

Social Media Rarely Used to Guide Purchases

May 21, 2009

-By Mark Dolliver, Adweek



Go figure: People regard social media as "social" rather than "commercial," marketers' eager wishes to the contrary notwithstanding. Knowledge Networks polling released this week finds fewer than 5 percent of social-media users age 13-54 "regularly turn to these sites for guidance on purchase decisions" in a range of common product/service categories.

The figure is a lackluster 4 percent in the "travel or travel services" and "banks or financial services" categories, and a mere 3 percent when it comes to "clothes or shoes," "eating out or restaurants" and "personal care products." It's lower still for "cell/mobile phones and services," "cars or trucks" and "groceries or food" (each at 2 percent) and lowest of all for "prescription or OTC drugs" (1 percent).

The numbers are more robust when respondents apply the looser standard of whether they "sometimes" use social media for guidance on purchase decisions in these categories. Still, the highest figure is a modest 24 percent for the "travel or travel services" sector, with "clothes or shoes" a percentage point behind.

In light of such numbers, it's not surprising that just 16 percent of the social-media users surveyed said they're more inclined to buy brands that advertise on social sites. Then again, most are not hostile to advertising on those venues: 63 percent agreed that the presence of ads is "a fair price to pay" for being able to use social sites.

When the survey (fielded in March) asked users of social media to say what motivates them to engage with such sites, the foremost reason (cited by 54 percent) was "'staying connected' -- to friends and family, as well as meeting new people."

The growing prominence of social media is reflected in the finding that 34 percent of this survey's respondents are using the sites and features more often now than they did a year ago. But it's also the case that some people give social media a try and then lose interest. Thus, 18 percent of respondents said they now use social media less often than they did a year ago.

[Source: Adweek.com](#)

Links referenced within this article

Source: Adweek.com

http://www.adweek.com/aw/content_display/news/agency/e3i82a4bef380199312acdb7a2541b7647a

Find this article at:

http://www.brandweek.com/bw/content_display/news-and-features/direct/e3ia00f4b58276bb2e3de6e24a7b5baaf18#2



[SAVE THIS](#) | [EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)

Uncheck the box to remove the list of links referenced in the article.

◆ 2008 Nielsen Business Media, Inc. All rights reserved.