

Social media customer care - a job for marketing or the call centre?

 By [Bruce von Maltitz](#)

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While most businesses today are employing some sort of social media strategy, many are still very slow to respond to customer support issues and complaints that come in through this channel...

This might be due to poor monitoring of social media conversations, or it could be due to a lack of clarity around whose responsibility it is to respond to these posts and when. And of course, not everyone is equipped to answer every enquiry. A marketer, for example is unlikely to have the technical expertise to help a customer with a complex problem, and a junior employee may not know how to respond to or escalate serious complaints.

As social media becomes the first port of call for an increasing number of consumers, it's important that businesses are able to respond effectively via this channel. The time is coming for customer care agents to play a greater role in social media management to ensure that all enquiries and complaints are dealt with quickly, by the best person for the job.

Social media isn't the responsibility of just one department

The conversations happening on social media vary hugely, and can include anything from reactions to company news, endorsements and referrals from happy customers, questions, and of course, complaints.



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Different skills are required for these different interactions. It would make sense that the marketing, PR or communications department deals with anything related to brand - or community-building, while the contact centre deals with support issues and complaints handling. In some cases, the accounts team could be brought in to answer enquiries related to billing.

For social media management to run smoothly across the business, it's important to get the team, processes and technology right.

The team

Setting expectations and performance metrics upfront will help people know what is expected of them - how they should prioritise responding to social media posts, how quickly a post should be answered and when they should escalate an issue - this will prevent the team (especially those members who already have heavy workloads) from feeling overwhelmed.

Finding a system to ensure good communication is vital if social media customer care is to be of consistently high quality

across the business.

The process

Take the time to map out a process for responses. Here are guiding questions to answer:

- Which team members are responsible for which category of posts?
- How are posts prioritised?
- How are they passed to the right people?
- Is there a time limit for responding?
- How is performance tracked across this new channel?
- Will you compare it to voice metrics?

Getting the tech right to support the team

The right technology tool can automate specific processes relevant to the needs of your contact centre. It can sort enquiries and put them into the correct queue or route them to the best agent. It can also measure how long it takes an agent to respond to the post, and how many interactions take place before an issue is resolved.

It's best to partner with a specialised call centre technology provider that understands your business needs and can assist in getting the technology right. This allows you to focus on your customer service and avoid the tech headaches. For more on integrating social media capabilities in the call centre, [read here](#).

ABOUT BRUCE VON MALTITZ

Bruce von Maltitz is currently the MD of 1Stream, a cloud-based contact centre technology provider. He has over 20 years experience in the service industry focusing specifically on contact centres for the last twelve years. He has a detailed understanding of how to design, build and operate contact centres having worked in the industry in SA, Africa and abroad.

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