



## New Data Shows Social Media Uniquely Positions Brands to Lead the way in Mending Today's Societal Divisions

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*Sprout Social's latest report in its Brands Get Real series finds 78 percent of people want brands to use social to help bring them together*

Whether watching the news, scrolling through social media or talking with friends, it has become overwhelmingly clear that our world is fraught with social and political strife. Four out of five consumers believe society is more divided than ever before, leaving many wondering how to overcome these differences. Released today, Sprout Social's report [Creating Connection: What Consumers Want From Brands in a Divided Society](#) found that despite the negativity, people still express a strong desire to build connections and point to brands as drivers in accomplishing this, using social media as a primary tool.

[Sprout Social](#), a leading provider of social media analytics, engagement and advocacy solutions for business, surveyed more than 1,000 U.S. consumers on their desire for greater connection with brands and with each other, as well as how brands benefit when they facilitate these connections on social. The report found that while 55 percent of people say social media is to blame for societal divisions, 91 percent also believe in social's power to connect people. And when it comes to championing these connections, 79 percent of consumers agree brands are well positioned to bring together people of varying backgrounds and beliefs.

The report further explores why consumers see brands as ideal facilitators of connection, and findings show how brands can establish meaningful relationships with consumers by acting as connectors first and sellers second. Key insights include:

- Social is the number one channel for brands to connect with consumers. Of all the communication channels available to them, consumers point to social media as providing brands the greatest opportunity to truly connect with their audiences.
- Connection breeds loyalty and bottom line growth. Sixty-four percent of consumers say that their loyalty to a brand increases when they feel connected. When customers feel connected to brands, more than half of consumers (57 percent) will increase their spending with that brand and 76 percent will buy from them over a competitor.
- Real people are the key to authentic relationships. Seventy percent of consumers report feeling more connected when a brand's CEO is active on social. And 72 percent of consumers report feeling similarly when employees share information about a brand online.
- People want brands to connect them to others. More than half of consumers (55 percent) want brands to use social to help connect like-minded people with each other, while 52 percent want to meet people different from them and more than one third (36 percent) are looking for communities they can belong to.

"As societal and political climates shift, consumers expectations are changing as well," said Jamie Gilpin, CMO at Sprout Social. "Social media can't solely be used to inspire transactions. Today, social is a global force that drives conversations, creates authentic interactions and makes a measurable impact on issues that matter. Our data shows that brands have a responsibility to leverage social to build the connections people crave if they want to earn long-term customer loyalty."

For more insight on the role of brands and social media in building meaningful connections, download the full data report [here](#).

### About Sprout Social

Sprout Social offers deep social media listening and analytics, social management, customer care, and advocacy solutions to more than 25,000 leading brands and agencies, including Evernote, Grubhub, West Elm and Edelman. Sprout's suite of solutions supports every aspect of a cohesive social program and enables organizations of all sizes to extend their reach, amplify their brand and create the kind of real connection with their consumers that drives their businesses forward. Headquartered in Chicago, Sprout is a Twitter Official Partner, Facebook Marketing Partner, Pinterest Marketing Partner, Instagram Partner Program Member and LinkedIn Company Page Partner. Learn more at [sproutsocial.com](http://sproutsocial.com).

### About the Data

The "Creating Connection: What Consumers Want From Brands in a Divided Society" study is based on a survey of 1,013 U.S. consumers. The survey was conducted online between Nov. 20–26, 2018. The report is the third in Sprout Social's Brands Get Real series, which examines how social media is changing consumer expectations and the increasing power of brand authenticity.

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