Today's customers expect to be delivered excellent service and support using platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. But simply being on social media is only half of the equation: Businesses must also have a cogent, thoughtful plan on how to engage these customers online and integrate social media with their internal operations. Engaging in social media via an omnichannel contact center is a powerful way for businesses to communicate better with current and prospective customers through social channels.

If you are trying to get to know and serve your customers better, a social media contact center might be just the key.

The Social Media Contact Center's Benefits

By now, most businesses are fully on board with the idea of having a social media presence. They know that the social media contact center enables companies to engage immediately with customers, continually reinforcing the company's brand image and cultivating customer loyalty. According to a study from Conversocial, 46.7 percent of respondents said that receiving a personalized response from a brand would strengthen their brand loyalty.

Social media offers companies a golden opportunity for increased customer loyalty that drives business growth. Social channels also present companies with a wealth of insights regarding customer preferences, allowing them to learn how products and services could be...
improved and to discern how the market is shaping up in terms of competition. But to maximize all these benefits, businesses need to adopt an integrated approach to the social media customer experience.

The Key to Social Media Success: The Right Approach

Simply having a social media presence is not enough. For a business to provide the high-quality contact center customer experience customers expect, it must integrate social media into an overall contact center strategy rather than treating social media as an isolated, stand-alone channel. A truly omnichannel contact center provides a seamless customer experience across all channels, regardless as to which touchpoint the client uses.

For starters, this means channeling social media interactions into the contact center and recording them as interactions with an agent. Many organizations currently allow them to be siloed, which prevents them from being analyzed and understood as part of the entire contact center operation. It also means making sure that customers engaging with the business on social media receive the same promotions or offers they would if they reached the contact center using the customer support phone line, for example. Each social media interaction with a current or potential customer can either reinforce the company's brand or detract from it, so it's important to make sure that every engagement is aligned with the company's overall brand personality and identity.

Businesses are already enhancing the contact center customer experience in this way. According to Gartner, more than 50 percent of organizations will implement significant business model changes in their efforts to improve customer experience by this year. As businesses invest in solutions like the omnichannel contact center, they will achieve the greatest results by integrating social media with their overall contact center operations.

Social media listening provides some of the most beneficial insights of all, gathering intelligence on customer preferences and interests that then can be used to enhance the entire contact center customer experience as well as products and services.

Tips for Creating an Integrated Social Media Plan

It's important to have a single view of the customer when engaging with them, regardless of the channel. If a customer decides to switch from Twitter to a voice call to get more in-depth assistance, the last thing they want is to be asked to repeat their identifying information — or any information, really. Businesses can avoid that all-too-common customer pain point by providing contact center agents with a single view of the customer, detailing their prior interactions with the company across all channels, including social media. This empowers agents to deliver the fast and satisfying customer service today's consumers expect.

Businesses can also use the social media contact center to proactively identify customer issues that are bubbling up and respond before they develop into more serious problems — a distinct advantage that is not available through any other channel. Contact center software can also route inquiries received via social media to the most appropriate agent, ensuring that the response is not only timely, but also
helpful. And by properly training agents in social media customer care, the business can ensure that the service it delivers on social channels is both high quality and consistent with overall contact center operations.

Companies can leverage analytics and reporting to understand how social media interactions are performing relative to the rest of the contact center, assessing social media engagements as part of an integrated whole. Social media listening provides some of the most beneficial insights of all, gathering intelligence on customer preferences and interests that then can be used to enhance the entire contact center customer experience as well as products and services. This is one powerful way that businesses can begin differentiating themselves from the competition, becoming truly responsive to their customers and providing them with unrivaled service.

When aligned with a broader contact center strategy, social media can provide businesses a powerful opportunity to better understand their customers and meet their needs in an age when timely, personalized support is now the norm. With the benefits that omnichannel contact centers have to offer, businesses can position themselves well to drive impressive growth now and into the future.

Contact Vonage Business to learn more about how a cloud-based omnichannel contact center can benefit your company.