

2010 Social Media Marketing Benchmark Report

*Data and Insights for Mapping an
Effective Social Marketing Strategy*

Note: This is an authorized excerpt from the full MarketingSherpa 2010 Social Media Marketing Benchmark Report. To download the entire Report, go to: <http://www.SherpaStore.com> or call 877-895-1717

Executive Summary

Welcome to MarketingSherpa's 2010 Social Media Marketing Benchmark Report.

An important transition in the use of social media for marketing purposes is taking place. A rapidly increasing segment of marketers are gaining the experience required to advance from novice to competent practitioner capable of achieving social marketing objectives and proving ROI. This Executive Summary will give you a glimpse into the most complete benchmark study available for guiding marketers through this transition.

In the past year, marketers have been captivated by the ample hype about Twitter, Facebook, blogs and other social media platforms. Their reaction was, for the most part, counter-intuitive to proven marketing principles. They jumped into this new medium thinking tactically about the latest social media platforms they could add to the mix rather than thinking strategically about the objectives they needed to achieve.

In the year ahead, we see social marketing maturing to the point where a majority of organizations will be in transition from the trial phase to the strategic phase of the learning curve. We see marketers first researching the medium (starting with resources like this report) and monitoring audiences to determine realistic objectives, then formulating the tactics and implementing tools for accomplishing those objectives.

To make this leap, marketers will need benchmark data to help them better understand what works (and what doesn't) in social media marketing, and a *practical* method for mapping a strategy that will lead them to social marketing success. Both of which are provided in this *2010 Social Media Marketing Benchmark Report*.

Throughout this report, we have segmented benchmark data into standard demographics like organization size, primary market and industry sector. And for the first time we are segmenting data by the "social marketing maturity" of responding organizations. Social marketing maturity has been defined by the practices of an organization during three logical phases of development. The goal is to demonstrate the disparity in the performance of social marketing programs by organizations in each stage of maturity.

This report also provides valuable insights and commentary from more than 2300 marketers who participated in the benchmark survey and enthusiastically shared their experiences. Social media has opened a whole new world of possibilities for marketers, and the report that follows will help guide you through this promising new frontier.

As always, we welcome your comments and look forward to hearing from you.



Sergio Balegno
Senior Analyst, MarketingSherpa Inc.

Social Marketing ROAD Map and Maturity Model

“Lack of an effective social marketing strategy” is one of the most significant challenges facing marketers. Without a strategy, organizations typically approach social media by putting the cart before the horse – starting a blog, a Facebook, LinkedIn or Twitter account, or other social platform – rather than first mapping a course to achievable objectives.

To guide marketers through overcoming this challenge, we created the Social Marketing ROAD Map, a practical method for mapping an effective social marketing strategy.

A Practical Method for Mapping an Effective Social Marketing Strategy

Social Marketing ROAD Map and Social Marketing Maturity Model			
Social Marketing Maturity Phases	Phase I: Trial	Phase II: Transition	Phase III: Strategic
Social Marketing ROAD Map Method			
R esearch	Monitor target audience dialogue about brands and competition		
O bjectives	Define objectives aligned with target audiences and social metrics		
A ctions	Create a social marketing strategy with a definitive plan of action		
D evelop	Deploy social platforms based on audience, objectives and strategy		
Social Marketing Maturity Benchmarks	No Process, Platform-Centric	Informal Process, Randomly Performed	Formal Process, Routinely Performed

Using this method to develop a strategy will give marketers the ability to make winning decisions about the integration of social media into their marketing mix.

The Social Marketing ROAD Map, an acronym for the four elements, consists of:

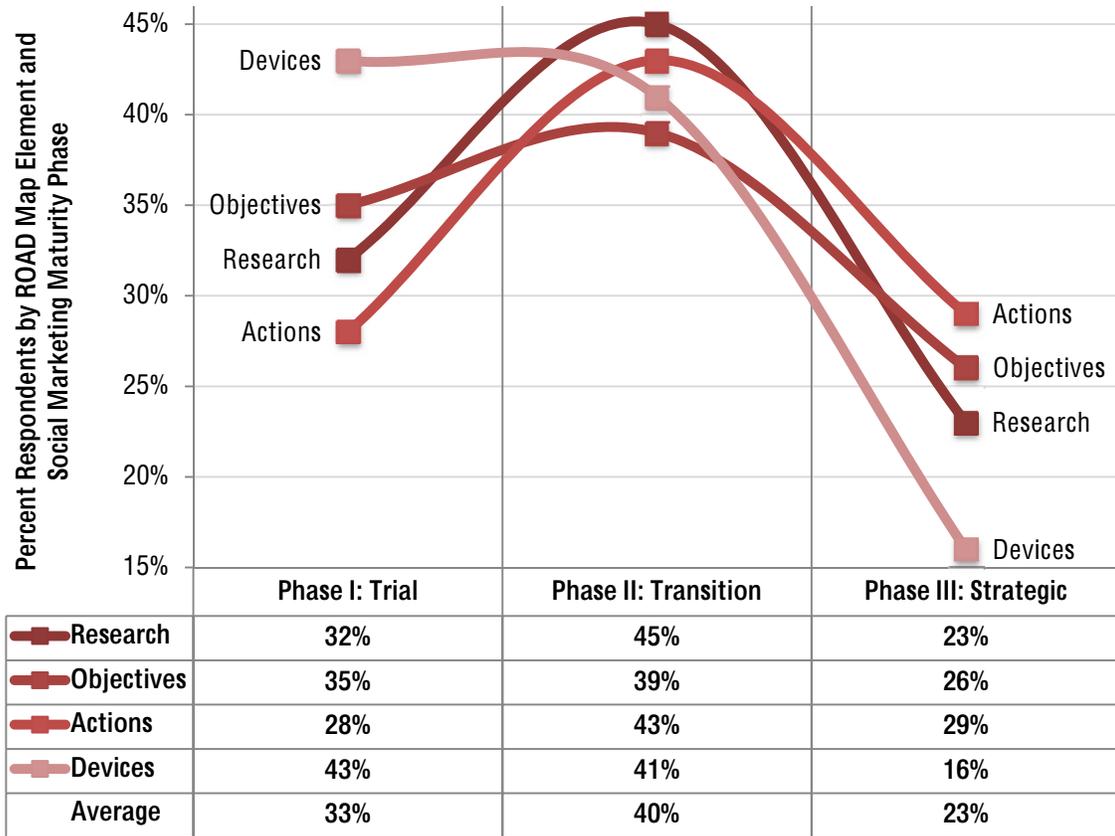
- Research – monitoring target audience dialogue about brands and competition.
- Objectives – defining objectives aligned with target audiences and social metrics.
- Actions – creating a social marketing strategy with a definitive plan of action.
- Develop – deploying social platforms based on audience, objectives and strategy.

Marketers are performing these elements at various times, and in various ways. The Social Marketing Maturity Model, incorporated in the table above, determines how far an organization has progressed in the use of each ROAD Map element in a systematic way. This benchmark study measured social marketing maturity based on three phases:

- Phase I: Trial – no process is used and social platforms are implemented first.
- Phase II: Transition – an informal process is used and performed randomly.
- Phase III: Strategic – a formal process is used and performed routinely.

Social Marketing Maturity is in Transition from Trial to Strategic

Where Organizations are in the Social Marketing Maturity Lifecycle



Source / Methodology: MarketingSherpa Social Media Marketing Benchmark Survey / Fielded Nov 2009, N=2,317

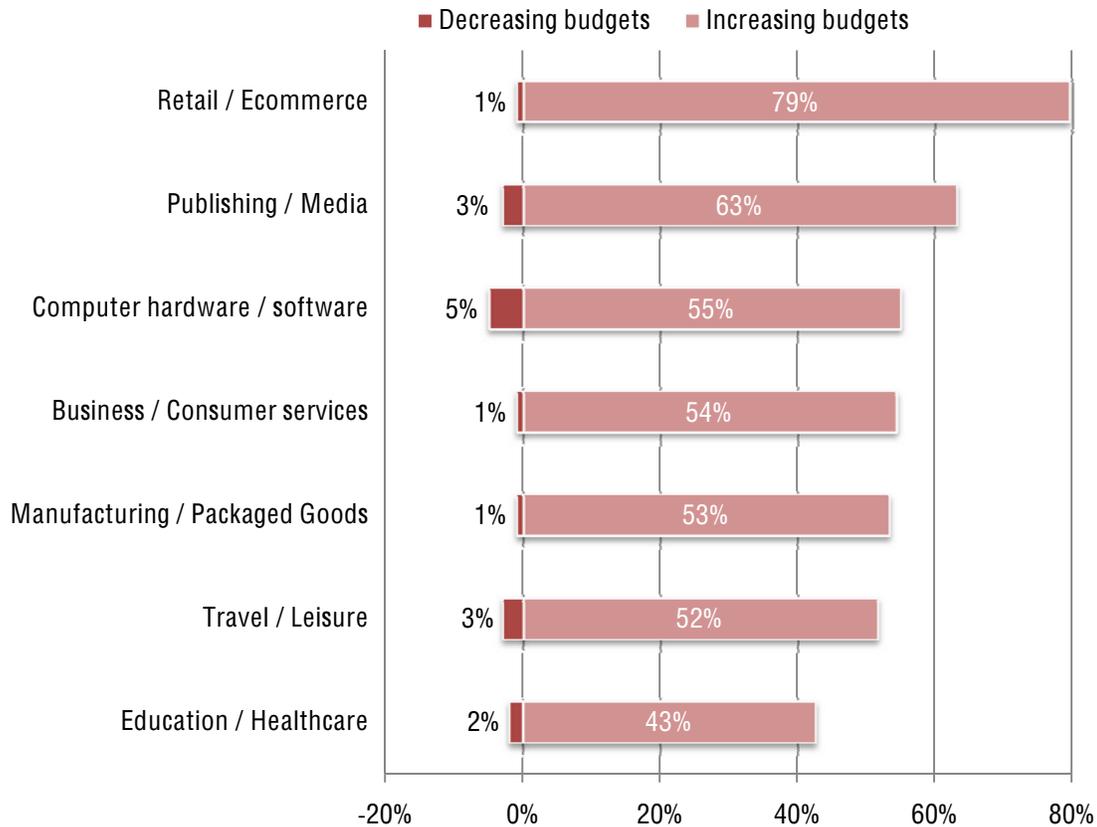
Which phase of marketing maturity is your organization in today? Where do you want to be? How will you get there from here? These are important questions because the more mature an organization's social marketing, the more strategic and effective it becomes.

This chart shows that, when averaging all elements, the largest share of organizations (40%) is now in the Transition Phase. While a third of organizations are still in the Trial Phase, the good news is that nearly a quarter (23%) has advanced to the Strategic Phase.

Marketers reported that maturity can differ markedly by ROAD Map element. For organizations in the Trial Phase, we see most organizations focused on Devices (social media platforms). We see the focus shifting to Research in the Transition Phase and to Actions in the Strategic Phase. The key take-away here is that emphasis on Devices drops from the top line to the bottom as an organization's social marketing maturity evolves.

2010 Social Marketing Budgets Defy Economic Concerns

Change in Social Marketing Budget from 2009 to 2010, by Industry Sector



Source / Methodology: MarketingSherpa Social Media Marketing Benchmark Survey / Fielded Nov 2009, N=2,317

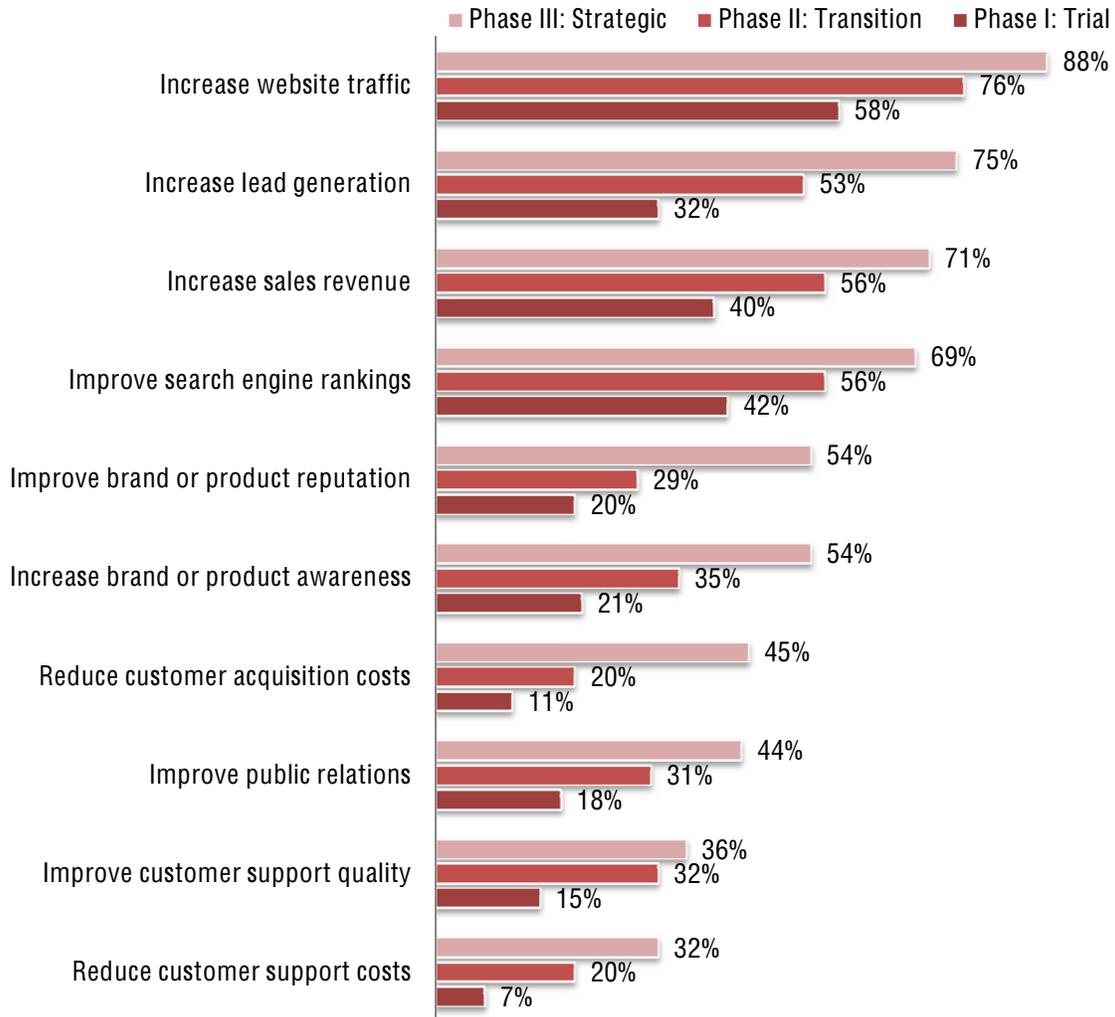
Chances are your overall marketing budget was hit hard by the economy in 2009 and the prospect of recovering a substantial portion of these funds in 2010 is not very likely. But there is good news for social media marketers. This chart shows that social marketing will benefit from very significant budget increases in the year ahead no matter what industry your organization is in. What this chart doesn't show is where these increases will come from.

As a relatively new and rapidly emerging tactic, social media is generally funded by either increasing the overall budget or, more often than not in the current economic climate, by shifting funds from other marketing line items to social media. Social marketing budgets are growing at the expense of other tactics and a deeper dive into this study will show you which ones and to what extent.

The human factor will account for nearly 60% of social marketing expenditures next year including staff salaries for blogging, content development, social monitoring, etc. Another 20% of the budget will go outside the organization to agencies, consultancies and other social marketing service providers.

Aligning Social Marketing Objectives with Corresponding Metrics

Objectives that are Targeted *and* Measured, by Social Marketing Maturity



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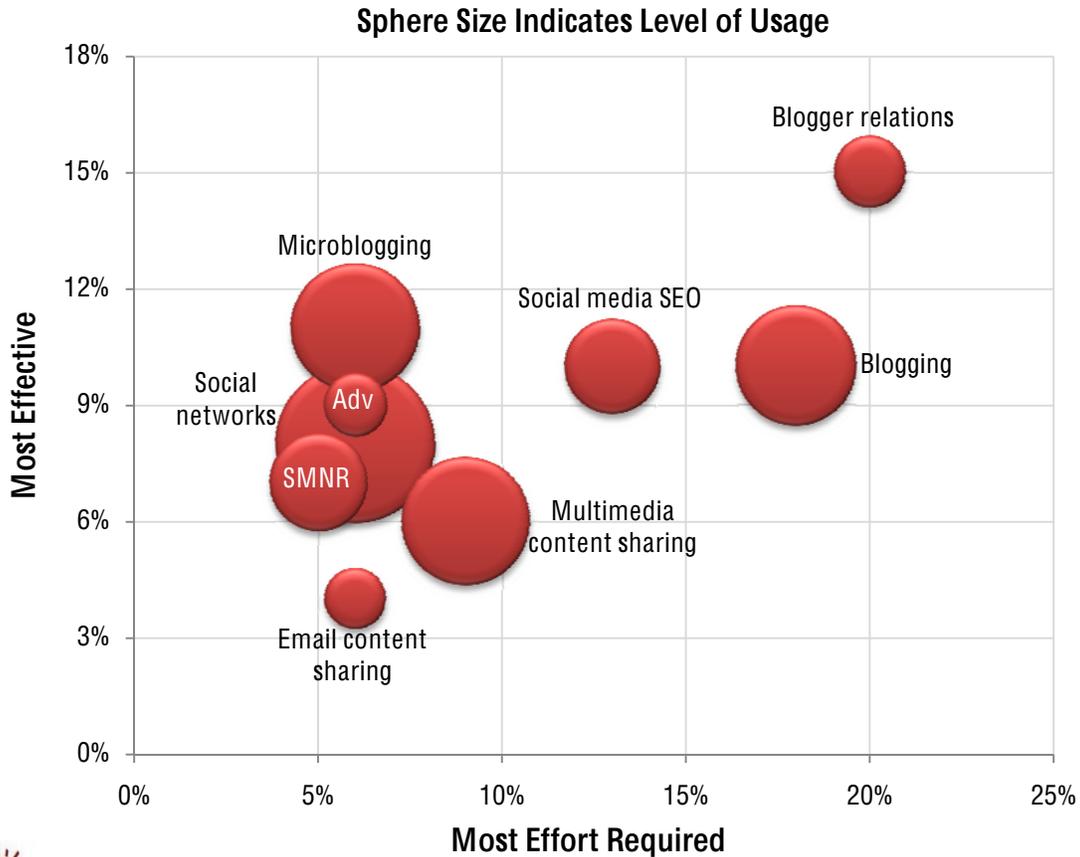
source / Methodology: Marketingsherpa Social Media Marketing Benchmark Survey / Fielded Nov 2009, N=2,317

Defining specific objectives for a social marketing initiative is only half the battle. The other half is aligning those objectives with corresponding metrics. This alignment is important because it enables an organization to measure its progress in achieving the objectives and proving ROI. While obvious, this step is often overlooked.

This chart breaks out the percentage of organizations targeting *and* measuring social marketing objectives by their social marketing maturity status. Regardless of the specific objective, an organization in the strategic phase of social marketing maturity is much more likely to align their objectives with corresponding metrics than are organizations in the earlier phases.

Three Dimensions of Social Marketing Tactics

Comparing the Effectiveness, Effort Required and Usage of Social Marketing Tactics



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Source / Methodology: MarketingSherpa Social Media Marketing Benchmark Survey / Fielded Nov 2009, N=2,317

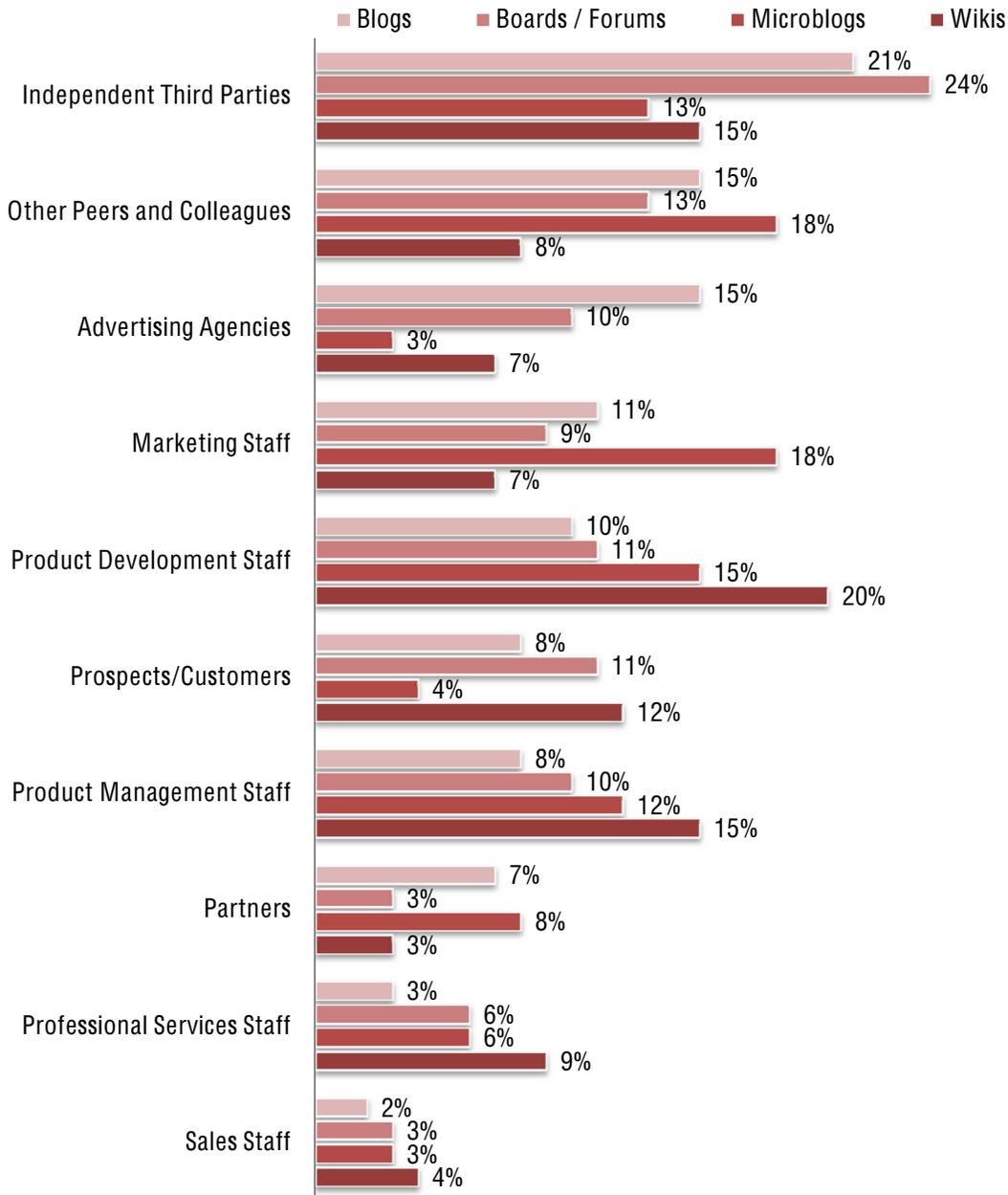
The data breakouts for the use, effort required and effectiveness of social marketing tactics are provided throughout this study. In the chart above, we combine these three sets of data to give you a three dimensional view of the tactics.

The effort (time and resources) required of a social marketing tactic often trumps the effectiveness of a tactic in determining its use. The more effort required, the less likely it will be implemented. For example, the most effective tactic shown in the chart above – blogger relations – is used by far fewer organizations than less effective tactics primarily because of the effort required.

This focus on “fast and easy” versus effectiveness is a problem that is far more prevalent with organizations in the trial phase of social marketing maturity than with more advanced social marketers working from a strategic social marketing plan.

Technology Buyers' Voice of Choice, by Social Media Platform

Preferred Primary Voice of Insight and Opinion on Vendor-Hosted Social Platforms



Source / Methodology: IDG Connect, IT Investment Decision and Content Preference in Social Media / Fielded Jun 2009, N=100

When vendors host or participate in social conversations, they must realize the preferred voice of insight and opinion varies by platform. This chart is useful in determining who to spotlight in conversational threads. While independent third parties have the highest overall preference, vendor staff can and should have a role to insure the conversation stays on topic and works to build legitimacy and a perception of expertise that helps round out the contribution of independent voices.

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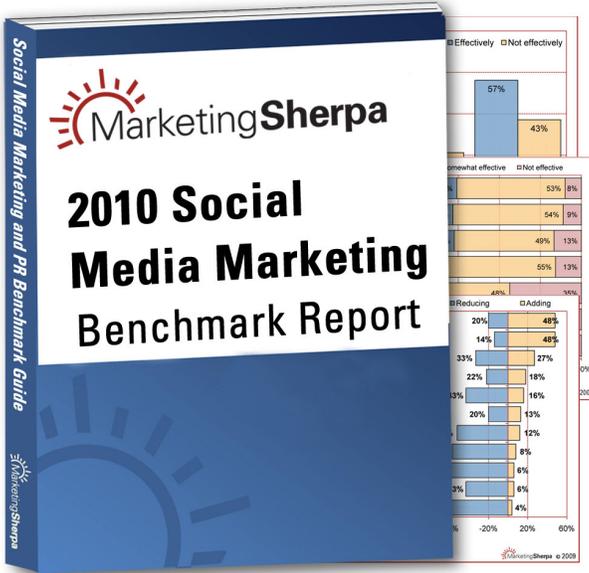
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