The DGA Global Channel Index 2026

The Social Platforms Driving Impact With Corporate Audiences

The DGA Global Channel Index
Foreword

Corporate communications has always been a balance between amplification and control: the need to reach specific audiences at scale, alongside the ability to retain control over how messages are delivered, understood and trusted. That model is now being tested. The 2026 DGA Global Channel Index captures a structural shift in how to address this balance. Drawing on our polling data, insights and client conversations, it shows how organisations are being forced to rethink not just where they communicate but how credibility is built and sustained.

In the past year, this shift has accelerated: Geopolitical instability, rapid advances in AI, and growing awareness of misinformation are reshaping how information is consumed and trusted. Content can be manipulated, amplified or taken out of context. At the same time, algorithm-controlled platforms have made the reach and visibility of corporate messaging less predictable and increasingly beyond an organisation's control.

Furthermore, the environment is now inherently holistic–whether organisations choose to design their comms around it or not. Fragmented strategies lead to inconsistencies surfaced and recombined by AI. Coherence across all outputs (PR, corporate, digital, leadership, policy) has finally become non-negotiable.

This brings consequences and opportunities. Mere visibility no longer equates to attention or credibility. Trust is no longer a by-product of reach; it has to be actively constructed and defended across all touchpoints.

This is where the role of channels is changing. Owned channels are no longer tactical tools for distribution. They are becoming strategic infrastructure–the holistic environments where organisations can fully explain, evidence and anchor their positions. Social channels still matter but their function is shifting.

Social channels are increasingly a point of connection, while owned channels are platforms to explain, build trust, and own a conversation. As the information environment becomes more fragmented, the priority becomes to understand the full spectrum of touchpoints and focus on resilience, control and trust.

This report reflects that transition. It explores how channels are evolving, where they are delivering the greatest impact, and how communication teams can make smarter decisions about where to focus time and investment in order to tell better stories that inform and build trust and protect reputation.

Key Findings

LinkedIn remains the anchor platform: It is still the clearest centre of gravity for executive visibility, corporate positioning and key audience engagement. Its growing user base, increasing relevance among policymakers and investors, and the fragmentation of the broader digital landscape make it the one platform most organisations cannot afford to treat as optional.

No clear second platform has emerged: Beyond LinkedIn, the social landscape is more fragmented and role-specific. X still holds value in some real-time media, policy and reputational contexts, but it is no longer the default second channel for corporate communications. For most organisations, the right mix now varies more by audience, geography and use case.

Corporate social strategies are consolidating, not expanding: Most teams are not rushing to launch new channels. Instead, they are concentrating resources on the platforms and formats they can sustain well, especially as AI changes how content is surfaced and tighter budgets force harder choices. In that environment, consistent executive visibility, short video and useful audience-specific commentary tend to outperform generic corporate broadcasting.

AI is changing the value of social media, not replacing it: As brand discovery shifts to AI summaries and prompt results, organisations need to ensure corporate content is clear, current and attributable. The goal is not just to be seen, but to be represented accurately across all sources.

Social Platforms at a Glance

These radar charts show how each key audience scores the main social platforms in this report, on a scale of 1 to 10. Scores reflect a weighted assessment of audience size, platform suitability and content effectiveness, with higher scores indicating greater strategic relevance.

Bluesky

Facebook

Instagram

LinkedIn

Tiktok

X

YouTube

Truth Social

Channel analysis

LinkedIn

LinkedIn remains the central platform for corporate leadership and business engagement. While other networks fragment along political or demographic lines, LinkedIn offers a stable, credible environment for executive narrative, investor visibility and talent positioning. For most organisations, it is no longer optional but foundational.

LinkedIn remains the leading global professional network. Its core strength lies in combining verified identity with professional context, making it uniquely effective for corporate affairs, executive visibility and reputation management.

DGA's audience survey reinforces LinkedIn's central role in senior decision-making. Two thirds of Heads of Communications say LinkedIn is the channel they currently use or value most for CEO and executive communications, the highest of any platform. This underlines its position as the default arena for credible leadership narrative and corporate voice. Among Heads of HR and recruiters, nearly half cite LinkedIn as a key channel for attracting talent, confirming its importance for employer brand and senior hiring. For journalists, LinkedIn plays a secondary but steady role, with around one fifth using it to source or promote stories.

LinkedIn has become the primary platform for executive visibility. Organisations are improving engagement through practices such as mutual tagging and visible peer interaction between senior leaders. Data also suggests CFOs are becoming more prominent and influential on the platform.

LinkedIn's algorithm has increasingly favoured posts from individuals over content from company pages. At the same time, the platform is trying to balance the promotion of its own AI tools with efforts to limit low-value AI-generated posts.

For policymakers, LinkedIn has become one of the most credible networks for corporate issue positioning. It is well suited to executive commentary on politically relevant topics. However, the platform's ban on ads related to political candidates, parties or legislation positions it more cautiously than some peers. It also reinforces expectations of transparency and professionalism.

Product developments have reinforced LinkedIn's evolution into a hybrid network and media channel. The expansion of vertical video and greater emphasis on dwell time signal a shift towards more content-driven engagement.

Channel Updates

New AI-powered search feature: Used to find colleagues, companies and investors.

New formats: LI now allows users to create newsletters and to use videos as cover for articles.

Mandatory recruiter verification: Aimed at stopping recruitment scams, LI now requires anyone with a recruitment job title to verify their workplace.

New AI features:

LI is introducing AI job search in natural language, allowing users to describe the role they want rather than relying only on filters.

LI is adding verified AI skills badges based on partner validated usage. They are designed to support skill-based hiring.

Total Users

1.33b

▲ 16% y-o-y

X

X remains influential in certain circles, but its value is now selective for corporate communications and diminished for public affairs. It is still important for monitoring and policy visibility, yet declining trust, polarisation and changing commercial dynamics mean it is no longer a priority channel for most organisations.

X's role in corporate communications has narrowed significantly. It is now used primarily for monitoring developments and engaging politically active segments. Overall usage has declined, with only 10% of adults saying they use X on a daily basis.

Journalists continue to rely on the platform for breaking developments. Our survey shows that 41% use X to source stories. At the same time, concerns are rising about declining information quality, with respondents describing feeds as dominated by misinformation and less useful content. This has not been helped by algorithm changes which prioritise paying users, who are incentivised to share content that provokes a reaction.

Among Heads of Communications in our survey, only 9% say they currently use X as an active channel, suggesting that it now plays a limited role in the corporate communications mix. For many organisations, this reflects not only audience and engagement considerations, but also concerns around brand safety and the predictability of the platform environment.

Regulatory scrutiny has intensified. In 2025, misuse of X's Grok AI image tools to generate deepfakes triggered investigations and legal action in several jurisdictions. Wider debates around online safety and content moderation have placed X at the centre of political and regulatory discourse and discourage companies from engaging with the platform.

The platform's ownership, governance and public positioning continue to shape perceptions of X among corporate users and stakeholders. While many policymakers still use X to communicate directly with the public, others have reduced activity or shifted to alternative channels viewed as less polarised. For public affairs teams, it still matters because it is where politicians, journalists, activists and commentators react in real time, shaping the initial tone of debates. Its influence now outstrips its scale.

Commercial dynamics have shifted alongside reputational concerns. Advertising spend in the UK has fallen. In the United States, however, senior leadership has stated that most top advertisers have now returned.

Channel Updates

About this Account: X's new feature aims to combat bots by showing users' location, the times their username has been changed and how they are connected. Notably the feature exposed how individuals from other countries are commenting and driving conversations on US politics.

Encrypted chat: X launched a new messaging system with richer features, such as end-to-end encryption, video calling and disappearing messages.

New AI features:

The platform rolled out Grok 3 and 4 as a premium feature, which allow the AI chatbot to pull live information straight from X.

Feed recommendations have progressively shifted towards a Grok-powered recommendation system to match users with content.

Total Users

448m

▼ 24% y-o-y

Facebook

Facebook remains relevant to corporate communications, but in a narrower and more geography-specific way than before. Its value now lies less in elite stakeholder influence and more in broad public reach, local visibility and community-level engagement. For most organisations, it is a channel to maintain selectively rather than actively expand.

Facebook is no longer a central venue for elite policy debate, but it remains useful for constituency-facing communications, local issue monitoring and issue-based mobilisation in markets where it still has scale. The U.S. Research particularly supports this view: Research supports that view: 71% of US adults use Facebook and 38% say they regularly get news there, while Meta continues to invest in local discovery through Groups, Events and its new Local tab. For organisations for whom local-level issues or community activity matter, Facebook can still help reach audiences and track sentiment more effectively.

Our survey data points in the same direction. Comms teams rank Facebook as a lower priority channel. Only 23% report using Facebook for corporate communications, compared with 68% for LinkedIn, and just 9% say they have created a new corporate Facebook profile in the past 12 months. A quarter of recruiters say they use Facebook to attract talent, though most see social channels (other than LinkedIn) as especially effective for reaching candidates.

Over the past year, Meta has allowed users to reduce political content in their feeds; shifted to Community Notes in the US; and ended political, electoral and social issue advertising in the EU from October 2025. In addition, a third of regular Facebook news consumers say they often see inaccurate information there. Together, these developments make Facebook less reliable as a broad policy influence channel and more useful as a tightly targeted, market-specific and carefully managed one.

Channel Updates

Focus on Groups and local discovery: Facebook is being repositioned around groups and local interest-based engagement rather than news.

Meta Verified expanded: Brands now have more features, including advanced original content protection and in-feed engagement recommendations.

New AI features:

At the end of 2025, Meta started using AI interaction data to influence ad targeting on Facebook and Instagram, making it more personalised.

AI recommendations increasingly influence what appears in users' feeds, showing more variety.

Total Users

3.07b

▲ No change y-o-y

Instagram

Instagram combines broad public reach with growing influence among retail investors. While not a primary channel for formal corporate communications, it plays a targeted role both in tracking reputation narratives for executive visibility and in talent outreach, particularly where cultural relevance matters.

For investors, Instagram has become a meaningful source of financial content. Globally, 49% of retail investors say they use the platform for investment guidance, second only to YouTube. Younger investors often rely on visually led, short form content from financial influencers and online communities, sometimes prioritising it over traditional advisory sources. At the same time, the growth of nontraditional investment outlets on the platform has raised concerns about unregulated advice and the risk of misinformation.

Instagram matters for public affairs as one of the places where younger audiences encounter discussions on issues, advocacy content and trending narratives, often through creators, rather than formal news sources, making monitoring highly useful.

Our survey data indicates that Instagram has selective but tangible value for corporate communications. A quarter of journalists say they use it to source stories and around a third use it to promote their work, suggesting it plays a supporting role rather than serving as a primary source for news gathering. Among communications leaders, 22% view Instagram as valuable for CEO and executive communications. However, only 6% report creating a new corporate Instagram profile in the past 12 months, indicating that most organisations are maintaining an existing presence on the platform rather than establishing a new one.

As the workforce becomes increasingly digital, Instagram's importance for recruitment is rising. Our survey shows that 16% of HR and talent professionals are using it to attract candidates. In practice, organisations, particularly consumer facing brands, tend to use Instagram to showcase culture, values and day to day working life. This is especially relevant for retail, creative and entry level roles.

Channel Updates

More algorithmic transparency: Instagram now gives all English-speaking users access to "Your Algorithm" to fine-tune what they see in their Reels.

"Schools" for US college students: Instagram is adding campus verification and communities to compete for student networks.

New AI features:

In October 2025, Instagram added Meta's AI-powered photo and editing tools directly onto its Stories.

In December 2025, Instagram announced an AI-powered feature to give users a view of (and control over) the interest signals driving recommendations.

Total Users

3b

▲ 72% y-o-y

YouTube

Despite its vast size, YouTube plays a more limited role in corporate communications. Most publicly listed and large corporations have active channels, but they use them primarily as repositories for long-form content like company and financial updates, speeches and interviews.

YouTube's sustained growth means it has now become the largest "TV channel" in the US and the second most viewed service in the UK, with more users viewing YouTube on TVs than on mobile devices. It also leads podcast consumption in the US, overtaking Spotify and Apple. Brands like HSBC, AstraZeneca and Flutter have started to use the new podcast options in different ways.

Business networks and finance creators, such as Bloomberg, have expanded their presence via YouTube TV distribution.

Companies like Tesla regularly host or syndicate earnings events on YouTube, making it a valuable channel for investor days and similar events. Younger investors increasingly turn to creator-led finance content on YouTube, alongside platforms like Reddit and TikTok. Surveys show YouTube as the top social channel for investment information, used by 30% overall and 61% of those under 35.

For policymakers, YouTube's potential lies as a public record and long-form persuasion channel where the public can search and share video content easily.

Communications teams should view YouTube as a broadcast platform, with investor relations (IR) pages serving as the authoritative source.

Overall, YouTube continues to attract interest due to its broad reach among the public, but its effectiveness for corporate communications is constrained by high resource demands and low organic engagement. For most brands, it should be treated as a complementary broadcast channel, with priority given to maintaining authoritative content on IR pages and corporate websites.

Channel Updates

Multi-language support:
YouTube now allows creators to upload multiple audio tracks in different languages for a single video.

Enhanced streaming: The platform is developing new features to improve multi-format streaming, interactivity, and monetisation.

New AI features:

In September 2025, YouTube launched its AI dubbing tool, Aloud. This tool automatically translates and lip-syncs videos in over 20 languages.

It also introduced Veo 3 Fast, a customised version of Google's text-to-video model optimised to create content directly from mobile phones.

YouTube added AI-powered analytics to its Studio Dashboard.

Podcast creators can now generate AI-produced videos from audio files and automatic Shorts highlights.

Total Users

2.7b

▲ 7% y-o-y

TikTok

TikTok continues to grow as a culturally influential platform. While it is not central to traditional corporate communications workflows, it plays a meaningful role in shaping news consumption, financial attitudes and brand perception where visual storytelling drives engagement.

Overall, TikTok's relevance for corporate comms is selective. It is most useful for understanding emerging narratives, engaging prospective talent in certain sectors and for reaching retail investors. It is less suited to formal policy engagement or institutional investor communications. In addition, the split of its US operations into a new entity could prompt a reevaluation of what it means in terms of data storage and updated privacy policies.

For organisations exposed to consumer, health or social policy debates, TikTok can offer an early read on how arguments are being simplified, challenged or amplified.

Among journalists, TikTok has become part of the monitoring mix. Our survey shows that 28% use it to source emerging stories and 22% use it to promote or distribute content. This suggests that its value lies more in identifying narratives gaining traction, particularly among younger or digitally native communities.

Financial content remains a significant feature of the platform. "FinTok" communities continue to attract retail investors, particularly Gen Z users. However, regulators including the SEC and the FCA have raised concerns about misleading or unregulated financial advice. Research indicates that a high proportion of viral investing videos contain inaccuracies, underscoring the reputational and compliance risks associated with the space. At the same time, younger investors report increasing reliance on influencer-led financial commentary across TikTok and other platforms.

Brands are experimenting with native formats, including point of view and immersive video styles, to align with platform norms and capture attention. Success tends to depend on authenticity and cultural fluency rather than polished corporate production. This reinforces that TikTok is not a broadcast channel but an environment where tone and format must match community expectations.

Channel Updates

Footnotes: TikTok has introduced community-added context on videos, expanding its approach to integrity and information quality.

Creator protection and workflow tools: Creators can now filter comments, check eligibility before posting and access a more professional creator inbox.

New AI features:

TikTok has integrated AI filters and AI outlines to help creators structure their content with video titles, hooks and outlines.

Total Users

1.9b

▲ 19% y-o-y

Bluesky

Bluesky matters less for mass reach than for niche policy and media monitoring. Its audience remains relatively small, but it has become a meaningful secondary network for journalists, academics and some lawmakers in the US, UK and EU. For public affairs and corporate communications teams, its value lies in tracking how issues move within progressive and institutional circles, rather than in broad stakeholder engagement.

At the start of 2025, Bluesky saw rapid user growth driven by the US election cycle and driven by the US election cycle and policy changes on X, but that momentum soon slowed, with around 15 million new users added in 2025. Bluesky remains concentrated among left-leaning communities, including parts of the media and political class, with hundreds of EU, US and UK lawmakers active. That also makes the use case relatively narrow for political audiences.

For some left-leaning journalists, Bluesky has become part of their professional mix, particularly for circulating stories within like-minded networks. A Pew study found that 43% had an account on Bluesky, although X remained more widely used overall. Our survey data shows a similar pattern: 12% of journalists use Bluesky to source stories, while a quarter use it to promote them. This suggests relevance for amplification within certain circles more than for primary newsgathering.

The academic community has also shown notable uptake. Studies suggest that hundreds of thousands of researchers have moved to Bluesky, while Altmetric reports that 22% of researchers globally now use it more than any other social platform. Engagement within these networks appears relatively strong, with interaction rates often higher among specialist audiences.

Corporate adoption remains limited. Our survey data shows that only 5% of heads of communications currently use Bluesky. As a result, the practical use case for companies is less about broad publishing and more about targeted monitoring, stakeholder mapping and rapid response. For most organisations, Bluesky is a platform to watch closely rather than prioritise.

Channel Updates

Stricter moderation: In recent months, Bluesky announced tougher enforcement and more transparent moderation tools.

Shift to real-time and live features: Bluesky is developing a roadmap focused on more discovery features, live content and better recommendations.

New AI features:

In March 2025, Bluesky proposed letting users signal if they want their data to be scraped for AI training.

In early 2025, the platform announced a partnership with AI company Roost to provide new AI-supported safety tools.

Total Users

41.4m

▲ 60% y-o-y

Truth Social

Truth Social is a niche platform with limited reach but clear political relevance in the United States. Its value for corporate communications lies in monitoring and early narrative detection rather than broad stakeholder engagement. For most organisations, it is a channel to track selectively, not prioritise.

Truth Social's influence stems less from scale and more from its proximity to political power in the United States. Pew research shows that only 3% of US adults say they ever use the platform, confirming its status as a niche network. For corporate communications teams, this limits the case for active participation. Its relevance is largely confined to organisations exposed to US federal policy, regulation or polarised political debates, where it can act as an early signal of narratives that could later migrate into mainstream media ecosystems.

For the Index's priority audiences, the main value of Truth Social lies in monitoring. It provides early insight into how segments of Republican-aligned consumers interpret news, how Republican messaging lines are tested and what policy developments and themes resonate. Its global relevance is negligible.

For policymakers and political influencers, Truth Social remains closely associated with Trump-aligned networks. Posts from Donald Trump and other prominent figures on the platform can serve as early signals of political priorities, lines of attack or shifts in messaging within that ecosystem. For journalists and opinion formers, it is typically treated less as a broad engagement platform than as a source to monitor for statements, reactions and cues from Trump-aligned political actors.

Truth Social also sits within a broader ecosystem that includes media and financial components, such as Truth+, which features access to programming from outlets including Newsmax, Real America's Voice and OAN, alongside a growing crypto and fintech presence. These extensions may hold relevance for US focused journalist and investor audiences, but they do not materially change the platform's niche status within the wider social landscape.

Channel Updates

New Ownership: In December 2025, the owner of Truth Social, Trump Media and Technology Group, announced a $6bn merger with fusion energy company TAE Technologies amidst a wider push by the administration toward nuclear energy.

New AI features:

In August 2025, Trump Media and Technology Group announced that it began beta testing a new AI-powered search engine on the Truth Social platform. The search engine, called Truth Search AI, is powered by a partnership with Perplexity and the Perplexity Sonar API.

Total Users

2m

▼ 68% y-o-y

Other Channels

Substack
Substack is a platform for sharing longer-form thought leadership in the shape of articles and newsletters. While companies themselves don't typically publish on the platform, it can be a way for individuals within an organisation with an area of expertise to share their insight. The platform is now leaning into video content on its feed. Substack can support executive positioning, policy and regulatory commentary, strategic narrative building, and deeper stakeholder engagement through owned, subscription-based audiences.

Telegram
Similar to WhatsApp, Channels within Telegram can be used to share company updates and foster groups with shared interests. The platform has rolled out new AI-powered summaries for channel posts. Telegram channels offer a direct and efficient way to distribute real-time updates, crisis communications, regional or stakeholder-specific briefings, and digestible summaries that reduce information overload.

Snapchat
In 2025, Snapchat boosted user engagement by introducing AI-driven AR tools, launching a streamlined creator monetisation program, and rolling out interactive ad formats such as First Snap and Sponsored Snaps. For corporate communications, this creates opportunities for immersive product storytelling, and employer branding campaigns targeted at younger audiences.

Discord
Discord has continued to grow in popularity. One of its notable features for 2025 was a personalised year-in-review experience that highlights users' friendships, favourite games, and top communities. The platform can be used to build branded community hubs, host live AMAs and events, foster customer and partner engagement, and create segmented spaces for innovation, advocacy or employee culture initiatives.

Key audiences and themes

AI Spotlight

AI has emerged not as another social platform, but as a layer that shapes how information from social and digital channels is discovered and interpreted. It does not replace platforms, but it changes what visibility now means. For communications teams, the challenge is no longer just to publish content that reaches stakeholders on-platform; it is also to ensure that accurate, authoritative material can be surfaced when stakeholders ask AI tools questions about companies, brands and issues.

Our survey data shows AI is already entering professional workflows. Among Heads of Comms, 60% say they use AI tools regularly or occasionally, suggesting it is becoming mainstream practice. Use is lower among HR and recruitment leaders, where 8% say they use AI regularly and 16% occasionally, while 63% say they do not use it for recruitment marketing or content creation. Nearly two thirds of journalists say they do not currently use AI, but those who do apply it in areas that directly shape corporate narratives, including fact checking or source verification (15%) and background research (12%). There were also growing concerns about AI driven misinformation.

AI chatbots are beginning to play a role in how people access news and information, particularly among younger audiences, while tools such as Google's AI Overviews compress complex topics into short summaries. For policymakers, this raises the importance of traceable evidence and trusted sources, while also increasing the risks of disinformation and the flattening of complex policy issues into simplified or misleading narratives.

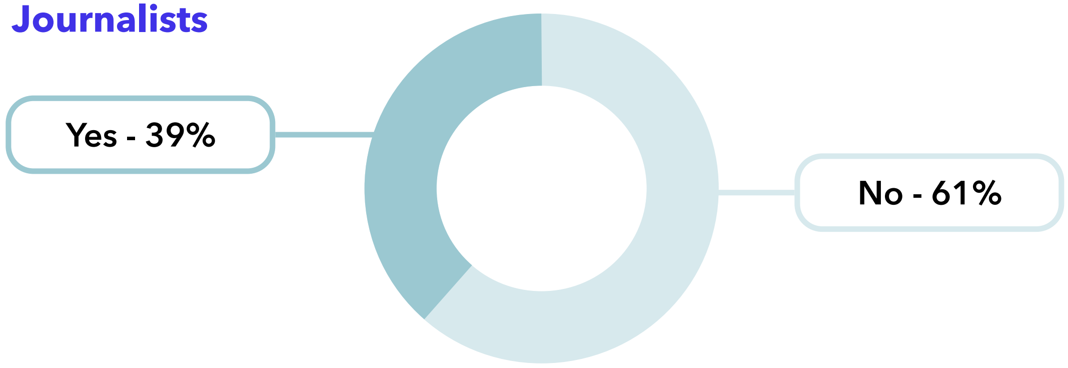
That has direct implications for how organisations use social media. Social channels are no longer only places to publish and engage. They are also part of the information cycle that informs AI-generated answers, summaries and comparisons. Effective social strategies now need to combine visibility, consistency and digital hygiene, ensuring that corporate information is current, well-structured and easy to verify. In that sense, AI is not replacing social media, but it is changing how its value is created and how reputation is shaped.

Are you currently using AI in your work?

Heads of Comms

HR and Recruiters

Journalists



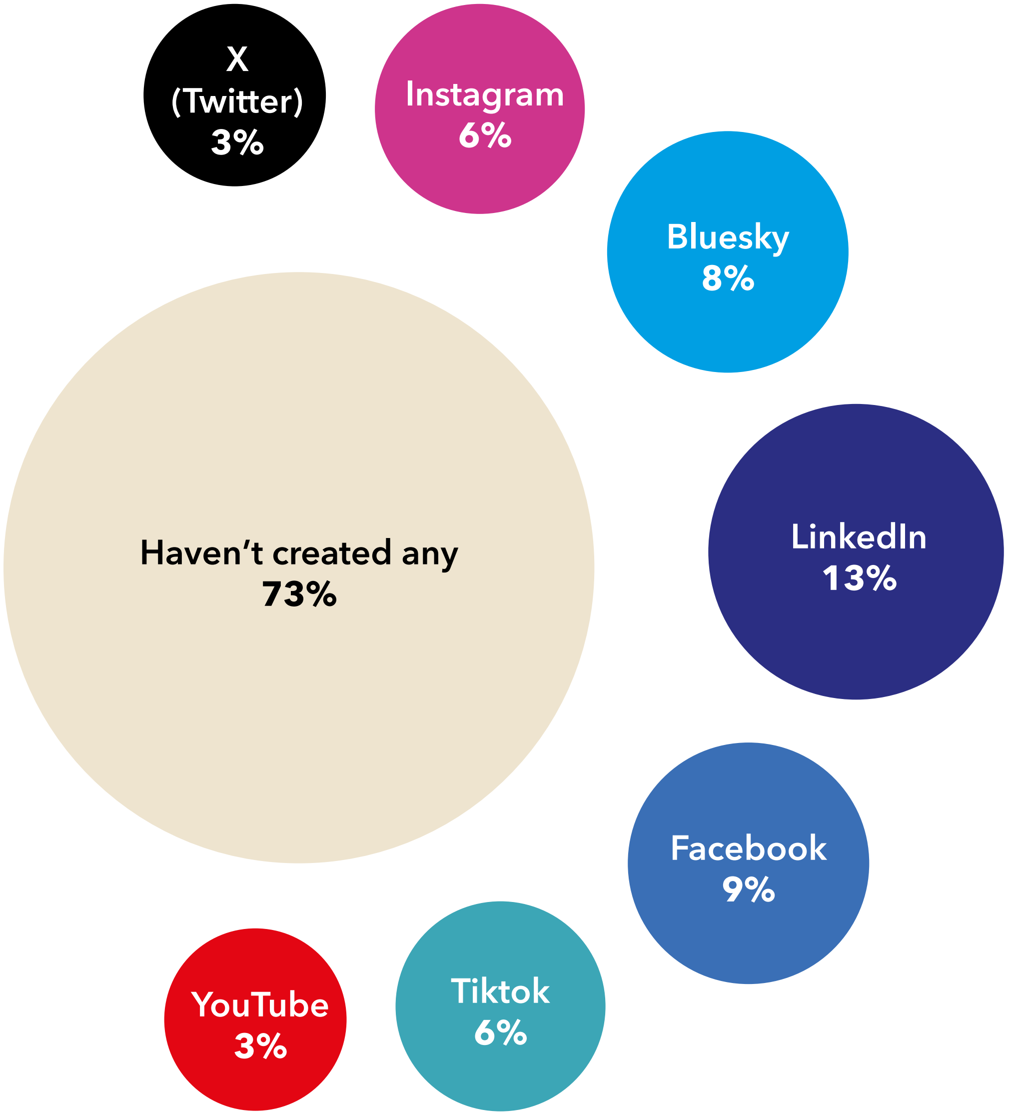
Survey Spotlight: Heads of Communications

Comms leaders' use of social channels remains pragmatic, with **68%** favouring LinkedIn.

However, **73%** of comms teams haven't launched any new corporate social profiles in the past year, indicating that leaders are consolidating their presence on existing platforms rather than expanding into emerging ones.

In terms of who they try to reach, **customers (52%)** and **industry peers (38%)** lead, followed by employees (26%) and potential recruits (23%). This points to social platforms often being treated as a reputation and narrative tool, rather than a primary broadcasting medium.

Have you created any new corporate social media profiles in the past 12 months?



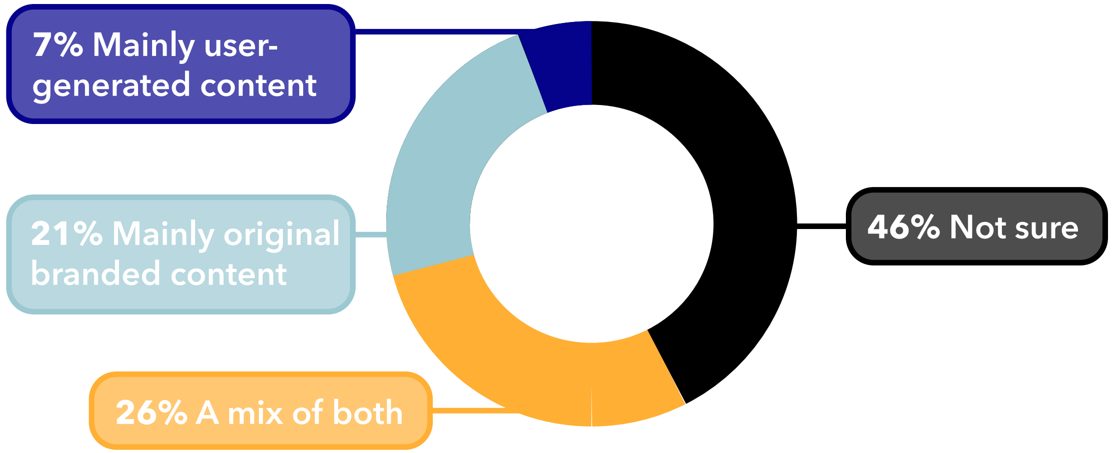
Survey Spotlight: Heads of HR and Recruiters

Predictably, HR and recruitment specialists favour LinkedIn as the top social channel for recruitment **(43%)**. However, even more **(44%)** said they don't use social media to attract talent, suggesting that the use of social channels is not yet a consistent norm.

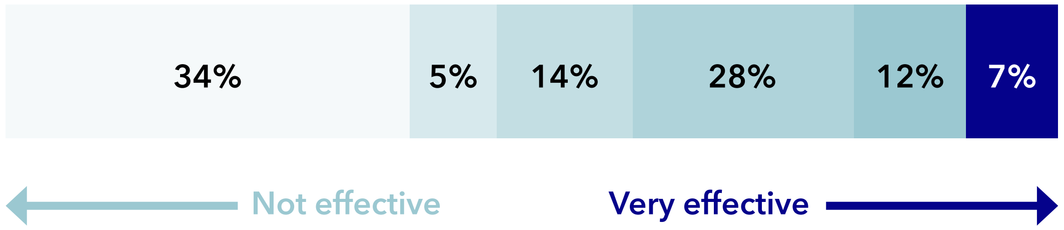
This could partly be due to mixed perceptions about how useful social media is to attract talent: **39%** rate it as not effective, while only **19%** consider it mostly or very effective.

In terms of content, there is also uncertainty: **47%** are not sure what type of content they use in talent campaigns, vs **26%** using a mix of branded and user-generated content and **21%** mainly branded.

What type of content do you use in your talent campaigns?



How effective are social media platforms for reaching and converting talent?



Specialist audience and platform spotlights

Regional Spotlight: Middle East & WhatsApp

WhatsApp is among the most widely used digital platforms in the Middle East and Gulf, with an estimated 120 million users and penetration rates exceeding 80–90% in key markets such as Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Egypt.

The platform is deeply embedded in daily life, from personal communication to customer service and news consumption, and is increasingly leveraged by brands as a direct distribution and engagement channel.

The introduction of WhatsApp Channels has expanded this feature by enabling one-to-many broadcast communication. The format allows media organisations to share breaking news, headlines and article links directly with opt-in audiences, positioning the platform as a lightweight but high-reach publishing tool.

Regional media outlets such as *Arab News* and *Gulf News*, alongside international brands with local editions including *CNN Arabic* and *Forbes Middle East*, have launched Channels and built considerable, active follower bases for news dissemination.

Beyond media, Middle East politicians, government entities and local authorities use WhatsApp as part of the infrastructure of public information. Channels are used to distribute information on public engagements, issue official statements and communicate guidance during crises.

Sports organisations and major brands have also capitalised on the format. Football clubs such as Al-Ittihad and broadcasters including beIN Sports have attracted millions of followers, although per-post engagement varies depending on content strategy and posting cadence.

WhatsApp Channels operate as a controlled, low-risk environment for brands. Followers cannot comment or engage in open discussion and interaction is limited to emoji reactions. As such, the format functions primarily as a broadcast mechanism, enabling brands and institutions to speak directly to audiences, rather than facilitating conversation.

Channel Updates

Ban on general-purpose AI chatbots such as ChatGPT from WhatsApp Business API from January 2026.

Total Users

2.95b
(2025)

Channel Spotlight:
Reddit & Retail Investors

Reddit, which prioritises discussion over visual content, continues to see user growth and now ranks among the most used channels, especially amongst retail investors, who are sourcing information through community platforms.

Only 17% of Heads of Corporate Communications say they use owned channels to reach investors, reflecting a continued reliance on traditional investor relations and media pathways. However, this approach is increasingly misaligned with investor behaviour.

CEOs and Investor Relations teams are beginning to test more direct engagement models with retail audiences, which could reshape established communications norms. Retail investment flows have risen by 50% since 2023, and 40% of 25-year-olds now hold investment accounts – a fivefold increase since 2015. This cohort is digitally native and less dependent on traditional financial media.

As a result, Investor Relations teams are experimenting with non-traditional platforms such as Reddit to engage this audience. Recent examples include senior executives participating in Reddit "Ask Me Anything" sessions to field questions directly from retail investors. Retail investor sentiment on platforms such as Reddit is also closely monitored by institutional analysts, given its potential to influence share price movements and broader market narratives.

The expansion of promoted embedded posts is boosting ad revenue for Reddit. These ads are increasingly less disruptive and more integrated into community conversations.

Reddit is also one of the most commonly cited sources by LLMs, influencing how chatbots present information to users. This makes it a very important channel to monitor.

Reddit is rarely a place to reach policymakers directly, but it matters because it surfaces the arguments, frustrations and narratives that can later help explain wider political developments.

With the platform projected to continue growing, corporate communications and investor relations teams are tracking it more closely. However, Reddit remains discussion-led rather than content-led, making it a challenging environment for controlled narrative management or traditional broadcast style communications.

Channel Updates

AI features: AI-powered Reddit Answers tool, advanced search and community moderation.

Total Users

1.36b
(2025)

Channel Spotlight:
Threads Quietly Continues to Grow

When Meta launched Threads in 2023 as a rival to X, in the wake of Elon Musk's acquisition of the platform, it saw rapid early growth. Helped by its place within Meta's wider ecosystem, it became one of the fastest-growing consumer apps on record. However, the early product lacked key features and active usage soon fell back.

Since then, Meta has continued to invest in the platform and, nearly three years on, that investment appears to be gaining traction. In January, Threads surpassed X in daily active app users for the first time. X still appears to have a larger overall user base, particularly on desktop, but the gap is narrowing on mobile.

That progress has been supported by Meta's decision to surface Threads content across Facebook and Instagram. More importantly, the platform now offers a more credible user experience than it did at launch, with better features and more reasons for audiences to return.

Today, Threads is increasingly a place where users discuss culture, sport and current events in a way that recalls the earlier, more conversational phase of Twitter. Meta is leaning into that behaviour through product features such as Communities and profile topic tags, which help users signal interests and find relevant conversations.

For corporate communications teams, Threads is not yet a channel that demands significant investment. But as X's popularity declines and Bluesky remains limited in scale, Threads is becoming harder to ignore. It is increasingly plausible that it develops into a more relevant network for journalists, policymakers and other influential audiences, prompting companies to decide whether it deserves a defined role in their channel mix.

Channel Updates

Communities: Threads introduced over 100 topic based communities as places where uses can have deeper conversations about their interests.

Topic tagging: Users can add up to ten topics to their profile to help their discoverability by others with similar interest.

Insights: Analytics were introduced to help users understand their reach and engagement.

Total Users

1.36b
(2025)

Methodology

For the 2026 edition of the Global Channel Index, DGA Group conducted dedicated surveys among priority stakeholder audiences, including communications leaders, journalists and talent/HR leads. These findings are integrated with external data on platform usage, engagement trends and audience demographics to produce a comparative assessment of the suitability of each channel to key audiences.

Scoring criteria

1. Audience presence (30%): Measures the representation, accessibility and activity levels of the target stakeholder groups on each platform, informed by newly conducted DGA surveys and external demographic data.
2. Content effectiveness (25%): Assesses the extent to which platform formats and algorithms support corporate messaging, including engagement patterns and the suitability of formats such as video, long-form and executive-led content.
3. Engagement opportunities (20%): Evaluates the availability of platform features (e.g., live streams, groups, comments) that encourage interaction and foster meaningful dialogue with the audience.
4. Paid advertising options (15%): Analyses the precision, flexibility and measurability of paid targeting tools, particularly the ability to reach defined professional and policy audiences.
5. Platform credibility (10%): Examines levels of trust, perceived professionalism and reputational risk, drawing on survey findings and recognised industry research.

Scoring and weighting

Each criterion is scored on a scale of 1 to 10:

1 to 3: Low suitability

4 to 6: Moderate suitability

7 to 10: High suitability

Weighted scores are calculated for each audience group using the formula:

$$\textit{Weighted score} = \sum (\textit{criterion score} \times \textit{criterion weight})$$

Data sources

- DGA Group proprietary surveys conducted for the 2026 edition
- Audience demographic and engagement data from recognised industry research and official platform disclosures
- Case studies and observable platform usage trends
- Publicly available surveys and studies examining trust, reputation and news consumption patterns
- Key external sources include Datareportal, Edison Research, Hootsuite, Khoros, Ofcom, Pew Research Center, the Reuters Institute Digital News Report and Statista, among others.

Who We Are

DGA Group is a global advisory firm that helps clients protect and grow what they have built. We bring clarity to complexity and support clients in high-stakes moments, helping them navigate and shape policy, reputational and financial issues across markets.

Our teams provide integrated expertise across public affairs, stakeholder engagement, strategic communications, and insights and intelligence. We work globally, drawing on deep local knowledge and trusted networks to help clients make decisions with confidence in a fast-changing environment.

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