Get Social With Your Customers

How Social Media Has Impacted Customer Service

metaswitch

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The Value of Social Service

It wasn't long ago when the power of social media was often debated as more of a trend or phenomenon.

But think of all the people you know who haven't heard of Facebook, Instagram or Snapchat... Not surprisingly, it's not very many. Social media has become so embedded in our everyday lives, it's no wonder that many companies are also turning to social channels to promote themselves, gain fans and followers.

In return, customers are turning to these channels to seek out customer support. With social media being such a public platform, companies need to create a social media strategy for dealing with customers to stay competitive and maintain their image.

A recent study by Aberdeen Group1 found companies that embraced social media as part of their customer service strategy saw results in a variety of areas:

▲ **5.3%** increase in first contact resolution rates

▼ **5.3%** decrease in customer complaints

▲ **6.7%** increase in year-over-year revenue

In comparison companies who did not incorporate social media saw:

▼ **2.4%** decrease in first contact resolution rates

▲ **4.6%** increase in customer complaints

▼ **12.1%** decrease in year-over-year revenue

Social Media — A Two Way Conversation

The rise of social media has clearly impacted how we need to look at customer service. It's no longer good enough for a company to simply have a presence on social media. Customers are expecting social media to be part of their experience with you. Just like you use your personal social media accounts to connect with your friends, customers are looking to use these same channels to build their relationships with your company.

A 2013 study from J.D. Power and Associates surveyed more than 23,000 U.S. online consumers2 who had interacted with an organization's social media channels. Of these, two-thirds had used the businesses' social resources to receive customer service. By comparison, only one-third engaged with social marketing campaigns. A social media campaign that only focuses on marketing, rather than service, is limiting in terms of the potential for developing genuine client relationships.

Get Personal

Social media is all about making connections. And as impersonal as it may seem, it really is personal. We put up photos of our special moments, write our innermost thoughts and express our honest opinions. Social media channels are spaces where people create portraits of themselves and share what they want people to hear.

It's also the space where many people choose to inform others of their own positive or negative experiences.

Just one interaction with a company's products or services, good or bad, is enough to influence the opinion of tens, hundreds or even thousands of people they are connected to.

Developing a strong social customer support strategy is vital to curb any customer service disaster and for continuing positive customer relationships. Personalization is key in this realm for managing relationships in a space where customers can make even their "private" conversations public in the blink of an eye. When agents are available, addressing customers by their online name and noting the subject of their post automatically makes that customer feel valued and already heard. Everyone likes to feel unique. Social media spaces are not any different. In fact, it is these platforms where the need for feeling unique is heightened.

Manage Expectations

Not all companies can afford to have customer service agents monitoring their social media channels around the clock. If your agents are not available after hours, or if you have a higher than normal number of customers needing support, it's best to be honest in letting your customers know if/when they are receiving an automated message and when they can expect an answer.

Some customers will send requests or messages through social media that you will not be able to handle through the same channel. By outlining clear guidelines on what your social media channels can or cannot do at the very beginning, you will minimize the amount of potential customer frustration (for example, if you are not able to process payments through Facebook, orders through Instagram, etc.).

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To stay relevant, social media needs to be embraced as a platform for companies to connect with their customers.

By providing high-quality support through social media, businesses can drastically improve the chances that they'll see a greater amount of positive mentions and likes. Conversely, a subpar effort will turn off customers, and they'll already be in a prime position to share any negative experiences they've encountered with your company and your brand.

For more on how Metaswitch can help you improve customer experience or to schedule a demo, visit our website.