

Press release

Survey by assetinum.com on the social media competence of the 50 most important private banks

Social Media: Banks Are Lagging Far Behind

assetinum.com, the independent information portal for investors, analyzed the social media presence of the 50 leading private banks. The result: the majority of banks are still inexperienced when it comes to dealing with social media. Citibank performs best, followed by Société Générale and ABN AMRO.

Zurich, 8th March 2012 – Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn & Co. are on everyone's lips. However, not with the banks: the majority of banks still deals with social media quite clumsily. Especially the private banks analyzed by assetinum.com have difficulties: the 50 worldwide largest and most important private banking and wealth management institutes only reach an average of 43 out of 100 possible points – which is not even half of the maximum amount of points. And this despite the fact that the criteria for the awards for points were relatively easy to fulfill.

Citibank takes the first place, followed by Société Générale and ABN AMRO

For the present survey assetinum.com analyzed the communication of the 50 leading banks in wealth management and private banking on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn and the integration of social media on their websites (see appendix). Result: Citibank leads the ranking, ahead of Société Générale, ABN AMRO, Barclays, Wells Fargo, Standard Chartered, Deutsche Bank and Vanguard who all achieved at least 70 points. Thereby, not only financial topics are of importance within the social media strategies of the leading banks. Also sponsoring campaigns in sports, art, science, culture, development aid or sustainability attract attention on Facebook & Co. The best placed banks manage to be convincing not least because of their interaction with users on their social media channels.

Amateurish social media strategies

On average, however, the social media competence of banks is rather poor: 27 banks do not even reach half of the possible points. 27 banks do not reach half of the maximum amount of points in the «Facebook» category, 25 in the «Website, mobile & Co» category, 25 in «Twitter», 29 in «YouTube» and 21 in the «LinkedIn» category. «For a surprisingly high amount of banks a convincing social media strategy is still not distinguishable,» says Benjamin Manz, managing partner of assetinum.com. And this despite the fact that bank clients worldwide wish for more transparency and information content – not least because of digital media.

Working against «shitstorms» with the help of social media

The area of social media is experiencing a paradigm shift which is also changing the long-term media behavior of affluent bank clients. Digital media does not only serve for information search but, increasingly, also for reputation building and preservation as well as for client acquisition. Reputation-jeopardizing «shitstorms» can be best avoided if banks themselves are prominently present on the important social media channels and can react in time to accusations. Especially for renowned banks with a demanding clientele it is increasingly important to be present in the virtual social network. «The banks have to hurry, as long as they still can jump on the bandwagon. It takes time to build an active Internet community,» explains Benjamin Manz.

Banks on Facebook are hibernating

Facebook has become the central social interaction platform. It is therefore even more surprising that a third of all analyzed banks does not yet have an active Facebook profile. Astonishingly enough, Goldman Sachs is one of these banks – even though the company is invested in Facebook. Royal Bank of Canada, ABN AMRO, Nordea and Standard Chartered who actively integrate their users in their communications and let them participate in what goes on online did best. Averagely, the banks only reach a third of the possible amount of points – a disillusioning result. Also, only 18 banks or approximately half (55%) of the banks with an active Facebook profile reacted to a test request by assetinum.com via Facebook – a clear sign for insufficient interaction with the users.

Twitter and YouTube channels: mere tokenism for many banks

Also, the communication by the analyzed banks with the social news service Twitter is not much more skillful: even though 42 out of 50 banks have a Twitter account, only 26 (or approximately half the banks) react actively to the user tweets. Only 13 of 50 consider wealth management topics. Only barely half of the banks have an up-to-date YouTube channel, thereof only 15 banks with special consideration of topics related to wealth management. At least, all banks – apart from the bottom-placed Bank J. Safra – have a LinkedIn profile that is mainly supposed to serve the Human Resources departments. However, a closer look at the LinkedIn profiles shows that only 14 banks present additional content and only 8 institutes cultivate interaction with LinkedIn users.

Poor online and mobile integration of social media

Shortcomings are also shown on the websites of the banks: almost half of the institutes integrate social media insufficiently in their Internet presence. Only 19 banks have an own blog and only with 6 banks interaction between the users and the bank is possible via an interactive blog or chat on the website. Only 33 banks feature a subsite on wealth management or private banking topics. Only 22 or less than half of the banks have a website that is optimized for smartphones. 14 banks do not have a mobile app.

Contact for further information:

Benjamin Manz, Managing Partner
assetinum.com
Schaffhauserstrasse 120c
8057 Zurich, Switzerland
Phone: +41 44 576 8888
E-mail: media@assetinum.com
Website: www.assetinum.com

Appendix

About assetinum.com

assetinum.com is an independent Swiss consulting firm and information portal for investors. Apart from up-to-date information, surveys, interviews and in-depth articles, investors benefit from a decision-making tool that allows the selection of suitable Swiss banks, verified independent asset or wealth managers and family offices.

Methodology

«The International Private Banking Study 2011» by the University of Zurich, «The World's 500 Largest Asset Managers» (2011) by the consulting firm Tower Watson as well as own research served as the basis for the selection of the 50 banking institutes. In the present survey there was no difference made between wealth management banks and private banks (with wealth management and private banking services). All analyzed information is from publicly available sources. Information that is only available to a limited public was not considered. The data was collected at the end of February 2012. The maximum amount of points that could be achieved were 100. Thereby, the most important social media channels – Facebook (at most 35 points), Twitter (15 points), YouTube (10 points) and LinkedIn (10 points) – as well as the integration of social media into the website presence (30 points) including mobile presence and Google+ were taken into consideration. An accordingly high amount of points was given to factors that were especially focused on, i.e. activity, interaction and special consideration of wealth management or private banking topics. If a bank has several channels within a medium – for example several country-specific Facebook pages – the most relevant channel was taken into consideration.

Facebook

assetinum.com analyzed the following factors, among others, whereby activity, interaction and focus on wealth management topics were especially evaluated: existence of an active Facebook profile, amount of contributions per day, amount of «like this» and «talking about this», integration of other media channels such as videos and events, interaction possibilities via challenges or games, commentary functions and general interaction with users. Additionally, assetinum.com tested with a request on the «Facebook wall» how fast banks reacted to the request. A maximum of 35 points could be achieved.

Twitter

The following factors were analyzed: existence of an active Twitter profile, amount of tweets and tweets per day, amount of «followers», ratio between «followers» and «following», reputation (including amount of re-tweets), interaction (answering to other Twitter users), wealth management topics. A maximum of 15 points could be achieved.

LinkedIn

The following factors were analyzed: existence of an active LinkedIn profile, amount of followers, regular news, content contribution, interaction. A maximum of 10 points could be achieved.

YouTube

The following factors were analyzed: existence of an active YouTube profile, amount of videos, amount of subscribers, amount of video views, up-to-dateness of the videos, consideration of wealth management topics. A maximum of 10 points could be achieved.

Website, mobile & Co.

The following factors were analyzed: integration of social media on the website, existence of an in-house blog, interaction possibility via website (e.g. through a chat channel), blog, podcast or webcast (with and without wealth management topics), separate website or subsite on wealth management topics, mobile optimization, mobile applications, existence of a Google+ account, usability. A maximum of 30 points could be achieved.