

2017 Social Campus Report



A global survey of higher education social media usage

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Over the past 5 years social media has been adopted as one of the primary communications technologies in higher education. It is used by many stakeholders across campus for various use cases: to engage students and alumni; to drive fundraising efforts; to promote events and athletics ticket sales; to attract students from domestic and international markets; to deliver student services digitally; and to manage crisis communications.

In fact, social media has become so ubiquitous, so quickly, that institutions are now experiencing challenges with governance, security, cost efficiencies, and cross-campus collaboration.

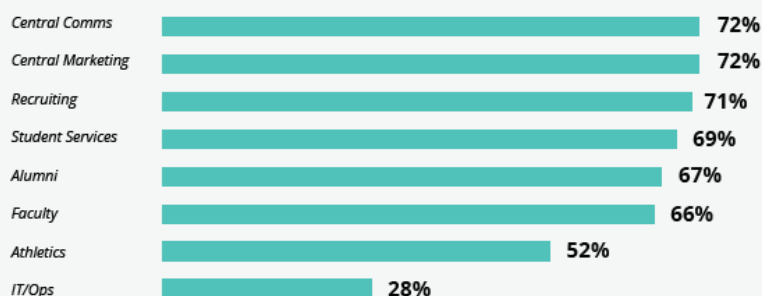
In July 2017, Hootsuite - a leading social media management company - conducted a global survey with 423 professionals from higher education institutions that have responsibility for social media strategy and/or its execution. Hootsuite's study provides some valuable insights into how social media is being used across campus. It also uncovered eight areas of opportunity for social media in higher education in 2018.

The State of the Social Campus 2017

Social media has transformed the communication landscape for higher education institutions—with students being the key driver of change. Schools around the world understand that they need to keep up with and embrace social media. Unsurprisingly, Hootsuite's research found that over 90 percent of institutions now use social media to market to, and recruit, top talent.

And while over 70 percent of institutions surveyed in this study plan to have a formal social media strategy in the next 12 months, there are still major challenges. Lack of skills, cross-campus collaboration, and budget are key barriers impacting success.

AREAS OF CAMPUS THAT USE SOCIAL MEDIA



Which of the following areas of your institution are using social media? (Select all that apply)

Social media use is widespread across campus

DRIVERS OF SOCIAL MEDIA ADOPTION ACROSS CAMPUS

Student use of social creating more demand for social engagement



Increased competition from other education providers

44%

Declining undergraduate enrollments forcing new recruitment approaches

32%

Growth in international student enrollment pushing more focus on virtual outreach to new markets

22%

Outlined are several external factors that may be driving your institution's use of social media. Please rank the following factors, where 1 corresponds to the most important factor, 2 the second most important factor, and so on.

Student use of social is the number one driver of change

Seventy percent of institutions say that students' use of social media is the biggest market driver for higher education organizations to invest in social media.

Top goal is developing a clear strategy

Developing a clear strategy is the number one goal for higher education institutions in 2018. Other priorities include social media monitoring to better understand students, faculty, and alumni, along with determining the ROI of social media activities.

Social media is a strategic area of focus

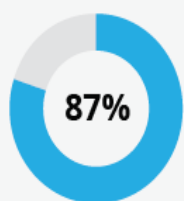
Over half of executive teams see social media as a strategic area of focus, with 41 percent increasing spend in social media technology and 36 percent increasing spend in social media head count.

Nearly half of social media users adopt analytics platform

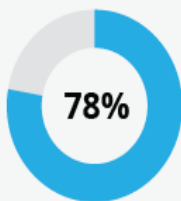
Next to social media management platforms, analytics and social listening are the most commonly used technologies.

Engagement most often used to measure success

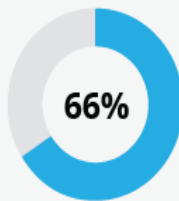
Social metrics like engagement, reach, and shares are most often used to measure success, while just over half are measuring conversion rates and click-through rates.



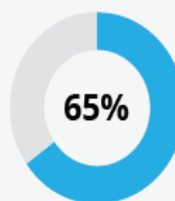
Engagement (likes, comments)



Presence (fans, followers, blog subscribers)



Post reach



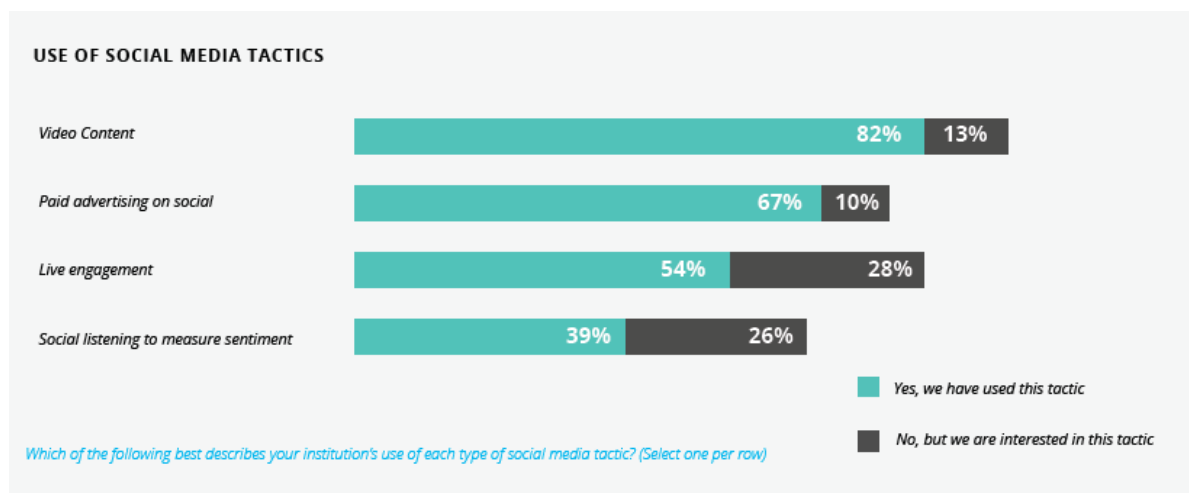
Social shares

Marketing and engagement are top social media use cases

Social media is most often used for marketing, engaging with students and alumni, and sharing news. More than two thirds of schools are also using social media to drive revenue through student enrollment.



Facebook and Twitter are the top channels used, while Instagram gains momentum with almost a 30 percent increase in use. While Snapchat has not experienced the same level of adoption, 27 percent of schools are planning to use the network in the next 12 months.



Video tactics are most popular

Video tactics are used most often, followed by paid social advertising. Higher education institutions are also interested in trying out student/faculty takeovers and Ask Me Anything (AMA) sessions.

The social campus: Where to next?

From current and prospective students to alumni and the wider community, social media plays a pivotal role in higher education communications.

While schools are doing a great job of focusing on student engagement, they're still struggling to measure and track revenue returns. This is a key barrier to getting more buy-in and budget.

There's a lot of opportunity in social for higher education—with a unified strategy, improved reporting, and centralized management, schools will be able to better understand their ROI.