Shopping Center Social Media: Who's Doing What?

Q2 2010

ALEXANDER BABBAGE

Experience Measurement

1201 Peachtree Street NE, Suite 500
Atlanta, GA 30309
Phone: (404) 961-7600
www.alexanderbabbage.com

Shopping Center Social Media: Who's Doing What?
Q2 2010

Summary

The initial efforts to harness the power of social media for shopping centers began to emerge late in 2008. Now, early in 2010, shopping centers are creating new forums for communication at a rapid pace. But who is doing what? And how does the assimilation of social media look across the shopping center industry? Alexander Babbage has been tracking social media activity and has established benchmarks for the shopping center industry. In its analysis of the benchmark data, Alexander Babbage found that while there is much industry discussion, far fewer than half of U.S. shopping centers 300,000 square feet or larger have taken the social media leap. Fewer still can quantify the true value of their "fans" and "followers."

Alexander Babbage Social Media Benchmarks for the Shopping Center Industry

Less than a decade ago, shopping center marketing professionals were launching the first shopping center Websites. It was not exactly clear how this new tool called a Website would benefit the centers, but it was deemed necessary to have one in order to keep pace with developing technology. Today Websites are in use by more than three-quarters (76.9%) of all centers 300,000 square feet or larger. In the same way as they once did with Websites, marketing professionals are now carefully assessing the impact and opportunities presented by the myriad social media entities that appear with ever increasing rapidity.

Questions like: "***Should my center be represented with MySpace, Facebook, Twitter, Yelp or Foursquare?"*** have given way to: ***"How many fans and followers is enough?"*** Alexander Babbage's social media benchmarks bring together important information in one comprehensive database that includes 1,843 U.S. shopping centers.

Center Type (300,000 Square Ft or larger)	Base
Super Regional Centers	432
Regional Centers	778
Lifestyle Centers	522
Value Centers	94
Entertainment Centers	17
Total Industry	**1,843**

Alexander Babbage analyzed each shopping center to ascertain the level of participation and representation in selected electronic and social media forums including a Website, Facebook page and

Twitter account. The data for those centers with a Facebook page and a Twitter account, were then analyzed (by center type and by developer) to determine the level of fan and follower representation at each center.

Website Representation – Varies significantly across center types

Surprisingly, the analysis revealed that nearly one-in-four (23.1%) shopping centers do not have a Website as of Q2 2010. Super-regionals are most likely (95.1%) to be represented with an individual center Website, while lifestyle centers are least likely. Fewer than two-thirds (63.0%) of lifestyle centers analyzed had an individual center Website.

Center Type	Base	% with Website
Super Regional Centers	432	95.1%
Regional Centers	778	75.2%
Lifestyle Centers	522	63.0%
Value Centers	94	81.9%
Entertainment Centers	17	88.2%
Total Industry	**1,843**	**76.9%**

Social Media – Everybody's Doing It – But Are They Really?

As of Q2 2010, 25.8% of all centers studied had a Facebook account and 24.0% had a Twitter account. The average number of Facebook fans was 1,244 per center, with regional centers having the lowest average number (479) and the handful (17) of entertainment centers having the highest average (5,655). Super regional centers had an average of 1,516 Facebook fans, while lifestyle centers had an average of 1,859. The highest number of fans for any single center was 25,416 for a super regional center.

Center Type	% with Website	% with Website and Facebook	Average Number of Fans
Super Regional Centers	95.1%	35.6%	1,516
Regional Centers	75.2%	22.9%	479
Lifestyle Centers	63.0%	21.5%	1,859
Value Centers	81.9%	25.5%	1,027
Entertainment Centers	88.2%	41.2%	5,655
Total Industry	**76.9%**	**25.8%**	**1,244**

The number of centers with a Twitter account was similar. As of Q2 2010, 24.0% of all centers were employing Twitter. The average number of Twitter followers was 252 for all centers. Again the small base of entertainment centers topped the list with the highest average number of followers (1,117) while regional centers had the lowest average number of followers (109). The average number of followers for super regional centers was 190. Lifestyle centers and value centers have a similarly active follower base averaging 479 for lifestyle centers and 408 for value centers. But when it comes to follower engagement, entertainment centers and lifestyle centers lead the way. Entertainment centers have the most active follower base (425 average following). Lifestyle centers have an average of 360 following per center.

What Does It Mean?

Social media is in its infancy and changing quickly. Social Media has been adopted by an average of a third (33.6%) of the centers who already have a website. The uniqueness of lifestyle centers and the immediacy of entertainment centers generates a higher level of engagement for social media users than do super regionals and regionals.

As centers with websites integrate social media into their marketing strategies and centers who have already adopted social media refine their usage of social media we expect to see a rapid evolution of the purpose, engagement and monetization of social media investments.

As our benchmark program evolves, we are tracking the next generation of questions for shopping center marketing professionals including: ***"What is my return on investment for social media?"*** and ***"Are friends, fans and followers productive or are they simply voyeurs?"*** Alexander Babbage will continually monitor social media activity in the shopping center industry with benchmarks published at the beginning of each quarter. For more information about comparing your center or portfolio to benchmarks, contact:

Alan McKeon at 404-961-7602 or amckeon@alexanderbabbage.com or

Charlotte Sykes at 404-961-7603 or csykes@alexanderbabbage.com .

Alexander Babbage, Inc., is an Atlanta based full-service research firm specializing in experiential research for destinations including shopping centers, professional sports teams, retailers, restaurants, the arts and financial institutions. It has the deepest experience and most extensive benchmark set among private research providers. Alexander Babbage acquired Stillerman Jones & Company in 2007 and MAXtrak® in 2004, making it the shopping center industry's leading provider of market and shopper research.