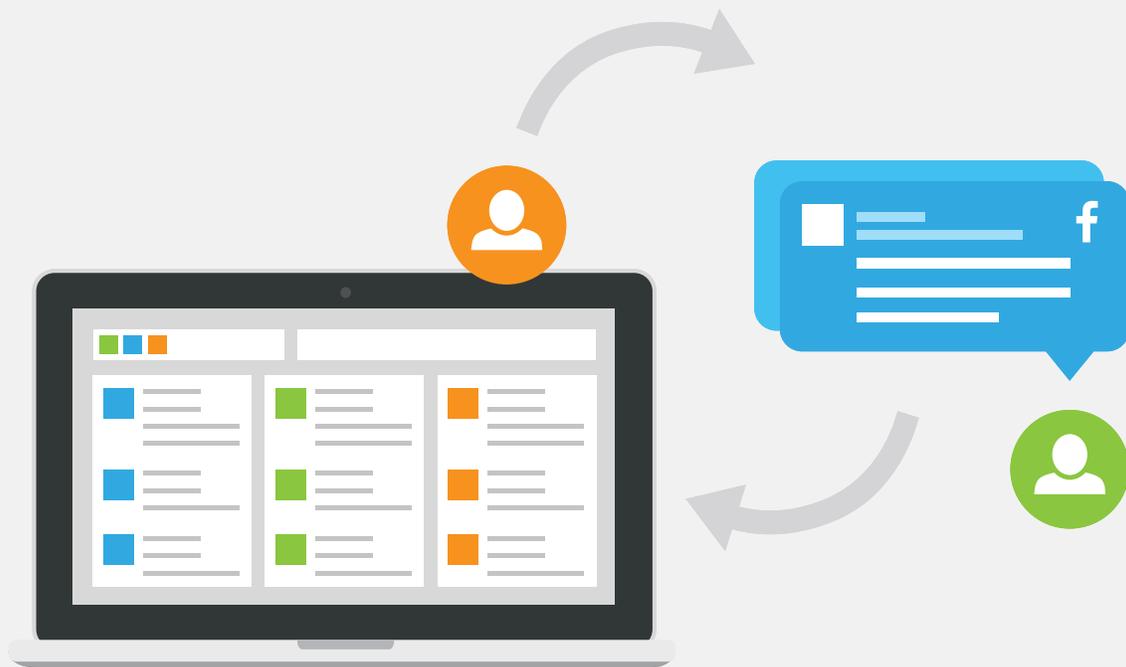


GUIDE

Social Customer Service

Using Social Media to Build a Loyal Customer Base



Guide to Social Customer Service

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The Evolution of Customer Service

Social media has redefined relationships between customers and brands. Consumers have a voice and they expect to be heard. What does this mean for brands today? It means more opportunities for conversations with customers, where and when they want to talk—the kinds of conversations that can help build relationships.

In this customer-centric environment, Customer Service departments are evolving from being a cost center that resolves problems to one that's aligned with an enterprise-wide shift towards customer experience. Simply put, a customer experience strategy is a plan to deliver consistent touch points across the entire customer journey, with the ultimate goal of building brand loyalty and increasing revenue. Through social media, Customer Service teams have the opportunity to play a stronger role in this evolution, while improving their own productivity and reducing costs.

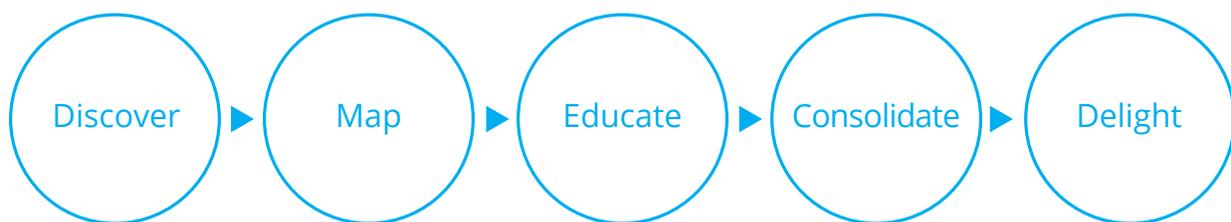
Integrate Social Media Into Your Customer Care Strategy

This guide will outline a five-step strategy to start delivering exceptional customer service on social media and integrating it across your enterprise:

1. Discover your social media footprint
2. Map your strategy and identify your metrics
3. Educate and empower your team
4. Consolidate your social strategy across the organization
5. Delight your customers with proactive engagement

The Age of the Customer: Where the most successful enterprises will reinvent themselves to systematically understand and serve increasingly powerful customers.

Source: Forrester Research



Step 1: Discover Your Social Media Footprint

One of the first steps towards integrating social media into your customer care strategy is surveying the current social landscape. Start by finding out where and how your business is currently engaging people by asking these questions:

- Which social networks is our company using?
- Have social media profiles been developed for each network?
- Which networks are being used most effectively? By which department(s)?
- Are those social media profiles consistent with our Customer Service team's approach?
- Are there any fraudulent or unauthorized social media accounts that are affecting us?

Auditing your company's overall social media presence will help you listen to what your customers are saying, find out where they are saying it, and figure out who is doing the talking. This will lay the important groundwork of determining goals and strategy that are centered around your customer.

It will also give you a good idea of the training and workflows that you will need to develop. For example, there is no point spending time and money developing a LinkedIn customer support strategy and then finding out that most of your customers expect to interact with you on Twitter.

Idea in Action

Conducting a manual audit of your company's social media presence can be difficult, consuming a great deal of time and resources. As part of its security services, Hootsuite offers a Social Media Asset Audit for full discovery and assessment of your social media footprint.

Hootsuite's Social Media Asset Audit helps:

- Identify unauthorized social media profiles and remove them from the web
- Create a map of all legitimate social profiles—along with the users that are allowed to post to those profiles—to establish a secure publishing environment
- Establish the security and compliance processes that will protect your brand from internal and external threats

Step 2: Map and Measure

Now that you have completed the discovery phase, you can start to plan your strategy and lay out the corresponding tactics:

- Set out your overall business goals. For example, is it to reduce costs, improve customer satisfaction, or increase revenue?
- Define the customer service objectives that support your overall business goals
- Determine the social customer service metrics that will measure your success

Start by mapping and aligning objectives to business goals. For example, if your primary goal is to increase customer satisfaction, then your social customer service objective may be to improve the customer experience by providing proactive, timely communication and solving customer issues faster through your social media channels. If your goal is to help increase corporate revenue, your social customer service

The average enterprise has more than 178 social media profiles.

Source: Altimeter Group

objective might be to boost sales by increasing customer retention and loyalty. However, if your goal is to reduce costs, your social customer service tactics may be to deflect high-cost touchpoints such as chat and email, and focus more on scalable channels such as social media.

Strategy	Objectives	KPIs
Increase customer satisfaction	Improve buyer journey	Relevant online content Problem resolution time
Increase revenue	Drive customer growth	Customer retention Customer loyalty
Reduce Costs	Reduce live assistance costs	Chat sessions Email inquires Phone support

Made to measure

Set out the metrics that you will use to identify and demonstrate social customer care success. Some to consider are:

- Time to first response
- Average handling time (overall and by representative)
- Percent of inquiries managed by social channels
- Cost savings on call deflection
- Changes in sentiment
- Changes in customer satisfaction
- Flush rate (mentions that are not relevant or that the Support team is unable to respond to)

Idea in Action



Having the ability to review, assess, and share social metrics that are geared to support business goals helps all business units and executive leaders see the value of a shared social engagement strategy. Hootsuite's command center gives businesses a master control to track online conversations across multiple social networks and monitor key metrics as they happen.

Social command centers are designed to provide actionable data that can ultimately drive business strategy. At the forefront of social innovation, eBay gets over 80,000 social media brand mentions per day, a volume that requires a serious social media strategy. They have a command center with two 50-inch and four 30-inch displays that include a tag cloud screen, a map, an influencer screen, share-of-voice vs. competitor metrics, and specific queues for customer support.

For consistency, the command center provides "a single source of truth among data sources." The data is shared across the enterprise, maintaining consistency in their customer service efforts and beyond. "Understand your KPIs and present them clearly so anyone at a glance can understand them," says John Bodine, Senior Manager, Social Content and Insights, eBay, Inc.

Step 3: Educate and empower your team

The next stage involves implementing best practices:

- Decide which social channels to start, continue, or stop engaging on
- Start social relationship platform training
- Adopt social media policies and guidelines
- Establish a consistent tone of voice

Where to start? There is no right or wrong answer on how to set up or differentiate social channels for customer service. For example, JetStar, one of the largest low-cost air carriers in the Asia Pacific, filters their Tweets from their regular handle (@JetStar) through teams and workflows. Others like Marketo, a leading marketing automation company from the Bay Area, have a dedicated customer service Twitter handle, in this case @MarketoCares. This helps them streamline workflow, track volume and sentiment of responses, and distinguish those metrics from marketing and brand awareness objectives.

Which team members are best at social? Who needs more training? It's important to select the right people for the right job, and train team members to deliver customer service in a new social environment. Many customer service leaders assume that this new social media function is best allocated to junior social-savvy employees. However, that's not always so. Companies often have better success with new social initiatives by assigning mature representatives who understand the brand and the voice, and who can work between departments.

Are the rules clear? If your organization doesn't already have a set of social media policies, this is the time to develop them. Set up a series of guidelines that are clear for the team, help drive customer satisfaction, and protect the company from mismanaged messages. For example, most companies avoid talking about financials or engaging in political discussions. To work properly, social customer service needs to be fast, channel-appropriate, and consistent.

Is the tone consistent? Social Customer Care teams not only need to know what to say, but how to say it. Automatic or scripted responses should be avoided, as today's socially savvy customer wants and expects a personal response. Team members who are responding on social media should be trained to use a calm, natural, conversational tone that is friendly and helpful. Other team members who are learning those specific communication skills can be assigned permissions that let them monitor and learn, while functioning as important coordinators and engagement facilitators in the team workflow.

Idea in Action

At Hootsuite, our social customer service mantra is "Be everywhere. Be available. Be helpful." We manage to do that with 9 million users who are actively engaged on multiple social channels. We have 21 customer advocates to manage those 9 million users, and our average response time is 26 minutes.

How do we do it? We focus on prioritizing and escalating interactions by triaging requests and routing them across multiple teams. Our customer advocates handle an average of 125,000 interactions per month, so efficiency is critical. Many of those requests are serviced by helpdesk articles, so having that content available, searchable, and accessible for teams is a key part of our strategy.

Need help educating your team? Hootsuite Enterprise offers customized education programs for platform, strategy, and policy training across your entire organization. These comprehensive programs are tailored to your company's needs and requirements. They are designed to give your team the skills they need to accelerate your social transformation, as well as deal with issues before they escalate.

Only 18% of companies state that their employees are aware of their social media policies and procedures.

Source: Altimeter Group

Step 4: Unify your social strategy across the organization

Harnessing the real power of social media for your organization requires a coordinated effort between departments. By bringing people together to collaborate and having an overall engagement strategy, you can start to move beyond providing better customer service towards building an excellent customer experience across all business divisions.

Next steps:

- Develop a triage process that designates responsibility for:
 - Monitoring comments, replies, and brand mentions on every social channel to ensure no comment is missed or answered inappropriately
 - Filtering, prioritizing, and escalating customer service issues to make sure issues are dealt with quickly and on the right channel (for example, a process is required to direct unhappy customers out of the public arena into an area that allows you to communicate in more than 140 characters, to promptly resolve the issue)
 - Proactively identifying customer feedback that is not directly communicated via official accounts (for example, passive mentions where users are not directly mentioning your company, or misspellings)
- Implement a shared social relationship platform and design handoffs between marketing, social media operators, customer service, and subject matter experts so that issues can be easily and routinely assigned for resolution
- Integrate communication channels so that customers can move seamlessly between social channels and private channels (such as email or telephone)

In other words, know your social customer and design a strategy that fits them. Give them what they want, when they want it: fast, sincere, honest responses on the channel they prefer with no runaround.

“The Jetstar Group is always looking to minimize costs to help us offer the lowest ticket prices to our customers. Thanks to Hootsuite, we managed to reduce our social customer care team’s workload, freeing up valuable time to share stories and increase our social customer engagement. Compared to the beginning of the year, we reduced our FTE [full-time equivalent] spend on social media by 30%.”

Ameel Khan, Social Media Manager, Jetstar Group

Collaborate, Integrate, and Scale Globally

Hootsuite Enterprise is designed to empower your entire organization to achieve your business goals:

- By collaborating across business divisions and enabling teams to connect smoothly and efficiently with customers, your customers get the answers they need from the right people in your organization.
- By integrating social media with the business applications and tools you already use, such as CRM, Marketing Automation, and Content Discovery, your productivity is accelerated. The Hootsuite App Directory offers more than 100 integrated applications.
- Designed to support global growth and expansion, Hootsuite enables geotargeted searches and posts to connect with communities around the world, enabling teams to engage in up to 15 languages.

Idea in Action

An innovative step that Marketo has taken to become a social enterprise is to closely integrate Hootsuite with the CRM software of Salesforce.com. The Salesforce app for Hootsuite arms the Customer Support team with the tools to immediately direct support cases to the appropriate team member. With a more efficient workflow from case creation to resolution, Marketo was able to simplify processes and improve customer satisfaction dramatically.

“The move toward a multichannel customer engagement center has seen the customer support organization achieve a customer satisfaction level of 93%.”

Kenneth Law, Customer Support Knowledge and Social Media Manager, Marketo

Step 5: Delight your customers

With an enterprise-wide social media engine running, it is possible to transform reactive customer service into stronger, more proactive service levels that keep customers happy and boost corporate revenues by:

- Proactively reaching out to your customers
- Helping develop them into brand advocates
- Sharing product updates and information to show they are cared for
- Acting as a resource beyond the products and services you sell

Monitoring social networks for keywords and brand mentions provides opportunities to engage with customers in unexpected ways and give them the little things that count. When managed with intelligent workflows and permissions, Social Customer Service teams can give customers the kind of meaningful, relevant messages that help build deeper, more connected relationships.

Forward-thinking organizations are using the data gained from engaging with their customers to measure results and gain insights that will optimize their core business strategies, moving customer service beyond the traditional complaint department into an innovative driver of improved service levels and revenue opportunities across the enterprise.

“We know that people go to social when they have questions, when they’re looking to book, and also when they have challenges. We not only look for all @brand mentions, but we also monitor and find non @brand mentions. Beyond the obvious spelling mistakes, we’ve even uncovered customer conversations and opportunities to connect by identifying keywords and phrases we weren’t aware of before, like ‘flight space centre.’”

Gregg Tilston, Global Social Media Leader, Flight Centre Travel Group

Idea in Action

Tracking and responding to customer issues is vital. To build a better customer experience you must first reach out on the social networks they prefer and secondly identify and solve problems that are present.

The Hootsuite Insights app monitors channels, uncovers trends, and provides actionable insights for social analytics and intelligence that transforms an organization’s productivity and innovation. Hootsuite Insights enables companies to get data from more than 100 million sources, filter results, and have immediate visual information on:

- influencer mentions
- spikes in sentiment
- location
- demographics
- trending topics

What does this mean for teams all across your organization? In a nutshell, it means harnessing social data to make better decisions in a customer-led economy: discovering trends and responding to them, finding new business opportunities, retaining more customers, and improving the company’s bottom line.

“An organization’s ability to learn, and translate that learning into action rapidly, is the ultimate competitive advantage.”

Jack Welch, former CEO of General Electric

Deliver game-changing social customer care

To learn more about how Hootsuite can transform your social customer service, request a demo and join 744 of the Fortune 1000 that already use Hootsuite. Visit us at enterprise.hootsuite.com.

About Hootsuite Enterprise

Partner with Hootsuite to accelerate your social transformation



Hootsuite is the most widely used platform for managing social media, loved by over 10 million people around the globe and trusted by more than 800 of the Fortune 1000. Hootsuite Enterprise empowers organizations to execute business strategies for the social media era and scale social media activities across multiple teams, departments, and regions. Our versatile platform supports a thriving ecosystem of social networks complemented by 200+ business applications and integrations, allowing organizations to extend social media into existing systems and programs.

Along with our channel and agency partners, we help organizations build deeper relationships with customers, stay connected to the needs of the market, grow revenue, and draw meaningful insights from social media data. Innovating since day one, we continue to help organizations pioneer the social media landscape and accelerate their success through product training, group training and tailored organizational training, as well as security and compliance services.

Request a custom demo today by visiting enterprise.hootsuite.com

Trusted by over 800 of the Fortune 1000

