Downtown Women's Club 2008 Online Networking Survey:
How Social is Your Media?

October

2008

In September 2008, the Downtown Women's Club, a women's network and career website, surveyed 800+ businesswomen across three generations to spot trends about online networking and social media. This survey is an update of a 2006 Downtown Women's Club survey.

Downtown Women's Club
www.downtownwomensclub.com

DowntownWomensClub.com 2008 Online Networking Survey: How Social is Your Media?

Introduction

In September 2008, the Downtown Women's Club, http://www.DowntownWomensClub.com, a women's network and career website, surveyed 800+ business women across three generations to spot trends about online networking and social media. We then compared the responses from the three generations – Generation Y, Generation X and Baby Boomers – and found some startling differences between these groups. In addition, we tracked changes from our 2006 survey, Online Networking: High Tech or Not High Tech, That is our Question.

Key Findings

1. The survey revealed double-digit increases in all categories of online networking: email, professional and social networks, and blogs.
   a. More businesswomen in all generations use email rather than the telephone to network.
   b. The use of LinkedIn and Facebook for business networking doubled in all generations.
2. "Online professional networks" jumped from the 8th most useful online tool in 2006 to 3rd in 2008.
3. LinkedIn topped the list as most popular online networking site with 89% of respondents using it.
   a. Facebook was the second most popular with 63% using it (up from 9th place in 2006).
   b. New entrants worth watching include Twitter (microblogging) 7th place, and Flickr (picture sharing) 9th place, which are both popular with generation Y.
4. The most cited reasons businesswomen use social media for their business/career are for networking and research.
5. Only 16% of respondents participate in social media more than one hour per day. However, that rises to approximately 30% for Gen Y.
6. Blogs are being use for business:
   a. 62% of respondents are reading at least one business and career blog per day.
   b. 59% are reading at least one fun and entertainment blog per day.
   c. Only 18% of respondents comment on blogs on either a daily or weekly basis.
   d. 20% of respondents run a blog for their business (up from 5% in 2006).
7. 23% of Gen Y respondents cited *The Daily Show* as a main source of political news and information; 18% of Gen Y cited blogs as a main source.

*** We added in a couple of politically-related questions because they were issues relevant to our audience and an earlier study we did entitled, Women in the Workplace – Generationally Speaking.**

8. Respondents cited economic, social and foreign policy issues as the top three extremely important factors when choosing a candidate to support. The four least important factors were: Race, gender, religion and parental responsibilities.
9. 83% of respondents think it's possible for a woman with young children to effectively work in a high profile position.

Methodology

We surveyed the members of DowntownWomensClub.com, plus supplementary lists of working women through an online survey powered by Zoomerang.   The survey respondents included 314 Baby Boomers, 336 Generation Xers, and 133 Gen Yers. Only complete surveys were considered.

## Section I – Online Networking 2006 v. 2007

1.   **We know you don't like to give your age, but it helps us get to know you better (really, we're not just being nosy) and we'll even let you generalize. Are you a:**

- Baby Boomer (born 1946-1964)* – 314 respondents.
- Generation X (born 1965-1976)* – 336 respondents.
- Generation Y (born 1977-1993)* – 133 respondents.
- Silent Generation (born before 1946** – 16 respondents

*Note that the actual year ranges of the generations are hotly debated.*

**We didn't have enough Silent Generation members to include in the results*

Total respondents to survey
(broken down by generation)

# of respondants

■ Boomers ■ Gen X ■ Gen Y
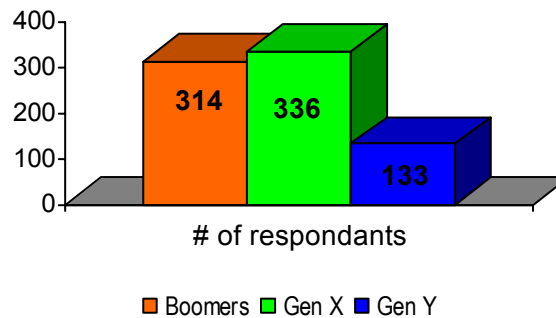
2. How do you go about your networking?

October 2008 – Double-digit increases in online networking from 2006

How do you go about your networking?
(broken down by percentage within each generation)
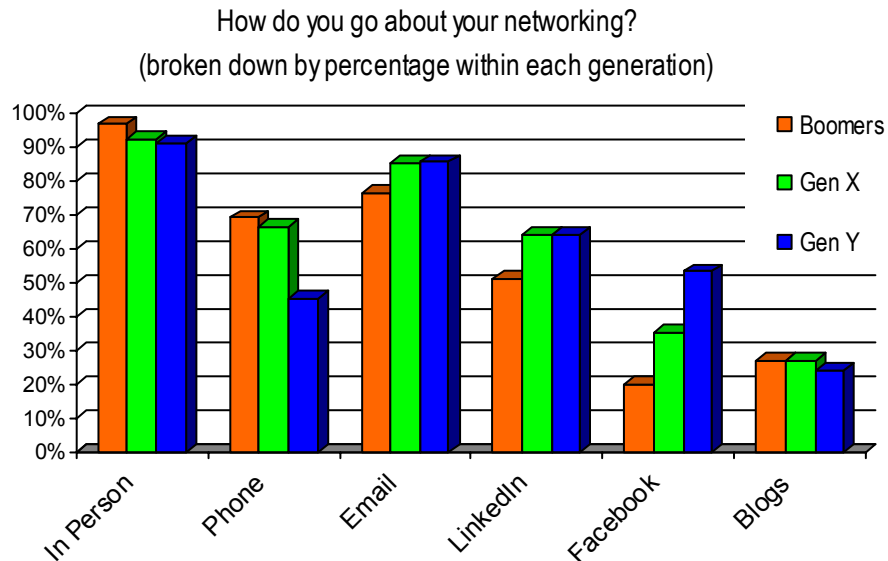
Respondents were allowed to answer "never, rarely, some of the time, most of the time, all of the time." The above diagram includes respondents who answered "some of the time, most of the time, and all of the time" broken down by generations. **Of note are four items: (1) the 20% difference between Gen Y and Boomer phone users, (2) the importance of Facebook for Gen Y; (3) the dominance of LinkedIn; and (4) the use of blogs as a business networking tool.**

When we compared this to our April 2006 Online Networking survey, we also discovered the following:

- In-person networking remained constant;
- Phone use dropped in all generations, but dramatically in Gen Y from 63% to 45%;
- Email networking rose in all generations at least 10%;
- The use of online professional networks, specifically the leader LinkedIn rose from 27% to 50% for Boomers, and to approximately 60% for Gen X and Y from 27% and 18% respectively*;
- Facebook showed growth in all generations. **
- We did not ask about blog networking in 2006. Our 2006 numbers showed that only 21% were "reading" blogs for business at that time, and less than 5% were running their own blogs.

Our 2006 survey grouped all professional networks together, but LinkedIn was dominant then and now.
**Our 2006 survey grouped all social networks together, but Facebook was the dominant social network for business use both then and now.

April 2006 – The beginning of online networking

**The following chart was excerpted from the DowntownWomensClub.com 2006 Online Networking Survey: High Tech or Not High Tech,That is Our Question (1,000+ respondents).

How do you go about your networking?
(broken down by percentage within each generation)
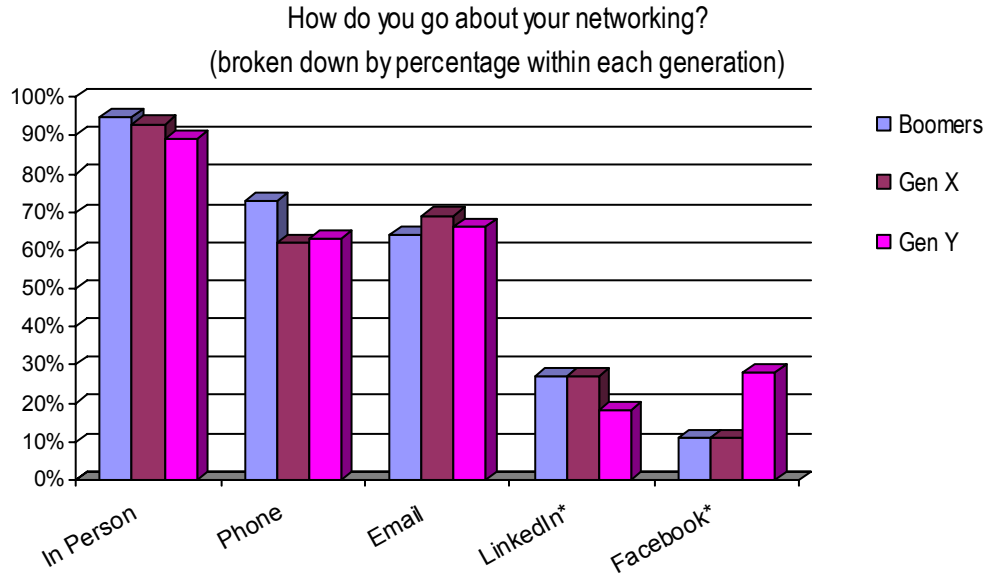
*LinkedIn was described as "online professional networks" in 2006, so this could include other professional networks, but LinkedIn was the leader then and now; Facebook was described as "online social networks" in 2006, and therefore likely includes mySpace and other social networks.

3.   If you network online (via email or an online service), why? (Check all that apply.) Skip this question if you do not network online.

In 2008, the top five reasons businesswomen network online (all generations) were:

1. It's more time efficient
2. I can multitask
3. I can do it all hours from all times zones.
4. I can network with more people at once
5. It's easier to find relevant people to network with.

In 2006, the top five reasons businesswomen network online (all generations) were almost identical:

1. It's more time efficient
2. I can multitask
3. I can do it all hours from all times zones.
4. I can network with more people at once
5. I don't have to travel

While the reasons didn't vary in order much from 2006 to 2008, it's interesting to note that online networkers are getting more sophisticated. A new entrant into the top five in 2008 is that "it's easier to find relevant people."

4.   **If you DON'T network online, why not? (Check all that apply.) Skip this question if you do network online.**

In 2008, the top five reasons businesswomen did NOT network online, were:
1. I don't know how, but I would like to learn
2. Too impersonal
3. I cannot gauge my level of trust for a person
4. Can't form true connections
5. I'm much better in person or on the phone.

In 2006, the top five reasons businesswomen did NOT network online, were:
1. Too impersonal
2. Can't leverage personality & image
3. I don't know how but I would like to learn
4. I cannot gauge my level of trust for a person
5. Can't form true connections

In 2008 we saw an increase in the number of businesswomen who didn't know how to network online but wanted to learn (from 33% in 2006 to 40% in 2008). However, there were many of the same issues of trust and the impersonal aspects of the networking. Only 20% of total respondents stated that they didn't network online for any or all of the reasons stated above.

5.   How useful are the following online tools for your business/career?

In 2006 and 2008, we asked respondents which online tools were the most useful. Respondents were allowed to answer "naah, once in a while, sometimes, pretty useful, can't live without." below are the online tools that respondents found "pretty useful, and can't live without." This chart clearly shows the rise in online professional networks, specifically, LinkedIn.

How useful are the following online tools for your business/career?
All generations combined (Respondents could select multiple answers)
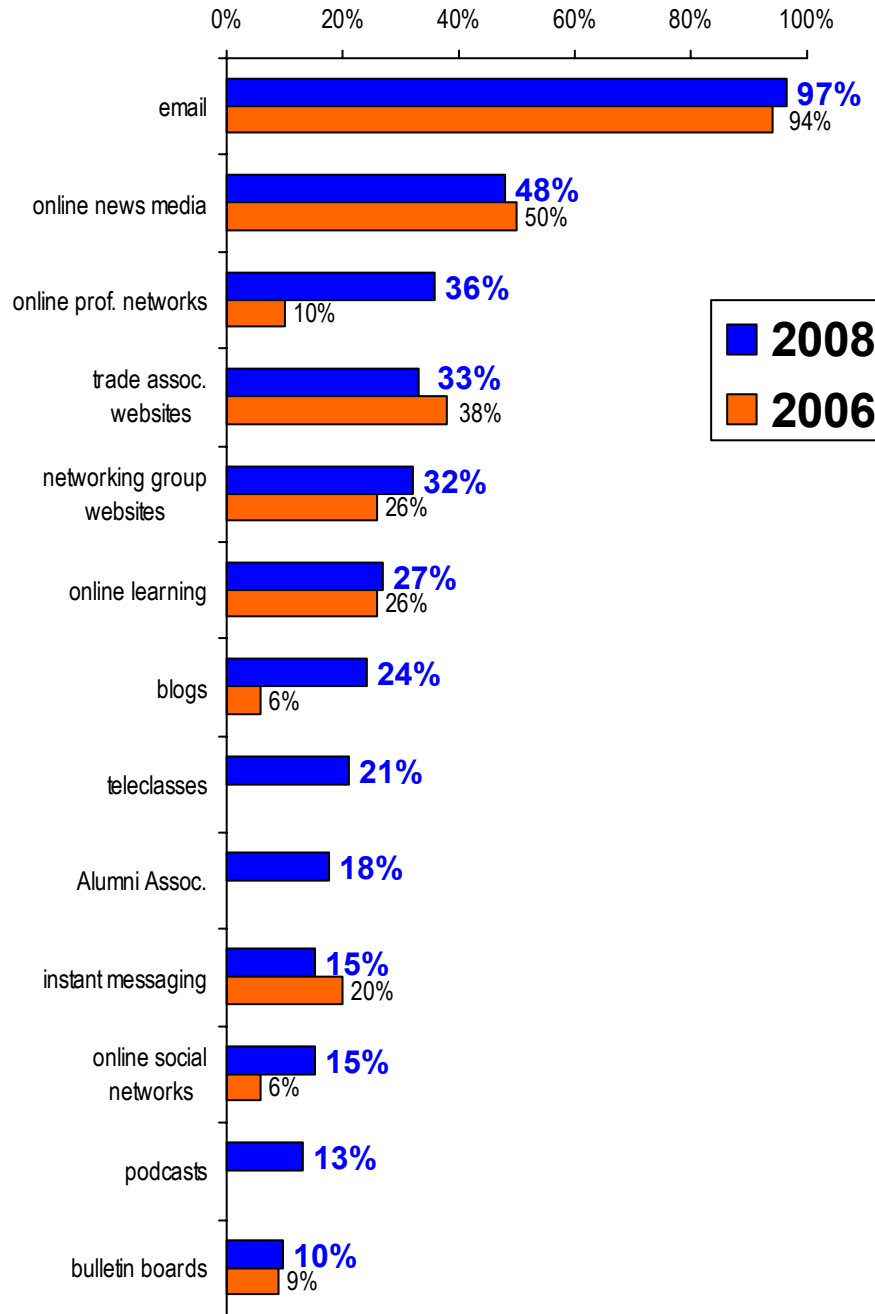
6.   Have you ever "ego-Googled" yourself? If so how may relevant sites come up?

There weren't too many generational differences in this question, although Gen Xers seemed to have slightly more hits on Google. We did see a slight increase in the number of people who have googled themselves from our 2006 survey, including a 10% increase in businesswomen finding 5-20 relevant sites and a 5% increase in businesswomen who found too many sites to count.

Have you ever "ego-Googled?" How many hits?
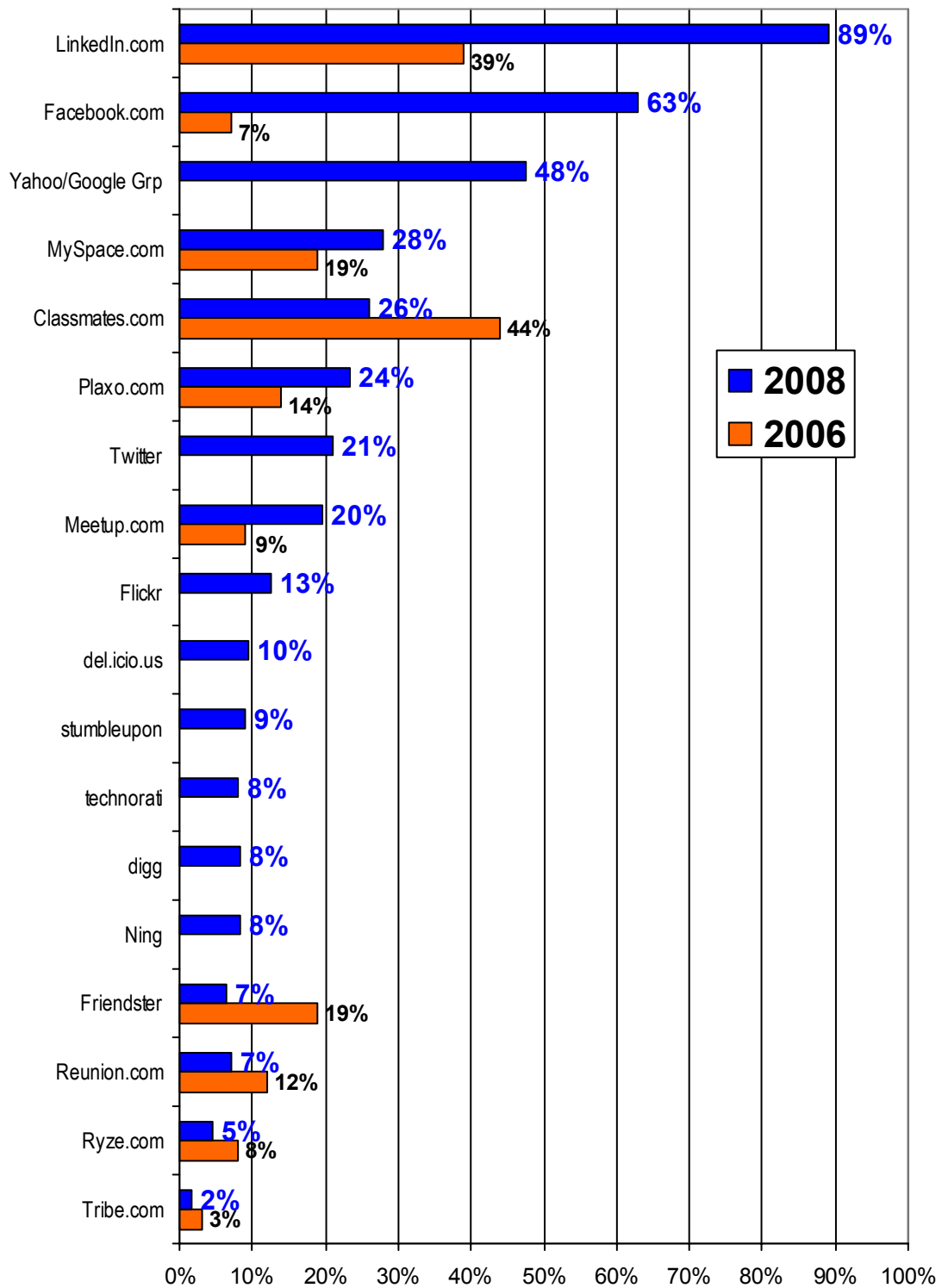(all generations combined)
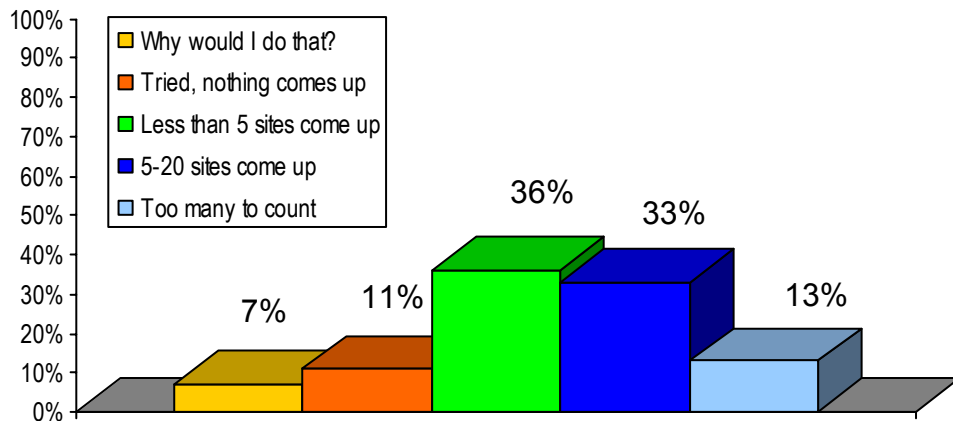
7.   Which online professional and social networks and services do you belong to and/or use for business networking? (Select all that apply.)

We asked our respondents about online networks and services they belonged to for business networking. In 2008, it's clear LinkedIn is the dominant service with a nearly 90% adoption rate, with Facebook a distant second at 63%. However, for Generation Y, Facebook was a close second, trailing LinkedIn by only 6%.
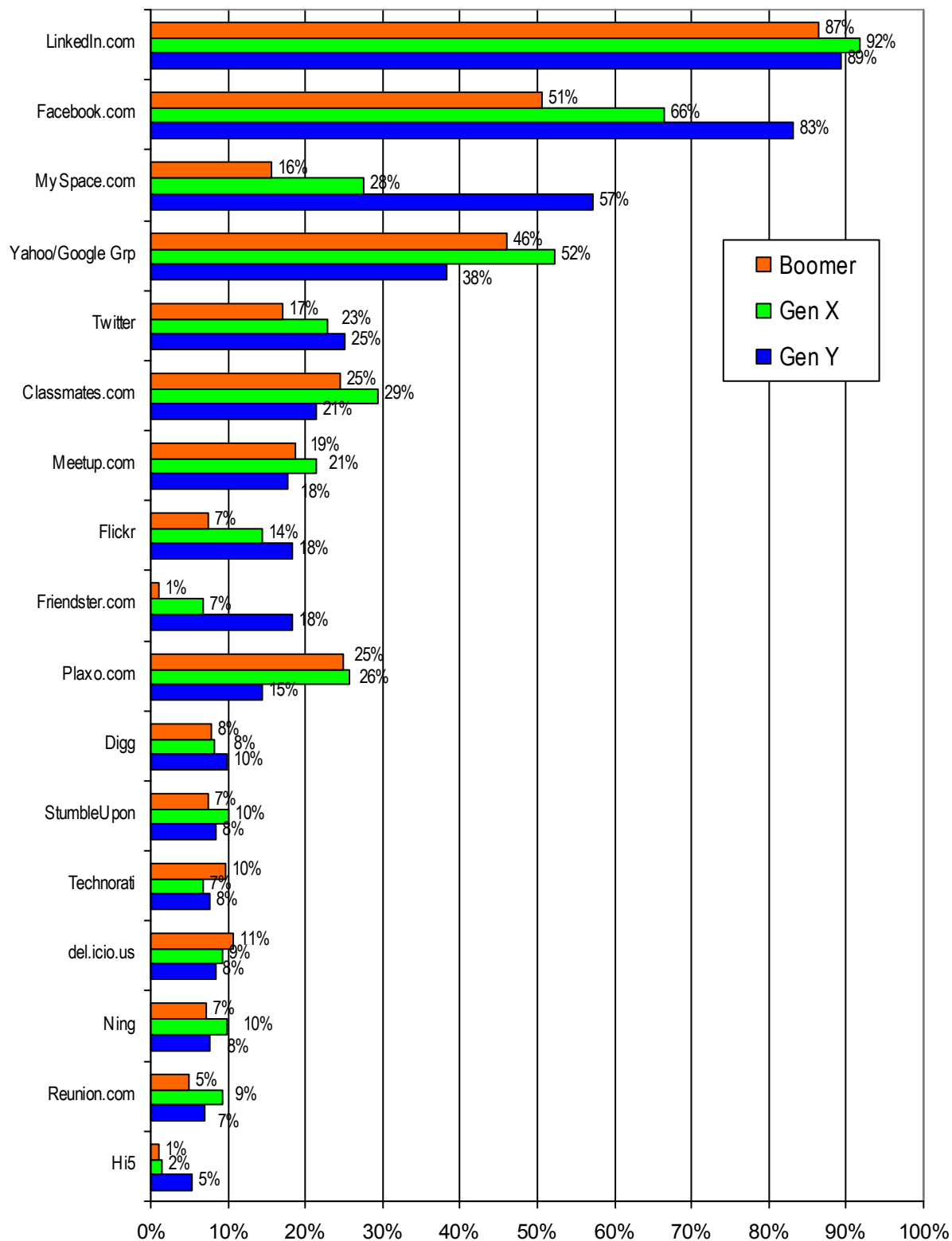
Two services worth watching are Twitter (micro-blogging) and Flickr (picture sharing) as they have broken into the top ten this year lead by Gen X and Gen Y users.

The decrease in Classmates.com and Reunion.com is not surprising as both LinkedIn and Facebook offer similar functionality by allowing you to search for college alumni (both) and high school alumni (Facebook).

Most popular online networking sites for business - All generations combined (multiple answers allowed)

Site	2008	2006
LinkedIn.com	89%	39%
Facebook.com	63%	7%
Yahoo/Google Grp	48%	
MySpace.com	28%	19%
Classmates.com	26%	44%
Plaxo.com	24%	14%
Twitter	21%	
Meetup.com	20%	9%
Flickr	13%	
del.icio.us	10%	
stumbleupon	9%	
technorati	8%	
digg	8%	
Ning	8%	
Friendster	7%	19%
Reunion.com	7%	12%
Ryze.com	5%	8%
Tribe.com	2%	3%

Most popular online networking sites for business 2008 - Broken down by generation (multiple answers allowed)

Site	Boomer	Gen X	Gen Y
LinkedIn.com	87%	92%	89%
Facebook.com	51%	66%	83%
MySpace.com	16%	28%	57%
Yahoo/Google Grp	46%	52%	38%
Twitter	17%	23%	25%
Classmates.com	25%	29%	21%
Meetup.com	19%	21%	18%
Flickr	7%	14%	18%
Friendster.com	1%	7%	18%
Plaxo.com	25%	26%	15%
Digg	8%	8%	10%
StumbleUpon	7%	10%	8%
Technorati	10%	7%	8%
del.icio.us	11%	9%	8%
Ning	7%	10%	8%
Reunion.com	5%	9%	7%
Hi5	1%	2%	5%

8. **What role does social media (blogs, twitter, message boards, social networks) play when it comes to your business/career? Respondents can select all that apply.**

1. Business networking – 53%
2. Research – 53%
3. Market my business – 32%
4. Job hunting – 29%
5. It's part of my job description – 12%
6. Don't use social media for business, just for fun – 12%
7. Don't use social media but think it would help my career/business – 12%
8. Don't use any social media and don't think it will affect my career/business.

9. **How long have you been actively participating in social media?**

Not surprisingly, Gen Y has been participating much longer than the other generations in social media.

How long have you been actively participating in social media?
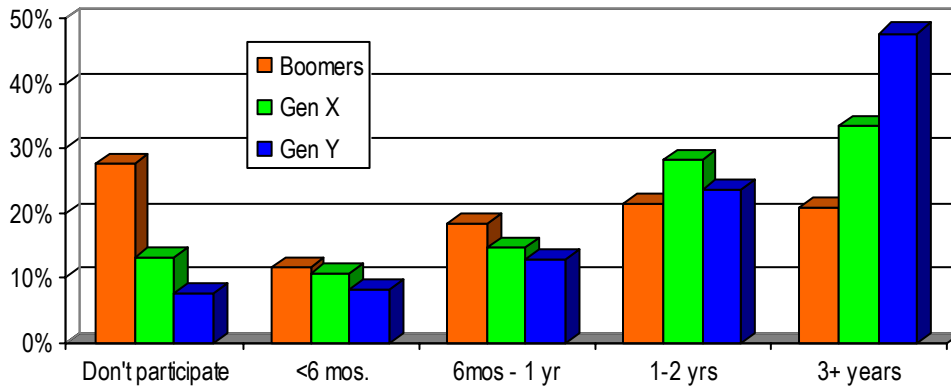
10. If you participate in social media, approximately how much time do you spend on them?

With all the generations combined, only 16% of individuals use it for more than one hour per day. When broken down by generation below, it's not surprising to find greater numbers of the Gen Y population using it more than one hour per day (approximately 30%) .

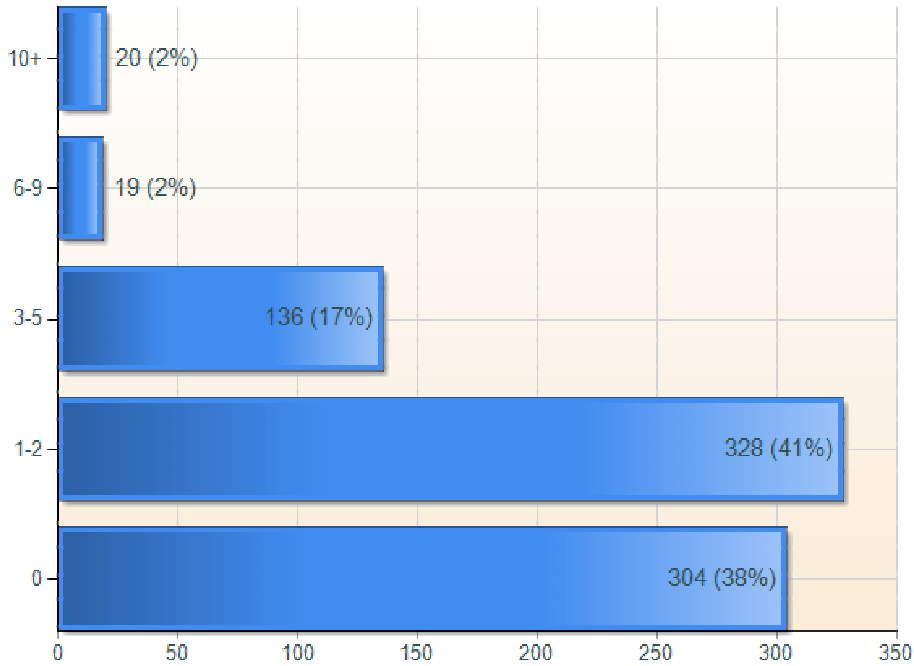**If you participate in social media (the blogosphere, social networks, or message boards), approximately how much time do you spend on them?**
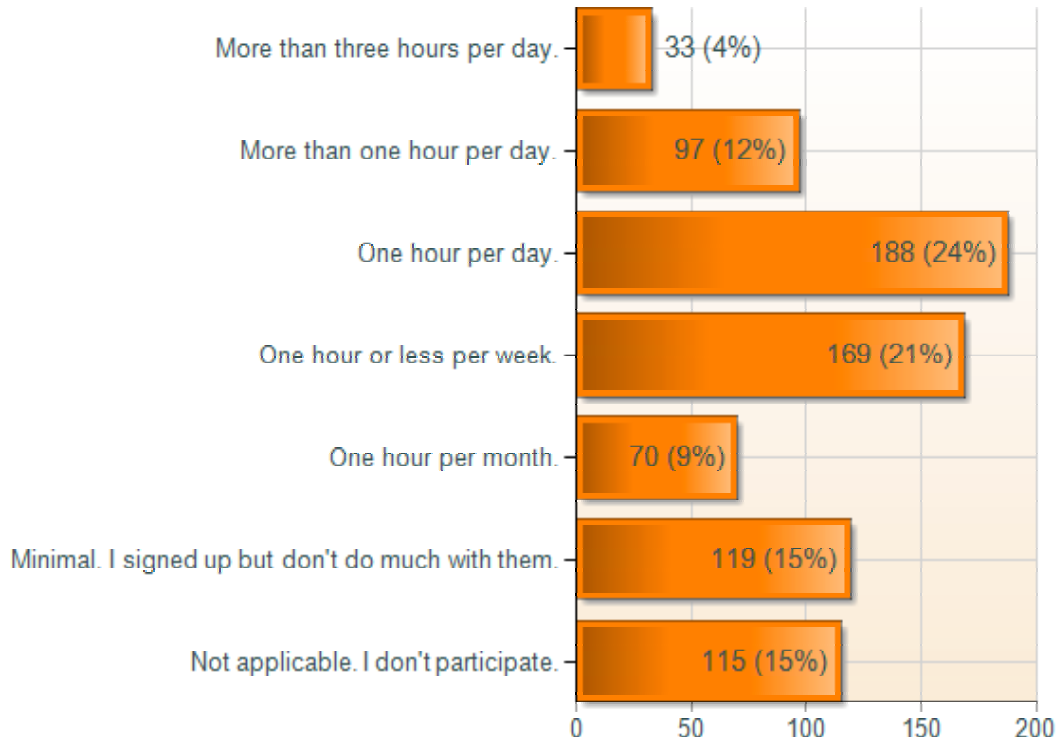
How often do you participate in social media?
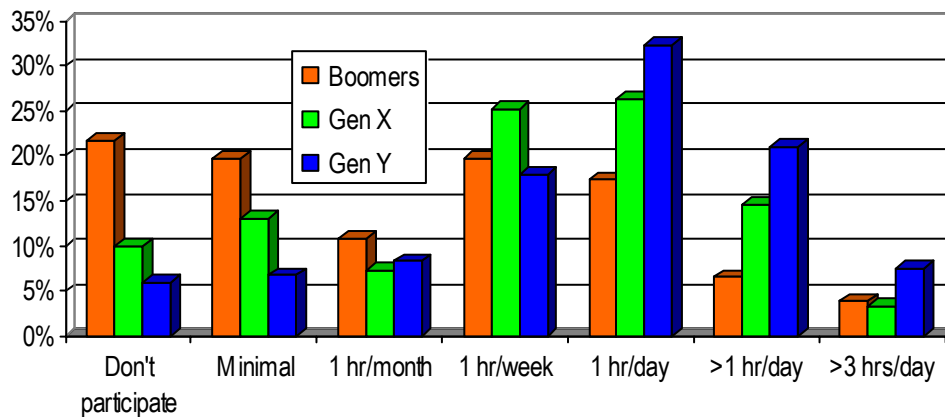
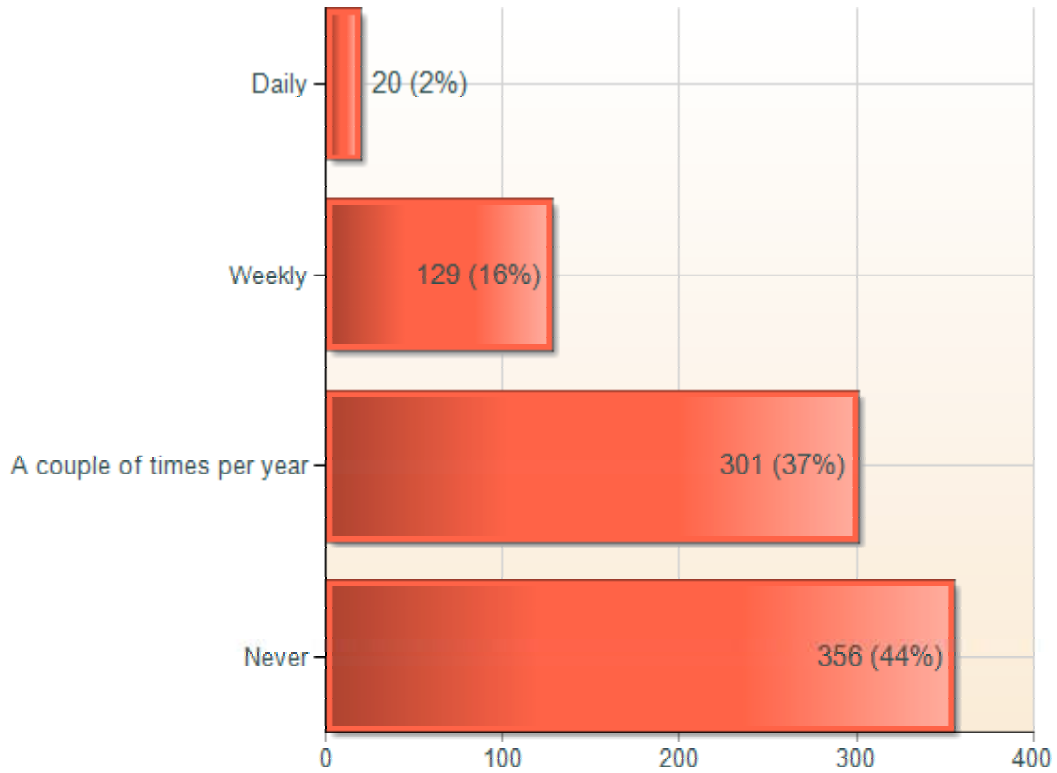**11-13. How many blogs do you read and how often do you comment?**

How many business and career blogs do you read in an average day?

Category	Value
10+	20 (2%)
6-9	19 (2%)
3-5	136 (17%)
1-2	328 (41%)
0	304 (38%)

How many blogs do you read purely for fun and entertainment in an average day?

Category	Value
10+	21 (3%)
6-9	22 (3%)
3-5	112 (14%)
1-2	317 (40%)
0	329 (41%)
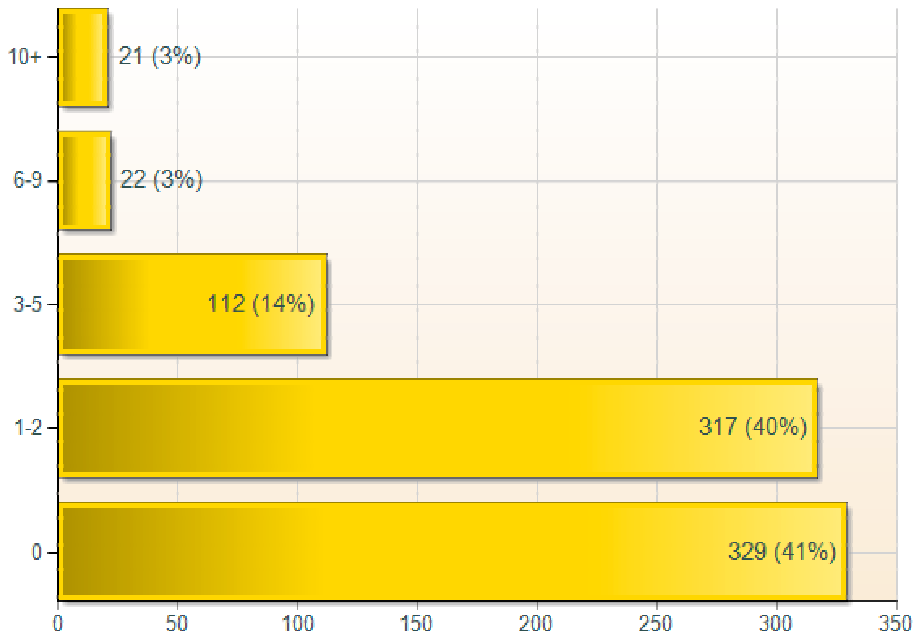
On average, how often do you comment on blogs?

Response	Count (Percentage)
Daily	20 (2%)
Weekly	129 (16%)
A couple of times per year	301 (37%)
Never	356 (44%)

14. Do you run a blog that helps you with your business/career? A personal blog?

In 2006, only 5% answered yes they ran a blog. In 2008, 20% of our respondents had a business or career blog; 17% said they run a personal blog.

Section II – News sources and politics

15. **In keeping with the current political season, we'd like to know how do you get your political news and information?**

Top 6 sources of political news for Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y

	Boomers	Gen X	Gen Y
1.	Daily newspapers (online)	Daily newspapers (online)	Daily newspapers (online)
2.	TV newscasts (major networks)	TV newscasts (major networks)	TV newscasts (major networks)
3.	Daily newspapers (print)	CNN.com	CNN.com
4.	CNN (TV)	CNN (TV)	CNN (TV)
5.	Weekly magazines (Businessweek, Time, Newsweek)	MSNBC.com	The Daily Show
6.	MSNBC (TV)	Daily newspapers (print)	Blogs

Daily newspapers (online) were cited by approximately 48% of each generation as a main source of political news, followed closely by major network newscasts with an average of 45%.

Breaking from tradition, a surprising 23% of Gen Y respondents stated that The Daily Show with Jon Stewart was a major source of political news and information, followed by blogs at 18%. Daily print newspapers were cited by only 12% of Gen Y'ers as a regular source of political news and information ranking it 11th behind MSNBC.com, MSNBC (TV), social networks, and Fox News (TV).

16. **When selecting a candidate to support in a national election please rate the following factors as to how important they are to you in making your decision.**

Top six factors businesswomen cited as <u>extremely</u> important* in lending their support to a national political candidate:

1. Economic policies – 66%
2. Social policies – 64%
3. Understanding of foreign policies – 61%
4. Authenticity – 60%
5. Education – 35%
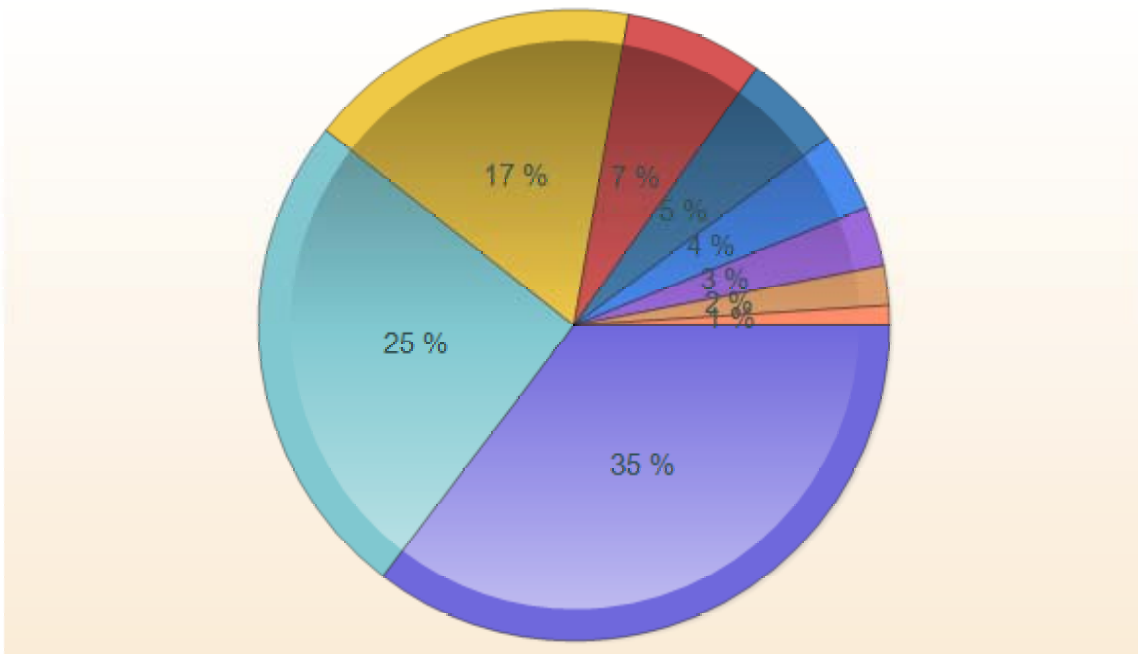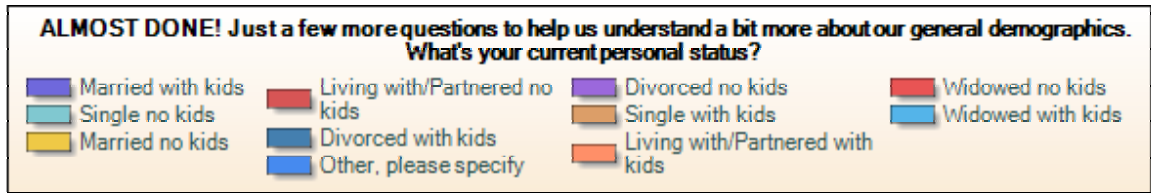6. Experience in government – 31%

Six factors businesswomen cited as <u>not</u> important* in lending their support to a national political candidate:
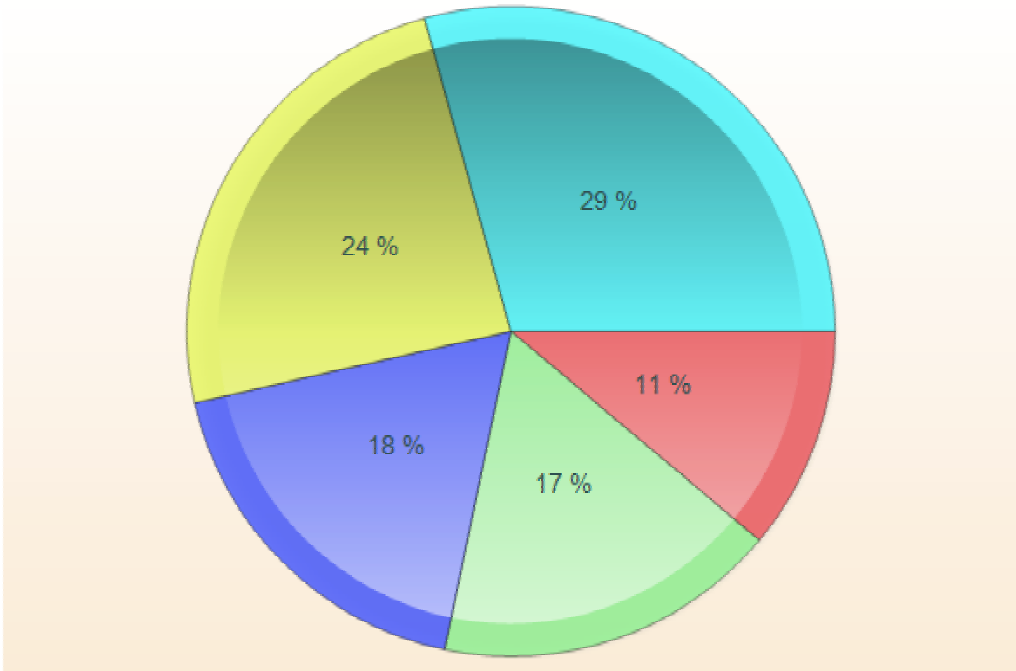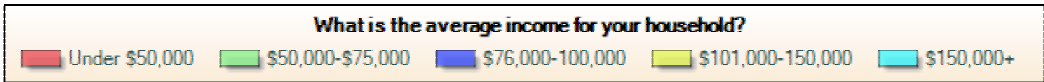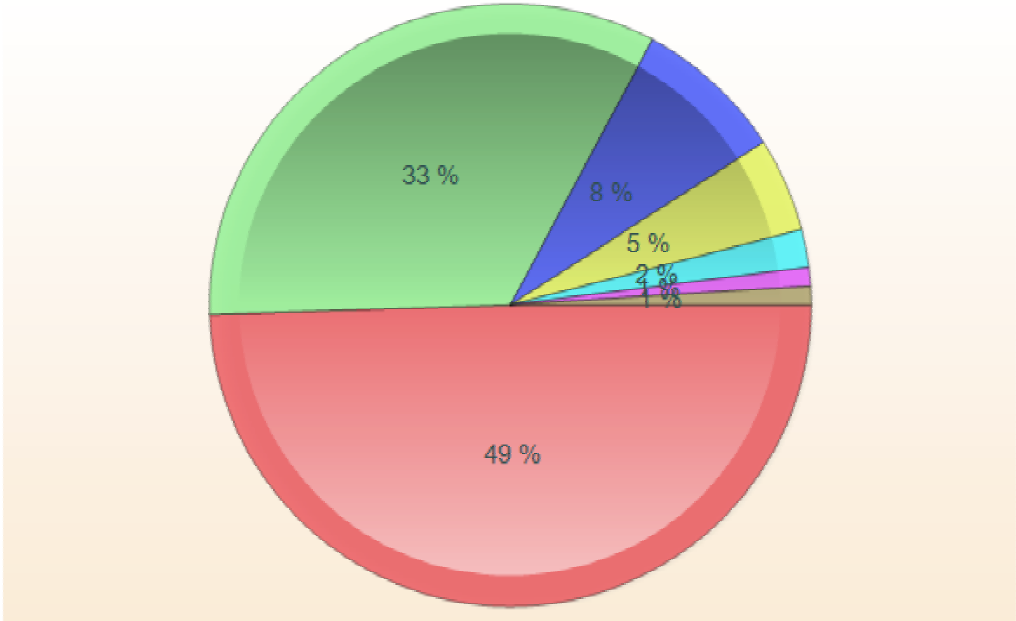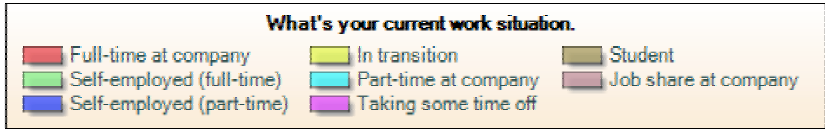
1. Race – 82%
2. Gender- 74%
3. Religion – 47%
4. Parental responsibilities – 47%
5. Their family – 31%
6. Age – 22%

17. **Do you think it is possible for a woman to effectively work in a high-profile position while still having young (aged 10 and under) children at home?**

83% of respondents think it's possible for a woman with young children to effectively work in a high-profile position.

Section III - Demographics

What's your current work situation.

- Full-time at company
- Self-employed (full-time)
- Self-employed (part-time)
- In transition
- Part-time at company
- Taking some time off
- Student
- Job share at company

33 %
8 %
5 %
2 %
1 %
49 %

What is the average income for your household?

- Under $50,000
- $50,000-$75,000
- $76,000-100,000
- $101,000-150,000
- $150,000+

29 %
24 %
18 %
17 %
11 %

About DowntownWomensClub.com

DowntownWomensClub.com (www.downtownwomensclub.com) is a leader in "Networking to Go" - 24/7 business and social networking that is convenient, pressure free and adaptable to today's varying work styles. It was founded in 1998 by Diane K. Danielson, whose credits include author, lawyer, entrepreneur and software developer. Its innovative "Clicks and Mix" model offers thousands of women an online and offline community using new and emerging technologies such as DWC Faces (a proprietary, Internet-searchable "Facebook" for career women). Member-launched, custom tailored local chapters currently include Boston, Washington DC, LA, NYC, Pittsburgh, San Diego, and Worcester, MA, with new locations in the pipeline. For a yearly membership fee of $49.99, members access "networking to go", professional development, promotional opportunities, social events, discounts and more, anytime, anywhere and anyway they choose.

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Downtown Women's Club