



EXPERT ARTICLE

Social Media... Would You Like Service With That?

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We've all seen the business & media headlines... Facebook and Twitter are taking over the world.

Digital agencies are rushing to help businesses and brands make sense of this new communication channel with new social media marketing and social media optimisation services springing up every day.

But if social media is about conversations and participation, just how do brands reach these huge audiences with their message, particularly when consumers don't want to be interrupted from their conversations?

While the media channels may have changed, basic business principles still apply. If you look after your customers and give great customer service they will be your biggest fans and the best source of referrals for new business.

By its conversational nature, social media is the perfect customer service tool... if it's used correctly.

I had a perfect example this week of customer service over social media gone wrong.

My company has recently started using a software-as-a-service accounting solution named saasu. The software is great and works well for a business of our size. Because we are new to using the software I needed some help in training and also integrating it with some of our other business systems.

I visited saasu's website looking for help and went to their Contact Us page. In addition to the standard email form and phone contact details there was a 'Social Media' contact option. "Post a tweet question using Twitter and get a chirpy answer!" it said.

Great I thought, I use twitter regularly and if they can answer my question publically on twitter maybe it will help other users of their software. So off to twitter I went and sent them the 'chirpy tweet' below.

"@saasu I need some help with consulting & training on sassu in Brisbane area. Can you recommend anyone or have someone contact me?"

2 days later I still had no reply.... hmmm.... maybe they didn't see it? So I retweeted.

Another 5 days pass and still no reply. By this time I had given up on getting a reply and took matters into my own hands, using Google to track down a consultant that could help with our training.

Then on the 6th day I received a phone call from someone at saasu. While I appreciated the personal contact I it was strange as I hadn't posted my phone number on twitter. Perhaps they looked up my customer record.

The saasu representative was very apologetic for taking so long to respond and suggested that the reason why it took so long was because I wasn't following them on twitter????? I don't get it????? "Post a tweet question using Twitter and get a chirpy answer!" was what their website said. It didn't say I had to follow them.

He offered to email me a list of consultants I could contact, but because I had already sorted it out on my own the opportunity had passed.

How could have this been handled better?

For starters, if you are going to embrace social media as a communication channel for your business then you had better have the tools in place to monitor it effectively and the resources in place to respond in a timely fashion.

Secondly, social media is about sharing and collaboration. If they had responded to my tweet with a link to a list of consultants or partners on their website, not only would it have answered my question but it could have helped existing or potential saasu customers looking for answers to the same question.

All's well that ends well, their software works well in my business and our training is happening on Monday. It is great they are embracing social media in a way and maybe my experience was just a few early adopter teething problems.

If you've had experiences of great, or not so great, customer service over social media, please let share it by commenting below.