



100% Communication, 100% Success

The Definitive Guide to Social Media Customer Service

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Introduction

Venturing into social media customer care can be a minefield for many businesses. Not only do you need to figure out why you want to do customer service over social media and set yourself KPIs to track, you'll also need to work out a process for social media engagement and train your staff on effective social media use.

Our eBook has you covered. It's not called a "definitive" guide for nothing — we've explained every possible consideration that you'll need to take into account, whether you're setting up a brand new social media channel for the first time, or if you'd simply like to brush up on your existing social media customer service.

The chapters contained within this eBook are:

- [9 Unmissable Reasons Why You Need to Care about Social Media Customer Service](#)
- [You Need a Jointly Owned Social Media Customer Service Strategy ASAP — Here's Why](#)
- [The Top Social Media Goals and Marketing Strategies for Successful Teams](#)
- [Social Media Training Activities and Marketing Courses You Never Realized Your Team Needed](#)
- [5 Social Media Customer Service and Marketing Secrets from the Pros](#)
- [Don't Try This at Work: 16 Bad Social Media Business Examples to Avoid at All Costs](#)

9 Unmissable Reasons Why You Need to Care about Social Media Customer Service

In 2013, Amy's Baking Company became famous overnight after premiering on a particularly dramatic [episode](#) of Gordon Ramsay's "Kitchen Nightmares" — a reality TV series that followed Ramsay's attempts to help struggling food establishments improve their business. Once a failing restaurant, Amy's Baking Company now had a flock of new customers rushing to their location in Scottsdale, Arizona, eager to check out the only establishment that the renowned chef had ever [walked out on](#) mid-episode.

With the fame came a wave of social media engagement. New customers and fans of the show posted comments and reviews of Amy's Baking Company to social media channels like Facebook, Yelp, Twitter, and Reddit. That's when the real nightmare started.



Instead of engaging in proper social media customer service, Amy's Baking Company had what the internet described as a "[meltdown](#)," unleashing a tirade of insults against their customers and critics. On their Facebook page, the restaurant dared those who were criticizing them online to come say it to their face — at the same time, they claimed that the police were going to arrest everyone who had posted a negative comment. On Reddit, they created fake accounts to try and scare their customers into believing that these supposed arrests were already happening. This over-the-top reaction generated more criticism, and attracted a growing amount of people eager to mess with the frantic business owners.

After hours of repeated threats and curses, Amy's Baking Company updated their Facebook, saying (instead of apologizing) that their social media accounts had been hacked.



Although this case may be extreme, it isn't unique. As the years have passed, social media has brought an ever-increasing amount of empowerment to customers, and a growing set of expectations. Large corporations and small companies alike have had to either learn how to properly engage with customers over social media, or lose business as a result. This blog post will show you exactly why social media customer service is so important, and how social media support can help take your business into the future of customer care.

1. Connect with the People You Serve

As of right now, Facebook has over 2 Billion active users. Instagram has over 700 Million. Twitter has more than 328 Million monthly users. And Snapchat has at least 300 Million. While not every single customer will be on social media, the numbers make it clear that a large amount of them will be. That's a lot of potential for customer care.

The problem is, although many companies already use social media, they aren't using it the right way. Brands on social media typically send out 23 promotional messages for every 1 response given to their audience. If a brand does end up actually responding, it's usually after letting the user hang for an average of **10 hours**, even though most consumers consider under 4 hours reasonable. This isn't exactly a great connection.

By practicing effective social media customer service, you will be able to connect with your customers, and show them that their voices matter. By responding to inquiries, feedback, praise, and complaints in a timely and compassionate way, you will be able to cultivate a caring brand image, and in turn generate more positive, productive connections, rather than one-sided posts.



2. ...On Their Terms

Hearing from your customers is an indispensable part of growing a successful business. Customer feedback can help you remedy website glitches, improve processes, adjust your policies and better your products. The problem is, you can send out [customer survey](#) after customer survey — despite your best efforts to make a connection, oftentimes you never end up hearing back.

How can social media customer service help? Research from OpinionLab shows that 66% of customers prefer to give feedback by [actively reaching out](#) — not by taking surveys. Social media allows customers to reach out to companies easily, without going out of their way. Instead of scouring a website for a company's contact info, or spending minutes filling out a survey, customers can tell companies what they think within seconds, as easily as tagging them in a status, tweet, or post.

JetBlue discovered the power of social media as a source of customer feedback back in 2007, after they posted a [video](#) on YouTube apologizing for what later become known as the “[Valentine's Day Crisis](#)” — an incident where storms kept passenger-filled planes on the runway for hours, and led to about 1,000 canceled flights in five days. According to Marty St. George,

JetBlue's then VP (and current EVP): "Some of this feedback was, 'I can't believe you guys let us down like this.' Some of the feedback was, 'I still love you and it's OK.' As a marketer, my response was, 'This is like crack because I spent a lot of money and waited a long time to get feedback like this via traditional market research.' [Now] I'm getting instantaneous feedback. To me, that was the power of it."

Instantaneous feedback leaves room for immediate improvements and adjustments to your business. Ask yourself the following questions as you review customer comments:

- a. Are your customers asking technical questions?
 - If so, is your website's FAQ section up to date with answers and easy to navigate? (Regardless, you should still answer their questions directly on social media — don't refer them to this)
 - Are your processes as clear as they could be, and your website/product easy to use?
- b. Are your customers complaining?
 - Are multiple customers complaining about the same thing?
 - What are their top complaints?
 - What can you do to solve whatever it is they are complaining about?
- c. Have your customers had a poor experience?
 - Are they complaining about your service or product?
 - What needs to change?
- d. Are your customers telling you what they love?
 - What are your customers' favorite things about your company?
 - What processes can you put into place to ensure that you keep it up?

e. Are your customers making valuable suggestions?

- Which suggestions could be useful for your business?
- How can you go about implementing those suggestions?

Some customers may not feel moved to contact your company directly, but that doesn't mean they aren't saying anything about you. By having an active social media customer care system, you can type your company's name into the search bar, to find out what customers are saying about you in public posts or tweets.

Whatever feedback you end up getting, make sure that you establish a system that will build your social media customer suggestions into a defined continuous improvement process. This is especially important if different departments are handling your company's social media. Important feedback can sometimes be lost if marketing, for example, aren't clear on the need to feed back to the research and development team (or if they assume that the research and development team already knows about an issue).

Train your social media team to funnel feedback to the proper department, using your company's chat or email system. Have a dedicated person from each department receive the feedback, and bring it to the rest of the team. Encourage forwarding both positive and negative feedback so that your teams can work out the kinks in your operation, while also receiving a morale boost.

 **Staci Luker**
@StaciLuker Follow ▼

Had my first salted caramel mocha of the @Starbucks fall season and it was magical. Plus my barista was the sweetest. #coffee #fallflavors

5:08 PM - 17 Sep 2017

5 Retweets 85 Likes



 5  5  85 



Tweet your reply



Starbucks Coffee @Starbucks · 41m ▼

Replying to @StaciLuker

Thanks for coming in, Staci. We can't wait to see you again for more Salted Caramel Mocha magic! ✨

  1  3 

3. Win New Fans

Customers love to know that you are listening — it lets them know that their satisfaction really is your top priority. By listening and prioritizing social media customer service, you can convert people into highly vocal brand advocates.

If you don't believe it, look to the numbers: 75% of people say they are more likely to [post something positive](#) about a brand that makes a meaningful connection with them on social media, while 70% say they're more likely to actually make a purchase. 71% of consumers who experience positive social media customer service are likely to [recommend the brand](#) to others, compared with just 19% of those who do not.

Those positive comments and recommendations pack a lot of punch, especially given how social media has revolutionized word-of-mouth advertising. A satisfied (or unsatisfied) customer who might tell two or three people about their experience in person can now reach hundreds of people online. This is why an effective social media support strategy can double as a stellar marketing strategy — customers trust their friends and contacts more than they trust advertisements.



4. Increase Customer Loyalty

Since Facebook implemented the “Like” button, it has been used more than **1.13 trillion times**, with that number rising every day. This button isn’t unique to Facebook — Instagram, Twitter, Youtube, Google, Tumblr, and other social websites also have their versions of the same feature.

It doesn’t matter whether the “Like” button is shaped like a heart or a thumbs up — the feeling of validation that comes every time it’s pressed makes the recipient feel good, and leaves them wanting more. That’s because when someone likes something you posted on social media, you

actually feel a rush of dopamine — the brain’s pleasure chemical — being released. The pull of dopamine is so strong that studies have shown tweeting is [harder for people to resist](#) than cigarettes and alcohol.

So, what do the people who are giving the likes get in return? People “like” posts because we want to maintain relationships. When we like each other’s posts, we add value to the relationship, and [reinforce](#) that closeness. At the same time, we also create a [reciprocity effect](#): We feel obliged to give back to people who have given to us, even in a small way, to even up the scales.

The same is true for customer-company relations. If a customer reaches out to your company on social media — and you reach back in a positive way — your customer will feel closer to your company, and the reciprocity effect will generate more loyalty. Research has shown that 86% of high-value customers are [more loyal](#) to brands they engage with on social media. During the same study, 46.7% of survey respondents indicated that [personalized responses](#) from brands would strengthen their brand loyalty, while 28.1% said it might affect their brand loyalty.

By using social media customer service to your advantage, you can trigger your current customers' dopamine centers, strengthen your relationship, and keep them coming back for more.



5. Engage with Millennials

It's no secret that the age of the Millennials is upon us, and they are ready to do things their way. For companies, this brings tremendous opportunity for growth and a different kind of outreach — after all, millennials have [\\$200 billion in spending power](#) right now, and over \$10 trillion over their lifetimes as consumers; to ignore them would be a mistake.

 **SAND CASTLE** @sande_castle · 6h
@tacobell 🍌+🌮

1

 **Taco Bell** ✓
@tacobell

Follow

Replying to @sande_castle

#TacoEmojiEngine



1:01 PM - 28 Sep 2017

1

Social media customer service is an excellent way for companies to meet millennials on the platforms that they dominate. According to [a report by Microsoft](#), 64% of millennials believe social media is an effective channel for customer service, as opposed to the 27% of Baby Boomers who feel the same way. The same report found that about 52% of millennials actively use social media to resolve customer service issues, and 47% have used social media to complain about a brand's service.

By having active social media support, you can generate a loyal following from the generation that uses social networks the most. By engaging with millennials on their platforms, on their terms, you can prepare younger customers to become long-term buyers.

One company that has mastered social media engagement with millennials is Taco Bell. This popular fast food chain's most recent engagement strategy involves what they have dubbed the "Taco Emoji Engine." The idea is for users to tweet at Taco Bell a combination of a taco, plus any other emoji, and Taco Bell will respond with either a GIF or an image of an original emoji fusion. This fusion of marketing and customer care gets users talking about Taco Bell and engaging with the restaurant, all while incorporating the millennial generations' love of emojis.



6. Reduce Churn Rate

It's **cheaper and easier** to retain customers than it is to attract new ones, which is why it's no small deal that social media customer service can help you reduce your churn rate.

According to Aberdeen, companies that have a well-crafted approach to social media customer care experience [92% customer retention](#). This is because when you have an active social media presence and customer support system, you can help remedy issues customers have with your product or service on the spot — issues they might not have even bothered to come to you with through other channels.

By 2020, Customer Experience is expected to [overtake price and product quality](#) as key brand differentiators. By arming your business with a quality social media customer service strategy, you can make sure that customers will leave the competition to come to you, not the other way around.

The screenshot shows a Twitter thread. At the top, Scott Fosgate (@fozzgator) asks how Southwest Airlines can have a 3+ hour flight without WiFi. Southwest Airlines (@SouthwestAir) replies, stating that all planes without WiFi will be retired and a fully WiFi-enabled fleet is on the way. Scott Fosgate then replies, thanking Southwest Airlines for the reply and noting the bad timing on the last day.

Scott Fosgate @fozzgator · 2h
@SouthwestAir. How do you have a 3+ hour flight and the plane not be equipped with wifi? #gettheoldonesupdated

Southwest Airlines @SouthwestAir
Hang in there, Scott! All planes without WiFi will be retired tomorrow. A fully WiFi enabled fleet is on the way! ^TL

6:03 PM - 28 Sep 2017

1 Like

Scott Fosgate @fozzgator · 2h
Replying to @SouthwestAir
Good to hear @SouthwestAir, bad timing on the last day I guess 😂. Thanks for the reply, you guys are solid!

7. Customers Expect It

Most customers who reach out to social media aren't doing it for nothing — they want a response. 67% of global consumers interacting with a brand for customer service on social

media expect a response [within 24 hours](#). 32% expect a response within [30 minutes](#), and 42% expect a response within 60 minutes. Millennials have even [higher expectations](#) (a quarter expect companies to respond to them in as little as ten minutes), and may hold it against companies who don't comply.

Customers don't only expect a quick response time — they expect engagement across multiple social media channels. A survey of nearly 600 consumers found that customers expect brands to be active on [at least three to four social channels](#).

To make sure that your company's social media customer service is meeting your customers' expectations, we recommend that you invest in social media support that is available 24/7. If you don't have the resources to do so, try at least having enough staff on your social media team to be able to respond to questions and comments quickly as they come in.

Before you decide to limit your social media customer care to only Facebook or Twitter, research to see where the most of your customers are connecting with you from. If you have a younger audience and a product that can be well photographed, you may want to try your luck with Snapchat and/or Instagram as well. As long as you are going where your customers are, your social media support strategy is on the right track.

Laura Abbott @LauralsNora · 8h
Please help me @IKEAUK! Literally close to smashing this cupboard up and then crying

IKEA UK @IKEAUK · 8h
PM your contact number and we will call!

Laura Abbott @LauralsNora · 8h
You need to follow me for me to dm you

IKEA UK @IKEAUK · 7h
can you try now

Laura Abbott @LauralsNora · 7h
Dm sent

IKEA UK @IKEAUK
[Follow](#)

Replying to @LauralsNora
calling now!
12:55 PM - 28 Sep 2017

8. Be Ready for Crisis Management

Companies are constantly under fire; that's part of the business. And — like Amy's Baking Company showed us — what fuels the fire more than social media?

Thanks to social media, people can share things with their friends and network in just a few clicks, which means that companies are now being held more accountable than ever for any slipups — major or minor. Think back, for example, to the video of the customer being dragged off a United Airlines flight. When that video went viral on social media, it was seen and criticized by millions of people around the world, greatly hurting United's international market. This major

company mess-up became such a social media crisis that, for a few days, the top trending topic on Twitter in the U.S. was #NewUnitedAirlinesMottos, with users suggesting slogans such as "Not enough seating, prepare for a beating."

Although these larger social media catastrophes require an even greater level of social media customer care, they aren't all that different from smaller, less damaging complaints and concerns. If you can respond to an upset or unsatisfied customer quickly, professionally, and caringly over social media, you can put out any potential fires before they begin and give them an experience that will ultimately be satisfying.

What happens if you don't engage in social media support? A survey shows that if you ignore customers on social media, 36% will [shame you publicly](#), while 1 in 3 will switch to a competitor. By practicing effective social media customer service, you can be there for your customers in their time of need. That way angry customers won't shame you publicly, and — if you're like Wendy's — you can save your customers from dangerous sandwich feuds in the nick of time.

The screenshot shows a Twitter thread. At the top, a user named Baeldor (@baeldor) posts a tweet at 9h asking Wendy's for help because their girlfriend doesn't believe hamburgers are sandwiches. Below this, Wendy's (@Wendys) replies at 9:59 AM on Sep 28, 2017, stating, "It what universe is a hamburger not a sandwich? It most definitely is." This reply has 2 likes. At the bottom, Baeldor replies at 8h, praising Wendy's quick response and saying it ended the "war" before it began.

Baeldor @baeldor · 9h
@Wendys S.O.S. Please help, meme queen. My girlfriend refuses to believe that hamburgers are sandwiches. Fix this. @lolitakuma

2

Wendy's @Wendys
Following

Replying to @baeldor @lolitakuma

It what universe is a hamburger not a sandwich? It most definitely is.

9:59 AM - 28 Sep 2017

2 Likes

2

Baeldor @baeldor · 8h
Replying to @Wendys @lolitakuma
This is why all other fast food restaurants are trash. Your quick response in my time of need has ended the war before it could even begin.

9. Customers Are Already Engaging

In a survey by the IBM Institute for Business Value, [45% of participants](#) said that they use social media to interact with brands. In another survey by Nielsen, [over a third](#) said they preferred social to traditional communication channels like phone and email. Whether you're ready for it or not, many of your customers are already engaging with you over social media. And that trend is only continuing; [Gartner](#) predicts that by 2020, 90% of companies will be using social media for customer service.

In today's digital world, if brands are not a part of the conversation, they are going to be left behind. Consumers have flighty attention spans and are quick to move on to the next big thing. Customers can also galvanize quickly on social media, and have the power to steer the conversation about your brand in the wrong direction if you're not in the loop to moderate. The presence of a social media customer care system reminds them that brands are still relevant, and that they can continue to provide value to customers now and in the future.



After an uphill struggle of fighting their customers on and off of social media, Amy's Baking Company eventually [closed their doors](#). They moved to California, rebranded themselves as a dessert company,

and began to engage in professional social media customer service. Although the baking company may not have gotten it right at first, they eventually learned the importance of social media customer care, and taught other businesses a valuable lesson in the process.



Social media customer service is not only important: it's necessary to create a winning brand image, generate a loyal following, and most importantly, be there for your customers. Whether you're a small business, a big company, or a politician with his own brand, we hope you take it upon yourself to provide effective social media support, now and in the years to come.

You Need a Jointly Owned Social Media Customer Service Strategy ASAP — Here's Why

Once you decide to engage in social media customer service, the next step is coming up with an effective strategy for implementing it. You know the “what” and the “why” of social media support, but who within your company should be the one to own this new platform? Should it be customer service? Marketing? PR? Sales? IT?

If you want a well-rounded, capable, and effective social media customer care team, then the answer is all of the above. Whether you are starting from scratch or hoping to maximize the quality and effectiveness of your current social media outreach, a jointly-owned social media department is the way to go.

This blog post will show you what makes a jointly-owned social media customer service strategy so necessary, and will walk you through how to implement one yourself. By learning these benefits and following the simple steps we've laid out for you, your newest support channel will be a hit — not a miss.

Why Do I Need a Jointly-Owned Social Media Support Strategy?

Companies often fall into the trap of giving control of social media over to one department — usually Marketing.

On first thought, it seems to make perfect sense - in a world that's increasingly virtual, social media is an excellent place to develop and implement new marketing schemes that will attract all kinds of customers to your product.

Unfortunately, however, it isn't that simple. Companies that fall into this mindset overlook the reason that social media exists in the first place - to give people a platform where they can communicate, connect, and engage with people (and companies!), no matter their distance.

An effective social media team shouldn't just push promotions and advertisements (although those are great and a normal part of social media outreach); they should also answer product questions, address concerns, and help customers when they need it.

A jointly-owned social media support strategy is one where the control of social media isn't given over to a single department — rather, the company comes up with a social media task force that multiple

departments contribute to, or “own” at once. This allows for a well-rounded social media presence, more effective customer service, and a great image for your brand.

Companies *without* a jointly-owned social media support strategy often suffer in the following ways:

- ***Inconsistent Replies***

When an untrained agent responds to a customer service email, he or she might end up completely overlooking what the last representative has written, and tell a customer something completely different. This is also possible for companies whose social media team comes from a single department, and who aren't fully versed in the ins-and-outs of responding to customers as a team.

- ***Slow Replies***

If your social media customer care is the hands of just the marketing department, then your team might not know how to respond to simple customer service queries. On the other hand, if your social media is the sole responsibility of your customer service department, then they too might not have the answers to specific marketing questions. If only one department owns this channel, you can count on slow replies, as representatives may have to reach out to a different department first for an answer before posting back.

- ***No Replies***

The deadlier alternative to slow replies is no replies. Many companies that give control of their social media page to their marketing department do so without empowering their employees to engage with customers, or offering an engagement strategy whatsoever. The result is a social media page where personal inquiries, desperate complaints, and more comes in — but nothing goes out. Alternately, the inaction may also be due to a lack of clarity around who is responsible.

- ***Repetitive, Robotic, and/or Outdated Canned Messages***

It's natural that if your company has a social media customer service team that isn't equipped with qualified customer service agents, they might fall into the habit of using canned messages. Although there is nothing wrong with canned messages themselves, canned messages that are used incorrectly, at the wrong time, or too frequently will kill any human tone that your social media page might have had, and make your brand harder to relate to.

- ***Clogged Queues***

One common, extremely avoidable (and irritating!) symptom of social media customer service being owned by a single department is clogged queues. When a company is owned purely by

Marketing (or any other department that doesn't have the resources, expertise, or institutional support to handle customer inquiries or complaints), then that company will often respond to their customers by asking them to reach out via a different channel — usually by phone, email, or even sometimes asking customers to switch social media platforms (i.e. from Facebook to Twitter). This leads to clogged queues, frustrated customers, and customer service agents overwhelmed by unnecessary repeat contact.

- ***Lower Quality Service***

Slow replies, clogged queues, inconsistencies, and annoyingly canned messages all have one thing in common: they don't make for good social media customer service.

- ***Processes That Don't Work Stay That Way***

Imagine your company's social media page is hit by a wave of negative comments and reviews about your product and/or service. While the customer service team that you have in place may (or may not!) be adequately equipped or trained to reach out to these customers and handle their individual complaints, not having a jointly-owned social media strategy means that your representatives are probably not well-equipped enough to form a plan to prevent this from occurring again.

- ***Lower Retention Rates***

You heard right: By 2020, Customer Experience is expected to [overtake price and product quality](#) as what makes your brand stand up from the crowd. Social media customer service that is owned by a single department often leads to unsatisfied customers, which your company will feel in its pocket.

- ***Undynamic Customer Outreach***

If your social media customer care team is only going to be good at one thing: why bother? After all, you want your company to be the best at what it does — why not extend the quality you strive for all throughout your service, and all the way to social media? When your company's social media is owned by only one department, it falls flat and short of what you, as a brand, want your online customers to remember you by.

Doesn't sound like that's for you? Congrats! Companies *with* a jointly-owned social media customer service strategy enjoy the following benefits:

- ***First Contact Resolution***

When your social media support is jointly-owned, customers can rest assured that someone on your social media customer support team is equipped to handle their question, problem or complaint. With a dedicated customer service staff working alongside marketing, IT, sales, and more, customer issues can be handled at once, without any annoying transfers. That takes pressure off the contact lines for the rest of the customer service department and allows social media to act as a true support channel.

- ***Cost-Effective Help***

When your customers aren't calling in, your company is saving time and money. According to [McKinsey](#), handling an inbound telephone call typically costs a company \$6 to \$8, whereas an interaction using social media costs less than a dollar. Social media can work just as well as call centers to upsell products or capture service-to-sales opportunities, and in this respect, it offers additional opportunities that aren't possible via traditional phone calls. Imagine if you were standing next to two customers who were having a laugh trash-talking the competition: you might chime in and laugh alongside them, or maybe even offer your company's services instead as a helpful tip. On social media, this is not only possible — it is a common practice for companies who have an effective jointly-owned customer service strategy and an engaged, empowered team.

- ***Give Your Customers More Accurate Help***

When several of your departments own social media together, they are working together to give your customers what they need. With different heads in the mix, you can draw on the expertise of multiple teams and give your customers more accurate help. Additionally, since your jointly-owned social media support team will be empowered to help your customers online, they will be able to “push” links to customers in need, guiding customers to relevant content and/or videos that are more accurate and concise than support that they would have been given over the phone. Should your agents have to call a customer to help with a more complicated issue, a social media support team member will have all the resources needed to reach out to that customer, instead of making them call you.

- **Get Faster, More Convenient Support to Customers**

Before [Hertz](#) shifted from a marketing-centered social media strategy to a jointly-owned system in 2014, the marketing department had control over the company's social media accounts. In an [article](#) from the Harvard Business Review, social media and digital marketing expert Keith Quesenberry tells us the story:

“Marketing staff would publish brand content, but they also received customer complaints. They forwarded the complaints by email to customer service agents, who would then process the requests and email them back to marketing to post on social media. Social media response was limited to Monday through Friday. For the new 24/7 cross-functional team, Hertz partnered with a software company to easily connect customer service agents to the software that marketing staff uses to monitor social media conversations. The multidepartment system has enabled Hertz to respond within 75 minutes to more than 1,000 individual customers per week. The company that responds to customers in real time through social media has increased customer loyalty, contributing to customer lifetime value.”

By switching to a jointly-owned social media customer service strategy, the company adopted a social media customer care model that fit its customers' expectations and need for speed.

- **Better Customer Retention**

When your customers are satisfied, they'll return to your company for more. The higher accuracy, speedier response time, and one-and-done response potential of jointly-owned social media customer service is a recipe for success and customer retention.

- **Beat the Competition in Quality**

Some companies don't have the resources to, don't realize the need to, or simply don't want to bother with organizing social media customer care between different departments. With a jointly-owned social media customer care strategy, your social media customer service quality will beat the competition's. A recent ExecsInTheKnow [benchmark](#) found that when asked which department in their organization is primarily responsible for social media engagement, the companies surveyed answered as follows:

- 49% Marketing/PR

- 30% Customer Care
- 21% Joint

This means that 79% of companies still have single-department ownership of their social media channel. That leaves a lot of room for you to develop your jointly-owned social media customer service strategy miles ahead of the bulk of the competition. And as for the 21% of companies who already have a jointly owned strategy - once you join them, you will be making your social media customer care the best it can be. And from there, you can beat them, too!

- ***An Effective Channel-less Strategy***

An omnichannel approach to customer support means that companies can seamlessly engage with their customers across all communication channels. This means being able to switch from one channel to the next without losing that customer's context or history. However, as customer service expert, Shep Hyken [says](#), "In the end, the customer doesn't care about how many channels you make available to them. They just want to buy the way they want to buy, have their questions answered, their problems solved and their comments acknowledged." He predicts that the future of customer service is not for all channels to work in sync, but for them to become so united that they become [channel-less](#). "All the customer wants is to connect with a company. It's not about a channel. It's about making a connection. So, make it easy. Make it seamless. Make it ubiquitous. Make it channel-less!" With a jointly-owned social media support strategy, your departments will become seamlessly united in the goal of quality social media customer service, getting you off on the right foot to start your own channel-less customer service strategy.

How to Adopt a Jointly-Owned Social Media Support Strategy

a. Analyze

When adopting a jointly-owned social media customer service strategy, the first step is to analyze your existing team structure, costs, and approach to social marketing. This will provide you with a better understanding of how your business can move toward channel-less (or omnichannel) social media support.

Maybe it's your first time using social media as a customer service platform, and you're starting from scratch. Maybe you already have a social media support team, but it's run exclusively by

Marketing or PR. In this first step, start to get a feel for how your operation is going, and where your business could take it. Ask yourself the following questions to get started:

- How is your social media interaction right now?
- How many social media inquiries do you get per day?
- Do you want a proactive approach to social media?
- Do you have the resources for a 24/7 social media presence?
- Who could you move into this new jointly-owned social media task force?
- Will the members of this jointly-owned social media task force work strictly on social media, or will they continue with their usual tasks as well?
- Will this task force be connected online or can you take up office space to seat them together?

b. Get Organized

Sharing responsibility or social media customer care between departments isn't an issue — however, organizing it can be. After you analyze your current team structures, organize your information to find a practical and cost-effective starting point. Consider writing down your company's budget, an estimation of hiring costs (for your 24/7 social media team or for anyone that you might need to hire to replace staff who are going to be spending more time working on social media than in their old assignments), and names of responsible individuals who would do well on a social media team. Being organized will also help you down the line, as you develop training protocol, implement shared responsibilities and create a feedback loop.

c. Create a Team

The next step is to put together a team that can address all areas of social media customer service efficiently and effectively. Identify qualified individuals from your marketing, customer service, PR, sales, and IT teams, or from any combination of departments that will be best suited for the task. For example, as a part of their social media support strategy, JetBlue [assigned responsibility](#) to 3 teams — customer commitment, marketing, and communications.

What kinds of people should you bring aboard? In recalling one case study of an effective transition to a jointly-owned social media support system, McKinsey [says](#) that the team members chosen for this role needed to have “deep product experience, excellent writing skills, and the ability to act as strong customer advocates.” See to it that yours do, too!

d. Define Roles and Expectations

Once you have your team picked out, it’s time for you to define your expectations. Depending on who is doing what on your team, some members may be full-time teammates; others, like IT, may be part of the team, but may not be required to participate in most everyday customer concerns.

It’s up to you to decide which teammates are expected to dedicate themselves fully to social media customer service, versus which ones will be taking care of some of their usual tasks as well. Should some of your social media task force continue to take care of their previous responsibilities, make sure that you emphasize that social media support is the priority. Social media is a public platform, and you want every team member available to contribute to situations as necessary.

Preserve the roles of your team and assign specific responsibility for certain types of communications over social media. Do you expect your team to just reply to direct wall posts and things your company is tagged in? Or should they proactively search for comments about your company (and competition) and get more involved in the conversation?

Should you have a remote team, make sure that hours are clear, and — should you have a 24/7 social media response team — that schedules don’t leave any gap of time where customers will go without a response.

e. Create Guidelines

Create brand guidelines for standards, tone, and style of social media communication (Does your brand have a sense of humor? Can you use emojis? Will your agents initial after every message, or act as if they are the brand talking?). Ask legal and human resources to provide a list of do’s and don’ts for real-time consumer engagement. You should also establish rules for data protection, to ensure your customers’ security. What account-specific info can be given online? What information needs to be checked before information can be disclosed? When should agents switch from public posts to direct messaging? And when should direct messaging be escalated to a phone call?

f. **Train**

Once you have your guidelines, it's time to give your team social media-specific training. Coach your staff through effective communication practices, to make sure that everyone in the team is on the same page. Marketing experts should make sure that social media knows of any ongoing promotions, etc. for smooth sailing and easy resolution of customer issues. In McKinsey's case study, agents were **trained** both on the technical side of social media and on compliance (such as the kind of information appropriate to share in a public channel and when to take a conversation private, either through private digital channels, such as direct messaging on Twitter or e-mail, or through a phone call).

g. **Set Up the System**

Make sure that all computers are set up, and that your team has any necessary passwords and permissions to do their job. Don't forget to set up social media accounts if you haven't already, and give employees access to social media systems. For easy, organized engagement, be sure to download and implement your software for monitoring social media conversations. It may also be necessary to set up live chat or a similar software to allow communication amongst your staff — this is especially important if members of your social media customer service team are not all in the same room together.

h. **Empower Agents**

Empower your social media customer support staff to take care of as much as they can online via posts or direct messages. Give them as much leeway as possible to help your customers reach satisfactory solutions.

i. **Define Goals**

Define specific goals based on key performance indicators, and make these unique to social media. What social media response rate are you going to aim for? How engaged do you want your customers to be? How many positive comments should you receive for each negative one? How many times have your posts been viewed, liked, or shared, and what numbers are you aiming for? Come up with tangible, number-based goals, and use them to track and improve your performance.

j. **Create a Feedback Loop**

Make sure that you are constantly communicating with your new team. Do they feel prepared to tackle anything? Is there anything they need more training on? Is there any process that can be improved?

Work on establishing a practical system for turning social media feedback into tangible improvements — since multiple departments are in this together, this should be easier than ever! Keep encouraging all members of your team to work together, communicate with one another, and report through the proper channels, and watch your new social media customer service strategy do its magic.

Having a jointly-owned social media customer service strategy isn't the only thing you need for your company's social media to go above and beyond. It is, however, a necessary part of this process.

With your jointly-owned social media customer support strategy, you will have effective, capable agents, a feedback loop that works, and — most importantly — a better, more fluid online relationship with your customers than you ever thought possible.

The Top Social Media Goals and Marketing Strategies for Successful Teams

By 2018, an estimated [2.62 billion people](#) will be using social media worldwide. Out of these 2.62 billion, each person who uses social media does so to fulfill their own unique needs. The same can be said for brands — depending on who your brand is and what you are trying to achieve, chances are you're going to be using social media a little (or a lot!) differently than other companies that are connected.

Maybe you're a small startup that uses social media marketing to try and raise brand awareness. Maybe you're a different type of organization, like a music group that uses social media to connect with listeners and post new songs. Or maybe you're a large enterprise, that wants to join the conversation and boost brand engagement.

Regardless of who you are or why you're on the web, one thing is certain: For you to have an effective social media strategy, it is important to know what you're trying to achieve. That means knowing what your social media goals are, and how you're going to reach them. In this blog post, we have brought you a step-by-step guide to planning your social media goals, choosing social media strategies, and achieving your goals, so that you can ensure your company's social media success, now and in the future.

Planning Your Social Media Goals

a. Understand the Language of Planning

When it comes to planning social media goals and strategies, there's a lot of lingo thrown around on the internet. Sometimes it's used correctly, other times not so much. That's why the first step to planning your social media goals is to understand the language of planning.

Here are some of the words that you need to know (don't worry, we won't quiz you!):

- A **goal** is a broad primary outcome. Normally there is [no measurement](#) in the goal, and it only gives you the general direction of the company. Your social media goal, for example, might be: "Foster better connections with customers." It's simple, broad, and something that you can move towards in general.
- A **strategy** is an approach you take to achieve the goal. It is *how* your goal is going to be achieved. For example, you might follow the above goal with: "Foster better

connections with customers by initiating more online discussions, and being attentive to customer feedback.”

- An **objective** is a measurable, specific step you take to achieve a strategy. In other words, it quantifies the goal and sets a target so that the strategy can be planned around it. An objective for this scenario might be: “Foster better connections with customers by responding to 90% of your Tweets in 2 hours or less. Actively ask your customers for help making a big corporate decision once per month.”
- A **tactic** is a tool you use in pursuing the objective associated with your strategy. Tactics are the “what’s” of the equation, and represent action. An example tactic might be: “Use a social media tracker to keep better track of when your company is mentioned, so that you can have a faster response rate. Start a monthly campaign asking users to vote on which old product they think your company should bring back, which color option you should make available, etc.”

Forbes contributor, Mikal E. Belicove, likes to call these four components **G’SOT** (an acronym for Goals, Strategies, Objectives, and Tactics). Here’s another real-life G’SOT example from Intel:

- **Goal:** Make our Core PC microprocessors a category leader in sales revenue by year X.
- **Strategy:** Persuade buyers that our Core processors are the best on the market by associating with large, well-established PC manufacturers.
- **Objective:** Retain 70 percent or more of the active worldwide PC microprocessor market, according to Passmark’s CPU benchmark report.
- **Tactic:** Through creativity that underlies our messaging, leverage hardware partner brand awareness to include key messages about the Intel Inside program.

As Belicove [says](#), “...organizations that understand the G’SOT and social media’s place on it will be the ones best positioned to evolve at the same pace as the appearance of new and compelling tactics.”

b. Use the S.M.A.R.T. Goal Framework

You can define your social media goals, strategies, objectives, and tactics individually, or you can use the [S.M.A.R.T. Goal Framework](#). S.M.A.R.T. is an acronym that was first popularized in the 80's, and is used to set goals that are clear and reachable, or as follows:

- **Specific** (the more specific your goal, the more you will be able to hone in on it)
- **Measurable** (use numbers to quantify goals)
- **Attainable** (set goals that are within reach)
- **Relevant** (your goals should be relevant to your business' success)
- **Timely** (goals should be time-sensitive)

The result of using this framework is directed, actionable, quantifiable goals. Let's take a look at an example. Imagine your starting goal is to **boost social media engagement**. Here's what to consider for each part of this acronym:

- **Specific:** Is your goal well-defined? If you need help with this, try asking yourself the "who, what, when, where, and how's" of achieving your goal.
 - **EX:** Where do I want to boost social media engagement? On Facebook? Twitter? LinkedIn?
 - How do I want to boost social media engagement? By posting more videos? More surveys? Relatable Memes or GIFS?
 - When (how often) do I want to produce engaging posts?
- **Measurable:** What can you measure to know that you are reaching your goal? What are the key metrics that you can look to?
 - **EX:** By how much should I boost social media engagement? Do I want to reach 300 likes per post on Facebook? Or 3,000?
 - Do I want to boost engagement of any kind (including comments, retweets, mentions) by a certain percentage? How about 10%?

- **Attainable:** Can this goal be achieved? Is it realistic? While aiming high may feel nice, a goal that is actually impossible to reach can be disastrous to morale. Look back and reference past goals that you have set to judge whether your present ones can be reached.
 - **EX:** Boosting engagement by 10% may be a stretch. What about boosting it by 5%?
- **Relevant:** Is this goal relevant to what your company is trying to achieve? Will it actually help your business grow? Does it resonate with who you are as a brand?
 - **EX:** Boosting engagement is relevant to my company's social media strategy because it will help us increase brand awareness and strengthen our roots within the community.
- **Timely:** When can this goal be reached by? Don't forget that this should also be realistic.
 - **EX:** Should I reach this goal by the end of the year? Or is it more of a 3-month goal?

When you put this all together, here's what you might get as your S.M.A.R.T. social media goal:

"On Facebook, we will post relatable (tag-able and shareable) memes and GIFs 3 times per week that communicate our company culture. The target is to have an average post receive at least 300 likes and 10 shares, and to boost engagement by 5% in 3 months' time."

c. Assess Where You're At

Before you establish your social media goals and marketing strategies, you need to perform an assessment of your current social media use. This will tell you what's working and what isn't, and will give you a starting point from which you can create effective goals and strategies.

Start by auditing your existing social media accounts. Who runs them? Which ones are owned by your company? Which ones are fan pages? Are any of the accounts fake?

Once you have all of your social media pages accounted for (and any imposter pages reported to Facebook, Twitter, etc.), see which pages need to be updated or deleted. If you have a social media page on every site, consider only keeping two or three, and deleting the rest.

To know which pages you should keep, see where your customers are reaching you from. You can also use information about the demographics that your brand appeals to in order to decide what social media channels are right for you. For example, Instagram users are predominantly millennial females that live in urban areas. Twitter users are [extremely global](#) (Twitter performs highly in countries such as Brazil, Japan, Mexico, and India), and Snapchat is overwhelmingly popular with [teenagers and college students](#).

Not only do you have to be where your audience is, but for effective social media marketing and outreach you also need to know *how* they are using the platform. Make sure that every one of your social media accounts has a purpose, and write down that purpose so that you remember it. Don't forget to keep in mind which platforms will help you best achieve your social media goals.

d. Align Goals Through the Organization

It's no secret that it's easy to lose yourself in social media. However, when planning your social media goals, it is important that you do the opposite. Remember the bigger picture, and make sure that what you are planning align with your company's broader goals. For the best social media strategy, start by looking at your company's most pressing goals, and seeing how your social media presence can help achieve them.

Here's an example of how this might work: Let's say that you run an entertainment company that is launching a new video game. You can align your social media goals according to your company's main upcoming goal: to raise awareness of this new product, and come up with a strategy to spread the word to consumers. From there, you can take actionable steps, such as running social media campaigns to promote the launching of your new video game (for example, you can create Snapchat filters that promote your game, or post engaging videos of the gameplay to Facebook). You can also use social media to further your company's goal by stimulating consumer engagement and interest in future releases.

In the event that you don't have any easily applicable company goals that you can help reach through social media, you can adopt your marketing goals as your social media goals.

Choosing Your Social Media Strategies

Not every social media goal is going to be for everyone. Depending on where your company's social media progress is at, you are going to need to have different goals — and different strategies — to achieve what you want.

These manageable social media strategies have been adapted from David L. Rogers' book, [The Network is Your Customer](#). As you read them, keep in mind which strategy will best benefit your company's current goals and objectives.

a. Network Strategy

To establish your social media goals, you must first make sure that you are appealing to and reaching the right customer network. This strategy is especially important for companies that are branching out into social media for the first time, or who want to start over from scratch.

- **Reach the right people.** Make sure you are reaching who you need to be reaching. Know who your audience is — are they consumers? Investors? Business customers? Business partners? Donors? Volunteers? Music fans? Voters? Who else might they be? You can use tools like Facebook Ads manager to estimate the size of your audience, and see if and where there's room for you to expand your audience.
- **Be on the right platform.** There are lots of social media platforms out there. Are you where your people are? Based on the people who you are trying to appeal to, would your brand do better on Instagram or LinkedIn? If you need help with this or aren't sure, send your customers a survey asking them what social media sites they most use, what websites they visit for information, what blogs or podcasts they enjoy, and what influencers they pay attention to online. Don't forget that you can always research [social media demographics](#).
- **Use the right people.** Have you liberated your network strategy from the "social media interns" in your public relations department? Are you embracing customer networks in every division of your business: market research, product development, marketing, sales, customer support, human resources, and more? Are you using networks to

collaborate across divisions? Make sure that your social media is owned by more than one department.

- **Watch the competition.** Keep an eye on the competition to learn what works and what doesn't. Pick 3-4 competitors and research them. What platforms are they on? What are their interactions with customers like? What can you do better?

b. Access Strategy

In order to meet your goals, your company has to be accessible. This social media strategy will help you make your company accessible to consumers, and works well for companies who are just warming up to social media marketing.

- **Make sure you're findable.** Customers need to be able to easily find you and incorporate you into their digital lives. Make sure your social media is easily findable via Google, social media search bars, and on your website.
- **Be flexible.** Offer services and content on the customer's schedule, not just when you feel like it. Make sure that customers can reach you via many channels (your social media approach needs to be part of an omni-channel or [channel-less](#) approach).
- **Be fast.** Whether it's your shipping time or your response time, consumers expect fast service!
- **Keep it simple.** Keep your social media strategy simple and eliminate hoops your customers should jump through. Are your customers reaching you on Facebook? Then don't ask them to create a Twitter account just so you can direct message them on Twitter instead (yes, this actually happens).

c. Engage Strategy

Today's internet is packed with ads. However, ads and adblockers help jaded browsers hide unwanted sidebar ads. Companies need to create social media content that customers will actually consume, and that will encourage engagement. That's where this social media marketing strategy comes in.

- **Create valuable content for your customers.** To earn your customer's attention in a world overloaded with memes and social media stimuli, you must create content that is worth paying attention to. Have you moved beyond running boring ads that simply push

your company's name, and towards creating content and stories that truly engage customers?

- **Create sensory and interactive content.** Are you using text, images, video, maps, gaming and surveys? Is your content easy to share via email or Facebook or embed in blogs?
- **Create useful content.** Know who your content is aimed at, and make sure that it is reaching the correct audience. What needs does your content answer for your customer? What problems does it solve? Do your customers have a good reason to return to your content? Is it genuinely useful?
- **Be authentic.** You need content that speaks in the voice of real people in the organization, and/or that addresses a genuine point of view. Will customers who have interacted with you in person recognize your voice in the content?
- **Use microphone as opposed to megaphone marketing.** Megaphone marketing is about blasting your customers and broadcasting your name. Microphone marketing is shared, co-owned, listening, engaging, and interacting. Make sure that you are using the latter to engage with your customers.

d. Connect Strategy

None of your goals would be possible without connection. These connection strategies will help you reach your customers and forge a real connection with them.

- **Listen to what your customers are saying.** Use tools to track your buzz online, and know what is being said about your brand, competitors, and your business category. Follow and learn from the conversations that your current and potential customers are having.
- **Be where your customers are.** Can customers find you to ask a question or report a problem? Can they "Like" you to express support for your brand?
- **Join the Conversation.** Respond to issues, answer questions, and make friends by joining the give-and-take of online conversations.
- **Be productive and helpful.** Respond quickly to concerns being voiced. Do your customers know they can turn to you for help? Are you creating positive buzz by showing you are helpful?

- **Provide a forum.** Create new places for your customers to express their views and connect with each other around shared interests.
- **Let conversations add a layer of value.** Make the conversations among your customers an added source of value for your business.

e. Collaborate Strategy

Social media was created to bridge gaps. It has brought people together from all distances, to exchange ideas and to collaborate (think, for example, about how GoFundMe has shown the power of collaboration on social media). Establishing a strategy for collaboration is necessary for even the most social media savvy businesses.

- **Invite customers to work together.** Give them tools and tasks that they can accomplish by working together and with your company. For example, the company Threadless did this by asking their customer to submit T-Shirts designs to them as [part of a contest](#). This saved Threadless design costs, while also giving customers an active interest in the product (and a reason to promote and buy the shirts they designed themselves!).
- **Ask for help on questions you can't answer yourself.** Pose big business questions to your customers! Solicit ideas from customers to tap into the wisdom of the crowd and show that you care about what they think. Be open to ideas coming from outside the organization and willing to reward them. For example, Ben and Jerry's did this by asking their customers to vote to bring back their favorite discontinued ice cream flavor.
- **Integrate their voice in yours.** Bring customers' stories into your own content and marketing. Customer stories [highlight](#) your company's purpose — they're free, always available, and are such a core part of our human DNA that they automatically make us feel good, especially when they're true.

Achieving Your Social Media Goals

Once you have an idea of which strategies are right for your team, it's time to apply them towards achieving your social media goals.

Here are some common social media goals, and how you can use strategies and metrics to accomplish them.

a. Connect with Customers

Let's face it — you came to social media first and foremost to be where your customers are. But how specifically do you connect with your customers?

Sometimes your customers will connect with your brand without you having to even do anything. Your dedicated fans might seek out your page, Tweet at you, or even create fan pages for your organization. Such as was the case for Coca Cola, when a fan-made page reached the [number two spot](#) on Facebook in 2008. Customers and fans of Coke from all over the world gathered on the page to connect via their love for the product.

Rather than bank on your customers finding you, you can be the one to reach out and connect with them. One way that you can do this is by posting content that users that are already in your network can connect with and relate to. Every “Like” that you get on Facebook moves you closer algorithmically to appearing in a new customer's feed. You can also reach out to customers who are contacting you for assistance, and connect with them directly online.

Applicable Strategies: Network Strategy, Access Strategy, Connect Strategy

Useful Social Media Metrics:

- Follower count
- Number of mentions/shares/retweets/customer posts on your page
- Number of customer “Likes”
- Frequency of your replies to customers

S.M.A.R.T. Goal Example: *Connect with customers on Twitter and Facebook by featuring a new customer of the week every Monday. Post a picture of the customer with a small blurb about them. The goal is to increase our mentions/shares/retweets/posts/likes by 5% in 3 months.*

b. Increase Brand Awareness

Increasing brand awareness is an extremely common social media goal, and is all about expanding your circle of customers and potential buyers. Increasing brand awareness can also help your company recruit more qualified employees, connect with promising investors, donors, and more, by widening the range of people that know of and are drawn to your organization.

A great way to increase brand awareness is by posting relevant, relatable, and useful content, that your followers can comment on and share. Another way is to pay for ads on social media. Over the years, paying for ads has become an increasingly necessary part of raising brand awareness on social media. This is due to the **dramatic demise** of organic reach. In other words, companies like Facebook, Instagram, and even Twitter have been **curtailing** the percentage of a Page's followers that actually see a brand's updates. In February of 2014, it was reported that for large brands, organic reach hit as little as 2% of their own followers. And that number has dwindled since.

According to a **report** from Gartner, "Sustained success in social marketing now requires paid advertising." The same report found that **80% of surveyed executives** planned on enacting paid social media advertisements within the next twelve months. Luckily, paid ads on social media look like normal feed content, and only have a small disclaimer showing that they are sponsored. Social media ads also have the benefit of reaching customers whose search histories make them ideal leads for your product. If you want to increase brand awareness, be sure to add paid advertising to your social media strategy.

Applicable Strategies: Network Strategy, Access Strategy, Engage Strategy

Useful Social Media Metrics:

- Follower count
- Range of social media posts (how many people they are reaching per day/month/year)
- Number of mentions/shares/retweets/customer posts on your page
- Amount of customer "Likes"
- Amount of link clicks per post
- Website analytics for social media referrals

S.M.A.R.T. Goal Example: *Increase brand awareness of your Facebook by introducing paid advertising. Have new content reach 10,000 people per post by the end of the month.*

c. Drive Traffic to Your Website

New website visitors often equal new customers. Driving traffic to your website is important for countless industries, such as e-commerce (once visitors click through to your website, they'll find themselves browsing your product), health care (visitors can familiarize themselves with your full selection of care offerings and locations), the SaaS industry (by attracting users from your social media page and to your company blog, they can learn why they need your software), and many more.

Make sure that your website is easy to navigate and visitor-ready, and use this important social media goal to get your web traffic up. You can do this by posting links to relevant product pages, blog posts, and other website content that is likely to attract your visitors.

You can see using visitor tracking how your visitors reached you, and see how many have come from social media.

Applicable Strategies: Access Strategy, Engage Strategy

Useful Social Media Metrics:

- Use your website's [visitor monitor tool](#) and/or [visitor segmentation](#) to measure how much of your websites traffic comes from social media, how many visitors reached you that way, etc.

S.M.A.R.T. Goal Example: *Increase website traffic to 2,000 visitors per day by posting and promoting relevant blog posts three times per week to Facebook and Twitter accounts.*

d. Generate Sales and Leads

If your company is on social media, chances are you're aiming to get some sales and leads out of it. You can generate sales and leads through paid advertising and by producing interesting content, and posts (after all, what good does it do to pay for advertising if you are advertising dull content or undesirable products?). It's important to remember to know who you are marketing to, and to make sure that your social media brand image and presence is both interesting and relevant to your audience, so that they have a reason to click through and buy!

Another great way to generate sales and leads is to provide exceptional customer support. Social media makes problem resolution a spectator sport. If your customers and potential customers see that you are on-point with your issue resolution, then they will know that they

can purchase from you again in the future — or that they can buy from you for the first time — and your company will be there for them to meet their needs.

Applicable Strategies: Engage Strategy, Connect Strategy

Useful Social Media Metrics:

- Count of leads that you have gotten through Social Media (such as email addresses)
- Amount of clicks that you have gotten on lead generating posts or links.
- (Google Analytics has a good tool for mapping lead generation, just go to Acquisition>Social>Conversions).

S.M.A.R.T. Goal Example: *Increase Snapchat leads by 6% by December. Our target is 30,000 views per promotional video.*

e. Boost Brand Engagement

Brand engagement is a huge part of social media. That’s because engaged customers are invested in you, and will come back to your page (and company for more!).

There are a lot of great ways to boost engagement, such as calling upon customer creativity, having contests (many brands call upon social media to comment on a post and/or share it for a chance to win something), and starting a friendly, open discussion that you invite your customers to participate in. All of these are great ways to take customers from the passive “Like” to actually engaging with your brand.

Applicable Strategies: Engage Strategy, Connect Strategy

Useful Social Media Metrics:

- Amount or frequency of mentions/shares/retweets/comments/customer posts to your page (how many people are interacting with your posts?)
- Number of mentions and replies
- Track engagement on social media sites, or with a social media management tool.

- See what is being shared the most (so that way you can see what energizing content works best!)

S.M.A.R.T. Goal Example: *Boost brand engagement on Instagram by 20% by the end of the month. We will do this by asking customers to comment on the post and tag a friend for a chance to win a \$100 gift certificate to our store.*

f. Increase In-Person Sales

Depending on what your business is, sometimes a great social media goal is to increase sales in person, or visits to your store. This is especially true for location-specific services such as restaurants, pet salons, human salons, and more.

One great way social media strategy for increasing in-person purchases through social media is by giving people an incentive to check-in to your location, tag your place of business, or post user pictures from your place of business. After all, McKinsey research shows that social media recommendations are behind [more than a quarter](#) of all purchases made. Your business should bank on that, too!

Applicable Strategies: Access Strategy, Collaborate Strategy

Useful Social Media Metrics:

- Amount of people who have checked in to your location, tagged you in a post, etc.
- How many advertising discounts were given
- Amount of reviews posted on social media

S.M.A.R.T. Goal Example: *Increase in-person sales at our restaurant by providing a free California roll appetizer to customers who check in on Facebook, or tag us in a picture on Instagram. Increase in-store sales by 10% by the end of this quarter.*

g. Build a Community

Building a community on social media is among the best ways to increase customer loyalty and retention. Having a community means having a place where customers can come together and share in their brand loyalty. It is very important for long term growth, and is how you cultivate life-long customers.

To build a community, your customers need to feel connected to your brand, and to others who also enjoy your brand. One great way to build a community is to have customers contribute to your brand in some way. This could be with original artwork (such as the artwork that [brought together anime fans](#) in the Wendy's community), a content, or a community vote — something that makes your customers feel like they are a part of something bigger.

Applicable Strategies: Connect Strategy, Collaborate Strategy

Useful Social Media Metrics:

- Number of photos tagged of your brand
- Amount of brand hashtags being used
- How many stories and posts tag your company
- Number of engagements per post (posts/likes/comments — how engaged is your community?)
- Number of engagements per follower.
- (You can track these metrics with sites like [Community Analytics](#), [HashTracking](#), or manually.)

S.M.A.R.T Goal Example: *Stimulate community growth and involvement by starting a new brand hashtag on Twitter. Get the new hashtag to have made as one of our country's top trending hashtags by the end of the week.*

h. Effective Social Customer Service

Social media isn't only for marketing — it's a great place for companies to answer their customers' questions, receive customer feedback and provide support to customers. By making effective social customer service your social media goal, you are reinforcing your commitment to your customers, and ensuring that you keep a good reputation on this public support front.

To reach this goal, be sure to have fast, reliable social media support. Don't keep your customers waiting, or ask them to switch service channels so that you can attend them. If you do need to switch to phone customer care, reach out to those customers, don't ask them to reach out to you.

Applicable Strategies: Connect Strategy

Useful Social Media Metrics:

- Number of support questions
- Average response time
- Customer satisfaction (how many customers left unresolved? How many left satisfied? How about unsatisfied?)
- First contact resolution rate (did customers have to switch channels to receive proper support, or did they get their problem solved over social media the first time?)

S.M.A.R.T. Goal Example: *Improve customer service quality over Twitter and Facebook by responding to customer comments and customers who have hashtagged our company in 2 hours or less. Have a 100% response rate in 6 months, and an 80% first contact resolution rate.*

i. Listen to Your Customers

Listening to your customers is important to make them feel like part of the community. It is also important to document customer feedback to improve processes within your company that aren't working as well as they should.

Listen to customers by having them vote on important processes (for example, Ben and Jerry's had customers vote on which retired flavor to bring back from the grave). Take note of customer feedback, and implement a strategy for turning that feedback into actionable change.

Applicable Strategies: Connect Strategy, Collaborate Strategy

Useful Social Media Metrics:

- How many conversations you have had with customers on social media
- How many suggestions you are getting from your customers on social media
- Out of those suggestions, note how many you have put into a plan for improvement
- (Use social listening tools to map this out)

S.M.A.R.T. Goal Example: *Take note of customer suggestions and turn at least one quality suggestion per month into action from now until the end of the year.*

j. **Join the Conversation**

You have to be a part of the conversation, or customers will have it without you! Chiming in on customer conversations will help your customers know that you are listening, and that you are willing and ready to engage with them.

Join in the conversation by responding to customers who are tweeting at you, posting on your wall, commenting on your content, etc.

Applicable Strategies: Connect Strategy, Collaborate Strategy

Useful Social Media Metrics:

- Frequency of your replies and network engagement
- Out of the posts, comments, etc. that you are mentioned in, how many do you chime in for?

S.M.A.R.T. Goal Example: *Become more involved in the conversation by responding to at least 80% of customer posts and comments on Facebook by the end of the year.*

When setting your social media goals, it's important not to overwhelm yourself. Set 1-2 goals that you can start out with, and run one social media strategy at a time. This will give you a greater chance of boosting the social media metrics that you have identified as important. Remember that if you try to improve everything at once, you may (A.) not be able to make the quality improvements that you desire, or (B.) not be able to pin the improvements that you have made down to one factor.

By setting goals, examining metrics, and following the strategies that we have laid out for you, you will be on your way to effective social media marketing in no time.

Social Media Training Activities and Marketing Courses You Never Realized Your Team Needed

Social media is chaotic, but your social media team shouldn't be! In order for your social media strategy to work, it's important that your team be onboard with what you are trying to achieve, and have the knowledge and resources to help you achieve it.

The problem is that social media is such a broad topic, and an effective social media team comes from a variety of knowledge levels and backgrounds. How are you supposed to find social media training activities and courses that will bring everyone up to speed?

The following blog post will give you helpful training tips, social media training exercises, and a brief list of courses that will help your social media team rise above and beyond.

Where to Start

According to [Forrester](#), There are 3 types of social media training that companies start out with:

- Casual Training
- Structured Training
- Formal Training

The kind of training that you give your social media team evolves as the company's commitment to social media evolves, moving through different formats until formalization is achieved.

Usually:

- **Casual training** is implemented by companies entering the coordination stage of social maturity. It often revolves around established social media policies, adding color, and bringing to life the published guidelines. Casual training is a good tool for spreading awareness of those policies throughout an organization.
- **Structured training** is great for organizations moving deeper into coordination or on to the scaling and optimizing stages. This approach helps when consistency of strategy or voice is a

concern. For that reason, structured training is more rigorous than casual training and is often delivered on a per-department or per-project basis.

- **Formal training** becomes necessary to become a truly empowered social organization. In a formal program, there are often several levels of certification depending on the employees' role in the organization and how deeply they're likely to engage in social media on behalf of the company or brand. This approach ensures that every individual has just the right skills and savvy to represent their companies responsibly in a social media context.

The Basics of Social Media Training

Whether you are starting out with casual, structured, or formal training, the more effort you put into [tailoring a social media training process](#) that's right for your organization, the better your outcomes will be.

The truth is that you can't successfully apply a blanket social media training approach to everyone who will be participating in your social media strategy — the ideal team is going to have participants from many departments involved, fulfilling different functions. Someone who is going to work with social media customer service is going to need different training than legal, legal is going to need different training than corporate, etc.

For this reason, successful social media training starts with an analysis of staff's existing skills, so that you will know what training each person needs. How you train your social media team — face-to-face, video, interactive online training and so on — should be chosen based on the culture and circumstances of the organization. You may need to use [multiple methods](#) to accommodate employees in different work environments and employees who have different learning styles or preferences.

It's important that your training demystifies social media, and makes your employees feel comfortable with the platforms your company uses. According to Nolan Carleton, Associate Director of Communications and Social Engagement at AT&T, "People are so fearful of getting out there in social media, but once they do it, and they get comfortable, it's amazing the pivot they make. Make sure whatever materials you have about your program are [fun and engaging](#). Don't make your program any scarier than it needs to be."

What Training Should Cover

For starters, you need to have a good social media policy, and use training to create awareness of the policy within your company.

Your company also needs to train participating staff on social media literacy (what does “Retweet” mean? What’s a DM? What does it mean to “Pin” something? What about “Snap”?). Your team members don’t have to know every word in the social media dictionary, but it’s important that they are well-versed in the social media platforms that your company will be working with.

Training should also cover social media best and worst practices. This will give your team a foundation of the Do’s and Don’ts of social media customer service and marketing, and will help guide them towards successful social media engagement. This should include training on how your staff can safely use social media without risking the business’s reputation or their jobs.

More advanced training should be delivered as needed to each participating individual and/or department. For example, Marketing could be trained on the best practices for developing social media campaigns and engaging audiences through social media, while Human Resources could be trained on how to use social media platforms to attract the best prospective candidates to work for the company.

It is important to know what role each department (and individual) is going to play on social media. Sales, Human Resources, and Marketing need to know how to use social media to reach business and departmental goals. Social media managers need in-depth, ongoing, practical training that simulates everyday work. And a social media response team should be trained on how to handle social media customer service and PR fiascos (should they arise).

Social Media Training Options

There are several types of social media training. One option is free or paid online social media courses for your individual departments.

Here are some examples:

- Beginner courses:
 - [Beginner Social Media Tutorials on How to Use Each Channel from GCF LearnFree.org](#)
 - [What Is Social \(a free introduction course\) from Coursera](#)

- [Social Media Fundamentals for Beginners from Udemy](#)
- Social media marketing courses:
 - [Social Media Marketing Specialization from Coursera](#)
 - [Digital Marketing: Social Media Marketing and Growth Hacking from Udemy](#)
 - [Social Media Marketing: ROI from Lynda.com](#)
 - [Search and Social Media Marketing for International Business from the University of Salford School of Business](#)
- Social media management courses:
 - [Social Media Management 2017 — The Complete Manager Bootcamp from Udemy](#)
- Social media PR courses:
 - [Public Relations for Digital Media Specialization from Coursera](#)
 - [Repairing Your Reputation by Lynda](#)
- Social media sales courses:
 - [Social Selling with Salesforce from Lynda.com](#)
 - [Digital Marketing- The Formula for Branding and Sales Growth from Udemy](#)
- Social media data and analytics courses:
 - [Social Media Monitoring from Udemy](#)
 - [Introduction to Social Media Analytics from Coursera](#)

These and much more (such as courses for [social media ethics](#), marketing on each individual social media platform, [social media for graphic designers](#), etc.) can be found online, and done comfortably from your home or office.

Another training option is in-person social media workshops and training activities.

Here are some social media training activities and exercises that we have compiled to help you train your team:

Group Introduction Activity

Social media isn't a one-department job; in order to have a successful social media marketing strategy, you are going to need a [jointly-owned social media team](#). That means that your social media team is going to consist of a lot of different talent coming together!

This activity is simple. On the first day, gather everyone from every department that will be participating in your social media strategy (if possible, have corporate there too!). Start by sharing your social media mission with the room. Then go on to introduce yourself, and tell your team what you hope that you will be able to contribute. Next, have each teammate take turns sharing a little bit about themselves and what they hope their expertise will bring to the team.

The whole group might not always be together, but it's good to know one another, and begin to open up communication channels.

Social Media "Never Have I Ever"

When training, you want to mix in a little bit of fun and engagement to keep your team on track.

In this social media training activity, have everyone start with five fingers. The first person begins by saying something that's related to social media that they've never done before or that they aren't sure of (confess something you don't know about social media, social media marketing, etc.). Have everyone who agrees puts a finger down.

This activity will show you where you are, and what your group knows vs what they need to work on. That way, you can start tailoring your training to fit your team's needs.

By making this into a game, you destigmatize not knowing (for example, when people are afraid to raise their hands and admit they don't know something) and turn it into something a little more fun, open, and relatable.

This also shows the importance of being vocal when you don't know something, which is vital to good teamwork and to contributing to your company's social media success.

I Tweet, You Tweet

Have your team create fake Twitter accounts (or use their own!). To make this activity more creative you can invite them to add a fun photo and come up with a character for their fake Twitter.

Have the team follow certain objective. For example, have them use a hashtag, direct message their peers, follow and unfollow their peers on Twitter, etc. so that you can give everyone a chance to practice using the social media platform.

Although it might be hard to create a fake Facebook, have your team do this for any platform you plan on engaging with (LinkedIn, Snapchat, Reddit, Instagram, Pinterest, Quora posts, etc.). That way, you will know that everyone is on the same page and knows the basics of how to use the platform.

Talk with users about the experience. What did they learn about the platform? What tasks were easy and difficult? Where can they see the advantages of using this social site?

Behind the Wheel

The next level of the previous social media training exercise is to simulate stressful and realistic social media situations. Create a mock social media account for your business, and have your social media reps log in. This time, it is your job to pretend to be the customer, while they run the show. Post as many positive and negative comments and inquiries as you can, while your trainees take the wheel one at a time.

Give social media trainees 3-5 minute turns each, to respond to as many of the comments as they can. At the end of each simulation, go over the trainees' responses and give feedback.

While it might not be necessary to have employees who will be involved in social media behind the scenes participate in this activity, it is vital that those who will be directly representing the company on social media do so.

Pick Your Favorite Mean Tweets

Social media can be intimidating for teams, especially if those teams are new. You want your teams to learn how to be comfortable online, and not (A) be so rigid and scared of missteps that they sound like a cold robot or (B) get upset or overwhelmed by customer negativity.

Have your team search your brand's name on social media, and see what mean tweets and/or posts they can find. Share the mean tweets with the group (if your brand doesn't have a social media

presence yet, they still might have mean posts! And if not, you can tweak this by finding the mean tweets and/or posts about your competitors).

Negative emotional responses on social media need to be channeled into action, and working to actively turn the situation around. This activity will help teach your social media reps to take the negativity of social media in stride. While it is important to take customer complaints seriously, your social media team shouldn't let customer negativity upset them or impact what they are bringing to the team.

See How Others Do It

This social media training activity can be done on one or several social media platforms.

Have your team interact with 3 different brands on social media. Encourage your team to tweet, post, etc. to brands that they are familiar with in real life, and have bought products from in the past. You will find that several of your team members probably still have a bone to pick with at least one company (and if not, they can invent a problem, ask a question, or just compliment the brand online)! Another option is to specifically interact with competing brands. If your staff isn't sure what to post, have them post one compliment, one complaint, and one inquiry and see what happens.

Do this activity in the morning, and at the end of the day go over the results with your staff. Which companies responded, and which ones didn't? How did they respond? Were they helpful? Out of all of the posts and tweets that went out, how many went answered? Which company had the best social media customer service? Which ones had the worst, or didn't respond at all? What can you learn from this and what could your company do better?

This social media training exercise will give your staff a feel for what it's like to be a customer on social media. It's also a great way for your team to see how your industry competitors do on social media, and what they're up against.

Train with Stories

According to Jennifer Aaker, a marketing professor at Stanford's Graduate School for Business, "Research shows our brains are not hard-wired to understand logic or retain facts for very long. [Our brains are wired to understand and retain stories.](#)"

In this social media training activity, use stories of the best and the worst of social media to help your team remember what to do and what not to do on social media.

Corporate social media mistakes often go viral. Have your team share their favorite social media disaster and success stories, and together with your team, write a list of things that you as a team vow to avoid and strive towards.

Market with Stories

Storytelling can also be used to create compelling marketing. Many successful marketing campaigns benefit from using real-life customer and/or employee stories. These stories can be of an emotional experience with a product, a time a customer received exceptional service, and anything else that might resonate with a social audience.

Train your marketing team on the importance of using stories in digital advertising by having them create and share their own touching brand stories. Teach them how to encourage user-generated content, such as hosting a contest, managing a hashtag, or interviewing industry leaders to [create third-party content with a storytelling flair](#).

Service First

Without proper customer service training, you might as well not even put your social media personnel online. Try out some customer service training ideas and activities to make sure your team knows how to keep your customers happy.

One company that knows the importance of happy customers is Disney. Disney's solution to bringing quality customer service to even the angriest customers is called: HEARD, an acronym that stands for the following:

- **Hear:** Listen to the customer's entire story.
- **Empathize:** Use phrases that convey that you understand how the customer feels.
- **Apologize:** And do so effusively!
- **Resolve:** Fix the issue, and if you don't know how ask the customer, "How can I set this right?"
- **Diagnose:** Get to the bottom of the issue so you can make sure it won't happen again.

Have your social media representatives practice using the HEARD method to soothe upset customers on social media. Train your agents on how to apply HEARD to different social media platforms (such as how to take care of customers in the 150 characters or less on Twitter, or through snaps on

Snapchat). Stage these customer service situations on your fake corporate accounts before moving over to your real accounts.

Know When to Make a Switch

Jay Baer, in his book [Hug Your Haters](#), was right when he said that social media makes customer service a [spectator sport](#). When you have excellent customer service, that becomes an advantage, rather than a problem.

But even companies with stellar social media support have to train their representatives on when to switch from posts, tweets, or comments to private direct messages (DMs). They also need to be trained on when, if ever, they should switch from DM to a phone call.

Here's a hint: Train your representatives to always try and solve customers' issue over social media. In the event that they can't, don't tell them to call in! Take their information and number over DM and ask the customer for a time when it's convenient to call them. Also, don't ask customers to email in. Anything that can be securely resolved over email can also be securely resolved via direct message).

Make sure that social media reps are properly trained on when to escalate an issue to a supervisor.

You can train this by using a particularly challenging simulation. Go on your company's fake social media account as a particularly difficult customer, and see if your agents know when to (A) switch to DM, (B) switch to a phone call or (C) ask a supervisor for help. Establish set guidelines for escalation that social media representatives can look back on.

Message Training

Your social media team needs to be versed in DMing. This is similar to training your agents to message with customers over live chat.

For this training, you can summon your team to shadow you for a live DMing session with a customer (or a fake customer volunteer, if you are still on your fake social media account).

Project your computer screen so that your staff can all see, and ask for their input. Supervise your team members, and have them take a shot at messaging themselves. Go over best and worst DMing practices, such as checking spelling and grammar, avoiding regional slang, expected direct message response time, etc.

While you are doing this social media training exercise, keep in mind the 70-20-10 model for organizational learning: **Seventy percent** of learning takes place from actual assignments; 20 percent from peer education; and 10 percent from instruction.

Know Your Tone

Call upon your social media representatives to define your brand's tone and audience.

According to a report by the Harvard Business Review, top performing brands employ a **gender-neutral, or slightly female tone** on social media. That means that they tend to use emojis and strive for emotional connections with their customers.

Casual, friendly, helpful tones are the most well-received on social media. Have social media agents take turns practicing their use of tone, and use of emojis when responding to customers on social media. Create an emoji guideline to best train your staff: When is it a good idea to use emojis? When is it not (for example, if a customer is upset)?

Empathy Exercise

According to The Harvard Business Review, empathy consists of **three components**: reassurance, authenticity, and emotional connection. Empathy goes beyond simply solving a problem. It involves making a customer feel valued. Empathy is necessary on social media, as much as it is in any other customer service situation.

Assign your SM group common problems/complaints with the company that are likely to be on social media (or have them create their own!) Pair them up into groups of two, where one Social Media rep is representing the company, and the other is the customer.

Have the "customer" state their grievance. Then, have the company show empathy for the grievance (and offer an empathetic solution!) Afterwards, have the pairs switch rolls, and the new customer reads their grievance.

The pair with the most empathetic duo could win — if you want to offer incentives. Regardless, at the end of this social media training exercise, talk about what works and what doesn't work for empathy, and how you might convey empathy over text.

Effective Social Listening

Social media teams need to know how to engage in effective social listening. When should your teams chime into a conversation? And when should they stay out of it? Develop a guideline for social listening, and encourage your social media team to use their better judgement when including the corporate social media page in customer conversations.

Show your team how to use social media listening tools such as SocialMention to monitor what is being said about your brand. Project your computer screen so that everyone can see, and go through the mentions that your brand has.

Ask your social media team which comments they think that their brand can contribute to? And why?

Social listening is not only important for chiming in — it is necessary for growing as a company and getting feedback. Make sure that feedback does not go unheard by implementing effective feedback channels, and training your team how to use them. What sort of things does IT need to know? Product development? And who in those departments is in charge of receiving social media information?

Have your team discuss and simulate this as well.

Training Follow-up

Social media training is an ongoing process that doesn't stop after one day or one session. Spacing social media training and practice out over a few weeks or days will allow you to see any gaps and fill them in as needed. Tweak your training according to your metrics, and according to any performance gaps.

What is or isn't working in training? What can you do better next time? What does your team still need to learn or master?

Monitor your social media team's interactions with customers, and make sure to provide proactive correction to prevent any major mishaps. Even after any social media courses, training exercises, and workshops are over, follow up with staff to provide further support and to instill accountability.

Once your social media team has been trained with the basics, let them take a swing at handling your corporate social media accounts. With the right amount of practice, training, and supervision, your team will move from social media beginners to social media experts.

Don't forget that as your team's experience with social media grows, so will your commitment to social media, and the formality of your training.

5 Social Media Customer Service and Marketing Secrets from the Pros

When [67% of consumers](#) turn to social media for customer service support, and 87% of customers indicate that these interactions positively impact their buying decisions, integrating social media into your customer service support strategy becomes a no-brainer.

Consider this bit of wisdom from customer service expert, Micah Solomon, from his book, [“High-Tech, High-Touch Customer Service”](#): “Saying your business is ‘on the internet’ is like saying it’s ‘on the power grid’doing business in a digitally informed manner should be comfortable enough for your business that it becomes background information.”

The same can be said for providing customer service through social media. From Priceline to JetBlue, the biggest brands are turning to Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram to resolve customer issues and proactively provide support — and so should you.

But if you haven’t broached the wild world of social media support, never fear. In this blog post, we’ll break down the habits of the pros and bring you their social media customer care secrets. Use these tips to strengthen your support strategy, and even generate a bit of positive buzz around your brand.

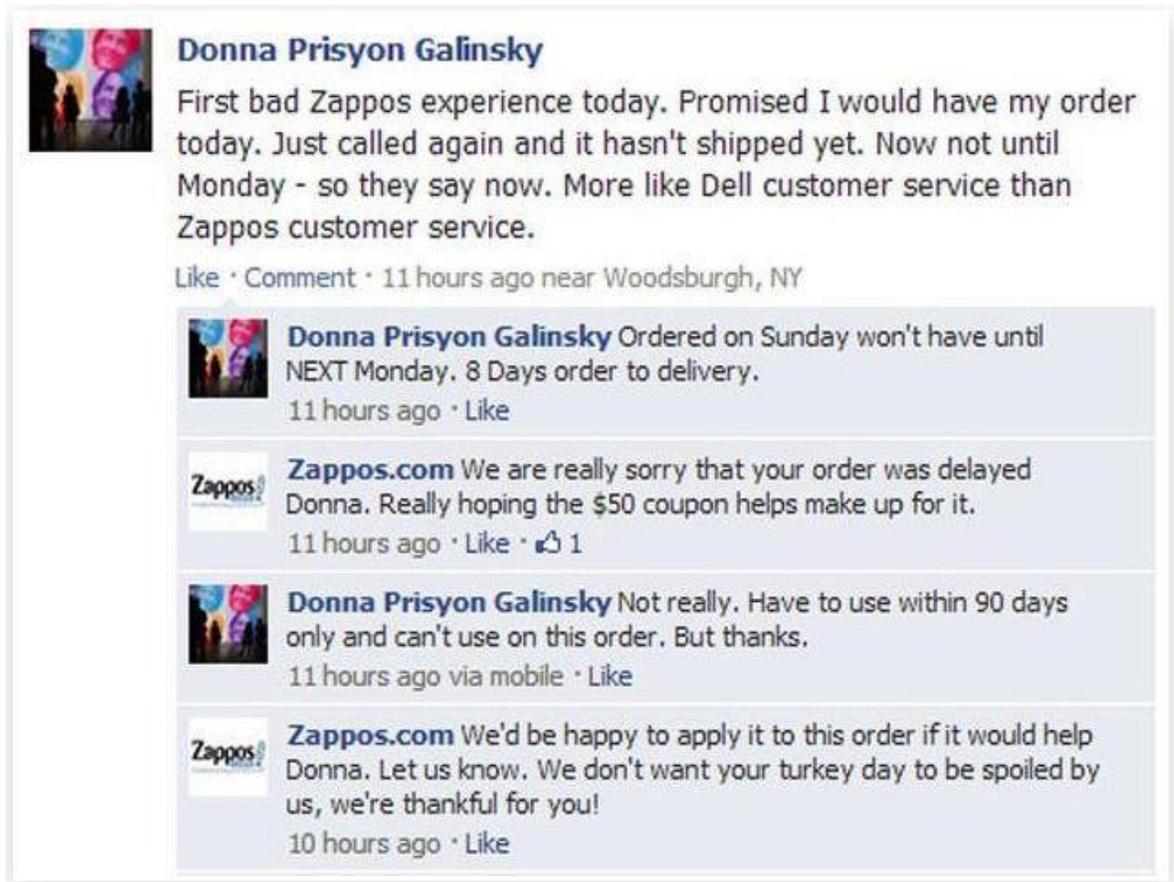
1. Be Proactive About Social Media Complaints

Nothing is worse for your brand’s image than a big fat complaint lingering on your Facebook page. While having excellent products and services goes a long way in preventing these issues in the first place, complaints happen. The best you can do is to prepare your agents to act quickly and appropriately. Here are three social customer service rules we’ve gathered from studying the habits of other companies, like Zappos and Maybelline New York:

Be Timely

If someone leaves a complaint, waiting even a few hours can sour their mood. As [Micah Solomon states](#), “after just a couple hours not hearing from you, customers start to assume that a company’s never getting back to them.”

Check out this Facebook interaction between a particularly unhappy customer and Zappos customer support:



Donna Prisyon Galinsky
First bad Zappos experience today. Promised I would have my order today. Just called again and it hasn't shipped yet. Now not until Monday - so they say now. More like Dell customer service than Zappos customer service.
Like · Comment · 11 hours ago near Woodsburgh, NY

Donna Prisyon Galinsky Ordered on Sunday won't have until NEXT Monday. 8 Days order to delivery.
11 hours ago · Like

Zappos.com We are really sorry that your order was delayed Donna. Really hoping the \$50 coupon helps make up for it.
11 hours ago · Like · 1

Donna Prisyon Galinsky Not really. Have to use within 90 days only and can't use on this order. But thanks.
11 hours ago via mobile · Like

Zappos.com We'd be happy to apply it to this order if it would help Donna. Let us know. We don't want your turkey day to be spoiled by us, we're thankful for you!
10 hours ago · Like

This customer is upset about a miscalculated delivery time - something that (as every ecommerce professional knows) can be out of your company's control. However, the Zappos representative handled this with poise and grace. We can see by the time stamps that this back and forth between the customer and Zappos happened within the hour. Offer solutions promptly, and continue to respond until the issue is resolved.

Hot Tip: When monitoring your social media presence for complaints, look for product mentions and misspellings of your company's name. These customers still need care, and letting such complaints fly under the radar could worsen an already dire situation.

Think Outside the Big Three

Don't limit your social care strategy to the big three social media giants: Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. You never know when a new blog or social media site will crop up and steal the show. Review sites and social apps come and go, but a complaint about your brand can leave an impression for a lifetime.

For this reason, it's important can use tools such as socialmention.com and [Google Alerts](https://www.google.com/alerts) to monitor where your brand and product names pop up. Remember that you can engage with your customers and provide support on other social media channels such as Snapchat, YouTube, Tumblr, Pinterest, Pheed, and Medium.

***Example** - Maybelline uses Snapchat to engage customers with make-up tutorials and answer product related questions through Direct Message. This a brilliant use of the channel; Maybelline representatives can field concerns promptly and privately, and also share product tips for best use. This can help mitigate complaints, and also gives customers a more gratifying avenue to express concern about defective products: through photo and video with near instant results.*



Proactively Offer a Solution

Responding to a complaint quickly is only one part of the equation. It's important to proactively offer a solution, or multiple: otherwise you could risk offending the customer. Even if you can't directly fix the issue at hand, you can always offer the customer credit as an apology.

***Example** - A customer on a JetBlue flight had a malfunctioning television on their flight and tweeted about it. JetBlue immediately stepped in with a form of compensation, since fixing a broken TV mid-flight was not a possibility.*



Esai Vélez @EvpLares14 · 26 Nov 2015

My View during all the flight (4hours). No movies, no TV. First complain to one of my favorite airline. @JetBlue :(



JetBlue Airways @JetBlue · 26 Nov 2015

@EvpLares14 We always hate it when that happens. Send us a DM with your confirmation code to get you a credit for the non-working TV.



2. Monitor Your Competition

The biggest brands on social media are very aware of their competition, and leverage a public rivalry to their advantage. Excellent customer service through social media isn't just about your current customers, it's also about customers to be. With social media customer support, you can monitor hashtags and mentions to see how the competition has failed a prospective customer, allowing you to swoop in and save the day.

For example, if a prospective customer complains about your competitor's shipping policies, why not shoot them a DM with a free shipping code on their first order with your brand?

It also never hurts to have a playful dynamic with your rivals on social media. The pros know that a public rivalry can keep their name at the forefront of prospective customers' minds.

Example - This rivalry between Orbitz and Priceline is funny and sure to get attention for both brands, establishing their Twitter handles as customer support channels..





 priceline 
@priceline

 Follow

Nice try @Orbitz's candidate, Walt, but no one wears a sombrero like the Negotiator. Game On. #Negotiator4President

11:43 AM - Nov 1, 2012





3. WOW Your Loyal Customers

A great way to show the world you value your customers is to WOW them with unexpected moments of “above and beyond”. This can catch people’s attention in a flood of content, boost your social media marketing efforts, and help you meet your customer service goals all at once. Check out these pro examples:

Example - A customer jokingly requested that Morton's Steakhouse greet him at Newark Airport with a porterhouse via Twitter. Instead of dismissing the tweet as absurd, someone at Morton's saw this as an opportunity to go above and beyond - and a server greeted him at the gate with a hot meal.

 **Peter Shankman** 
@petershankman  **Following**

Hey @Mortons - can you meet me at newark airport with a porterhouse when I land in two hours? K, thanks. :)

RETWEETS 16 LIKES 28 

4:08 PM - 17 Aug 2011



Example - Christina over at [A Mommy Story](#) was staying at the Gaylord Opryland resort back in 2012. She fell in love with the clock radio in her room, which emitted soothing spa sounds that gave her an incredible night's sleep. She reached out via social media about the clock radio, hoping to get her hands on her own model. Unfortunately, the Gaylord Opryland responded to tell her these clocks were not for sale to the public.



Christina McMenemy
@mommystory

@GaylordOpryland Where can I buy this Sharper Image clock radio in my room? None in stores have the "spa" sounds & I've never slept better!



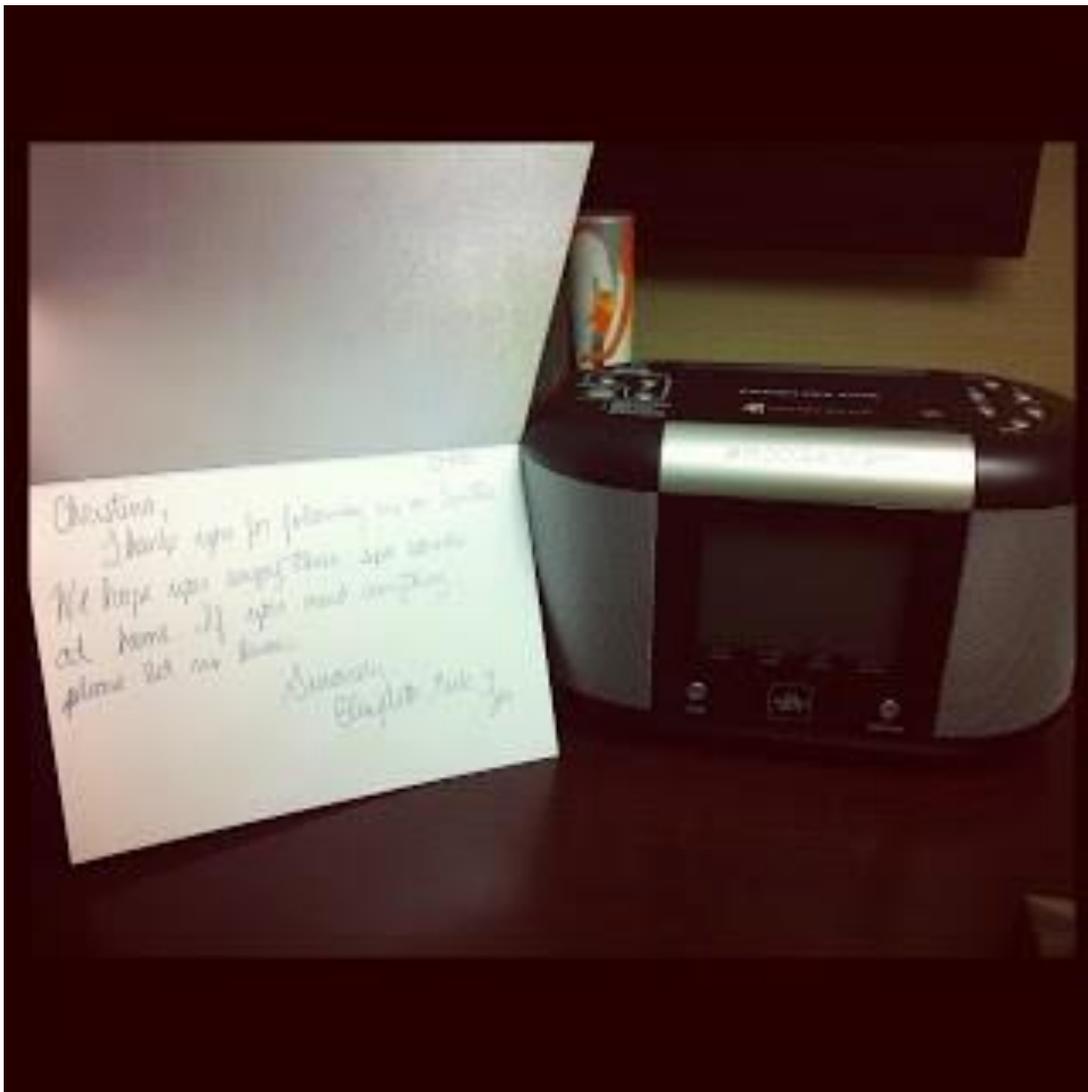
Gaylord Opryland
@GaylordOpryland

Following



@mommystory Unfortunately, our version isn't available to the public, but here is a Shaper Image alarm clock like it: amzn.to/ADMXzL.

Not content to buy the look alike that lacked the soothing sounds, Christina let the disappointing exchange linger to the back of her mind and went about her business. But the hotel wasn't content with offering her a link to a similar clock. Instead, Christina went back to her room to find a surprise gift:



The clock of her dreams was sitting on her dresser, with a card next to it which read: "Christina, Thank you for following us on Twitter. We hope you enjoy these spa sounds at home. If you need anything, please let us know. Sincerely, Elizabeth, Nick & Tori."

This exclusive treatment, which probably didn't cost the hotel much time or money, made a huge impact on Christina and inspired her to share her story online. It also boosted Gaylord Opryland's social media presence and proved that they take customer care seriously.

Example - You may be surprised by this choice, but celebrities are their own brand, with records and products to sell. When [Katy Perry met a loyal fan](#), Jason, while ordering a drink at a Chicago Starbucks, the barista and huge fan couldn't help but give the star a quiet compliment. Flattered to meet such a big fan, Perry gave him a handshake and a shout out later on Twitter.



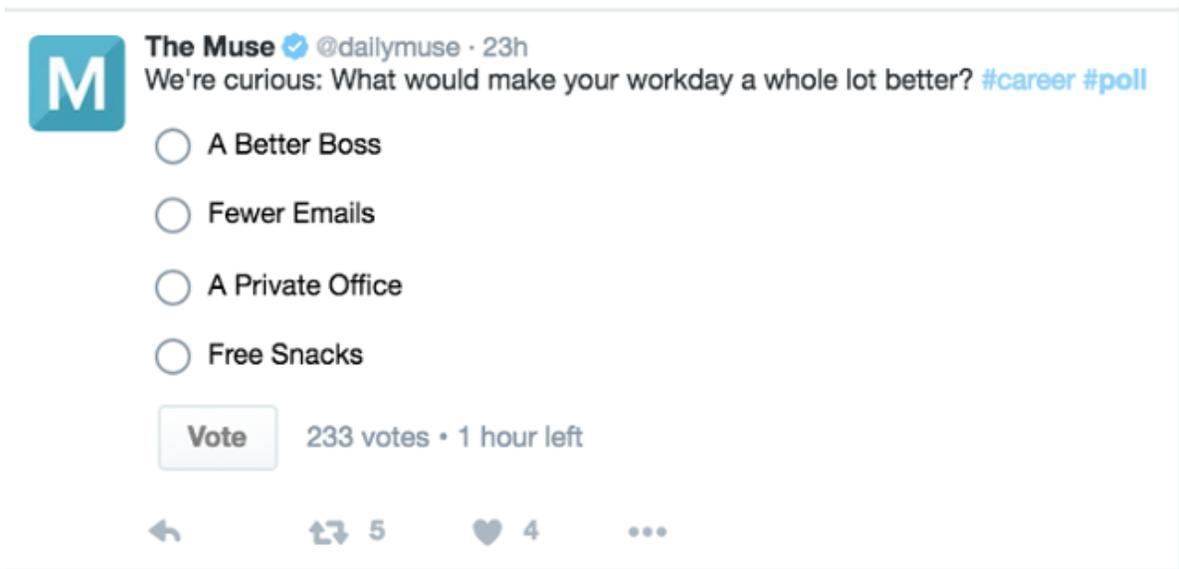
Positive attention can really go a long way in wowing a customer. [Research by Dr. Dan Ariely](#), the James B. Duke Professor of Psychology and Behavioral Economics at Duke University, found that people whose work was acknowledged, versus those whose work was ignored, were motivated to work significantly longer than the others. The power of acknowledgement in keeping us motivated is incredibly strong - so keep your customers motivated to do business with you. After a social care interaction, send out a compliment on social media. You'll brighten their day, even if you can't afford the pricier WOW options above.

4. Use Social Media Marketing Campaigns to Establish Your Customer Service Channels

For the pros, running a social media marketing campaign and establishing an active customer service channel are one and the same. Social care isn't just about responding to complaints. It's also about showing disengaged followers that real human people are on the other line, ready to

answer questions and concerns. The last thing you want is a wasteland of a Facebook or Instagram, which can dissuade customers from looking for support at all.

To encourage engagement, use hashtags that incentivize customers to chime in. Create polls and pose interesting questions. The job hunting site for millennials, The Muse, is well-known for its successful social media and content marketing campaigns. You can see here how they use this ability to inspire customer engagement through Twitter:



This poll encourages customers to reach out to The Muse through Twitter for help with their job search, and The Muse can use this data to figure out what their customers really want - setting the company up for support wins in the future; not to mention, it boosts their Twitter page as a customer support channel.

5. Have Fun... and Help Your Customers Smile

Good social media customer service starts with making followers glad to see your post on their feed. Pro brands understand this, and wield this secret to their advantage: you catch more flies, or customers, with honey.

Take for example, [the story of Shane and Samsung Canada](#). Shane, a big fan and loyal customer, went to Facebook and offered up a drawing of a dragon in exchange for the latest model of the Galaxy phone (which at the time had yet to be released to the public).

 **Samsung Canada** ← Messages 

 **Shane** Yesterday

Hello, I have bought many samsung products. I currently have a Samsung LCD TV, Samsung Galaxy S, Samsung laptop. I was just wondering if I could get a free Galaxy S3.

I have attached a picture of a dragon I just drew for you.

Have a great day!

 galaxys3.png



 **Samsung Canada** 5 hours ago

Hey Shane. Thanks for inquiring about scoring a free Galaxy S III. Unfortunately if we gave a free S III to everyone who asked, we'd probably be out before they ever went on sale, and we'd go under as a company. That being said, your drawing of the dragon is epic, so we're returning the favour. Please find attached a drawing of a kangaroo on a unicycle.

 SMemo_14.jpg



At first, Samsung responded with a creative and light-hearted denial: a drawing of a Kangaroo on a unicycle. As a result, the request went viral, and Samsung Canada not only sent Shane the phone, but customized it with his artistic creation:



Another great example is the sense of humor displayed by Smart USA. A Twitter user, taking a crack at the size of a Smart Car, made a joke that a bird dropping would total the compact vehicle. In response, Smart USA figured out exactly how many bird droppings it would take to render one of their cars dysfunctional:



Clayton Hove @Adtothebone

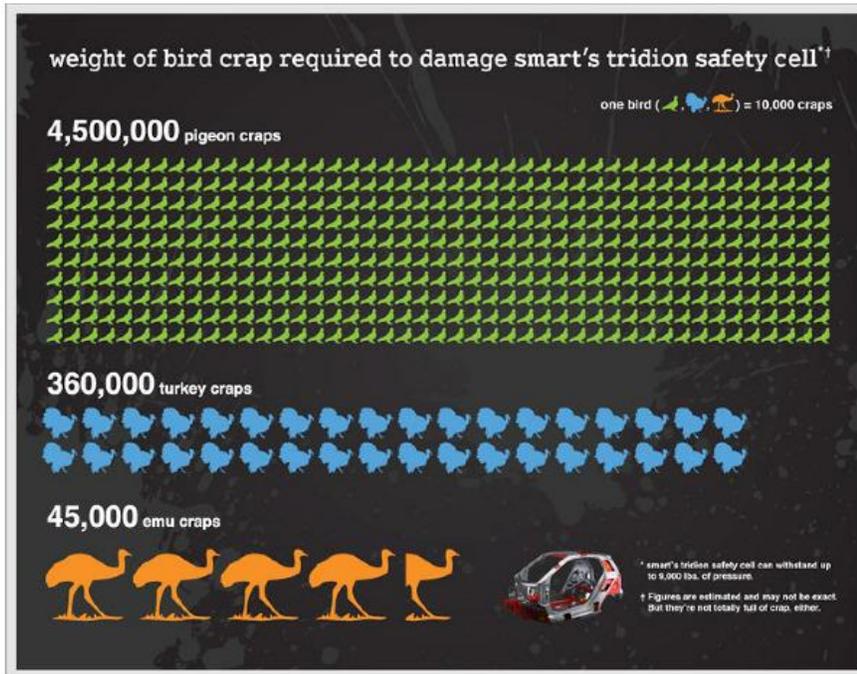
1 day ago

Saw a bird had crapped on a Smart Car. Totaled it.



Official smart USA
@smartcarusa

Couldn't have been one bird, @adtothebone. Sounds more like 4.5 million. (Seriously, we did the math.)



Social media customer care is an art form that takes commitment and creativity. Luckily, you can use the pro tips above to help your team master it. What's essential is to keep an eye on your customers, your competitors, and to have fun! The pros stay active on social media, and see it as important as any other customer service channel — and so should you. Reach out to your customers promptly, offer solutions, and find ways to go above and beyond for your followers. Remember, social care is mandatory for brands that want to flourish for years to come.

Don't Try This at Work: 15 Bad Social Media Business Examples to Avoid at All Costs

Social media is a modern day holy grail for businesses: should your company achieve a successful social media strategy, the promise is happiness (for you and your customers), abundance (of engagement and incoming cash flow), and longevity (of your corporation... social media is, after all, a major driver of what keeps businesses relevant nowadays).

Although social media isn't quite as mythicized as it was in its youth, companies that haven't already done so are flocking to sign up for this golden communication and marketing opportunity. As of last year, at least [86% of Fortune 500 companies](#) have an active Twitter account, and more than [50 million small businesses](#) use Facebook to connect with consumers.

As true as the legends may be (yes, social media can [win you fans and boost customer loyalty](#)), social media customer service isn't always sunshine and rainbows. Unfortunately for business owners, the path to social media success is riddled with potential disaster. If your company is to succeed — and thrive — on social media, there are a lot of social media mistakes that you need to avoid.

Today, Instagram is 7 years old. Twitter is 11 years old. Facebook is 13 years old, and LinkedIn is almost 15 (not to mention the sites that came before these, like Myspace and blogs that started as early as the late 90's). The point is that businesses have been a part of the dialogue for long enough that nowadays we have a pretty clear idea of what to avoid in social media.

This section is a compilation of the worst social media customer service and marketing practices, that every successful business needs to avoid. We've included some real-life examples of companies that have already made these mistakes, so that you don't have to.

1. Have Customers Switch Channels

I know, we're starting out with something that doesn't seem too dramatic. This social media customer service sin isn't as obvious of a faux pas as some of our next examples. However, it is worth mentioning because (A) it is all too rampant in social media customer service and (B) it is a complete nuisance.

Companies on social media often use their accounts primarily for marketing purposes, without understanding that a good marketing strategy also includes a quality customer service approach.

This sort of strategy leads to a [single department](#) running the social media show, which means that social media agents aren't empowered or even knowledgeable enough to help customers with their issues online.

The result is companies asking customers to switch channels and reach out instead by phone, email, or even by switching from one social media platform (such as Facebook) to the another instead (such as Twitter). This clogs customer service channels, wastes customers' and agents' time, and is frustrating for everyone involved.

 **Charles Richards** @C_Richards97 · Jun 9 ▼
@OldSpice your new body wash gave me a rash. What do we do about this?

 1   

 **Old Spice**  Follow ▼
@OldSpice

Replying to @C_Richards97

So sorry this has happened. Please call us @
@ 800-677-7582 so we can make it right.

5:31 AM - 12 Jun 2017

 1   



 **Charles Richards** @C_Richards97 · Jun 12 ▼
Replying to @OldSpice
I was on hold for half an hour after calling this number. Can someone just contact me?

Takeaway: Channel switching is terrible and should be avoided.

Prevention Tip: Empower your agents to troubleshoot online, and to meet your customers where they are. Should you have to switch channels to take care of sensitive information, DM your customer and ask them for (A) their phone number and (B) what time they can be reached. Schedule the call according to what works for them – don't deflect towards customer service (there's a reason they reached out via social media instead of calling in the first place!).

2. Siloed Accounts

While acceptable in some situations (such as if you multiple Twitter accounts to serve customers in different countries), siloing social media accounts [limits the range of interactions](#) between company and customers. Having different accounts for different departments forces customers to learn company hierarchies when all they really want to do is have their issue solved. This can be very confusing and even discouraging to customers who are looking for help.

Having different social media accounts for different operations reflects the organization's needs, not the customer's. It also poses the problem of greater resources being provided to specific care accounts than to the overall corporate Twitter accounts.

If you want to catch a glimpse of just how inefficient siloing social media accounts is, take a look at American Express' Twitter, where response after response is dedicated to connecting users with a different account, @AskAmex, since their main account isn't able to help the customers then and there.



American Express ✓ @AmericanExpress · 8h

Replying to @1703_teresa

Bringing @AskAmex into the conversation to see if they can help look into this. ^E



American Express ✓ @AmericanExpress · 8h

Replying to @jennamarie5613

Sorry to hear this. Connecting you with our social servicing team @AskAmex to see if they can help. ^E



American Express ✓ @AmericanExpress · 8h

Replying to @jim_shoo

Looping in @AskAmex to see if they can help answer your question. ^E



American Express ✓ @AmericanExpress · 9h

Replying to @rolandkwong

hi, connecting you to @AskAmex for assistance with your question. ^A



Takeaway: Only use two social media accounts on the same channel if they are both going to have an equal level of customer service, and both be helpful. Don't ask the customer to contact your support Twitter if they reach out to your company's general Twitter – that's inconvenient to the customer and a waste of time for your teams.

Prevention Tip: Have one social media account per social media platform with shared ownership. That way customers won't get lost in a sea of support options, and will know where to come for whatever they need – information from the marketing team or customer support.

3. Censor Followers

Two things that don't do well together are corporate social media use and censorship. Censoring followers could escalate an otherwise small issue, and cause customers to accuse your brand of not wanting to hear negative comments.

Worse, as [several recent lawsuits](#) have shown, it could even result in legal repercussions — that is, if you are a U.S. politician.



Politicians are, in many ways, their own brand. Because their social media pages are considered a public forum (and in Trump's case, tweets are ['official' White House statements](#)) followers

whose opinions have been censored via blocking or erasure have decried the act a [violation of the freedom of speech](#), and have not gone out without a fight.

Blocking negative feedback is also a way of showing your customers that you can't take the heat. One example of this is when [Hardee's blocked Wendy's](#) for a snide comeback that Wendy's made to the competitor fast food chain.



The screenshot shows a Twitter thread with four tweets. The first tweet is from Wendy's (@Wendys) dated Apr 10, with 9 replies, 87 retweets, and 406 likes. The second tweet is from Hardee's (@Hardees) dated Apr 10, with 4 replies, 70 retweets, and 125 likes. The third tweet is from Wendy's (@Wendys) dated Apr 10, with 23 replies, 436 retweets, and 1.3K likes. The fourth tweet is from Wendy's (@Wendys) with a 'Follow' button. A red vertical line on the left side of the tweets indicates a conversation thread.

Wendy's @Wendys · Apr 10
We usually prefer the original to a knock off, but hey, you do you.
9 replies 87 retweets 406 likes

Hardee's @Hardees · Apr 10
Just because you were first doesn't mean you're best.
4 replies 70 retweets 125 likes

Wendy's @Wendys · Apr 10
Tell us the fourth person to walk on the moon without googling it.
23 replies 436 retweets 1.3K likes

Wendy's @Wendys
Follow

Replying to @Wendys @Hardees and 2 others

lol They blocked us.

The internet was quick to praise Wendy's, and Hardee's use of censorship sealed its fate as the chain that just couldn't keep up.

Takeaway: *There's always going to be a customer who disagrees with you, or who maybe even offends you. Keep cool in these situations, and avoid censorship when possible.*

Prevention Tip: *Create a social media policy that clearly states the rules for engaging on your page. Save deletions for use as a last resort, when that policy is violated and harmful users need to be banned. If you use this policy – put the customer's needs, not your ego first, and ban users that are spreading content that could be offensive or hurtful to your customers (obscene or discriminatory comments, threats against individuals, abusive language, etc).*

4. Insult Customers

It's no secret that placing people behind a screen can encourage their inner trolls to come out. As [clinical psychiatrist Alan Manevitz, M.D.](#), puts it, "There's a freedom of speech without a fear of consequences...There's no inhibition. It's like being drunk."

It's so easy for things to deteriorate when a customer insults you. Take the infamous example of the Boston-based restaurant, [Pigalle](#), where a customer left an unsavory review, and a nasty Facebook feud between customer and head chef began:



Sandy Tremblay

Really horrible pumpkin pie on Thanksgiving!! Wow. I don't have a clue as to why you would think that throwing pumpkin chunks into a cold pre baked pie shell and then covering it with a cream sauce that literally tasted like vomit. { I am very serious!} and topping it off with whipped cream that was runny would in any way be something that can be called pumpkin pie? The whole meal was awful and the one thing thought would be a good ending was the worst part of it all. Spent 200.00 and will never be back. Thanks for ruing my Thanksgiving! I would of rather gave the money to the homeless person outside your front door that waste it on that crappy food. Merry Christmas!

]

Like · Comment · 15 hours ago near Nashua, NH



Pigalle Boston hey sandy , go f***k your self! if you have any questions on how to proceed

9 hours ago · Like



Pigalle Boston please call me at 617 680 3390

9 hours ago · Like



Pigalle Boston marc

9 hours ago · Like



Pigalle Boston you must enjoy vomit you b***h if you know how much it tastes like

9 hours ago · Like



Pigalle Boston secondly, if you had any clue about eating out, or balls, you would of informed your server you were unhappy with some thing, while at the restaurant , not on face book.....again f***k you, dont come back

9 hours ago · Like

This kind of social media nightmare is liable to motivate customers to unfollow you—and never do business with you again.

Takeaway: *Your ego isn't worth insulting and alienating your customers.*

Prevention Tip: *Before you respond to a negative comment, take a deep breath. Is what you are saying professional? Does it help the customer? Or are you just trying to take a jab at them?*

5. Engage with Everyone

Social media users don't want brands to chime into every conversation. While it's great to engage with customers who are explicitly looking for engagement (or who are tagging you as a part of their conversation), many users think that social listening is creepy. In fact, 32% of consumers [have no idea](#) that brands are listening online.

Not sure when to engage? According to a [consumer study](#), 64% of customers say companies should respond only if they're being directly addressed. 58% feel that companies should only respond to complaints. 48% say companies should listen only to improve products and services. 42% expect companies to respond to positive comments (these individuals want companies to join their conversation if they are saying nice things about them).

Takeaway: *Sound contradictory? That's because it is. Customers want companies to intuit when to respond and when not to.*

Prevention Tip: *When in doubt, speak when spoken to. Engage only when the context of the conversation allows for a smooth, natural, not-creepy engagement.*

6. Misuse Canned Responses

It isn't hard to miss the mark when it comes to canned responses, especially if you aren't reading all of what your customers wrote, or taking time to understand what they have to say.

One Twitter user pointed out how American Airlines messed up their canned messages by failing to do just that:



The screenshot shows a tweet by Ross Sheingold (@RossSheingold) from 9 minutes ago. The tweet reads: "It's funny that @AmericanAir is responding to every tweet coming their way. Especially when this happens: yfrog.com/od71yxp". Below the tweet, it says "Retweeted by Ian Schafer" and provides interaction options: "Hide photo", "Reply", "Retweet", "Favorite", and "More".

The thread continues with a response from AmericanAir (@AmericanAir) 1 hour ago: "Thanks for your support! We look forward to a bright future as the #newAmerican. bit.ly/ARRIVING".

Below that is a reply from murphmarkd (@murphmarkd) 2 hours ago: "Congrats to @americanair and @usairways on creating the largest, shittiest airline in the world.".

At the bottom of the thread, there is a YFrog logo and a "Flag this media" link. Below the thread, there are statistics: "6 RETWEETS" and "2 FAVORITES", followed by a row of profile pictures of users who interacted. The tweet is timestamped "9:03 AM - 14 Feb 13" and has a "Details" link.

Whoever responded to this comment on behalf of American Airlines failed to read beyond the first line. As a result, they mistook the "Congrats" for genuine congratulations, and used a canned message that was not suited for the user's sarcasm.

Takeaway: Canned messages can be helpful if they are used right, look bad if not.

Prevention Tip: Read what you are responding to fully before using a canned message.

While quick responses are great, it's more important that your responses be appropriate.

Remember that it's always better to get it right the first time than it is to have to go back and do damage control!

7. Post Misleading or Inaccurate Company Information

Over the summer, credit reporting agency, Equifax, discovered that hackers had [gained access to sensitive information](#) on more than 40% of Americans. In an attempt to remedy the situation, the company set up a separate website where potential victims could check to see if they had been affected by the breach: www.equifaxsecurity2017.com.

One programmer noticed that this site had some obvious vulnerabilities, and created a fake site to highlight those problems. He called this site securityequifax2017.com. The fake site looked exactly like the old one, except that the headline read: "Cybersecurity Incident & Important Consumer Information Which is Totally Fake, Why Did Equifax Use a Domain That's So Easily Impersonated by Phishing Sites?"

Equifax's social media team also fell for the fake site, tweeting the wrong link at least four times to breach victims who were asking for assistance.



Nick Sweeting 
@thesquashSH

Follow

Not only did they tweet the wrong link, they tweeted it 3 times. #Equihax



10:54 AM - 20 Sep 2017

80 Retweets 131 Likes



Takeaway: *If you're going to tweet information to your customers, make sure that it's the right information.*

Prevention Tip: *Double check company information you send out. Don't forget to check for website misspellings.*

8. Make Uneducated Posts

Uneducated posts can hurt a company's reputation, and cause a backlash on social media. This is in part due to how easy it is for these types of slip-ups to go viral. Take for example, this post that Delta made during a world cup match between Ghana and the US:

Mashable ✓
@mashable Following

.@Delta's tweet celebrating Team USA's World Cup victory over Ghana has been called "racist." on.mash.to/1pD91h5

Delta ✓
@Delta Following

Congrats team #USA🇺🇸! Nice goal @clint_dempsey @soundersfc! #USAvGHA #USMNT #DeltaSEA pic.twitter.com/7C8iRzPzoa

Reply Retweet Favorite More

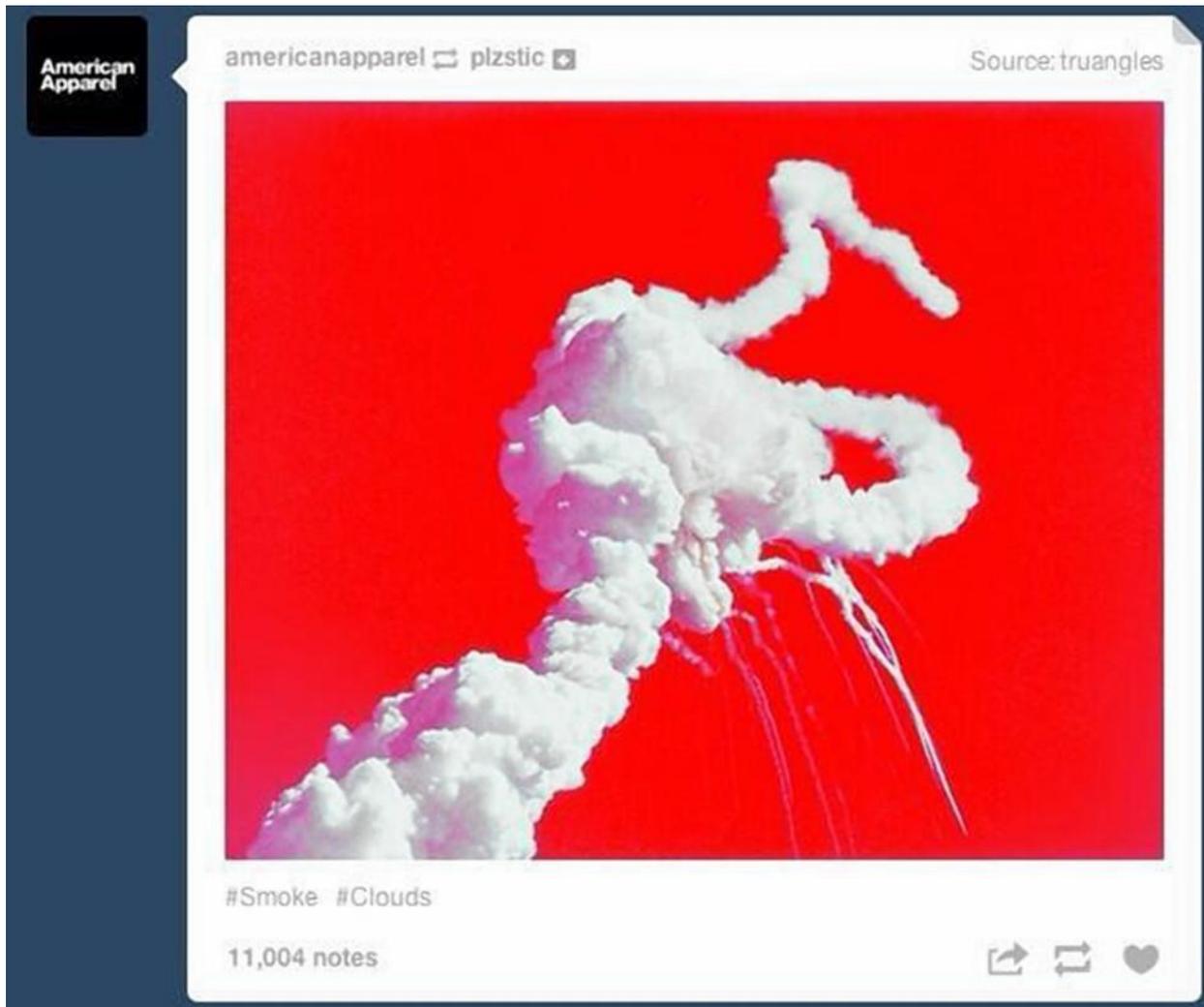
 

RETWEETS 618 FAVORITES 363

8:08 PM - 16 Jun 2014 Flag media

The problem with this tweet: there are no giraffes in Ghana. Twitter was quick to educate Delta, and generated a huge amount of bad press for the brand. As one news source put it: “[Delta Airlines is flying blind when it comes to geography.](#)”

Another example of an ignorant social media post is the time that American Apparel mistook a picture of the Space Shuttle Challenger exploding for fireworks.



The image, which was hashtagged with #smoke and #clouds, was [posted to the company's Tumblr](#), and was supposed to be an Independence Day post. This post, like Delta's, caused a substantial social media backlash, and showed the value of doing your homework before posting.

Takeaway: *Ignorance on social media isn't bliss.*

Prevention Tip: *If you aren't sure about something, research it before you post! Even if you think that you know something, it doesn't hurt to look it up anyway. When it comes to social media marketing, Google is your friend!*

9. Use Insensitive or Tone-Deaf Marketing

Not only do brands have to avoid insulting their customers in the comments, they also have to be wary of what they post on social media for marketing purposes. This means not running any marketing campaigns that could offend or alienate a large group of customers.

Unfortunately, there are numerous examples of insensitive social media marketing campaigns. Back in 2013 Home Depot apologized after posting a tweet that featured two African American men drumming with a monkey.



The Home Depot 
@HomeDepot



Which drummer is not like the others? See more @CollegeGameDay pics at hdgameday.com
#HDgameday #football



The tweet was deleted promptly, but that didn't stop it from circulating and upsetting hundreds of people.

In another, more recent example, Nivea posted a [tone-deaf deodorant ad](#) to its Middle Eastern Facebook page. The ad, which used the slogan "white is purity," was removed after 48 hours. In the time that it spent online, it was slammed for racism, and embraced by white supremacists, who began sharing it on social media. The CEO later apologized.



NIVEA

Mar 31 at 7:00pm • 🌐

Keep it clean, keep bright. Don't let anything ruin it,
#Invisible



👍 Like

💬 Comment

➦ Share

Takeaway: Gone are the days when companies could get away with Tone-Deaf and insensitive marketing. Your brand needs to create non-offensive content that empowers, rather than hurts, your audience.

Prevention Tip: Social media rightfully holds companies accountable for offensive advertisement. Before approving a social media marketing scheme, make sure that your marketing plan does not alienate anyone of a certain race, gender, sexuality, religion, country, etc. And if you aren't sure, ask someone who would know!



Travon Free 
@Travon

 Follow

Between Nivea's "white is purity" ad and Pepsi's "Black soda matters" ad I think it's time to open my "Ask A Black person" consulting firm.

3:02 PM - Apr 5, 2017

 326  5,502  20,302



10. Engage with the Wrong Hashtag

Brands like to be in on what's trending now, and using hashtags is a great way to do that. However, engaging with the wrong hashtag is another way to generate insensitive content that upsets customers.

One example of this is when DiGiorno accidentally made light of domestic violence by misusing the [#WhyIStayed](#) hashtag.



DiGiorno Pizza 
@DiGiornoPizza

#WhyIStayed You had pizza.

9/8/14, 11:11 PM



Keosha Varela @K_J_Writes 1h

So many courageous ppl sharing their stories re: #whyistayed and #whyileft. Domestic violence is often a hidden issue, bring it to light!



Adrienne Airhart @craydrienne 1h

I couldn't face the fact that I was a textbook statistic: if (step)daddy hurts you, so will hubby. #whyistayed



Scott Paul
@scottfpaul



Example of a brand using a trending topic without understanding the context #Advertising #SocialMedia #WhyIStayed

1:23 AM - Sep 9, 2014

 38  526  233

Following the incident, DiGiorno [apologized](#) one by one to each tweet that came their way (this was a great time to ditch the canned message and provide great, customized customer care).

Takeaway: *Be careful what you hashtag!*

Prevention Tip: *Before using a trending hashtag, take a look at what it's referencing. That will help you make sure you don't jump on any bandwagons you don't want to be on! Another tip is to start your own conversations, and develop your own hashtags to get customers talking.*

11. Shift Blame

Social media can be a great place for making corporate apologies. However, it's a terrible place for making bad apologies.

After the United Airlines incident when a passenger was [dragged bloodied off of a plane](#), United [dug the hole deeper](#) by issuing a poor apology to social media.



 **United** 
@united Follow 

United CEO response to United Express Flight 3411.

This is an upsetting event to all of us here at United. I apologize for having to re-accommodate these customers. Our team is moving with a sense of urgency to work with the authorities and conduct our own detailed review of what happened. We are also reaching out to this passenger to talk directly to him and further address and resolve this situation.

- Oscar Munoz, CEO, United Airlines

5:27 PM - 10 Apr 2017 from [Houston, TX](#)

21,005 Retweets 7,721 Likes 

 63K  21K  7.7K 

United's apology was deemed victim blaming (it shifted blame away from the organization and insinuated that the passenger may have been at fault), and sparked outrage amongst social media users.

Takeaway: *If you're going to use social media to make a public apology – and you should if it is ever necessary – make it a good one.*

Prevention Tip: *Show regret and apologize. Never blame others, and deal with the problem instead. Make the apology as human and heartfelt as possible so that your customers and audience will know that you mean it.*

12. Forget to Log Out of the Corporate Twitter

Accidentally posting a personal status in a corporate Twitter is an extremely common Twitter mistake, and is one that varies from harmless to less forgivable depending on the content of the personal post.

One of the most famous examples of someone posting in the wrong Twitter account is when an employee accidentally tweeted her plans for the night from the American Red Cross's Twitter.



American Red Cross
@RedCross



Ryan found two more 4 bottle
packs of Dogfish Head's Midas
Touch beer.... when we drink we
do it right **#gettngslizzerd**

Luckily the Red Cross engaged in a great social media recovery, and made light of the misplaced tweet with a funny post.



We've deleted the rogue tweet but rest assured the Red Cross is sober and we've confiscated the keys.

15 hours ago via [ÜberTwitter](#) ☆ Favorite ↻ Retweet ↩ Reply

Takeaway: *Those of us with access to a corporate social media account need to take care to make sure we aren't posting in the wrong account. This includes taking steps towards prevention, and having plan for handling this issue once it happens (such as a designated response team).*

Prevention Tip: *Use different browsers for different accounts. That way you are less likely to open the wrong account by mistake. You can also use different aps for different accounts, should you need mobile access to your corporate social media account (for example, try using the Twitter ap for your corporate account, and open Twitter in your phone browser for your personal account). Log out of the corporate social media account when you are done posting. This can help you avoid posting from the wrong account.*

13. Make Private Public

Maybe you've heard of [Old Man Tweets](#), a Twitter account that is supposedly an 81-year-old man who [thinks that Twitter is a search engine](#), and makes public posts that are supposed to be private Google searches.

While companies and business owners most likely won't make the same mistake as Norman N. (aka the old man), Twitter CFO proved that we still have to take care to not [accidentally post a private DM](#) on our public feed.



Takeaway: *The good news is that this hilariously cryptic tweet could have been a lot worse.*

Prevention Tip: *Double check what box you're typing in before you hit "send".*

14. Automate Carelessly

It might seem harmless to automate a congratulatory Tweet to your 1 millionth follower. Like canned messages, automated messages can save you time and can also be used to mark special metrics that you would otherwise have missed.

However, it wasn't so harmless for the New England Patriots. The New England Patriots' automatically thanked a user with a racist name, [retweeting the offensive Twitter handle](#) in the process.



New England Patriots

@Patriots



@IHATEN[REDACTED]SS Thanks for helping us become the first NFL team with 1 million followers! #1MillionPatriots

6:02 PM - 13 Nov 2014

1,511 RETWEETS 784 FAVORITES



If you need any more evidence that automating social media posts is something to be wary of, look no further than Microsoft's bot, TayTweets, who [turned into a pro-Hitler troll](#) after just 24 hours online.

Takeaway: Don't trust bots for reliable, non-offensive social media posts.

Prevention Tip: Submit all automatic tweets for approval before sending out. Strengthen Filters for automated tweets, so that you don't send any offensive content to your audience.

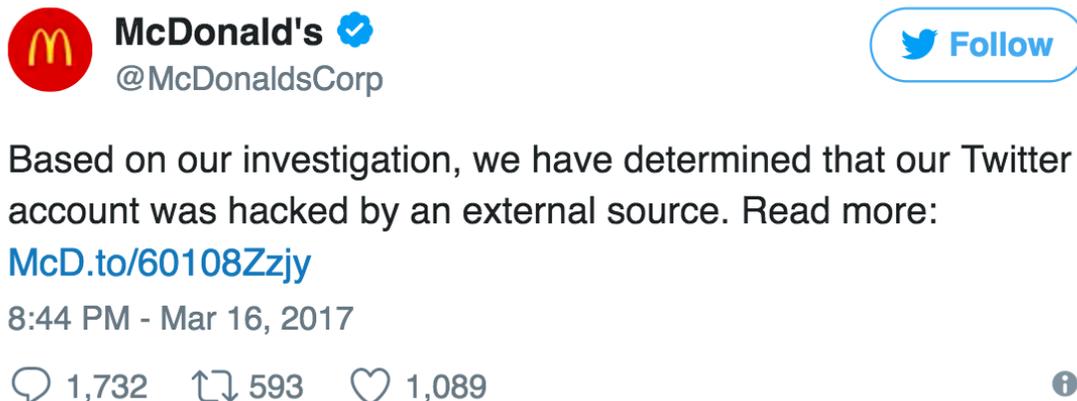
15. Forget to Watch out for Trolls, Hackers, and Rogue Employees

Trolls and hackers are a natural part of the social media landscape. Don't forget to pay attention to your social media page, so that you can delete any imposter posts.

One famous rogue social media post from this year was when McDonalds got political.



The tweet was up for a total of [20 minutes](#), before McDonalds took it down, citing an external hack.



Another example of online trolling that you need to watch out for are trolls in the comment section of sites such as Facebook. One user created a fake Facebook account and responded to customers before Target’s own social media team could, pretending to represent the company.



The screenshot shows a Facebook post from a user named Gary Plunk, who is identified as being associated with Target. The post is 15 minutes old and contains the following text: "I know this means little to Target , but I am tired of all this political correctness.. but after this latest move with signage I am going to do my best to not shop at your stores... I have already stopped shopping at walmart.. There are other stores to shop..". Below the post are interaction buttons for Like, Comment, and Share. Underneath, it shows that 3 people have liked the post, with the sort order set to "Most Relevant". A comment from a user named Ask ForHelp is visible, stating: "Actually Gary, you're wrong. It means NOTHING to us that you feel this way. Have a great day!". This comment has 4 likes and was posted 9 minutes ago. There are also input fields for writing a comment and a reply.

And lastly, sometimes the threat is internal, rather than external. HMV went viral after upset employees briefly took over the company’s Twitter during layoffs and began [live tweeting as they were being fired](#).



hmv 
 @hmvtweets

The Official hmv Twitter. The music, film, games and tech you love.
 #WeAreEntertainment
 UK · <http://www.hmv.com>

22,489 TWEETS 981 FOLLOWING 62,561 FOLLOWERS 

Tweets All / No replies

 **hmv** @hmvtweets 1m
 Just overheard our Marketing Director (he's staying, folks) ask "How do I shut down Twitter?" #hmvXFactorFiring
 Expand

 **hmv** @hmvtweets 14m
 Sorry we've been quiet for so long. Under contract, we've been unable to say a word, or -more importantly - tell the truth #hmvXFactorFiring
 Expand

 **hmv** @hmvtweets 15m
 There are over 60 of us being fired at once! Mass execution, of loyal employees who love the brand. #hmvXFactorFiring
 Expand

 **hmv** @hmvtweets 16m
 We're tweeting live from HR where we're all being fired! Exciting!! #hmvXFactorFiring
 Expand

 **hmv** @hmvtweets 14 Jan
 With our #hmvBlueCross Sale underway, who took advantage of the 25% off 1000s of products? What did you pick up?
pic.twitter.com/Dm0M5LqK
 View photo

Takeaway: *Stay vigilant for any unapproved activity on your social media platforms.*

Prevention Tip: *In the event of an external hack, make sure that you change your passwords and investigate the origin of the hack, and the security of your system. Make sure that someone in management has access to your social media page, and that all password and login information are securely stored. Use management's information when adding recovery emails and security questions to social media accounts.*

All the mistakes that other companies have made on social media have something in common: they can help you learn what to avoid on social media. By using these worst practices as a list of “Do not’s,” you can guide your social media team towards what works and away from what doesn’t.

And, if one day you or your team makes one of these social media mistakes, don’t worry — mess-ups happen! The important part is catching them quickly, and taking the proper steps to prevent any social media mistakes from happening again.

Comm100's Social Media Integration

Manage Your Social Media Customer Service from Your Live Chat Dashboard

Running a new customer engagement channel doesn't have to be difficult. Integrate your Facebook pages and Twitter accounts within your live chat dashboard to allow your agents to handle social media queries with ease — available for free for all Enterprise shared server clients.

Better Workflows

Our integration allows you to implement a well-organized social media workflow which cuts down on the number of systems, screens and passwords that your agents have to handle, and gives you a clear view of the messages and replies being sent to and from your teams. It's cleaner and more efficient than working with Facebook and Twitter in their native applications.

Sort, Filter, Label & Prioritize

Facebook and Twitter are made for people, not businesses. They lack common tools needed to handle work within a team — for example the ability to assign cases to other agents, pend awaiting responses, or add notes visible within a back-end interface.

Our social media integration does all of these things — allowing you to sort, filter, label and prioritize cases, helping to make social media case work a breeze for you and your team.

Conversation History at Your Fingertips

It's not always easy to see the history of a conversation in Facebook or Twitter — different methods of getting in touch (e.g. wall post versus direct message) mean that it can be tough to see how a customer's contact has played out over time.

It's easy to see the history of a communication thread within our interface. And wrap-up notes can be added too, to help agents handle future queries from that customer in a more personalized, context-aware way.

Safe and Secure Login Information

Running social media through their native websites can be tricky for enterprises — agents need to share logins, keep record of different logins for different accounts, and spend time logging in and out of sites manually.

Not only does this waste time, but it's a security risk too — what would happen if an agent carelessly left login details lying around? With integrated social media, agents only need to use their single live chat login to access and respond to social media queries — no matter how many Facebook and Twitter accounts you handle.

Accessible Anytime, Anywhere

Your Facebook and Twitter pages are open for queries from customers 24/7, from any device. Because of this, your responsiveness to queries shouldn't be restricted to certain times or devices either.

Integrating social media within your live chat interface means that agents can access it anywhere, from any device — helping you meet the standard for exceptional customer responsiveness.

Set Up and Go

Once you've entered your account information into your dashboard, your Facebook and Twitter queries will be pulled into a special tab within your agents' interface. That's it — no more customization is required to get your social media channel up and running.

[Contact our sales team](#) to find out more!

About Comm100

Comm100 Network Corporation is an award-winning global provider of enterprise live chat solution. Comm100 Live Chat is used by thousands of businesses worldwide to support their website visitors in real time so as to increase conversions, boost customer satisfaction and lower operating costs. With "100% communication, 100% success" as the company motto, Comm100 is committed to ensuring that transitioning human-to-human interactions to real-life success stories is always possible in a digital world.

Customers



Accreditations



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