

Businesses ARE missing out on social media opportunities

Companies failing to use social media to reach their customers and employees do so at their own peril, according to a new study on the importance of social media in business and customer communications.

SIEMENS

Nashua Communications' partner Siemens Enterprise Communications, and leading research analyst firm Yankee Group, recently found in an independent study that the vast majority of employees and consumers would prefer to use social networking for business communications.

The study revealed that 70% of consumers want access to company experts and support through social media channels, and trust company information provided to them through their social networks. It also indicated that nearly 60% of customers feel company outreach, through social media, would improve their loyalty to that company, and found that 50% of respondents use social media daily or several times a day.

Customer satisfaction - room for improvement

This study further revealed that average customer satisfaction with current business interactions through social media is only 65%, while one third of businesses have no formal social networking policies, do not allow the use of social media at work or are not aware of their company's participation in social networking.

Nashua Communications director of technology management, Fred Maurus says that the importance of social networking in improving both business output and employee performance should not be underestimated.

"Our research shows that customers are increasingly demanding that business talk to them in the communications platform of their choosing, whether it is Twitter, Facebook, blogging, or the latest social networking tool.

Therefore, overlooking social networking tools for business communications will result in lost opportunities to improve customer collaboration and employee productivity."

Nashua Communications is helping customers integrate social media capabilities into their current communications and business processes through the innovative and highly functional offering called OpenScape Fusion Social Media Integrations, in combination with the award-winning OpenScape solutions.

New integration service solutions

These new integration service solutions enable companies to tightly weave both public and corporate social media tools into enterprise customer contact centres, and unified communications and collaboration (UCC) solutions.

Employees subsequently find it simpler to collaborate and monitor customer or partner activities, as social media tools and contacts are mechanised and combined with existing desktop communications capabilities.

Customer concerns are resolved easily as social media dialogues such as multi-party audio or video conferencing are only "one click" away. The integration of social media and UCC into contact centre processes can also improve average call time, first contact resolution rates and customer loyalty.

Information sharing is also streamlined through integrating UCC desktop resources such as blogs, corporate wikis and chat groups. This then improves team collaboration, while automated updates to presence status, and conferencing abilities through social networking sites such as Twitter and Facebook, results in easier connectivity with colleagues and customers.

Maurus concludes that social media represents the communications wave of the future, and businesses have to get on board.

"Social media is changing the way businesses, customers and employees interact, and it is this change that creates significant opportunities for contact centres and the enterprise as a whole to leverage the integration of these tools into business processes.

"It is another way of delivering a better and faster service to clients, and to this end, businesses simply must improve their ability to serve consumers by meeting them on their preferred platform."

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