

# Harnessing the Power of the Social Conversation

**It's more important than ever to listen to what is being said about our brands – and to act on what we hear.**

## **BPM Trends Series**

*This paper is one of a series, Capgemini BPM Trends, which shares insights into how to resolve today's most pressing business challenges using the latest Business Process Management tools and methodologies.*

**Social media is a big opportunity and an even bigger threat. If you want to survive, adapt and grow, it is time to start listening to the social media conversation, understanding what your customers are saying, filtering noise and harnessing the influence of the loyal. In short, you need to gather insight from these conversations, and turn that insight into action that works for your organization.**

## **Your brand needs to listen to the conversation – and join in**

The online world is talking about your brand at a rate that is already phenomenal, and is growing

exponentially. Millions of online resources are facilitating conversations between customers about products, not just on Facebook and Twitter, but also on the likes of Amazon and YouTube, and on thousands of blogs and review sites.

This social media conversation is happening now, and you have the chance to manage and enhance your reputation. If necessary, you can get up and defend what you know to be right. However, this opportunity is only open for the duration of the conversation your customer is having. Once that moment passes (as with any conversation) any critical

## Imagine a conversation about you that's taking place at work.

Some of your colleagues like what you've done with a recent project and others think you're just insufferable – even if they have only seen you once. Before you know it, you're having a meeting with your supervisor because you haven't "landed well"... And then you wake up in a cold sweat. This is what social media means for your brand. It's a conversation, and one that will be infinitely more beneficial for you if you're able to be part of it, spread your charm, and dispel negative propaganda and opinions with the truth about your brand.

comment made about your organization remains in the ether as a permanent testimony to misdeeds, real or imagined, that you might not even be aware of. Every such comment affects your reputation and brand equity.

Listening to these conversations is important for every part of your business – not just marketing. Social media represents the CMO's ultimate wish list come true:

- You can find out what people like about your product so you can keep doing it, and express your appreciation of their confidence in you.
- You can find out what they don't like about your product, so you can fix what's wrong.
- You can find out what people wish your product could do for them, and pass that information on to the product development team.

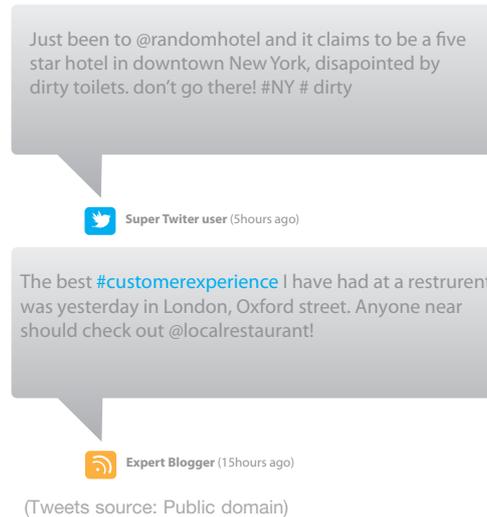
You can get all that information online now, provided you have the right approach and tools.

### Control has shifted

However, it is important to recognize first that control of the conversation no longer lies within your organization. It has shifted to your customers, individuals who:

- Are savvy and empowered
- Place their trust in peer recommendations and online experts
- Want to define for themselves how they receive messages from your organization, in terms of channel and location
- Have their own world view, including values, ethics and a need to be respected

Given this shift of control, and increasing individualization, all organizations need to be aware of the



threats posed to their businesses by ineffectual management of the social media channels as the examples in Figure 1 show.

Even ethical and socially responsible businesses have seen their brand equity eroded and their reputations tarnished as a result of online controversy. However, social media also brings with it immense and irreplaceable value, provided you can

get the crowd and conversation to work with you and not against you, as the next set of example shows (Figure 2).

The impact on all customer-facing organizations is undeniable. The upsurge of social media adds up to a digital transformation that could be the biggest opportunity to harness innovation since the industrial revolution. It is one that businesses must adapt to, or else face the possibility of extinction.

### Marketing activity versus holistic business process

Social listening, and the development of response and insight, do not just affect customer service or marketing. They require an end-to-end response from all areas of operation within a business.

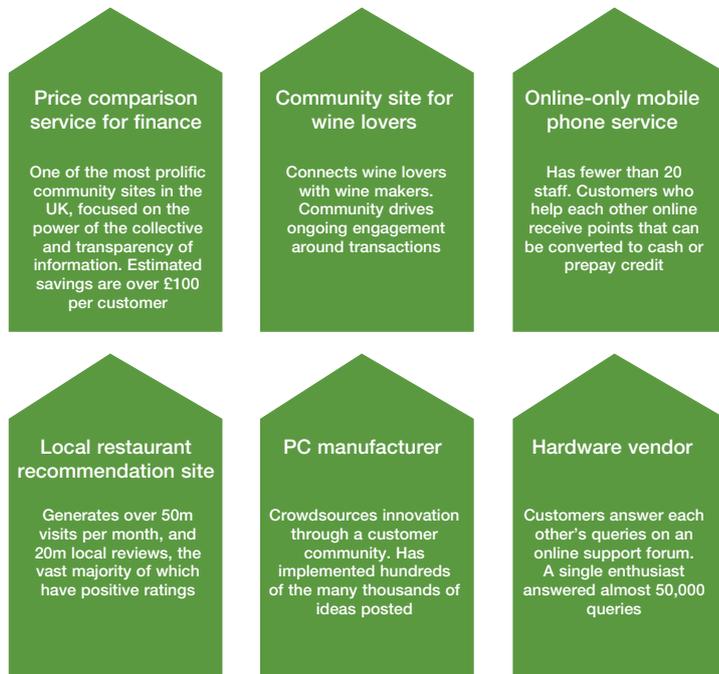
The rise of social media has broken the old marketing, sales and customer service model. Boundaries are being blurred and functions are starting

Figure 1. Ineffective management of social media channels – examples



Source: Capgemini, based on data in the public domain

Figure 2. Effective management of social media channels – examples



Source: Capgemini, based on data in the public domain

to merge as a result of the need to interact flexibly with the outside world.

As Figure 3 shows, it's not just marketing that can benefit from social media: virtually every activity within an organization can do so. Boundaries between the company and the outside world are also becoming blurred: you can now have an army of customers supplementing the activities of your marketing, sales and customer service departments.

**Five steps that turn social insight into organizational action**

Capgemini has developed a step-by-step guide, based on experience and best practice, to help you use social insight to get ahead of your competition. The five steps are:

**Step 1** – Create a community of influential customers who will become

Figure 3. "Social Insight into Action" across the entire organization



Source: Capgemini

your “unpaid workforce”: your most fervent cheerleaders in the crowd.

**Step 2** – Combine multiple layers and types of analysis of social media content (positive and negative) to ensure you have a complete view on which to base your actions.

**Step 3** – Enable smart, rapid decision-making by providing easy-to-understand data dashboards.

**Step 4** – Define your “to-be” customer experience, and then build your business rules and business process management around what customers want.

**Step 5** – Link your case management to your business processes so that you can respond quickly to issues emerging from your customers’ conversations.

### Conclusion

For organizations that are used to being in control of customer interactions, social media may look daunting. It’s clear, though, that digital transformation has already had an impact on our customers’ daily lives and is here to stay. In both the short and longer term, it is going to have an increasing effect on our organizational processes and structures.

Let’s embrace the opportunity to stop talking at our customers and start listening to what they’re telling us. For the first time, businesses can now respond to people as individuals rather than members of broad segments – something that will improve customer experience and bring competitive advantage. Ultimately, our ability to realize that opportunity depends on our listening skills.



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