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Another Social Computing Option for Product Development: OneDesk

March 21, 2012 By [Jim Brown](#) [Leave a Comment](#)



Think you have heard about all of the software vendors using **social computing and social media to help companies improve product development**? If you haven't heard of [OneDesk](#) then please add them to your list. I had the chance to talk with [Catherine Constantinides](#) and [Brendan Walsh](#) at OneDesk to get an update on their social business software applications. OneDesk is a unique company, and provides a **different suite of tools** than some of the other companies I have discussed in this area. Let's take a look.

What do they Do?

According to their website, "[OneDesk connects customers, employees and partners to your product and service development processes.](#)" You will get no argument from me on the value of that, gaining broader participation and feedback in product development is a winning proposition. You have heard me talk about [improving product development through social business collaboration](#), and that I believe the **use of social computing in product development and PLM is both valuable and inevitable**. Recently I have also discussed the introduction of a number of [cloud PLM solutions](#). OneDesk pulls a number of these aspects together, but in a unique way. OneDesk is not a traditional PLM system, or potentially a PLM system at all. You could possibly call it more of a **product management solution**. Regardless of what you call it, it has a lot of applicability to product development and product lifecycle management.

One of the reasons I find OneDesk unique is that it **focuses on the front end more than a PLM system**, but also provides **more execution capabilities than most "idea management" software**. In this way, it defies some of the traditional systems boundaries. In fact, there are two features that I find really compelling and unique that are not found in most innovation or PLM solutions:

- **Help desk / customer service** – Managing interactions with customers about products, including problem reports. This is a great source to learn about what customers want and need from products.
- **Social media monitoring** – Analyzing data from sources like Twitter, Facebook, and others to get feedback and insight from the social media universe. Even more interesting, to me at least, is that they allow companies to **not only monitor but also react to discussions** in social media.

Again, this may break down some of the traditional systems boundaries companies are used to, particularly in the physical goods space. It may be more common in software solutions, where customer interactions / trouble tickets are more tightly tied to development. It is a **very interesting and compelling way to incorporate voice of the customer (VOC)** into product plans.

OneDesk is also different from other innovation-focused systems because it goes further into the execution of the

ideas, including, project management and project issue tracking. While this is not entirely unique, it is **interesting to see such an integrated solution across the lifecycle of a product** (or service).

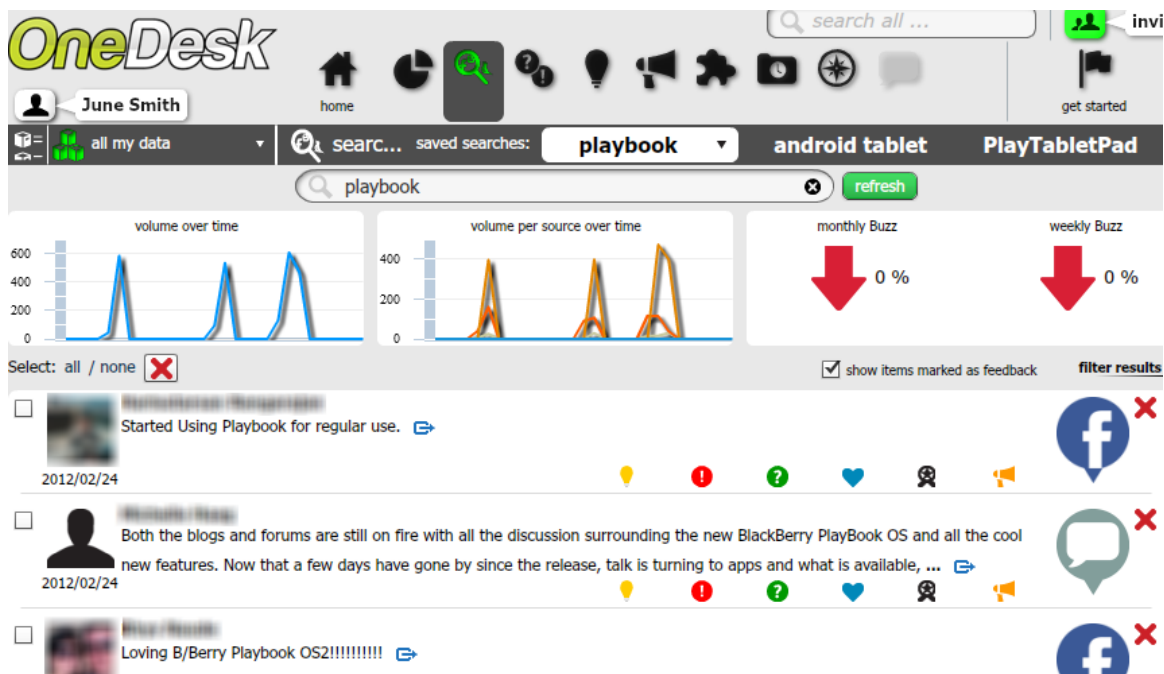
What do they Offer?

OneDesk is a social business platform, not surprisingly offered as a cloud-based solution. I was also told it can run on a private cloud if desired. They offer a very unique set of capabilities, combining the following into an integrated suite of products:

- Product Management
- Customer Service
- Requirements Management
- Social Media Monitoring
- Innovation/Idea Management
- Project Management

This is not PLM, nor is it intended to be. There are no data management capabilities, although they do allow attachments. In many ways the solution is **complementary to PLM and ALM solutions**, although for smaller organizations it may serve as their only solution.

Their use of social computing concepts is well done. They offer internal blogs, an activity stream, and discussions. And as I said before, they also provide the ability to reach out to **listen and react to activity in social media**. I am usually loathe to add software screenshots to my blog, but I did include a view into this because it is a new concept to some of my readers. This clearly crosses the boundaries from product development to product marketing, but linked together they also offer the opportunity to **close the loop back from customers back to product development and engineering**. It is an interesting approach, and one that companies may find hard to compare “apples to apples” with other solutions because the scope is relatively unique.



Who do they Work with?

OneDesk is targeting smaller businesses, but also has an enterprise offering. The solution is equally applicable to product-oriented companies as it is to service-oriented companies. Frankly, I think any company with products could benefit and should take a look to see how it fits with their needs and existing systems.

So that's what I hear from OneDesk, I hope you found it useful. What do you think? What else should I have asked them? How do they fit into the landscape of software solutions helping companies develop better products?

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