Social Media Customer Care:
How to Identify Leaders and Experts

White Paper

In the world of customer service, social media customer care is relatively new. That means few business process outsourcing (BPO) companies have had time to develop significant experience in providing customer service through social media channels, which can create challenges for companies who are looking for an expert-level provider of social customer care. Since social media is an emerging communication channel for contact centers, there are a lot of gaps in the technology and general operations know-how. In fact, only in the past few years have BPOs learned to navigate these challenges and deliver real value for clients and their customers. So how do companies adequately identify leaders in this space and recognize expertise in the still-budding realm of social customer care?

In this white paper, Qualfon's Client Relations and Service Delivery Directors Adam DeLorme and Angel Posada reveal tips and insights that can help companies distinguish between the mildly helpful practices and utterly priceless ones. As seasoned developers of social customer care solutions, they use their experience to help contact center professionals:

- Recognize the unique characteristics and results that differentiate the social care leaders from the laggards
- Understand the technology challenges around social care and learn how companies have worked through those challenges
- Identify best practices for social care and get a list of elements that are critical for success
- Hear real-world examples of how to turn social data into valuable customer insight

"Not many BPO companies have experience in social media customer service, but those with proficiency in this area have great insights to share. As an emerging communication channel for contact centers, there are a lot of gaps in the technology and general know-how, but the best companies have learned how to work through these challenges and deliver real value for clients and their customers."

-Adam DeLorme
Client Relations Director
Qualfon

Home-Grown Norm: Custom Tools Built from Premier Techologies

Facebook and Twitter are increasingly popular ways to reach out to big brands and large companies, but social media customer service isn't turnkey. The technologies just aren't there yet.

"From what we have seen, there aren't really out-of-the-box solutions that make it easy to track and manage social media customer service tickets across contact center technologies and other business systems. No one can come in and just show you how to do this," said Posada.

As a result, the most experienced BPOs have custom designed their own social media customer support systems for clients, joining different technologies together and rolling out the final product on a large scale in the contact center. "Today, the strongest programs rely on tight integration and leaders who are experienced in leveraging social listening and analytics platforms for customer care solutions," added Posada.

At this point, social customer care leaders will have at least five years of experience building, providing, and perfecting social customer care solutions for some of the world's largest companies. Look for partners and providers with proven results in leveraging social customer care to:

- Reduce executive escalations within months of implementation
- Decrease negative comments, social chatter, or brand sentiment
- Boost the number of social followers

Trust the Premier Social Analytical Tools

The best social care programs use premier social media analytical tools such as Radian6 and Parature to empower highly-qualified representatives to monitor social chatter and engage customers in meaningful conversation. The result of any social customer care program should always be a fast-acting response team focused on resolving customer issues, delivering high-quality customer experiences, and building the client's online brand reputation.

Social Customer Care Wish List

- ☐ Customized solutions built with premier platforms for social analytics and tight integration
- ☐ At least five years of experience perfecting the social care technology and service operations
- ☐ A clear measurable impact on contact center metrics

"With help from these advanced social media analytical tools, we have seen even a small group of social media care agents have a major impact on customers and generate a multifaceted ROI—affecting customer service awards, brand sentiment, and brand equity," explained Posada.

Key Factors for Success: Quality Analysis and Top Talent

Other characteristics that distinguish leading social care programs include quality control processes and top-notch talent. Outsourced social customer care requires a lot of trust between the client and the BPO company, and quality control and top talent are the primary factors behind a trusting relationship.

"Ensuring quality is most critical in social media channels," explained DeLorme. "Content published on the internet never goes away and can easily be captured or go viral, so it's important to take extra precautions with added review processes before anything is posted online."

In addition to review processes, Qualfon recommends that management teams review responses for solution accuracy while also emphasizing the brand voice to help communicate the company culture into these highly-public channels.

Handpicking only top-performing representatives for social programs is another key for social care success. "The talent we target must have the right blend of experience, excellent performance, technical prowess, and personality. Most of our social media agents have *both* sales and tech support experience," said DeLorme.

Social Insights Keep You Ahead of Customer Demands

Advanced social care programs should be able to take social data and turn it into real business insight, revealing intelligence around customer behavior and adding more value to your business. So don't be afraid to ask for examples of how the BPO company is turning social data into action items and predictive analytics for its clients.

QUALITY is the most CRITICAL element in social care

Essentials for Success

- Proven quality control and quality assurance processes that evaluate content for accuracy and brand voice or culture
- Hand-picked talent that has right balance of technical prowess, performance and personality
- A focus on data mining for business intelligence

With one client, for instance, Qualfon found that the social channels light up first. “Software releases and maintenance downtimes were triggering quick customer responses, and those customers would go to Facebook, Twitter, and online forums *before* they would reach out via phone or chat to ask questions,” said DeLorme. “After identifying this social trend, we worked with the client to leverage this early indicator and proactively prepare for the high call volumes that frequently followed over the next several days. We used the data to predict the demand for customer service in other channels and then helped the client create an appropriate response plan for each situation.”

Paving the Future of Social Customer Care

Perhaps the most telling sign of a mature social customer care provider is any indication of partnership between the BPO and the companies that create and deliver social analytics platforms. “Radian6 and Parature are looking for ways to enhance software features and make technological updates so that their tools will work well for the contact center and BPO industry. Companies actively involved in helping develop these technologies are clearly leading the pack. They are helping technology mature from purely marketing and public-relations tools into dynamic platforms that can also support customer service and social care functions,” said DeLorme.

About Qualfon

Qualfon is a people-driven business process outsourcing (BPO) company and a global provider of contact center services and back-office processing. Founded in 1995, Qualfon helps companies reduce costs and deliver superior customer experiences. Today, we have 11,000 employees serving international brands across many industries, and our outsourcing locations span the United States, the Philippines, Guyana S.A., and Mexico. Qualfon’s mission to “Be the Best BPO, Make People’s Lives Better” means we invest in our people and, in return, they take better care of you and your customers. Qualfon’s employee retention is twice the industry average, which creates a people-driven value chain: Our employees stay longer, providing you a higher quality service at a lower price.