



**Aptean Respond**

# A Prime Source of Business Intelligence

Leveraging customer social media  
feedback to elevate the customer experience





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The internet can mean big business for companies who harness it properly. Most companies are now utilising search engine optimisation (SEO) tools, keyword prioritisation and internet ads to attract new customers. But what about customer service? What role does social media play in your customer service function?

There are currently just under 5 billion internet users globally and research indicates that 72% of US adults regularly use at least one social media site. That means billions of people using social media to keep in touch with friends and family; to grow their social network; to sell or buy products; to be influenced by or influence others, and of course, to complain about poor service.

Before the rise of social media, if your train was delayed, or your bus driver was rude or the service was terrible in a restaurant, you had a few different options. You could complain there and then, face-to-face; call up the company later and attempt to speak with a live person, or you could write a letter and wait patiently for a response. While all these customer service channels are still valid, they're becoming less frequented avenues for customer complaints, with more people turning to social media to vent their frustration.

For many people, it's not even a conscious decision. A browse through Facebook or Twitter reveals a world where even the smallest everyday occurrences are shared publicly, meaning any interaction with a business (good or bad) has the potential to be seen by hundreds of people. But, with effective social media complaint management, you can seize the opportunity to turn any negatives into a positive.

The internet has made the world a smaller place and it has provided amazing opportunities to communicate widely with millions of people. According to [Forrester](#), 80% of consumers use social media to engage with brands, which is a lot of feedback traffic, both good and bad. And, with [research](#) showing that it costs six-times more to solve a customer issue through a call center than via a social platform, can you really afford to ignore the increased use of social media as a conduit for customer complaints?

While social media offers a great opportunity for customers to air their complaints in real-time, it also presents an equally attractive opportunity for you to promote outstanding customer service, turning your harshest critics into potential brand advocates.

## Where Does Good Online Complaint Management Start?

Complaints aren't new. You've been providing great customer service for years. Now it's just a matter of applying that same knowledge and skillset to social media engagement.

To be successful in managing online complaints – to have a proactive online presence that's customer-focused and appropriate – you need two things. Firstly, a team that's eager and engaged, with customer service top of mind, and secondly, a good, solid complaint management system that captures complaints across all channels, harnessing and analysing the resulting data.

Ensuring that there are policies and procedures in place for colleagues to exemplify good practice sets the tone for employee expectations. A negative response or tone from an employee may do as much damage, if not more, as not responding in the first place. All levels of the business, from the boardroom to the storefront, must be engaged and positive about what you need to achieve, and that good customer service is a goal for the entire company, not just front-line employees.



A clear, shared vision across the business ensures that marketing provides great feedback and reports on social media analysis while customer service crafts great responses that align with your business objectives.

## One Team

Though good customer service should be a company-wide goal, in terms of social media responses, two departments must be aligned and communicating effectively: customer service and marketing. These two departments need to communicate, collaborate and enliven the company's vision, mission statement and objectives. Most importantly, your employees need to be and feel empowered to make good decisions with confidence, so they can respond in real-time, using their best judgement to minimise the damage.

Apart from the risks associated with public real-time responses, great customer service on social media looks the same as great customer service on any other channel, including in-person interactions. Customers want the same things: a swift and empathetic response; they want you to be honest and acknowledge your mistakes, and they want a satisfactory outcome.

Train your staff so that they know the difference between auto-pilot and genuine engagement. You won't succeed if you trot out placatory comments without substance. Enabling your employees to use their natural tone of voice and their own words can be scary, but it's certainly worth doing. One positive, engaging, conversational response that addresses the customer's concerns directly and offers an appropriate solution will always surpass badly written stock apologies that don't sound genuine.

## Take It Offline and Be Genuine

Whenever possible, you should take the conversation offline.

A public and sincere apology, along with transparent ownership of any mistakes or misdoings, is a great way to show customers that you care. In doing this, however, you can set a precedent for every customer. There's even the potential that unscrupulous customers may make false complaints if public compensation is being offered.

There might be occasions where you need to have a conversation about sensitive data, but a public forum, like a Facebook wall, just isn't the proper place to do it. Have a process in place for apologising publicly while also informing the customer that you will contact them privately to further discuss and resolve the problem. You certainly don't want to push the initiative back on to the customer to complain again elsewhere. Again, the goal is to make the complaints journey as seamless for the customer as possible.





# Embrace Technology to Improve the Customer Experience

Invest in software that will analyse your social media presence, monitor your customer engagement on social platforms and help you and your team stay organised behind the scenes. Remember that while we're focusing on complaints, many people will also share positive experiences and ask basic service questions, and those comments and questions need to be identified and addressed too.

Every customer who comments about you on social media must be acknowledged. This is where a complaint management solution comes in handy. The one dissatisfied customer you overlook is likely the one that will take to the online forums, causing potential damage to your reputation.

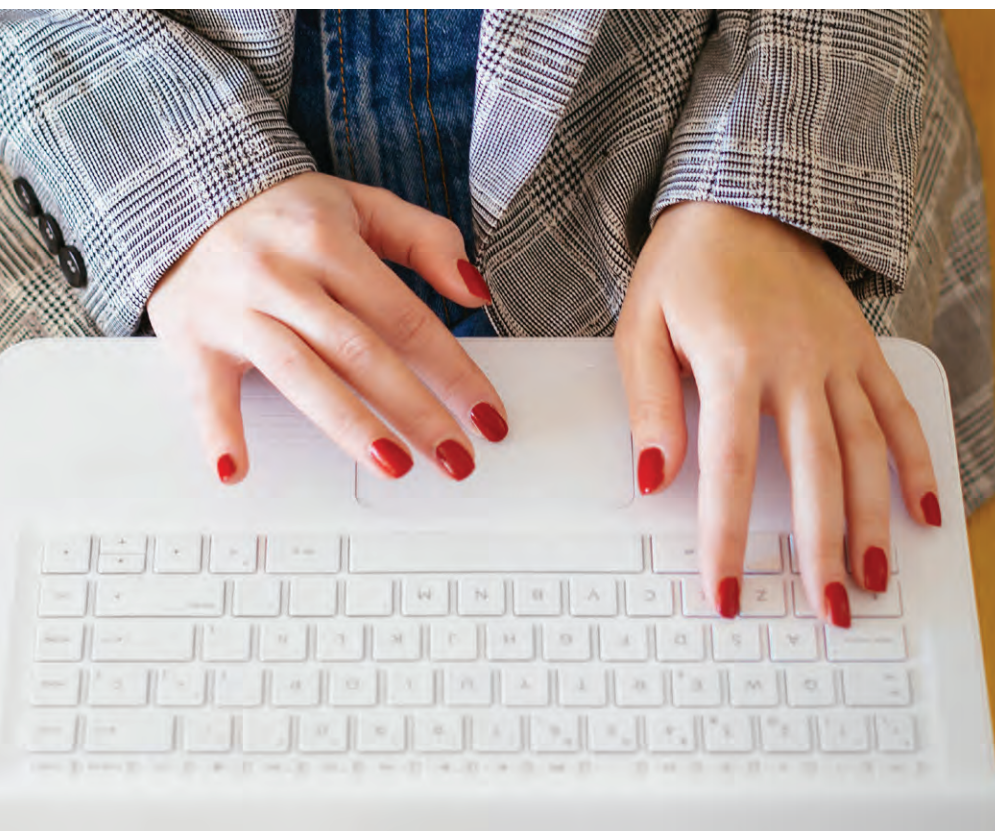
A complaint management solution with a universal inbox no longer restricts your visibility to single accounts. You could receive a complaint on a Facebook thread and then receive a DM on Twitter shortly after. Each of those interactions is flagged and sent to a singular inbox. This allows you to track all activity on your social media accounts, and if necessary, prioritise cases based on urgency and potential fallout.

Technology is the key to catching negative feedback before it escalates. Rather than leaving it to chance, integrate a system that alerts you to a problem, enabling you to resolve it promptly.

## Establish a connected team

Communication at all levels of your company is vital. It's no good making social media management decisions in the boardroom and handing-off responsibility to the marketing team – you need everyone on board. One department does not work without the support of another, especially when it comes to positive customer experience. All teams need to be communicating and collaborating in a way that makes customer support efficient and effective.

A clear, shared vision across the business ensures that marketing provides great feedback and reports on social media analysis while customer service crafts great responses that align with your business objectives. For those with a separate complaints team, we urge you to consider a different organisation method. You need to bridge any divides between departments, building a single, connected team.



Every customer who comments about you on social media must be acknowledged.

Effective social media management will help you develop and maintain a healthy brand, improving your relationship with your customers. Your customers are talking about you whether you want them to or not, so you don't have anything to lose by engaging with them on your various social media platforms. It's a great opportunity for you to understand their wants and needs, nurturing deeper, more long-term relationships.

Aptean Respond enables banks, insurance providers and other organisations that manage large volumes of complex complaints to streamline their processes, seamlessly monitor various social platforms, improve outcomes and elevate the customer experience. To learn more about how Respond can help you and your business, reach out. We'd love to talk.

Aptean provides very specific industries with very specific ERP, supply chain management, and customer experience solutions. In today's fast-paced, highly competitive economy, organizations don't have time to waste forcing homegrown software, spreadsheets, and one-size-fits-all solutions to do things they were never designed to do. Aptean is on a mission to end those workarounds – with industry-specific solutions instead of generic software, expert support instead of making you go it alone, and a steady influx of new ideas instead of the status quo. For more information, visit [www.aptean.com](http://www.aptean.com)



## Are you interested in leveraging social media to elevate **Customer Experience**

Contact us today at [info@aptean.com](mailto:info@aptean.com) or [www.aptean.com](http://www.aptean.com).



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For more information, visit [www.aptean.com](http://www.aptean.com).