



## Socializing CRM

The New Engagement Paradigm



# 1 Abstract

Consumer adoption of social media has rapidly shot up in recent years. Where businesses used to engage in one-way information dissemination with customers earlier, today, multi-way conversations, with or without the involvement of the business, between consumers are the norm. There now exist a category of super consumers, or influencers, who play a dis-proportionate role in the ecosystem given their large networks and online reputations. Current CRM approaches are incapable of capturing the various signals that are emanating from these multiple touch points and new stakeholders.

The need of the hour is for a social CRM approach that can effectively allow businesses to capture insights and manage the customer relationship successfully by leveraging the viral nature of the medium. However, companies will need to overcome challenges around control of message, identification of influencers and the need to actively engage with the customer community.

We believe businesses should take a structured approach to deploying social CRM, once they have determined the key takeaways that they need from such an approach. They should then ensure that they establish measurable baselines, while continuing to identify, engage and collaborate with influencers. And finally, it is imperative that businesses keep a close watch on how social activity is rapidly going mobile and the likely impact that it will have on experience management.

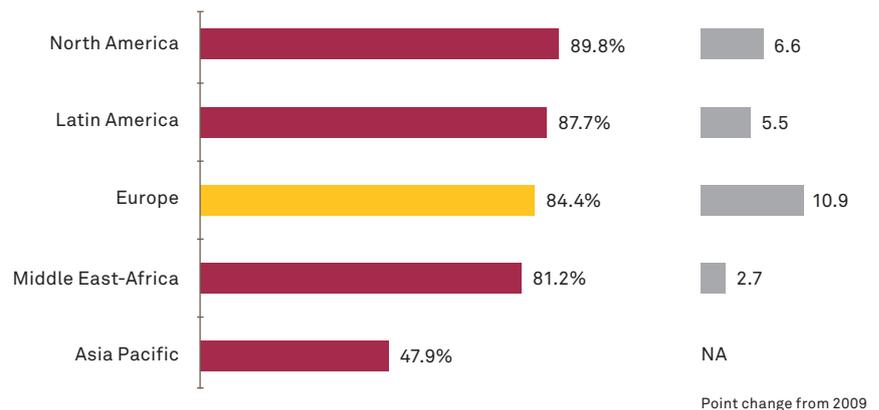
## 2 Emergence of Social Media

**One way information dissemination has given way to multi-way conversations with and amongst customers.**

Growing Internet penetration coupled with emergence of smart portable devices is leading to a rapid rise in usage of web-based services. Chief amongst such services has been the quick rise in popularity of social services that allow users to create online networks of their extended social circles. The convenience in connecting and sharing is encouraging both consumers and enterprises to adopt social media services.

Consumers have rapidly adopted social networking services. In Europe, social networking penetration at end of 2010 is estimated at over 84% (see Figure 1). Consumers are also engaging heavily with the medium, given the over 34% year-on-year increase in time spent on social networking sites<sup>1</sup>.

**Figure 1: Reach of Social Networking Sites by Region, Dec 2010**

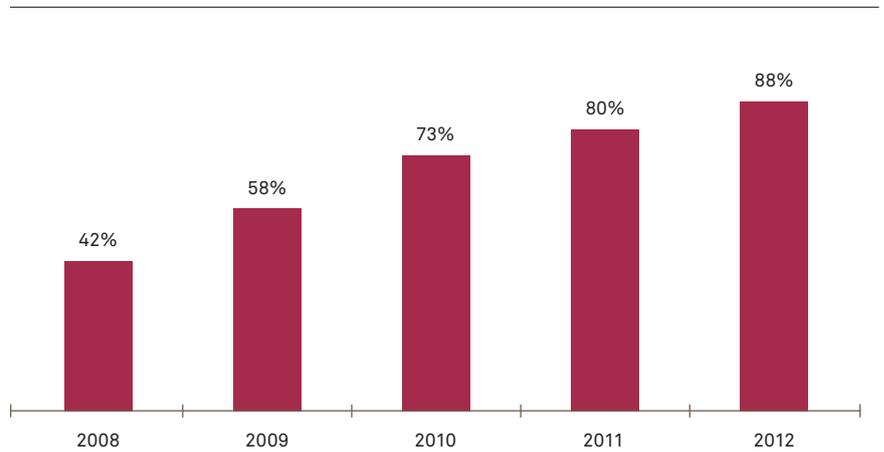


Source: Panel data from ComScore, "Europe Digital Year in Review 2010", Feb 2011

Enterprises too are realizing that increasingly they need to have a strong presence on such media if they are to actively engage with their current and prospective customers. Consequently, they have been taking early steps in creating their social presence online in the form of community pages or customer service desks. For instance, the number of Fortune 500 companies with an account on the rapidly growing social media platform, Twitter, grew from 35% in 2009 to over 60% in 2010. Most usage of the medium, though, is currently restricted to using social media tools for marketing goals (see Figure 2).

<sup>1</sup> ComScore, "Europe Digital Year in Review 2010", Feb 2011

**Figure 2: Percentage of Companies using Social Media Tools for Marketing Purposes, US, 2008-2012**



Source: eMarketer, 'How Many Marketers Are Using Social Media?', Dec 2010

In more recent days, the advent of mobile social media is having a profound impact on traditional customer interactions. Customers now have access to smart mobile devices that allow them to instantaneously share their experience with a business amongst their social networks. This combination of social media with mobile connectivity is adding to the increasing complications and subsequent implications for businesses.

In this paper we discuss factors leading to the emergence of the informed customer, the rise of influencers and their impact on the business-customer relationship. We also see how the arrival of such categories of customers is driving the creation of new social CRM<sup>2</sup> strategies. We conclude the paper with a set of actionable recommendations on how businesses can create a winning social CRM strategy.

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<sup>2</sup> Customer Relationship Management

## 3 Arrival of the Influencer

**There now exist a category of super consumers, or influencers, who wield and exercise significant control over the purchase process.**

In the emerging social ecosystem, a powerful army of grassroots ‘influencers’ has emerged. Equipped with above-average knowledge of the service / product, social esteem and extensive online social networks, these new categories of consumers are generating category demand, shaping brand perceptions and driving purchase decisions to a significant degree. Their preferred vehicles of communication are a proliferating number of blogs, message boards, wikis, and social networking platforms. In order to better understand the impact that such influencers have on consumers and businesses, it is imperative to first look at factors that have driven their growth.

### 3.1 Factors driving growth of influencers

- **Growing distrust of traditional marketing**

Consumers have grown increasingly cynical and distrusting of traditional marketers and the messages they communicate. Empowered by greater access to information, consumers have become information gatekeepers, filtering out the majority of marketing messages that are shepherded their way. With technology advancements enabling consumers to bypass or block a large percentage of irrelevant or low value messages, the power of traditional marketing clearly appears to be in demise. For instance, a recent survey indicated that over 62% of people polled in the UK held a deep rooted cynicism towards companies and felt that companies are only interested in selling products and services but not necessarily the product or service that is right for the consumer. The same survey found that as little as 5% of people trusted advertising<sup>3</sup>. On a related note, a different study revealed that in both the developed markets of US and UK, there has been a remarkable decline in trust placed in media in recent times<sup>4</sup>.

Presenting a potential solution, a different survey found that 70% of users trusted consumer opinions posted online, a number that is only below the percentage that believed in recommendations from known people<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Alterian, “Your Brand: At Risk or Ready for Growth”, 2010

<sup>4</sup> Edelman Trust Barometer, 2011

<sup>5</sup> Nielsen, “Global Advertising: Consumers Trust Real Friends and Virtual Strangers the Most”, Jul 2009

- **Rising means of aggregating word-of-mouth opinions**

Using social networks, consumers are able to connect with people they would probably never have otherwise met in real life and to create content, publish opinions and offer purchase recommendations online with considerable ease. For instance, websites such as Yelp and Trip Advisor help put consumers in touch with one another. Through rating and commenting mechanisms, they help consumers arrive at crowdsourced opinions. As the scale of such communities expands, the scale of influence will extend significantly.

- **Proliferation of influencer channels**

Businesses have recognized the proliferation of influencer channels and are now incorporating a variety of social aspects into their marketing efforts, encouraging consumer input, interaction and collaboration. For example, almost all ecommerce sites now have consumer reviews, comments and recommendation features; Amazon and eBay allow consumers to leave feedback on individual transactions from marketplace buyers. The proliferation of Influencer channels has created an environment of 'casual influence'. New services such as Blippy, that originally allowed consumers to create social networks based on goods and services purchased, are redefining the lengths of traditional user-business interaction<sup>6</sup>.

## **3.2 Role played by influencers**

While word-of-mouth influence has been traditionally restricted to the consumer's small circle of friends, family members and colleagues, the rise of digital platforms has significantly expanded the breadth and depth of the consumer's personal networks. Marketers are increasingly indentifying and reaching out to influencers in various market segments.

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<sup>6</sup>Telegraph, "Blippy: the social network based on credit card transactions", Dec 2009

A recent case-in-point is Unilever. The company wanted to launch a premium variant of Marmite, a yeast-extract breakfast spread in the UK. For doing so, the company created an exclusive club of what it identified as extreme Marmite lovers; those that consumed the product daily and in high-volume. The club members were then invited to events where their opinions were crowdsourced, and subsequently, more consumers competed to be part of the club, thereby creating a buzz around the product. Strong retail sales were reported at only 20% of the cost of a typical product launch<sup>7</sup>.

It is also important to bear in mind that influencers and their influence vary along the consumer decision process. For instance, a survey indicates that while anonymous peer reviews influenced only 34% of people polled during the awareness phase, their percentage grew to over 43% during the consideration and action phase<sup>8</sup>.

In order for businesses to address the impact of influencers, it becomes imperative that organizations recognize the fact that success in the social business environment requires a solid CRM foundation that can support the agility and flexibility that engaging with the social customer demands. In the next section, we look at what a social CRM approach looks like and some of the potential challenges that are involved in implementing it.

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<sup>7</sup>Word of Mouth Marketing Association

<sup>8</sup>Razorish, "Fluent: The Razorfish Social Influence Marketing Report", 2010

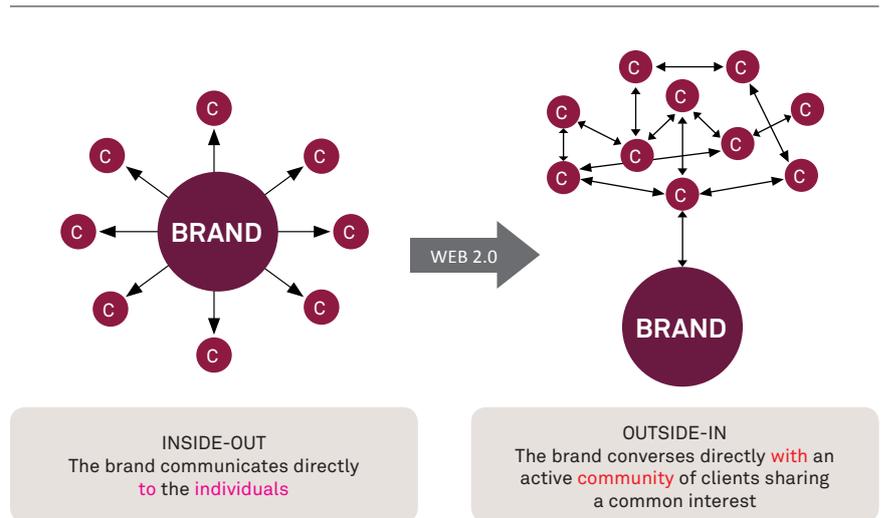
# 4 Shift from traditional to social CRM

Current CRM approaches are incapable of capturing the various signals that are emanating from multiple touch points and new stakeholders.

## 4.1 Defining Social CRM

Social CRM is the logical extension of traditional CRM solutions, where the focus shifts from managing customers to engaging continuously with them in a multi touch-point scenario. Traditional CRM solutions manage inside-out one-to-one relationships between companies and their customers. Such models leave little room for customer expression and feedback, which is a costly problem in an age of influencer-dominated social media. SCRMs outside-in model, however, encompasses relationships amongst fans and customers as well as the more traditional bonds formed between a business and its clients (see Figure 3).

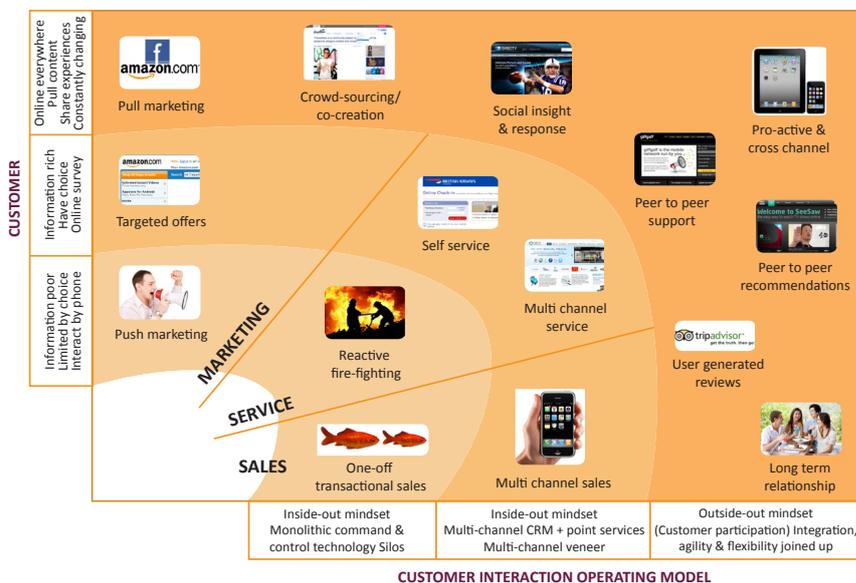
Figure 3: Difference between CRM and Social CRM



Source: Capgemini Analysis

In making the transition from CRM to SCRMs, companies need to undergo fundamental changes in how they approach the three key areas of marketing, sales and service moving from individual to group-based approaches, from reactive to proactive measures and from one-off transactions to long-term relationships (see Figure 4).

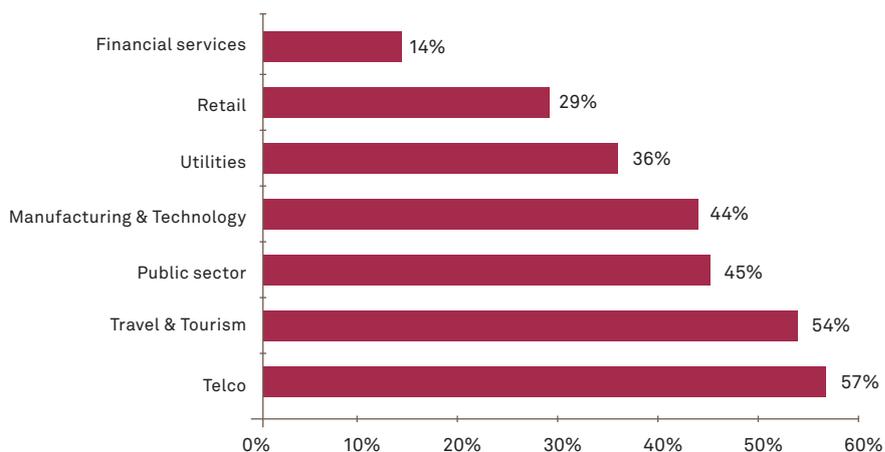
Figure 4: Evolution from CRM to SCRM



Source: Capgemini Analysis

Companies are already experimenting with social CRM solutions, however, their degree of adoption varies significantly by sector (see Figure 4).

Figure 5: Vertical Adoption of Social Media as a CRM Channel



Source: Ovum, "Profiting From Social Media in CRM Outsourcing", Feb 2011

By eavesdropping in and often participating in conversations where a company and its brands are the main topic of discussion, companies can recruit key influencers, such as customers and fans, interested in their wares into their operating models. However, such a move is not without the need for radical changes in the way a company approaches business. It becomes imperative to first understand the key sources of value for social media and how they are impacted.

## 4.2 Sources of value through social media

Companies that are able to successfully capture value through the embrace of social media are not those with great SCRM strategies, but those with great customer strategies. In order for a firm to succeed in the social media universe it has to first identify what its current customers, potential clients, and even possible detractors want and expect. Then it must determine how it can profitably deliver on the expectations, reserving SCRM as one of its tools. The rollout of an effective SCRM approach is almost by definition iterative because consumers control the conversation.

- **Create successful products with crowdsourcing**

Companies already have significant interaction with current and potential customers through their distribution channels. However, a lot of this interaction remains one-way. Social media's unique proposition is its ability to provide a means to both create an interaction at the brand level driving engagement, while helping drive innovations in product development.

A case in point for using crowdsourcing for driving engagement is coffee chain Starbucks. Starbucks has accomplished this by creating My Starbucks Idea, a micro site where their customers can post product ideas, comment on the suggestions, and vote for the best proposals. The system which encourages two-way communication and allows customers to follow the implementation of top-rated ideas has led to more than 100,000 submitted ideas in the three years of its launch to March 2011, of which over six hundred have been implemented<sup>9</sup>. While the percentage of actual product implementations might be low, it is pertinent to note that from the perspective of product engagement, the program has seen strong success, as witnessed by the large number of idea submissions.

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<sup>9</sup> Brand Autopsy, "Tough Love For Starbucks", Jan 2010

A good example of using crowdsourcing to innovate in product development comes from construction toy company Lego. The company provides downloadable design software that allows customers to design their own Lego and then purchase it through its Designbyme initiative<sup>10</sup>. This not only helps it in driving engagement, but also gives significant insights into customer trends.

By creating new products from a community, these companies successfully leveraged social media's ability to facilitate crowdsourcing, a clear benefit of a solid SCRM strategy. Allowing customers and fans to directly provide feedback on current products and propose new product ideas is not only an inexpensive approach to R&D but a strong way to build a stronger bond with clients.

- **Promote the brand using social media**

Companies need to smartly define what a brand stands for and then create a brand strategy that leverages the benefits and viral nature of social media. Automotive major Ford is a good case-in-point. The company gave 100 consumers that are already comfortable with social media, their Fiesta line of cars and asked them to complete a different mission each month. These missions were then documented on multiple social media sites including Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and Flickr. The impact of the campaign was both swift and strong. The brand had over 60% recognition even before it went into sale<sup>11</sup>. Fiesta got over 6.5 Mn YouTube views, and sold over 10,000 cars in the first six days of sales<sup>12</sup>.

- **Drive sales by engaging customer community**

A good customer strategy with a strong SCRM can bring customers and brand fans to the point where they are virtually employees of a company. When a business is able to integrate customers into its operating model by the thousands, SCRM can become a means by which companies can quickly and with relative ease improve sales figures.

A method that worked well for Domino's pizza was commission based sales for its fan network. The company created a tool that

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<sup>10</sup> Company website

<sup>11</sup> Fast Company Co Design, "Five Companies That Mastered Social Media's Branding Potential", Mar 2011

<sup>12</sup> BusinessWeek, "How Ford Got Social Marketing Right", Jan 2010

enables Facebook users to host Domino's ads. The tool is tied to an affiliate marketing program that pays a 0.5% commission every time someone clicks on the widget and places an order. The initiative generated \$26M in profits for Domino's in 2010<sup>13</sup>.

Similarly, a campaign run by Sony on Twitter allowed 1,500 users to build a customized laptop, at a discounted price. The promotion helped Sony garner an additional \$1.5 Mn in sales from Twitter<sup>14</sup>. However, an important point to bear in mind is that while it is relatively easy to create such one-off transactional actions, converting them into an approach that drives engagement and two way interaction is much more challenging.

- **Drive down costs without impacting quality**

While until recently many companies saw customer support as a one-to-one relationship with clients, the social web with its forums, blogs, and fan websites is transforming it into a many-to-many relationship. In many cases customers are taking on the key role of helping their peers and answering support questions.

GiffGaff, a mobile virtual network operator (MVNO) in the UK that is part of Telefonica and rents its bandwidth from O2, has gone so far as to forgo customer service employees altogether in favor of user-driven customer support. Subscribers are awarded points and are encouraged to answer other customer support inquiries or submitting ideas for marketing, advertising or pricing models. Users can then convert these points to cash, mobile credit or donations to charity. As of June 2010, the company had a 6,000 strong online community and over 40% received their first bi-annual cash payout with the average user receiving £14<sup>15</sup>. The company claims that 100% of questions raised are answered by its community, with an average response time of 4 minutes<sup>16</sup>. This allows GiffGaff to run a company having thousands of customers with only fourteen employees.

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<sup>13</sup> Marketing Magazine, "Domino's credits social media for sales growth", Jul 2010

<sup>14</sup> The Next Web, "Evidence that Social Media Really Does Drive Sales", Sep 2010

<sup>15</sup> Guardian, "Mobile provider Giffgaff makes first customer payouts", Jul 2010

<sup>16</sup> Company website, Oct 2010

**Companies will need to overcome challenges around control of message, identification of influencers and the need to actively engage with the customer community.**

### **4.3 Key challenges in deploying social CRM**

A move to social CRM, while having multiple benefits, is not without its share of challenges. Chief among them are concerns over brand image, the difficulty of identifying the influencers and the need to actively engage with the larger customer community.

- **Risk of losing control over brand image**

Companies entering the social media universe are often concerned about the social web's dangers and weaknesses. One of the biggest challenges that businesses face is their perceived lack of control over brand image. While positive social media coverage is welcomed uniformly, companies are concerned over the impact of uncontrolled and viral negative messages. Addressing this challenge required businesses to be transparent and honest with their customers, in times of crises. For instance, When Nestle was the target of environmental activists, their Facebook and YouTube pages were under attack with negative comments that rapidly spiralled out of control<sup>17</sup>. What further worsened matters was that the company's initial response was to delete negative comments. This further alienated the customer community creating significant loss of brand equity. The challenge with such an approach of deleting comments is the risk that consumers will simply move to another channel to vent their anger.

Similarly, there is the example of Domino's Pizza which was under attack on social media after a video surfaced of its employees handling food in an unhygienic manner. The company responded with a statement within 24 hours on its web site, and soon after the company CEO went public with a video apologizing for the incident, although even this response was seen as slow in the current times<sup>18</sup>.

- **Identifying the influencer segment**

While the power of influencers is indeed rising, it is also important to view this in context of the percentage of people contributing online. For instance, research indicates that in Europe, only 14% of users of social media are creators, while over 54% are spectators<sup>19</sup>. While

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<sup>17</sup> Wall Street Journal, "Nestlé Takes a Beating on Social-Media Sites", Mar 2010

<sup>18</sup> Wall Street Journal, "Domino's Response Offers Lessons in Crisis Management", Apr 2009

<sup>19</sup> Forrester, "European Social Technographics 2010", Sep 2010

social media offers the tools for becoming influencers in an easy manner, not everyone is one. Following the traditionally accepted participation inequality patterns where 1% are heavy contributors, 9% are intermittent contributors and over 90% are lurkers, it becomes apparent that influencers are amongst the top 10% of users of a service<sup>20</sup>. However, for a business, the important factor is that the rest of the 90% now trust these influencers more than they do businesses. As such it becomes all the more critical that they identify the influencers correctly.

- **Need for active engagement with community**

Many firms suffer a poor understanding of social media, often either because their employees are not encouraged to use social media or because executives do not allocate dedicated and specialized resources to social media initiatives. A strong social media presence will need tools to reach out to customers, collect customer insights, and monitor discussions. In the earlier example, since Nestlé was especially weak in monitoring, it was unable to identify and react to the crisis at its earliest stages when damage could have been minimized through direct communication with the aggrieved. Companies need to bear in mind that by not engaging with the community, they let the voice of the dissenters be the lone voice, leading to further complications down the road.

In our concluding section, we provide actionable recommendations on how businesses can create a winning social CRM strategy.

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<sup>20</sup> Jakob Nielsen, "Participation Inequality: Encouraging More Users to Contribute", Dec 2006

# 5 Creating a winning social CRM strategy

**Businesses should take a structured approach to social CRM, once they have determined the key takeaways that they need from such an approach.**

A winning social CRM strategy is founded on the pillars of several key principles. Firstly, organizations should not venture into social driven by their competition. Once they have figured out their true need for a social CRM strategy, they should go about deploying one in a highly structured manner. Companies will then need to establish measurable baselines and engage with the influencer community. They should make sure that there is a constant focus on analytics to ensure continuous improvement. As consumers start using social services over their mobile devices, businesses should ensure that they closely follow customer movements across platforms.

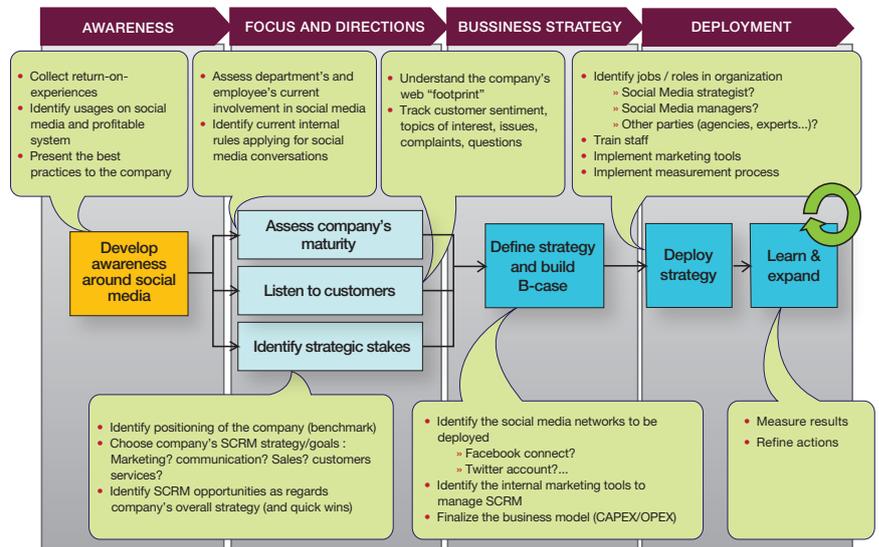
## 5.1 Determine the reason for going social

An important point to bear in mind is the fact that while social CRM gives a host of benefits, the objective behind deploying them should always be guided by a larger strategy of engaging holistically with the customer. Businesses should not venture into social CRM lured by the competitive game of one-upmanship. Instead, they should be guided by the genuine desire to gain a true 360° view of their customers. Before going social companies should first consider why they want to be there in the first place and more importantly, why their customers are there. Social CRM starts with an understanding of what customers are trying to do, where social media fits into the customer's value creating process and how social CRM can help create mutual value for both organization and customer.

## 5.2 Follow a structured approach towards social CRM

Companies should strive to follow a sequential and structured approach when implementing social CRM. They should resist the competitive urge to rapidly deploy them in face of what their peers are doing. A structured approach involves creating awareness, assessing a company's maturity, defining the business strategy and finally determining the rollout strategy (see Figure 6).

Figure 6: Social CRM Strategy Definition and Deployment Framework



Source: Capgemini Analysis

#### ▪ Create awareness

Influencer marketing should not be managed as an ad hoc or isolated activity but rather should be fully integrated into the overall brand, product and channel strategies. In formulating an influencer strategy careful consideration should be paid to whom the company wants to target and why, what they want to do with them once they are found, and through what channels they want to engage with them.

#### ▪ Assess company's maturity

Companies should assess themselves on where they stand in the social media scale. They should analyze how open their communication channels are and how open they are to negative feedback. They should try to identify department level involvement with social media and current guidelines as applicable to social media involvement by employees.

#### ▪ Define strategy and build a business case

Companies need to determine the social media platforms on which they intend to have a presence. These could vary from Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, among others. They should then identify the right

**A good social CRM approach ensures that the impact of each social signal is closely monitored.**

internal marketing tools that will help them effectively manage the CRM solution. Having done so, they should then build a business model that optimizes the one-time and ongoing investments that need to be made.

- **Deploy strategy**

The deployment phase includes the actual identification of jobs and roles relating to managing social media and accordingly staffing them. Companies will also have to train employees on the impact of social CRM and how they should address customer issues in the new scenario.

### **5.3 Establish measurable baselines**

While rolling out a comprehensive social CRM solution is a major part of a company's transition, however, it remains imperative that businesses constantly measure results and refine their actions. In order to calculate the impact of marketing efforts on the consumer decision process it is important to establish an initial baseline. This baseline needs to closely align with what the company is trying to change or disrupt in regards to the market.

### **5.4 Identify, engage and collaborate with target influencers**

Based on a company's overall strategic intent, businesses need to identify and target the 'right' influencers. There are multiple categories of influencers, which makes it challenging to identify the influential, and their extent, in a given market. Typical selection criteria include unique category knowledge or interest, demographic or network characteristics, or the specific channels through which the consumer exerts the greatest degree of influence. Companies should also strive to identify and rank influencers based on the stage of the consumer decision process that they have the most impact on. While some influencers, through the focus of their online content, are more effective at stimulating category, brand or product awareness/interest early in the buying cycle, others are more instrumental in guiding consumers to a specific purchase decision.

Transparency, openness, and honesty have become the new table

stakes of influencer interaction. Businesses need to be a part of the conversation by reaching out and engaging the key influencers and content creators through their own preferred channels and trusted networks. Collaboration needs to begin with social media services that consumers spend their time in and source their information from. Collaboration and co-creation help in creating a heightened sense of trust and partnership with those members of the online community who can potentially do the most good or indeed, the most harm, to the market's perception of a company's brands, products and services.

## **5.5 Use analytics to continuously improve performance**

Effective marketing evolves out of constant measurement and performance improvement. Companies will need to closely monitor the success of every e-mail, text message, blog, podcast, and web site visit, capitalizing on the analytics that are inherent in digital communications. Recent social CRM solutions enable businesses to track how their brand or product is being talked about across the Internet (frequency, content, tone and context), including the entire blogosphere, news sources, chat rooms and other social networks. Companies can clearly assess the impact of specific events and campaigns in terms of the buzz they create and, through daily feeds and alerts, able to make real-time tweaks when and where necessary. They should then use these insights to convert them to actionable steps.

## **5.6 Follow customers as they traverse platforms**

One final point to note is that while social networking is indeed a highly popular activity amongst consumers, it is pertinent to observe the platform that customers access these services from. Most activity is currently limited to the fixed platform, namely the desktop PC. However, with growing penetration of smartphones, tablets and high-speed mobile networks, consumers are increasingly getting comfortable with using such services from the mobile platform. As the social web becomes portable and customers become constantly connected to the web, businesses will need to alter their engagement strategies accordingly. As social networking becomes pervasive and transcends platforms and becomes enmeshed in the consumer's day-to-day life, the future of social CRM will be based on connecting information not just people and solutions will be immediate and location-specific.

## 6 Conclusion

We have entered an era of radical change for customer facing organizations. The changing consumer and technology landscape has led to the creation of an influence economy. As the power of traditional CRM diminishes, companies are turning to online social networks and powerful individuals within these networks to amplify and spread their messages, co-create solutions and provide ongoing support. By engaging and collaborating with key influencers in this complex ecosystem, companies are able to gain a better understanding of the consumer decision process while at the same time positioning their companies to 'win'.

The future for social CRM indeed appears bright. With consumer touch points increasing in a multi-device hyper-connected world, businesses have to indeed adapt their existing CRM approaches to capture and monetize the varying signals for the social worlds. As businesses and the way they are managed evolve in the future, it is indeed very likely that the concept of a social CRM would only be theoretical, for all the aspects that currently make up a dedicated social CRM strategy would have long been integrated into a new and more-robust enterprise of the future that has social as one of its key underpinnings. As consumers and businesses move to the mobile platform, it becomes imperative that total experience management becomes key as the focus shifts even further from the point of transaction to the point of interaction.



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