

TAKING THE BRAND ONLINE TAKING CUSTOMER SERVICE ONLINE

John Jantsch | Duct Tape Marketing | April 27th, 2009



A funny thing happened on the way to social media tools like Twitter becoming so popular. More and more consumers started to find that one of the best ways to get help about how to use the products and services they had purchased was to ask other users who happened to be online. (People have done this for some time in forums, but social networks have a more open and public feel.)

Recently, brands of all shapes and sizes have taken note and are rushing to set-up help desk type of response on sites like Facebook and Twitter. It always makes sense to go where your prospects and engage them in the way they choose, but another, perhaps unexpected phenomenon is starting to develop due to this new practice.

Effectively, brands are moving their customer service into the public eye. Now, when a customer has a question or even a complaint, millions of viewers have access to when and how they handle the request.

This may make some organizations a little uneasy, but I think it offers an incredible opportunity.

First off, I think it makes the brands we interact with potentially more accountable to provide the kind of service and follow-up they promise.

But, and here's where I think the big opportunity lies, it also provides smart marketers with an incredible stage to demonstrate just how responsive, engaging, and effective their customer service is.

Millions of viewers, some of whom may not even be aware of your products, can literally lurk and watch how you really operate with your customers. The sales implications of this are enormous and reason enough in my opinion to explore using twitter for some portion of you customer service.

I know that not every customer is on Twitter or even wants to interact this way, but growing numbers are. I've experienced some very good customer service inside of Twitter, and it works for me.

If you think your brand could benefit by providing customer service on Twitter, there are enterprise tools for customer service interaction on twitter being built right into EPR and CRM tools but here are a few free tools that might make your job a little easier.

- [Tweetdeck](#): Tweetdeck can operate a bit like your desktop dashboard to help you set-up searches for key terms and respond directly.
- [Seismic desktop](#): Another desktop tool that offers lots of flexibility in terms of monitoring searches and groups.
- [HootSuite](#): Hootsuite does a number of things, but for support one of the biggest tools is the ability to manage multiple accounts so you can easily jump back and forth from your personal account to the brand support account.
- [Splitweet](#): Another pretty cool multiple Twitter account manager that also allows you to monitor your brand mentions and has a mac desktop client.
- [Tweet2tweet](#): This tool allows you to put two Twitter names in and see the full discussion between the two much like Facebook's wall to wall. This can help understand a thread of messages or give you a view of an ongoing support thread you're engaged in.

Image source: [Manchester Library](#)