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## Business leaders take cautious approach to social media

When it comes to doing business, survey shows news media is leading user

An recently-completed Internet survey of Northeastern Wisconsin journalists as well as business and community leaders shows that the news media is the leading user of social media in their business while business leaders are more cautious about its use.

The survey, taken by Leonard & Finco Public Relations Inc. of Green Bay, focused on

each group's use of social or new media such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

"While social media is constantly in the news these days, we wanted to get a sense as to how much it is actually being used for business in Northeastern Wisconsin," said Susan Finco, president of Leonard & Finco. The surveys targeted more than 150 journalists and more than 750 business and community leaders. The response rate was 23 percent.

The findings showed that 68 percent of the journalists responding to the survey said they find contacts and interviews through social media outlets and more than half generate story ideas

and do background information gathering through social media.

The top social media cited by Northeastern Wisconsin media include Facebook (76 percent), YouTube (62 percent), blogs (55 percent), LinkedIn (48 percent) and Twitter (45 percent). The three used most often for work are Facebook (76 percent), blogs (69 percent), Twitter (45 percent) and LinkedIn (31 percent).

While some businesses and community leaders do use social media for work, 44 percent of respondents said they do not use social media at all. Of those who do use social media, 39 percent said they tend to use it to connect with

or communicate with others in the community or their industry; 31 percent use it to connect with or communicate with clients; and 27 percent use it to gather information or research specific topics. Just 22 percent indicated they use social media to find or connect with potential new clients.

Of the social media used by area business and community leaders, LinkedIn has the biggest share of users at 66 percent. Facebook was second at 41 percent followed by blogs and YouTube both at 27 percent.

When asked if the use of social media has had a positive impact on their businesses, 38 percent said yes and 51 percent answered they weren't sure.

Seventy-eight percent of those saying it had a positive impact believed it benefitted their organization because of the networking capabilities; 39 percent said it increased marketing opportunities; and 35 percent said it improved client/customer relations.

"With media immersed in communications every day, and tending to have a younger workforce, they are definitely embracing social media," said Scott Stein, senior account executive with Leonard & Finco. "However, we believe business and community leaders are taking a more cautious approach and want to see what the return on investment will be before they spend a lot of time or money on social media."

"However we believe, as social media becomes more mainstream and younger workers become business and community leaders, that dynamic will change," said Cole Buergi, also a senior account executive with the company.

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