



2023 Social Media Career Report

Uncovering the state (and state of mind) of the social media marketer

Social marketers have made it to the big leagues

But still struggle to make the big bucks

From the early days of modern social media marketing (back when we were still poking each other on Facebook) until now, the profession has seen countless transformations, fueled by the speed of social media itself.

Needless to say, the last couple decades have been a wild ride for social marketers.

But today, they pride themselves on effectively using social media to catapult their brands' success—and they're (slowly) gaining more respect for it.

So in 2023, we can finally say (with confidence) that social marketing has blossomed into a full-fledged career, which makes it the perfect time to talk about it.

In the first report of its kind, we're spilling the tea on what it's really like to work in social media management. We explore salaries, career progression, mental health, and more—providing the insights and advice you need to make informed decisions and take control of your career.

It's the career guide (and emotional support) you've been waiting for. **Dig in.**

The average social media marketer

-  Millennial (29-43 years old)
-  Woman
-  White
-  College-educated (studied journalism or marketing)
-  Has no formal education in social media
-  Has 5 years of social marketing experience
-  Works in-house
-  Makes a salary of US\$67,585 plus a US\$6,470 bonus
-  Gets 3 weeks paid vacation per year
-  Loves her job

About the survey and our respondents

 **3,842** qualified respondents

 **13+** industries

 **55%** practitioners

 **40%** managers and above

Research methods

This report is based on a survey of 3,842 qualified social marketers, and was conducted in March and April 2023.

We also conducted primary interviews with social media practitioners and leaders across different industries.

Our primary data has been supplemented by secondary research from Marketing Week, Pew Research, McKinsey, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, American Psychological Association, LinkedIn, Built In, and others.

Job function

 **55%** Practitioner

 **27%** Manager

 **9%** Director

 **4%** VP, C-level, founder/owner

 **5%** Other

Employment type

 **70%** In-house

 **13%** Agency or consultancy

 **9%** Freelancer or contractor

 **7%** Content creator

Social media experience

 **48%** 4 years or less

 **35%** 5-9 years

 **17%** 10 years or more

Work location

 **24%** Remote

 **45%** Hybrid

 **31%** Office

Note: The percentages for “Job function” and “Work location” are based on in-house and agency social marketers (n=3,220)

All your feelings—validated

Working in social media can be an emotional rollercoaster, one that social pros often turn into jokes (or even social content).

But we take those feelings seriously. It's why we're putting those emotions front and center.

Throughout this report, these icons hint at what's to come and how you might feel about it (whether you need to grab some tissues, have your meditation app on standby, or cue the music for your happy dance).



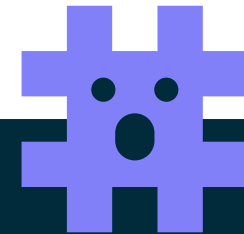
Excited



Optimistic



Disheartened



Surprised



Outraged

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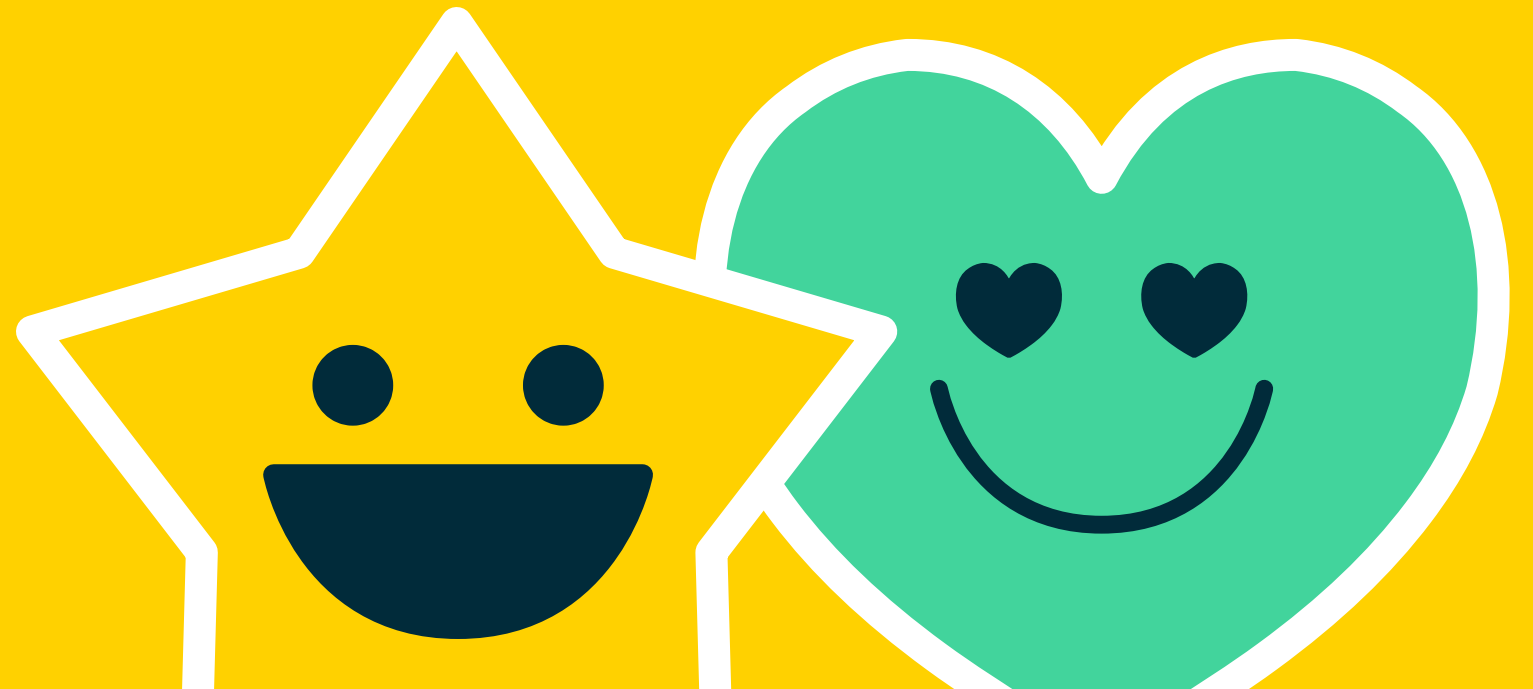
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Happiness and hardships in social





Find your happiness: 5 ingredients for social media marketing bliss

We don't have to sugarcoat what you probably already know: social media marketers are overworked, overwhelmed, and underappreciated.

We surveyed more than 3,800 social marketers who confirmed that they juggle too many different tasks, work long hours, and feel misunderstood by the people they report to. Many also told us that they don't have enough time or budget to do their best work and feel they don't get paid what they're worth.

But here's the kicker: social marketers *still* love their jobs. In fact, more than three-quarters (77%) of them report being happy working in social media.

Top 5 hardships for social media managers



66% have too many responsibilities



2 in 3 work 40 hours or more per week



56% say their bosses don't understand social media



About half don't have the time or budget to do their jobs well



Nearly half believe they're not fairly compensated

So what makes a career in social so great that even the downsides—which might otherwise be deal-breakers—don't sabotage job satisfaction?

Let's start by looking at the happiest in the biz, based on data from more than 3,200 salaried social marketers (those who work in-house or at agencies) and more than 600 freelancers and creators.

In this report, we'll explore *why* these ingredients may be the key to peak job satisfaction in social media marketing—so you can discover how to maximize your happiness as you shape your own career in the field.

Recipe for Happiness in Social Media Marketing

Sample: Social marketers (n=3,842)

Source: Hootsuite Social Media Management Career Survey 2023, March/April 2023

Note: "Full time" refers to salaried social marketers who spend 90-100% of their day working on social media or non-salaried social marketers who earn 90-100% of their income from social media.

1 Do social marketing full-time

Social pros who are almost **entirely dedicated to social media** are happier in their jobs.

Salaried social marketers who spend at least **90% of their day** working on social media are happier in their jobs than those who spend less than half their day working on social.

Same goes for non-salaried folks who make at least **90% of their income** from social media, versus those who make less than half.

2 Work in the office full-time

Social marketers who **work in the office 5 days a week** are happier (**81%**) than those who work remotely all or some of the time.

Job satisfaction isn't quite as high for **fully remote or hybrid workers (76%)**.

3 Work for a large organization

83% of social marketers who work for companies with **1,000 employees** or more are happy in their jobs.

For those at companies with **under 1,000 employees**, this number dips to **77%**.

4 Sit on a larger social media team

Those who work on social teams of **4 or more people** are happier (**83%**) than those who work on teams of **3 or less (77%)**.

The bigger, the better—social marketers who work on **teams of 100 or more** report being the happiest, at **86%**.

5 Get paid fairly

Social marketers who **strongly believe they're paid fairly** are significantly happier than the average social pro.

Freelancers and creators are less likely than salaried social marketers to believe they're fairly compensated (**45% vs. 53%**).



Achieve balance at home —and happiness in the office?

It's rare to find a social media manager who can honestly say their work never seeps into their personal life.

Whether you scribble down content ideas when you're out with friends (they come when they come, right?), read the comments on a post before bed (never a good idea, but so hard to resist), or record a social video on a Saturday because the weather's *finally* just right... let's collectively admit: We all do it.

Allison Wong, former social media specialist at natural wellness company Saje, says it's hard not to.

"The nature of your job is scrolling channels and doing research, so it feels like you're always-on," says Wong. "You're always trying to look for the next trend. You're trying to improve yourself. So it can be very overwhelming just being on your phone all the time."

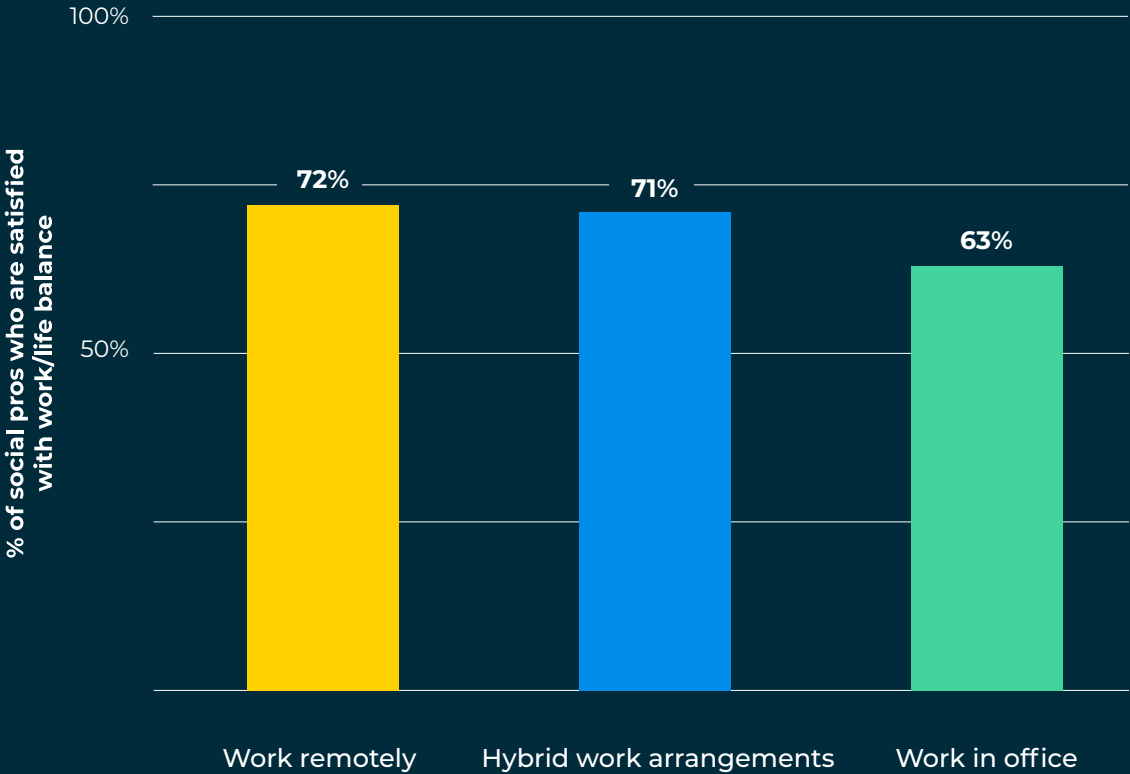
Despite that, two-thirds of social marketers are satisfied with their work/life balance, so it seems most find other ways to balance their personal life and their careers—or don't mind that the line between the two sometimes gets blurry.

***It feels like you're always-on....
It can be very overwhelming just
being on your phone all the time.***

Allison Wong
Freelance Social Media Manager and
former Social Media Specialist, Saje



Remote control: Work/life balance is better when you WFH



Sample: In-house and agency social marketers who fall into each category (n=769-1,458)
Source: Hootsuite Social Media Management Career Survey 2023, March/April 2023

But there’s a noticeable difference in satisfaction levels when it comes to work location.

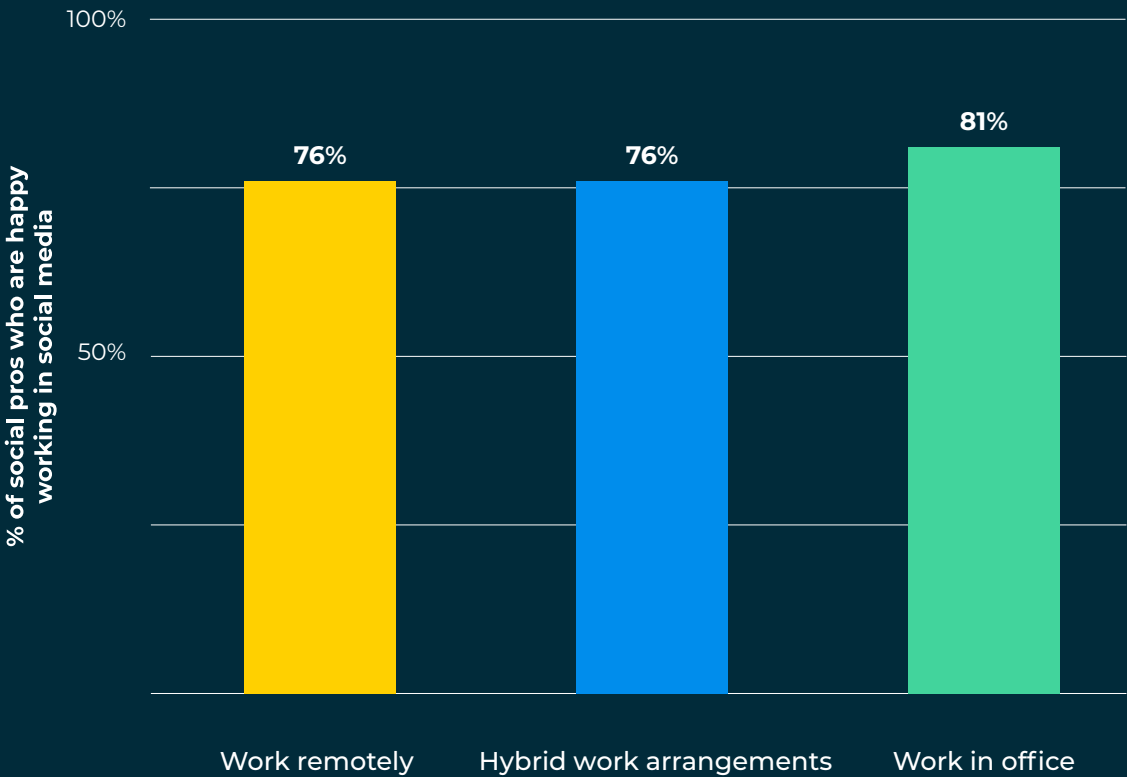
We thought that line would be blurrier for the remote social marketers, but that’s not the case, according to our survey. Remote full-timers are actually more satisfied with work/life balance than those who always work on premises.

Could the commute be to blame for the gap between these two groups? A 2022 Organizational Psychology Review [study](#) says no—that the commute, especially post-COVID, provides time and space that allows you to mentally transition from home to work and vice versa, which actually *improves* work/life balance.

So maybe it’s that office-only people are much more likely to work overtime. Our data shows that working longer hours negatively impacts work/life balance, particularly for those who clock upwards of 45 hours each week.

But work/life balance isn’t the same thing as job satisfaction. And the social pros who show up at the office every day are actually happier in their jobs than their remote and hybrid counterparts (even though they’re the least satisfied with work/life balance).

Collabing IRL: Social marketers find happiness at the office



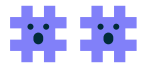
Sample: In-house and agency social marketers who fall into each category (n=769-1,458)
Source: Hootsuite Social Media Management Career Survey 2023, March/April 2023

Why might this be? Comfort level could be the scale-tipper here —being in the office every day can make it feel more like a place where you belong, rather than somewhere you’re just visiting.

Another possibility: Face-to-face interaction and connecting daily with colleagues IRL might be highly valued by social marketers, right up there with considerations of work/life balance. (And it shouldn’t come as a complete surprise that social marketers thrive on, well, being social.)

We may not know exactly why office workers are happier in their jobs while remote workers are more satisfied with work/life balance. But our data suggests that those who love their jobs are more willing to sacrifice work/life balance, and those who prioritize work/life balance are more willing to sacrifice job satisfaction.

The top takeaway here: Figure out what’s most important to you—job satisfaction or work/life balance. And if your company lets you choose where you work, pick the location that allows you to achieve it. Base your decision on your own lifestyle and needs as a social marketer—not what you *think* your employer would prefer. Ultimately, that choice could be the one that determines how happy you are in your role and in your career.



Social media never sleeps —does it affect vacation time?

Most social marketers (85%) get at least two weeks of paid vacation per year, which is consistent with the American private sector average of 11 days, according to the [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#).

And job satisfaction is pretty much equal across the board, whether you get five days of paid vacation or 25—even those with four days or fewer are about as happy.

But only 54% of social marketers actually *used* two weeks or more of vacation in the last year. Raise your hand if that sounds a lot like you (*guilty raises own hand*).

Social media management can be an always-on job, which could be a factor. But social marketers quickly learn that being glued to their phones and the social media universe 24/7 is detrimental to their well-being.

Three UK's social media lead Iain Beable stresses how essential it is for social marketers to take breaks whenever they can.

“It’s the Wild West out there on social, and it can be a lot sometimes,” he says. “You have to remember to take a step back from your laptop every so often—you need to be strict about it.”

It’s the Wild West out there on social.... You have to remember to take a step back from your laptop every so often.

Iain Beable
Social Media Lead,
Three UK

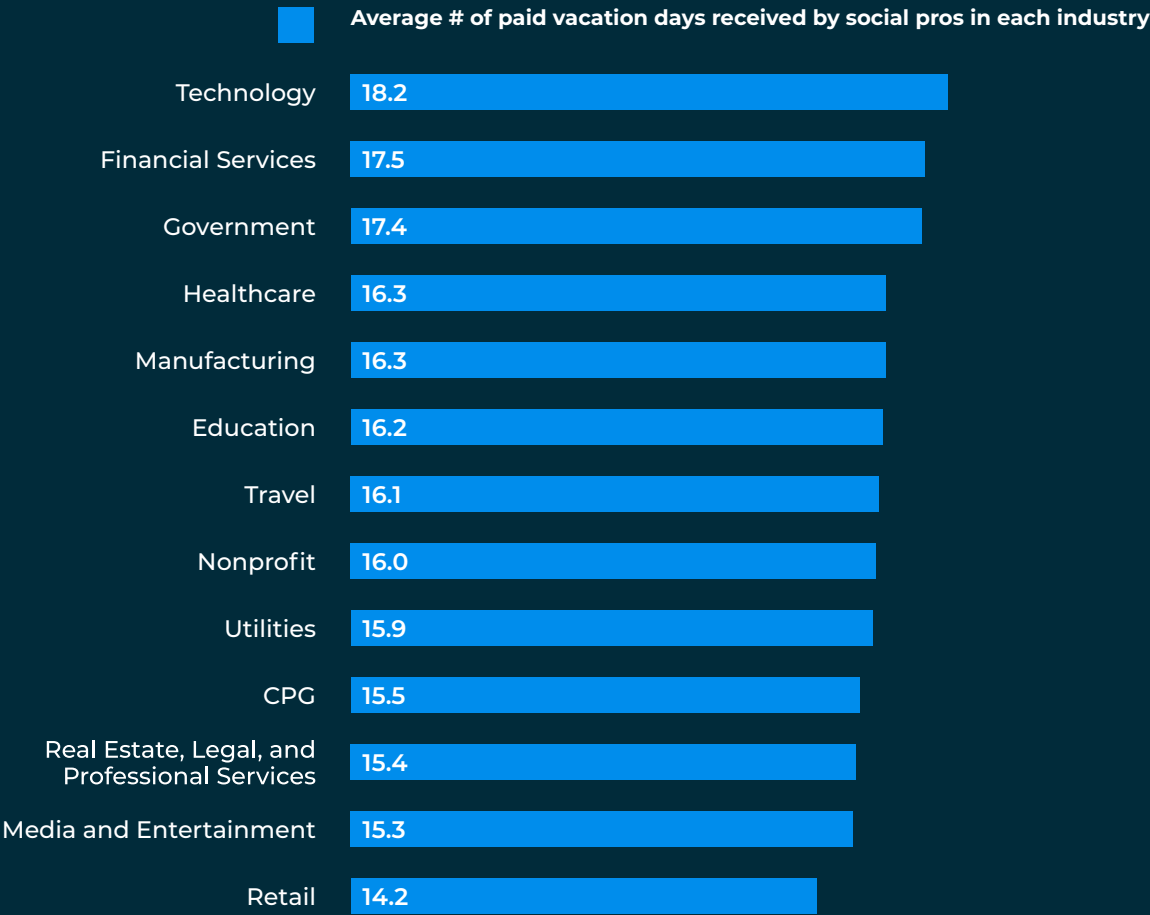


Taking vacation provides the healthy separation they need. And the number of vacation days they take impacts work/life balance—those who take 15 or more days of paid vacation are more satisfied with work/life balance than those who take less (though it has almost no effect on how happy they are in their careers).

Of course, there are probably many social marketers who would take more paid time off if they could—they just don’t have it. So it’s the vacation days you’re given that matter most, because they affect how much vacation time you’re *able* to take—and that can (and should) be a deciding factor in accepting a job offer, or part of your negotiations when asking for a promotion or raise.

Social media managers who work in tech receive the most paid vacation, so you might think the industry has an inflated number of high-level execs who’ve earned more vacation over time. However, social marketers in tech are no more likely to hold high-level positions than those in most other industries, suggesting that tech organizations prioritize their employees’ well-being regardless of seniority.

The ultimate vacation destination for social marketers:
The tech industry



Sample: In-house and agency social marketers who work in each industry listed (n=95-729)
Source: Hootsuite Social Media Management Career Survey 2023, March/April 2023

Only 54% of social marketers took two weeks or more of vacation in the last year.

In contrast, social marketers who work in consumer packaged goods (CPG) and media and entertainment are among those who get the least amount of paid time off. Interestingly, those two industries have more social marketers in high-level positions than any other. They seem to be more frugal when it comes to handing out vacation time, so they don't get any brownie points there.

Industry averages aside, paid time off is a benefit that varies widely from employer to employer. So if having lots of it matters to you—like it does for the 62% of American workers who say having this benefit is extremely important to them, according to a recent Pew Research [study](#)—inquire about it before accepting a job offer.

And don't forget that salary and promotion negotiations can go beyond money and responsibilities; you can also lobby for other perks like more vacation time.



Social pros aren't dazzled by company benefits—unless they don't have any

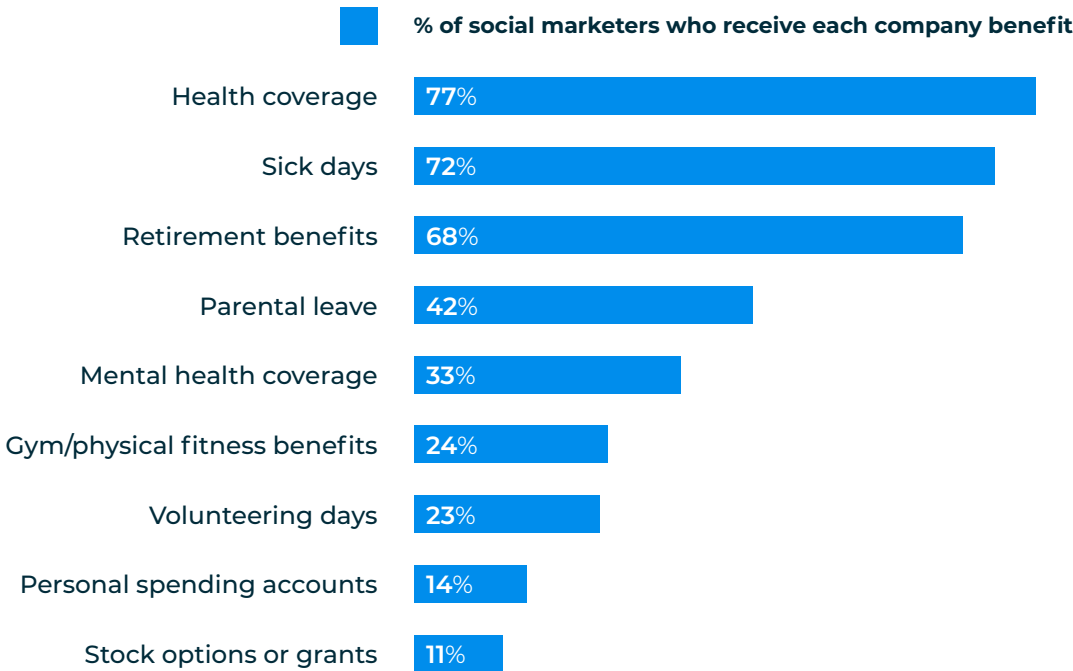
Almost all salaried social marketers (95%) reported that their organization offers at least some company benefits.

There's a small minority of social marketers who don't get any benefits at all. Those in retail are almost 2x more likely to receive no benefits.

Unsurprisingly, these benefit-less social media managers aren't nearly as happy in their jobs and have lower levels of satisfaction with work/life balance than those who do get benefits.

All in all, having benefits won't necessarily *add* to your job satisfaction. But not having them can certainly take away from it. So, yes, benefits should still be on your list of must-haves, even if they aren't your top priority. (And if they are, here's a little tip: Government and financial services are the most generous in the number of benefits they offer.)

Organizations put their employees' health first



Sample: In-house and agency social marketers (n=3,220)
Source: Hootsuite Social Media Management Career Survey 2023, March/April 2023



Social media marketing is so fun that (maybe) nothing else matters

While researching this report, we sat down with social experts to chat about their experiences in the field. We asked what they love most about their jobs and they were unanimous in their answers—it's fun.

How many professionals can say they get to create and be creative every single day? Or that doing research involves scrolling through hours of TikTok videos? Or that their best kept secret is being the face (and body) behind the company mascot?

“The creativity that this job involves is the thing that really keeps me in it,” says Sophie Vershbow, head of social marketing at event management and ticketing platform Eventbrite. “I’ll jot down the silliest TikTok idea you’ve ever seen, actually do it, and it’ll end up being our top post of the month. The idea-to-action-to-result pipeline that social media enables is my favorite thing in the world.”

That doesn't mean it's easy—in fact, social marketers say that's one of the biggest misconceptions about the job.

The creativity that this job involves is the thing that really keeps me in it.

Sophie Vershbow
Head of Social Marketing, Eventbrite



Taylor Knight, social media strategist at Vessi (known for its waterproof shoes) wishes people knew how much work goes into each piece of social content.

“Everything takes a lot more time and planning than people realize,” she says. “There’s always a purpose to every post that we do. Even if we have a fun post, we are still posting it for a reason—and we want you to take something away from it.”

But who says you can’t grind and have fun at the same time?

Social marketing is unique in that work and play are often one and the same. Brainstorming new ideas, for example, can be tough, but when you and your colleagues are riffing and the back-and-forth banter leads to something great, it can also be a thrill.

So maybe the fun, fulfilling parts of the job cancel out the challenges (and there are lots, but we’ll dig into that later).

Plus, if you work on a multi-person team and call those brainstorm buddies friends (which we suspect many do), this could give the job more meaning—another variable that propels overall job satisfaction, as per a [study](#) published in the Journal of Management Studies.

In fact, US professionals (especially Gen Z and millennials) feel

so strongly about their work having meaning that it’s even more of a driver to work hard than pay, according to a [Monster study](#) about Gen Z in the workplace.

And that’s a relief because social media marketing isn’t a contender on any lists of the highest-paying professions (though it pains us to point that out). Among our in-house and agency survey respondents, US\$67,585 is the average salary. So there must be something else that draws people to this career. Could *fun* be it?

The [2023 Marketing Week Career and Salary Survey](#) might give us a clue. Even though “funness” isn’t included on their list of most important job characteristics, the data shows that having a good working environment is more valuable to marketers than anything else—even beating out fair financial rewards. And while a “good working environment” doesn’t *have* to be a fun place to work, we’d bet most of them see their fair share of good times in a typical workday.

We can’t say for sure that there’s a correlation between job satisfaction in social marketing and how much fun it is to work in the field. But we *can* say that if you’re not having fun as a social media manager, you’re either not in the right career or you’re not working for the right people.

So let that simmer for a bit and make moves—or don’t—accordingly.



The most lovable job in marketing

Quick refresher: 77% of social marketers are happy in their jobs (and boy do we love saying it).

This high percentage already speaks for itself. But our competitive side told us to take it a step further and see how social marketers stack up against other professionals.

Among American workers, job satisfaction is at 62%—a 36-year high, according to The Conference Board's 2023 job satisfaction [survey](#).

That's pretty good, right? And yet, social marketers are 25% more likely to say they're happy—let's call that win No. 1.

This next win, though, might feel even sweeter—because it puts social marketers ahead of their marketing peers.

Marketing Week's 2023 career- and salary-focused [survey](#) shows that marketing professionals are equally satisfied in their roles as workers in the US (62%)—still not nearly as happy as those who specialize in social media.

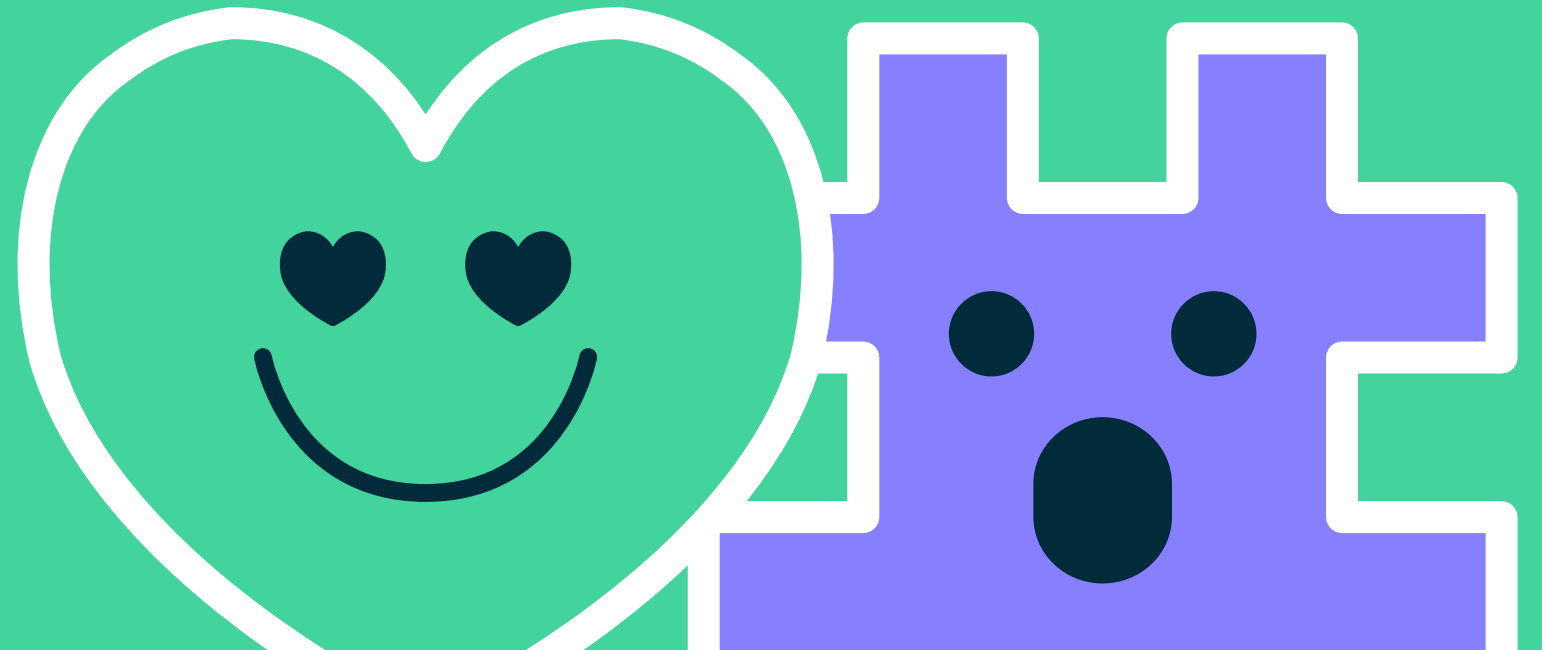
Work location could be one reason behind it. We know from our research that the happiest social media managers work on premises every day, but Marketing Week's [survey](#) indicates that marketers across industries are less likely to turn up at the office five days a week.

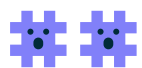
Social marketers may be happier, but they're about 2x more likely to report having plans to leave their industry than [other marketers](#). This could have something to do with the challenges social media managers face that other marketers don't—like having to deal with negative comments that litter their feeds on top of constant social platform and algorithm changes.

For now, though, let's focus on the positives. When more than three-quarters of your industry peers are happy in their jobs, it's truly a win.

So raise a glass to that. But know that every social marketer (that's you!) has a role to play in keeping it that way. And you'll learn more about how as we continue our investigation into what improves—and impairs—job satisfaction.

Teams, tasks, and tribulations





Who are social media managers, really?

The majority of people who work in social media actually spend less than half their day doing it.

Not nearly as many salaried social marketers are fully dedicated to social media as we thought—only 11% of them have roles that primarily focus on social.

At first, we wondered if this meant we surveyed the wrong people—where were the *real* social media managers? But we quickly realized that the amount of time you spend doing social doesn't necessarily determine whether or not you *are* a social media marketer.

There are so many other contributing factors, including who you work with, the social tasks you perform, your connection to those responsibilities, and even how much you enjoy them. And, of course, there's your job title—more than a quarter of our survey-takers have “social” in their official titles.

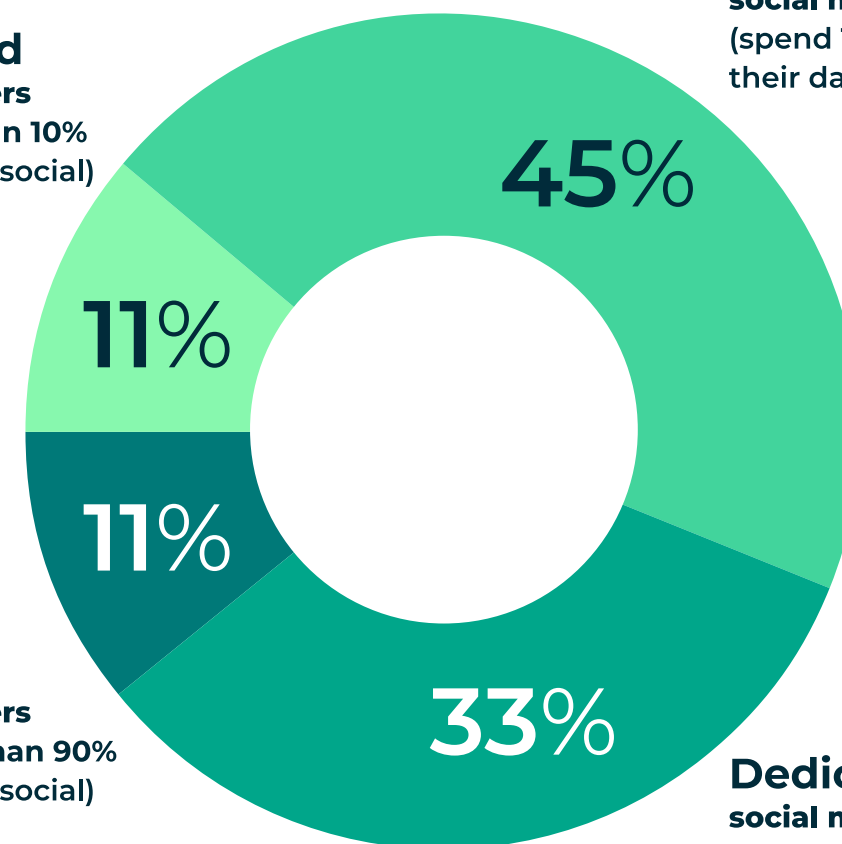
Social media-only roles are anything but the norm

Distributed social marketers
(spend less than 10% of their day on social)

Divided social marketers
(spend 10-49% of their day on social)

Devoted social marketers
(spend more than 90% of their day on social)

Dedicated social marketers
(spend 50-89% of their day on social)



Sample: In-house and agency social marketers (n=3,220)

Source: Hootsuite Social Media Management Career Survey 2023, March/April 2023



Everyone's swamped —but not everyone's stressed

The average social marketer does about eight different social tasks—things like writing copy, shooting and editing photos and videos, scheduling posts, creating ads, building strategies, tracking analytics, monitoring what people say, and managing influencer partnerships.

That's a lot of tasks (and those are just the ones they're telling us about!). No wonder two-thirds of them claim they have too many things to do.

We looked at our four groups to see how many social tasks are on their plates and how they compare to each other.

As you'd expect, the Devoted group (who spend the most time working on social media) perform more social tasks than the groups who spend less time working on social.

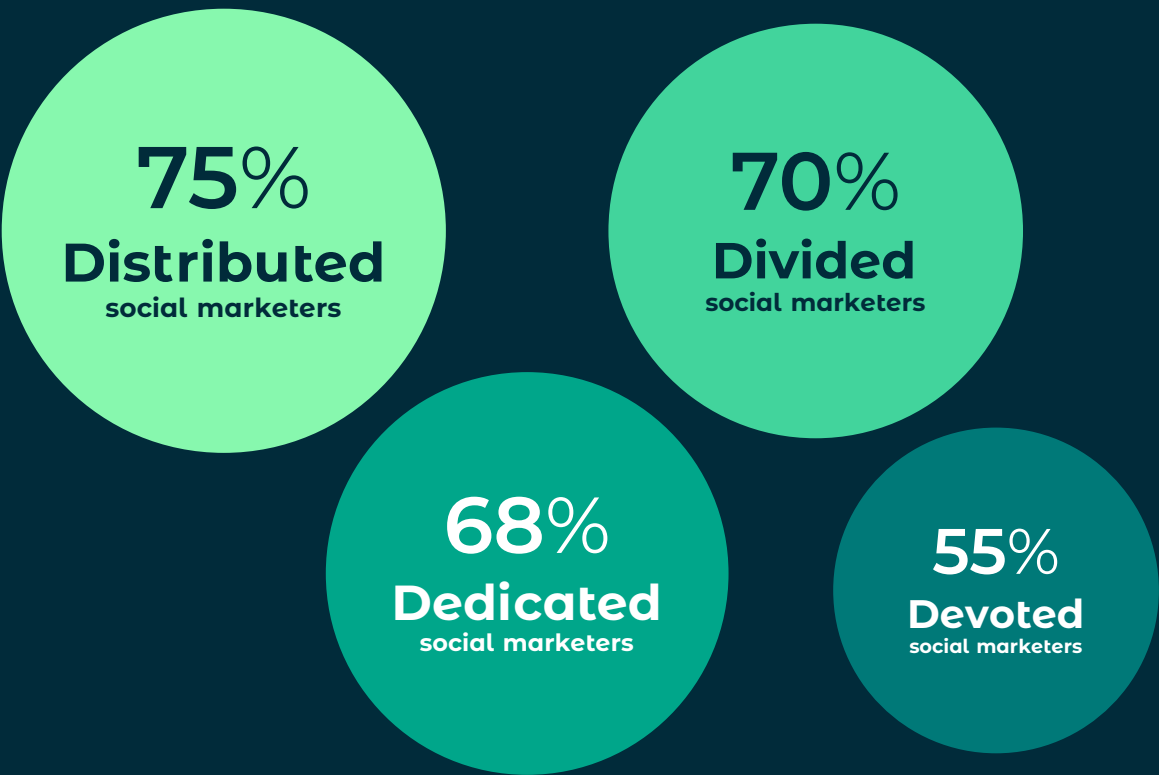
Sample: In-house and agency social marketers (n=3,220)
Source: Hootsuite Social Media Management Career Survey 2023, March/April 2023

More sticky notes, please: Social marketers' to-do lists go on forever

1 social task = 



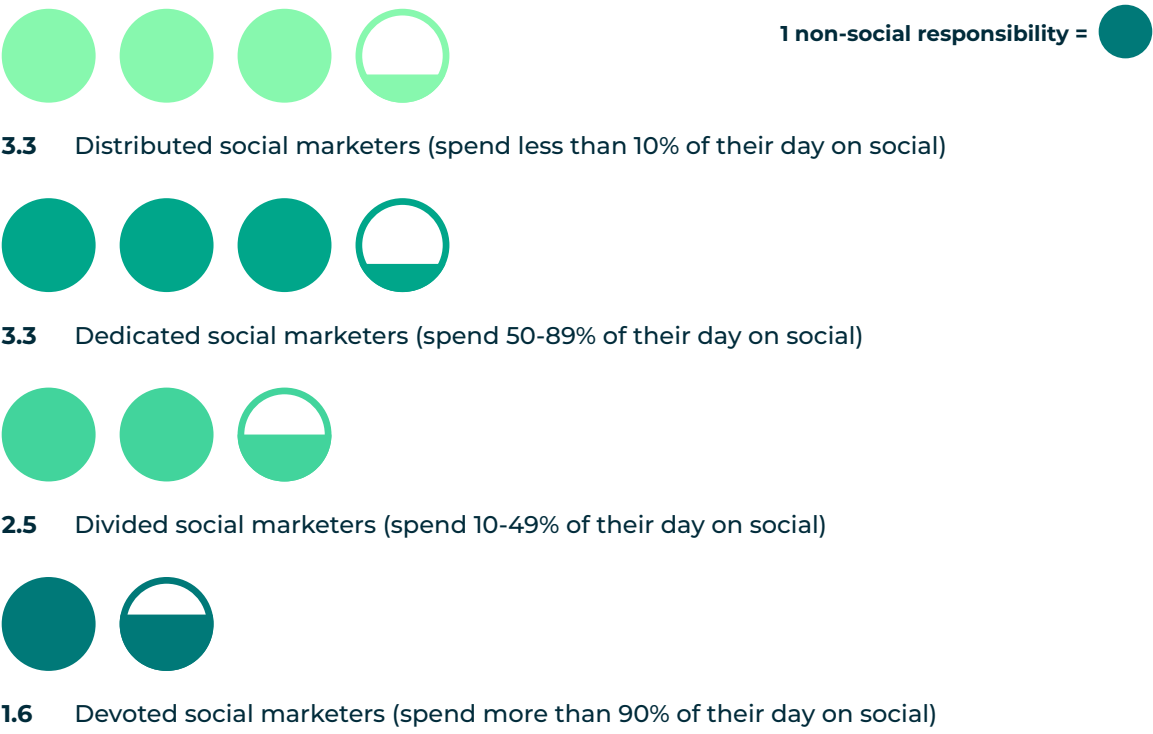
Feeling the pressure: Distributed folks are the most overburdened with responsibilities



Sample: In-house and agency social marketers (n=3,220)
Source: Hootsuite Social Media Management Career Survey 2023, March/April 2023

With all those tasks, you'd think the Devoted social marketers would be the most overwhelmed. Turns out, they're significantly less likely to say they're drowning in tasks than the others. But here's the thing: They don't have to split their time between different lines of work as much as everyone else.

Most social marketers are stretched thin with non-social responsibilities



Sample: In-house and agency social marketers (n=3,220)
Source: Hootsuite Social Media Management Career Survey 2023, March/April 2023

The Distributed, Divided, and Dedicated groups are more likely to feel bogged down because they're expected to carry out more non-social responsibilities—like PR and communications, email marketing, web design, event planning, and admin—*on top of* all their social tasks. Sheer workload isn't the only issue; when you're constantly being pulled in different directions, it's easy to get overwhelmed.

For Devoted social marketers, most of their tasks are connected—it's why they're not intimidated by their to-dos, even though they have lots of them. As well, by focusing almost entirely on social, they get the chance to further develop and sharpen their skills, and can feel more confident that they'll get the job—or jobs—done right.

The big takeaway here: It's in employers' best interest to have more social marketers mostly or fully dedicated to social media. Not only can this help reduce burnout and stress among social staff; it can also boost productivity, business results, and even morale.

But change won't happen if your boss isn't aware of the problem—that's where you come in. If you face challenges dividing your time and attention, communicate that with your leaders. And be honest about the tasks you excel at and enjoy most so they know where to place you should they decide to shake things up.

Devoted social marketers spend nearly their entire day on social tasks—it allows them to stay focused, further develop their skills, and feel more confident in the work they do.

Choose the path to the career you want

It's important to have career goals no matter what field you're in, but it might be even more critical in a relatively new field like social media marketing. Why? Because when few (or no) people have come before you, there's no set path to follow—and a greater opportunity for you to map out your own.

Let's take a deeper look at the four different paths based on how much time social marketers dedicate to the job so you can ask yourself the hard questions about the path you're on: Am I where I want to be? Will it lead me to where I want to go?

Knowing more about what these paths *really* look like is a good place to start if you want to build the social media career of your dreams.

But keep in mind that social media management is an evolving career, developing and changing almost as quickly as social media itself. So these paths may look different just a few months from now—and, down the road, some may not even exist at all. That's one of the many reasons we're so keen on keeping a close eye on this career as it evolves.

Explore the path you're on:

-  **Devoted social marketers**
(spend more than 90% of their day on social) pages **25-26**
-  **Dedicated social marketers**
(spend 50-89% of their day on social) pages **27-28**
-  **Divided social marketers**
(spend 10-49% of their day on social) pages **29-30**
-  **Distributed social marketers**
(spend less than 10% of their day on social) pages **31-32**



Devoted social marketers

Slaying their tasks, and deserve better pay for it

Devoted social marketers are almost entirely focused on social media tasks—it’s no surprise they have an easier time doing them.

Interestingly, they’re more likely than most of their peers to say they don’t have the right team around them, even though their teams are about the same size as almost everyone else’s. But since many work at larger organizations, they may have higher expectations that their teams should be big enough and skilled enough to handle all the work—making them more likely to be disappointed when that isn’t the case.

Snapshot

Profile

Average age: 30

Average income: US\$71,665

Work life

More junior

Work remotely

Work for medium to large organizations (100+ employees)

Perform about 10 different social tasks

Do social media tasks almost exclusively

Responsible for social strategy and execution

Top social tasks

Plan/manage campaign strategy

Write copy

Schedule posts

Respond to/route comments and messages

Track/report on analytics

Most likely to...

Have an easier time with most social tasks

Feel good about the amount of tasks on their plate

Say they don’t have the right team around them

spend more than 90% of their day on social

Sample: In-house and agency social marketers who spend more than 90% of their day on social (n=344)
Source: Hootsuite Social Media Management Career Survey 2023, March/April 2023
Note: Average age is calculated using median; average income is calculated using mean

25

Teams, tasks, and tribulations

2023 Social Media Career Report

Only 29% of Devoted social marketers have advanced into management roles.

Also shocking: Despite being *more* experienced than the Dedicated group (and, on average, the same age), Devoted social marketers *earn less*.

What gives? Our data tells us that although they're no less likely to be promoted in social, only 29% have advanced into management roles—making them less likely to have salaries in that higher range.

Another (more somber) reason for the discrepancy could be that social media management as a career still isn't respected within organizations, so because Dedicated people are more likely to have non-social duties in their portfolios, they get paid more.

If you fit into this group (or want to): The reality is, you might have to work a little harder to prove your worth. But know that your skills are unique and your social media expertise is extremely valuable to your brand. So don't be afraid to negotiate your salary (76% of salaried social marketers who ask for more money, get it) or push for a promotion that actually moves you up the ranks—just be sure to show the business impact of your work to help make your case.



Dedicated social marketers

The stage is set for mid-career advances

These social marketers aren't as junior as the Devoted folks, which explains why they're more likely than that group to have transitioned into a more senior social role.

But many have switched organizations to make it happen—and that may not have been necessary. Our research shows that more social marketers got a raise or promotion at a company they were already working at than by joining a new one. (Note: We totally get that people leave for other reasons as well.)

Snapshot

Profile

Average age: 30

Average income: US\$76,021

Work life

Perform about 8 different social tasks

Have about 3 non-social responsibilities

spend **50-89%** of their day on social



Top social tasks



Plan/manage campaign strategy

Write copy

Schedule posts

Respond to/route comments and messages

Track/report on analytics



Most likely to...



Have left a social role at one company for better pay or a more senior social role at another company

Spend too much time dealing with negative comments and the dark corners of the internet

Sample: In-house and agency social marketers who spend 50-89% of their day on social (n=1,059)

Source: Hootsuite Social Media Management Career Survey 2023, March/April 2023

Note: Average age is calculated using median; average income is calculated using mean

Dedicated social marketers are more affected by negative comments and the dark corners of the internet than any other group.

Dealing with negative comments and the dark corners of the internet can be brutal, but it's part of the job. The Dedicated group, though, is more affected by these challenges than any other. Devoted social marketers may struggle less with this issue because, as people who spend even more time working on social, they've likely become desensitized or have learned to cope with it. So a role that's more focused on social media could be what the Dedicated folks need to overcome that struggle.

If you fit into this group (or want to): In this phase of your social media career, you have some good experience behind you. You should feel more confident in your skills and more comfortable with the idea of advocating for yourself. It's prime time to think about longer-term career goals and how you'll get there—looking within your current organization to start.



Divided social marketers

Keeping options open—and staving off burnout

For the Divided group, social media marketing isn't their primary job—PR and communications likely is.

But they perform almost as many social tasks as the Devoted group—those who have all day to do them.

So we're not surprised the Divided folks feel overwhelmed with responsibilities.

A likely explanation is that this group has inherited (unwanted) social media tasks. Hopefully, they've since discovered they actually enjoy them. That doesn't help with their current workload, but it could open doors to a future in social media.

Snapshot

Profile

Average age: 32

Average income: US\$72,161

Work life

Perform about 9 different social tasks

Have more than 3 non-social responsibilities



Top social tasks

Plan/manage campaign strategy

Write copy

Schedule posts

Respond to/route comments and messages

Track/report on analytics



Most likely to...

Be responsible for PR and communications

Have a heavy workload (their social tasks and non-social responsibilities really add up!)

spend **10-49%** of their day on social





Sample: In-house and agency social marketers who spend 10-49% of their day on social (n=1,464)

Source: Hootsuite Social Media Management Career Survey 2023, March/April 2023

Note: Average age is calculated using median; average income is calculated using mean

29

Teams, tasks, and tribulations

2023 Social Media Career Report

Divided social marketers are some of the busiest, juggling many social tasks on top of their non-social responsibilities.

If you fit into this group (or want to): Your social media tasks may not be your primary focus, but they're giving you a chance to grow professionally, expand your skills, and ultimately, enhance your hireability. Most of all, your current role lets you keep your options open. So the best thing you can do for your career right now is embrace the opportunity and learn as much as you can (ideally without overexerting yourself and burning out!).



Distributed social marketers

Big career aspirations—and social isn’t one of them

This group includes higher-paid execs who oversee social strategy. For people who spend such a small portion of their day working on social media, it makes sense that their involvement is more high-level—they don’t have the time to handle the day-to-day details.

These more senior employees may be thinking about long-term career goals that include plans to secure high-level positions. Since such roles aren’t widely available in social media (yet), this often means broadening horizons and venturing outside of the field. It’s one potential reason they don’t see a future in social media (another is that they’re approaching the age of retirement).

Snapshot

Profile

Average age: 36
Average income: US\$78,263

Work life

In higher-level positions (director, VP, C-level)
Perform about 7 different social tasks
Have more than 3 non-social responsibilities
Work on social strategy, but not execution

Sample: In-house and agency social marketers who spend less than 10% of their day on social (n=353)
Source: Hootsuite Social Media Management Career Survey 2023, March/April 2023
Note: Average age is calculated using median; average income is calculated using mean

spend less than 10% of their day on social



Top social tasks

Plan/manage campaign strategy
Write copy
Take/edit photos
Schedule posts
Track/report on analytics



Most likely to...

Say they have too many responsibilities
Receive 15 or more vacation days per year
Say they don’t have enough time to do their jobs
Say they don’t see social as a long-term career
Be unhappy working in social media



Distributed social marketers are the most likely to feel bombarded by tasks and responsibilities.

But even though there are more Gen Xers and boomers (ages 44 and up) in this group than any other, Gen Z and millennials still make up the majority (which is why the average age is just 36). The younger members of the Distributed group are likely junior staff who only dip a toe in a variety of projects.

Distributed social marketers are also less happy to be working in social media and are the most likely to say they have too many responsibilities. Whether they're junior or senior, this speaks to how much they get pulled in different directions, hence their nickname (Distributed).

If you fit into this group (or want to): You might feel sad at the thought of leaving social media behind for a leadership role—but maybe you don't have to. One of the benefits of working in a newish career is that you can carve your own path and pave the way for others. So take it upon yourself to educate your organization's decision-makers on the importance of senior roles in social media and the positive business outcomes that people in those roles can drive. Plus, moving into a social leadership position could be the key to feeling less bogged down by tasks—hello delegation!

Do what you gotta do to nail the basic social tasks

You may have noticed that the top five tasks for all four groups are nearly identical.

These tasks are the baseline—the bare minimum essentials for any organization that wants to have a social media presence and understand, at least to some extent, the impact of social media on their broader goals.

For any career in social media, you have to know how to absolutely crush these fundamentals. Once you’ve done that, you can give yourself an edge by mastering some of the more specialized tasks as well.

Top 5 social media tasks



Plan/manage campaign strategy



Write copy



Schedule posts



Respond to/route comments and messages



Track/report on analytics



Niche social media roles lift a weight off generalists' shoulders

Social marketers, fully dedicated to social media or not, are jacks of all trades (they'll gladly accept "superheroes" as well).

"There's a lot of overlap into other people's roles when you're the social media manager," says Andy Au, a former social marketer who now does affiliate partnerships and growth strategy at Thinkific.

That's a reflection of the many different responsibilities they have and how widespread those tasks can be.

Juggling all these tasks isn't even what makes things difficult—the tasks themselves are hard AF. But for a career that's still somewhat new and constantly changing, it's expected that there'd be a serious learning curve. (Psst! [Hootsuite](#) can help make that curve a little less steep.)

So what social tasks do you struggle with most? We bet you're curious to know if your peers dread the same ones. Let's find out.

There's a lot of overlap into other people's roles when you're the social media manager.

Andy Au
Growth Strategist and Affiliate Partnerships Manager, Thinkific



Working in social is easy... said no social marketer ever

Tough tasks	Planning/managing influencer marketing partnerships
	Sourcing user-generated content (UGC)
	Planning/executing ads
	Filming/editing videos
	Tracking/reporting on analytics
	Planning/managing campaign strategy
Meh	Monitoring what people say via social listening
	Using social channels to recruit new employees
	Creating/managing social content for employees to share
	Writing copy
	Designing/animating graphics
Easy tasks	Responding to/routing comments and messages
	Taking/editing photos
	Scheduling posts

Sample: Social marketers who regularly perform each task listed (n=959-2,974)
Source: Hootsuite Social Media Management Career Survey 2023, March/April 2023
Note: Toughest social tasks = 30%+ of those who regularly perform these tasks say they struggle with them; “meh” social tasks = 21-29% of those who regularly perform these tasks struggle; easiest social tasks = 20% or fewer of those who regularly perform these tasks struggle.

The tasks social marketers struggle with most tend to be the ones that require specialty skills—many of which are so time-consuming and multi-faceted that they could be full-time roles in their own right. Some of the social marketers we spoke to predict (and hope) they will be, if they aren’t already.

Freelance social media manager Allison Wong, says she’d love to see more specialized roles for tasks like content creation, social listening and analytics, and even community management.

Biteable’s growth marketing manager Haily Moulton agrees. “I think we’ll see companies really start to embrace and realize how important social media marketing is,” says Moulton. “They’ll hire teams that can appropriately handle the amount of work that actually goes into it instead of assigning 15 different roles to one person and calling them a social media manager.”

Moulton also thinks companies will start assigning social marketers to individual platforms, which would help make some of the job’s most difficult tasks more manageable.

That's how we divvy up the work here at Hootsuite. Our most recent hire was a specialist to take care of all things TikTok—because producing video content is a whole other beast (and it has become an absolute must-have in order for businesses to get noticed, compete, and convert on social).

It's why video gurus have also become more of a necessity. And bringing them on board means the rest of the team doesn't have to worry about video creation when it's not their area of expertise—that's a major relief.

Other specialty roles can have the same effect. When teams create full-time positions for individual platforms or niche skills like influencer marketing, analytics, and animation, the generalists also benefit because their scope of work shrinks, making other tasks feel less daunting. So when these responsibilities stop appearing in social marketer job descriptions, you'll know why. (Hint: Those are the jobs to go for.)

When organizations create full-time positions for individual platforms or niche social skills, the entire social team benefits.



The right degree sets you up for social marketing success

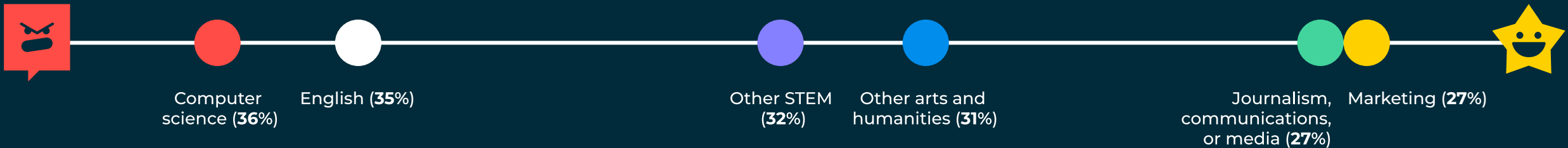
Colleges and universities have only just started to offer social media programs and courses. Since this is still so new, almost two-thirds of people who work in social media today have had no formal education on the subject.

Most social marketers (52%) studied journalism, communications, media, or marketing, which sounds logical—but how much value do these programs really provide for those who pursue a career in social media?

Marketing and journalism grads are better equipped for social media jobs

Struggle with social tasks most

Struggle with social tasks least



Sample: Social marketers whose education primarily focused on each area of study (n=104-1,153)
Source: Hootsuite Social Media Management Career Survey 2023, March/April 2023

Note: Groups are ranked on the average percentage of each group that struggles with each of the social tasks they regularly perform.

52% of social marketers studied journalism, communications, media, or marketing in school.

Social media managers with a marketing or journalism background have an easier time with social tasks than those who've studied other subjects.

So it seems that they gain more transferable skills than everyone else—ones they actually use once they enter the workforce.

If you're planning to go after a career in social marketing, your surest bet—until social media post-secondary programs really take off—is to study marketing, journalism, or communications. These programs will give you the best chance at being prepared for what the job entails.



Working in regulated industries makes a tough job tougher

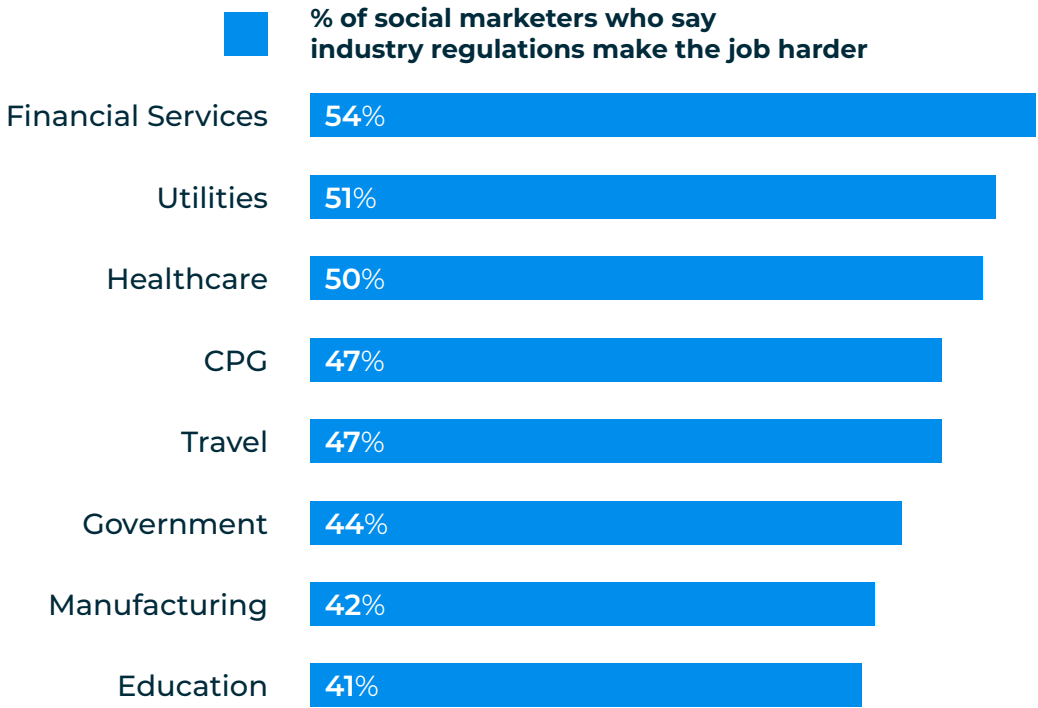
Regulated industries have the added challenge of dealing with tricky compliance standards and strict approval processes. This can also make even the most basic tasks, like writing copy, creating graphics, and responding to comments, more difficult.

Jon-Stephen Stansel, a seasoned social marketer with extensive experience in higher ed, recalls how challenging it was doing social for universities, particularly when dealing with PR crises.

“On a college campus, you have to be very sensitive to the content you’re putting out and how it can be interpreted,” says Stansel. “We always had to have that in the back of our minds. That really was tough.”

More than 40% of social marketers who work in regulated industries say regulations add another level of complexity to the job—with financial services, utilities, and healthcare topping the list of those most affected.

Industry regulations make social tasks harder across the board



Sample: Social marketers who work in each industry listed (n=149-600)
Source: Hootsuite Social Media Management Career Survey 2023, March/April 2023
Note: Only regulated industries are included in this chart

If you've ever handled social media for these industries, this won't come as a surprise. Between FINRA, FCA, FFIEC, IIROC, SEC, PCI, AMF, MiFID II, and others, the financial services industry is governed by enough regulations to make your head spin. HIPAA compliance for healthcare isn't exactly straightforward either. Plus, these industries need to keep up with other policies around information security, risk management, and more.

Given how important and complex compliance standards are for these industries, it's understandable that there's an emphasis on approval processes as well. They, too, create hurdles for social marketers.

Looking at who struggles most with approvals, those in utilities and financial services once again occupy the top spots (though healthcare's a little further down this time).

Some of the highest-paid social marketers work in finance and utilities, so better compensation could definitely play a role in enticing social managers to spend their time dealing with more (and trickier) regulations.

Tackling tough regulations (and staying in the good graces of your company's compliance officer) is one area where using the right tools can make all the difference. Tools like (ahem) Hootsuite help

you create custom permissions for users, save pre-approved content, run compliance checks, and get approvals before publishing, making managing regulations and approvals a whole lot easier.

So if you're trying to navigate complicated regulations on your own, your next assignment is to convince your boss that a compliance tool can improve efficiency and alleviate stress not only for you, but for all social media contributors throughout your org. [This guide](#) will help you make your case.





Building your social dream team: Is bigger really better?

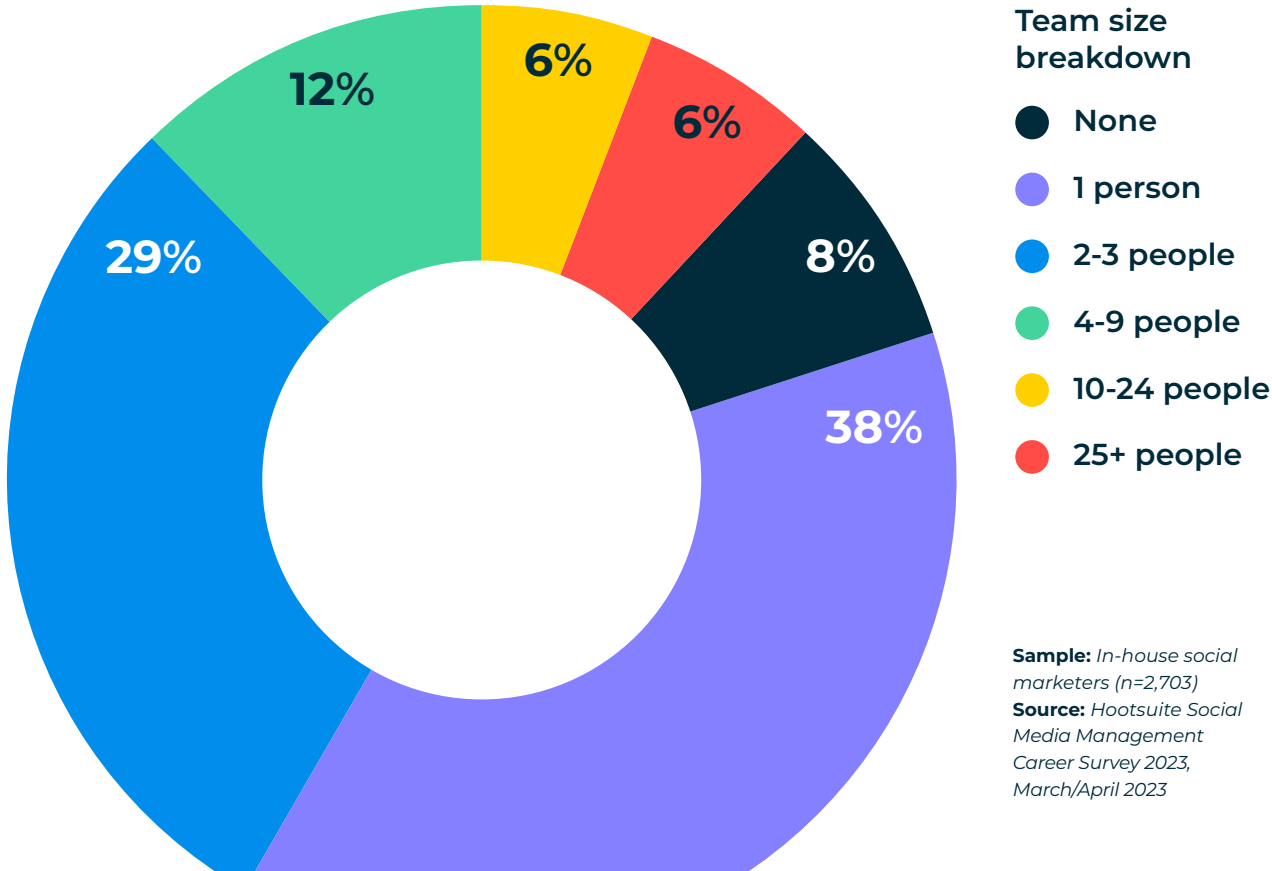
Social media marketing as a career is still in its infancy. That becomes even more evident when we look at social teams—or the lack thereof. Most commonly, organizations have just one person dedicated to social media.

We were shocked to learn that 8% of businesses don't have any dedicated social marketers. Even more surprising: These are brands that have a social media presence, but function without a designated team—which means every single person who works on social has other, possibly more pressing, priorities.

So how do these organizations do it? Or maybe the real question is: Are they doing it well? If yes, we'd love to know their secrets!

The vast majority of organizations (nine out of 10) have at least one person managing their social channels—so they know there's value in social marketing (even if they don't know how to show it).

Flying solo: The one-person team reigns supreme



For brands with *only* one social media specialist, that individual has it pretty rough—they feel inundated with tasks and don’t have much support. But as soon as you add another person to the team, things don’t look so grim.

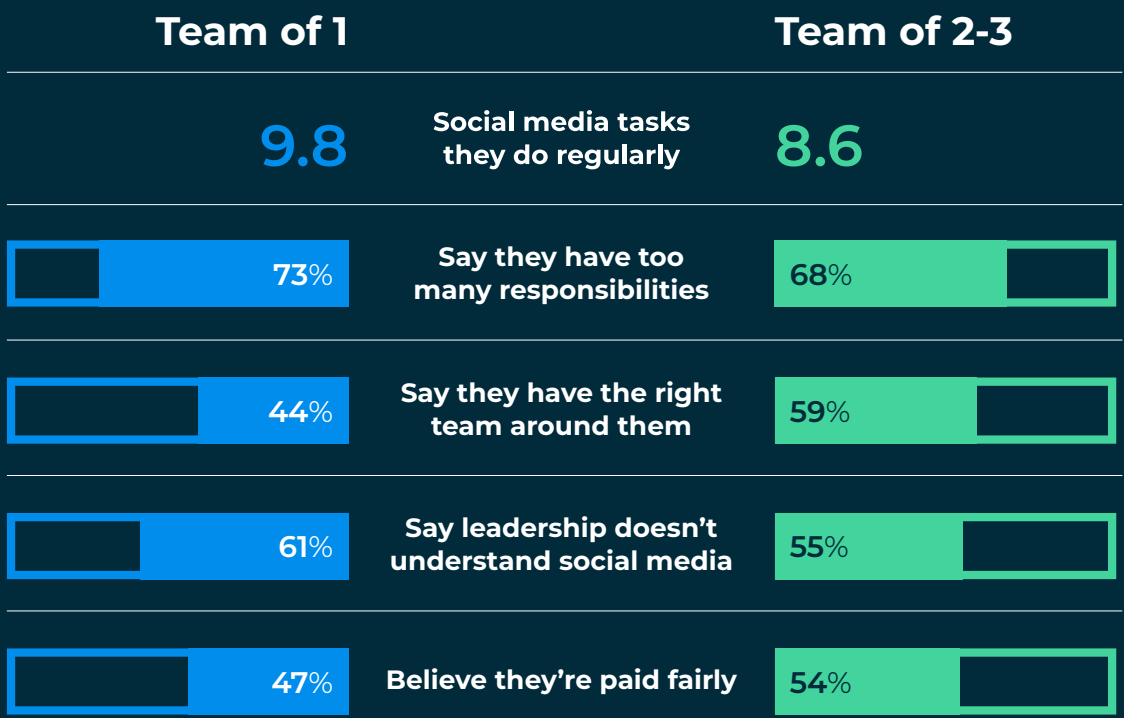
Maya Wesby, social media manager at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, is excited to be getting support on social tasks after tackling them on her own for so long.

“I’m happy with what I’m doing, but in order to grow, it can’t just be me,” she says. “It’ll be nice to have someone to bounce ideas off of in a social-first way.”

The difference between managing social media alone and working with just one or two teammates is substantial—it makes several aspects of the job drastically better.

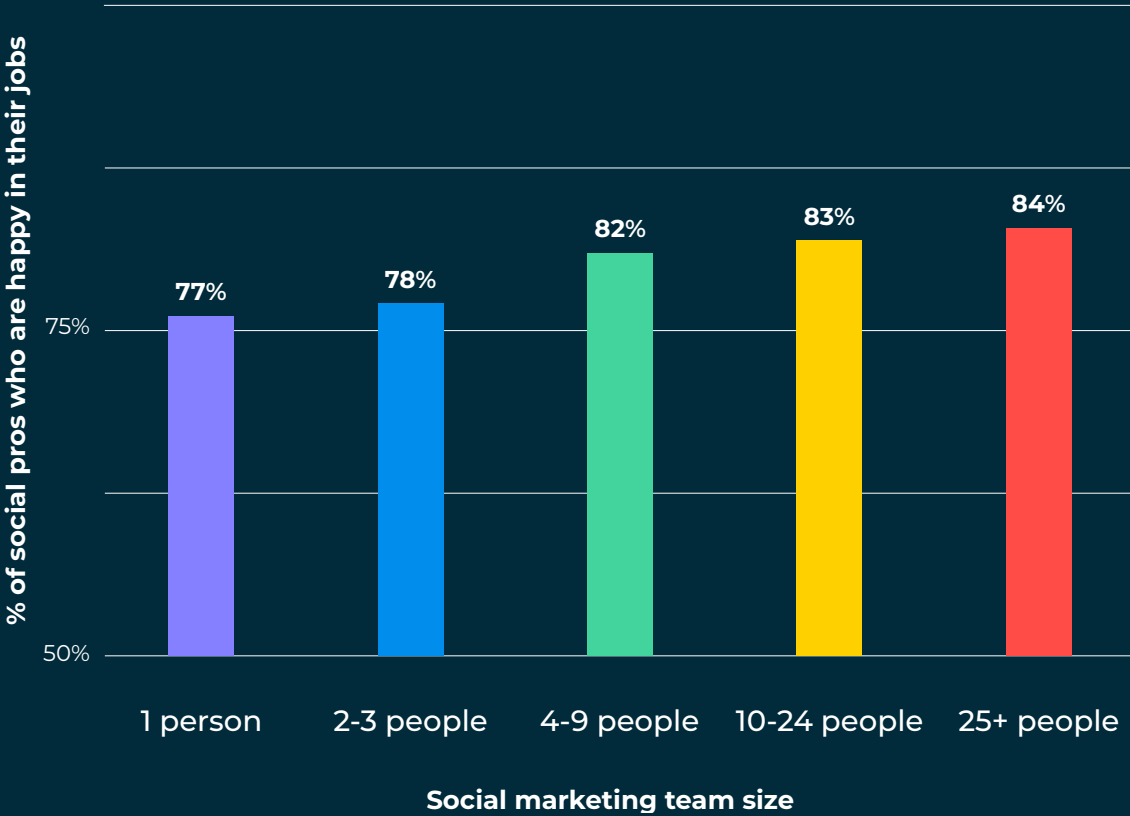
The game-changer: Being able to divide and conquer tasks.

Social marketers get by with a little help from their friends



Sample: In-house social marketers whose companies have social teams of 1 (n=1,031) or 2-3 (n=786)
Source: Hootsuite Social Media Management Career Survey 2023, March/April 2023

The more the merrier: Larger social teams have happier social marketers



Sample: In-house social marketers (n=2,703)
Source: Hootsuite Social Media Management Career Survey 2023, March/April 2023

Social marketers who sit on larger social teams are happier in their jobs. After all, they’re more likely to have what they need to do their best work—more resources, larger budgets, buy-in from leadership, teammates who specialize in niche areas, bigger (and better) support systems, and enough bodies to execute.

It’s no coincidence that those who work on teams of four or more are also much more likely to say they have the right team around them. This indicates that their teams have the right people in terms of headcount *and* skill—in other words, they’ve hit the social teams jackpot.

Of course, not all brands have the ability to bring in more staff. But that doesn’t mean you can’t get the support you need if you’re a social team of one.

Our reco: Ask for a dedicated buddy for *select* projects, such as big campaigns. Hiring freelancers or tagging in other in-house marketers for a fixed period of time can be a cost-effective way to get the help and camaraderie that can alter how you feel about the work in front of you—and your job overall, which hopefully makes it harder for your boss to turn it down.



Does your boss need to know social media to know your value?

More than half (56%) of the social marketers we surveyed say the people they work for don't understand social media.

Tommy Clark, founder of B2B social media agency Clark Media, and author of *Social Files* knows first-hand that having to convince top execs of social media's value is where many social pros get stuck.

"You have to figure out ways to craft the narrative around social's ROI," says Clark. "And it can't be 'Dude, I know this works. Just trust me and give me six months.' It's about using metrics and tying them back to business outcomes that leadership cares about."

But having bosses who don't understand your job isn't unique to social media management.

Even other marketing professionals can relate. Almost half of marketers say marketing isn't fully understood by their company either, according to [Marketing Week's 2023 Career and Salary Survey](#).

That's when it clicked: Having leaders who don't understand what you do might be more common than we thought. But, more importantly, it might not even be a problem. Your boss doesn't have to understand all the ins and outs of social media to see its value and recognize your impact. What it really comes down to is whether or not their lack of understanding affects you and your ability to do your job.

No matter what you're struggling with as a social marketer, like having managers who don't understand what you do, there are always others who are going through the same thing—you're not alone.

So find your allies—there's a big social marketer community out there! Those social pros and confidants can provide the support you need, along with advice and ideas that can help you overcome your hardships and create the changes you want to see.

So your boss doesn't understand social...eek!
Discover how you can change that



Pay and prejudice





Social marketer salaries fall short—do bonuses balance them out?



A day in the life of a social media manager: it's jam-packed, to say the least.

Social marketers handle *a lot*—is an average salary of US\$67,585 enough?

Almost half of social pros don't think so.

However, 51% also received a bonus in the last 12 months, adding US\$6,470 to their base salaries.

Still, many social marketers say it doesn't make up for all the work they do and challenges they face—like dealing with trolls and nasty comments, perpetual algorithm and network changes, and the emergence of brand new platforms that must be adopted ASAP (oh hi, Threads!).

But since half of social marketers *do* get bonuses, it shows that base salary doesn't always tell the full story when it comes to pay. It's why we've added average bonuses to most income figures throughout this section—and why you should always be aware of your organization's bonus and merit policies, including how to boost your chances of earning one.

The average social marketer makes a base salary of US\$67,585 and gets a US\$6,470 bonus.



The highest-paid social pros (and how everyone else stacks up)

There isn't anything too shocking about the groups of social marketers who earn the most money.

Boring? Maybe. But we kinda like it that way, because it means the profession isn't straying too far away from workforce norms.

Things do get a little more interesting when you look beyond the highest-earning social media managers, though—so prepare for some curveballs.

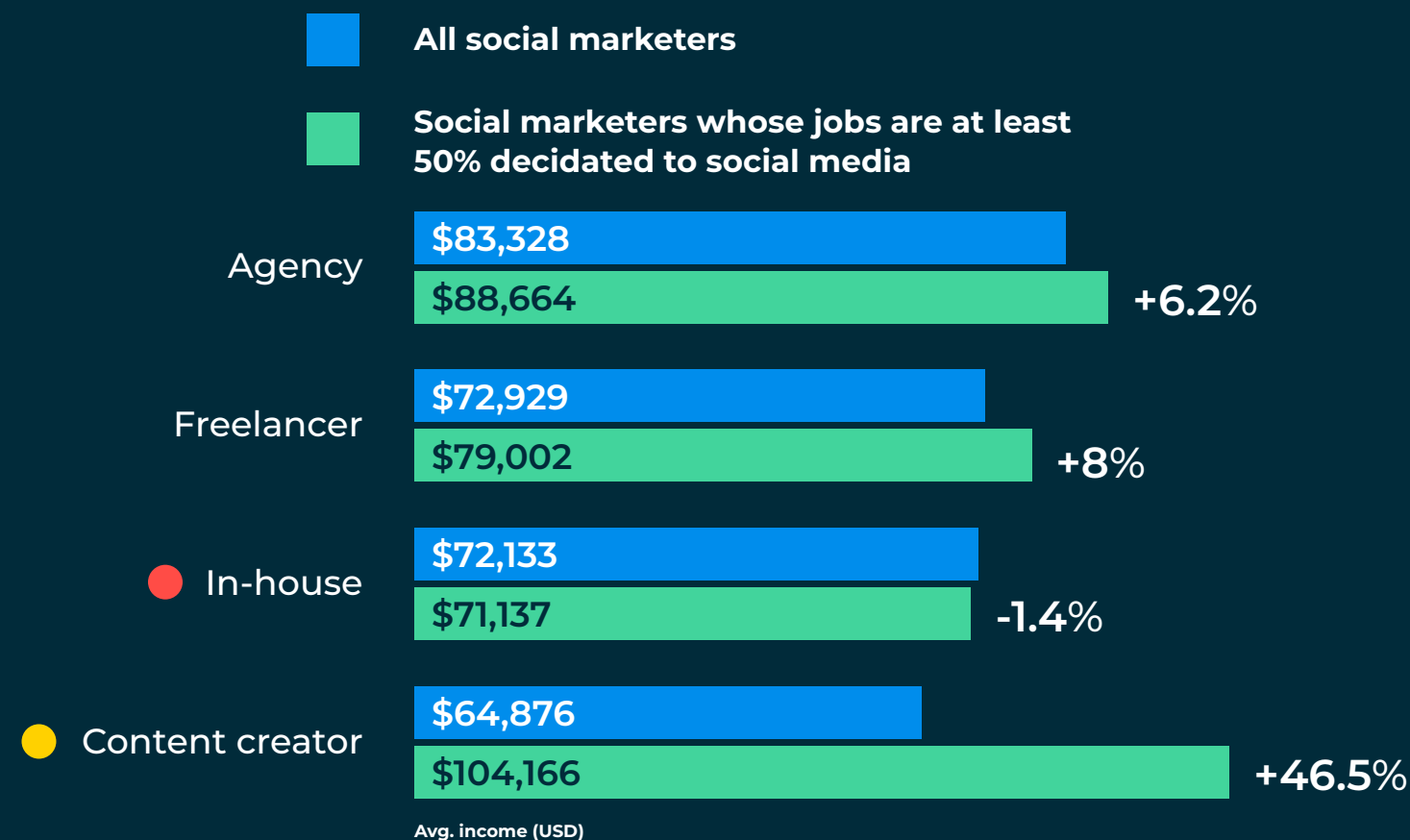
The top earners in social media are basically who you'd expect

	VPs, C-level executives, and founders/owners	US\$120,930
	Content creators who make at least half their income through social media	US\$104,166
	Have 15+ years of social media experience	US\$101,346
Work in the following industries:		
	Utilities	US\$91,903
	Financial services	US\$90,560
	Completed a master's degree, Ph.D., or post-doctoral degree	US\$90,184
	Work at agencies	US\$83,328
	Work for a large organization (1,000+ employees)	US\$82,061
	Live in the US	US\$78,475

Sample: Social media marketers (n=3,842)
Source: Hootsuite Social Media Management Career Survey 2023, March/April 2023
Note: Figures show respondents' total income (salary plus bonus where applicable for in-house and agency respondents; total income for freelancer and content creator respondents).

- **In-house social pros** are the only group that doesn't see a pay bump when they dedicate more than half their day to social media. It could be because those who spend less than half their day on social spend the rest of their time focusing on other, higher-paying lines of work, like PR and communications, online display advertising, email marketing, and search marketing.
- On average, **content creators** earn less than any other type of social marketer. Our hypothesis is that many only do the job as a side hustle (or that getting paid in free products and services makes up the difference). But when creators make social media their full-time gig, their overall earnings go through the roof.

Social Marketers' Pay x Employment Type

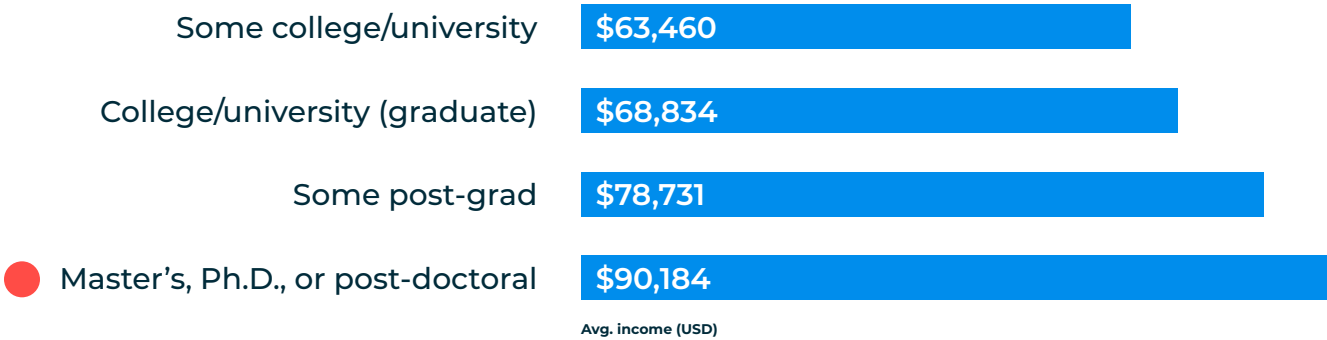


Sample: In-house social media marketers (n=2,703), agency social media marketers (n=517), freelance social media marketers (n=338), content creators (n=284).

Source: Hootsuite Social Media Management Career Survey 2023, March/April 2023

Note: Figures show respondents' total income (salary plus bonus where applicable for in-house and agency respondents; total income for freelancer and content creator respondents).

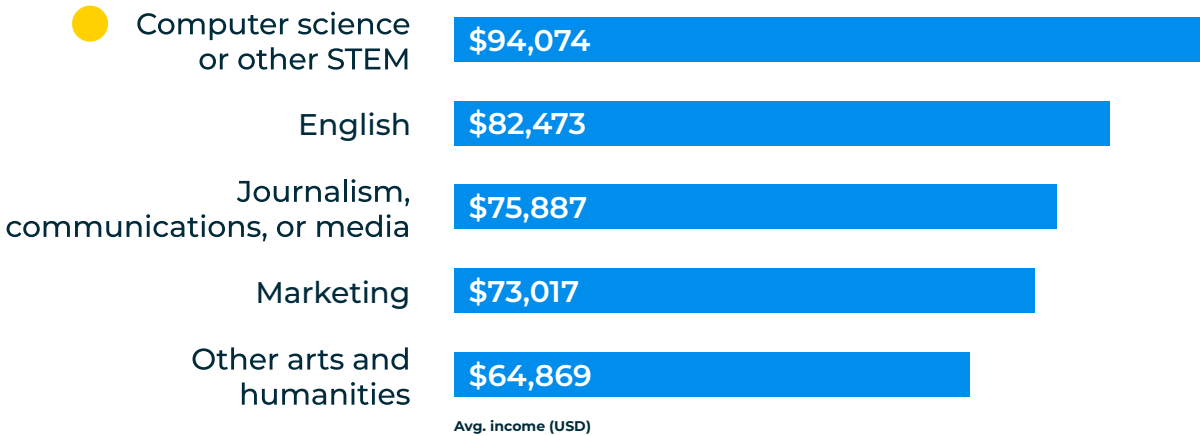
Social Marketers' Pay x Highest Level of Education



Does having a **master's degree or Ph.D.** make a meaningful difference for social marketers? Our data tells us that marketing, journalism, communications, and media programs equip students with the skills they need to excel as social marketers in the real world. So an education in one of those fields (or social media management) could bode well for social pros, but it doesn't have to be as elite as a master's. [Online social media certification courses](#) and other training and development opportunities that don't require as much of a commitment can be equally, if not more, beneficial. As far as we're concerned, a postgraduate degree doesn't make you any more likely to succeed as a social media manager—but it might help bring in more money, as this chart suggests. So it's up to you to decide if the extra effort (and tuition) is worth the extra cash when all is said and done.

Sample: In-house and agency social marketers (n=3,220)
Source: Hootsuite Social Media Management Career Survey 2023, March/April 2023
Note: Figures show respondents' total income (salary plus bonus, if applicable).

Social Marketers' Pay x Educational Background

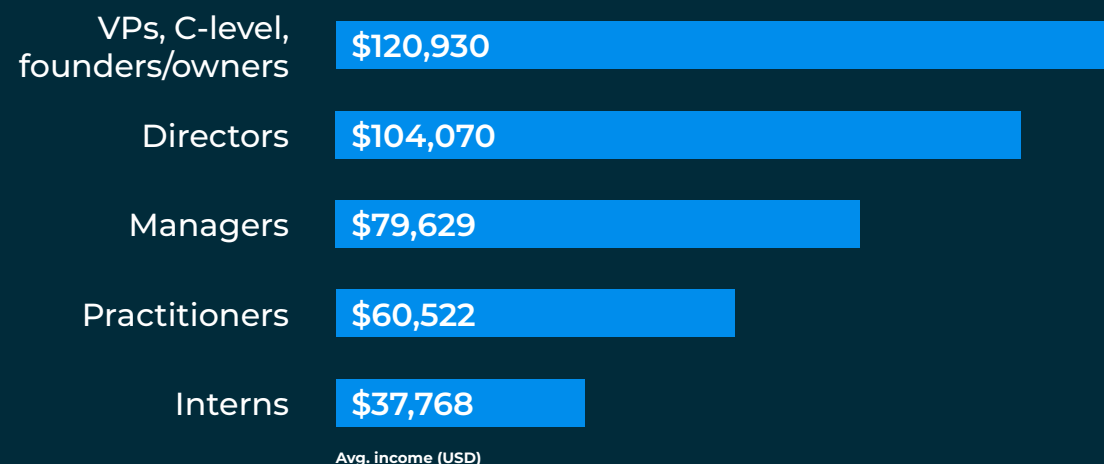


While social pros with a **computer science or STEM degree** earn the most money, they're more likely to struggle with social media tasks than most other groups, indicating those programs might not teach the skills they need for the job. So maybe the higher income makes their challenges more worthwhile, but why struggle when you don't have to? We'd encourage computer science and STEM grads to seek out training and development opportunities to get their skills up to speed.

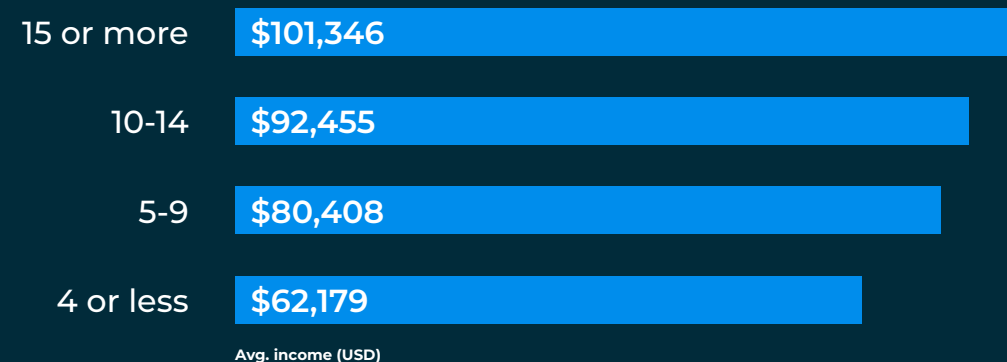
Sample: In-house and agency social marketers (n=3,220)
Source: Hootsuite Social Media Management Career Survey 2023, March/April 2023
Note: Figures show respondents' total income (salary plus bonus where applicable).

- We'll just leave this here... and point out that as social pros progress into more senior roles, their pay increases can be hefty. For example, managers earn 32% more than practitioners—so making that leap could mean a big bump in compensation. The jump up to director could come with a similarly large hike.
- As you'd expect, social marketers in higher-level positions earn more than those in lower-level positions. Similarly, social pros with more experience make more than those with less. This mimics pay patterns seen in other, more established professions—and it illustrates that social media managers can work their way up and get pay increases accordingly.

● Social Marketers' Pay x Job Level



● Social Marketers' Pay x Years of Social Media Experience



Sample: In-house and agency social marketers (n=3,220)

Source: Hootsuite Social Media Management Career Survey 2023, March/April 2023

Note: Figures show respondents' total income (salary plus bonus where applicable).

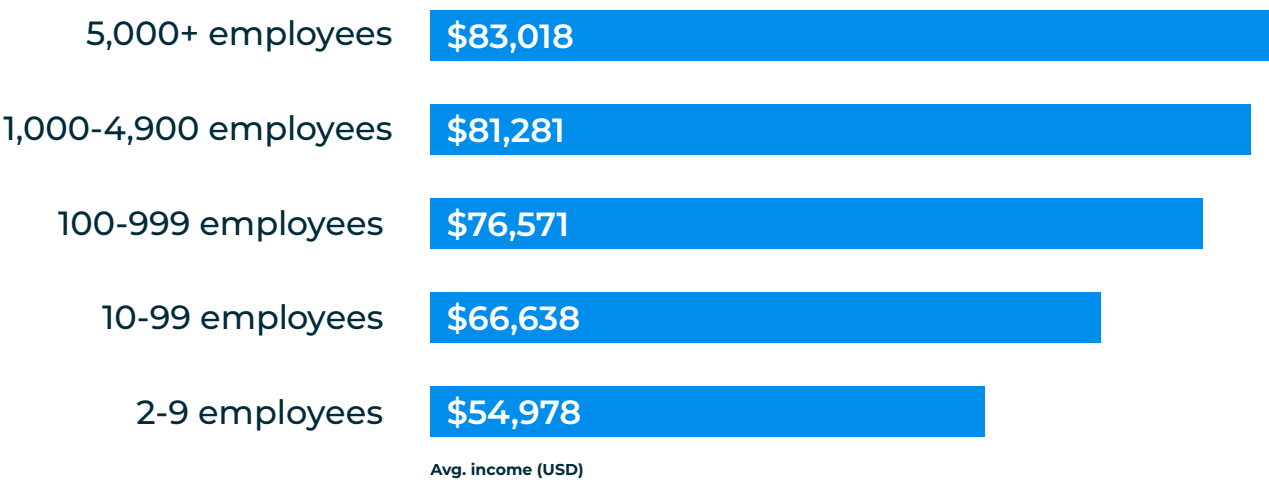
You'll likely make more money if you work for a larger organization—but pay isn't everything.

There are many perks of working for smaller organizations—ones that are sometimes valued even more than monetary rewards—that can be harder to come by at larger companies. At smaller brands, there's often an "all hands on deck" mentality. This can mean more varied responsibilities, exposure to different sides of the business, the chance to expand your horizons by trying new things, and working closely with senior leaders. These learning and growth opportunities can help enhance your hireability down the line. As well, when you work for smaller orgs, it can be easier to get noticed and make an impact—priceless!

Of course, money-making potential isn't the only benefit of working for larger organizations either. At companies with thousands of employees, you usually have access to a bigger network of people (and therefore more professional opportunities), a larger social team (so you can learn from and collaborate with those who do the same type of work as you), and more training (which is extremely valuable when you work in a medium that's always evolving). You might also have a more defined career path (thanks to clear-cut processes for advancement), as well as more structure (if that's the kind of environment you thrive in).

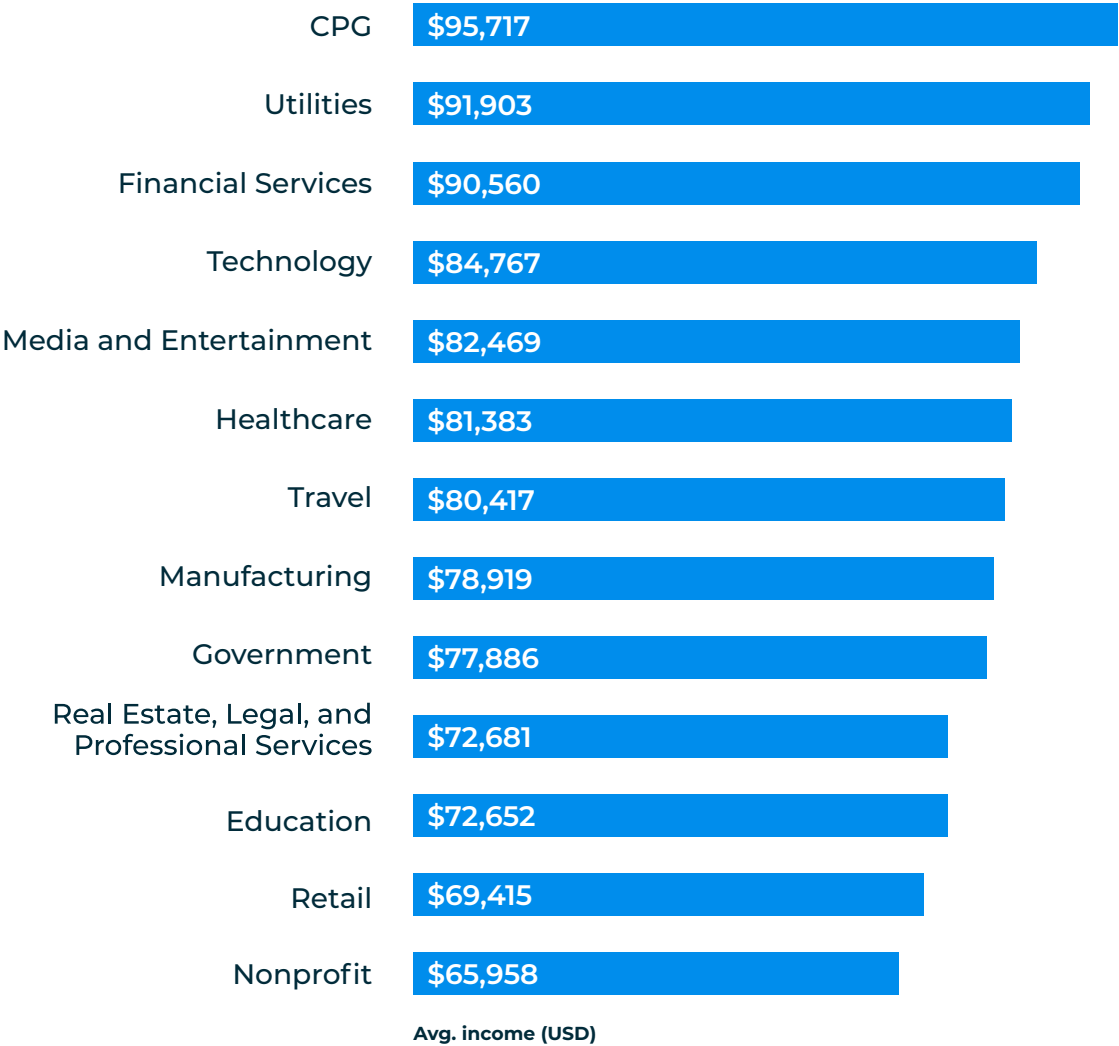
It's all about evaluating which perks mean the most to you—money included—and taking steps to land a job in an organization that's a good fit (if you're not already working for one you love).

Social Marketers' Pay x Company Size

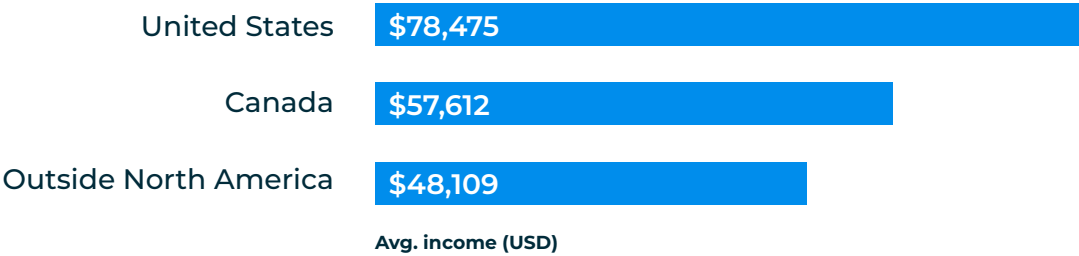


Sample: In-house and agency social marketers (n=3,220)
Source: Hootsuite Social Media Management Career Survey 2023, March/April 2023
Note: Figures show respondents' total income (salary plus bonus where applicable).

Social Marketers' Pay x Industry



Social Marketers' Pay x Country of Residence



Sample: In-house and agency social marketers (n=3,220)
Source: Hootsuite Social Media Management Career Survey 2023, March/April 2023
Note: Figures show respondents' total income (salary plus bonus where applicable).



Social marketing—another profession plagued by gender pay disparity

The overwhelming majority (73%) of social media marketers are women, making it even more agonizing to report that they don't earn nearly as much as men in the field.

Women's income is only 76% of men's—that's even lower than the US workforce average of 82%.

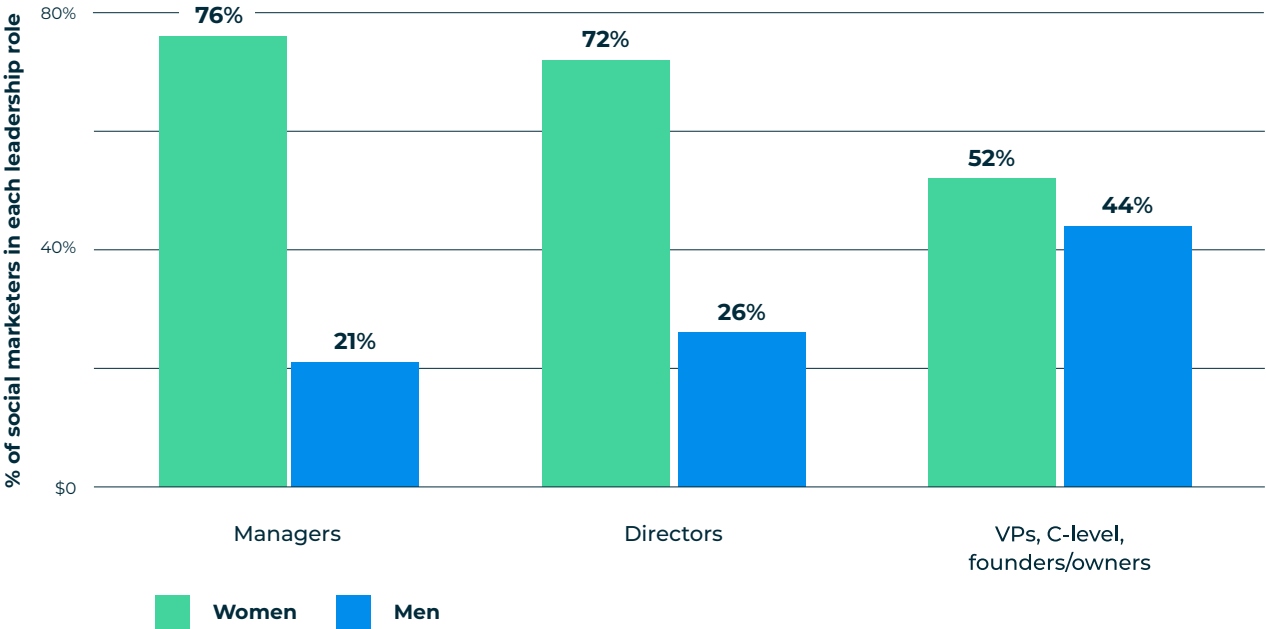
You'd guess then that women are less likely to be in leadership roles. Well, the opposite is true.

A glaring gap: Women in social make 3/4 of the income of men social pros



Sample: In-house and agency social marketers (n=3,220)
Source: Hootsuite Social Media Management Career Survey 2023, March/April 2023
Note: Figures show respondents' total income (salary plus bonus where applicable).

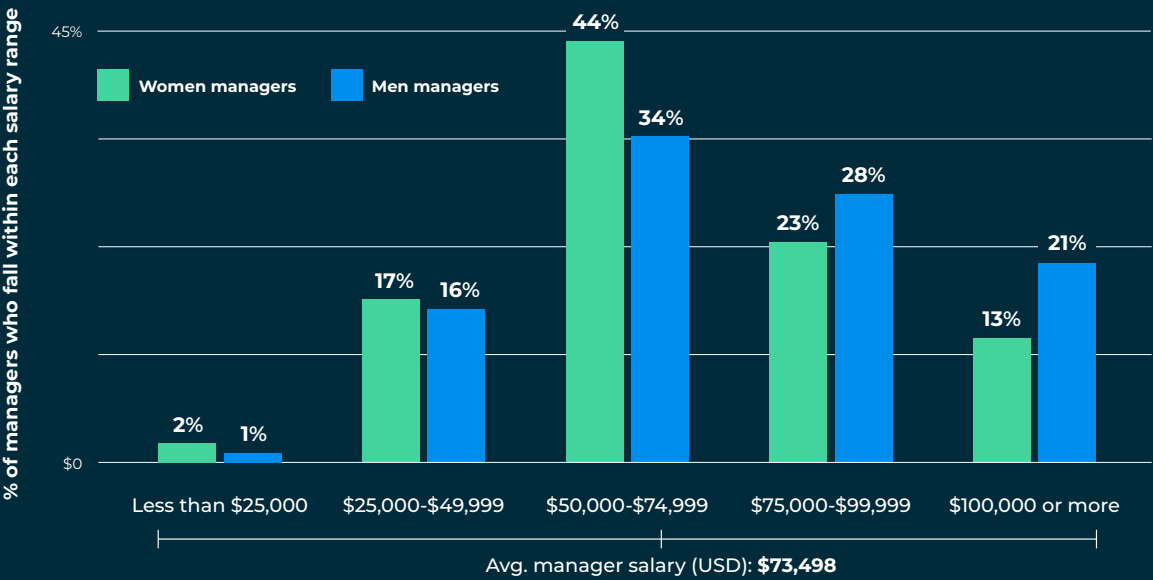
Top of their game: Women social pros dominate high-level positions



Sample: In-house and agency social marketers (n=3,220)
Source: Hootsuite Social Media Management Career Survey 2023, March/April 2023
Note: Percentages do not total 100% for all roles because some respondents identified as non-binary, preferred to self-describe in another way, or preferred not to answer.

In social media management, more women than men occupy leadership positions. Across the US workforce, only 37% of leadership roles are held by women, [research from LinkedIn](#) reveals. So social marketing bucks the trend in America (we'll take the small wins where we can get them).

Women managers in social media are less likely than men to earn big bucks

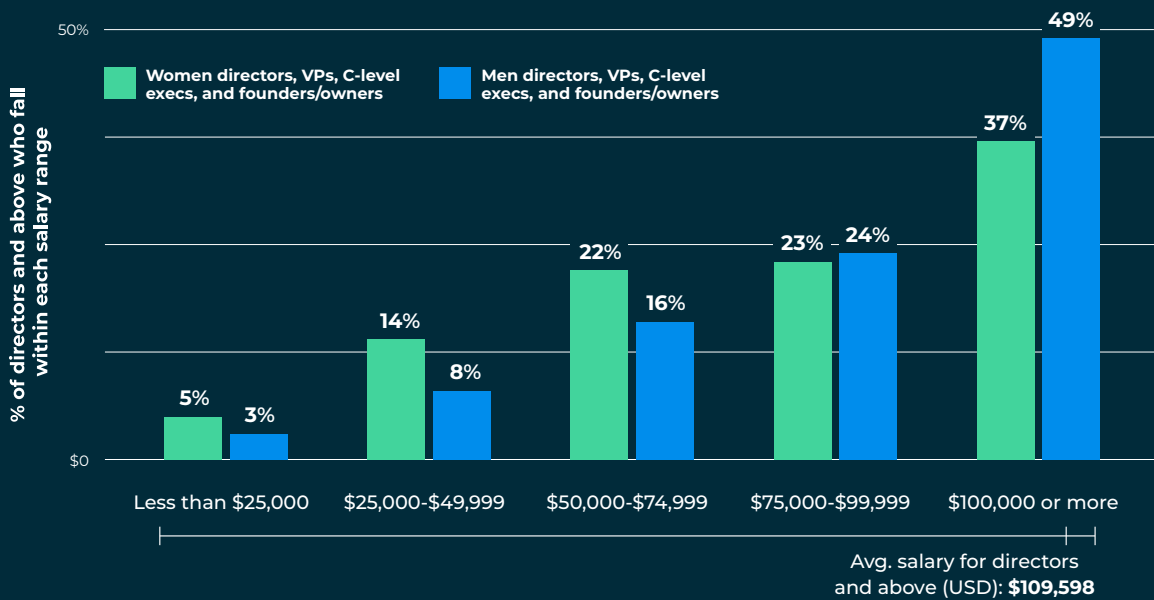


Sample: In-house and agency social marketers who oversee other social pros (n=704)
Source: Hootsuite Social Media Management Career Survey 2023, March/April 2023
Note: Figures show respondents' salary only.

That women could be such leaders in the field and still make less than colleagues who are men is a hard truth to accept.

The pay discrepancy becomes even clearer when you look at men's and women's salary ranges for the same positions.

Same leadership roles, different pay: Women's income doesn't measure up



Sample: In-house and agency social marketers who are directors, VPs, C-level executives, founders, or owners (n=360)
Source: Hootsuite Social Media Management Career Survey 2023, March/April 2023
Note: Figures show respondents' salary only.

As we continue to build up women to be leaders in social media marketing, it's critical that we also fight for pay equity in those roles (and all others)—because it should be table stakes.

Right now, it's not.

But we *can* get there by talking openly about pay (and normalizing those conversations). That's one of the best ways to expose inequities and put pressure on organizations to do something about it. As a social media manager, how epic would it be to post about your brand's own efforts to combat the gender pay equity gap? Now that's a goal to work towards.

Transgender people have found a home in social media management

In America, transgender people account for 0.5% of the population, as outlined in a Williams Institute [study](#). In social media marketing, the number of people who identify as transgender is significantly higher than the American average.

As far as pay goes, transgender people in the US make 32% less than their cisgender co-workers, according to a 2021 [McKinsey study](#). But our data reveals that salaried social marketers who identify as transgender make an average of 22% *more* than their cisgender peers and are more likely to hold higher-level positions.

In an industry that's full of people who are known to be more progressive and accepting, perhaps transgender individuals see the social media profession as a safe haven—it could be why they're attracted to social as a career and able to flourish in such a monumental way.

No notable differences in pay for other marginalized groups

Looking at race, sexual orientation, and disabilities, salaries are fairly equal across the board. No news is good news here.

But 19% of social pros say better diversity, equity, and inclusion practices within their organization would have the biggest positive impact on their career—and those who identify as members of historically marginalized groups are much more likely to feel this way than average.

So pay equity may not be a pressing issue for most underrepresented groups in social media management, but we still have a long way to go when it comes to improving diversity, equity, and inclusion in other areas of the field.



Social marketing vs. other marketing jobs: The hard truth about perceived value

Social marketers are multi-tasking mavens who bring incredible expertise to their roles. They work in a medium that has great (arguably the greatest) potential to reach their audiences, bring in new customers, and increase sales. And they put up with a lot of sh*t—often with a smile.

It's not hard to understand why social pros might want a pay bump.

But of those who think they deserve a raise, some say there's another key reason: Other marketing jobs in their organization pay more.

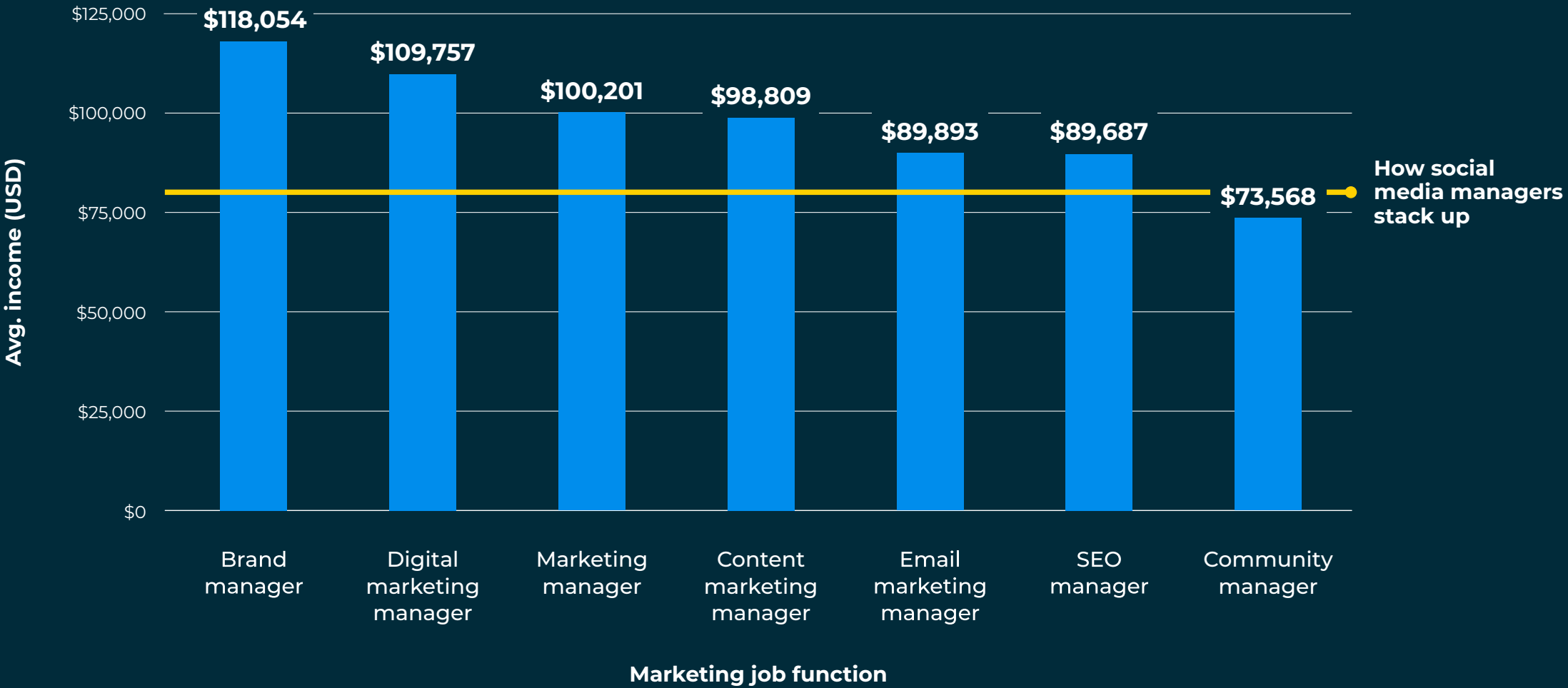
And US [income data](#) from Built In backs them up.

Looking at total pay (base salaries plus additional cash compensation like bonuses), people in other managerial marketing roles tend to make more than social media managers—highlighting that social pros aren't valued as much as other marketers.

That needs to change.

So if this doesn't sit well with you, ensure it's one of your list items when making your case for a raise. Do your research and come prepared with the pay ranges of other marketing roles as they pertain to your organization. (You might even have a legal right to know, depending on where you live.)

The cost of being social? Making less than your marketing peers

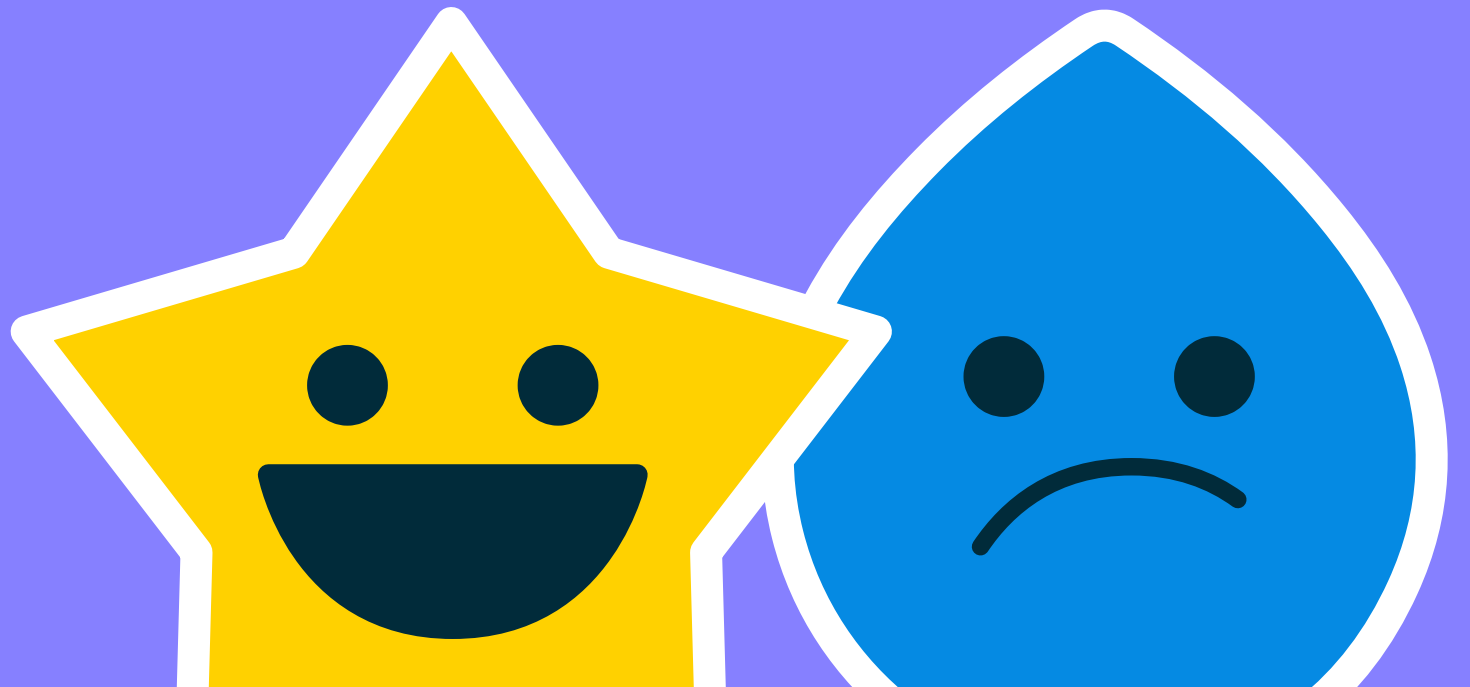


Sample: US marketers

Source: Built In (data pulled in July 2023)

Note: Figures are based on responses gathered from Built In from anonymous employees in the US, and show respondents' total compensation (salary plus additional cash compensation where applicable). The difference between total compensation reported by US social media managers in Hootsuite's and Built In's surveys is <1%.

Moving up, cashing in, and burning out





Advocating for higher pay... pays off

In-house and agency social marketers make an average salary of US\$67,585 per year—and almost half of them don't think their earnings accurately reflect the work they do.

Simply put, they feel underpaid.

The majority of social pros also report that their bosses don't understand social media—yet they get to decide how much a social media manager is worth. Womp-womp.

Truth is, the only people who really know what a social marketer should make are the ones who do the job (even if they are a *little* biased).

“I think social media managers should make upwards of \$100,000 a year, which maybe some people will gawk at,” says Haily Moulton, growth marketing manager at Biteable. “But when you look at all the different facets of the role—they're doing strategy, oftentimes they're doing content creation, they're creating graphics, they're working with executives explaining their strategy, and they're the face and voice of your company.”

Social media managers should make upwards of \$100,000 a year.... They're the face and voice of your company.

Haily Moulton
Growth Marketing Manager, Biteable



That’s why it’s so vital for social media managers to be their own advocates when it comes to pay increases—and they seem to be doing pretty well for themselves. Two-thirds (67%) of salaried social marketers have received a pay increase within their company. How’d they get it? They *asked*.

Three out of four social marketers who’ve asked for a raise, got one—not only because they deserve it, but because their rationales are so compelling.

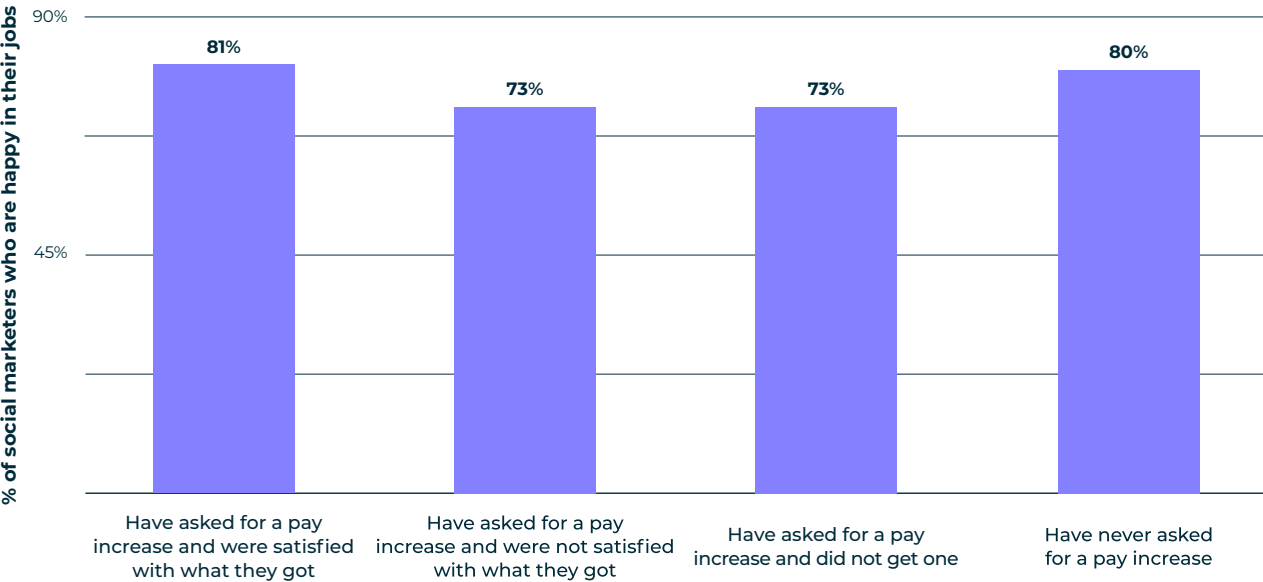
Workload is the No. 1 reason social marketers would ask for a raise



Sample: In-house and agency social marketers (n=3,220)
Source: Hootsuite Social Media Management Career Survey 2023, March/April 2023

But just because they ask for more money doesn’t mean they get as much as they think they should. Does the outcome of salary negotiations change how they feel about their job?

Social pros who got a small raise are as salty as those who got nothing



Sample: In-house and agency social marketers (n=3,220)
Source: Hootsuite Social Media Management Career Survey 2023, March/April 2023

It makes sense that social marketers who got a raise they were pleased with are happier in their jobs than those who got a raise they were disappointed with.

But it's interesting to see that those who got nothing at all are as happy—or as bitter—as those who got something, even though it wasn't quite what they wanted. (For the record, when it comes to pay, we're here for stubbornness—it could be what ultimately helps drive the industry forward.)

As for the social marketers who've never even asked for a raise? They're just about as happy as those who got an increase they liked. And why ask for a raise when you're already content with the salary you're getting?

But this group of social pros who've never asked for an increase could also be happy because more than half of them received one anyway. Extra cash is always a welcome surprise, but that kind of gesture from your organization demonstrates their gratitude and makes you feel noticed and valued—if that doesn't contribute to job satisfaction, we don't know what will.

So it is possible to get a pay increase as a social marketer without asking, but waiting for a raise to fall in your lap is not a reliable tactic. Given how common it is to get one when you initiate the conversation, you might as well take your chances.

And, hey, even if you're not successful, there are still positives to take away from the experience (aside from the experience itself, of course). You establish a reputation as someone who's willing to advocate for themselves, and, successful or not, it means you're blazing the trail for other social marketers that will follow.

Ask for a raise with confidence. Check out our Salary Negotiation Guide.

At a glance: Social marketer pay increases

Who’s most and least likely to have received a raise?
(compared to the average)

Most likely		Least likely	
Identify as gay	+13%	Work 29 hours or less per week	-26%
Managers and directors	+10%	Work for organizations with no dedicated social team	-18%
Have 5-14 years of social media experience	+9%	Identify as transgender	-17%
Work for an agency	+7%	Identify as disabled	-17%
Work in the financial services industry	+4%	Identify as non-binary	-15%
Work for large organizations (1,000+ employees)	+4%	Identify as Asian	-15%
		Have 4 years or less of social media experience	-15%
		Studied computer science or STEM in school	-15%

Looking at identity-based groups, who’s more or less likely to have received a raise? (compared to the average)

Men	-5%	vs.	Women	+1%
White	+3%	vs.	BIPOC	-6%
Cisgender	+1%	vs.	Transgender	-17%
Straight	+1%	vs.	LGBQ	-3%
Not disabled	+1%	vs.	Disabled	-3%

Sample: In-house and agency social marketers (n=3,220)
Source: Hootsuite Social Media Management Career Survey 2023, March/April 2023
Note: Some groups have been removed for sample size and other variables. “LGBQ” refers to respondents who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or queer; transgender respondents self-identified in a separate survey question and are listed separately in this chart. All percentages shown are comparisons with the average of all in-house and agency social marketers who have received a pay increase while working in social media (67.2%).



Social marketing isn't immune to the gender promotion gap

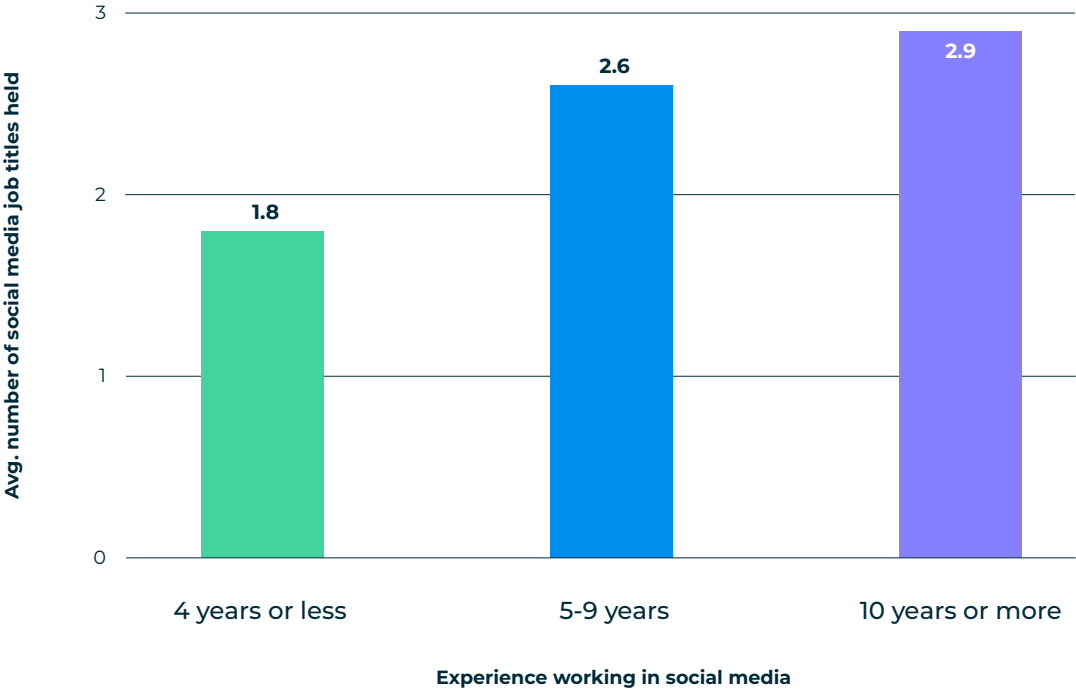
Promotions and progressions in social media management—yet another area where it's up to social marketers to be their own advocates and forge their own paths. It's par for the course when you work in a newer industry.

The social marketers who are currently in the field have already started this work, and guess what? Promotions happen.

Social marketers who've been in the field longer have held more job titles, suggesting a correlation between having more experience and gaining more seniority (or getting promoted).

Those in higher-level positions are also more likely to have been promoted during their social media careers than those in lower-level positions. That may seem obvious, considering they are more senior (and being promoted is one of the most direct paths to getting there), but it reiterates the point that promotions in social media marketing happen in the same way you might expect them to in other, more established professions. And that's good news.

The OGs of social marketing have held their fair share of job titles



Sample: In-house and agency social marketers (n=3,220)
Source: Hootsuite Social Media Management Career Survey 2023, March/April 2023

Which social pros are most likely to have been promoted?



Men are **19%** more likely than women



Those who sit on a larger social team (4+ people) are **26%** more likely than those who sit on a smaller social team (1-3 people)



Those who work at an agency are **46%** more likely than those who work in-house



Those who have an educational certificate in social media are **35%** more likely than those who don't

Sample: In-house and agency social marketers (n=3,220)

Source: Hootsuite Social Media Management Career Survey 2023, March/April 2023

So who's most likely to get promoted?

In social media marketing, men are more likely than women to have been promoted—it's an age-old story across the global workforce, but one we hoped we wouldn't have to tell, given that almost three in four social marketers are women.

In corporate America, women are still severely underrepresented in senior leadership roles, according to a recent McKinsey study, [*Women in the Workplace 2022*](#). The crux of the problem is at that first step up to manager—women have the hardest time breaking into managerial roles from entry-level positions.

And seeing that more than half of women have *never* been promoted while working in social media, social marketing hasn't been spared from the gender promotion gap.

Even sitting on a larger social team doesn't do much to improve women's chances of getting promoted—but for men, it's a different story.

Men who sit on social teams of four or more people are 22% more likely than women who sit on the same size teams to have been promoted. Looks like men have the upper hand there, too.

In general, though, there's more room to grow when your team consists of several people who hold a variety of positions and have a range of different skills.

Social marketers on smaller teams may not have that, but it could open doors for *inventing* their next (more advanced) role and possibly building their own team.

So if your main goal is to learn from those around you and move up the ranks at a steady pace, an organization with a larger social team is your match. But if creating your own more senior role and assembling a team interests you, a company with a smaller social team could have greater potential to provide that opportunity.

Additionally, those who've received a social media certificate are more likely to have been promoted than those who haven't.

If you fall into the latter category and you're looking to take a leap in your career, [Hootsuite Academy](#) has a variety of social media certification courses that you can complete from anywhere—they'll help you build your skills so you have an edge when the next promotion cycle comes around.

65% of social pros who work at an agency have been promoted, compared to 45% of those who work in-house

At a glance: Social marketer promotions

Who's most and least likely to have received a promotion? (compared to the average)

Most likely		Least likely	
Work in the consumer packaged goods (CPG) industry	+42%	Work for a very small organization (2-9 employees)	-27%
Work for an agency	+36%	Live in Canada	-16%
Work in the travel industry	+25%	Identify as neurodivergent	-12%
Work in the financial services, utilities, or media and entertainment industries	+15%	Work in the office full-time	-11%
Sit on a larger social team (4+ people)	+13%	Sit on a smaller social team (1-3 people)	-11%
		Identify as Black	-11%

Looking at identity-based groups, who's more or less likely to have received a promotion? (compared to the average)

Men	+9%	vs.	Women	-2%
White	+2%	vs.	BIPOC	-6%
Cisgender	-1%	vs.	Transgender	+21%
Straight	(not more or less likely) 0%	vs.	LGBQ	(not more or less likely) 0%
Not disabled	(not more or less likely) 0%	vs.	Disabled	-2%

Sample: In-house and agency social marketers (n=3,220)
Source: Hootsuite Social Media Management Career Survey 2023, March/April 2023
Note: Some groups have been removed for sample size and other variables. "LGBQ" refers to respondents who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or queer; transgender respondents self-identified in a separate survey question and are listed separately in this chart. "Disabled" refers to respondents who identify as having a physical disability, a learning disability, or neurodivergence. All percentages shown are comparisons with the average of all in-house and agency social marketers who have received a promotion while working in social media (47.9%).



Social marketers survive a year of mass layoffs

Throughout 2022 and much of 2023, it felt like mass layoffs made the headlines almost every day by virtue of big-name companies (that already garner a lot of media attention) being at the center of it all.

In reality, layoffs accounted for only 1% of the American workforce, according to the [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#).

That number is slightly higher in social media management, where 7% of workers have been laid off in the last year. But across all industries, social marketers were far more likely to be kept than cut.

Still, some industries were less affected by layoffs than others.

Social marketers at nonprofits enjoy unmatched job security

Consumer Packaged Goods (CPG)



Utilities, Travel



Technology, Media and Entertainment



Healthcare, Government, Education



Nonprofit



Social marketers laid off in the last 12 months

Sample: In-house and agency social marketers who work in each industry listed (n=95-729)
Source: Hootsuite Social Media Management Career Survey 2023, March/April 2023

Social marketers who were more likely to get the pink slip in the last year work in CPG, utilities, travel, tech, and media and entertainment—industries that were hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftereffects.

The CPG industry is still bearing the brunt of the global supply chain crisis. The tech industry has been trying to offset hiring spree that happened when demand for tech skyrocketed during lockdowns. The media and entertainment industry continues to face repercussions of movie theater and production company shutdowns. And the travel industry is struggling to recover after enduring years with barely any travelers.

It's highly likely that many, if not all, social marketing layoffs were connected to the pandemic, so it's not necessarily an indication of what future layoffs will look like across the field. (It's why we're interested in seeing how layoffs play out over the next few years.)

But we hope the limited number of layoffs during such a trying time demonstrates that businesses are (finally) starting to realize the value of social media and the people who manage it.

7% of social marketers have been laid off in the last year

At a glance: Social marketer layoffs (in the last 12 months)

Who's most and least likely to have been laid off? (compared to the average)

Most likely		Least likely	
Identify as physically disabled	+339%	Have 15+ years of social media experience	-74%
Identify as transgender	+338%	Distributed social marketers (spend less than 10% of their day on social)	-62%
VPs and C-level executives	+197%	Haven't tried to negotiate pay while working in social	-59%
Studied English in school	+161%	Work for a large organization (1,000+ employees)	-58%
Work in the consumer packaged goods (CPG) industry	+155%	Practitioners (work within a team or as an individual contributor)	-53%

Looking at identity-based groups, who's more or less likely to have been laid off? (compared to the average)

Men	+106%	vs.	Women	-29%
White	-6%	vs.	BIPOC	-35%
Cisgender	-17%	vs.	Transgender	+338%
Straight	-18%	vs.	LGBQ	+89%
Not disabled	-44%	vs.	Disabled	+136%

Sample: In-house and agency social marketers (n=3,220)

Source: Hootsuite Social Media Management Career Survey 2023, March/April 2023

Note: Some groups have been removed for sample size and other variables. "LGBQ" refers to respondents who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or queer; transgender respondents self-identified in a separate survey question and are listed separately in this chart. "Disabled" refers to respondents who identify as having a physical disability, a learning disability, or neurodivergence. All percentages shown are comparisons with the average of all in-house and agency social marketers who have been laid off in the past 12 months (6.6%).



The future is bright for social marketers—but some don't want to see it

Social media is constantly growing, changing, and advancing—it's what makes working in the field so damn hard (*screams into the abyss at algorithm changes and yet another social trend that came and went before you had the chance to hop on it*).

At the same time, it's what makes social media marketing a bulletproof career. There will always be a need for people who can keep up with it all and use that knowledge to reach customers in a medium that's becoming increasingly effective at doing so.

Social marketing isn't going anywhere, and neither are the 61% of social media managers who see it as a long-term career.

But a career in social isn't for everyone—24% plan to leave the field in the next 12 months.

So what factors make social pros more likely to stay in or leave the industry? To find out, we looked back at the five ingredients that create our “Recipe for Happiness in Social” (see page 8 for a refresher).

Those who meet the “Recipe for Happiness” criteria are more likely to see social marketing as a long-term career (though working in the office every day has no impact).

Social pros who meet the 'Happiness' benchmarks are in it for the long haul

What factors make social marketers more likely to **stay** in social media long-term?

- Recipe for Happiness
- Doing social marketing full-time (more than 90% of the day) ☒
 - Working for a large organization (1,000+ employees) ☒
 - Sitting on a larger social media team (4+ people) ☒
 - Working in the office full-time (5 days a week) ☐
 - Getting paid fairly (and strongly believing it) ☒

Social pros who think they're not paid fairly are planning their escape

What factors make social marketers more likely to **consider leaving** the field of social media?

- Recipe for Misery?
- Spending little time working on social (less than 10% of the day) ☐
 - Working for a small organization (2-9 employees) ☐
 - Sitting on a smaller social media team (1-3 people) ☐
 - Working remotely or having hybrid work arrangements ☐
 - Not getting paid fairly (and strongly believing it) ☒

Sample: In-house and agency social marketers (n=3,220)

Source: Hootsuite Social Media Management Career Survey 2023, March/April 2023

But for the most part, those who are furthest away from fitting the “Happiness” criteria aren’t more likely to say they plan to leave the industry (turns out it’s not a recipe for misery after all). Only those who think they’re definitely not paid fairly are more likely to say they want to quit.

So they may not be planning their exit, but many who fall into the “misery” category don’t see social media as a long-term career—that includes social pros who work for companies with two to nine employees, spend less than 10% of their day on social (Distributed social marketers), and work for brands that don’t have any dedicated social media staff.

It seems that reasons for wanting to flee the social media industry are based on individual decisions, rather than industry-wide problems—that’s positive. But when social marketers don’t see their own profession as a viable career, that sentiment can rub off on business leaders and set the entire industry back.

It means everyone else has a responsibility to continue to find practical ways to prove (and share) the value of social media, fight for the pay and promotions they deserve, seek out skill development opportunities, and build social marketer communities—because we can do more when we work together.

At a glance: Social marketing long-haulers

Who’s most and least likely to see social media as a long-term career?
(compared to the average)

Most likely		Least likely	
Have 15+ years of social media experience	+13%	Distributed social marketers (spend less than 10% of their day on social)	-34%
Sit on a larger social team (4+ people)	+13%	Work for an organization with no dedicated social team	-17%
Strongly believe they’re paid fairly	+12%	Work for a very small organization (2-9 employees)	-16%
Work for a large organization (1,000+ employees)	+11%	Identify as having a mobility or motor skills impairment	-13%
Devoted social marketers (spend 90-100% of their day on social)	+10%	Live in Canada	-12%

Looking at identity-based groups, who’s more or less likely to view social media as a long-term career?
(compared to the average)

Men	+1%	vs.	Women	(not more or less likely) 0%
White	+1%	vs.	BIPOC	-3%
Cisgender	+1%	vs.	Transgender	-11%
Straight	(not more or less likely) 0%	vs.	LGBQ	+1%
Not disabled	-3%	vs.	Disabled	(not more or less likely) 0%

Sample: In-house and agency social marketers (n=3,220)
Source: Hootsuite Social Media Management Career Survey 2023, March/April 2023
Note: Some groups have been removed for sample size and other variables. “LGBQ” refers to respondents who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or queer; transgender respondents self-identified in a separate survey question and are listed separately in this chart. “Disabled” refers to respondents who identify as having a physical disability, a learning disability, or neurodivergence. All percentages shown are comparisons with the average of all in-house and agency social marketers who see social media as a long-term career (60.6%).

At a glance: Social marketing drop-outs

Who’s most and least likely to plan to leave the field of social media?
(compared to the average)

Most likely		Least likely	
Studied computer science or another STEM in school	+46%	Have 15+ years of social media experience	-56%
Strongly believe they’re not paid fairly	+42%	Strongly believe they’re paid fairly	-29%
Identify as transgender	+41%	Sit on a larger social team (4+ people)	-13%
Studied English in school	+40%	Work for a large organization (1,000+ employees)	-13%
Identify as physically disabled	+30%	Work in the consumer packaged goods (CPG) industry	-12%
		Practitioners (work within a team or as an individual contributor)	-9%

Looking at identity-based groups, who’s more or less likely to plan to leave the field of social media?
(compared to the average)

Men	+3%	vs.	Women	-1%
White	-5%	vs.	BIPOC	+13%
Cisgender	-2%	vs.	Transgender	+41%
Straight	-4%	vs.	LGBQ	+12%
Not disabled	(not more or less likely) 0%	vs.	Disabled	+11%

Sample: In-house and agency social marketers (n=3,220)
Source: Hootsuite Social Media Management Career Survey 2023, March/April 2023
Note: Some groups have been removed for sample size and other variables. “LGBQ” refers to respondents who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or queer; transgender respondents self-identified in a separate survey question and are listed separately in this chart. “Disabled” refers to respondents who identify as having a physical disability, a learning disability, or neurodivergence. All percentages shown are comparisons with the average of all in-house and agency social marketers who plan to leave the field of social media in the next year (23.8%).



The dark side of social marketing

In today's world, mental health challenges are almost universal. A whopping 76% of US workers admit to having at least one symptom of a mental health condition, according to the Mind Share Partners' [2021 Mental Health at Work Report](#).

Not quite as many social marketers report having a mental health condition, but it's still well above half at 57%.

As mental health issues continue to rise, US professionals have found themselves re-evaluating the importance of employer support for mental health—and 81% say it'll be a large part of their future job decisions, as outlined in the American Psychology Association's [2022 Work and Well-being Survey](#).

Many social pros work at organizations that already provide some support—61% have flexible work hours, more than two-thirds have hybrid or fully remote work arrangements, and 33% receive benefits that include mental health coverage.

57% of social marketers identify as someone with a mental health condition

Some companies do even more.

Citizen Relations, a Toronto-based PR agency with a focus on social media, offers a robust suite of mental health tools, services, and programs to their employees.

About 2 in 5 social marketers say their work has a negative impact on their mental health

Laura Brown, the agency's VP of digital strategy, says all employees have a free subscription to the *Calm* app, and the opportunity to attend quarterly mental health workshops, among many other mental health supports.

"One of our recent workshops covered how to adapt working styles to suit people who live with neurodivergence," says Brown. "So they can function—and thrive—while working on social media in an agency environment."

This kind of mental health support is part of what makes the social media industry more accessible (and attractive) to those with mental health challenges.

But whether or not you have a condition, the job of a social media manager can take a toll—41% confess their work has a negative impact on their mental health.

Naturally, we wanted to dig into why.

We looked at several factors that have the potential to hinder mental health, including how much time social marketers spend working on social media each day, how much (or rather, how little) vacation time they take, their work location (office, hybrid, or remote), and whether or not they have flexible work hours and locations.

None of them made much of a difference.

The ones that did? Feeling immensely underpaid and working extra long hours—61% of social marketers who strongly believe they're not paid fairly and nearly half of those who work 45 hours or more per week say their work has compromised their mental health.

This underscores the importance of setting boundaries to help keep your work hours in check, as well as getting comfortable with the idea of advocating for better pay.

Most of all, in a job that can send you spiraling, preventing burnout is key. And knowing the signs can help you stop it in its tracks.

Nawal Mustafa, cognitive neuroscientist and psychological health educator, says to watch out for these clues:

- No longer finding your job fun or fulfilling
- Feeling like you can't handle the work in front of you
- Believing you don't bring value to your work, team, or organization
- Disregarding your own needs and not carving out time for yourself

So if you think you're not into your job anymore, it could just be burnout in disguise, and it's critical to make that distinction so you can take care of it before making any rash decisions.

If burnout is bringing you down, there are many things you can do to pull yourself out of it—like making a point to take lots of breaks, changing up your day-to-day work routine, jotting down all your wins (even the small ones), surrounding yourself with people who inspire and uplift you, and prioritizing work/life balance.

But even Mustafa agrees that managing your work hours is the best way to avoid burnout and safeguard your mental health.

She also emphasizes asking for help—whether it be from your colleagues or your boss—because working in social media is tough and it's okay to feel like you need a little extra support from time to time.

***48% of social pros
who work overtime say
their work compromises
their mental health***

At a glance: Social marketers negatively affected by the job

Who’s most and least likely to say their work negatively affects their mental health? (compared to the average)

Most likely		Least likely	
Believe they’re not paid fairly	+27%	Believe they’re paid fairly	-24%
Identify as having a learning or cognitive disability	+24%	Studied computer science or another STEM in school	-17%
Identify as physically disabled	+20%	Directors	-15%
Studied English in school	+20%	Sit on a larger social team (4+ people)	-15%
Work in the retail industry	+20%	Divided social marketers (spend 10-49% of their day on social)	-14%
Identify as having a mental health condition	+19%	Identify as Hispanic	-12%
Work for an agency	+18%		
Work 45 hours or more per week	+18%		

Looking at identity-based groups, who’s more or less likely to say their work negatively affects their mental health? (compared to the average)

Men	-2%	vs.	Women	(not more or less likely) 0%
White	(not more or less likely) 0%	vs.	BIPOC	-2%
Cisgender	-1%	vs.	Transgender	+15%
Straight	-5%	vs.	LGBQ	+17%
Not disabled	-3%	vs.	Disabled	+21%

Sample: In-house and agency social marketers (n=3,220)
Source: Hootsuite Social Media Management Career Survey 2023, March/April 2023
Note: Some groups have been removed for sample size and other variables. “LGBQ” refers to respondents who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or queer; transgender respondents self-identified in a separate survey question and are listed separately in this chart. “Disabled” refers to respondents who identify as having a physical disability, a learning disability, or neurodivergence. All percentages shown are comparisons with the average of all in-house and agency social marketers who report that their work has a negative impact on their mental health (41.0%).

To all the wise and talented owls who made this possible...

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Thank you to all the social marketers
we interviewed as part of our research
—your insights helped shape this report.

Hootsuite is the global leader in social media management

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A whopping 66% of social marketers say they have too many responsibilities, two out of three work more than 40 hours per week, and more than half say they don't have time to do their job well.

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