step by step, following the principle: Listen, analyze, evaluate + understand, and ultimately act.

With the socialyzer, the metapeople-group offers a technical solution that allows controlling, evaluating and improving Social-Media-Marketing activities in various ways, no matter whether they are sales management oriented, aim at community building or reputation management. Thus, the socialyzer makes it possible to set up global marketing campaigns in the Social-Web that can be measured target-oriented, efficiently and transparently.



Conclusion

Social-Media is still - particularly from a commercial point of view - either glorified to the extreme or considered a short-lived hype. The categorization of social online portals and their closer examination has shown that Social-Media comes in many varieties and can be used commercially in just as many ways. The screening of Social-Media activities of selected industries and companies revealed that both B2C and B2B companies have discovered Social-Media as a way to pursue various marketing objectives. It also became clear that thoughtful strategy and consistent implementation are required to be able to successfully operate in Social-Media-Marketing. Just to be present in the Social-Web and to gain a lot of fans is merely a first step in Social-Media engagement, and still far from having a good and successful campaign. However, if you deliver quality, reach and awareness are likely to follow. With sensitivity for and know-how about the Social-Web, it is possible to drive sales in addition to reputation management and community building.

A Social-Media engagement should however not be planned strictly and evaluated according to ROI considerations. Specific financial implications of Social-Media activities are difficult to measure. In principle, Social-Media can serve as an additional sales and marketing channel, but it is primarily about communication, exchange and interaction. The Social-Media-Screening has also disclosed that many companies currently use Social-Media only one-way, as an additional advertising channel, and shy away from interaction, or, due to misinterpretation of Social-Media, are even earning no or negative responses only. Social-Media-Marketing can help companies, for example, to create and consolidate customer loyalty and to build and maintain trust. However, such successes are difficult to measure as return on investment, even though they create sustainable follow-up effects, which ultimately impact positively on the turnover.

It was also evident that many companies limit their Social-Media engagement to one language or operate only nationally. This, however, artificially corsets the possibilities of the World Wide Web and wastes marketing potentials that is not fully exhausted. Social-Media is a worldwide issue and continues to grow globally. Usage and preferred portals often differ due to cultural and regional differences or languages, therefore limited, regional knowledge and know-how of Social-Media can only result in a limited regional Social-

Media-Marketing. Global goals and strategies require in-depth knowledge of the culture of communication, language, internet usage and preferred social platforms of the respective target group.

Particularly between the West and Asia major differences exist in the usage of Social-Media. The Asian market has therefore to be considered separately and requires a customized strategy based on regional-specific empirical results and experience, because Western findings cannot be adapted there.

In order to successfully operate Social-Media-Marketing worldwide, experience and know-how but also technical solutions are needed. On the one hand it must be possible to set up and support Social-Media campaigns target-oriented, on the other hand a central measuring tool is required – one which helps to evaluate the Social-Media activities of a company, but also those of the users who participate in those activities and initiate their own. metapeople's self-developed socialyzer-tool specifically created for this purpose and is tailored to the needs of the commercial use of Social-Media.

metapeople covers the existing demand for modern tracking solutions with the socialyzer and offers an innovative measurement technology built to cope successfully with future challenges of Social-Media-Marketing. With offices in Duisburg, Munich, Hamburg, Zurich, London, San Francisco and Hong Kong, the metapeople group is perfectly positioned to support Social-Media campaigns with region-specific know-how on the American Continent, in Europe and Asia. With the socialyzer as a tracking tool, Social-Media-Marketing can be conceptualized globally and managed centrally. Social-Media-Marketing with metapeople is thus thought global, handled centrally and implemented with sensitivity to local needs.

The metapeople-group draws from many years of experience in Performance-Marketing, is positioned internationally and can provide the necessary know-how and the technical means to transform innovative ideas into successful Social-Media campaigns. We would be glad to explain how we can assist you in positioning your company in the Social-Web.

Contact & Information

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