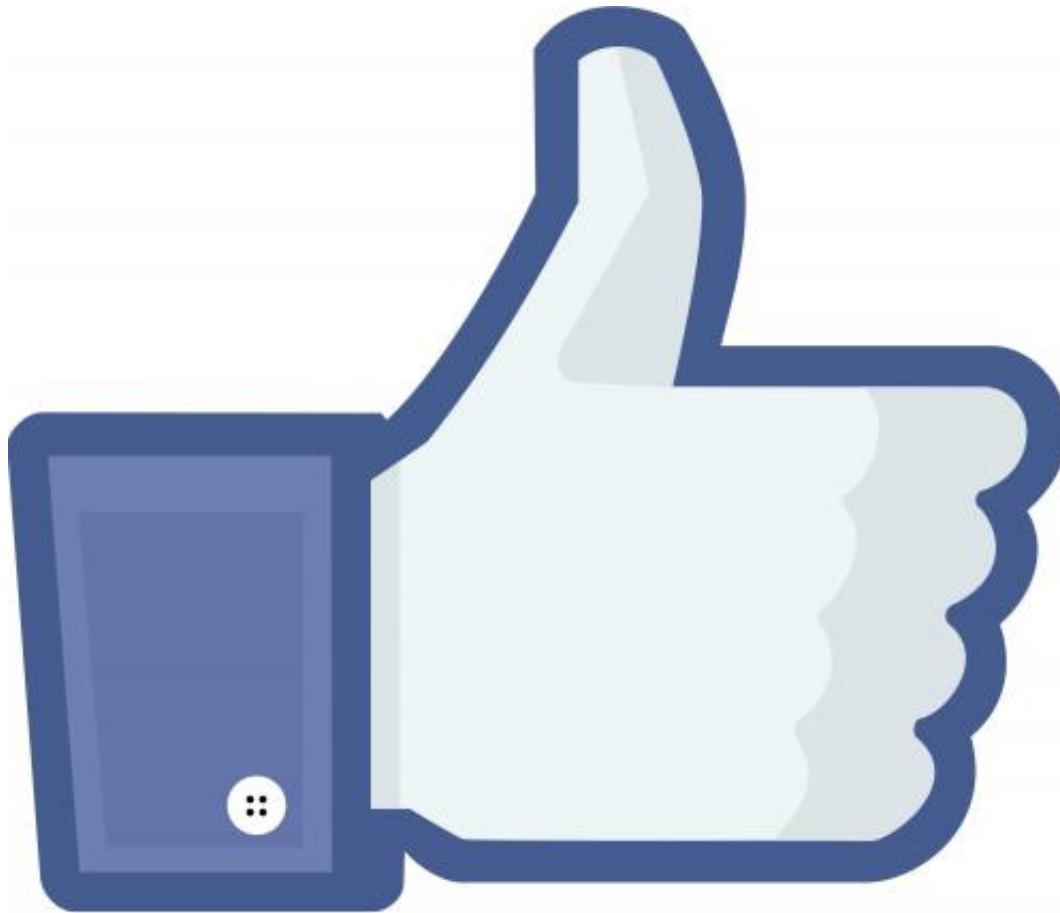


Most admired companies have room for social media improvement

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Not all of America's most admired companies are killing it on social media. In fact, some are almost flat lining, according to a team of

researchers.

Several firms on Fortune Magazine's list of America's most admired companies are failing to achieve basic [social media](#) standards, let alone best practices, according to Marcia DiStaso, associate professor of public relations, Penn State.

"We were surprised that not all the companies had a Twitter account, for instance, and not every company had a Facebook page, or a YouTube page," said DiStaso. "There are top companies that don't have a Facebook page, but just used an entry from their Wikipedia page."

While 95 percent of the 417 most admired companies on the list had a Facebook page, 51 percent were basic Wikipedia-fed pages. For example, ExxonMobil and Berkshire Hathaway, two of the world's biggest companies, only have default Wikipedia page holders as their Facebook home.

On an industry basis, companies in the consumer packaged goods industry, such as Coca-Cola and Coach, did the best across all three major social media platforms—Twitter, Facebook and YouTube.

"When you think about the social media platforms we looked at, it's easier to communicate your content and that content resonates easier if you're in the consumer packaged goods industry," said DiStaso. "Coca-Cola could post or send out a picture of a cute animal with a bottle of Coke which, as content, isn't as hard to deliver, and you usually also have very passionate followers who will like it."

The companies in the study had a better handle on Twitter and YouTube, according to the researchers, who reported their findings in a current issue of the *Journal of Promotion Management*. A total of 82 percent of the companies had a Twitter account and 72 percent had a YouTube

account.

One industry that struggles particularly with social media is the [health care](#) industry. However, the researchers speculated that this may be because the industry is heavily regulated.

"All of the industries have room for improvement, which is what the study shows, but there's specifically some more room for improvement in the health care industry," said DiStaso. "Since we've done the study, we have seen some growth in how the health care industry has used social media, but there's a lot more opportunities."

Using social media effectively may help these companies do more than just sell products and services. Social media can establish personal connections between a company and its customers.

"What social media does for organizations is it really helps create brand supporters and connect with people in more ways," said DiStaso. "From a personal perspective it allows the public to really get to know the company before they become that brand advocate."

The study built on prior research that identified some best practices in each social media platform, said DiStaso, who worked with Tina McCorkindale, associate professor of communication, Appalachian State University and Alexa Agugliaro, former undergraduate student in [public relations](#), Penn State. The best practices vary across the social media platforms, but include tactics such as providing details of how the account is being managed and including a link to the company website.

The researchers examined efforts across the three major social media platforms because not all platforms fit the mission of each company.

Fortune's most admired companies list is one of the most frequently

cited sources of information about [company](#) reputation. To create the list, the magazine asks corporate executives, directors and securities analysts to identify the reputations of companies. The companies included in the study appeared on the 2012 version of the list.

Provided by Pennsylvania State University

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