

# B2B AND B2C CONTENT LESSONS:

## New Data From 175,000 Blog Posts

*Learn what topics and types of B2B and B2C posts perform the best on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Google+ and Pinterest*

...  
**HubSpot** & **Buzzsumo**



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# 01 /

## INTRODUCTION

Whether you're marketing for a B2B or B2C company, chances are content creation and promotion of that content on social networks is a large part of your inbound strategy.

[Three out of four marketers across the globe](#) are prioritizing inbound marketing, which means hundreds of thousands of marketers are creating blog posts, ebooks, webinars, videos, quizzes, templates, social media campaigns, and content to get found on search engines.

Content isn't a new thing: in fact, over [2 million blog posts](#) are written and published every day around the world.

So, how on earth are you to stand out in a sea of 2 million posts every day? New data from BuzzSumo and HubSpot Research in this report will give you all of the insight on how to optimize your content and blog posts to maximize for sharing across each social network around the world: Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Google+, and Pinterest.

In this report, you'll learn:

- Data-backed insight into what specific content topics do well on specific social networks
- Best practices from examples of top performing B2B and B2C posts to consider when creating your own content
- Data on what type of headlines and post length maximizes shares on social media

## Summary

Do you need different content approaches for B2B and B2C content? People often assume that:

- The B2B procurement process is lengthier and more complex which requires longer content and more rational, benefits based content.
- B2C buying is more emotional and consumers want shorter, more entertaining content
- Some social networks are better for B2C content distribution and amplification, whilst some work better for B2B content such as LinkedIn.

We decided to test some of the assumptions about B2B and B2C content. We reviewed 175,000 articles, 49,952 from Hubspot B2C customer sites and 124,876 from Hubspot B2B customer sites. The aim of our research is to explore the nature of B2B and B2C content, to gain insights into the content that performs best in terms of social shares and the social networks that maximise content amplification.

We found:

- B2C content achieves higher total shares on average than B2B content.
- The average content length, in terms of number of words, is very similar for both B2B and B2C published content.
- Longer form content in our sample did not perform better for either B2B or B2C content.
- B2C content performs significantly better on Facebook and Pinterest.
- B2B content performs better on LinkedIn, though on average B2B content gets a similar number of LinkedIn and Facebook shares.
- There is little variation in the shares of B2B and B2C content across Twitter and Google Plus.
- There is evidence that entertaining content, image content and quizzes work particularly well for B2C content on Facebook.

The full results and the key lessons for marketers are set out in this paper.



## 02 /

## THE B2B & B2C MARKETING CONTEXT

### Differences and Assumptions

Do you need a different content marketing approach for B2B and B2C audiences? It is often argued that the context is very different and this requires a different approach. The argument runs as follows:

- The B2C purchasing process is typically faster and often involves just a single consumer. The B2B purchasing process by contrast is slower, there may be procurement stages and there are often multiple people involved.
- B2B buyers are not as involved emotionally when purchasing and tend to focus on the logical benefits of a product or service in relation to their business.  
Secondarily, there is also more risk involved: the person recommending a product is putting their reputation on the line and will want evidence to back up their decision. This might be in the form of case studies, references and other collateral. **The aim of a B2B company in many ways is to make their buyer look a hero inside their organization.** This might include providing them with the latest news and information.
- **B2C buyers can make a more emotional decision, which is theirs alone, they want convenience** and may be less likely to want longer content.
- B2C content needs to be simpler than B2B content, as it is often, though not always, pitched at a more general audience.  
Whilst a niche audience will understand industry phrases and language, this is less likely for a wider consumer audience. Thus the tone can vary, for example a more professional tone for B2B content.
- B2C audiences want to be entertained and will accept more frivolous, shorter, emotional messages.  
B2B buyers whilst appreciating some entertainment are more likely to be driven by rational business benefits.

- The aims of B2B companies may also vary for example, they may have a greater focus on lead generation and content that gathers lead generation information.
- LinkedIn is clearly aimed at a more B2B audience whilst Facebook has a greater consumer focus. Some B2B companies still do not distribute content on Facebook.
- Finally, some social media channels work better for B2B than B2C content. B2B and B2C buyers may use different social media channels to share and discuss products and services.

We decided to take a look at performance of B2B and B2C content in terms of social shares on each major global social network (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Google+, and Pinterest) to see if we could examine and test some of these assumptions.

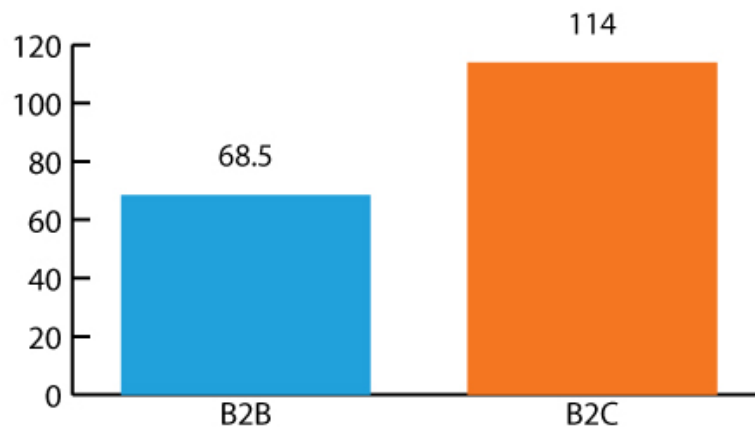
## 03 / TOTAL SHARES OF B2B AND B2C CONTENT

The table below shows the total shares across all networks for the B2C and B2B content in our sample of 175,000 posts.

	B2C	B2B
1st quartile	6	8
Median shares	17	22
Mean (Average)	114	68.5
3rd quartile	51	56
Maximum shares	196,853	458,040

Immediately we can see that the average shares for B2C posts were much higher at 114 shares compared to just 68.5 for B2B posts.

Average shares by company type

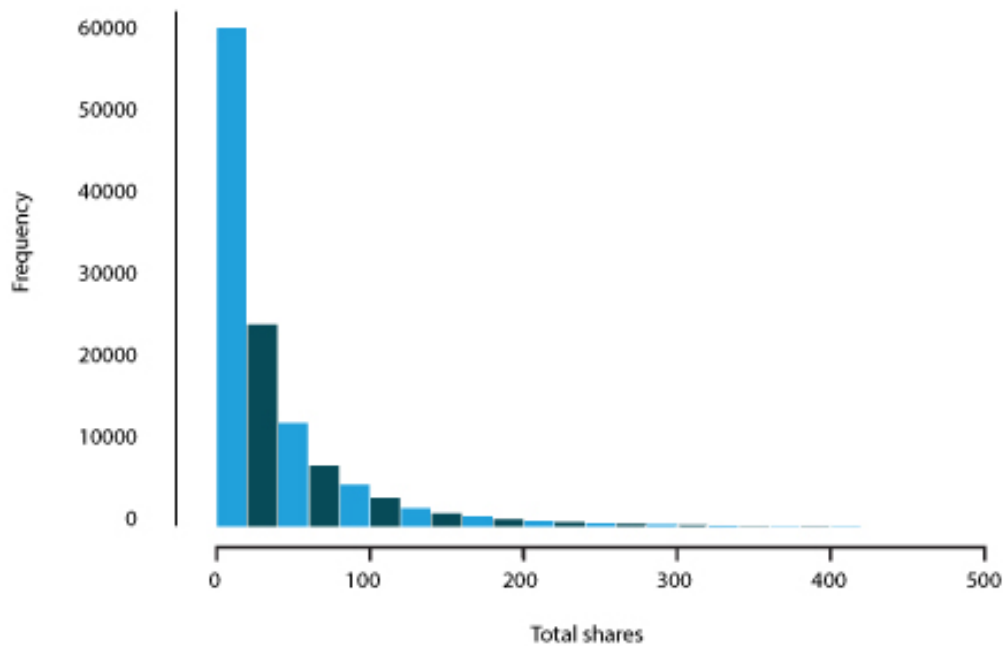


Interestingly, B2B posts had a higher number of median shares at 22 than B2C posts where the median was 17. This means 50% of B2B posts got less than 22 shares, while 50% of B2C posts got less than 17 shares. A number of very highly shared B2C articles disproportionately increase the average shares. We look at the skewed distribution of shares below.

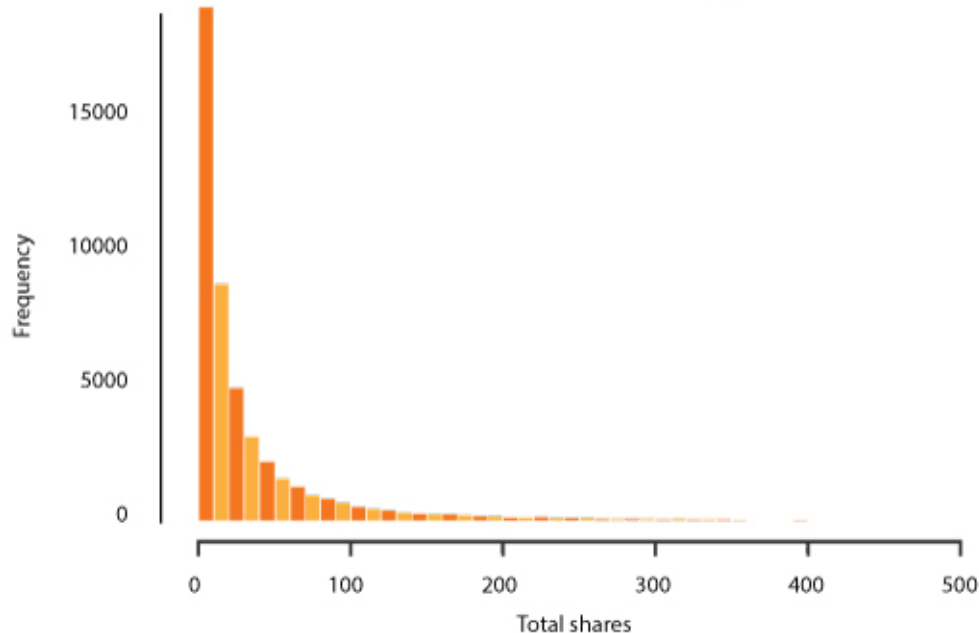
### There is a skewed distribution of shares for both B2B and B2C content

As we have found in previous research, most content receives relatively few shares. The histograms below clearly show the distribution of shares for B2B and B2C content.

**B2B Posts: Total Shares Histogram**



**B2C Posts: Total Shares Histogram**



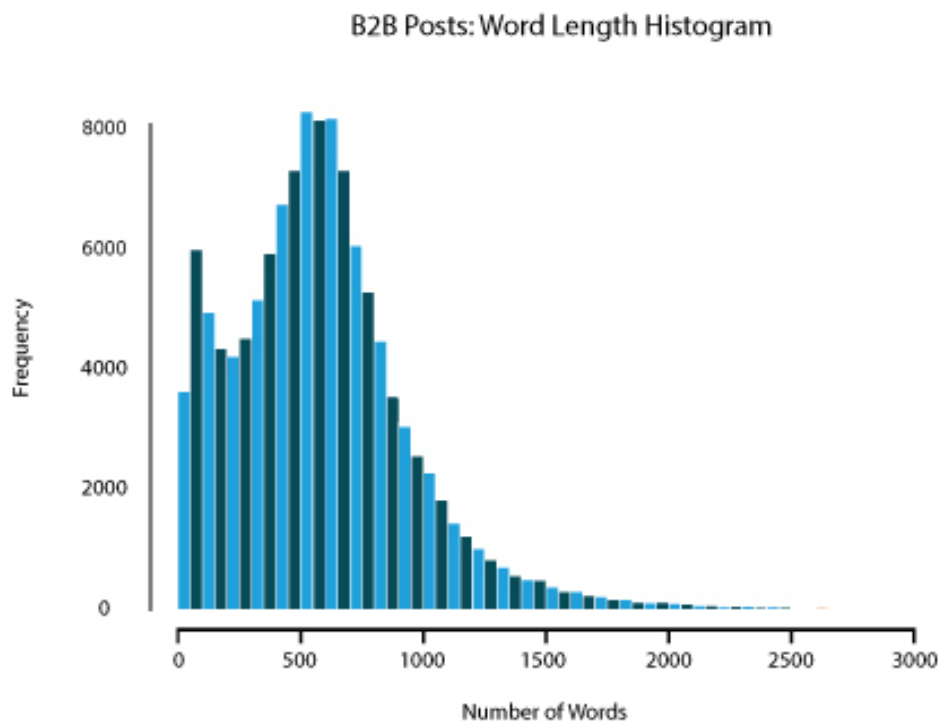


There were some outlier posts in both the B2B and B2C data sets that received over 100,000 shares. These outlier posts and other high performing posts skew the average share count higher and it may be more appropriate to look at the median rather than the mean.

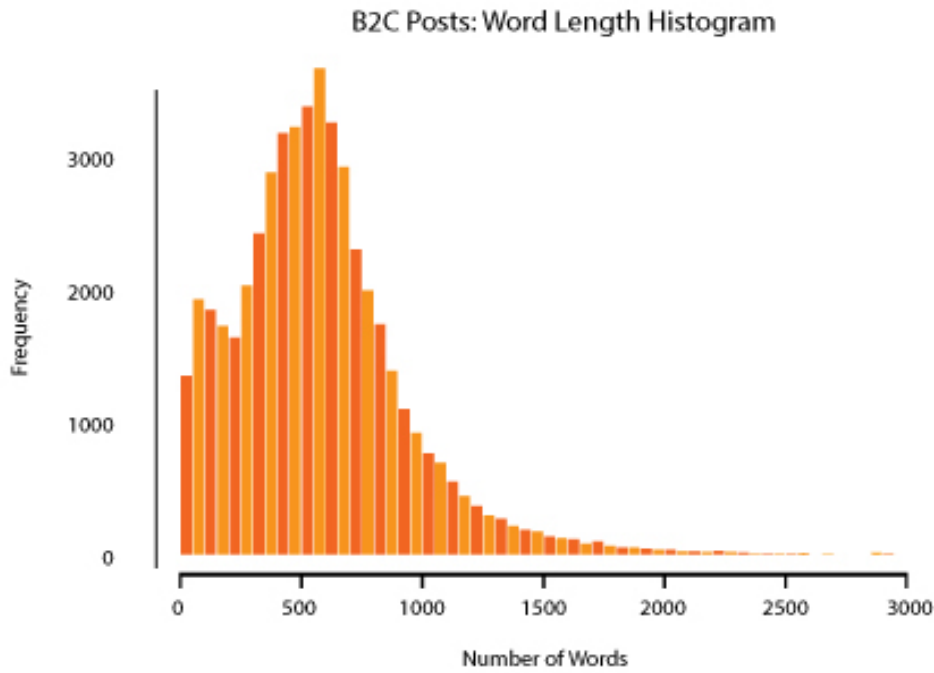
## Content Length

We found there was no real difference in content length (number of words) between the 124,876 B2B posts and 49,952 B2C posts. The median was very close to 550 words and the average was close to 605 words for both sets of posts.

We also found a more normal distribution of posts by number of words for each data set as we can see below.



For B2C posts the median number of words was 545 and the average was 601.



The median number of words was 556 words and the average was 610 words.

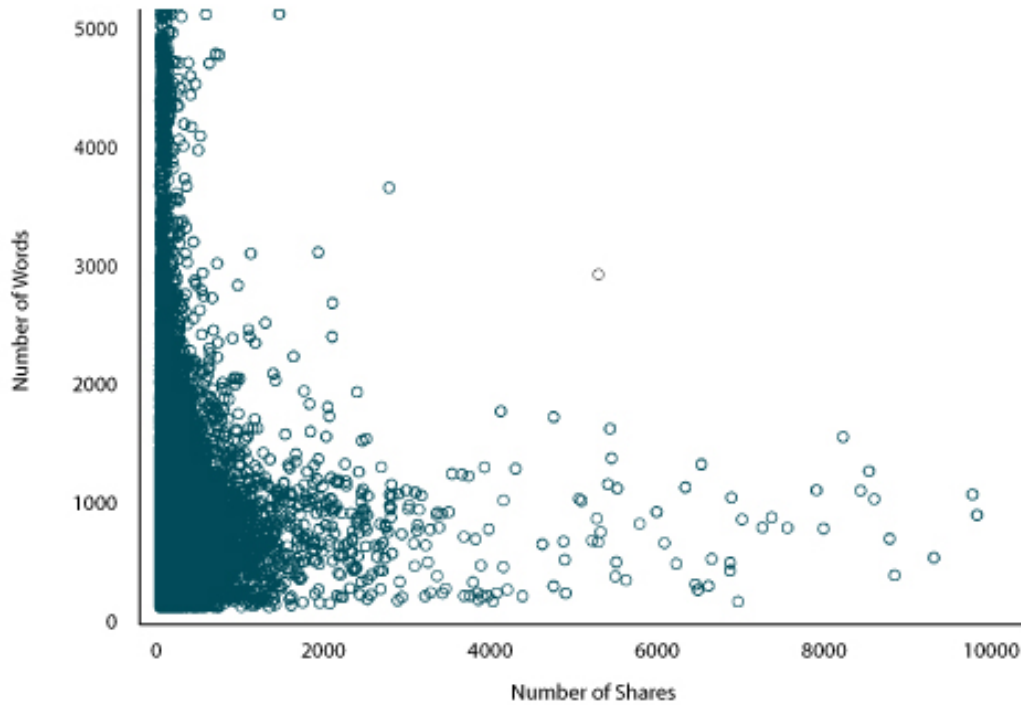
## Relationship between content length and shares

We looked at the correlation of article length and number of shares for all the posts. Previous studies have found that longer posts receive more shares on average.

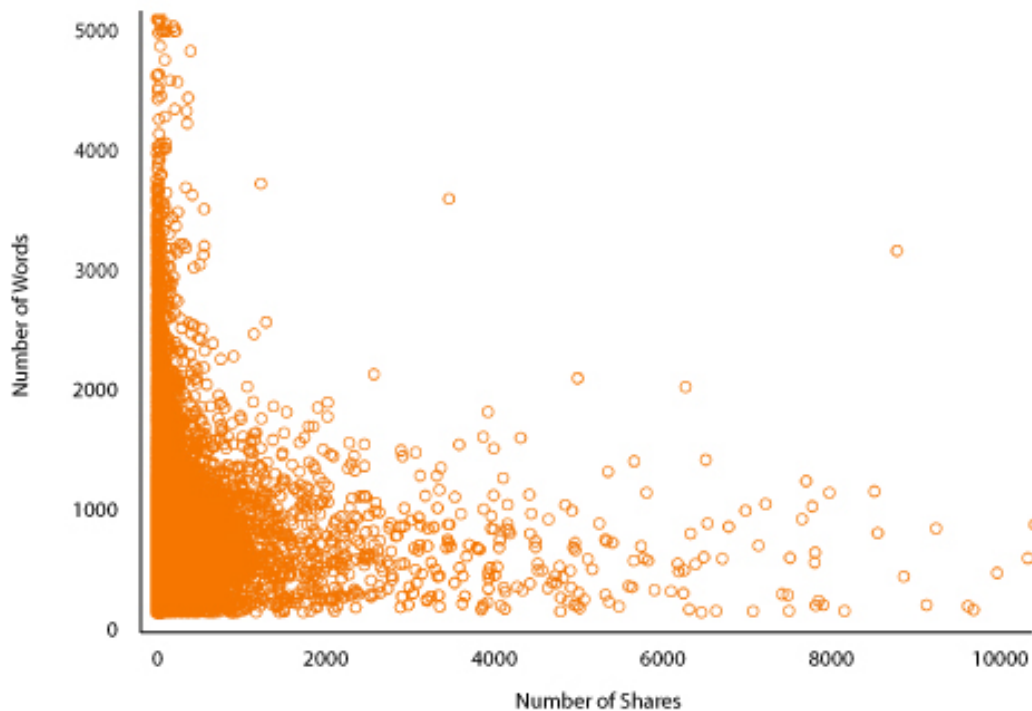
In this study, we found no correlation between post length and social shares either for B2B or B2C content.

The charts below show the relationship between word count and shares.

B2B Posts: Word Length vs Total Shares



B2C Posts: Word Length vs Total Shares



In both cases we can see there is no correlation of shares and article length i.e. as the number of words increases the number of shares increase. Correlations can vary from +1 for a perfect correlation to -1 for a perfect negative correlation. In our sample the correlation was close to zero and the longer posts did not receive more shares on average than shorter posts. For this sample set, our findings indicate article length does not impact social shares.

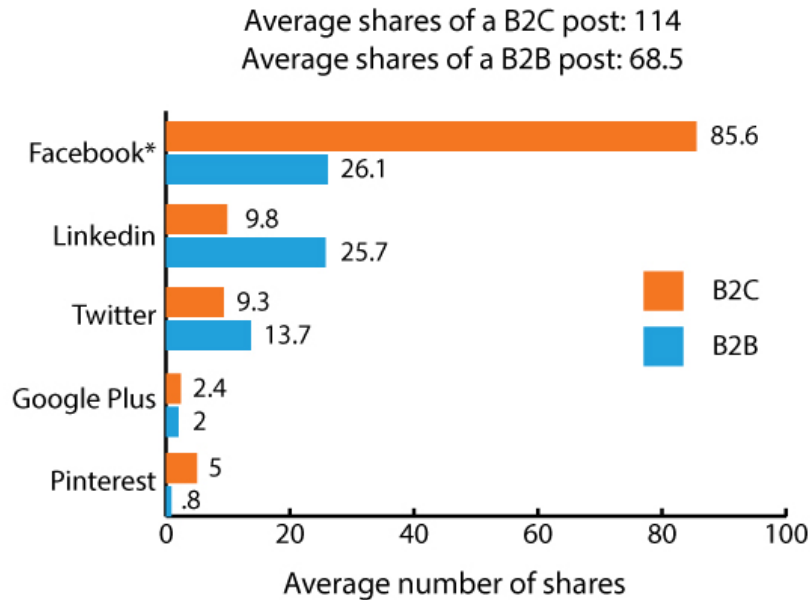
## 04 /

## PERFORMANCE ON SOCIAL NETWORKS

In this section we look at the performance of B2B and B2C posts on the main social networks.

Our main findings were as follows:

- B2C posts received an average of 114 shares compared to just 68.5 for B2B posts.
- The breakdown by network was as follows:



\*Facebook data includes shares and likes

- 75% of the shares of a B2C post came from Facebook. B2C posts performed much better on Facebook than B2B posts. The average Facebook shares for B2C posts was 85.6 compared to 26.1 for B2B posts.
- Pinterest also delivered more shares for B2C posts. The average Pinterest shares received by B2C posts was 4.97 compared to just 0.83 for B2B posts.

- B2B posts performed much better on LinkedIn, on average posts received 25.7, LinkedIn shares compared to just 9.8 for B2C posts.
- There was little variation in the performance of B2B and B2C posts across both Twitter and Google Plus, particularly when you look at medians. The median Twitter shares were 4 for B2B posts and 3 for B2C posts.

The detailed findings are set out below.

## Facebook Shares

We can see from the table below that B2C content gets significantly more Facebook shares and likes than B2B content both on average and the median. On average B2C content gets 85.58 shares compared to 26.1 shares for B2B content.

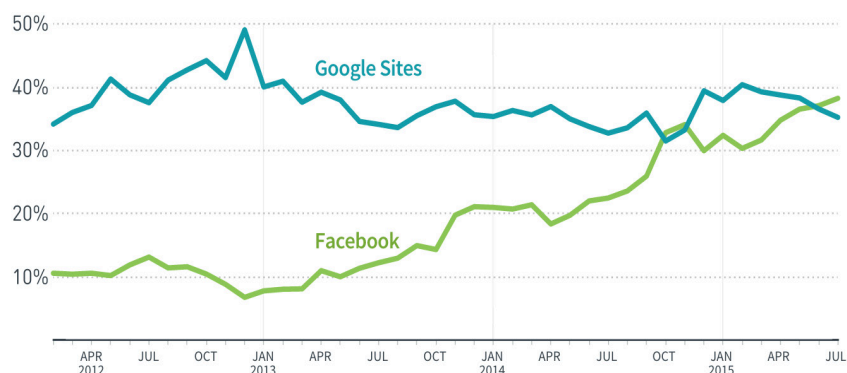
### Facebook Shares For Blog Posts

	B2C	B2B
1st quartile	1	0
Median shares	6	2
Mean (Average)	85.58	26.1
3rd quartile	24	7
Maximum shares	193,719	458,004

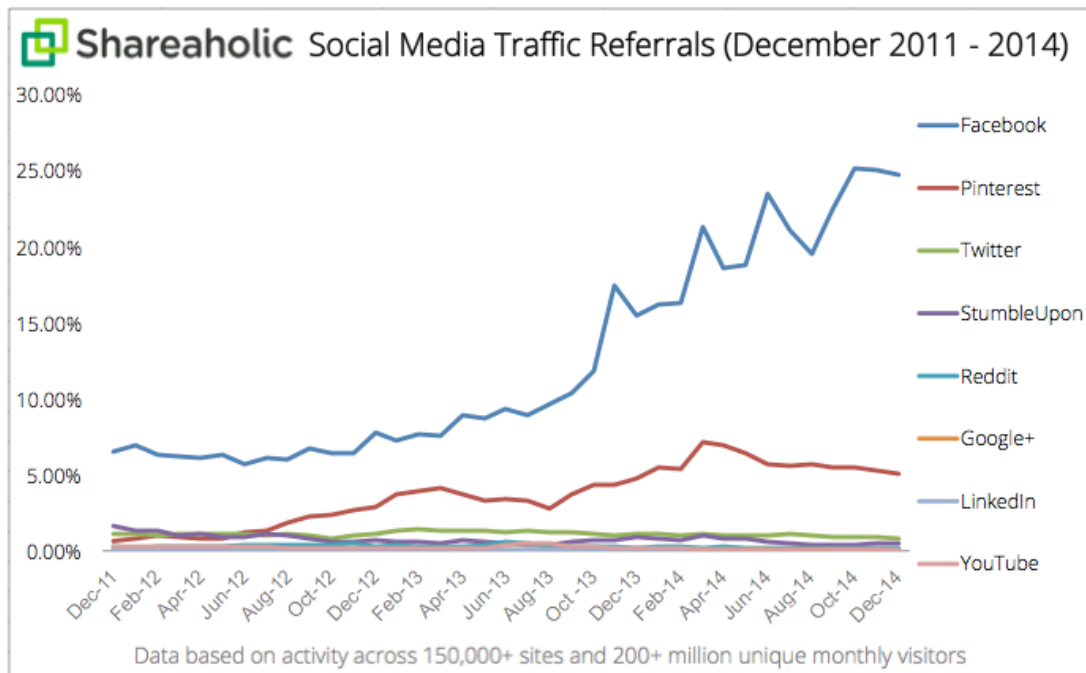
This is not surprising, as many B2B companies do not actively promote their content on Facebook, as they consider it more a consumer platform.

However, there is increasing evidence that Facebook is growing in importance for both B2B and B2C content, partly due to the significant reach of Facebook. For example, parse.ly estimates that Facebook now drives [more traffic to news sites than Google](#).

#### PARSE.LY NETWORK TRAFFIC FROM GOOGLE VERSUS FACEBOOK



Shareaholic also estimate that [Facebook now drives a quarter of traffic to all websites](#).



It is difficult to ignore a social network that is driving between 25% and 30% of traffic to websites. Below are some examples of the types of content and formats that we found performed well on Facebook.

...

The top blog post by a HubSpot customer is by [Solar City](#) on how homes kept cool before air conditioning. It was shared and liked almost 200,000 times on Facebook.



## How homes kept cool before the age of AC

By SolarCity | July 22, 2015

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[in Share](#)
[564](#)
[Like](#)
[Share](#)
[194K](#)
[G+](#)
[352](#)



Image: Green Connections via CC

The modern air conditioner was invented only in the 1920s, and it didn't become a common home feature until the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### About This Blog

SolarCity's mission is to accelerate the mass adoption of clean energy. Follow solar's progress here.

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### Posts by Topic

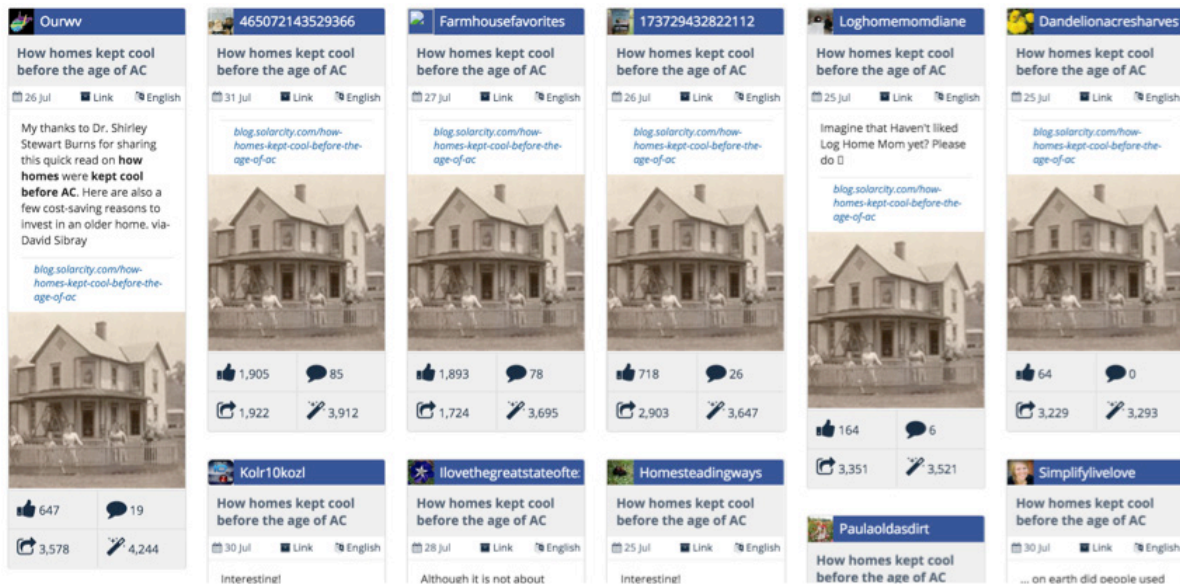
Solar (78)

News (48)



It is difficult to know why this post was shared so much. We had a further look at the Facebook pages that shared the post using the BuzzSumo analyser to see if we could uncover more.

BuzzSumo found the post was picked up and shared by many Facebook pages such as historic sites and home sites. Many of these posts were shared in turn as we can see below. One post was re-shared 3,500 times.



We also found that health posts were well shared on Facebook. This article on [Sjogren's Syndrome](#) from the Sjogren's Syndrome Foundation was shared and liked 34,000 times on Facebook.



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## Conquering Sjogren's: Follow us on our journey to change the face of Sjogren's

### 13 Types of Sjogren's Fatigue

Posted on Thu, Apr 17, 2014

[Tweet](#) [in Share](#) 17 [Like](#) [Share](#) 34K [G+](#) 57



This is a revival of an essay I wrote ten years ago, originally entitled *11 Types of Fatigue*. I've been asked by the Sjögren's Foundation to give it new life. I thank them for the opportunity and hope that in the ten years that have passed since the original essay, there is increased acknowledgment of fatigue as a major factor in Sjögren's. I've decided to add two new types of fatigue to the list, which is by no means meant to be exhaustive.

A quick update: The friend mentioned below was my first friend with Sjögren's and as such, has

always been very special to me. We still speak in a kind of shorthand, as I do with most if not all of my

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Another HubSpot customer example is an [ebook on relieving back pain](#) by the Illinois Back Institute.



## 10 Tips & 10 Videos for a Healthy Back!

Studies show that you can eliminate 60% of your back related symptoms by following a simple daily routine.

By signing up for our free email series, you will receive ten tips from Dr. Jeff that help you maintain a healthy back. Each tip is equipped with an educational video that teaches you how to perform the tip correctly.

### In the Back Tip Emails You Will Learn:

- "What to do" and "what **NOT** to do" when it comes to your back and neck! Everything from the way you stand when you brush your teeth to the way you get in and out of a car.

### Sign Up Now for Your Free Back Tips!

First name

Last name

Email address\*

Phone Number

What is your current back pain struggle?

We have previously seen that people like to share warnings on Facebook. An example in our data set is this warning about the types of [peanut butter that are dangerous for dogs](#). This was liked and shared over 180,000 times.

## Is Peanut Butter Safe For Dogs? Please Beware – Some Could Be Deadly!

Authored by [Jason Nicholas, BVetMed](#)

© May 28, 2015

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If you're like many people, you might want to give your dog some peanut butter as an occasional treat. Or you might want to use peanut butter as a trick or reward to get your dog to take their medications? In many cases this is perfectly fine (so long as it's not in excess — as too much can cause [pancreatitis](#) and/or contribute to [obesity](#)).

However, with the introduction of a unique line of peanut and other nut butters onto the market — Nuts 'N More® — the answer to the question of whether or not it's safe to give, even a small quantity of, peanut butter to your dogs is no longer a straightforward one. Why? Because of the sweetener that's been

We also found examples of B2B posts that performed well on Facebook. For example, this practical post set out tips on how to use AutoCad and was shared over 13,000 times on Facebook.



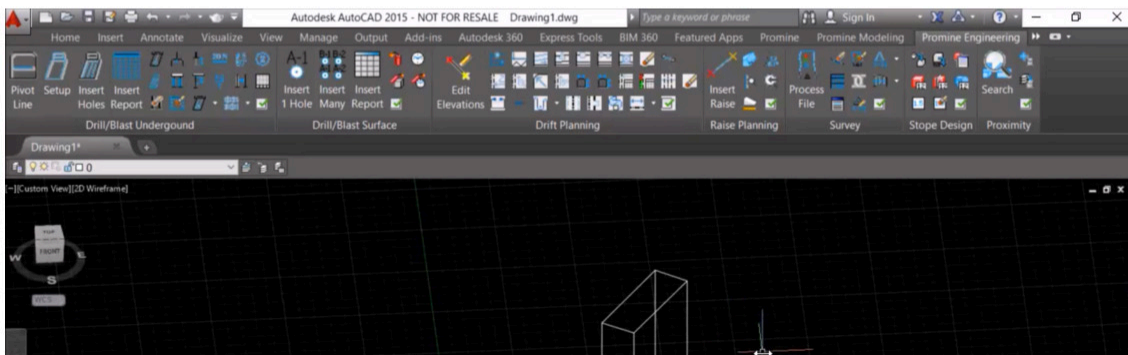
## Promine AutoCAD Tips & Tricks: Align Command

Posted by **Yvan Dionne** on October 20, 2015

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[Tweet](#) [in Share](#) [1](#) [Like](#) [Share](#) [13K](#) [G+](#) [1](#)

The AutoCAD Align command can move, rotate and scale an object while aligning it with existing geometry or selected point.



We would expect to see more B2B sites distributing and promoting content on Facebook given its sheer size and scale.

## Pinterest Shares

We can see from the table below that B2C content on average gets more Pinterest shares than B2B content. 4.97 on average compared to just 0.83 shares. It appears that B2B content does relatively poorly on Pinterest, though in both cases it is worth noting that upper quartile is zero in both cases, which means 75% of content in both cases received zero Pinterest shares.

### Pinterest Shares For Blog Posts

	B2C	B2B
1st quartile	0	0
Median shares	0	0
Mean (Average)	4.97	0.83
3rd quartile	0	0
Maximum shares	41,620	10,532

A post by AmeriFirst Home Mortgage is a good example of how to use an [infographic to good effect on Pinterest](#). The infographic set out a schedule of home maintenance tasks you need to carry out each month. The infographic was shared more than 41,000 times on Pinterest.



Another post that was well shared on Pinterest centered around on making your own lip balm. This achieved over 11,000 shares on Pinterest.

While most posts do not get shared on Pinterest, there is significant potential for the right type of post, particularly in the B2C area.



## LinkedIn Shares

We can see that B2B content on average gets significantly more LinkedIn shares than B2C content. 25.7 compared to 9.83 shares. 25% of B2B posts get more than 26 LinkedIn shares.

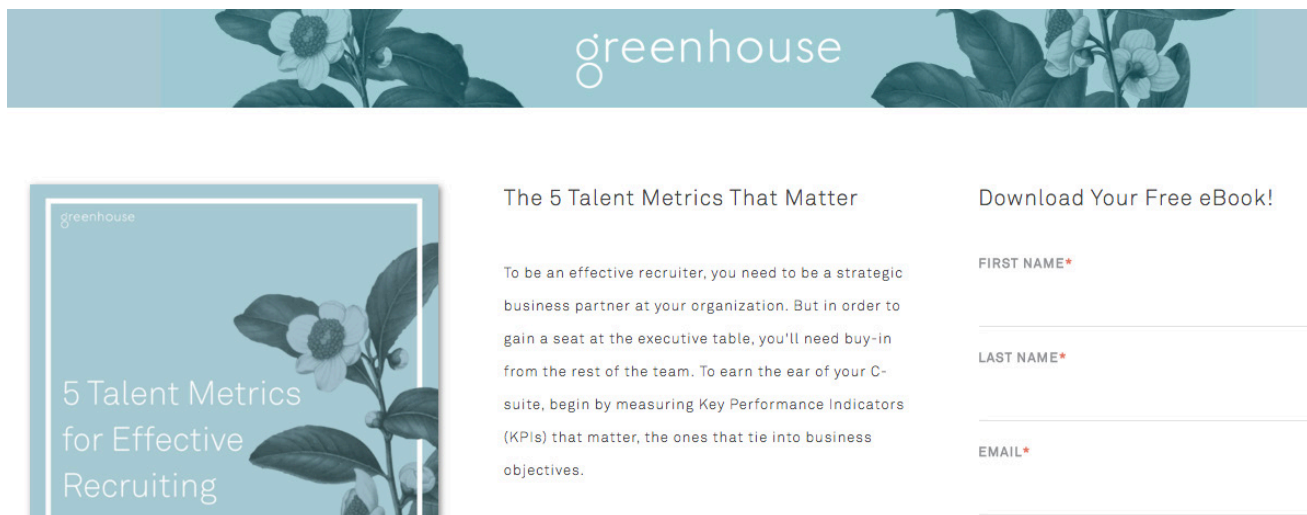
### LinkedIn Shares For Blog Posts

	B2C	B2B
1st quartile	0	1
Median shares	0	8
Mean (Average)	9.83	25.7
3rd quartile	5	26
Maximum shares	11,285	13,769

It is worth noting that the median for B2C posts was 0 (i.e. 50% of B2C posts received zero LinkedIn shares).

Below are some examples of B2B posts that performed well on LinkedIn.

We found that ebooks can be very effective in B2B marketing. [Greenhouse's landing page on talent metrics](#) for recruiting had almost 3,000 LinkedIn shares.



The screenshot shows a landing page for Greenhouse's eBook. The header features the Greenhouse logo and a floral background. Below the header, there is a section titled "The 5 Talent Metrics That Matter" with a brief description of the eBook's content. To the right of this section is a form titled "Download Your Free eBook!" with fields for "FIRST NAME\*", "LAST NAME\*", and "EMAIL\*". On the left side of the page, there is a thumbnail image of the eBook cover, which also features the Greenhouse logo and the title "5 Talent Metrics for Effective Recruiting".

People appear very keen to learn from mistakes or identify habits that will make them successful at work. Often these are published as list posts. Here is an [example list post from Zurple](#) that did well on LinkedIn.

## The 5 Biggest Mistakes I've Made as a Real Estate Agent

Posted by Jessica Schweppe

Find me on: [in](#) [g+](#)

Jul 29, 2014 7:00:00 AM

[Tweet](#) [in Share](#) 2,243 [f Like](#) [Share](#) 40 [G+1](#) 26

Welcome to our Agent Insight series!

*We've been scouring popular real estate forums in search of awesome agent bloggers who are posting about all the things that matter to you - valuable industry insights, [real estate marketing tips](#) and more. Today, we're publishing our very first guest blog - an Active Rain re-post by 15 year real estate veteran. Mel*

This next post from Impact, with a [catchy title](#), also did well on LinkedIn



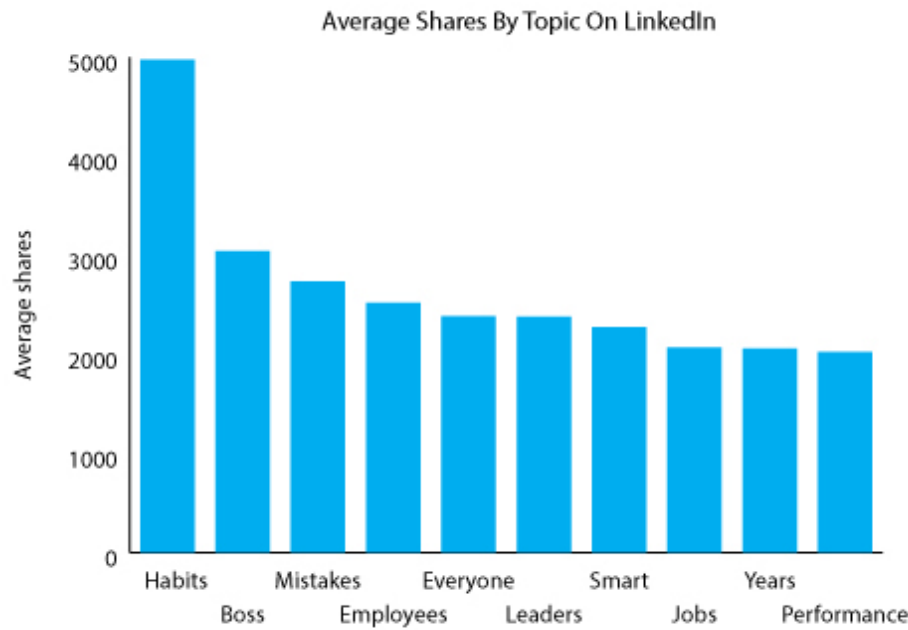
INBOUND MARKETING WHY US SUCCESS STORIES RESOURCES ABOUT BLOG

TALK TO US



Posts that provide advice to help people become more successful at work do particularly well. We analysed the most shared topics on LinkedIn and these are set out below.





We had a look at the top posts on habits on LinkedIn and found examples of posts that were well shared on LinkedIn as shown below.

### Top Posts on Habits on LinkedIn

Title	LinkedIn Shares
12 Habits of Exceptional Leaders	25,700
Top 10 Habits of Likeable Leaders	22,900
Habits of the Most Irresistible People	20,900
15 Critical Habits of Mentally Tough People	19,600
10 Habits of Genuinely Charming Leaders	11,000
6 Unusual Habits of Exceptionally Creative People	10,800

This content on habits is consistent with users of LinkedIn looking for and sharing content that will help people become more successful at work.

## Twitter and Google Plus Shares

There was less of a marked difference between B2B and B2C content when it came to Twitter shares. B2B content performed slightly better, the average shares was 13.7 for B2B content and 9.3 for B2C content.

### Twitter Shares For Blog Posts

	B2C	B2B
1st quartile	1	1
Median shares	3	4
Mean (Average)	9.28	13.71
3rd quartile	8	12
Maximum shares	8,271	5,034

On Google Plus the numbers were very low for both B2B and B2C content. The average plus ones for the sample of B2B content was 2 and the average for the sample B2C content was 2.4.

## Content Formats

Our data sample was not large enough to effectively test different content formats. However, we did examine some the differences in the most shared content across all sites across Facebook and LinkedIn.

We found that “entertainment” content does well on Facebook and in a B2C context. Top content on popular topics, such as health, were also entertaining, for example:

- Drinking three glasses of champagne ‘[could help prevent dementia and Alzheimer’s disease](#)’ received over 957,000 Facebook likes and shares.
- The ‘[11 Surprising Health Benefits of Whisky](#)’ received 624,000 likes and shares.

We also looked at the titles used by top performing content to see if this might reveal any further insights. We reviewed one million articles at random and reviewed three word phrases in headlines that got the most shares.

## Most Shared Phrases From 1 Million Articles

Trigram	# of Articles Containing Trigram	Avg Facebook Shares & Likes
"X pictures that"	162	19,646
"X signs you're"	206	12,740
"make you laugh"	169	11,029
"how well do"	411	10,111
"X photos that"	250	9,704
"can we guess"	202	9,085
"you should never"	222	8,669
"X things only"	307	7,940
"are the best"	164	7,106
"X things to"	626	6,676

Trigram	# of Articles Containing Trigram	Avg Twitter Shares
"the science of"	175	542
"the case for"	248	364
"you can now"	208	321
"Donald Trump is"	239	313
"history of the"	321	307
"the art of"	264	276
"the rise of"	258	268
"first time in"	237	262
"the future of"	778	259
"the age of"	180	258

There is evidence that quiz, entertaining and image content does better on Facebook and for B2C content.

For example, the phrase “pictures that” was used in 162 of the one million posts and received an average of 19,645 likes and shares on Facebook.

The top most shared post on Facebook was “24 Pictures That Will Make You Feel Better About The World” with over 700,000 shares.

The top most shared article with that phrase on LinkedIn by comparison was “How to Take Pictures That Attract and Convert Customers” which received just 403 shares.

The term “make you laugh” was used 169 times in headlines in our sample and these posts received an average of 11,000 Facebook likes and shares.

By contrast the top most shared content that had this phrase on LinkedIn was “41 Public Comebacks That Are Guaranteed To Make You Laugh” and this received just 815 shares.

The term “signs you’re” was used 206 times in the sample of 1m posts and received an average of 12,700 likes and shares on Facebook. The top post on Facebook was “10 Signs You’re Being Raised By A Nurse” which received over 800,000 posts.

The top post on LinkedIn with this phrase was “signs you’re going to be successful” which received 6,500 shares.

### Quizzes

Quizzes are popular across both B2B and B2C content but particularly B2C content. For example, the phrase “can you guess” was used 249 times in our one million random posts and received an average of 8,949 Facebook likes and shares.

The top post on Facebook was “Can You Guess The Disney Movie From A Shot Of The Opening Scene?” which received over 500,000 shares. On LinkedIn the average shares for content with “can you guess” in the title was less than 50. The fifth most shared was by HubSpot “Can You Guess the Brand Behind These Clever Product Descriptions?” which had 325 LinkedIn shares.

While we did not do a comprehensive review of content formats, this initial analysis does appear to confirm that entertaining content, images and quizzes work better for B2C content on Facebook.

# 05 /

## CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the analysis of 175,000 posts our main findings were as follows:

Our main findings were as follows:

- B2C content achieves higher total shares on average than B2B content.
- The average content length, in terms of number of words, is very similar for both B2B and B2C published content (both are between 500-600 words) but there is no direct correlation between increased word count and number of shares.
- Longer B2B content does not perform better than longer B2C content.
- In our sample longer form content did not perform better for either B2B or B2C content
- B2B content performs better on LinkedIn, though on average B2B content gets a similar number of LinkedIn and Facebook shares.
- There is little variation in the shares of B2B and B2C content across Twitter and Google Plus.
- There is evidence that entertaining content, image content and quizzes work particularly well for B2C content on Facebook.

### Recommendations

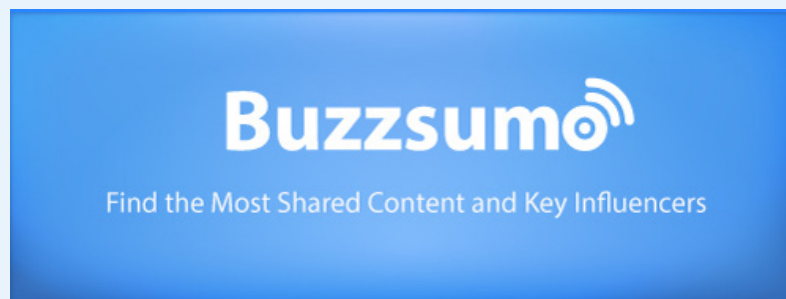
Knowing which platform will get you the most shares of your content, the optimal post length, and headline to maximize your content's potential will undoubtedly help increase the top of your inbound marketing funnel and generate leads from social media.

Try not to limit yourself to one playbook, and keep in mind there were outliers in the data that proved there were longer posts out there that skewed the average; meaning it is possible and encouraged to write content that doesn't follow the normal playbook of writing a "10 Habits of Leaders" article and sharing it on LinkedIn every week.

Test your posts, share on different networks at different times of the day, and create an editorial calendar based on those results that adopt both the learnings from this report and your test results to maximize your brand's potential to grow!

For more information on how often you should be blogging, check out HubSpot's [Blogging Frequency Benchmarks](#) research.

WANT TO KNOW HOW BUZZSUMO ANALYZED  
HUBSPOT'S CUSTOMER BLOG DATA?  
**CHECK OUT BUZZSUMO'S PRODUCT OFFERINGS**



WANT TO USE THE DATA CHARTS  
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## APPENDIX

HubSpot would like to thank the following customers for graciously allowing us to feature their exemplary content in this ebook:

AmeriFirst Home Mortgage  
 Greenhouse  
 Illinois Back Institute  
 Impact Branding and Design  
 Preventive Vet  
 Promine  
 Solar City  
 Sjogren's Syndrome Foundation  
 Zurple

Shares of B2C content - the overall shares of articles by network was as follows:

B2C	LinkedIn	Google+	Twitter	Pinterest	Facebook	Total Shares
Minimum shares	0	0	0	0	0	0
1st quartile	0	0	1	0	1	6
Median shares	0	0	3	0	6	17
Mean (Average)	9.83	2.42	9.28	4.97	85.58	114
3rd quartile	5	1	8	0	24	51
Maximum shares	11,285	1,171	8,271	41,620	193,719	196,853

Shares of B2B content - the overall shares of articles by network was as follows:

B2B	LinkedIn	Google+	Twitter	Pinterest	Facebook	Total Shares
Minimum shares	0	0	0	0	0	0
1st quartile	1	0	1	0	0	8
Median shares	8	1	4	0	2	22
Mean (Average)	25.7	2	13.71	0.83	26.1	68.5
3rd quartile	26	2	12	0	7	56
Maximum shares	13,769	3,499	5,034	10,532	458,004	458,040