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SIGNAL

LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATION

SIGNAL SOCIAL CEO INDEX

**SOCIAL MEDIA USE AMONG CANADIAN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS (CEOs)**



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100 SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

“THIS REPORT, THE FIRST OF ITS KIND IN CANADA, FOCUSES ON HOW CANADIAN CEOs ARE USING – OR NOT – SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS”

1.1 INTRODUCTION

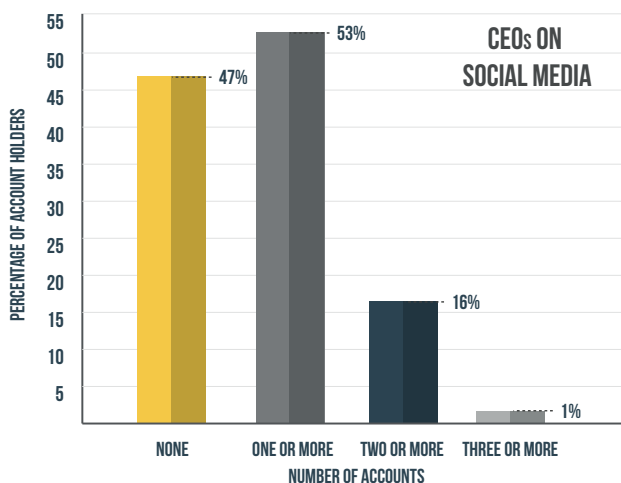
This report, the first of its kind in Canada, focuses on how Canadian CEOs are using – or not – social media platforms. The *Canadian Business* magazine’s “Top 100 highest-paid CEOs”¹ rankings served as a starting point for analysis, with some minor edits made to reflect recent changes in leadership at Canadian companies. While this list was determined by CEO salaries, the list of companies and CEOs included herein represents a wide cross-section of the Canadian economy, from energy and mining, to finance and telecommunications. In the end, the study focused on 98 CEOs from 28 different sectors of the Canadian economy.

The report is principally concerned with determining the extent to which CEOs develop their online profiles and presence on social media platforms, and to what end they use said platforms. The report includes an extensive analysis of what CEOs post on social media, including *LinkedIn*, *Twitter*, *Facebook*, and *YouTube*.

Research for this report was conducted during the month of May 2016.²

1.2 CEOs ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Our research determined that **53% of CEOs were on one or more social media platforms**. However, **only 16% of all**



CEOs held **two or more social media accounts**, suggesting that CEOs are making limited use of the variety of platforms available. Furthermore, **47% of CEOs had no social media presence whatsoever**. This contrasts with a 2015 report of Fortune 500 CEOs which found that 61% of CEOs had no social media presence³, suggesting that Canadian chief executives may be more socially networked online than their American counterparts.

1.3 CEOs ON SOCIAL MEDIA BY SECTOR

In terms of sectors, this study focuses on the top five in our list of Canadian CEOs, representing 49 CEOs (half of our entire list).

- 1) Energy: 13 CEOs
- 2) Mining: 13 CEOs
- 3) Finance: 9 CEOs
- 4) Banking: 8 CEOs
- 5) Telecommunications: 6 CEOs

As a sector, mining company CEOs had the highest participation on social media platforms. Seventy-seven percent (77%) of mining CEOs had at least one social media account, and 23% had more than one account.

Sixty-seven percent (67%) of telecommunications CEOs also had one or more social media accounts.

Conversely, both energy and finance CEOs had much lower rates of participation on social media. For both sectors, only 36% of CEOs had one or more accounts.

More in-depth findings can be found on page 7.

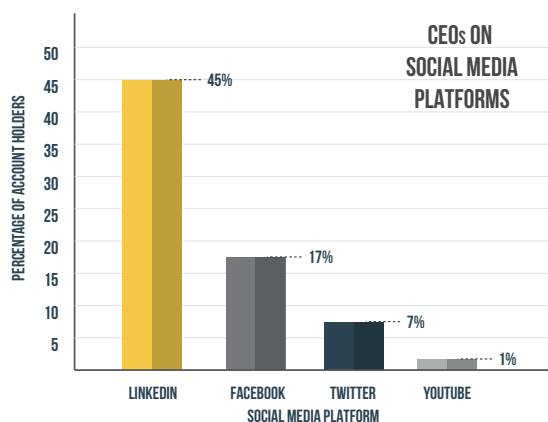
¹ <<http://www.canadianbusiness.com/lists-and-rankings/richest-people/canadas-top-100-highest-paid-ceos-2016/>>

² Given the dynamic speed at which changes occur on the web and social media, some minor changes to our findings may have already occurred. We discuss future social media adoption in the final section of this report.

³ <<http://www.ceo.com/social-ceo-report-2015/>>

1.4 WHICH SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS?

Not surprisingly, *LinkedIn* is the most popular platform for CEOs, nearly half of whom (45%) have accounts with the business-focused site. While popular among Canadian CEOs, our research found that very few of them were utilizing the social network functions for the site, and that many online profiles were underdeveloped. For further analysis, see page 8.



While popular with celebrities and public figures such as journalists and politicians, **only 7% of CEOs use the Twitter micro-blogging platform.** Our findings show that CEOs posted on a wide variety of topics and use the platform to conduct a number of different communications activities. Twenty-five percent (25%) of *Twitter* posts – the most prevalent – were found to promote the business of the CEO’s company, while only 1% of tweets were of a personal nature.

For a fulsome discussion of our CEO *Twitter* findings, see page 9.

Just 17% of CEOs have accounts on the popular Facebook social networking site. Our analysis of posts however revealed that unlike their use of *Twitter* and *LinkedIn*, the vast majority of CEO posts (78%) on *Facebook* were of a personal nature. Such findings come just a month after another study found that 64% of Americans were “not looking for personal anecdotes” from CEOs on social media.⁴

For further analysis of *Facebook* use by CEOs, see page 11.

Given that **only 1% of CEOs hold YouTube accounts**, this report conducted an analysis of corporate YouTube accounts. Almost one in five (18%) of the companies studied for this report actively used the *YouTube* platform. Eight accounts were found to include videos of their CEO.

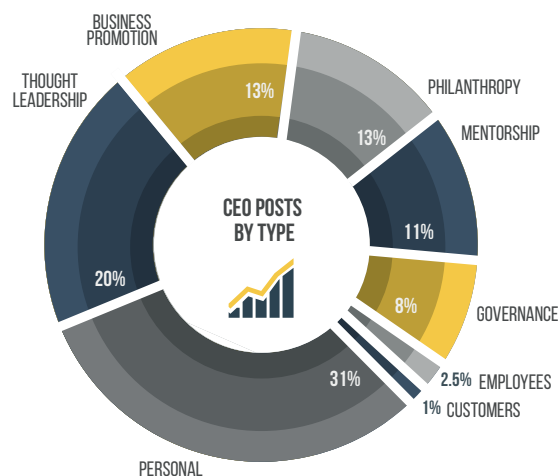
An analysis of the *YouTube* accounts and content can be found on page 12.

These findings of platform use offer an intriguing comparison to results from American ‘social CEO’ studies. A 2014 examination of the top 50 CEOs in the Fortune Global 500 rankings found *LinkedIn* to be the most popular platform at 22%.⁵ Our study suggests, however, that two years later, more than double the percentage (45%) of Canadian CEOs are on *LinkedIn*.

Although there is no precedent to measure Canadian CEO social media growth, this comparison suggests that Canada’s industry leaders are driving a trend and turning to social media platforms, at least as much as their American counterparts.

1.5 WHAT ARE CEOs POSTING ON SOCIAL MEDIA?

Our research found that CEOs generally post eight different types of content on social media. The leaders posted images of themselves and their family members in relatively large numbers, and overwhelmingly on the *Facebook* platform (see page 11 for more on this). About one in five of all posts offered ‘thought leadership’ qualities, such as visions or opinions on the state of the CEO’s industry.



Conversely, **only 2.5% of posts promoted or lauded the employees of a CEO’s company.**

Surprisingly **less than 1% of tweets were directed at – or spoke to – the experience of individual consumers or clients of a company.**

A more extensive content analysis of CEO posts is outlined in sections 4-8 on pages 8-13. The diagram below represents the types of content that CEOs share on social media platforms.

⁴ <<http://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20160419006049/en/Social-Media-CEO-Public>>

⁵ <<http://www.webershandwick.com/uploads/news/files/socializing-your-ceo-iii-exec-summary.pdf>>

TYPES OF CONTENT SHARED BY CEOs ON ALL PLATFORMS



2.0 INTRODUCTION

“STUDIES OF SOCIAL MEDIA WITHIN THE CORPORATE SECTOR ARE BY COMPARISON RELATIVELY SCARCE AND UNDERDEVELOPED, DUE IN PART PERHAPS TO THE PRIVATE AND PROPRIETORIAL NATURE OF CORPORATE PRACTICES, CONVENTIONS, AND COMMUNICATIONS”

2.1 CONTEXT OF STUDY

Studies of Internet and social media adoption and use are hardly a new phenomenon. Much attention has focused on how particular demographics engage with social media platforms.⁶ Due to their unique role in our society, politicians and to a lesser extent journalists continue to be the focus of social media research projects worldwide.⁷

Studies of social media within the corporate sector are by comparison relatively scarce and underdeveloped, due in part perhaps to the private and proprietorial nature of corporate practices, conventions, and communications. Studies of the PR and marketing departments of companies have however started to question how social media use has changed the culture of the contemporary corporation.⁸

US research companies have also generated a growing body of studies focused on the use of social media platforms by American corporate leaders, particularly Chief Executive Officers (CEOs).⁹

2.2 THE SOCIAL MEDIA CEO

The growth of social media or web 2.0 also roughly coincides with the presence and penetration of 24 hour financial news networks. Consequently, never has there been so much attention paid to the opinions, appearance, and personalities of Chief Executive Officers. CEOs are actively sought out by media to comment on the prospects of their company, their stock performance, or the economic challenges of the day. Indeed, the world-wide financial crisis of 2008 put even greater emphasis on the thoughts and plans of the leadership of the largest companies.

As social media has intersected with traditional or legacy media outlets, the expectation to be online has grown. Pundits, politicians, and other public personalities have subsequently developed PR strategies to promote their brands and propagate their opinions across old and new media, including social networks.

For the CEO, such a networked strategy of communication offers new opportunities to engage in conversations with different communities online and off. With the help of social media, CEOs can send out ‘unfiltered’ messages to the public at large, or intervene in specific debates that concern their business or sector of the economy.

However, there are obvious risks in CEOs using social media. A novice and unprepared CEO risks offending communities by contravening online practices and conventions, or may simply post unedited comments by accident. That said, there is another less tangible – yet equally important – risk for the CEO: silence. In other words, by not engaging with social media, CEOs run the risk of being perceived as aloof, out of touch, or uncaring by their own employees, customers, or the public at large.

⁶ The US-based Pew Research Center continues to offer compelling datasets on social media use. See <<http://www.pewinternet.org/>>

<<http://www.pewinternet.org/data-trend/social-media/social-media-use-by-age-group/>> Globally the World Internet Project has produced annual reports on national trends regarding the broader use of the Internet in various countries, including Canada. <<http://www.worldinternetproject.net/>>

⁷ For an introduction to research on Canadian politics and elections see Elmer, G. G. Langlois & F. McKelvey. (2012). *The Permanent Campaign: New Media, New Politics*, New York: Peter Lang.

⁸ See the work of NYU business professor Sinan Aral <<http://pubsonline.informs.org/doi/abs/10.1287/isre.1120.0470>>

⁹ CEO.com. (2015). Social CEO Report old guard vs new guard: CEOs and companies new to the Fortune 500 list leading social media charge. <<http://www.ceo.com/wp-content/themes/ceov2/assets/CEOcom-Social-CEO-Report-2015.pdf>>; G&S Business Communications. (2016). Social Media and the CEO: What does the public really want?; Information Age. (2015). Too busy to tweet? Only seven FTSE 100 CEOs are active on Twitter and none get close to Richard Branson for social power. <<http://www.information-age.com/it-management/skills-training-and-leadership/123458791/too-busy-tweet-only-seven-ftse-100-ceos-are-active-twitter-and-none-get-close-richard-branson-social>>; Nanos. (2016). Social media seen as the top threat to one’s public image.; Weber Shandwick. (2014). Socializing your CEO II. <http://www.webershandwick.com/uploads/news/files/WS_SYCEO_ExecSummary.pdf>; Weber Shandwick. (2015). Socializing your CEO III: From marginal to mainstream. <<http://www.webershandwick.com/uploads/news/files/socializing-your-ceo-iii-exec-summary.pdf>>.

2.3 LIST OF CEOs

This study examines the online presence of the country's most highly paid chief executives. As noted in the summary, this report studies 98 CEOs from an updated index initially published by *Canadian Business* magazine. While such an index comes with its biases, the resulting list of economic sectors nonetheless provides a cross-section that is reasonably representative of the Canadian economy. The following chart outlines the number of industries represented by CEOs in our index.

RANK	SECTOR	F
1	ENERGY Canadian Natural Resources; Cenovus Energy; Crescent Point Energy Corp; Emera; Encana Corp; Husky Energy; Imperial Oil; Methanex Corp; Pacific Rubiales Energy Corp; Paramount Resources; Precision Drilling Corp; Suncor Energy; Transalta Corp	13
2	MINING Agnico Eagle Mines; Barrick Gold Corp; Cameco Corp; Dominion Diamond Corp; Eldorado Gold Corp; Goldcorp; Kinross Gold Corp; Lundin Mining Corp; Nevsun Resources; Novagold Resources; Silver Wheaton Corp; Teck Resources; Yamana Gold	13
3	FINANCE Brookfield Asset Management; Canaccord Genuity Group; CI Financial Corp; Great-West Lifeco; Onex Corp; Power Corp (2)*; Power Financial Corp; Sun Life Financial	9
4	BANKING Bank of Montreal; Bank of Nova Scotia; Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce (2)*; Laurentian Bank of Canada; National Bank of Canada; Royal Bank of Canada; Toronto Dominion Bank	8
5	TELECOMMUNICATIONS BCE; Manitoba Telecom Services; Quebecor; Rogers Communications; Shaw Communications; Telus Corp	6
6	FOOD Cott Corp; Empire Co; Maple Leaf Foods; Restaurant Brands International; Weston (George)	5
7	TRANSPORT Air Canada; Canadian National Railway; Canadian Pacific Railway; Transcanada Corp; Transforce	5
8	RETAIL Alimentation Couche-Tard; Agrium; Canadian Tire Corp; Loblaw Companies	4
9	AUTO BRP; Magna International; Martinrea International	3
10	HEAVY EQUIPMENT Fining International; Linamar Corp; Ritchie Bros Auctioneers	3
11	MEDIA Corus Entertainment; Thomson Reuters Corp; Transcontinental	3
12	INSURANCE Intact Financial Corp; Manulife Financial Corp	2

13	INFORMATION MANAGEMENT Catamaran Corp; CGI Group	2
14	PHARMACEUTICALS Valeant Pharmaceuticals International (2)	2
15	REAL ESTATE FirstService Corp; RioCan Real Estate Investment Trust	2
16	UTILITY Fortis; Enbridge	2
17	TELECOMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT Mitel Networks Corp; Blackberry	2
18	AEROSPACE Bombardier	1
19	AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS Potash Corp Of Saskatchewan	1
20	AVIATION & DEFENCE CAE	1
21	CLOTHING Gildan Activewear	1
22	ELECTRONICS Celestica	1
23	ENGINEERING SNC-Lavalin Group	1
24	ENTERTAINMENT Cineplex	1
25	INDUSTRIAL CHEMICALS Chemtrade Logistics Income Fund	1
26	MARKETING Aimia	1
27	PACKAGING CCL Industries	1
28	RETAIL MANAGEMENT First Capital Realty	1

**Power Corp Of Canada and Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce have two co-CEOs in our list*

30 HOW SOCIAL MEDIA IS USED BY CEOs IN TOP 5 SECTORS

3.1 MINING CEOs

The report found mining sector CEOs as a group to be the most active on social media in Canada. Seventy-seven percent (77%) of these CEOs had at least one social media account. Many CEOs used social media to highlight charity and philanthropic campaigns of their companies, while also actively seeking to address concerns over the environmental impact of their core business.

3.2 TELECOMMUNICATIONS CEOs

A relatively high 67% of telecommunications CEOs were also on social media platforms. But only 17% of these CEOs had more than one social media account.

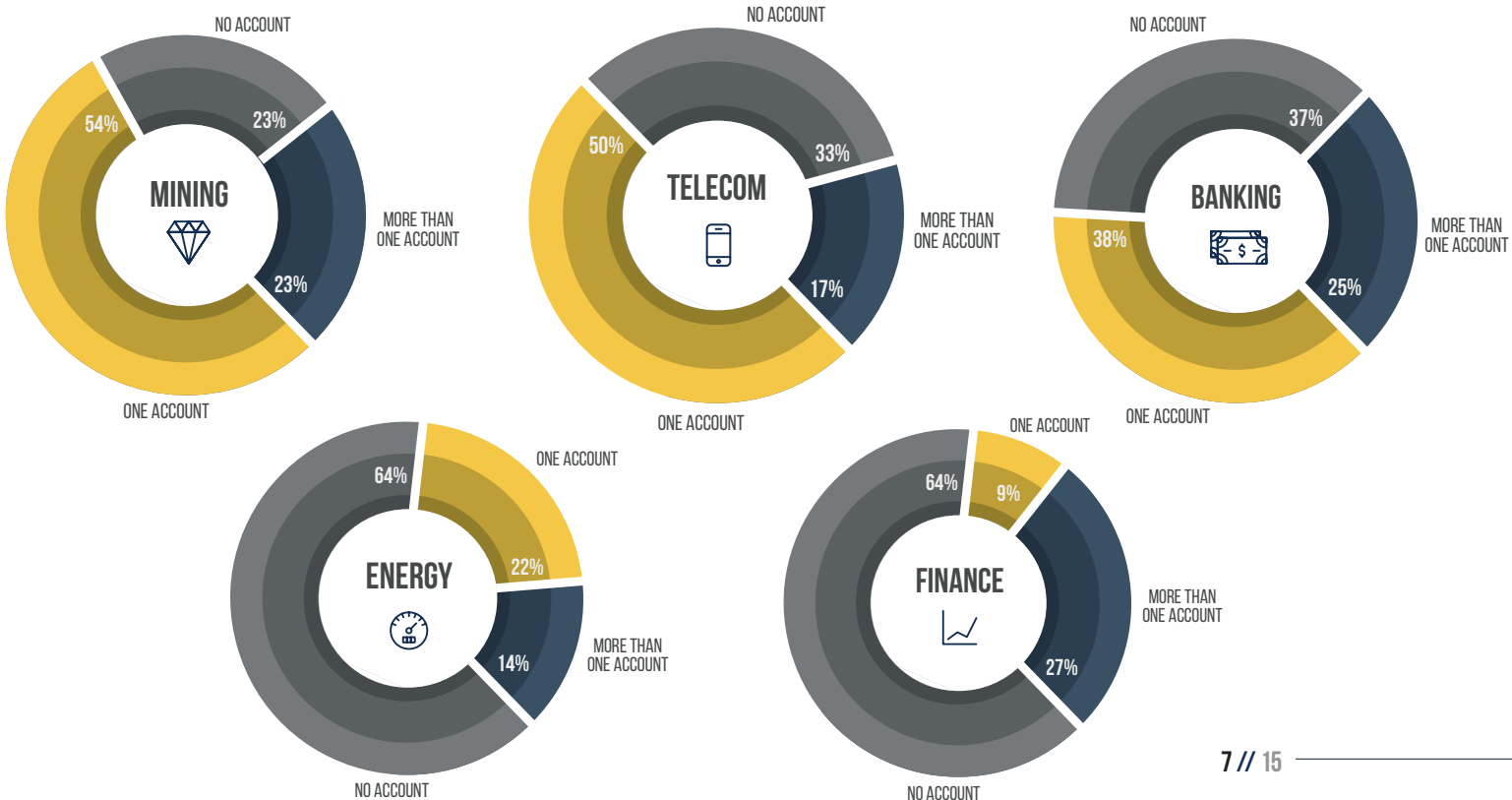
3.3 BANKING CEOs

Banking CEOs were also relatively active on social media. Sixty-three percent (63%) of banking CEOs were on at least one social media platform, while 25% had more than one social media account.

3.4 & 3.5 ENERGY & FINANCE CEOs

CEOs from the energy and finance sectors were much less engaged with social media than their telecommunications, banking and mining sector counterparts. Only 36% of energy and finance CEOs had one or more social media accounts.

CEO SOCIAL MEDIA USE



40 CEOs ON LINKEDIN



4.1 SUMMARY OF LINKEDIN PLATFORM

LinkedIn is the world's largest professional networking platform. Officially launched in May 2003, the social networking site operates in 200 countries and hosts over 433 million members. The platform is largely comprised of individuals aged 30 to 49. Conceived as a professional tool and social networking site, *LinkedIn* offers its users access to companies, jobs and news updates. The platform's default privacy setting enables users to view other member profiles with few restrictions.¹⁰ Users can adjust account privacy settings to restrict profile visibility, account activity, contact options, and data use.

4.2 CEOs' LINKEDIN ACCOUNT PROFILES

Nearly 45% of CEOs were found to have *LinkedIn* accounts; however, only half of these accounts included a profile picture, one of the first steps involved in creating an active social media presence. Eight accounts not included in this percentage could not be verified because they included no posts, friends, or profiles. Furthermore, of those CEOs with 'active' *LinkedIn* accounts, only one-third included a biography, again further calling into question the actual use of such accounts.

Only two CEO accounts on *LinkedIn* (5%) were identified as 'LinkedIn influencers,' a designation bestowed by the platform to indicate elite industry leaders. Both of these accounts included profile pictures, as well as summaries and/or biographies.¹¹

Our research shows that several CEOs have only a 'placeholder' presence on *LinkedIn*. The findings also suggest that busy CEOs may not have an ample knowledge of social media platforms and preference settings in order to rapidly and confidently address them properly. It is clear that CEOs' online presence on *LinkedIn* could be substantially expanded.

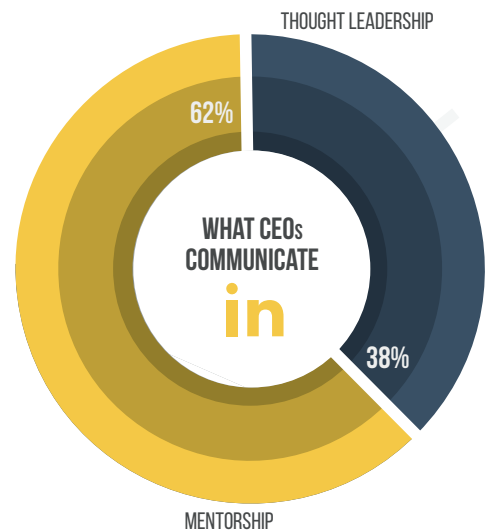
4.3 WHAT CEOs POST ON LINKEDIN

Another strong indicator of underdeveloped and underused *LinkedIn* accounts is the low number of posts, comments or

USE OF LINKEDIN BY CEOs

Percentage of all CEOs on platform	45%
CEOs who included a profile picture	50%
CEOs who completed a user profile summary and/or biography	33%

other shared content on the platform. Of all CEOs, only three (two of whom are 'Influencers') posted content.



Of the comments posted, 62% offered advice or mentoring to junior colleagues and business students, while the remaining 38% offered broader insights into the challenges faced by their industry. Such findings are in stark contrast to a much greater diversity of comments and posts on the other platforms studied, particularly *Twitter*.

¹⁰ Some profile details such as contact information, connections, and posts are limited to 1st-degree connections only.

¹¹ The *LinkedIn* influencers are John Chen (BlackBerry) and David McKay (RBC).

50 CEOs ON TWITTER



5.1 SUMMARY OF TWITTER PLATFORM

Created in March 2006 by Jack Dorsey, *Twitter* is a social networking platform that allows users to send and receive short messages – tweets – confined to a 140-character limit. In addition to tweeting, the platform enables users to produce and engage with content through @replies, @mentions, and hashtag functions. The platform hosts 310 million¹² active monthly users and is supported in over 40 languages. In North America, the majority of *Twitter* users are individuals aged 18 to 49, with males slightly more likely to use the platform than females. Registered users can opt between ‘public’ and ‘protected’ privacy options. The default setting enables all tweeted content to be publically visible (including to those who are not registered users), while the protected setting restricts content access to an account’s approved followers alone. *Twitter* also offers ‘key’ individuals and brands the ability to authenticate identities by verifying accounts (indicated by a blue verified checkmark on a *Twitter* profile). All verified accounts meet specific criteria established by *Twitter*.

5.2 CEOs’ TWITTER ACCOUNT PROFILES

Only 7% of CEOs used the *Twitter* micro-blogging platform. Of these accounts, only two accounts were ‘verified’.¹³ Such findings suggest that CEOs may be unaware of the dangers posed by fake, false and parody accounts that may call into question the identity of the CEOs and her/his reputation and opinions on important issues, including proprietorial and brand related matters.

Interestingly, all *Twitter* CEO accounts were opened within almost a year-long period, starting December 1, 2013- January 6, 2015.

The number of followers a user has is often held up as an indicator of influence or at least reach on *Twitter*. If we remove BlackBerry CEO John Chen (who has over 18,000 followers at last count) the remainder of the CEOs only averaged 316 followers. Conversely, we found that on average (including Chen), CEOs showed little interest in following other *Twitter* accounts. On average, CEOs followed only 65 *Twitter* users.

USE OF TWITTER BY CEOs

Percentage of all CEOs on platform	7%
Percentage of verified accounts	29%
Average number of accounts followed by CEOs ¹⁴	65
Range of accounts followed by CEOs	3 – 183
Average number of CEO tweets	188

5.3 WHAT CEOs POST ON TWITTER

In terms of usage, our study found that CEOs posted relatively few tweets. Since joining the platform, the overall average total of CEO tweets was only 188. **When CEOs did tweet, it was primarily to promote business ventures (25%), express philanthropic undertakings or campaigns (22%), or act as a vehicle for thought leadership (22%).** Broadly speaking, the content of *Twitter* posts or ‘tweets’ were the most diverse of all platforms, encompassing all eight content types used for our study (see page 4).

Given the interactive functions on *Twitter* that encourage dialogue among account holders through @ commands and replies, it was surprising to find a paltry 2% of all CEO tweets engaging other *Twitter* users. **Such a stark finding leads us to conclude that *Twitter* is being used overwhelmingly by these select few CEOs as a broadcast medium for one-way ‘push’ communication.**

As opposed to our findings on the *Facebook* social networking platform, **only 1% of tweets were found to be of a personal**

¹² As of March 2016.

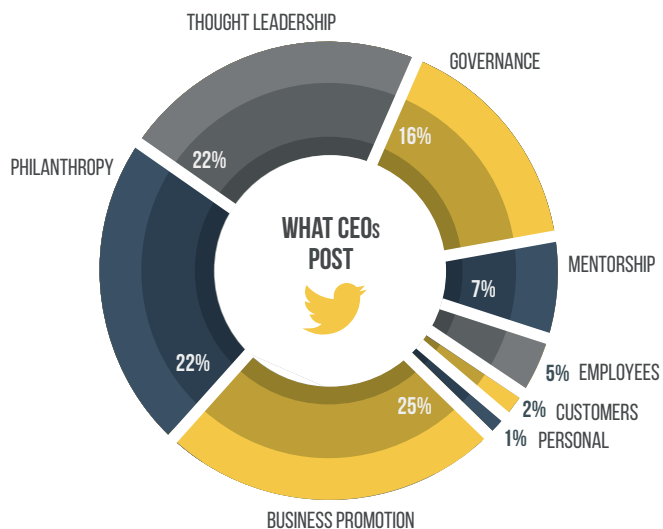
¹³ The verified *Twitter* accounts are held by John Chen (BlackBerry) and Michael McCain (Maple Leaf Foods).

¹⁴ Note: one protected account included in sample. As a result of these privacy settings, coders were unable to identify account features and contents.

nature. CEOs were conspicuously not posting in great numbers about their own employees (5%).

These findings support the conclusions drawn by a 2015 study examining the use of *Twitter* by the top 100 FTSE CEOs. Replicating almost the exact same results, only seven FTSE CEOs held active *Twitter* accounts, all of whom did not utilize the full potential of the platform.¹⁵

¹⁵ Information Age. (2015). Too busy to tweet? Only seven FTSE 100 CEOs are active on Twitter and none get close to Richard Branson for social power. <<http://www.information-age.com/it-management/skills-training-and-leadership/123458791/too-busy-tweet-only-seven-ftse-100-ceos-are-active-twitter-and-none-get-close-richard-branson-social>>.



60 CEOs ON FACEBOOK



6.1 SUMMARY OF FACEBOOK PLATFORM

Facebook is the world's largest social network. Founded in 2004 as an online networking platform for Harvard University students, *Facebook* currently hosts over one billion active daily registered users.¹⁶ Users who create a personal profile are able to perform a variety of functions, from connecting with other *Facebook* users, to sharing personal information, and customizing platform notifications. The platform's privacy settings offer its users more customizable options. Users can select from 'basic' and 'advanced' menus to restrict or allow search functions, as well as control visibility of personal information, account activity and associated groups/friends. *Facebook* also allows select users to authenticate identities through verifying profiles and platform pages. Public figures, businesses and brands can request a blue verified badge that confirms ownership of the account. At present, *Facebook* only supports select verification requests should they meet its specific requirements.¹⁷

6.2 CEOs' FACEBOOK PROFILES

Seventeen percent of CEOs studied have a *Facebook* account, making it the second most popular social media platform (after *LinkedIn*). Of these accounts, almost half (47%) restricted public access to account information.

Only nine out of 17 accounts (53%) could be viewed publicly, and had an average total of 79 friends. No CEO accounts were officially verified.

These findings suggest that CEOs have a more advanced knowledge of settings and privacy protocols on *Facebook* than on any other platform and/or it could also be the case that *Facebook* does a better job of making these options available to its user base. That being said, of those accounts that were set to private, profile pictures – often personal in nature – were regularly updated and made available for public viewing on *Facebook*, a fact that some CEOs might not know.

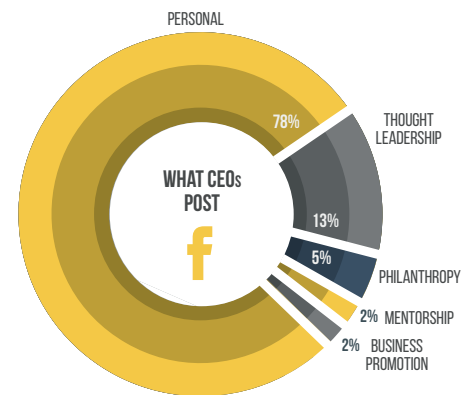
The aversion towards public *Facebook* profiles may reflect some awareness of the platform being understood as a place more suitable for personal posts.

USE OF FACEBOOK BY CEOs

Percentage of all CEOs on platform	17%
Percentage of private CEO accounts	47%
Average number of account friends ¹⁸	79
Verified pages	0%

6.3 WHAT CEOs POST ON FACEBOOK

The public CEO *Facebook* accounts overwhelmingly served a personal function and rarely acted as platforms for professional publicity. This distinguished *Facebook* from all other social media platforms.



Seventy-eight percent (78%) of posts were personal in nature, while only 2% promoted business operations.

The relatively low number of friends on *Facebook* also suggests that the platform is being used for purposes other than large-scale business networking. Such findings raise significant privacy related issues for CEOs who made their accounts public.

¹⁶ As of March 2016

¹⁷ As of June 6, 2016 Facebook is only accepting verification requests from select people, sports, media, entertainment and government pages.

¹⁸ Figure representative of public accounts only. Account information is restricted on private accounts.

70 CEOs ON YOUTUBE

7.1 SUMMARY OF YOUTUBE PLATFORM

Launched in May 2005, *YouTube* operates as a video distribution platform for user-generated media content. Hosting over one billion users, it operates in 76 different languages and has introduced localized versions in over 88 countries. Users can produce, consume and/or engage with content that abides by *YouTube's* terms and conditions. The platform's default privacy setting is set to 'public' which allows anyone (including non-users) to view uploaded content. Contributors can restrict public access by selecting between 'private' and 'unlisted'¹⁹ privacy options. Private videos cannot be searched, will not appear on a user's *YouTube* channel, and may only be viewed by users authorized by the creator. Likewise, 'unlisted' videos cannot be searched and will not appear on its associated channel. Content of this nature, however, can be viewed by *anyone* with access to the video URL. High-profile individuals, businesses and brands can also authenticate identities through obtaining a blue verification badge displayed on the confirmed channels. All verified accounts meet qualifications stipulated by *YouTube*; the platform does not accept general verification requests.

7.2 COMPANY ACCOUNTS AND THE CEO

Individual CEO accounts were noticeably absent from the *YouTube* platform. However, this study also includes a brief analysis of the companies that use *YouTube* for corporate marketing and other purposes.

Almost one in five (18%) of the companies represented in our list actively use the video hosting platform.

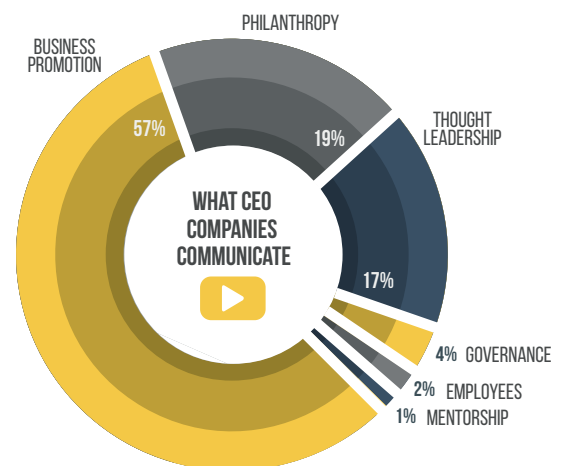
Reasons for the absence of CEOs on *YouTube* could range from the advanced technical skills required for video production, to potential conflicts with company branding guidelines and corporate communication policies.

7.3 WHAT COMPANIES COMMUNICATE ON YOUTUBE

This is not to suggest that CEOs were absent from *YouTube*. **Eight company accounts were found to include videos of their CEOs**, typically giving speeches to business groups (thought leadership) or annual general meetings (governance).

The majority of videos studied were found to include messages and campaigns designed to promote the core business of the company (57%). A sizeable (19%) number of videos also highlighted the companies support of various charities and causes, many highlighting the contributions and campaigns supported by their employees. Twenty-one percent (21%) of videos highlighted the governance and thought leadership contributions of their CEO.

Overall, the findings highlight a significant absence in the personal use of *YouTube* by CEOs to visually introduce themselves to their clients, employees, and other communities.



¹⁹ Note: only accounts with "good standing" (a status afforded through compliance with YouTube content guidelines and copyright policies) are able to post unlisted videos.

8.0 OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

8.1 BLOGS

The emergence of the online *weblog*, known as the blog, can be traced back to the early 1990s, although the blogging phenomena really took off starting a decade later. Initially serving as individual online journals, blogs now take multiple digital forms, cover limitless topics, and may be co-authored by multiple contributors. Blogs are characterized by their form and function: all posts are time-stamped and display the most recent content first in reverse-chronological order. Blogs can also act as powerful marketing tools for brands and businesses. Businesses who blog receive an increase of inbound links to their websites by an estimated 97%²⁰. All blog privacy settings vary and are dependent on the content management system hosting the online content.

This study found insignificant uptake of blogs. Only four (4) CEO blogs were found. This is lower than we expected, given that CEO blogs are typically hosted on corporate websites which are owned by the companies themselves (and often controlled by their communications and/or marketing departments). However, there is no master directory or central platform for blogs, and their location can be anywhere on the web.

8.2 INSTAGRAM

Facebook-owned *Instagram*, in contrast to blogs, represents something of a next wave of social media platforms. For example, Canada's new Prime Minister's *Instagram* account was fodder for significant discussion during the last federal election. The platform served as a dynamic visual space to frame a particular image of Justin Trudeau. CEOs conscious of their image might consider the upside of such platforms.

Only three CEO *Instagram* accounts could be verified. A combination of privacy settings and sparse profile details make *Instagram* a largely personal photo-sharing platform for those few CEOs who have opened accounts.

Instagram, *YouTube* and other platforms should also not be considered in isolation from *Facebook*, blogs, and *Twitter*. Most platforms now enable the embedding of their images, text and other content across a number of web and Internet based properties and formats, enabling CEOs and their companies the opportunity to project their presence across the Internet and beyond.

²⁰ HubSpot. (2015). 6 Stats you should know about business blogging in 2015. <<http://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/business-blogging-in-2015#sm.000015rz09l3rtdc1vamc5t1da2jk>>.

9.0 CONCLUSIONS

“THE RELATIVE ABSENCE OF CEOs ON SOCIAL MEDIA MAY RAISE QUESTIONS ABOUT CEO ENGAGEMENT IN THE DAY-TO-DAY AFFAIRS OF THE COMPANY OR LONG RANGE AND STRATEGIC DESIGN OF A COMPANY’S FUTURE BUSINESS”

9.0 FINAL THOUGHTS

Overall, the report found that uptake, use, and knowledge of social media platforms in Canada is slightly higher than in the US, but still remains relatively low when compared to other online communities. That said, a large proportion of CEO social media accounts were found to be underutilized or altogether dormant.

There was little evidence of strategic social media or leadership communication campaigns designed and implemented for, or by, CEOs.

CEOs’ knowledge of the privacy settings of social media platforms is underdeveloped and presents a potential risk to matters of property, security, and branding for their companies plus personal reputation and image.

Generally speaking, CEOs are not directly engaging with other users, customers, clients, investors or employees on social media platforms. The relative absence of CEOs on social media may raise questions about CEO engagement in the day-to-day affairs of the company or long range and strategic design of a company’s future digital business.

Even on the most used and business-friendly social media platform, *LinkedIn*, it was found that CEOs were not making use of networking functions or even basic profile functions such as pictures and biographies. Given the role of *LinkedIn* for recruitment, this platform seems underutilized as a resource for the CEO to support their organization’s talent strategy.

Platforms that focus on visual images (*YouTube* and *Instagram*) are particularly underused by corporate CEOs, though the small percentage of CEOs on *Twitter* were making good use of images on that particular platform.

While there remain tremendous opportunities for CEOs to better engage on social media, there were significant differences in use across sectors. Interestingly, mining CEOs showed the most participation on social media, while energy and finance had significantly less uptake.



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Founded in 2005 at Ryerson University, the Infoscape Research Lab hosts research projects that focus on the cultural and political impact of digital code, particularly with regards to social media. The lab develops software based research tools, interface designs, and experimental research methods that seek to analyze content and use of new media platforms.



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Signal Leadership Communication Inc. is a social public relations firm for executives and organizations with images to create, issues to manage, relationships to build, and reputations to protect in a digitally disrupted era. It is the one communications consultancy expressly dedicated to serving senior leaders with PR counsel that is both strategic and social by design, informed by a deep understanding of analytics, content, communities, media, sustainability and technology.