

# SOCIAL MEDIA IMPACT SURVEY 2018

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# Foreword

This survey was intended to gauge the way in which businesses engage with social media platforms, and how they view social media in light of the sector within which they operate. It was sent to business leaders representing a broad range of sectors.

The questions were split into two sections: Social Media Platforms and Sector Specific. The first section focused on businesses' approach and attitude to social media. It sought to identify the range and types of platforms business people are using to engage with key audiences, raise brand profile and create an online identity for their business. The second section aimed to understand who our respondents are, the sector they operate in and the key issues concerning them at the moment.



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# KEY FINDINGS:

The Howes Percival Social Media Impact survey indicated a number of consistent trends:




**85.92%**  
Unsurprisingly, LinkedIn is the most popular social media platform for businesses



'Creating a brand identity and positive brand association' was the primary reason businesses use social media

Over 61.64% of respondents confirmed they had a social media work policy in place.

30.14% responding saying that their business did not have a policy and 8.22% was unsure whether or not their business had a policy that outlines how the business and its employees should conduct themselves online.



**59.63%**  
Just over half of respondents stated that they do not participate in sector discussion groups on Social Media



Tracking competitors ranked the least important to respondents

Facebook the biggest distraction during working hours for businesses .



**"Just Google it!"**

33.64% still rely on Google for sector and business know-how



**26.29%** **Business Issues**

'Client growth and retention' the biggest issue affecting businesses that responded to this survey



**Future Sector Issues**

Automation Safety Consolidation Legal  
 GDPR Competition Available Stock  
 Fees Making Tax Digital Big Data  
 Clients Recession Brexit  
 Regulation Financial Uncertainty  
 Technology Data Protection Staff  
 Funding Levy Cyber Security

**17.53%**

of businesses reported that 'recruiting and retaining staff' is an issue to their business



**12.89%** had GDPR concerns

**14.43%** Brexit uncertainty





Howes Percival canvassed the views of clients and contacts from a range of sectors. The 220 respondents ranged from companies turning over less than £1million to global players with significant sector presence, nationally and internationally.

A national snapshot from our six offices, with the majority of respondents residing in the Central and East of England areas.

The majority of respondents were CEO/Managing Director level. Also a close mix of partners, shareholders/owners, directors, managers and Finance Director. Other respondents roles included business development and HR.

Respondents came from a variety of sectors including:

- |                                     |                                 |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Automotive                          | Energy                          |
| Property Development & Construction | Financial Services              |
| Transport                           | Health                          |
| Food & Drink                        | Manufacturing                   |
| Leisure & Tourism                   | Media & Creative Industries     |
| Education                           | Minerals & Waste                |
| Agriculture                         | Professional & Support Services |
| Banking                             | Retail                          |





# SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

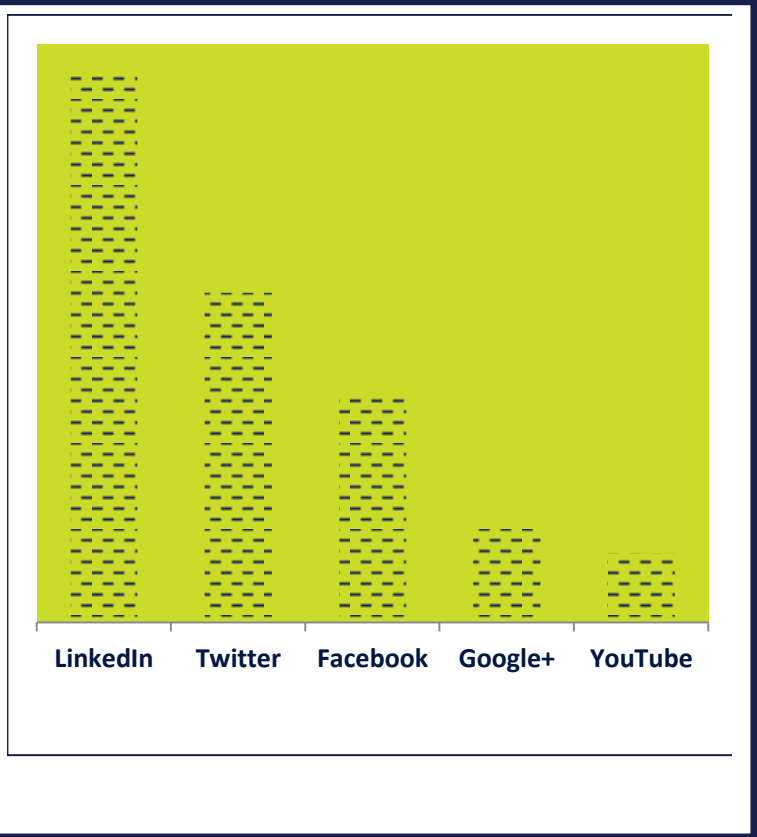
## GO-TO SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS FOR BUSINESS

As expected, LinkedIn was the most popular social media platform amongst businesses, with 88.73% of respondents suggesting LinkedIn would be on their list. Twitter was also expectedly high on respondents' lists, with just over half (53.52%) of businesses selecting this platform.



## PROGRESSIVE PLATFORMS

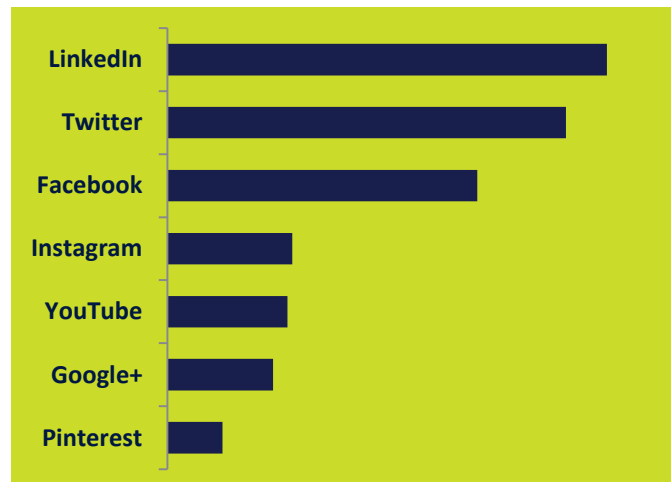
More surprisingly perhaps, however, is the 11.27% of businesses who selected YouTube as one of their go-to social media platforms. Whilst this was the least popular platform amongst respondents, its presence on the list at all suggests more businesses are using video technology as a means of communicating with others than before.



## BUSINESS PRESENCE

85.92% of respondents selected LinkedIn, with Twitter being the second most popular with 78% of respondents' businesses having a presence on this.

Surprisingly again, however, was the 23% of businesses who have a presence on YouTube. This figure is higher than the 11% who selected YouTube as a go-to social media platform, which suggests that some of those businesses who have a presence on YouTube are perhaps not using it as effectively as they could be, or promoting it as a useful platform amongst their staff and clients.





## HOW BUSINESSES USE SOCIAL MEDIA



### BRAND AWARENESS AND IDENTITY

Respondents confirmed that brand awareness and building a brand identity were most important to them when using social media, with improving communication with key audiences coming a close second.



### TRACKING COMPETITORS

Tracking competitors ranked the least important to respondents with 50.94% of businesses putting this at the bottom of the list. This would suggest businesses are perhaps not as interested as they should be in tracking their competitors through social media platforms - are they missing a trick here?



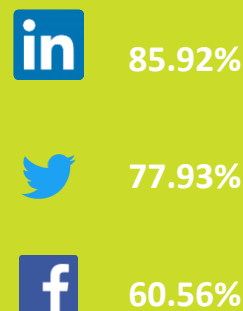
### DRIVING TRAFFIC

Curiously only 9.95% of respondents use social media to increase traffic to their website. This would indicate that most businesses do not link social media with promoting their website and online presence, despite ranking raising brand awareness as one of the most important uses of social media.

25%

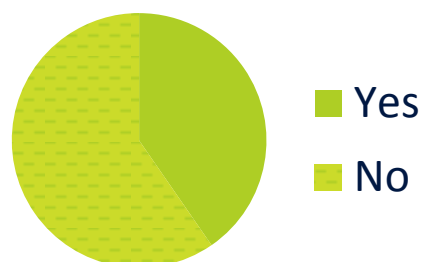
of respondents businesses have a presence Instagram, YouTube and Google+

Most popular social media platform for businesses to have a presence on:



59.63%

do not participate in online discussion groups

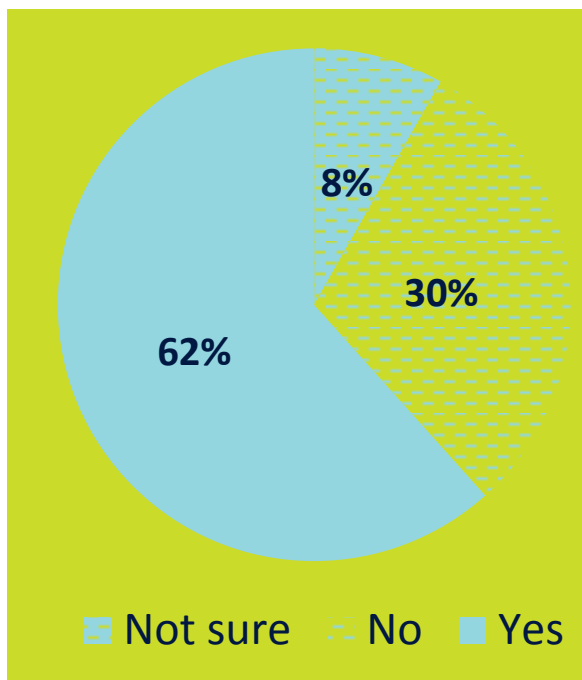




## MANAGING SOCIAL MEDIA AT WORK

**30.14%**

of respondents confirmed their business did not have a social media policy



### MISUSE IN THE WORKPLACE

Despite the widespread use of social media within our respondents' businesses, 96.33% have indicated that they have detected no significant issue relating to the misuse of social media platforms in the workplace.



### FACEBOOK THE BIGGEST "DISTRACTION"

Unsurprisingly, out of the 3.67% of respondents who have experienced issues, the majority of them linked the misuse with Facebook. This would suggest, businesses perhaps link Facebook to personal use first and foremost, suggesting it is a "distraction" and restricting its use at work. Does this indicate that businesses are viewing Facebook negatively in relation to work, rather than promoting its use for business purposes?



# ISSUES FACING YOUR BUSINESS



## ORGANIC GROWTH

In terms of issues that are keeping respondents awake at night in relation to their business or sector. Client growth and retention was the biggest issue respondents were concerned by, with 26% selecting this issue.



## PEOPLE AND TALENT MANAGEMENT

Similarly, people and talent management had 17.53% of respondents “up at night”, suggesting that the bigger issues are those relating directly to businesses and individual sectors, rather than wider issues affecting the economy as a whole.



## BREXIT

Brexit uncertainty received 14.43% of the vote, which is perhaps lower than we would otherwise predict in light of the attention Brexit gets within the news and media. With Brexit coming lower down the list of key issues, perhaps concerns surrounding the impact of Brexit on business have reduced since the initial referendum vote.



## GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION (GDPR)

Interestingly, Data Protection followed Brexit closely with 12.89% of respondents being concerned about this. With GDPR having recently come into force, we expect that this figure has become higher since the survey was launched.

[Find out more about GDPR and get help - Click Here](#)

[Read our recent Brexit survey - Click Here](#)





## **FUTURE BUSINESS ISSUES**

Automation Safety Consolidation Legal Competition

Available Property Stock **Fees** Making Tax

Digital **Increase** Big Data **Clients** Recession

**GDPR** Pay **Brexit** Financial

Uncertainty **Regulation** **Technology** Data

Protection **Staff** Industry Regulations **Funding** Apprenticeship

Levy **Cyber Security** **Media Market**

### **BUSINESS UNCERTAINTY A KEY FOCUS**

In the last section respondents highlighted those issues currently concerning them and their businesses. This section looks to those issues that may concern them in the future. The overall trend is uncertainty here, with references to changes in legislation, such as the GDPR, and changes in the economic and financial landscape, perhaps linked to Brexit.



# PROFESSIONAL AND SUPPORT SERVICES

## PLATFORM OF CHOICE



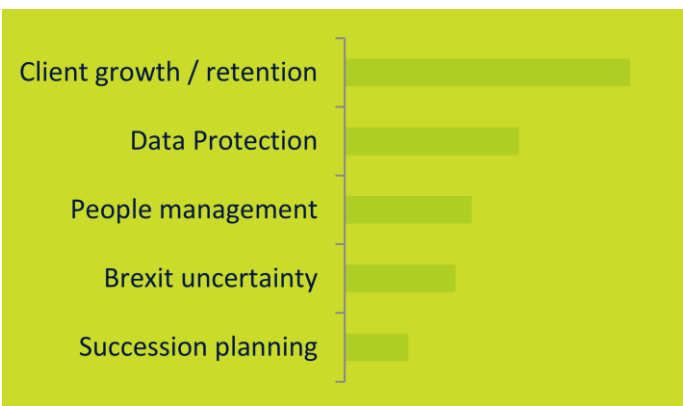
95% of the businesses in this sector have a presence on LinkedIn.

## MAIN REASON FOR USE

Most important use of social media among professional and support services is creating a brand identity and positive brand association.

Exposure on sites like Twitter and LinkedIn, where content can easily be shared, certainly helps this.

## 'KEEP YOU AWAKE ISSUE'



Most professional and support services are kept awake by the issue of client growth and retention (32.14%).

Unlike the main results, among this sector data protection and security was the next biggest issue (19.64%). This could be because such companies handle more vast quantities of data and personal information as this is the nature of their business, especially accountants and solicitors.

## FUTURE SECTOR DRIVERS

Data Protection  
 Quality Big Data  
 Regulation GDPR Law  
 Clients Cyber  
 Brexit Legal Fees  
 Automation  
 Making Tax Digital



# PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT AND CONSTRUCTION

## PLATFORM OF CHOICE



LinkedIn and Twitter were more closely matched, but LinkedIn still came out on top with 76%.

## MAIN REASON FOR USE

Improving communication and raising brand awareness and creating a positive brand identity were all very evenly matched. While it was only 4th most important, increasing website traffic also ranked more highly in this sector than in the overall survey results.

## 'KEEP YOU AWAKE ISSUE'



Technology and the changes it will bring are not such a concern/not considered the next big thing in this sector.

The focus here is on regulations and legislation - several respondents cited how planning legislation is changing so often, and another was concerned about MEES.

Also mentioned was the fact that there is over-regulation in this sector, and 'interference.'

## "GO-TO" SECTOR RESOURCES



## FUTURE SECTOR DRIVERS

Planning Uncertainty

**Brexit** MEES

**Competition**

**Available Stock**



# MANUFACTURING

## PLATFORM OF CHOICE



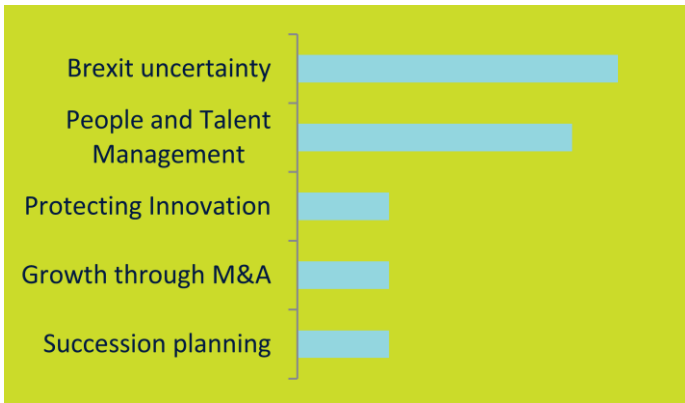
LinkedIn remains the most popular go-to platform, but with a lower share of the vote in this sector at 73.68%.

## MAIN REASON FOR USE

There is an even spread of what social media is used for in the sector, but raising brand awareness is slightly ahead of the other options.

In an uncertain economic climate, manufacturers will want others to know that they exist, and what they can produce, so it is not surprising that this is the most popular choice.

## 'KEEP YOU AWAKE ISSUE'



Brexit and international trade uncertainty was the main issue affecting the sector, which will likely impact exports and demand in the sector.

People and talent management followed closely, with the sector facing difficulties filling jobs and the skill gap. These results demonstrate the concerns manufacturing companies face in creating a skilled workforce.

## FUTURE SECTOR DRIVERS

GDPR Apprenticeship Levy  
Protecting Innovation

**Brexit**

Export Innovation



# MEDIA AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

## PLATFORM OF CHOICE



Go-to platform is still LinkedIn, with 92.31% choosing this.

## MAIN REASON FOR USE

Unsurprisingly, the most important use of social media in this sector is to raise brand awareness, with creating a brand identity and positive brand association close behind.

## 'KEEP YOU AWAKE ISSUE'




66.67% chose client growth and retention as the main issue affecting the sector. This could be due to the rise of consultancies, compression of spending by marketers and added competition from new agency models.

Unlike other sectors no respondents identified Brexit as a concern, showing that perhaps this sector clearly feels that it will not be impacted by the uncertainty surrounding Brexit as much as other sectors.

This is a sector where the business' brand is extremely important, as the businesses will want to stand out.

## FUTURE SECTOR DRIVERS

**GDPR**  
 Print Media Decline  
 In-House Production  
 Digitisation  
**Spend**



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