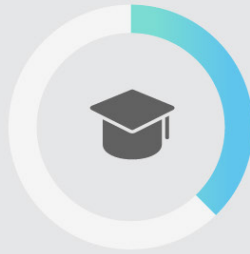
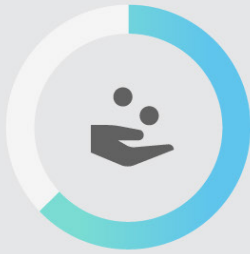


2017

# Social Campus Report

A global survey of higher education  
social media usage



# 2017 Social Campus Report

A global survey of higher education social media usage

Social media has transformed the communication landscape for higher education institutions—with students being the key driver of change.

Higher education institutions understand that they need to keep up and embrace social media. 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.

In our 2017 Social Campus Report, we uncover the current state of the social campus and outline eight areas of opportunity for higher education institutions using social media.

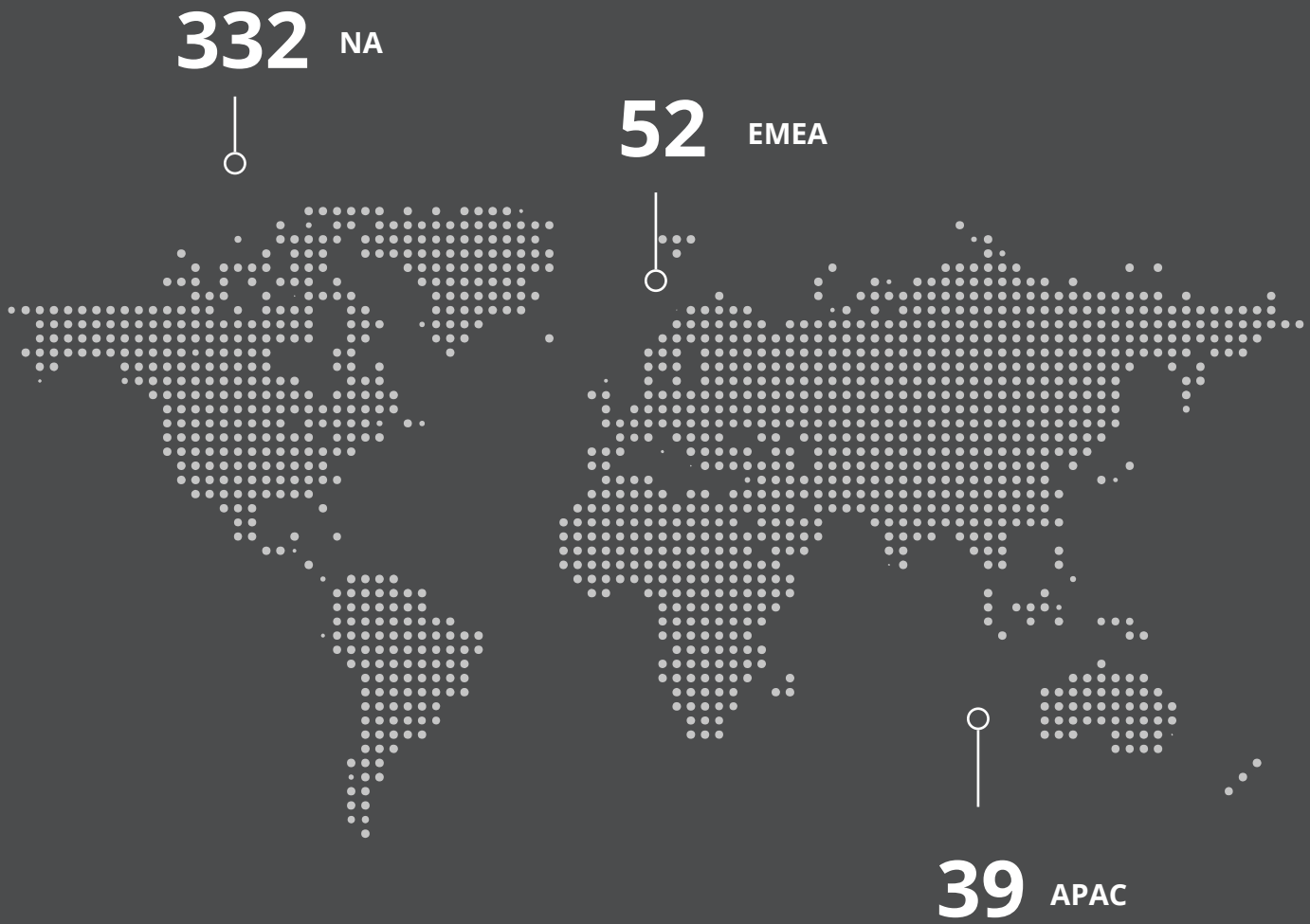
## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Hootsuite is a leader in social media education, with over 800 higher education institutions teaching Hootsuite Social Media education programs.

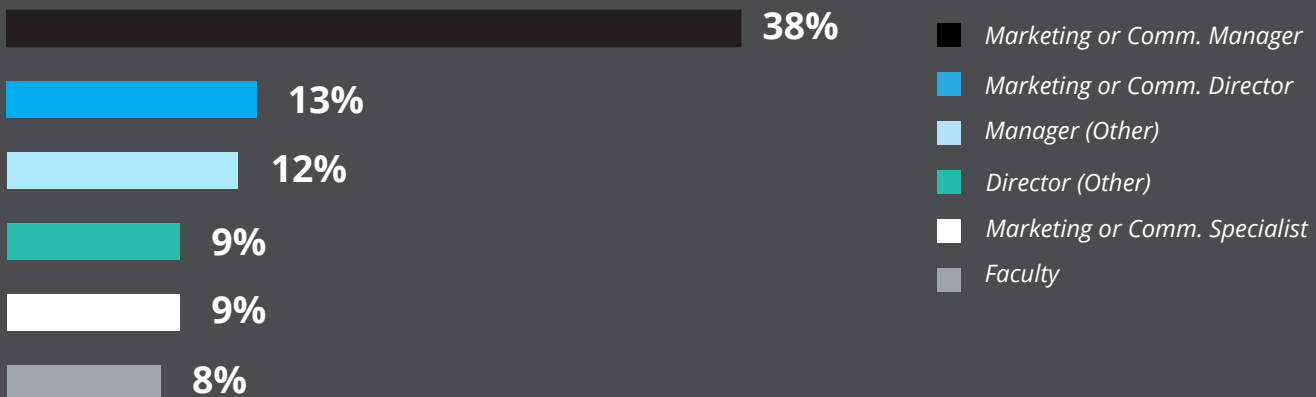
In July 2017, Hootsuite conducted a survey with 423 professionals from higher education institutions that have responsibility for social media strategy and/or its execution.

From that data, we've identified how the majority of institutions surveyed are currently using social media, along with areas of opportunity.

## Survey participants: demographic breakdown



## Role within university



# The state of social media in higher education

## Students' 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.

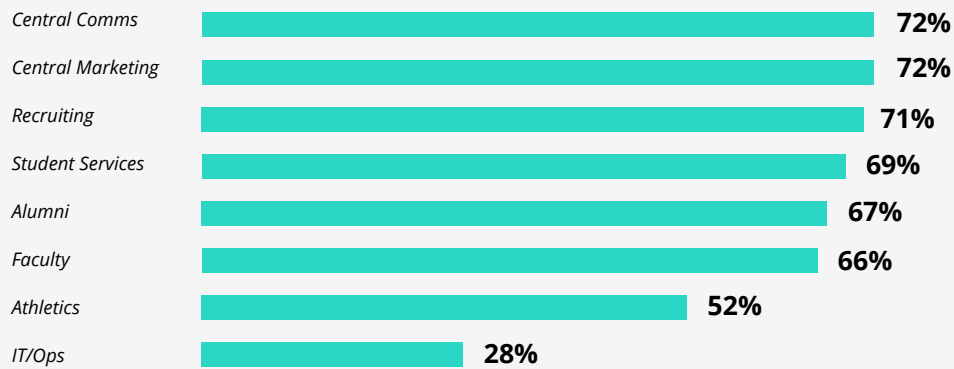
### DRIVERS OF SOCIAL MEDIA ADOPTION ACROSS CAMPUS



*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.*

A variety of teams across campus use social media. While marketing and communications teams are the most common users, there is high adoption on many other teams including recruiting, student services, alumni, faculty, and athletics.

### AREAS OF CAMPUS THAT USE SOCIAL MEDIA

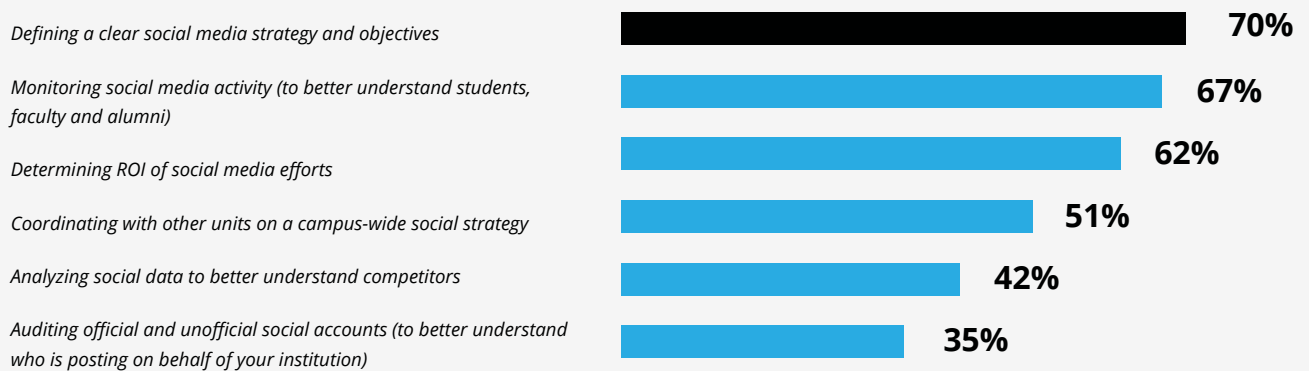


*Which of the following areas of your institution are using social media? (Select all that apply)*

### 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 GOALS IN HIGHER EDUCATION



*What are your social media goals for the next 12 months? (Select all that apply)*

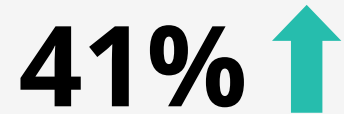
## Social media is a strategic area of focus

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 headcount.

As the focus on social media increases, it will become more important for schools to define clear key performance indicators to prove the return on social media investments.



Executives that see social media as a strategic area of focus

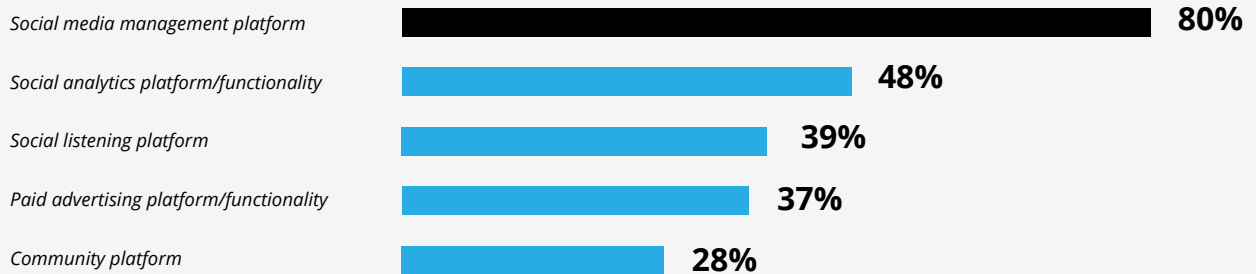


Increase in social media technology spend

## 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.

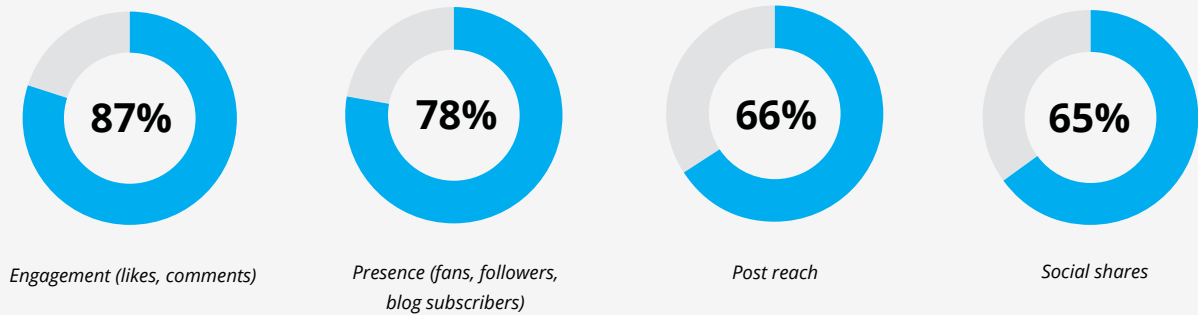
### SOCIAL MEDIA TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION



Which of the following social media technology/platforms does your institution currently use? (Select all that apply)

## Engagement most often used to measure success

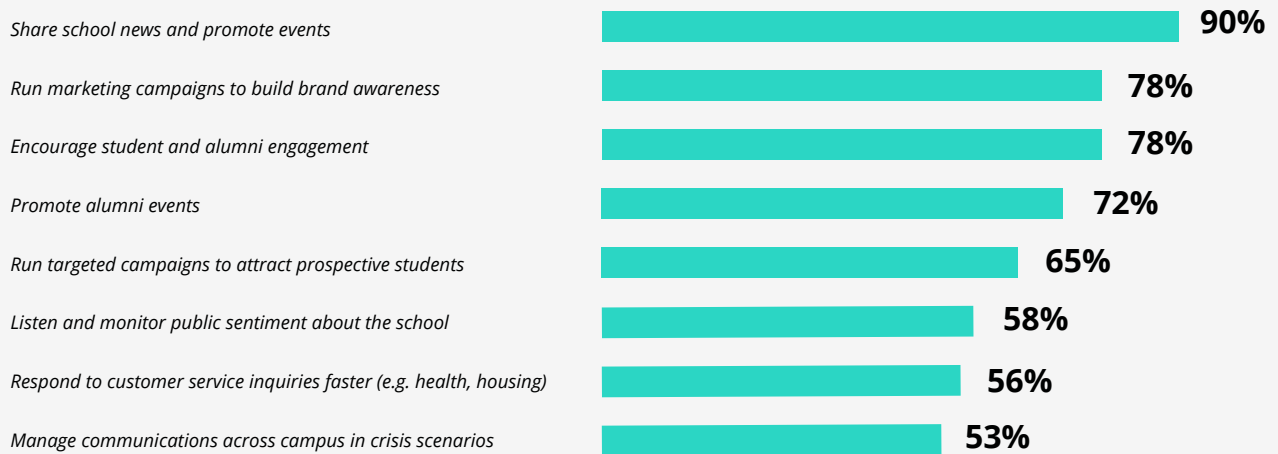
Social metrics like engagement, presence, reach, and shares are most often used to measure success, while just over half are measuring conversion rates and click-through rates.



## 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 to drive revenue through student enrollment.

### SOCIAL MEDIA USE CASES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

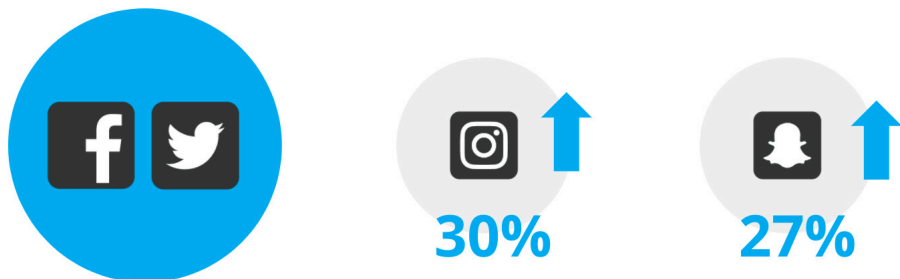


*Thinking about marketing and enrollment efforts, which of the following ways does your institution currently use social media? (Select all that apply)*

*Now thinking about student support and alumni relations, which of the following ways does your institution currently use social media? (Select all that apply)*

## Facebook and Twitter are top channels

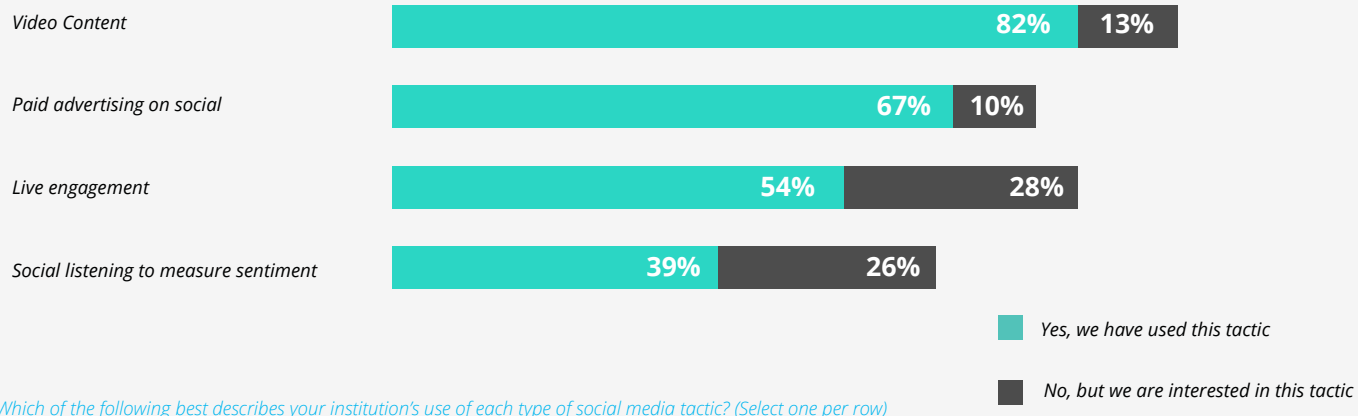
Facebook and Twitter are the top channels used, while Instagram gains momentum with almost a 30 percent increase in use. Snapchat has not experienced the same level of adoption, however, 27 percent of schools are planning to use the network in the next 12 months.



## 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.

### USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA TACTICS





# 8 strategic areas of opportunity for higher education



## 1. Campus collaboration

Despite the high adoption of social media across campus, our survey showed that social efforts are still siloed. Seventy-six percent of schools allow individual teams and departments to manage their own social accounts.

There is a desire for improved collaboration. Over half of higher education schools want to coordinate with other teams on social strategy in the next 12 months.

By aligning social media efforts across campus, schools can unify their social strategy, implement better security measures, and get more value from social media.



### BARRIERS TO SOCIAL SUCCESS

**25%**

say lack of centralized ownership of social media is a barrier to social success

**52%**

say lack of cross-departmental collaboration is a barrier to social success

## 2. Executive support for social

Executive participation on social at higher education institutions is high, with 49 percent of institutional leaders active on social, compared to the [39 percent of Fortune 500 CEOs](#) active on social.<sup>1</sup> This may be driven by a desire to better engage their audience and be seen as more transparent and trustworthy.



### DEANS LEADING THE WAY ON SOCIAL



The Bath Spa Institute for Education's dean [Dr. Kate Reynolds](#) was named one of the top [50 social media influencers in higher education](#).<sup>2</sup> Dr. Reynolds was recognized for her use of social media in the development of the [Bath Spa Institute for Education](#).



[Sally Blount](#), dean of Northwestern University's business school, was [named one of LinkedIn's Top Voices for education](#).<sup>3</sup> She uses social media to post about management and business.



[Dean Roy Green](#), dean of UTS Business School at the [University of Technology Sydney](#), is a social media influencer in Australian higher education. He uses social media to write and share thought leadership content.

### EXECUTIVE PARTICIPATION

**49%** of institutional leaders are active on social media

**66%** of executive teams see social as a strategic area of focus

However, it's not just executive participation on social media that's important; executive support is also vital for success.

In our study, 66 percent of respondents agree that their executive teams view social media as a strategic area of focus for their institution, and 63 percent believe that social media is connected to their organization's strategic plan and institutional mission.

While this is promising, there is little investment in strategic social initiatives: 45 percent of respondents predict no change in budget for headcount or technology in relation to social media.

### 3. Social advertising

[Social media advertising](#) has become a key part of marketing efforts to reach a wider audience<sup>4</sup>—so it’s no surprise that advertising on social has also become top-of-mind in higher education.

Our research found that 67 percent of respondents are using paid advertising to enhance their reach. Fifty-one percent expect an increase their in paid ads budget in 2018—and among respondents that manage social media centrally, 62 percent expect an increase.

Despite the significant increase in advertising and advertising budgets, only 37 percent have invested in an advertising platform. With a social ads platform, schools can save time and optimize ad spend.



### 4. Social insights

Using social media data is an essential part of building a solid strategy. By taking advantage of insights made available by [social listening](#), schools can measure sentiment towards their institution, better understand student needs, and differentiate from their competition.<sup>5</sup>

While 65 percent of schools are using social media to measure sentiment, only 39 percent are using a social listening platform to improve their social listening efforts.

#### SOCIAL LISTENING AND MONITORING

**39%** have a social listening platform

**42%** are actively analyzing data to better understand competitors

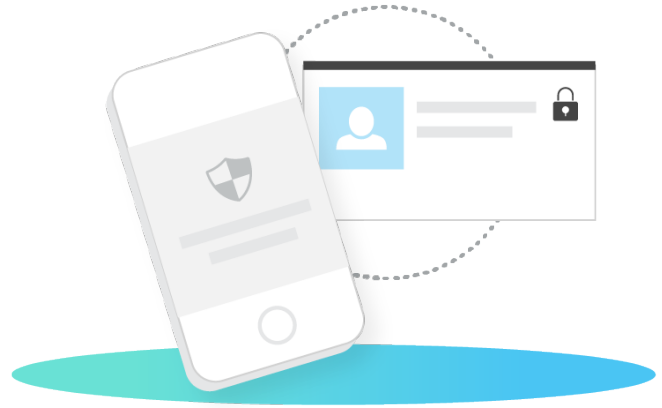
**65%** listen to and measure sentiment about the school

## 5. Security

It's becoming more important than ever to approach social media activities with a security mindset. Without effective protocols in place, social accounts can be an [easy target for hackers or malicious behavior](#).<sup>6</sup> Even the most well-trained social media professionals are subject to human error.

With nearly 50 percent of schools working in silos across campus and 40 percent sharing login credentials, social media security is at risk.

In 2015, the University of Michigan suffered an [attack on their social media accounts](#) when malicious postings appeared on three of the university's most popular Facebook pages. As the owner of the sixth-largest higher education Facebook audience in the U.S., the school found itself at risk of lasting damage to their reputation.<sup>7</sup>



“For us, the moral of the story was clear. Password security isn’t enough—even the most well-trained social media professionals are still subject to human error.”

*Nikki Sunstrum, Director of Social Media, University of Michigan*

### SOCIAL MEDIA SECURITY RISKS

- 40%** share login credentials to native social media platforms
- 18%** have had a public scandal related to social media
- 8%** have had their social media accounts hacked

## 6. Sharing authentic experiences on social

User-generated content (UGC) is an important part of student outreach. It allows schools to showcase authentic experiences to prospective students—and recruit top talent.

Our survey respondents see value in sharing these real-life stories. Thirty-five percent of those surveyed allow students to 'take over' official institution accounts to share experiences and special events on campus.

A further twenty-five percent of respondents use social advocacy programs to amplify positive student experiences to a broader audience. We predict that this trend will continue to grow in 2018.



## 7. Delivery of student services

By delivering student services on social media, schools can improve communications with students and significantly reduce customer service backlogs.

Schools that deliver student services on social have experienced these gains. Over half of respondents said that social media helps them respond to customer service queries faster, and 17 percent have already reduced the numbers of calls and emails.

### BENEFITS OF USING SOCIAL MEDIA FOR STUDENT SERVICES

**56%** said that social media helps them respond to customer service queries faster

**17%** have already seen reduced calls and emails due to social media

## 8. Measuring return on investment (ROI)

Higher education institutions are investing in social as a revenue-generating activity. Seventy-one percent of higher education institutions use social to drive student enrollment and 67 percent use social to drive fundraising efforts.

The returns are small but promising. Fifteen percent have seen increased success in fundraising as a direct result of social media, and 26 percent have seen an increased number of student applications as a result of social efforts.

Better tracking is essential for measuring success. It will allow schools to build a case for improved programs and more budget. While 41 percent are still unsure about how to measure results, 62 percent intend to put measures in place to determine the ROI of social.



### RETURN ON SOCIAL MEDIA INVESTMENTS

- 15%** have seen increased success in fundraising as a direct result of social media
- 26%** have seen an increased number of student applications as a direct result of social efforts
- 11%** have seen increased quality of student applications

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Fortune. [Social Media Use By CEOs Is Increasing—Slowly](#). 2016.

<sup>2</sup> Bath Business News. [Top 50 social media influencers ranking for Bath Spa Education Institute dean](#). 2015.

<sup>3</sup> LinkedIn. [LinkedIn Top Voices 2016: The 10 must-know writers in education](#). 2016.

<sup>4</sup> Hootsuite. [The Complete Guide to Social Media Advertising](#). 2016.

<sup>5</sup> Hootsuite. [Social Listening: What it is, Why You Should Care, And How to Do it Well](#). 2017.

<sup>6</sup> Hootsuite. [How to Protect Your Brand on Social Media](#). 2017.

<sup>7</sup> University of Michigan. [Hacked: A Case Study](#). 2015.

# 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.

## Want to capitalize on these eight social media opportunities?

[Learn how leading colleges and universities use social media](#) to drive enrollment, boost student engagement, and raise new funds.







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