# Social Media

**The consumer goods industry's preferred providers of software for managing, monitoring and measuring social media conversations and engagement.**

Even with its explosive growth, social media is still in its adolescence at most major consumer goods (CG) organizations. However, CG executives are finally getting wise to what makes sense for their business — what insights to gather, how to use and measure them, and which technology tools can facilitate this work. Don Scheibenreif, research vice president and Jenny Sussin, principal research analyst of Gartner, Inc., break down noteworthy new trends in social media for the industry.

## Can you comment on this list?

**SCHEIBENREIF/SUSSIN:** There are some surprises on this list, and others we're not so surprised to see. Salesforce. com and Adobe are frequently inquired about from Gartner's customer base. NetBase, we know, has strong ties to consumer packaged goods (CPG) for social analytics. Astute Solutions, we never see, but perhaps this speaks to a CPG vertical specialization where they're serving as a cross-channel CRM platform. Oracle is interesting, because we hear more about it from a curiosity perspective than a buyer's perspective. All in all, this list again speaks to clients looking at a multichannel solution, rather than just a social solution.

## Can you comment on CG investment activity in this area?

**SCHEIBENREIF/SUSSIN:** A recent Gartner survey of CG manufacturers' 2015 sales and marketing technology investment priorities saw increases in the areas of crowdsourcing for retail audits, crowdsourcing for consumer innovation and social media marketing platforms versus 2014. This tells us that CG companies are moving beyond the general platforms to project-specific applications. Customer engagement is really a poor measure of success. The question needs to be, "Has this had a demonstrative impact on the CG company's business?" The answer to that is "sometimes". In a lot of organizations there has been a push to identify social's ROI, so traditional marketing push through social isn't cutting it for CG manufacturers. Instead, they are trying things that are trackable, things that are indicators of business effectiveness.

## How can CG manufacturers leverage data and insights from social media?

**SCHEIBENREIF/SUSSIN:** Our top-level advice for clients when it comes to data and analytics across industries is this: figure out what the organization needs to solve for, and then use data and analytics for that purpose. This is especially true for measuring social media efforts. We are seeing more and more use cases in the area of Social Analytics from the CG industry and many others. The most compelling start with a well-defined question or hypothesis. If you need market perspective to a competitive product, use social analytics to gain that. If you need to identify your market influencers to target in a marketing campaign, also use social analytics to do that. If you need to track content through social networks, do that. If you don't need to solve for anything, don't analyze just to analyze. ❖