Constant Contact Survey of Small Business Owners Finds Increasing Numbers Now View LinkedIn and Twitter as Effective for Their Business

On the revenue front, 2012 year-end results did not match the mid-year optimism of small businesses

WALTHAM, Mass.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Despite much debate over the value of social networks to small business marketing, recent data from Constant Contact®, Inc. (NASDAQ: CTCT) indicates that small businesses are increasingly seeing the value of social media platforms across the board, and, in particular, LinkedIn and Twitter. Eighty percent of respondents surveyed in December 2012 said they conduct social media marketing and, when asked which social media platform was the most effective for their organization, the always-dominant Facebook won out at 82 percent. More notable was the fact that 29 percent said LinkedIn was effective for their business, an increase of 19 percentage points compared to a similar Constant Contact Small Business survey last spring, and 25 percent said Twitter, a rise of 18 percentage points from last spring.

When asked which social media platform is the most effective for their organization:

- Facebook: 82 percent (vs. 75 percent in May 2012)
- LinkedIn: 29 percent (vs. 10 percent in May 2012)
- Twitter: 25 percent (vs. 7 percent in May 2012)
- YouTube: 15 percent (vs. 3 percent in May 2012)
- Pinterest: 9 percent (vs. 1 percent in May 2012)
- Yelp: 6 percent (vs. 2 percent in May 2012)
- Google+: 5 percent (vs. 1 percent in May 2012)

“The sharp increase in effectiveness ratings for both Linkedin and Twitter is significant,” said Mark Schmulen, general manager, social media, Constant Contact. “While Facebook remains the dominant platform, small businesses are successfully expanding their engagement to reach audiences across multiple networks. This indicates another positive step in the social media adoption curve for SMBs.”

Social Media S.O.S.

While small business interest in, and appreciation for, social media is on the rise, small business owners continue to lack confidence in their social media skills. More than half (54 percent) chose social media marketing as the marketing activity they need the most help with, which might explain why their frequency of use with social media is not where it needs to be. Only 13 percent of survey respondents post to Twitter daily and ten percent post weekly to LinkedIn.

“Twitter just celebrated its seventh birthday, but the reality is that social media marketing is a relatively new practice for most small businesses,” commented Schmulen. “While the majority of small businesses are ‘experimenting’ with social, those who have found success have learned that social media marketing requires a commitment to engaging their audience on a consistent basis.”

Business Snapshot

Small business year-end revenue reports did not match their mid-year 2012 optimism.

2012 Year-End Revenues:

- 38 percent said revenue increased by more than 10 percent. (Predicted by 52 percent in May 2012.)
- 21 percent reported revenue increased by less than 10 percent. (Predicted by 27 percent in May 2012.)
- 23 percent said revenue remained flat. (Predicted by only 13 percent in May 2012.)
- 8 percent said revenue decreased by less than 10 percent. (Predicted by only 4 percent in May 2012.)
- 10 percent said revenue decreased by more than 10 percent. (Predicted by only 3 percent in May 2012.)

Hiring, on the other hand, stayed in line with mid-year predictions. In the spring of 2012, 66 percent of small businesses said

they were not planning to hire and that bore out – 62 percent reported in December 2012 that employee levels stayed the same.

For a full report, please visit http://news.constantcontact.com/research.

About the Survey

This Constant Contact-sponsored survey was administered in December 2012 to 1,100 participants in the Constant Contact Small Biz Council, a research panel of US small businesses and nonprofits recruited from the Constant Contact customer base. This is the third installment of an ongoing study about the state of small businesses and the ways they connect with and grow their audiences. Results include responses from respondents across a range of business-to-business and business-to-consumer industries.

About Constant Contact®, Inc.

Constant Contact wrote the book on Engagement Marketing™ – the new marketing success formula that helps small organizations create and grow customer relationships in today's socially connected world. More than half a million small businesses, nonprofits and associations worldwide use the company's online marketing tools to generate new customers, repeat business, and referrals through email marketing, social media marketing, event marketing, local deals, digital storefronts, and online surveys. Only Constant Contact offers the proven combination of affordable tools and free KnowHow®, including local seminars, personal coaching and award-winning product support. The company further supports small organizations through its extensive network of consultants/resellers, technology providers, franchises and national associations.

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Contact:

Media Contact:
Constant Contact
Erika Tower, 781-482-7039
pr@constantcontact.com
or
Investor Contact:
Constant Contact
Jeremiah Sisitsky, 339-222-5740
ir@constantcontact.com
