



The Social Exception

MEDIA & ENTERTAINMENT

With 3x more fan messages than average and a 6% response rate, this industry plays by its own rules.

THE SPROUT SOCIAL INDEX

Q1 2016



sproutsocial

Across 15 Industries, 1 Stands out From the Rest

Let's face it, Hollywood has always marched to the beat of its own drum. Therein lies much of its magic. And on social media, it's pretty much the same script.

In fact, according to the latest Sprout Social Index, the entire media and entertainment industry—which includes journalists and DJs as well as cinema and sports—reveals itself yet again to be one big anomaly.

In examining trends for 15 verticals across Facebook and Twitter, the latest Sprout Social Index uncovers several surprising standouts (but not always for the right reasons). In this edition, for Q1 2016, we shine a light on the media and entertainment industry while examining how people talk to brands across all major industries as well as several networks, including, for the first time, [our latest integration](#), Instagram.

At the start of Q1, we discovered that all brands are seeing an average of 2,742 messages per social account across industries. Last quarter alone, the average social profile in the media and entertainment category received a staggering 9,052. That's about 3 times as many messages as the next closest industry, nonprofits, which received just 3,105 messages in the same time period. For every social account tied to media and entertainment, that comes down to about 100 messages a day, 44 of which directly require a response—that's 44 opportunities to strengthen your brand. Yet for every 9 promotional messages, the industry issues just 1 response.

So, with big-time social events like the Super Bowl and Academy Awards just around the corner, how will the industry respond (for better or for worse)—and what can others learn as a result? Our Q1 2016 Sprout Social Index takes a closer look.

Give the People What They Want?

Several studies suggest it's time for the media and entertainment industry to wake up and get talking on social. Fans demand it, and it's becoming increasingly important to the bottom line.

- **88%** of viewers supplement entertainment with Facebook and Twitter; **72%** post about movies ([Hollywood Reporter](#)).
- **66%** of viewers want more Tweets from shows while tuning in ([FOX, the Advertising Research Foundation, db5 and Twitter](#)).
- **Advertisers and agencies** now factor social engagement into media planning and buying ([Nielsen](#)).

Media & Entertainment's Social Anomalies

9,052

Inbound Messages (Index Avg. = 2,742)

489

Messages Sent (Index Avg. = 260)

6.6%

Response Rate (Index Avg. = 10.7%)

9-Hour

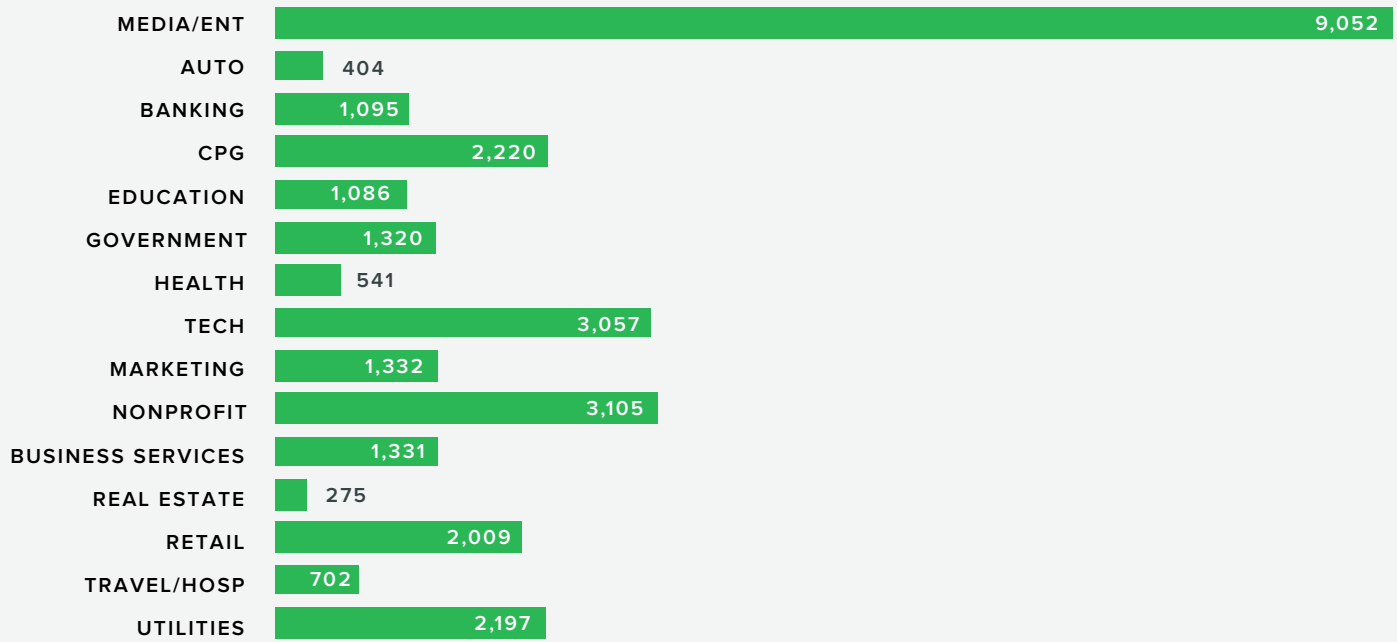
Response Time (Index Avg. = 11)

8.7

Posts per Replies (Index Avg. = 3.2)

Avg. Inbound Message Volume by Industry

Q4 2015



Across Industries: Some Notable Performances

When looking at key metrics—response rates, response times, percentage of messages needing response and posts per reply—here is how each industry stacks up as well as who comes out on top.

Brand & Consumer Index Spotlight by Industry

Q4 2015

Industry	Avg. Response Rate	Avg. Response Time (Hours)	Avg. % Messages Needing Response	Avg. Posts per Replies	Brand Engagement Ranking	Consumer Engagement Ranking
Automotive	13.9%	13.2	48.7%	3.4	6	7
Banking / Finance	14.7%	10.0	40.9%	2.8	3	2
Consumer Services	12.2%	13.6	45.7%	1.8	10	4
Education	8.1%	8.6	37.9%	7.3	9	10
Government	8.4%	11.3	46.4%	4.2	13	11
Healthcare	8.2%	11.3	47.7%	5.8	15	1
Internet / Technology	11.7%	11.0	40.9%	3.1	5	14
Marketing / Advertising	11.2%	12.6	44.9%	2.7	11	15
Media / Entertainment	6.6%	9.1	43.9%	8.7	14	12
Nonprofit	8.6%	10.0	39.9%	2.9	12	9
Professional Services	8.5%	8.9	35.1%	4.3	8	8
Real Estate	11.2%	11.0	52.8%	8.7	7	5
Retail	18.2%	11.1	50.0%	1.1	2	6
Travel / Hospitality	13.7%	11.3	54.7%	1.2	4	3
Utilities	15.1%	8.5	46.9%	-0.4	1	13

Fastest to Respond

There is one thing that media and entertainment does well—and that is get back to its audience quickly. The downside is that it's able to get back faster because it's responding to people at the lowest rate of any industry (just 6.6% of the time).

In fact, media and entertainment is tied with education, professional services and utilities for having some of the quickest responses on social (at 9 hours). Of course, according to [Convince & Convert, 42% of consumers expect to hear back within an hour](#). So hold your applause, please.

Most Responsive

The most responsive group this time around goes to the retail industry (at a rate of 18.2%). Coming off a busy holiday season, perhaps many retailers [took our advice from last quarter](#)

Most Engaged Audience

Think of “average social messages that need a response” as a barometer for audience engagement. In this category, the travel and hospitality industry is sailing ahead. More than half (55%) of the messages it receives provide an entry point for conversation.

Most Customer Centric

We were delighted this quarter to see the utilities industry dip into the negatives for a very positive reason: With a ratio of -0.4 posts per replies, the industry issues more responses than it does promotional updates on social, showing that it prioritizes social customer care.



Sprout's Stance

Last quarter, we advised retailers to account for seasonal spikes in social communication, especially around the holidays. This time, we suggest the media and entertainment industry get a bit more granular and look at peak hours of the day. You'll want to do this year-round, not just during the Super Bowl and Academy Awards, given that inbound messages and messages that need a response have remained steady for this industry

for the past few quarters. Consider this key Sprout finding: Audience engagement with the media and entertainment industry reaches its peak around 8 p.m., most notably on Mondays. Allocate your resources as needed, and clearly communicate to your audience when support reps will be the most active as well as how quickly to expect a response. Creating this level of transparency with consumers sets expectations and, potentially, helps your brand avoid negative sentiments.

Overall Industry Takeaways

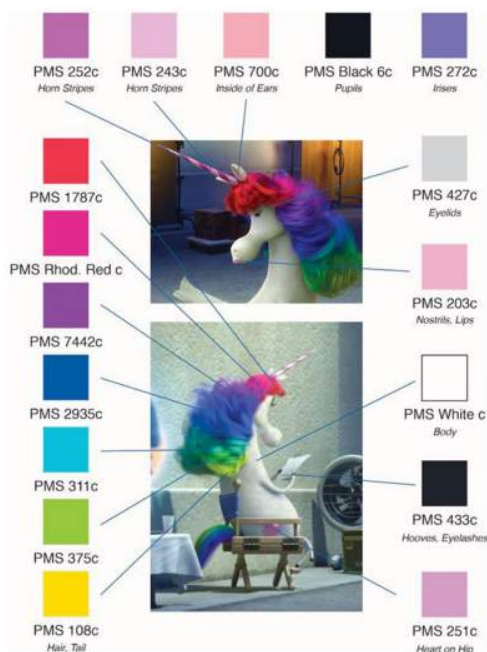
Most brands appear to still be uncovering the full value of social media, not just as a promotional venue but also as a powerful, two-way communications tool. This is something we have seen—and have been saying—since launching The Sprout Social Index in 2013. A few key takeaways as we assess trends over the past two years:

- **Brands are being hit with more messages.** There has been a direct and steady spike in incoming social messages, from 1,790 in Q3 2013 up to 2,742 to date.
- **Consumer expectations are increasing.** In Q3 2013, only 15% of social messages needed a response; in recent quarters, that number has hovered around 43%.
- **Brand response rates are getting worse.** In Q4 2013, 14% of social messages received a response across industries. Today, the response rate has fallen to less than 11%.
- **Brand response times are flatlining.** First, the somewhat good news: In Q4 2013, you had to wait about 13 hours for a social response from a brand. Today, you have to wait 11 hours, but that has been consistently the case since Q3 2014. Of course, any way you slice it, this isn't acceptable—imagine being placed on hold for half the day.
- **Brands are being even less considerate of customers.** While people wait, brands are posting, on average, about 3.2 promotional messages for every 1 reply given to customers. In Q4 2013, this ratio was a bit better, at 2.5 to 1.

Sprout's Stance

Are you working toward the right ROI metrics? Likes and follower counts are about as superficial as a botoxed reality TV star. Focus instead on the metrics that matter: Response rates, response times and the number of promotional updates you post versus how often you engage to support customers are more accurate indicators of progress and growth. Not convinced? Well, according to Rosetta Consulting, engaged consumers buy 90% more frequently, spend 60% more per transaction and are 5 times more likely to indicate that yours is the only brand they would purchase in the future. All these factors lead to engaged customers delivering 3 times the value to the brand over the course of a year.

Pique Their Interest Like Pixar: Offer Behind-the-Scenes Access



FOLLOW

6,921 likes

24w

pixarinsideout #RainbowUnicorn is the queen of color! #InsideOut

view all 91 comments

Iky_tiff @chloeeeeeeck 😄😄😄😄

Iky_tiff @chloeeeeeeck uni to the corn
chloeeeeeeck @Iky_tiff ur the uni to my corn 🌽

sharonangela_ So fabulous

lovedaluce @toriewink #aesthetic

chungjsk @ysterrr

snlgoofydogg01 Jejemon, jolog, jejelog!

isobellx @euuuwness HAHAAH

minion_master_19 Evil unicorn !!! I love it 😄😄😄😄

alesakai @dkamogawa

ceciliazazsa @louisbernardus

joeynurpocket @marrcccc mind blown!

Log in to like or comment.



The Instagram account for Pixar’s “Inside Out” offers a range of content that humanizes the animated film. The account includes [character color palettes](#), real-time photos from [industry events](#), [user-generated-content](#) and [artwork](#) from the film’s character art director. These exclusive photos leave fans feeling like a VIP on a virtual red carpet. Craft an intimate relationship with fans by sharing Instagram photos and videos that give followers unprecedented access to every aspect of your film, from ideation to award season.

Take a Page out of Mom & Pop's Playbook

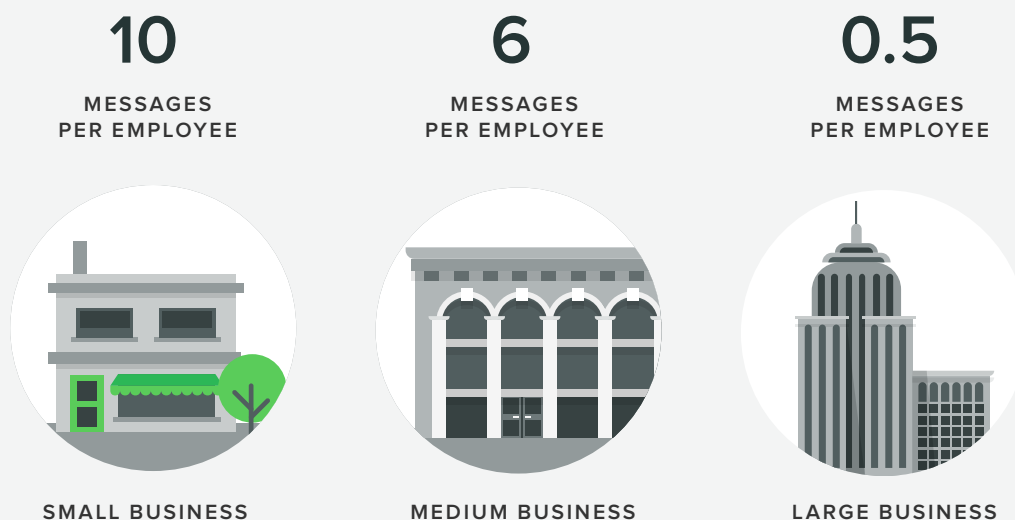
Just like in Hollywood, big budgets don't always mean big success.

Consider this: While small businesses (organizations of 0–200 employees) have far fewer resources than big industry players, they are actually much more efficient at managing their Facebook and Twitter accounts than their medium- (201–1,000 employees) and large-sized (1,000+ employees) counterparts.

The average small business receives about 10 messages per employee—compared to just 6 for medium-sized organizations and 0.5 for large corporations—yet they are capable of responding at nearly the same rate. What's more, small businesses actually edge out their bigger rivals by a slight margin, responding to 10.7% of social messages, compared to 10.6% for large businesses and 10.1% for medium businesses.

Avg. Number of Social Messages per Employee by Business Size

Q4 2015



Sprout's Stance

The size of your brand shouldn't determine the quality of your social relationships. All businesses should think small on social and pay homage to their scrappier roots. Large brands can scale this more intimate, one-to-one experience by putting the right people and tools in place to sift through the social noise and get to the messages that matter most, ensuring everyone feels heard. Remember, your brand may be famous, but you're not a celebrity. And elusiveness won't build mystique; it will just cost you customers.

Strategize Like the Rams: Prepare & Educate



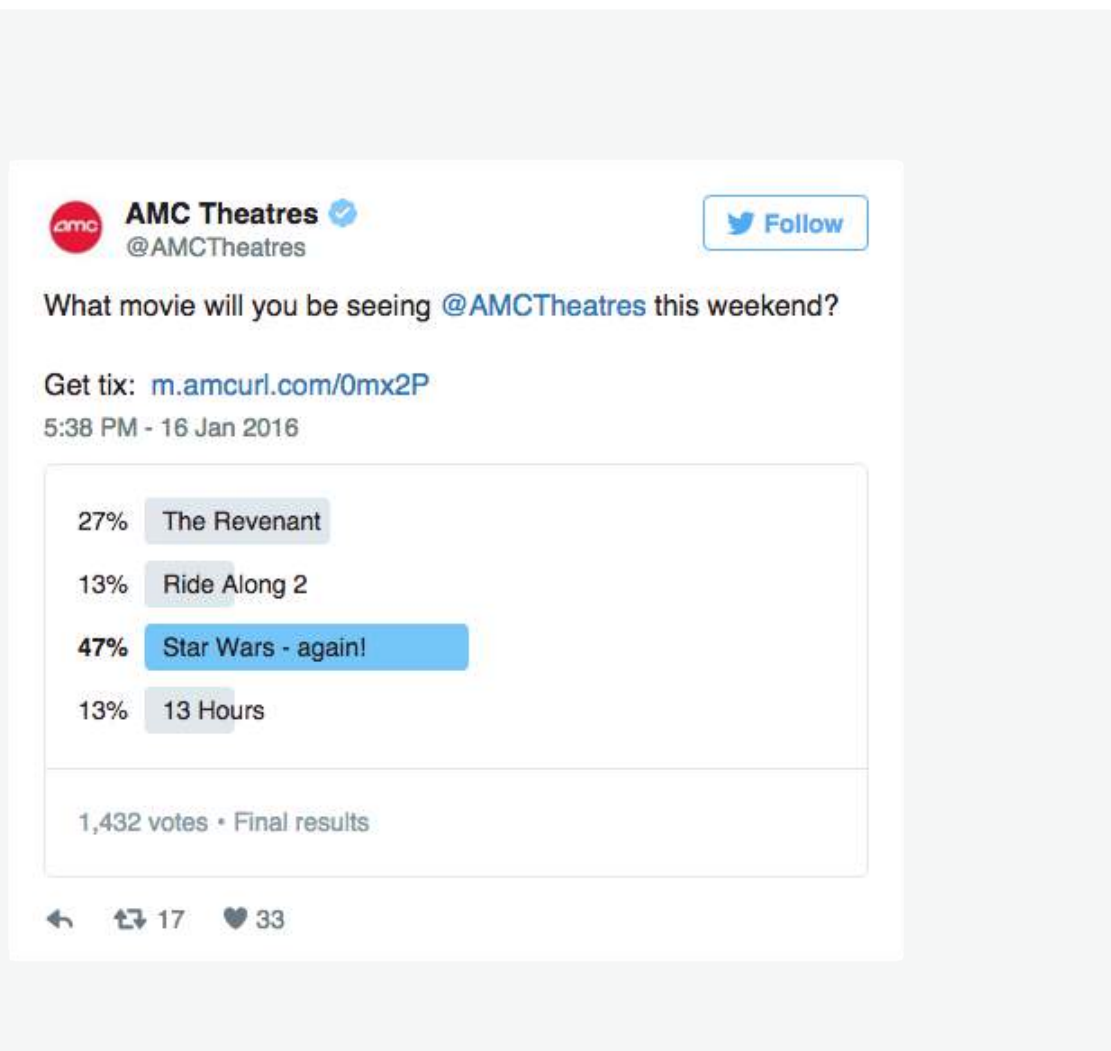
The announcement that the St. Louis Rams were returning to Los Angeles riled fans—and they reacted all over social. The organization smartly anticipated and prepared for an influx of Tweets by [directing followers](#) to a comprehensive FAQ hub. Take a page from the Rams' playbook by proactively educating your community about changes to your organization that affect perception and continued patronage. When information is too dense for 140-character Tweets, instruct followers on your owned properties.

Audience Engagement Speaks Volumes

Could it be that when your brand actually engages with its audience, more people will take note and follow you back? The Q1 2016 Sprout Social Index finds a striking correlation between brands with the lowest post-per-reply ratio (2.8) and those with the biggest audiences (of 101K+).

Of course, Sprout would suggest that brands with a sizable audience have a greater reason to make a bigger investment in social customer care.

So, is it the chicken or the egg? One thing is clear: If you want to build and/or maintain a bigger flock of fans, aim to strike up at least 1 conversation for about every 3 messages you put out on social.



AMC Theatres @AMCTheatres [Follow](#)

What movie will you be seeing @AMCTheatres this weekend?

Get tix: m.amcurl.com/0mx2P

5:38 PM - 16 Jan 2016

27%	The Revenant
13%	Ride Along 2
47%	Star Wars - again!
13%	13 Hours

1,432 votes • Final results

17 replies 33 likes

Get to know your audience by asking them questions. AMC Theaters garnered more than 1,000 responses within 24 hours when it polled Twitter followers, “What movie will you be seeing @AMCTheaters this weekend?” This simple prompt encouraged organic conversation and showed fans the brand is invested in their thoughts and interests—while driving them to theaters. Similarly, you can use Twitter Polls to ask your followers about their opinions on subjects related to your brand while compelling them to take action.

The Social Networks: Who's Most Tuned In?

When people come looking for answers, certain platforms are a better bet. The Q1 2016 Sprout Social Index finds a few ways to get the message through, based on social network nuances.

If you're looking to get a response from brands, you're better off heading to Twitter. Response rates on Twitter are 36% better than they are on Facebook.

Avg. Brand Response Rate on Twitter & Facebook

Q4 2015



12.9%

RESPONSE RATE



8.9%

RESPONSE RATE

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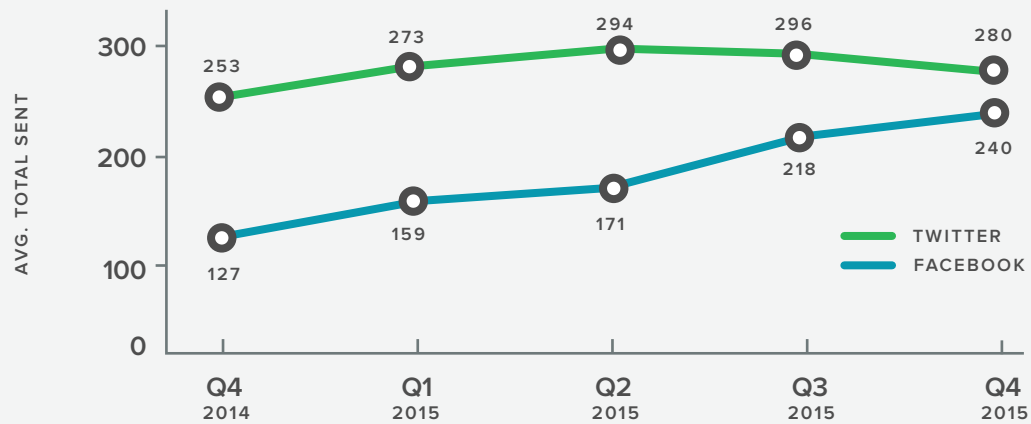
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Additionally, you won't have to hold your breath quite as long—you should hear back from a brand about 3 hours faster on Twitter than Facebook.

Still, brands are continuing to grow their promotional efforts on Facebook. Since Q4 2014, brands have increased the amount of messages they're sending on Facebook by nearly 90%.

Avg. Number of Messages Sent by Brands

Q4 2014 to Q4 2015



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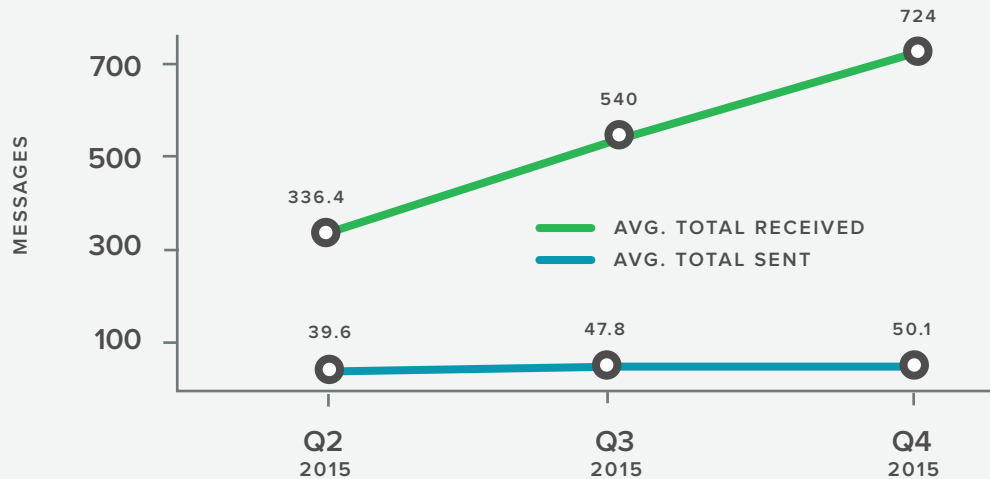
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Instagram: The New Starlet

Instagram is exponentially growing in popularity. More and more, people are using the network to engage in conversations with brands, but brands aren't keeping up. In fact, last quarter, brands received 115% more messages from their audience on the platform; however, they only increased the messages they sent by 28%.

Avg. Number of Instagram Messages Sent & Received by Brands

Q2 2015 to Q4 2015



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sproutsocial.com/index

Sprout's Stance

You're so vain, you probably think this stance is about you. Seriously, what's the point of product shots and selfies if you're not answering questions from people engaging with your brand on Instagram? The platform isn't just visual; it's also a go-to communications tool. Know that people are using Instagram to research restaurants, gain product recommendations and engage with their favorite brands, just as they do on Facebook and Twitter—but with potentially even greater value. In fact, [according to Shopify](#), engaged followers on Instagram are worth \$65 on average, compared to \$55 for Facebook and \$46 for Twitter. These are great numbers all around, but don't underestimate the newbie.

Think Like TayTay: Surprise & Delight

Today is my 16th birthday, Taylor!



brighteyed.swift

FOLLOW

286 likes

73w

brighteyed.swift Taylor!!! My sixteenth birthday is TODAY! I'm kind of freaking out 🤪 It would mean everything and more to me if you could wish me a happy birthday!! LOVE YOUUU MORE THAN WORDS! - Natasha

taylorswift Happy Birthday Natasha!! And look at that new merch t shirt!! Love you and hope you have a great 16th year of life.

brighteyed.swift @taylorswift THANK YOU SO MUCH

brighteyed.swift NO ONE COMMENT

Log in to like or comment.

...

Bad blood between Taylor Swift and her fans is nearly nonexistent. The pop star is a pro at captivating her Swifties on social. Natasha didn't even have to tag Taylor's Instagram to receive a "happy birthday" from the singer. Ensure it's a love story with your supporters by surprising them with unexpected messages. Go beyond @mentions and engage with fans by searching for Twitter keywords related to your business. Replying to these Tweets will resonate with your followers and keep your brand top of mind.

Ever After: Tips to Keep Your Audience Happy

Whatever your industry, as you aim to entertain and engage audiences of all shapes and sizes, there are a few clear ways to have a measurable impact. So, if you want to improve your brand response rate and time—which will build engagement and therefore your overall social value—take this advice from Sprout’s very own Social Media Manager [Darryl Villacorta](#).

How to Increase Your Social Response Rate

- Develop a comprehensive customer service strategy for your brand on social.
- Designate time slots and schedules to avoid outbound messaging collision.
- Identify which messages are more pressing than others and if they need approval.
- Follow up. By going the extra mile, you will build relationships over time and lessen the likelihood of negative sentiment in the future.
- Be as thorough as possible with your initial responses—it will eliminate a lot of back-and-forth.

How to Cut Your Social Response Time

- Don’t compromise professionalism in the name of speed. You may be creating extra work for yourself by having to apologize for spelling mistakes and more.
- Know that it’s OK to work off of a response template—but remain human and personalize.
- Take it offline when needed. Some inquiries deserve more time and support than others, and by taking it offline, it allows a one-on-one

discussion that also provides a little extra breathing room. Just make sure you ask the customer before you do so.

- If your brand is setting time parameters (M–F, 9–5)—which we don't recommend if you have the resources, given social's 24/7 cycle—take that into account when assessing overall response time. Also, make sure your audience knows about peak hours of customer care operation by putting that information in your bio or in a pinned Tweet.
- Know your product from top to bottom. Details matter and the more knowledgeable you are, the more efficient your answers will become.

Lastly, Darryl leaves brands with this key piece of advice: "Find the problems before your customers do. Proactive customer service goes a long way to build loyalty and repeat business."



Sprout's Stance

Don't leave your audience with a cliffhanger. While you're online pumping out messages, get back when people have questions. At Sprout, we developed protocols to ensure our social and support teams work collaboratively to quickly respond to customers, cutting our average response time by about 50% since July—down from 100 minutes to just 52. Set benchmarks for your team members, and [measuring their efforts accordingly.](#)

About the Data

The Sprout Social Index is a report compiled and released by Sprout Social. All referenced data is based on 198K public social profiles (95K Facebook; 78K Twitter; 25K Instagram) of continually active accounts between Q4 2014 and Q4 2015. More than 1 billion messages sent and received during that time were analyzed for the purposes of this report. Some data may have shifted from the last Sprout Social Index report due to a shift in the social profiles analyzed; however, all overarching trends remain consistent. Industry classifications were based on LinkedIn industry categories. In some cases, closely related industries were merged into a single overarching industry. All messages analyzed that were considered casual mentions or not in need of a response were excluded from engagement, response rate and response time calculations with the intention of eliminating noise. Analysis of which messages required attention was done using Sprout's proprietary technologies. Response time and response rate calculations were done using Sprout's Engagement Reporting technology found in the Sprout Social product. For questions about the Index data, please contact: pr@sproutsocial.com.

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Sprout Social offers social media engagement, advocacy and analytics solutions for leading agencies and brands, including Anthropologie, GrubHub, Hyatt, Evernote and Zipcar. Available via web browser, iOS and Android apps, Sprout's engagement platform enables brands to more effectively communicate on social channels, collaborate across teams and provide an exceptional customer experience. Bambu by Sprout Social, a platform for advocacy, empowers employees to share curated content across their social networks to further amplify a brand's reach and engagement. Headquartered in Chicago, Sprout is a Twitter Official Partner, Facebook Marketing Partner, Instagram Partner Program Member, LinkedIn Company Page Partner and Google+ Pages API Partner. Learn more at sproutsocial.com and getbambu.com.

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