



New Research Reveals Georgia Companies Lack Social Media Engagement

Georgia's Top Companies Do Not Make the Grade on First Annual Scorecard

ATLANTA – Jan. 28, 2010 – Georgia's top public and private companies scored a D for social media engagement in 2009, according to a new study by [Wunderkind Public Relations](#), an Atlanta-based communications strategy and services company. The [Social Media Engagement \(SME\) scorecard](#) reflects the activity of corporations and their chief executives in social media channels for Georgia's top 25 public and top 25 private companies, as determined by revenue and published in the [Atlanta Business Chronicle 2009 Book of Lists](#). Wunderkind Public Relations established a company's score based on its use of Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, and a corporate blog.

"Clearly, there are corporations in the study that are effectively using social media marketing and networking on a daily basis, but the data shows the large majority of companies in Georgia are still evaluating [social media as a business tool](#)," said Steve McAbee, president and founder, Wunderkind Public Relations. "We expect this to change in 2010 as more companies seek to employ tools and technology to further extend their marketing budgets including social media, which provides businesses with an affordable content distribution option to supplement higher-cost initiatives."

Companies received a point for each of the five social media tools they employ, for a maximum score of five, where a perfect score is equivalent to an A grade. Data from the Georgia SME scorecard shows business-to-consumer (B2C) companies are more than twice as engaged with customers and prospects online than their business-to-business (B2B) counterparts. Private B2C companies had the highest SME score (3.2), followed by public B2C companies (3.0), public B2B companies (1.76), and finally private B2B companies (1.6). Omitting LinkedIn, a popular professional networking service, less than 20 percent of the companies researched appear to have an ongoing social media effort, though data was insufficient to conclude whether or not the channels were utilized with any frequency or as part of an integrated marketing plan.

Four Georgia companies received perfect scores: [AGCO Corp.](#), [the Coca-Cola Company](#), [Delta Airlines](#), and [Infor Global Solutions](#). These companies utilize a variety of channels to create an interactive dialogue with customer, prospects and employees. On the other hand, thirty-one companies received a score of 2 or less, and all but one company is using some channel of social media. Data also concluded that public companies as a whole, whether B2C or B2B, are more engaged (2.36) than private companies (1.92).

Worldwide, companies are utilizing the emerging medium to strategically and methodically establish or reinforce their influence, reputation and brand within communities of existing and potential customers, prospects and other supporters. Most effective when integrated with more established marketing channels, social media is being embraced by companies of all sizes for its low-cost content

distribution model and as a powerful catalyst for viral marketing. On social media sites, groups of individuals with different points of views are empowered to collectively determine the value or importance of content disseminated throughout the community. In most cases, users are given the editorial power to influence the visibility of content, providing significant insight to companies regarding their brand, products and services.

Highlights of the Georgia Social Media Engagement Scorecard:

- LinkedIn is the most popular social networking service; **96%** of all companies have a LinkedIn page, followed by Facebook (**42%**) and Twitter (**38%**)
- Only **9** companies received a SME score of **4** or better
- CEOs lack engagement with an average SME score of **.26**
- **12** companies have a dedicated YouTube channel while only **7** have a blog
- Only **1** CEO contributes to the company blog

Georgia CEOs Use LinkedIn More Than Other Channels

Among the chief executives of Georgia's top companies, data showed CEOs of private companies are more engaged than those of public companies, though almost all of that is attributed to their LinkedIn profiles. Thirty-two percent of private CEOs maintain a profile on LinkedIn, compared to only 16 percent of their counterparts in public enterprise. None of Georgia's top CEOs maintains a public-facing Facebook account.

Outside of Georgia, some CEO early-adopters, like Tony Hsieh of Zappos, Virgin Group's Richard Branson, Guy Kawasaki of Garage Technology Ventures and AllTop, and Jonathan Schwartz of Sun Microsystems, are engaged with the public through a wide spectrum of social media tools from Twitter to blogs.

A new generation of corporate leadership is emerging and the C-suite is being occupied by an increasingly more digitally connected network. For B2C companies this means another touchpoint to the customer—a personal connection between company leadership and the consumer. In B2B circles, the rise of the [social CEO](#) means their customers, the executives who make purchasing decisions, will be dramatically more engaged and will seek to connect with vendors or research the brand's reputation through online channels.

"We certainly aren't advocating that all CEOs jump on the social media bandwagon – there are too many variables for social media to be one-size-fits-all – but the extremely low adoption rate among CEOs in Georgia is interesting given the explosive growth of social media in 2009," said McAbee. "This medium can provide CEOs an open line of communication with customers, investors and partners to start a constructive, long-term and transparent dialogue. However, before the CEO becomes involved with social media, the brand itself should get it right."

In the wake of a worldwide recession, many companies have recognized how the broad use of online tools can help attract and retain customers and have embraced social media out of an appreciation for the power online customers wield over brands, corporate reputations and public opinion. Additionally, younger generations of workers and college students are well connected and digitally engaged, making social media an effective tool for talent recruiting. These factors, combined with social media's low cost of entry, demonstrate social media's growing importance and are among the reasons analyst firms predict social media marketing budgets will quadruple over the next five years.

"The Georgia study found the majority of companies are participating in one-way conversations where they have complete control," said McAbee. "The real impact social media can have on an organization will only be fully realized when a company engages with its audiences by monitoring and managing the online conversation and participating in two-way communication. We look forward to following the progress of social media usage among Georgia's businesses and updating the results in next year's study."

Additional Information:

- [Wunderkind Public Relations' Georgia Social Media Engagement Scorecard SlideShare](#)
- [Georgia Social Media Engagement Scorecard Methodology](#)
- [Georgia Social Media Engagement Company Index](#)
- Whitepaper: [Is Social Media Right for B2B Companies?](#)

About Wunderkind Public Relations

Atlanta-based Wunderkind Public Relations blends public relations and social media to deliver results-driven communications strategies and campaigns that create a positive impact on a company's audiences. The agency provides full-service support to local, national and global clients in industries including technology, foodservice and non-profit. For more information, visit www.wunderkindpr.com, follow [@WunderkindPR](#) on Twitter, or read the agency's blog, [The Practitioner](#).

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