



TAPPING THE POTENTIAL OF SOCIAL MEDIA:
**THE QUESTION IS HOW.
THE ANSWER IS WHY.**

By ALYSON CONNOR, MS

SVP, Group Director, Strategic and Behavioral Services



The answer, like everything else connected with being human, is more complex than it first appears. Fortunately, we have science to enlighten us.”

We know who uses social media. The demographics have been dissected down to the eyelash. We know where they go. The average mom blogger can tell you how many readers she has, where they come from and how long they stay. And thanks to oft-cited Forrester’s social media ladder, we know what people are doing when they’re in social media.

What we don’t know is why.

The answer is not as simple as it appears. Why does an asthma mom visit an asthma blog? What motivates a person with high cholesterol to log onto a discussion about statins? The answer, like everything else connected with being human, is more complex than it first appears. Fortunately, we have science to enlighten us.

The MicroMass behavioral investigators looked into the reasons people use social media and found that most people fall into one of four segments with their own keys to the kinds of messages they would find relevant and resonant.

But before we get into those four behavioral segments, we should ask:

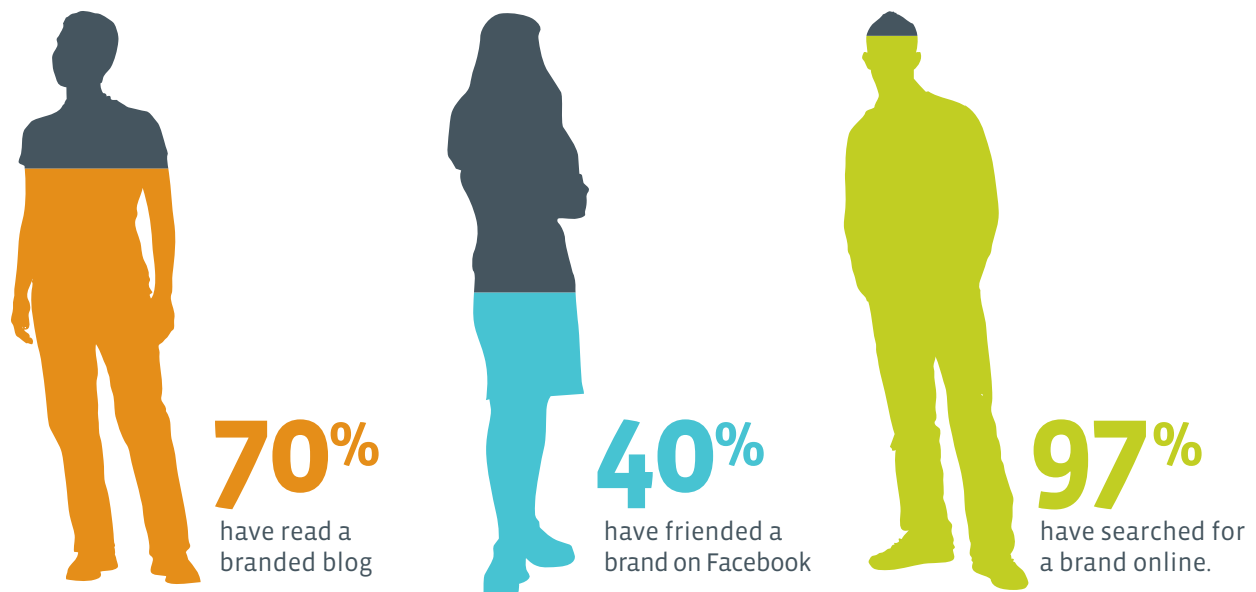
IS THE REVOLUTION REAL?

According to *Socialnomics* guru Erik Qualman, television took 13 years to reach 50 million people. The Internet took four years. And Facebook added 100 million in less than nine months.



That's a lot of people.

So we know where they are, who they are and what they're doing. But in this age of digital recording and time shifting, can they be reached? The answer is a surprising and resounding yes. According to the Razorfish Digital Brand Experience Report, 70% of consumers have read a branded blog, 40% have friended a brand on Facebook and a whopping 97% of all consumers have searched for a brand online.



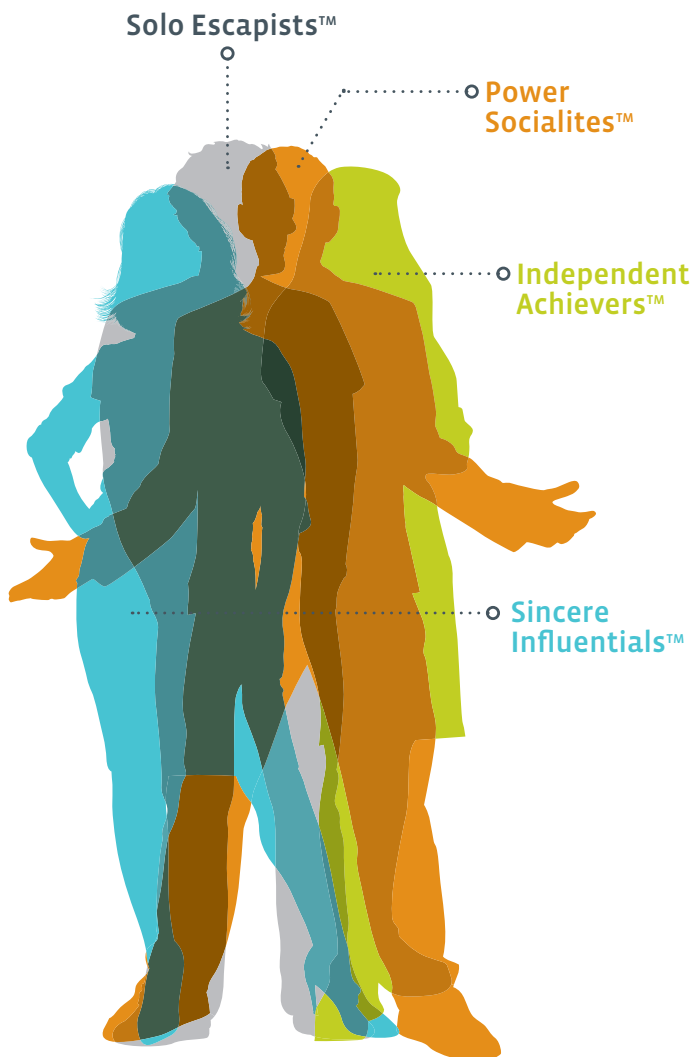
People are not only open to branded information, they're positively hungry for it.

“ To be successful, you need to shift your mindset from social media to social strategy.”

– Mikolai Jan Piskorski, Harvard Business School

THAT GUY WHO BEAT YOU UP IN MIDDLE SCHOOL? HE WANTS TO BE YOUR FRIEND.

We recently conducted a study using original research and national market data from the Simmons database. We wanted to find out what motivated users of social media and how that understanding could be used to develop a solid social media marketing strategy.



Four main groups emerged from the research, distinguished by shared personality traits and common social media habits. In each segment, we found remarkably similar reasons why a person uses social media. They may be demographically, economically and geographically different, but they agree on what they expect from the experience. It's this motivational resemblance that gives us the communications key.



Power Socialite™

Power Socialites use social media to be in the spotlight. They are early adopters and use social media to voice their opinions, meet others, and expand their personal visibility. Favorite sites include FaceBook and Match.com.

Although Power Socialites get sick more often and don't stick to a well-balanced diet, they claim that friends ask their advice about health and nutrition. Power Socialites look for and trust well-known brands and overwhelmingly trust expensive, well-advertised medicines.

Power Socialites can be your strongest advocates, telling everyone about the wonders of your brand, or they can be your most vocal enemy. They use social media as a megaphone. Get them on your side early and you have a friend for life.

Marketers should look for ways to help Power Socialites amplify their perceived influence through web sites with Twitter and Facebook feeds.



Sincere Influentials™

Sincere Influentials use social media to help maintain strong personal relationships with established friends. They are constantly looking to improve the quality of their lives. Social media is a tool they use to support their relationships and share advice. Favorite sites include Evite.com and Craigslist as well as Facebook.

Sincere Influentials make health part of their daily lives. They get regular exercise and eat a well-balanced diet. They score the highest on the statements "Friends ask my advice about health and nutrition" and "I'll pay anything when it concerns my health." They are more likely to investigate treatment options and challenge their doctors.

The best way of connecting with Sincere Influentials is to help them gather and share peer advice. They use social media to be better friends and parents and respond positively to cause-related initiatives and programs that tap into mom-bloggers and other empathetic influencers.



Solo Escapists™

Solo Escapists are more solitary than other groups and regard technology as a personal companion. They look to social media for entertainment and diversion, favoring sites such as YouTube and Download.com

They don't take good care of their health and score lowest on statements such as "I try to eat healthy food and a balanced diet" and "I have regular medical checkups." They are extremely skeptical of medicine, doctors and pharmaceutical companies making them the least likely to buy advertised medications or pay more for branded drugs.

Solo Escapists respond best when they're invited to play.



Independent Achievers™

Independent Achievers are grounded, conservative, well-informed, and use social media for simple solutions and practical information. Favorite sites include MSNBC and MapQuest.

Ironically, Independent Achievers are the least likely to be asked for advice on health, although they are the healthiest of all groups. They rarely get sick, work at eating well and exercising, and get regular medical checkups. They have faith in their doctors, but opt for self-treatment with nonprescription drugs when possible.

The best way to connect with Independent Achievers is to give them tools for doing everyday tasks more efficiently. They respond well to online concierge services and simple mobile applications that help them find solutions quickly and easily.

By knowing why a person uses a social media, and what sort of internal or external drivers motivate that behavior, we have a much clearer picture of where to find people and what kinds of messages they are most likely to find relevant and useful.

This study is the first of several behavioral research projects we're conducting this year. As we continue to explore human behavior and the various ways in which people connect, we will share our findings with regular readers, clients and anyone interested in how the changing world of technology and media are affecting the way marketers reach an ever-evolving audience of always fascinating human beings.

ALYSON CONNOR, MS, SVP, Group Director, Strategic and Behavioral Services

As Senior Vice President, Group Director, Strategic and Behavioral Services, Connor is responsible for developing new and enhanced applications of the agency's behavioral science applications, including a patent-pending predictive modeling capability that mines statistical data to predict trends and behavior influencers of consumers. Connor also manages the expansion of the agency's outcomes and optimization practices, along with segmentation and primary research capabilities.

Connor joined MicroMass in 2005, leading the company's in-house team of behaviorists and researchers and working closely on campaign development with the agency's strategy, creative and technology teams. Prior to joining the agency, she worked as an epidemiologist for GlaxoSmithKline in Research Triangle Park, N.C. She also devoted 13 years to public health research with various government and not-for-profit organizations, focusing on women's health, cancer, HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases.

About MicroMass Communications, Inc.

Founded in 1994, MicroMass offers unrivalled capabilities in the application of behavioral science to marketing challenges. The company's approach is founded on the belief that understanding the critical factors that influence individual behavior is the best way to create dialogue and build enduring relationships between customers and brands.

Unlike traditional agencies that are structured by discipline, MicroMass brings together under one roof the expertise and services for building sophisticated, multi-channel programs that span the full marketing continuum.

Headquartered in Cary, N.C., with a second office in Morristown, N.J., MicroMass is one of the fastest growing agencies in its field. With experience in more than 30 therapeutic categories, the company has a roster of clients that includes some of the most respected names in the pharmaceutical industry.

For additional information on MicroMass, visit micromass.com.