



New Data Reveals 1 in 3 People Buy Holiday Gifts Because of Social Media

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Recently released Q4 2016 Sprout Social Index reveals increased need for social media customer service attention

For the retail industry, the holiday season represents a mixture of excitement and anxiety—increased shoppers and sales also means more customer questions and problems. This holiday season, a growing number of those issues will arise on social media. In fact, [new data](#) from Sprout Social, a [social media management platform](#) for businesses, found that the average retailer will receive 3,140 social messages this holiday season—30 percent more than last year.

According to the report, social media's influence reaches beyond customer service issues; it is now an integral part of the research and gift-buying process. One in three people surveyed said that social media impacts their gift purchasing and requesting behavior during the holidays. Once they've unwrapped their presents, 30 percent of respondents said they're likely to post about a gift they receive on social media.

Further insights from the report include:

- Consumers want different types of messages from retailers during the holiday season. Nearly 20 percent are looking for more promotional messages from brands and 38.8 percent want a healthy dose of holiday cheer.
- Deals and cheer aren't enough—people want answers to their questions on social media. An estimated 56 percent of the social messages retailers are expected to receive in Q4 2016 will require action. This represents a 15 percent increase in social messages warranting a response compared to last holiday season.
- Retailers treat social networks differently when it comes to response rate. On Twitter, more than 20 percent of messages receive a response, while on Facebook that number drops to 13 percent. The type of content shared across each network also varies: Retailers send 11 promotional messages per reply on Twitter and on Facebook, they distribute 22 promotional messages per reply.

"The record number of social messages retailers are expecting underscores a trend we've been seeing for a while," said Scott Brandt, CMO at Sprout Social. "People are using social as their main communication channel with businesses, but many brands aren't responding to the demand. In order to survive this influx and capitalize on the opportunity, brands must shift their social strategy and staffing to integrate marketing and customer care."

For more information and the full data report visit sproutsocial.com/index.

About the Data

The [Sprout Social](#) Index is a report compiled and released by Sprout Social. All referenced data is based on 236,000 public social profiles (106,000 Facebook; 102,000 Twitter; 28,000 Instagram) of continually active accounts between Q3 2015 and Q3 2016. More than 3.6 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.

This consumer survey was conducted by Survata, an independent research firm in San Francisco. Survata interviewed 1,008 online respondents on October 31, 2016. For further information, visit <http://www.survata.com>.

About Sprout Social

[Sprout Social](#) offers social media engagement, advocacy and analytics solutions for leading agencies and brands, including Hyatt, GrubHub, Microsoft, Uber and Zendesk. 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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