

Should you integrate your social media capabilities with the call centre?

 By [Bruce von Maltitz](#)

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Customers are increasingly taking to social media to look for support or lodge complaints. Most businesses today understand this about customer behaviour, but many take a siloed approach to managing social media enquiries, giving the job to a community or social media manager who sits in the marketing department.

This makes perfect sense if you're using social media as a marketing tool. But as more complicated enquiries come in, these marketers often find that they are not equipped to handle this level of customer service enquiry.

And so the contact centre is having to deal with a new channel, one that, to date, it has not had much experience of.

Not that it takes a rocket scientist to understand social media - it's just another channel, like email or webchat after all. Rather, the problem is that, in most cases, call centre technology is not designed to handle all of these new channels. Prioritising enquiries, routing them to the best agent for the job and reporting on the quality of the agent's response becomes much more complicated when a number of channels are involved.

But social media is not going to go away. Those businesses that are able to embrace this 'addition' to the call centre will be seen as ahead of the curve, and their efforts will be appreciated by the growing number of social media-first consumers.

Three key areas of integration

There are three areas in particular where integrating social media with your call centre makes a lot of sense: prioritisation, routing and reporting.

Emails, chats and social media posts are often shoved into a general inbox, with no idea of content, complexity or urgency.

Integrating all of these channels will enable you to prioritise enquiries from all channels and route those enquiries to the best agents for each job.

Integrated, unified reporting will enable you to assess agent performance across all channels and compare performance metrics over different channels to identify any gaps. For example, you might find that some agents are very efficient via email and social media while others are better at voice - this might help you shape your contact centre strategy or encourage employees to learn from each other.

What next?

If your contact centre technology is already in the cloud, ask your provider what their plans are in this regard. You might find that they can already offer social media integration or that they are busy working on it as we speak.

If you have not moved your contact centre technology to the cloud, I would highly recommend that you look into doing so. One of the biggest benefits of cloud (aside from its lower cost and greater flexibility) is that users can get access to upgrades and new additions very quickly.

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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