

It would be reasonable to think that every company that has found its way onto the Fortune 500 list knows the importance of being social. Given the leaps made by media platforms like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, companies have had to learn quickly in order to catch up with their customer base. While some have done extraordinarily well, there is also a large percentage that barely made a move, if at all. So what is the reason for the lack of social media presence?

After looking at over 25 B2B companies on the coveted list*, we have uncovered a commonality that cannot be overlooked: **THE SOCIAL FOLLOWINGS OF CMOs.**

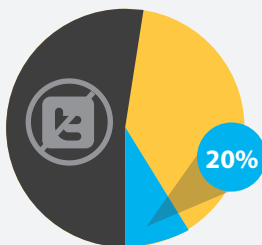
How can a company be expected to develop a successful social strategy when a CMO has no experience creating their own? We found that there was a limited number of CMOs with a successful social media following, whether on Facebook, Twitter, or LinkedIn. As these three social media channels are quickly becoming the fastest way to give and find information, it is vital for marketing leaders to take full advantage of these opportunities. Instead, these executives are asking their companies to do as they say and not as they do – something that never works well.

HERE ARE SOME OF THE POINTS WE NOTICED

CMO SOCIAL

VS

CORPORATE SOCIAL



- Over **50%** of the CMOs didn't have Twitter accounts
- Of those that did, only **20%** posted regularly



CMOs that didn't have Twitter accounts or accessible LinkedIn accounts worked for companies that had the lowest rate of new followers

Less than **5%** of the CMOs had a Facebook page as a Thought Leader



Companies with "unsocial" CMOs had the lowest number of posts on LinkedIn, and the lowest number of two-way engagements on their Facebook wall



CMOs and Companies that didn't post thought leadership pieces had the smallest increase in Likes over Facebook

What can companies gather from these findings?

What they can gather is that their Marketing executives need to learn that their personal brand is just as important (and influential) as their company's brand. As we steadily move towards the era of inbound marketing, having consumers recognize executives as thought leaders will become increasingly more valuable for the success of a company.

CMOs could be considered interchangeable; they all possess creativity, experience, and knowledge.

However, there are key factors that make one CMO significantly more valuable than others. Let's take the example of Beth Comstock, the Senior Vice President and CMO of General Electric. Her marketing teams have reached out across every social media chain from Facebook to YouTube to Pinterest, and they have created followings that have put General Electric among the best at social within the Fortune list. As an individual, Beth Comstock is considered at the forefront of CMOs in social media, with one of the highest Klout scores, almost 50,000 followers on LinkedIn, and an active and relevant twitter feed. She regularly posts thought pieces that show her expertise, and that engage her followers in critical and meaningful discussions.

Over the last few years social media strategies have become exponentially more valuable.

Companies without a clear plan will likely find themselves out of the competition entirely. Without a Chief Marketing Officer that recognizes the value of being social with consumers, companies will be working without the experience or insight of other more socially-capable companies.

There are other CMOs that have the same capabilities and knowledge as Beth Comstock, but they have yet to take the necessary step towards social media. Chief Marketing Officers needs to be responsible for bringing their company a following, and turning their company into a place of influence. Regardless of whether they do this on their own, or delegate it down to teams below them, the task falls into their department. Social media has become the most valuable way to gain thousands (if not millions) of followers, so this is generally the approach that Fortune 500 companies have taken, but how should a company trust a CMO that isn't even capable of commanding their own following?

**Couch & Associates did an in-depth analysis of 25 Fortune 500 companies over the course of 5 weeks. An additional 50 to 75 Fortune 500 companies were looked at over a smaller period, and were in accordance with the conclusion. The comparison is made between each company's official Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter accounts, and their CMOs. Couch & Associates considered a CMO to be social if they are active on at least two of three social media channels, and are sharing relevant thought pieces or encouraging industry-related discussion. CMO accounts were also measured by their accessibility and how easy it is for the public to have access to their activity.*