

The Social Pulse

The state of consumer-brand engagement on social media in 2025





INTRODUCTION

What do consumers want from brands on social media in 2025?

In 2025, if your brand isn't actively engaging on social, you're invisible to consumers.

A static Facebook page or an outdated blog post won't cut it. Consumers expect brands to show up where they already are, respond quickly, and provide real value – not just ads. They also want honesty, entertainment, and a sense of community. But what does that really mean for brands?

Authenticity is everything

We surveyed nearly 1,000 frequent social media users to find out exactly how consumers expect brands to engage with them in 2025.

The takeaway? Trust is paramount. Consumers want brands to be genuine, responsive, and engaged. That trust isn't built through marketing campaigns alone – It's shaped by how brands interact with users, respond to feedback, and make customer service seamless.

Brands that actively engage, share customer content, and provide real value on social aren't just gaining followers. They're building lasting relationships.

How to meet customers where they are

Your social strategy needs to align with how your audience actually interacts with brands online. This report delivers data-driven insights and actionable strategies to help your brand:

- **Understand what consumers expect from brands on social**
- **Identify what makes them engage, buy, and stay loyal**
- **Optimize your content, engagement, and customer service for real impact**

Social media isn't just part of the customer journey – It *is* the customer journey. If your brand isn't getting it right, you're already losing ground.

As you read on, let this be your guide to holding that ground.



**Let this report
show you where
to show up – and
how to win.**



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What you will find in this survey report

This report examines the top-line data from a survey of nearly 1,000 U.S.-based social media users from a wide spectrum of ages and demographics to understand their behavior, preferences, and expectations for brand interactions on social media.

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Methodology

- Nature of survey:** This was a 15-minute online survey offered in English only.
- Sample size:** The sample was 965 U.S.-based consumers (229 in Generation Z, 242 Millennials, 241 in Generation X, and 213 Baby Boomers).
- When:** Data collected November 14-26, 2024
- Qualifications:** To qualify, respondents had to:
- Use at least two of the following at least twice a week: Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, or X.
 - Have interacted with a brand on social media in the past 90 days.

(CLICK SECTIONS TO JUMP TO PAGE)

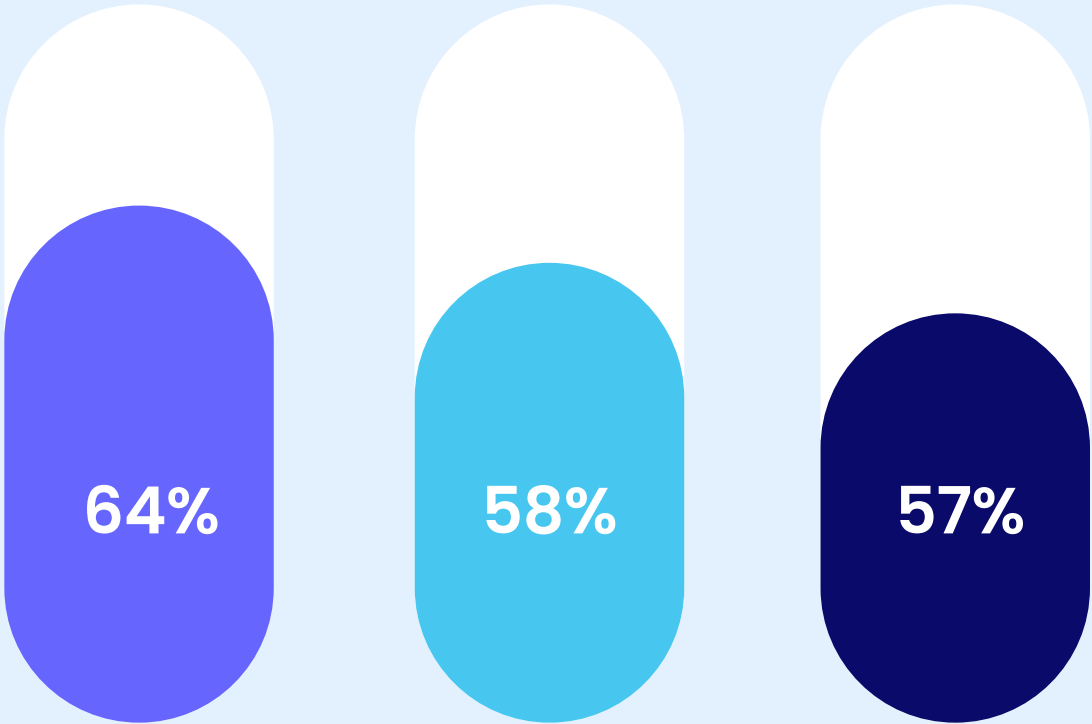


BEHAVIOR

Consumer behavior on social media

Consumers don't follow brands just because they exist. They follow them because they offer something valuable. Whether it's exclusive deals, engaging content, or real connections, brands that get this right earn loyalty. Those that don't? They get ignored.

Here are the top three reasons consumers cited for following a brand account:



- News about promotions, sales, and discounts
- Entertainment
- Learning about new products/product updates

What we know:

People follow brands that give them value.

Mostly deals, entertainment, or product updates. If you're not offering something they want, don't bother.

Consumers use social to validate buying decisions.

Your posts are trust signals. If your brand looks inactive or lacks engagement, buyers will think twice.

Consumers expect brands to reward their loyalty.

They want to feel part of something. Loyalty grows with social feels exclusive.

What you can do:

Make your value clear upfront.

Use your bio, pinned posts, and Stories to show why following matters: exclusive deals, standout content, or community perks.

Build trust with social proof.

Post real customer testimonials, UGC, and visible responses to reviews or questions.

Turn your followers into insiders.

Give early access to sales, social-only deals, and sneak peeks to give followers what they can't get anywhere else.



Takeway:

Give people a reason to follow – or they won't. The brands that win on social make their value clear, post consistently, and offer something followers can't get elsewhere. Social needs to feel like a VIP experience.



REVENUE

What prompts social media users to purchase (and what doesn't)?

About half of frequent social media users have made a purchase via social media in the past 90 days, showing that your most engaged followers are pretty likely to also be your most engaged followers.

But what actually prompts them to buy varies quite a bit. What's clear is that people trust people like themselves more than they do brands, and they expect brands to be responsive to the world around them.

Also, though, just like for you, the bottom line matters to people. Give them special deals for following you, and you'll draw more of them in.

Want to see how Emplifi can seamlessly connect social to commerce? [Let's talk today.](#)

What we know:

People buy from brands that engage.

58% say it's important to see brands respond to customers on social.

Celebs don't drive conversions.

Real people do. Just 14% say celebs influence them, while 65% say UGC does.

Discounts drive sales.

Six out of 10 buy because of a deal, far above visuals, relatability, or humor.



What you can do:

Act like a community member.

Reply to followers and comment on posts where your brand is mentioned – even if it's not on your page.

Feature your customers.

Encourage and spotlight real reviews, photos, and videos in shoppable posts to build trust.

Make promotions clear and consistent.

Prioritize sharing deals and offers over chasing trends or memes. Give them what they're begging you for.

What drives social purchases?



Takeway:



Social isn't just where consumers discover **products** – it's where they decide to buy. Brands that combine strong visuals, relatable content, and timely offers are best positioned to convert followers into customers.



CONTENT

How can brands keep their audiences engaged?

2025 is the year to try new formats. Consider testing live video and giveaways (which can often be combined) and see how your audience responds.

When it comes to the tone and objective of video content, consumers care the most about whether it’s informative and honest.

How often consumers want brands to post

Multiple times per week



Once per day



Multiple times per day



Once per week



What we know:

Boomers prefer short, to-the-point videos.

Many want them under 30 seconds, especially when it comes to product info or deals.

Gen Z has a higher threshold for longer live streams.

They’re even okay with 20+ minutes long, but it has to be entertaining.

About half of consumers want to see brand posts at least once a day.

Weekly just won’t cut it for most. Frequent activity matters.



What you can do:

Keep it simple.

Stick to one clear message per 30-second video, and use the format to share offers, how-tos, or real customer input.

Try longer live formats that invite participation

If Gen Z is your primary audience, make sure the content is fun and keeps them engaged.

Post daily to stay relevant.

Mix in UGC, quick updates, and lower-effort content to keep your presence strong without overloading your team.



Takeway:

Keep your content mix diverse, blending images, short-form videos, and giveaways to maintain engagement. If you’re targeting older generations, prioritize information, products, and promos. If your audience skews younger, lean into entertainment and interactivity.



CUSTOMER SERVICE

What do consumers expect from social customer care?

Frequent social media users most commonly jump to Facebook (55%) and Instagram (47%) to get customer service-related issues solved.

But that's only part of the story of what consumers expect from brands when it comes to customer service on social media. Meeting your customers where they are matters, but doing so on their timetable is crucial.

Think about that. The moment your customer sends you a social media DM, the clock is ticking in their head **even if your team hasn't seen the message yet**. That highlights the imperative that your Customer Service and social teams are always ready to craft the right response.

The longer it takes a brand to respond, the more likely it is to lose customers. If you take more than 24 hours, you risk losing a third of them instantly.

Want to streamline your approach to social customer care?
[Let us show you how Emplifi can help.](#)

What we know:

The clock starts ticking as soon as a DM is sent

Delays lead to frustration – and, potentially, lost customers.

58% say brand responses on social are important

Social care doesn't just fix issues. It drives purchase decisions.

Customers want support on the platforms they use most.

If they're active on TikTok, that's where they'll expect help.

What you can do:

Send instant auto-replies.

Acknowledge messages and set expectations. Even a quick "We got this!" helps them feel heard.

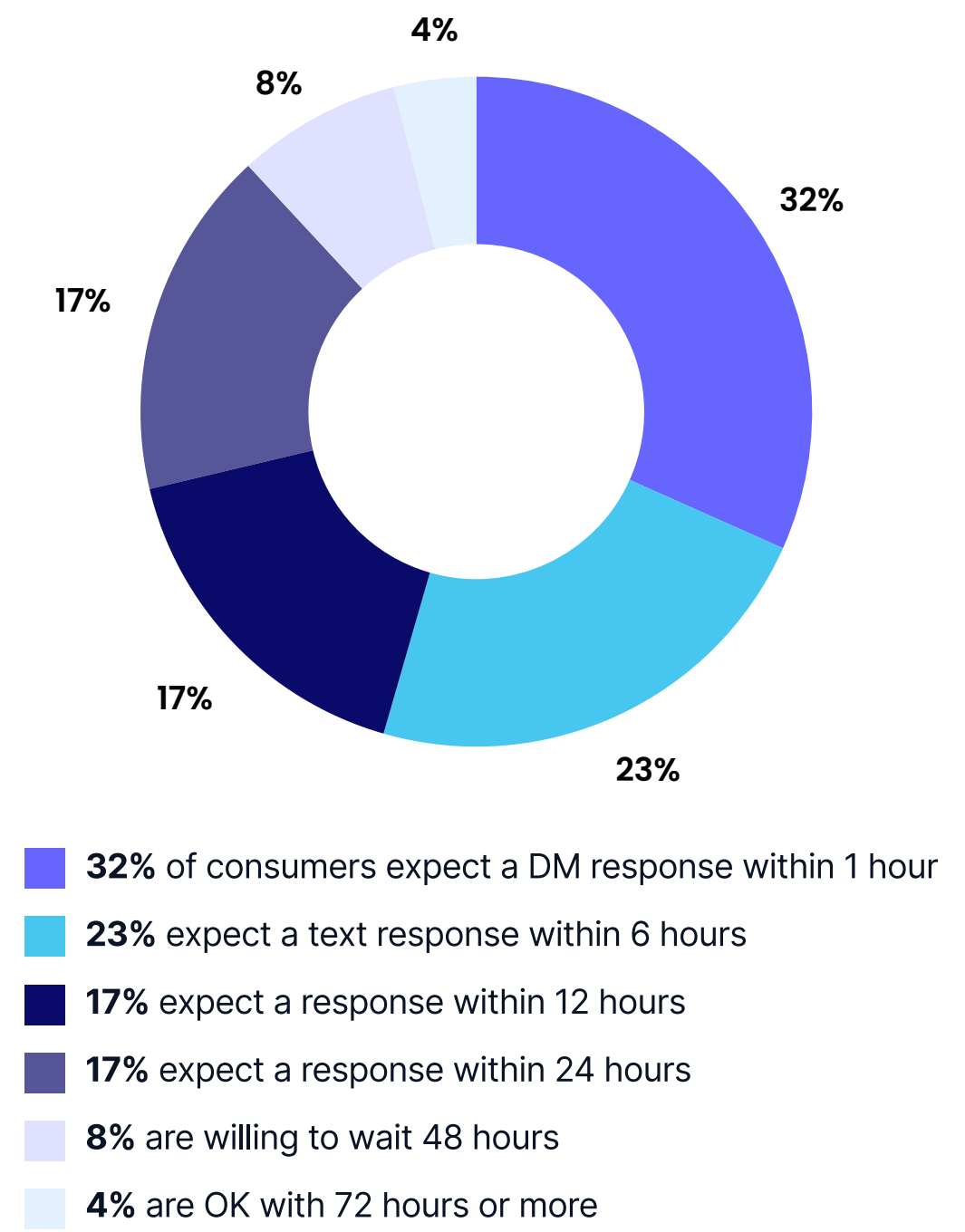
Treat social care as part of the sales funnel.

Be visible, responsive, and proactive – not just reactive to complaints.

Offer support on every platform your audience uses.

Don't ignore TikTok or Snapchat. They matter more than you might think.

DM response time expectations:



Takeway:

Social customer service isn't just about solving problems – it's about driving loyalty and sales. A strong social care strategy builds trust, increases conversions, and keeps customers coming back.



CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Customer retention and the cost of poor experiences on social

All consumers expect speedy responses, no matter the platform. We're talking 24 hours, max.



One-third of consumers expect replies to tags and DMs within one hour. You'll likely lose that customer if you wait longer than 24 hours.



Two-thirds of consumers prefer a human response, even though they know that AI support might be faster.

What we know:

Customers don't give second chances.

One bad experience drives away 1 in 4. Two? Nearly half are gone.



What you can do:

Act fast on negative feedback.

Be consistent across platforms, and treat every touchpoint as a chance to earn loyalty.



40% of consumers will still pick up the phone to find answers.

This means every channel matters.



Consumers want fast, human responses.

Bots can help, but humans still matter most. People want to talk to people.

Use AI to triage, but prioritize fast human follow-up.

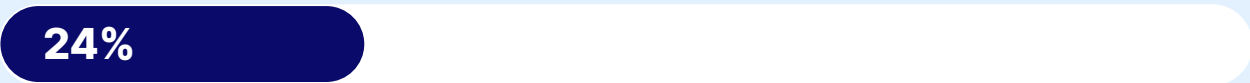
This is especially true on social. Treat it like a core support channel.

Why Customers Leave Brands:

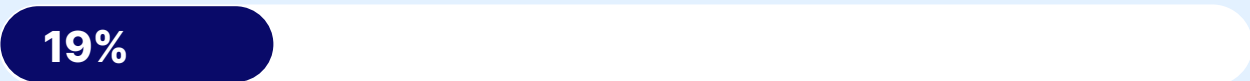
Leave after two bad experiences



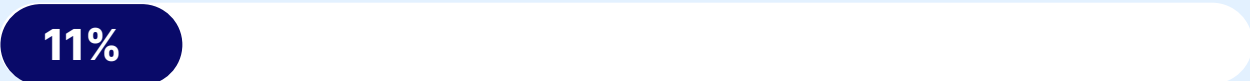
Leave after one bad experience



Leave after 3



Leave after 4 or more

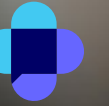


Customers aren't just leaving over price – they're leaving over poor experiences. One unresolved issue can cost you a loyal customer. Brands that **respond quickly, fix issues transparently, and treat every complaint as an opportunity** will win in the long run.

Takeway:



Your customer experience is your brand's reputation. With nearly half of consumers leaving after two bad experiences, every single touchpoint matters, every single time.



STRATEGY

Final strategic recommendations for brands

A one-size-fits-all approach no longer works. What succeeds on Facebook will fail on TikTok – and vice versa. But no matter the platform, brands that prioritize authenticity, fast responses, and real engagement will stand out and drive results.

Still, a few approaches stand out across all mediums.



STRATEGY

How to approach content:

- > **Short, clear, and real beats long, polished, and scripted.**
Keep videos under 60 seconds and prioritize transparency over high production value – consumers care more about authenticity than perfection.
- > **UGC sells – more than polished campaigns ever could.**
65% of consumers trust customer content more than influencer posts. Brands that showcase real customer experiences build loyalty and trust.
- > **Give people a reason to buy right now.**
Almost two-thirds of consumers follow brands for deals – **Make sure they see them.** Promotions, exclusive discounts, and real conversations with your audience turn casual followers into customers.

How to achieve customer service excellence

- > **Fast responses = loyal customers.**
Delayed responses = lost business. Roughly one-third of customers expect a DM reply within an hour, and only 8% are willing to wait 48 hours. Speed isn't just a nice-to-have – It's a competitive advantage.
- > **AI is great – but it's not enough.**
Not when 67% of consumers prefer a human response over AI. While automation can help with speed, customers need real people for trust and problem solving. Make it easy for them to reach a human when it matters.
- > **Meet customers where they already expect help.**
If your audience is on Instagram and Facebook (where most service requests happen), don't make them leave the platform to get support. Friction costs sales.

Retention tactics

- > **Loyalty isn't just about great products – It's about great service.**
Make getting help effortless, and 46% of customers won't have a reason to leave after a bad experience. Publicly resolving issues doesn't just fix problems. It shows potential customers why they can trust you.
- > **Mistakes cost trust – Prevent them before they happen.**
Use AI and social listening to catch complaints early, respond consistently, and protect your reputation before issues escalate.
- > **Be more than a brand – Be part of the conversation.**
Consumers expect brands to post frequently, engage authentically, and join discussions. Not just start them.

TAKEAWAY



Winning on social in 2025 isn't just about posting – it's about providing real value. The brands that master content, engagement, and customer care will own the space. Those that treat social as an afterthought? They'll be forgotten. We can help ensure you're front and center on social. [Let's talk about your unique needs today.](#)



Emplifi provides exceptional digital customer experiences via a platform trusted by more than 20,000 of the world's leading brands. With comprehensive and integrated social media marketing, social commerce, and care, combined with unified analytics and AI, Emplifi fuels growth, resulting in happy customers, increased product sales, and improved brand loyalty.

Want to learn more?

For more information, please visit us online:

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