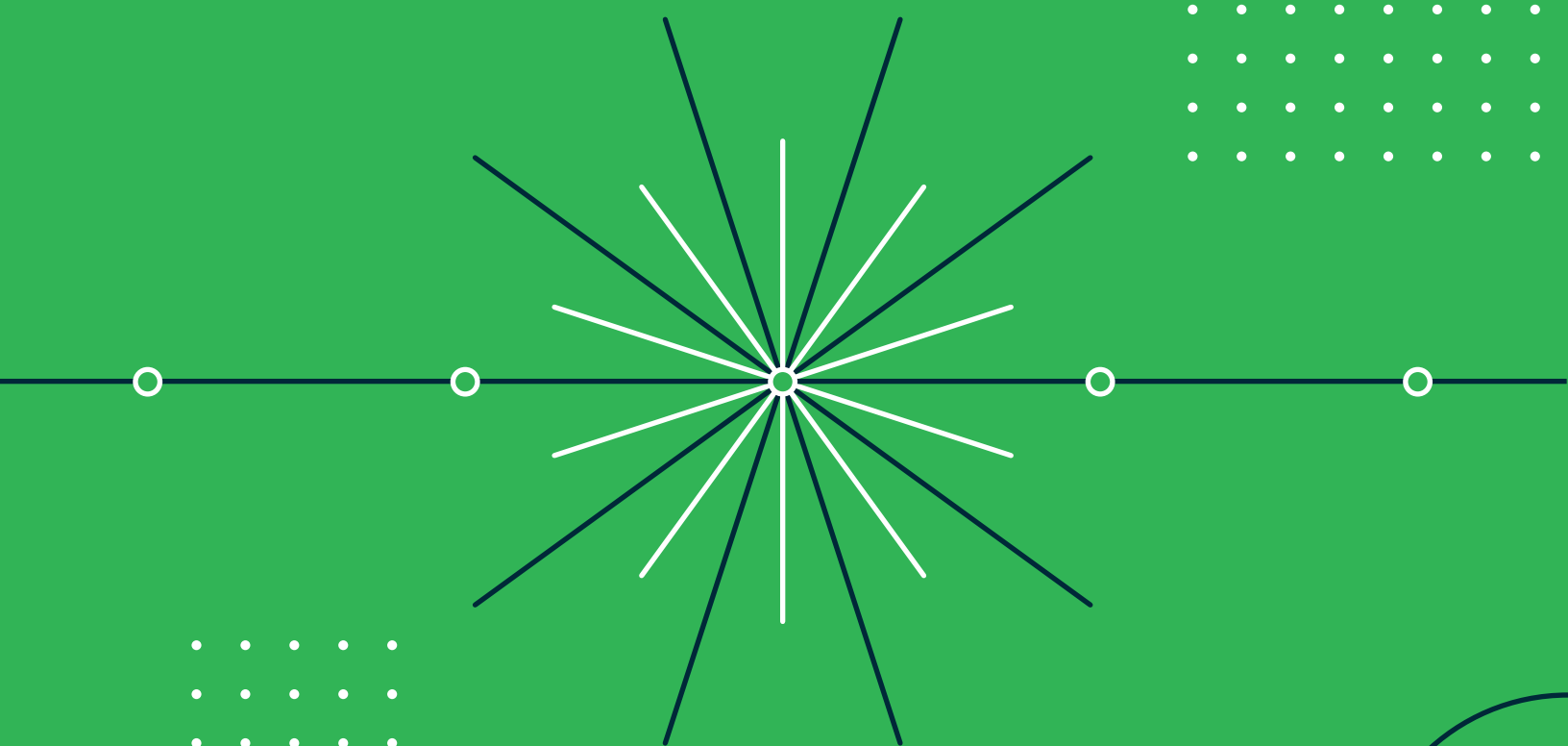


sproutsocial



## Data Report

**From conversation  
to connection: how  
brands can turn  
Likes into action**



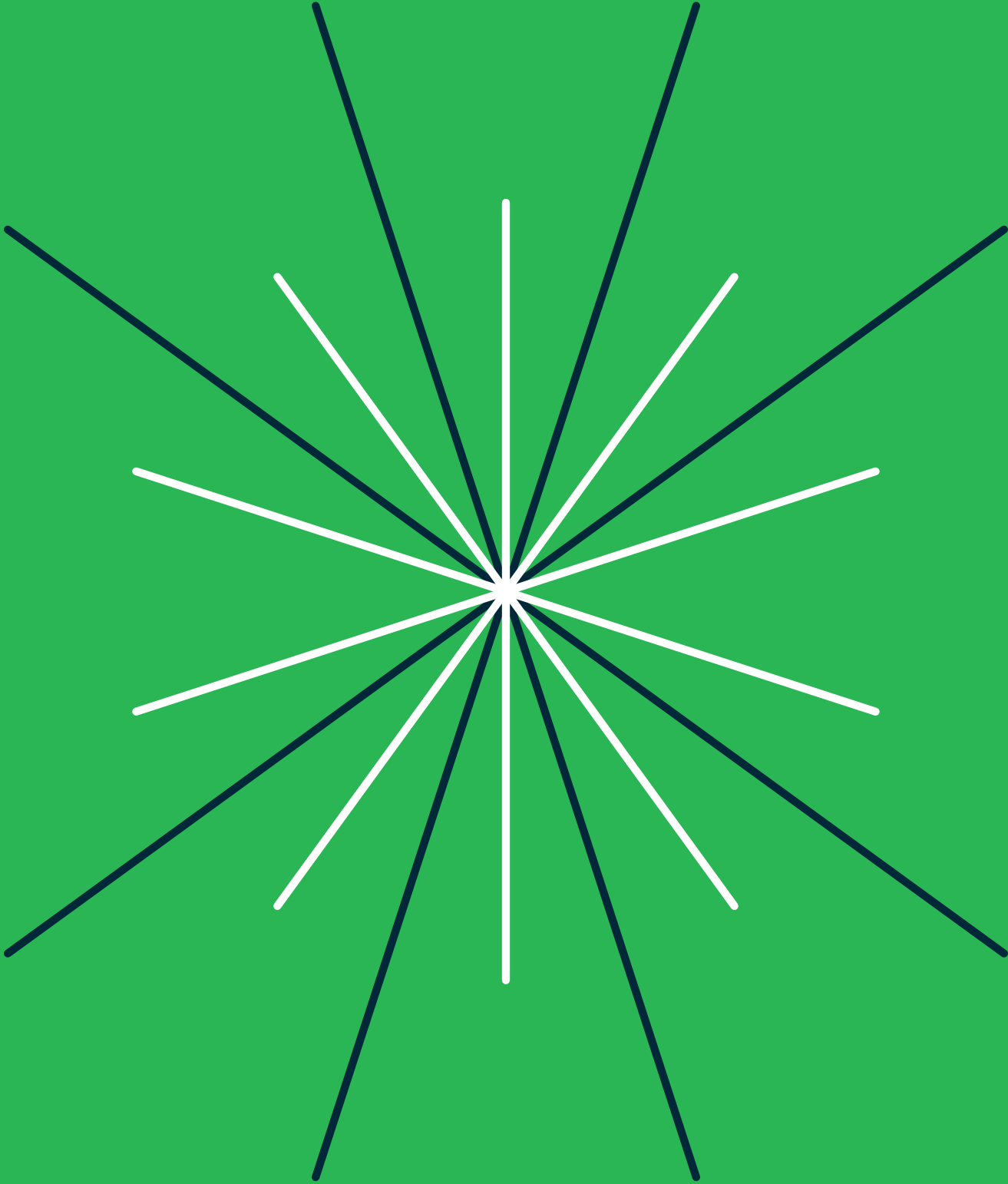
# Table of contents

- 04** Introduction
- 06** How Irish & UK consumers use social today
- 10** What people want from brands on social
- 14** Connection moves consumers from passive to active
- 17** Conclusion

# Introduction

Social media usage is on the rise. By 2022, studies estimate 70% of the total Irish population and 65% of the total British population will be active monthly social network users. In the past six months alone, half of Irish and UK consumers say they find themselves using social media more, compared to 44% of American consumers who feel similarly.

For marketers, the surge in social media use presents a prime opportunity to grow their businesses and reach new people. While growing and engaging with an audience on social is important, marketers also need to know how to convert them into paying customers. In this data report, we'll uncover how brands can engage with their audiences and achieve their social media goals, whether their primary objective is strengthening awareness or growing their bottom line.



# How Irish & UK consumers use social today

Before engaging with consumers on social media, it helps brands to first understand why their audiences are using social and what motivates their behaviors online.

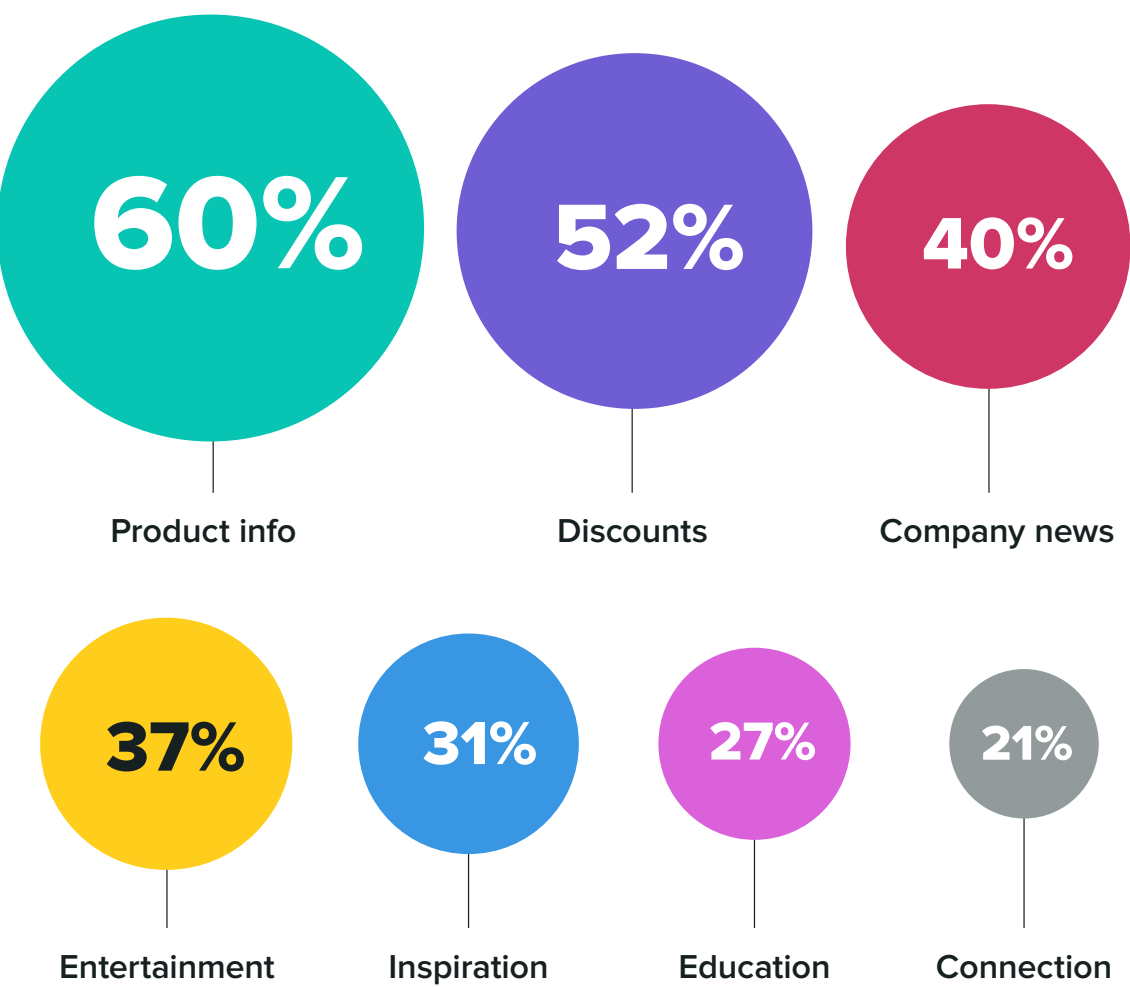
When asked why they use social media, both Irish and UK consumers say connecting with family and friends is their number one motivation. Consumers also use social media to kill time, to stay informed of breaking news and to be inspired.

## Why Irish & UK consumers use social media

1. Connect with family/friends
2. Kill time
3. Stay informed of breaking news
4. Get inspiration
5. Research
6. Share their experiences
7. Meet new people
8. Experience a different point of view
9. Communicate with brands
10. Network with coworkers/clients

While communicating with brands may not be consumers’ primary reason for using social, 75% of consumers Like or follow at least one brand profile. Reasons for following brands on social vary, with 60% doing so to learn about new products and services and 52% wanting to learn about promotions or discounts.

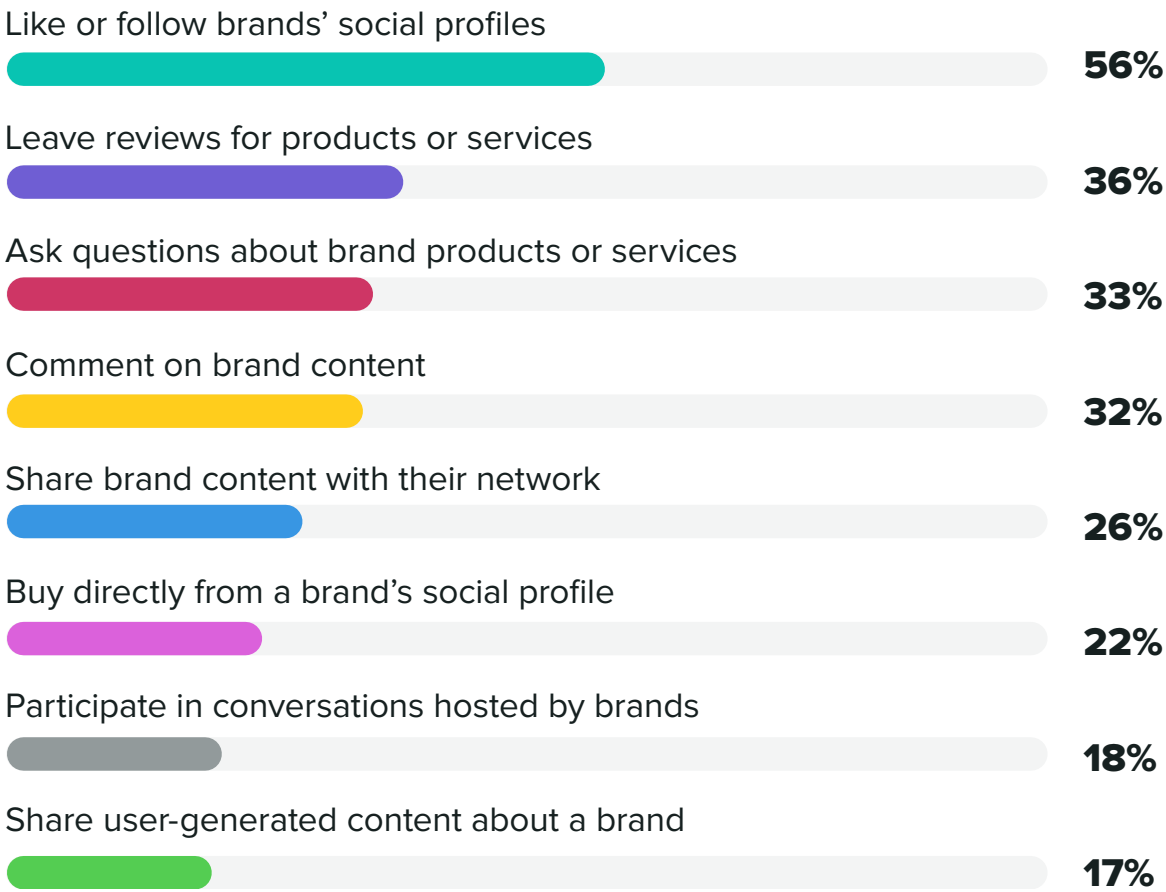
## Why consumers follow brands on social



And while marketers across industries are increasingly using social, some sectors have a stronger consumer appeal than others. A closer look at our data reveals most consumers (57%) are following retail brands on social media. After retail, the next four most followed industries include media/entertainment (39%), technology (38%), consumer goods (32%) and travel/hospitality (28%).

Consumer interactions with businesses on social can range from a simple Like to more in-depth conversations. Over half (56%) of consumers prefer to interact with a brand just by Liking or following that brand’s social profile, while 36% prefer to engage by leaving reviews for products or services. Additionally, 32% of consumers will comment on brand content and one-third will ask questions about products or services.

### How consumers prefer to interact with brands over social



**“Our customers really feel like they’re part of the brand when they can engage us in a communal setting. We have a feature on Instagram and Snapchat every week called ‘Monday Moan’ where customers love to tell us about what a terrible Monday they’re having and we put it up on our Story. People get so excited just to be on our Story!”**

Mícheál Nagle, Head of Social & Digital Content at PaddyPower

# What people want from brands on social

Where consumers go, brands will follow, and all roads lead to social. Nearly **two-thirds** of Irish companies use social media to promote their businesses and communicate with customers, while **60% of British companies** use social media for business. For brands, growing their social following starts with putting their customers’ preferences and expectations at the center of their social strategies.

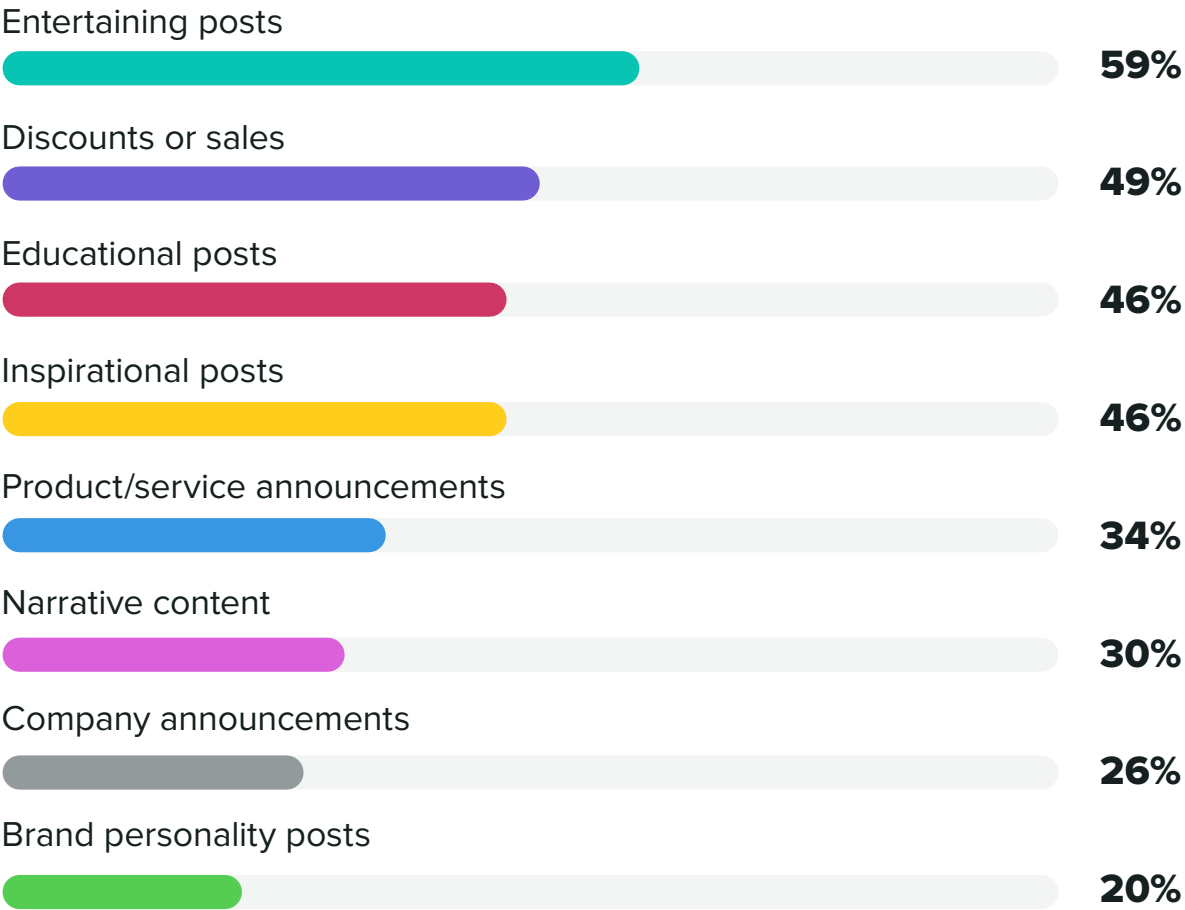
## How consumers want brands to use social



When asked what they want from brands on social, 60% of consumers said they want brands to use social to communicate with customers, while 41% want brands to connect with their audiences. The majority of consumers (55%) want brands to answer people’s questions, highlighting the need to prioritize real-time engagement.

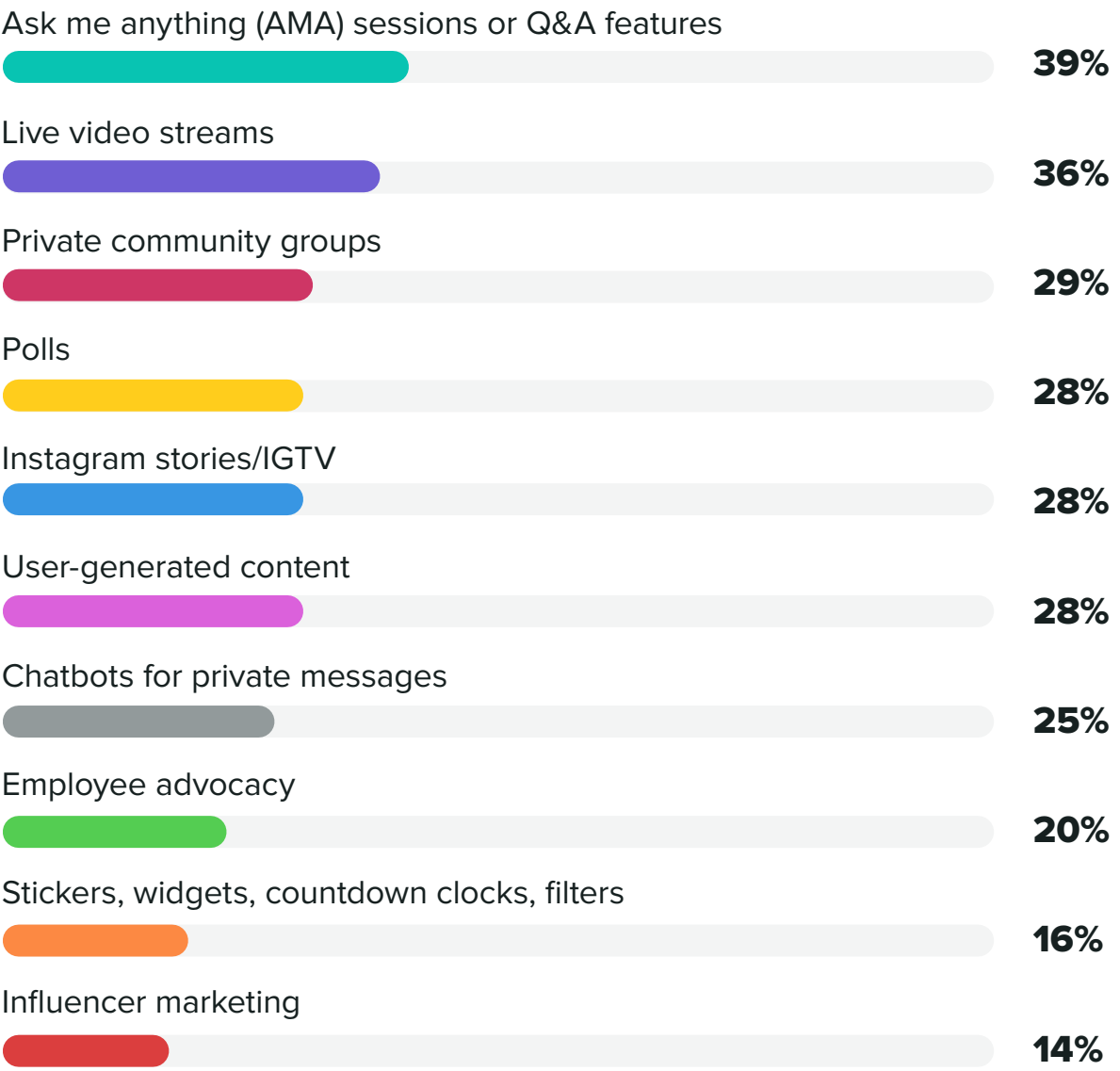
When it comes to the types of brand content consumers are most likely to Like or comment on, entertainment is the clear winner. The majority of consumers (59%) in Ireland and the UK, like **their American counterparts**, say they are most likely to engage with entertaining posts. Additionally, 49% of Irish and British consumers will Like posts containing discounts or sales—in an interesting comparison, that’s 32% higher than the number of American consumers who would engage in the same way.

## Brand social content consumers are most likely to engage with



Another way for brands to attract and retain their audiences is to leverage content like ask me anything (AMA) sessions and Q&A features that invite consumer participation. In addition to features like polls and chatbots, over one-third (36%) of consumers would like to see brands use live video streams and 29% would like more private community groups.

### Social trends consumers want to see more of from brands



**“We’ve found AMA sessions to be really popular and have carried out several of these on Reddit with our brand ambassadors including Emmanuel Petit and Mark Lawrenson.**

**Live Video Streams have also proved incredibly popular and we run a gameshow live called ‘Finders Keepers’ each month on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.**

**Not only does it drive massive engagement for us on social but it also has been hugely beneficial for us in acquiring and reactivating customers.”**

Mícheál Nagle, Head of Social & Digital Content at PaddyPower

# Connection moves consumers from passive to active

Social media gives brands the opportunity to build a loyal community of customers invested in learning more about their products and services. But amassing a large audience is only half of an effective social strategy. Brands also need to move their following to action—and connection is the key.

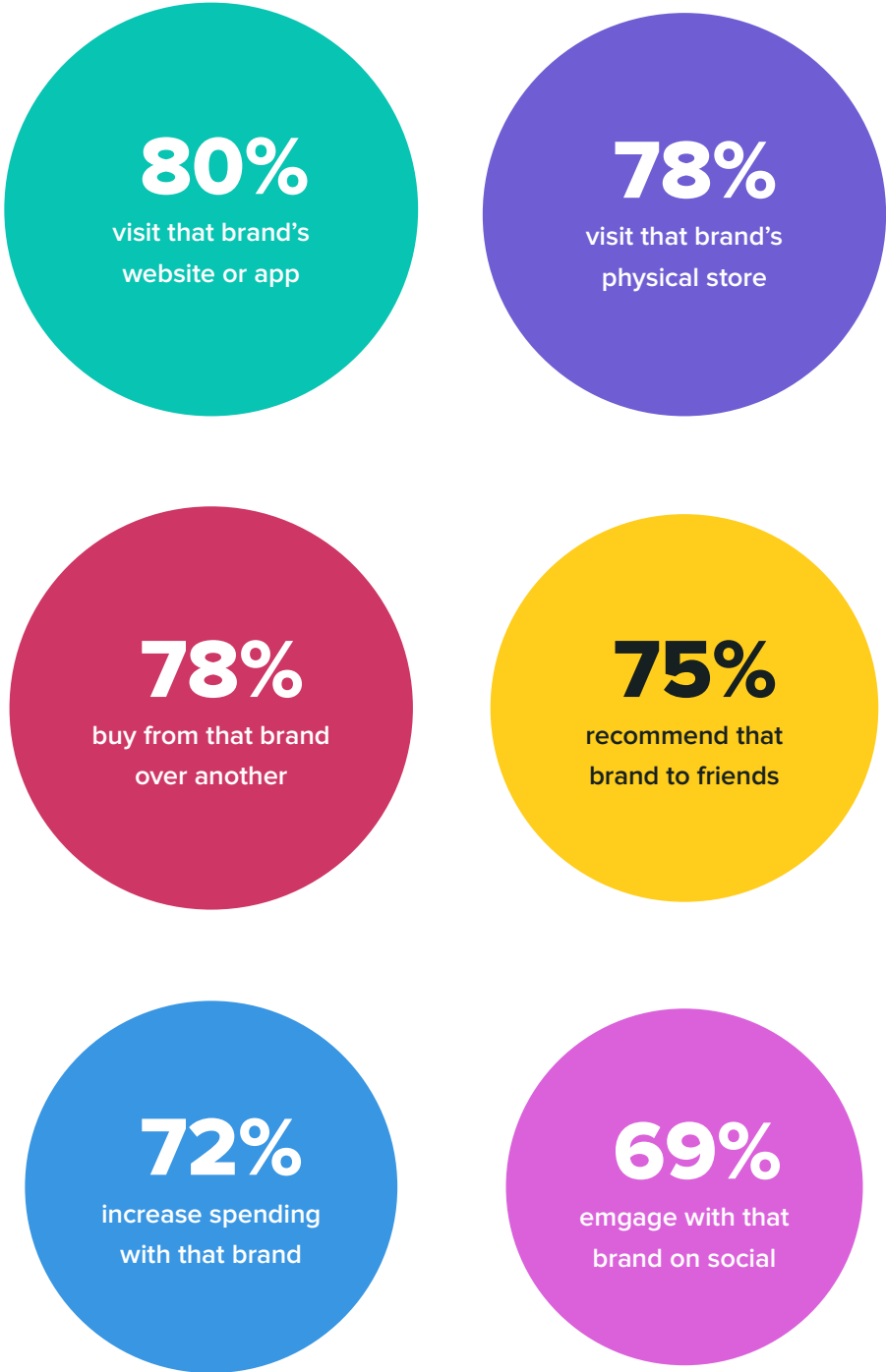
When asked about their preference, 64% of all consumers expressed they would like to connect with brands over social media. For 60% of consumers, connection starts when they feel they can trust a brand or business. Two-way dialogue is also important; 34% of consumers say regular communication from a brand helps them feel more connected. And for 41% of consumers, they define feeling connected as when a brand understands them and their wants.

For brands, the payoff for investing in social connections is huge. When consumers feel connected to brands, 80% are likely to visit a business’s website or mobile app and 72% will spend more with that brand. In addition to a boost in revenue and foot traffic, brands also benefit from word-of-mouth marketing and stronger brand loyalty.

In the pursuit of connection, however, brands should be cognizant of which actions strengthen and jeopardize a business’s relationship with social users. More than half (58%) of consumers say they would unfollow a brand on social because of poor customer service, while 48% say they unfollow when they feel their posts and mentions are being ignored.

To maintain sound relationships with their audiences, brands should prioritize customer service and interact with consumers by responding to posts, reviews and more. Forty-nine percent of consumers say they’d feel more connected to brands that reply to customer reviews and 46% feel connected to brands that resolve a problem or concern in a timely manner.

## Actions consumers take when they feel connected to brands on social







**“For brands, engagement with people on Twitter translates to influence, with conversations growing rapidly in the form of memes, movements and hashtags around anything new and noteworthy. And that influence means action: two-thirds of people on Twitter influence the purchases of friends and family.”**

[Mick Keane](#), Director, Twitter Business EMEA



## Conclusion

Thanks to social media, brands can reach new audiences and grow awareness around their products and services. But brands are missing out on the true power of social media if they only use social to demonstrate their popularity.

Instead, marketers need to bring a multi-pronged approach to their social strategy. First, brands need to attract and engage their consumers on social by appealing to their audiences' preferences. Then, once they've built up their audiences, marketers can use a combination of strategic content and engagement tactics to cultivate consumers' feelings of trust, connection and loyalty.

As marketers increasingly embrace social to reach their audiences, connection is what will differentiate brands from their competitors. With a stronger relationship with their customers and a better understanding of consumer preferences, brands can achieve whatever goals they set for themselves on social.

# About the data

The Sprout Social Ireland & UK report is based on a survey of 521 Irish and 502 UK consumers for a total of 1,023 respondents. The survey was conducted online by Lucid between 24 and 31 May, 2019. Graphics are rounded to the nearest whole percentage and may not add up to exactly 100%.

For questions about the data, please contact [pr@sproutsocial.com](mailto:pr@sproutsocial.com)

# About Sprout Social

**Sprout Social** offers deep social media listening and analytics, social management, customer care and advocacy solutions to more than 20,000 brands and agencies, including Evernote, Ticketmaster, NBCUniversal and Ogilvy. Sprout’s suite of solutions supports every aspect of a cohesive social program and enables organizations of all sizes to extend their reach, amplify their brand and create the kind of real connection with their consumers that drives their businesses forward. Headquartered in Chicago, Sprout is a Twitter Official Partner, Facebook Marketing Partner, Pinterest Partner, Instagram Partner Program Member and LinkedIn Company Page Partner. Learn more at [sproutsocial.com](https://sproutsocial.com).

