



Catherine Constantinides

[Posts](#) [Profile](#) [Comments](#) [Follow](#)

"Channeling" the social customer

Like it?

Posted April 19, 2012

0 comments

0

Keywords: [Social Customer](#)

0

0

0

0

To stay competitive in the delivery of products and services, organizations must provide every opportunity for customers to engage them, and that means *any and every* channel.

The social web is rapidly becoming the preferred approach, and organizations are making this a top priority in their customer relationship management strategy. However, we must acknowledge that in this day and age, the customer owns the conversation and ultimately decides when and how they want to connect with you. The new expectation that your company is available to the customer at any time and on multiple channels requires organizations to have an effective process of ongoing dialogue. Customers must be able to communicate with your organization through **various channels**, such as the social web (Facebook, Twitter, blogs, etc.), but also through company feedback portals, online help desk services, and more traditional email or phone methods.



How does your customer engagement strategy stack up?

Three factors combine to ensure a successful multi-channel customer engagement strategy: *Communication, responsiveness and involvement*. Here are some tips to help you evaluate the success of your current social customer initiatives:

1. Communication

Where do my customers live? There are real-time conversations happening right now related to your products and services. Therefore, it is critical to identify all of the various channels your customers use to voice their feedback, opinions and issues regarding your products and services. Whether they communicate through traditional mail, email, phone, online feedback forms, Twitter or Facebook, you need to be on those same channels, listening and interacting.

Am I asking the right questions? Remember, a conversation is a two-way communication that builds relationships between individuals. The dialogue you create through multi-channel customer engagement serves to enrich your company's insight into the markets it serves. More than just gathering data about customer needs, 'asking questions' means taking that extra step to clarify and elaborate upon the details of customer feedback, inquiries and requests for support. This information must then be directly funnelled into the development process, to ensure the creation of customer-driven products and services.

2. Responsiveness

Do I manage all customer requests efficiently? Once you have captured customer issues, problems and questions, what's next? One

of the important components of an effective online customer support strategy is to be able to respond to customer ideas, issues or requests in a timely manner. This ensures every customer feels valued, and that customer insight does not fall through the cracks.

3. Involvement

How involved are my customers in the development process? Customers expect you to listen and to actually do something about their issues and requests. You can significantly increase customer engagement levels by opening the lines of communication and keeping customers updated on the status and progress of their requests.

Without a doubt, the rise of the "connected social customer" has changed the process of development, particularly how we create and deliver products to market. Understanding the importance of customer communications, responsiveness and involvement will enable organizations to stay ahead of the competition, and secure a viable place in the marketplace. It should be your top priority to create a social strategy that puts the customer at the core, offers them many channels of communication, and uses the right tools to capture, respond to and integrate customer feedback into your business processes, especially in product development.

» [Login or register now to comment!](#)

Authored by:

Connect: [in](#) [f](#) [+](#)

Catherine Constantinides

Catherine's widely published articles and essays on product management and customer engagement take a uniquely social bent, with practical advice for product people.

[See complete profile](#)

Would you like to contribute to this site? [Get started](#) »