

Social media platforms are now commonly part of the “marketing mix” for direct marketers and advertisers. As social media use becomes more widespread, it is increasingly viewed today as yet another delivery channel. There are distinct advantages to this approach. Using social media sites as a delivery platform for your marketing messages can be significantly less expensive than advertising buys, traditional public relations (PR), and tradeshows.

However, just as with any marketing or communication strategy, social media marketing takes sound management and control to reap the greatest benefits. Whether you are already using social media to market or you are a new entrant considering using social media, there are smart ways to implement it in true CRM and real-time fashion to get greater lift in marketing response rates and profitability.

The key is making it relevant, and that begins with a sound strategy. Consider thinking of Social CRM as a business strategy rather than just another delivery medium. It benefits the business by fostering engagement, participation, and interaction among customers, prospects, and partners in the way they want to interact with your company. It has a strong sense of immediacy and, when done right, high read and response rates. It begs to be made personal. It supports sales, marketing, and customer service processes. Despite its moving boundaries, there’s one absolute about Social CRM—it will be mandatory, not optional, for most businesses in the very near future. Analysts predict that analytical solutions and deeper integration with traditional CRM processes and social-network services like Facebook® and Twitter® will be the focus of social CRM R&D in 2011.¹

This brave new world demands coordination before collaboration. That’s why it’s important to include any social media tactics under the umbrella of CRM strategy.

Why?

The use of social media as a marketing channel is controversial. Will it delight customers, become more annoying than dinnertime phone calls, be ignored like direct mail and e-mail, or become regulated for marketing purposes? Some predict that through 2015, 75% of marketing organizations will view social media as simply another channel, annoying customers and failing to deliver significant value to the CMO’s strategy.² Social media marketing very well might be viewed that way, if done badly by business. But it doesn’t have to be that way. Enter Social CRM.

Are you ready to explore a CRM solution for your social CRM strategy?

Find out more at www.infor.com/solutions/crm/.

Five guidelines to Social CRM

Here are five key guidelines for making sure you’re prepared, so you can maximize the significant time investment in social media:

Take inventory. Assess what you are doing today in social media. Perhaps you are sniffing for positive or negative mentions of your business or customer experiences. As is growing more common, you may be managing a Social Servicing department. Or, maybe you have sidebar advertisements on the Facebook home pages or YouTube home pages. Whatever your existing tactics may be, begin with an analysis of their effectiveness today.

Strategize. Do some research, then brainstorm and strategize on what you might like to implement as new social media tactics. Our recommendation is to begin to include social media as delivery points for your marketing messages and to overlay a CRM-centric approach to your messaging via social media.

Set a goal. Define a purpose for your social CRM project based on what it can do to assist and engage customers and how it can improve a key business metric, such as reservation rates, inventory management, spend per visit, and cost-to-serve.

Don’t overdo it. Layer your new social media strategies and tactics onto your existing crosschannel marketing roadmap or calendar. Treat them as campaigns and include cross media rules so as not to oversaturate the customer with touches. Remember social media is an effective medium for customers to share their issues with the world, so you must be cognizant of having a touch strategy with maximum number of touches, rest periods, etc. Use your touches as you would a spice. Easy does it.

Find the right solution. To take your plan to the customized level, you must leverage some type of sophisticated realtimeoffer decisioning and delivery software that can manage the complexities of real-time offer arbitration and delivery simultaneously across multiple customer touchpoints. CRM solutions are designed for this and offer tools for managing touchpoints that include social media, like Facebook pages and Twitter® tweets.

¹ Gartner Inc., Michael Maoz, Jim Davies, Ed Thompson, Michael Dunne, Adam Sarner, “The Concise Social CRM Vendor Guide, 2011,” October 2010, p. 1.

² Gartner, Inc., Kimberly Collins, “Five Ways Social Media Will Revolutionize Marketing,” Aug. 15, 2011, p. 3.