



## Connecting With Customers Through **SOCIAL MEDIA**

Social media has turned customer service delivery on its head over the past decade or so. Social networks represent not just another channel of communication, but a *public* channel of communication, which makes them very different from chat, email, SMS, and other channels.

The other big difference is that social networks are where customers live—and they live there all of the time thanks to their mobile devices. Connecting with customers through social media has become a business imperative, albeit an imperative without a precedent.

The following articles from Sparkcentral and Freshdesk offer two very different perspectives on delivering social customer service. Sparkcentral leads with a research-based assertion that high-effort, high-cost customer service might just be counterproductive, and concentrating on service speed might be a less expensive and more appreciated tactic to take. Freshdesk's recommendations include sage advice on evolving your customer service efforts to include social media as a platform of convenience.

When it comes to integrating business processes, including customer service, in a socially networked world, the rulebook certainly hasn't been written yet, but there is much to be learned from the successes and failures of companies who forged onward, ahead of the vast majority.

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## Delivering Effortless Customer Experiences with Social Media

Social media has marked the biggest disruption to customer service in the last 20 years. Until recently, customers were *accustomed* to simply calling, emailing or web-chatting their way to issue resolution, and mostly in the company's timeframe.

In 2016, the modern, mobile, socially-connected consumer is empowered to tweet, post, snap, tag and message their way to the front of the help queue, all while on hold with your call center and loading a webchat at the same time just to satisfy their impatience.

Brands today must find ways to meet customers where they are on any digital channel and match growing expectations for instantaneous issue resolution, with the least possible burden of effort on the customer. But what about delighting customers? Research suggests the long-held belief that delighted customers are loyal customers is likely a myth.

CEB Global found brands' perceptions about exceeding customer expectations or "delighting" customers and the reality are vastly different. While most brands invest in delighting customers to keep them happy, evidence is mounting that exceeding service expectations is largely overlooked by customers and not a key driver of loyalty. Not only does it not work but it also increases operating costs by 10-20%. CEB's analysis tells us customers who have high-effort service experiences report being more disloyal and spending less than those who have low-effort experiences. Conversely, customers who experience low-effort service are 94% more likely to repurchase, only 9% disloyal and just 1% likely to spread negative word of mouth.

The fact is even if you are hyper-focused on delighting customers but are making them jump through hoops to get help, you are at risk of losing that customer. If you aren't responding fast enough on social, if you can't solve your customer's issue on the same channel they contacted you on and if your customer has to repeat themselves,

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*"Focusing on customer delight is a bit like treating customers as if you'll never see them again. If you worry about delighting them in a particular moment in time, but aren't concerned about a long-term relationship, where does that leave you?"*

— Joellyn Sargent,  
Claravon Group

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your social customer service channel may be driving disloyalty.

So how do you actually plan for an organization that can provide effortless social customer service at enterprise scale? To do that, you need to understand what customer expectations are for service in general.

Forrester Research shows that customers will buy from someone else if a company cannot provide **quick** and **accurate** information to them. Specifically, research shows these customers don't just abandon a purchase but will intentionally buy from another brand. Another finding from Forrester is that most customers—more than 75%—rank **valuing their time** as the top factor in receiving good customer service.

This is important to remember when engaging customers on social, because unlike other channels that have been around for a long time, there are no explicit implied service level agreements with customers for how long they'll wait to get help. For some brands, responding within five minutes is a long time, but for others it might take as long as 6 hours — and that might be considered an acceptable response time in certain industries. Unfortunately customers don't see it that way. Customers are looking at their last best service experience from *anywhere* and comparing it to all others. This

means Uber is compared to Amazon and Zappos is compared to Delta and Arby's is compared to Apple. From a customer's perspective, all experiences are either good or bad, regardless of the industry. It's important that on social channels, your customers get fast responses *and are* connecting with real customer care agents who can answer their questions and solve their problems.

So, what elements are needed to operationalize low-effort experiences that value customers' time and stack up to the best in class service brands in the world? The first thing to consider is creating a service process for social and then getting the right tools in place to allow you to rapidly respond to inquiries without the need to deflect to a different service channel to fully resolve issues. Once these factors are in place, your organization should remember these three do's and don'ts for effortless social care:

1. Don't auto-respond with canned messages on social channels and make them go to your preferred channels for help
2. Do hire a skilled and knowledgeable social customer service team and trust them to deliver care in an unscripted environment
3. Don't let policies and processes based off phone channels dictate how you provide digital service ■

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### About Sparkcentral:

In an era of empowered, hyper-connected customers, Sparkcentral is the only CRM platform for enterprises that unifies social, mobile, cloud and contextual data to proactively deliver personalized and engaging customer experiences. Customer service teams use our software to efficiently handle large amounts of customer inquiries in a fast and structured manner. Sparkcentral's client roster includes Delta Air Lines, Netflix, Discover Financial, Uber, Western Union and T-Mobile. For more information, visit [www.sparkcentral.com](http://www.sparkcentral.com).



# Social Networks Are Evolving Into a Platform of Convenience

By Saurabh Arora, Director, Social Products at Freshdesk Inc. (@tanish2k)

Over the last decade, the social networks have evolved from apps connecting friends and family into a platform to deliver products and services to consumers.

Social networks started around weaving relationships and interests. In the next years, it transformed into a platform to include businesses, institutions, municipalities and communities into their social graph. We are now at the cusp of witnessing another shift where social networks are becoming into one-stop convenience platform to help users communicate and commerce with other services. Is your business evolving with the social network and it's users?



Relationships



Interests



Utilities

The consumers today are highly opinionated, spend most of their time on mobile devices and are always connected. Social media usage continues to increase amongst the consumers, making it the top internet activity, ahead of email, messaging and even games.

## 80% of daily active Twitter users are mobile

The potential for social networks to evolve into a platform of conveniences makes for an extremely valuable use case. Now consumers can order taxis, food from nearby local restaurants, pay bills with integrated payment options, shop from storefronts built right within the social networks.

### SOCIAL NETWORKS AS CUSTOMER SERVICE UTILITY

One of the foremost utility that both social networking giants (Facebook and Twitter) are now focussing on is customer service. In the past year alone, both platforms have made several changes to how businesses can deliver better support to its customers.

- Businesses now can easily switch from the public conversations on social media to private messages, to further **reduce friction in providing service and resolution.**
- Businesses can now express direct intent of providing support through their social accounts by displaying **Support Hours and Service Levels on responses.**
- Businesses can now take customer feedback after each service interactions through **native CSAT or NPS** forms within Twitter and Facebook. ■

### CHECKLIST TO EVOLVE YOUR BUSINESS WITH THE NEW WAVE OF CUSTOMER SERVICE ON SOCIAL

- Provide your agents with a unified customer service tool that allows to seamlessly move in and out of different customer service channels.
- Measure customer feedback (CSAT, NPS) metrics on both Twitter and Facebook.
- Setup response guidelines on service delivery, expected response time & resolution. Set expectations with your customers by communicating these through Facebook and Twitter profiles.
- Deliver consistent service and resolution on all channels including social.

### About Freshdesk

Freshdesk is a full-fledged cloud based customer support solution that offers everything a business needs to deliver exceptional support. The built-in social channel allows you to track your brand or competitors on social media, create routing workflows and engage with your social customers instantly. With Freshdesk's multi-channel capabilities, businesses can take calls, address support tickets, respond to emails and more — using a unified dashboard.

[www.freshdesk.com](http://www.freshdesk.com)

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