

Nothing Beats Word-of-Mouth Advertising

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Although I love online social media, it turns out that **nothing beats a word-of-mouth recommendation to get new business**, according to a new study by [ARANet](http://ARANet.com).

Word-of-mouth recommendations from friends or family remain the most influential resource on advice for those looking to purchase products and services, but overall, search engines are also becoming a trusted source.

Young and highly educated consumers say online sources influence their buying decisions at a higher rate compared with the rest of the population, but **social media resides down at the bottom of the list – just above billboard advertising--** according to the recent survey. Overall, consumers rely less on resources in social sites like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and MySpace, according to a survey from Opinion Research Co., sponsored by ARANet.

Scott Severson, president of survey sponsor ARANet, believes companies need to have more than one way to reach consumers online because not all will want to have contact via email or social sites. Companies will need search engine optimization (SEO) and paid-search campaign strategies, too. In other words, one campaign message will not resonate with all consumers the same way.

Overall, among survey participants, 49% who bring home annual salaries of \$75,000 or more chose search engines as the preferred choice vs. 39% for all respondents. But break that down into participants between the ages of 25 and 34, and about 50% say they prefer search engines.

For the age group 25 to 34, online articles are another trusted source of information, at 39% vs. 28%, respectively. Younger consumers also appreciate information in emails from retailers or manufacturers, at 32% compared with 20% for all respondents.

Here are the highlights:

- **Overall, most people participating in the survey -- 59% -- choose personal advice from friends or family members**
- TV news or other broadcasts: 40%
- Search engines Google, Bing, Yahoo or Ask: 39%

- TV ads: 36%
- Articles in newspapers or magazines, 33%
- Newspapers or magazines ads: 31%
- Online articles, 28%
- Radio news or other broadcasts ads: 25%.
- Direct mail came in: 24%
- Radio ads: 20%
- Emails from retailers or manufacturers, 20%
- Online ads: 19%
- Messages or posts on social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn or MySpace, 18 percent
- Billboards, 15%.

The results are based on 1,029 interviews conducted by Opinion Research Corp. online from Jan. 7-8, 2010 among a demographically representative U.S. sample of adults 18 years of age or older.



For more on this topic, call:

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