

Bigmouthmedia unveils British business top social networking executives



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A new bigmouthmedia survey has identified the UK market's biggest business users of online social networking tools.

Following extensive research, Carnival Cruises' John Heald and On Holiday Group CEO Steve Endacott have been revealed as the business leaders trading in Britain that have most readily adopted services like LinkedIn, Facebook and twitter as part of their essential marketing tool kit.

"Social networking may have become one of the most talked about trends in the online world, but until now there has been little hard evidence showing to what extent the business community has embraced these tools. Our research shows that while many leading executives are now deriving measurable benefits from this rapidly developing channel, some of the UK's most prominent organisations have failed to get to grips with this important trend," said Lyndsay Menzies, bigmouthmedia Chief Operations Officer.

While the social media has been one of 2009's most hyped phenomena, little evidence exists as to what extent businesses are deriving benefits from the plethora of available services. In order to gauge real-world attitudes to the tools, bigmouthmedia assessed the online networking performance of 50 CEO's & senior marketing executives selected from the FTSE100 and the Sunday Times Fast Track 100.

Carnival's Senior Director John Heald emerged as the clear winner in the FTSE100 category. He uses a combination of Facebook and blogging to reach out to past, present and future customers.

"The internet has changed the way that people want to communicate with companies, and even the FTSE100 has to come to terms with that. Customers have become accustomed to a certain level of transparency and informality in their dealings with business and even large-scale enterprises need to adjust their marketing strategies accordingly."

Heald's use of social media proved to be a relative rarity amongst the FTSE100 executives sampled. Only 25% of them engage in any form of online networking, compared to 80% of senior players from Fast Track companies.

Topping the table from the fast growth companies listed in the Fast Track 100 is On Holiday Group CEO and founder Steve Endacott. The former MyTravel chief employs a range of tools including Facebook, LinkedIn, twitter, Plaxo and Xing to promote his travel company and believes that they are an essential part of the modern business toolkit. "I believe that these are tools every business has to get to grips with. There's a generation of consumers growing up with social media, and unless you truly understand the culture there's a real danger of losing touch with them," he said.

LinkedIn emerged as the senior executive's networking tool of choice. Half of those surveyed use the service, while 80% of the FTSE100 managers that engage in online networking use it as their only application.

"Social media is simply about listening and interacting with your customers, using channels that many staff will already be familiar with, such as Facebook, Twitter, Youtube and Digg. It is common sense, and it's perhaps unsurprising that the majority of the FastTrack companies are ahead of the curve in this respect," commented Econsultancy's Chris Lake.

"What's needed is a shift in mindset. Firms should embrace customer feedback and act on it. By engaging with customers you increase satisfaction, which is a proven way of generating repeat business and referrals. Why wouldn't you want to do that?"

About [bigmouthmedia](#)

Founded in 1997, [bigmouthmedia](#) is Europe's largest independent digital marketing agency. With a team of over 200 staff located across 13 offices in 10 countries on 3 continents, the company maximises exposure for major brands online through a variety of fully integrated digital marketing channels: Search engine optimisation, PPC, Online Media Planning, Affiliate marketing, Social Networking, Brand Monitoring, Online PR and Web Analytics. The [bigmouthmedia on Twitter](#), [bigmouthmedia on Mobile Twitter](#) and [bigmouthmedia on friendfeed](#) services provide constant up to date digital marketing news to ensure subscribers are fully informed and aware of all industry developments.

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