

# CEOs, SOCIAL MEDIA, & BRAND REPUTATION

2016 BRANDFOG SURVEY



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# OVER THE LAST FOUR YEARS, WE'VE STUDIED THE SIGNIFICANT ROLE THAT SOCIAL MEDIA PLAYS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDUSTRY LEADERSHIP, BRAND TRUST, AND BRAND REPUTATION.

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Our CEO survey results consistently show that executive engagement on social media strengthens each of three key pillars that support a brand's reputation: brand trust, effective leadership, and effective communications with stakeholders.

Survey respondents increasingly believe that C-Suite engagement on social media makes a brand more honest and trustworthy. 75% said so in our most recent survey, while 68% said so three years ago. Since 2013, we've seen a 15% increase in the number of respondents who believe that social media engagement makes CEOs more effective leaders. Regarding the changing nature of communications, an astounding 93% of survey respondents view socially engaged CEOs as a means to build better connections with customers, employees, and investors. Taken together, these three findings demonstrate how crucial it is for

CEOs to participate on social media in order to build a stellar brand reputation.

Contrary to popular misconceptions like "Our executives don't have time for this" or "CEOs engaging on social channels is too risky," survey results indicate a high level of interest from the public for hearing directly from business leaders. This makes it worthwhile to invest the time and develop a digital communications strategy. For C-Suite executives that opt out of social media, the real risk is becoming marginalized while other, more social-savvy business leaders become increasingly more prominent. In fact, more than two-thirds of survey respondents believe that CEOs who do not engage on social channels will become less relevant in the digital age.

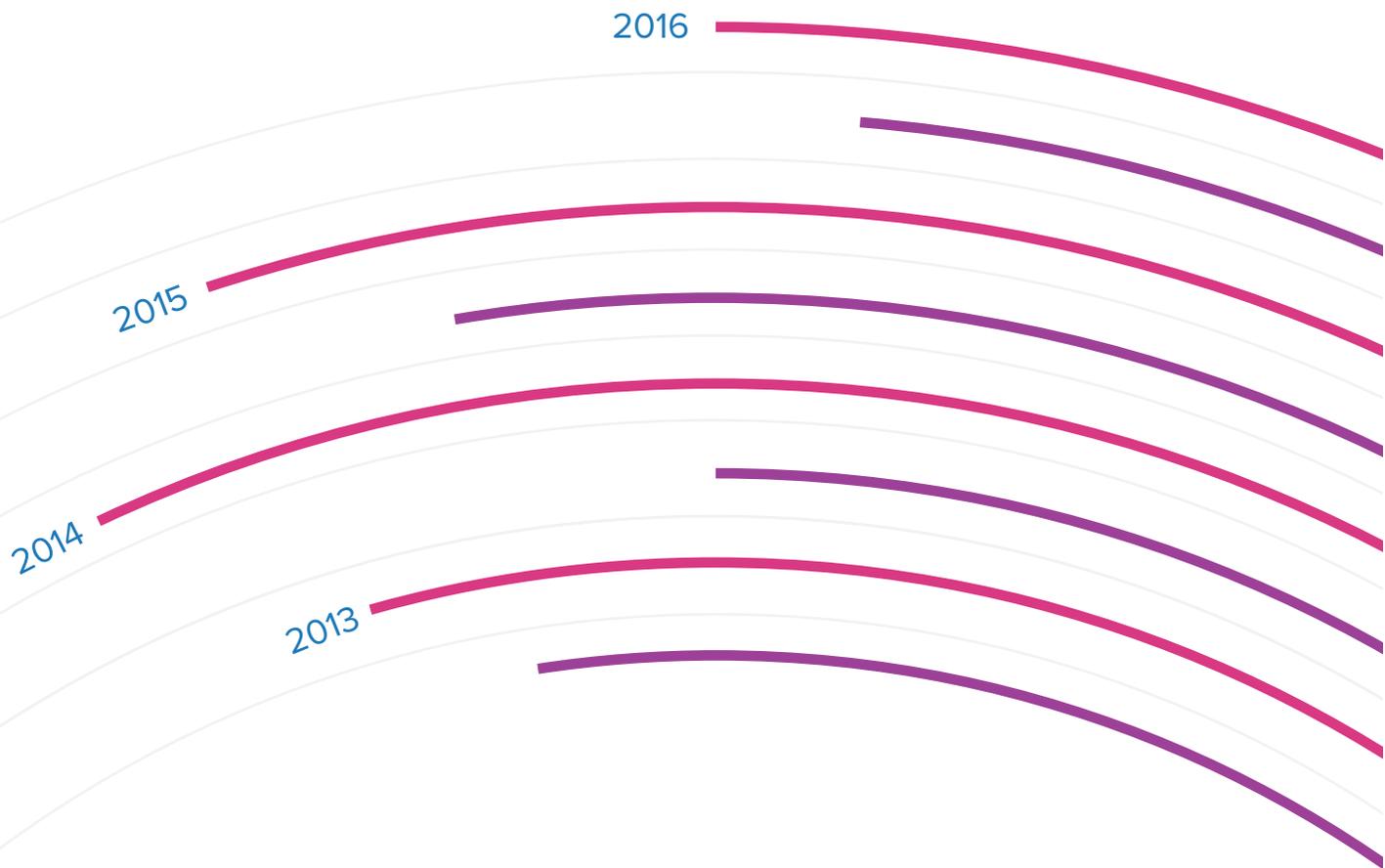
A few other eye-opening results show the breadth of social media's impact on leadership. First, brands benefit immensely when they shine a spotlight on their women leaders. 91% of respondents believe that social-media-savvy women executives strengthen a brand's leadership team. In addition, 90% of respondents say that social media has become an essential aspect of PR and communications strategy for C-Suite executives, and 85% state that having a socially active C-Suite leadership team can mitigate risk before a brand reputation crisis occurs.

In the course of our work with C-Suite executives at top global brands, we see a very encouraging trend. More and more CEOs are embracing social media as a leadership tool. Some of the strongest, most

lasting impressions about a company's brand reputation are created across social channels, as the words of executive leaders become the truest public face of the company. Social media enables C-Suite leaders to become more prominent, accessible and identifiable within their industry. It brings key individuals into sharp relief against a sea of executives who are invisible on the web. We expect that in the next 18-24 months, social engagement at the executive level will become the norm across many organizations globally.

## METHODOLOGY

BRANDfog's 2016 Social Media Survey surveyed 500 US employees in diverse companies. The companies surveyed ranged in size from startups to Fortune 1000 companies, and spanned various industries.

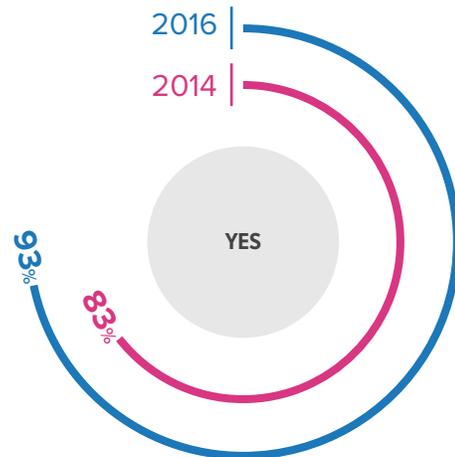


## Q1

### CEOS WHO ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN SOCIAL MEDIA CAN BUILD BETTER CONNECTIONS WITH CUSTOMERS, EMPLOYEES, AND INVESTORS.

It's nearly unanimous - 93% of respondents agree that CEOs who actively participate in social media can build better connections with customers, employees, and investors.

This is a ten percentage point jump from 2014, when 83% of US respondents believed that CEO participation in social media can build better connections with customers, employees, and investors.

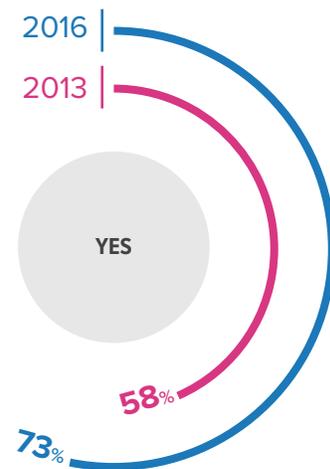


## Q2

### DO YOU BELIEVE SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT MAKES CEOS MORE EFFECTIVE LEADERS?

73% agree that social media engagement makes CEOs more effective leaders.

That's a 15% increase over our results from 2013, when 58% responded that they believe that social media engagement makes CEOs more effective leaders. In 2013, to see a similar response rate on the question of social media as a leadership tool, we had to look at just the population who already managed their executives' engagement on social media. At that time, just under 70% of employees whose companies managed executive leadership engagement on social media believed that social media engagement makes CEOs more effective leaders.

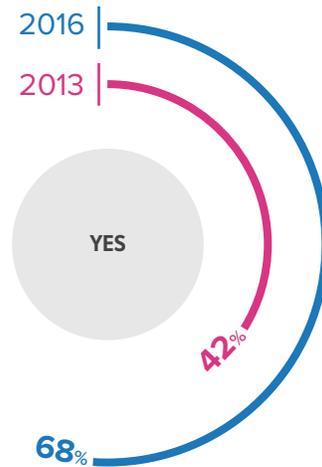


### Q3

## WILL CEOS WHO DO NOT ENGAGE ON SOCIAL CHANNELS BECOME LESS RELEVANT IN THE DIGITAL AGE?

More than two-thirds (68%) believe that CEOs who do not engage on social channels will become less relevant in the digital age.

That's a major shift in perspective from 2013, when less than half (42%) said yes, and just over half of employees (54.9%) whose companies managed executive social media engagement agreed.

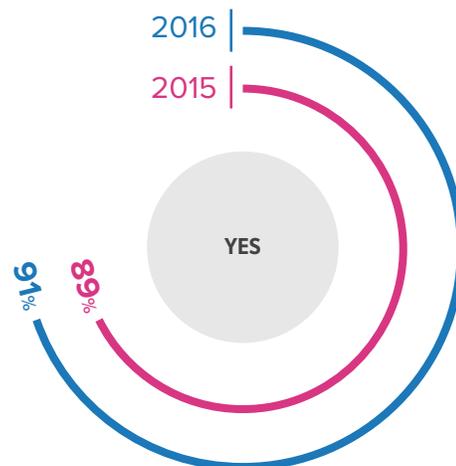


### Q4

## SOCIAL-MEDIA-SAVVY WOMEN EXECUTIVES CAN STRENGTHEN A BRAND'S LEADERSHIP TEAM.

More than nine in ten (91%) respondents agree that social-media-savvy women executives can strengthen a brand's leadership team.

Last year we saw a similar result, with nearly nine in ten (89%) respondents saying the same. But the intensity of agreement rose sharply in the past year – 19% more respondents strongly agree with the idea that social-media-savvy women executives can strengthen a brand's leadership team than did last year.

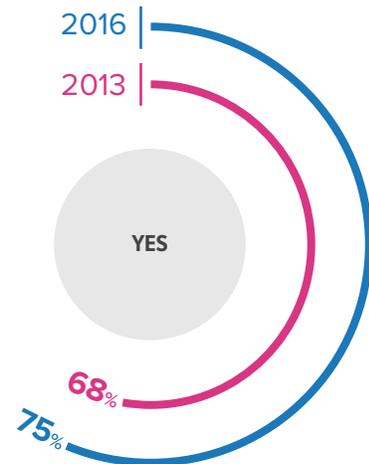


## Q5

### DOES C-SUITE SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT MAKE A BRAND SEEM MORE HONEST AND TRUSTWORTHY?

Three-quarters (75%) of respondents believe that C-Suite social media engagement makes a brand seem more honest and trustworthy.

This marks a substantial increase from 2013, when just over two thirds (68%) believed that C-Suite social media engagement makes a brand seem more honest and trustworthy.

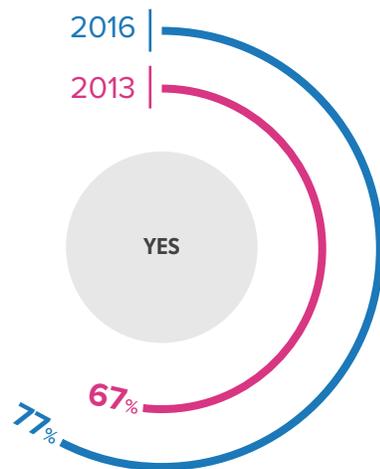


## Q6

### IS SOCIAL MEDIA AN EFFECTIVE TOOL FOR CEOs TO USE FOR CRISIS MANAGEMENT?

Over three-quarters (77%) of survey respondents agree that social media an effective tool for CEOs to use for crisis management.

This is a ten-percent jump from 2013, when just over two thirds of respondents (67%) believed that social media can be used either very effectively or somewhat effectively by CEOs in times of company crises.

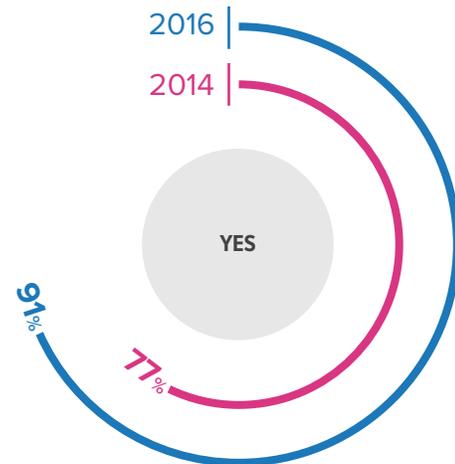


## Q7

### SOCIAL MEDIA IS A POWERFUL TOOL FOR BUILDING THOUGHT LEADERSHIP AND ENHANCING THE CREDIBILITY OF C-SUITE EXECUTIVES WITH STAKEHOLDERS, INCLUDING PRESS / MEDIA.

More than nine in ten (91%) agree that social media is a powerful tool for building thought leadership and enhancing the credibility of C-Suite executives with stakeholders, including press and media.

That's up 14% from 2014, when 77% of respondents said that social media is a powerful tool for building thought leadership and enhancing the credibility of C-Suite executives with stakeholders, including press.

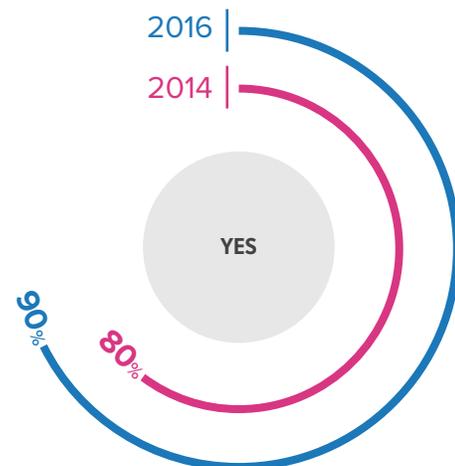


## Q8

### SOCIAL MEDIA HAS BECOME AN ESSENTIAL ASPECT OF PR AND COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY FOR C-SUITE EXECUTIVES AND BRANDS.

Nine out of ten (90%) survey respondents agree that social media has become an essential aspect of PR and communications strategy for C-Suite executives and brands.

That's a 10% jump from 2014, when 80% of respondents believed that social media was an essential aspect of PR and communications strategy for C-Suite executives and brands.

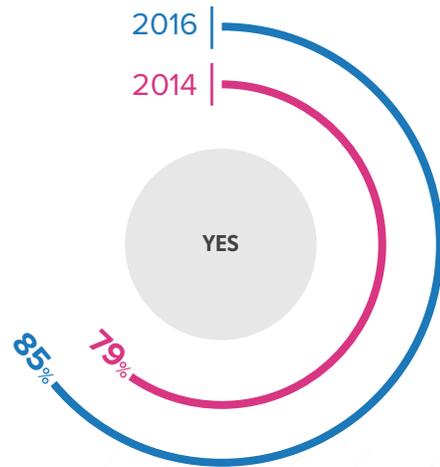


# Q9

## HAVING A SOCIALLY ACTIVE C- SUITE LEADERSHIP TEAM CAN MITIGATE RISK BEFORE A BRAND REPUTATION CRISIS OCCURS.

85% agree that having a socially active C- Suite leadership team can mitigate risk before a brand reputation crisis occurs.

That's 6% more than in 2014, when 79% of respondents believe that having a socially active C- Suite leadership team can mitigate risk before a brand reputation crisis occurs.



For more information on this survey or any of our previous surveys, please visit our web site:

[www.brandfog.com](http://www.brandfog.com)