

SURVEY OBJECTIVES

BRANDfog's second annual 2013 CEO, Social Media and Leadership Survey set out to better understand C-Suite social media strategy and measure its effect on executive leadership, brand image, and brand trust.

SURVEY RESULTS

The results of the survey proved very instructive for companies looking to establish leadership branding through social media channels. Innovative C-Suite and senior executives are at the forefront of social engagement, utilizing social media to attract new talent, deepen brand loyalty, increase purchase intent, and establish brand transparency. Specifically, survey results demonstrate that 80.6% of respondents believe that social media is an important communication channel for CEOs to engage with customers and investors, and 83.9% believe that CEO social media engagement is an effective tool to increase brand loyalty. What's more, CEO social media engagement was viewed as a gateway to facilitate deeper connections with customers, employees and shareholders.

Some of the most revealing survey insights emerged when comparing who was managing executive social media engagement with the perceived value of that engagement. For example, employees of companies that have developed a strategy and assigned accountability for executive social media engagement were far more likely to recognize the benefits of that engagement. When C-Suite social media engagement is managed, nearly 70% of employees believe that leveraging social media makes CEOs more effective leaders. However, the reverse of this statement is also true. When companies do not have an executive social media strategy in place, employees fail to see the value of showcasing the company's leadership team, which can provide a competitive advantage at the brand level.

The survey results also demonstrate that senior business leaders are in the early stages of social media adoption; however, ramp-up remains slow. While companies begin to recognize that there are opportunity costs for executives remaining silent in an increasingly dynamic social environment, there are a multitude of reasons holding them back. Survey respondents indicated that risk aversion, time constraints, fear of negative feedback, and a lack of a social media strategy are the primary barriers to C-Suite social media engagement. There is also the question of who owns social media leadership branding. Many respondents stated that they either did not know who was responsible for the brand image of their leadership team on social media, or that no one was responsible for it. We expect this trend to shift in the next 18-24 months, as more C-Suite executives start to realize the power of social media to communicate company mission and values, instill confidence in the company's leadership team, humanize the brand, and build brand trust.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

BRANDfog's 2013 CEO, Social Media Leadership Survey surveyed 800 US and UK employees in diverse companies. The companies surveyed ranged in size from startups to Fortune 1000 companies, and spanned various industries.

“This is an ideal time for the reinvention of modern leadership. The role of the CEO has evolved to become more visible, social, connected, and accessible than ever before. The competitive environment has likewise been transformed, and customers, investors and stakeholders expect to have access to the insights and vision of brand leaders on a continuous basis. C-Suite executives who ignore this trend do so at their own peril.

We are witnessing a fundamental shift in the culture of leadership, brought upon by social media but sustained by the strategic inventiveness of smart CEOs. While social media is new, the nexus between communication and leadership is not. Many of the world’s greatest leaders—from Winston Churchill to Martin Luther King, Jr. to Steve Jobs—have been highly skilled communicators. Social media, in all its forms, empowers CEOs to improve their communications skills, deepen their connections with people inside and outside the company, and emerge as more effective leaders.”

Ann Charles, Founder and CEO of BRANDfog, a NYC venture offering social media leadership branding for C-Suite executives.

SURVEY RESULTS

Q1

In your opinion, why are CEOs/CMOs not present on social media channels?

RISK AVERSION: FEAR OF POTENTIAL NEGATIVE FEEDBACK OR CRITICISM



NO TIME TO MANAGE SOCIAL MEDIA



I DON'T KNOW



NO SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY IN PLACE



NO INTEREST IN SOCIAL MEDIA



LACK OF UNDERSTANDING



OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)



Nearly 1/4 of all respondents indicated risk aversion as the primary reason for executive reluctance to engage on social media channels, and 20.6% stated they believed executives did not have time for social media engagement.

Q2

Who manages the brand image of your company's leadership team on social media?

I DON'T KNOW



MARKETING DEPARTMENT



NO ONE



PR DEPARTMENT



CHIEF SOCIAL OFFICER



OTHER



C-SUITE EXECUTIVES MANAGE THEIR OWN



Nearly half of the respondents stated that they either did not know who was responsible for the brand image of their leadership on social media, or that no one was responsible for it. **23.9%** stated that the Marketing Department managed the brand image of company leaders, and **16.1%** believed that the PR Department owned it.

Q3

How effective is it for CEOs to use Social Media to:

FIG. 1 RAISE THE PROFILE OF THE CORPORATE BRAND?

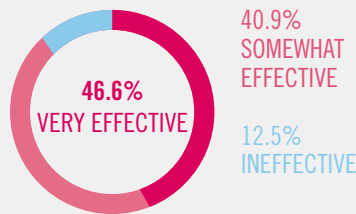


FIG. 2 COMMUNICATE COMPANY MISSION AND VALUES?

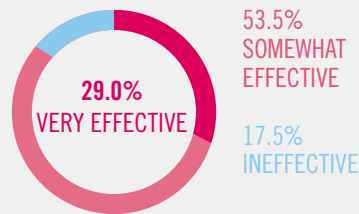


FIG. 3 FOR TALENT ACQUISITION AND EMPLOYMENT BRANDING?

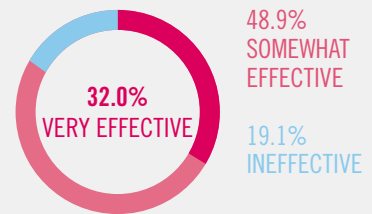


FIG. 4 INCREASE BRAND LOYALTY?

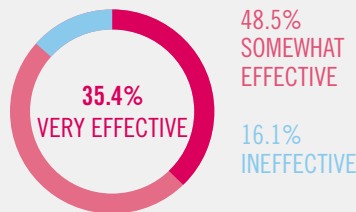


FIG. 5 INCREASE PURCHASE INTENT?

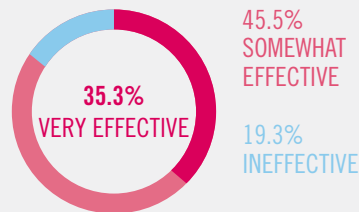


FIG. 1 Raise the profile of the corporate brand? **87.5%** believe it is either very effective, or somewhat effective.

FIG. 2 Communicate company mission and values? **82.5%** answered somewhat effective or very effective.

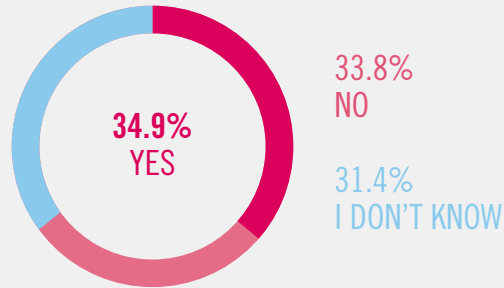
FIG. 3 Attract new talent and implement employment branding? **80.9%** answered somewhat effective or very effective.

FIG. 4 Increase brand loyalty? **83.9%** believe that CEO engagement on social media is somewhat or very effective for increasing brand loyalty, and only **16.1%** believe it to be ineffective.

FIG. 5 Increase purchase intent? **80.8%** answered somewhat effective or very effective.

Q4

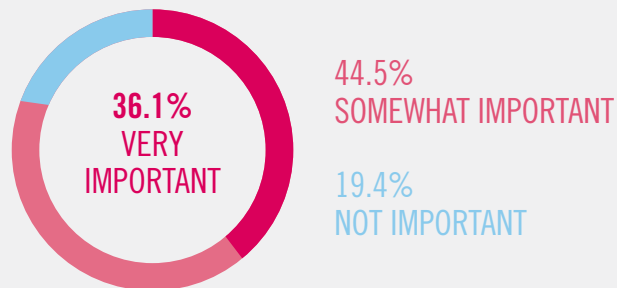
Does the use of social media by CEOs increase confidence in the company's leadership team?



34.9% believe that it does, 33.8% believe it does not, and 31.4% did not know.

Q5

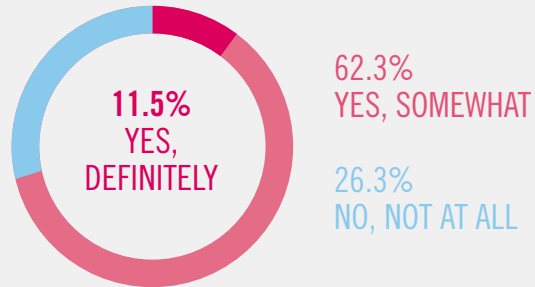
How important is it for CEOs to make time to engage with customers and investors on social media channels?



80.6% of respondents believe that social media was a somewhat or very important communications channel for CEOs to engage with customers and investors, while 19.4% felt it was not important.

Q6

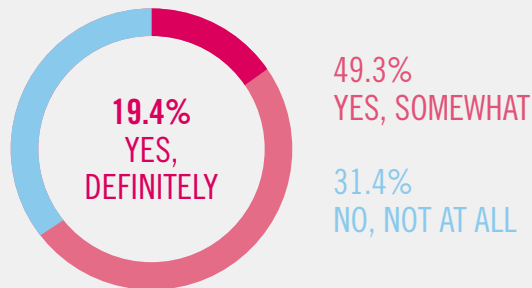
Does C-Suite social media engagement help to create brand transparency?



73.8% believe that C-Suite social media engagement either somewhat or definitely creates brand transparency.

Q7

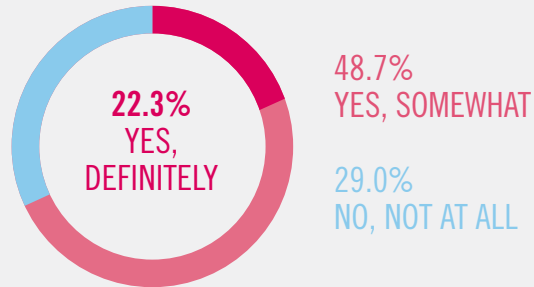
Does C-Suite social media engagement make a brand seem more honest and trustworthy?



68.7% of respondents believe this to be true.

Q8

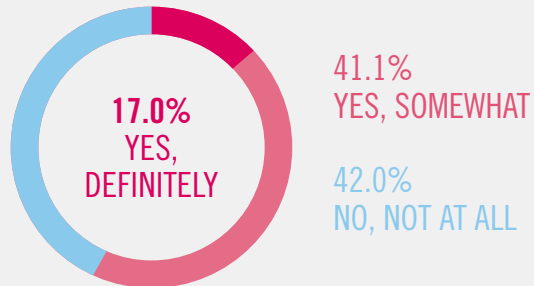
Does social media engagement make members of the C-Suite better communicators?



71.0% of respondents agree with this statement, while 29.0% did not.

Q9

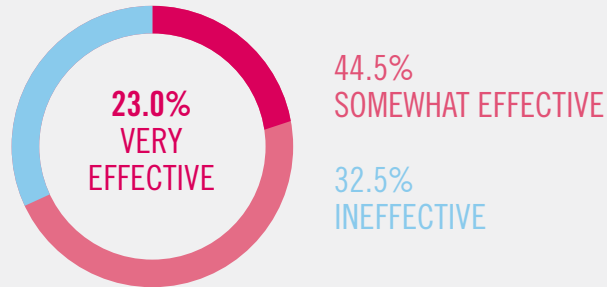
Do you believe social media engagement makes CEOs more effective leaders?



Over half of the respondents (58.1%) believe that social media engagement makes CEOs more effective leaders, and 42.0% believe that it does not. Nearly 70% of employees whose companies manage executive leadership engagement on social media believe that social media engagement makes CEOs more effective leaders.

Q10

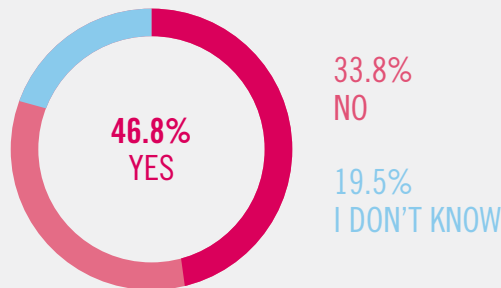
How effective is it for CEOs to use social media for crisis management?



The majority of respondents (**67.5%**) believe that social media can be used either very effectively or somewhat effectively by CEOs in times of company crises, and **32.5%** believe CEO's use of social media is ineffective for crisis management. Respondents whose companies deployed a strategy to manage C-Suite social media engagement were 2.4 times as more likely to believe that social media is a very effective tool for crisis management (**33%** vs. **13.9%**). Employees at companies with no executive social media strategy, or who did not know their company's social media strategy, were more likely to believe that social media is an ineffective tool for crisis management.

Q11

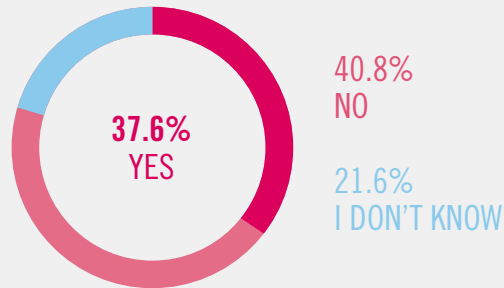
Will CEOs who do not engage on social channels become out of touch with their customers?



46.8% said yes, **33.8%** said no, and **19.5%** said they did not know.

Q12

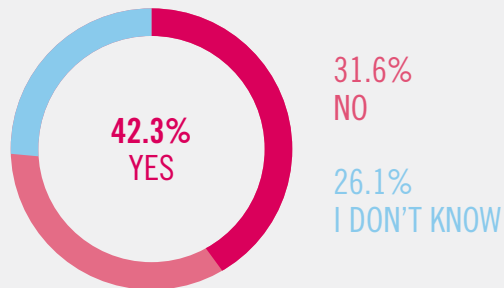
Will CEOs who do not engage on social channels become out of touch with their employees and shareholders?



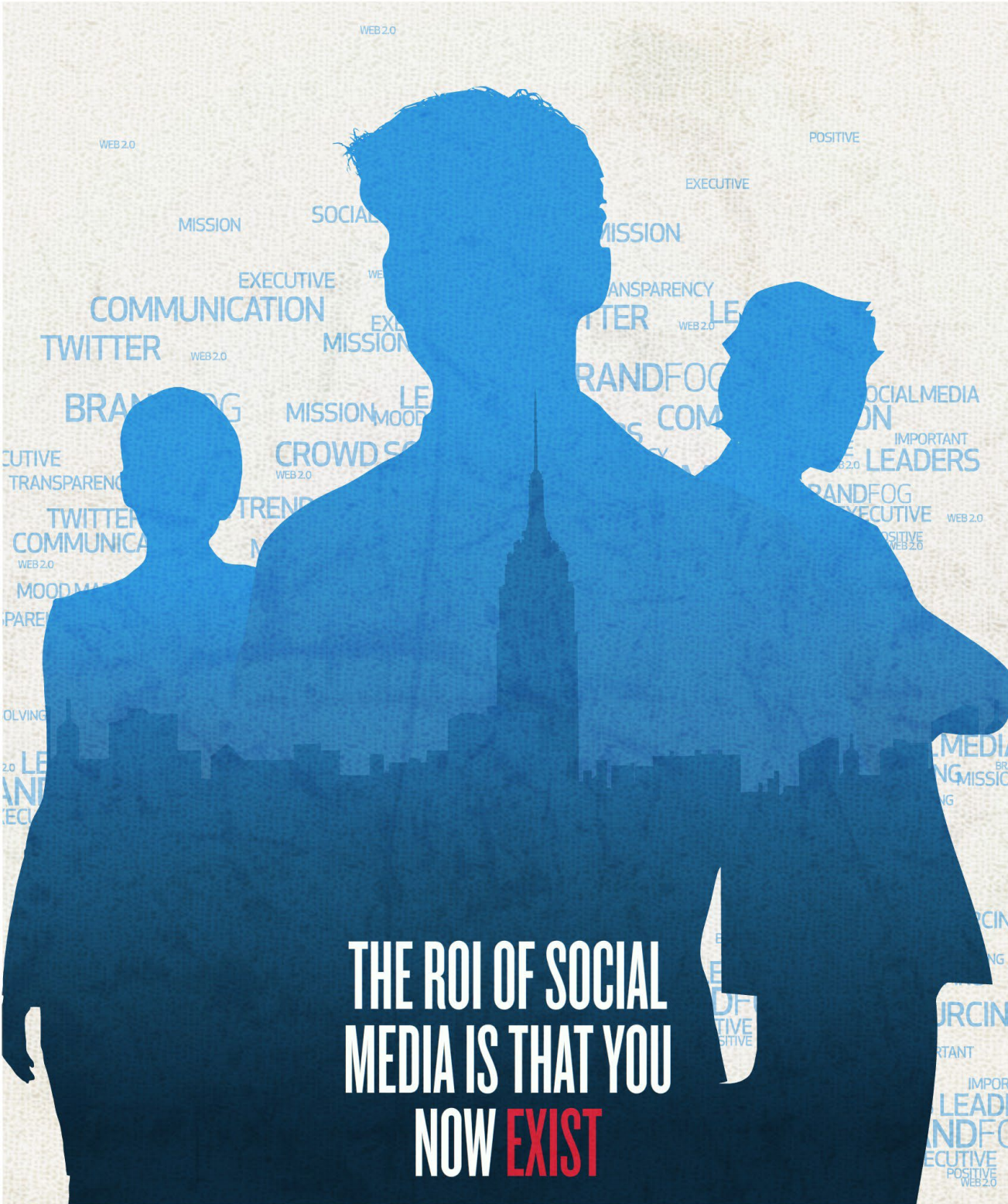
40.8% said no, 37.6% said yes, and 21.6% said they did not know.

Q13

Will CEOs who do not engage on social channels become less relevant in the digital age?



42.3% said yes, 31.6% said no, and 26.1% did not know. A clear majority of employees (54.9%) whose companies manage executive social media engagement believe that CEOs who do not engage stakeholders via social media will become less relevant in the digital age.



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