

Bloggers trusted more than celebrities, journalists, brands...and politicians

But outside immediate friends and family, trust is in short supply

14th May 2015: Bloggers are the third most trustworthy source of information, behind friends and family, according to an independent survey of UK consumers commissioned by affiliate network, [affilinet](#).

Meanwhile brands languish towards the bottom of the ranking, only just above politicians. Celebrities also ranked poorly.

affilinet Trust Index: Whose opinion do you trust the most?

1. Family
2. Friends
3. Bloggers
4. Social media contacts
5. Colleagues
6. Journalists
7. Religious leaders
8. Celebrities
9. Brands
10. Politicians

While it may come as no surprise that politicians footed the poll, it's perhaps more worrying that 10% of respondents said that they did not trust any of these.

UK Managing Director of affilinet Helen Southgate, commented on the findings, "It's a very British thing, not to trust anyone; we're a sceptical and wary bunch. I'm not surprised to see politicians at the bottom of the pile but perhaps a little surprised to see brands so low. What is encouraging though is the role that bloggers and social media play within consumer trust. But we must as marketers respect that and not take it for granted or abuse the position of trust earned by these affiliates.

"Is this a wakeup call for celebrity endorsement? It seems consumers are growing cynical of this tactic because celebrities are also at the wrong end of the trust index. Advertisers need to work smarter and look at who's really influencing their target markets. We are seeing a big shift away from mass digital one-to-many marketing strategies, to more targeted performance-driven campaigns. Working with niche specialist bloggers using adverts or content tailored to their audience, will become an important part of the acquisition strategy for advertisers, they strive to improve the level of trust in their brand from consumers."

When asked what the most important factors that engendered trust in bloggers, 55% of consumers thought that bloggers who gave balanced and fair reviews engendered more trust, while 53% were looking for authenticity of content.

The survey also revealed the kind of content that consumers are particularly looking for when they arrive at a blogger's site, and Tips, hints and how-to guides were what consumers were particularly after (52%), as well as content that's on a particular area or niche interest.

Southgate added "The fact consumers look to bloggers to provide them with information

about areas of specific interest, goes right to the heart of the evolution of digital marketing. The question for bloggers is now how they go about building on this trust, maintain editorial integrity, and at the same time, monetise their site.”

Consumers were asked whether they trusted the opinions of mainstream media outlets (magazines, newspapers, and online titles tied to a publisher), or independent bloggers/vloggers more, when it came to purchasing decisions, and the bloggers came out on top; 57% vs 43%.

On the blogs vs mainstream media debate, 36% of consumers said they felt that bloggers did not have to conform to someone else's editorial policy, while 27% felt bloggers were more independent and authentic. Twenty-three percent of consumers felt like they had more of a connection with bloggers, while only 14% said the same about journalists.

“The media industry has changed so much in recent years. For bloggers to have become more influential on consumers purchasing decisions, speaks to the importance of why brands need to be reaching out to them to connect with their audience, as much – if not more – than they have done with more traditional media outlets,” said Southgate.

As advertising revenues have dwindled, The Times, Sun, FT, and assorted vertical trade media have experimented with paywalls on their websites, but would consumers pay for content from their favourite bloggers? Surprisingly, 16% said they would. Southgate concluded, “I’m amazed the figure is that high. But when you consider that consumers are often turning to bloggers to get information about a niche area of interest, then perhaps because that content is particularly valuable to a loyal following, we might see paywalls springing up in a few unexpected places in the coming years.”

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Notes to editors:

Survey of 2002 UK consumers conducted in February/March 2015 by [Atomik Research](#).

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About affilinet

affilinet has been synonymous with the highest quality, security and transparency in performance marketing since its launch in 1997. As one of the leading affiliate networks in Europe, it offers partners results-oriented online marketing solutions. Over 2,500 advertisers and more than 500,000 publishers benefit from its innovative platform for affiliate marketing and data-driven advertising.

affilinet advises and supports its partners when choosing and implementing successful performance marketing programs and lead generation campaigns – both nationally and internationally. Having its head office situated in Munich and subsidiary companies located

in the UK, France, Spain, Austria, Switzerland and the Netherlands, allows for a global approach to performance marketing while offering local expertise.

<http://www.affili.net/>