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How social CRM is a shift from traditional marketing

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Would everyone please stop yelling and start conversing?

Would it not be better to talk to people and not at them? Of course, this involves finding out what they like to talk about, where they like to talk and when they are available to chat. Plus, then we have to get their permission to talk to them again. Pretty simple, right?

Throwing the book
In many ways, the foundation for what has become known as social CRM was built in 1999 by direct marketing guru and author Seth Godin.

In his seminal book "Permission Marketing," Mr. Godin made a powerful case for gaining permission of a prospect before any "selling" was attempted.

However, social CRM takes this concept of permission and combines it with the prospect's social makeup, resulting in a better buying experience for both the marketer and the customer.

Mr. Godin noted that an advertising message which interrupts a prospective customer's life television and radio spots, newspaper ads, unsolicited direct mail has little chance of persuading them.

The expert became famous for his advice to marketers to build a relationship with a prospect or customer over time, earning the permission to engage and sell to them.

The theory holds that when permission is earned by a marketer, the prospect is not only receptive to the message, but looks forward to receiving it.

The need for opt-in rules, which were first discussed in "Permission Marketing," were also incorporated in text-based, mobile marketing when it was introduced.

With the highly personalized aspect of social media such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Google+, this demand for marketers to obtain permission from potential customers was even more pronounced. Social CRM is the next step in this evolution of consumer marketing.

Evolution of CRM to social CRM
According to the Harvard Business Review, customer relationship management (CRM) is a business strategy for managing a company's interactions with sales prospects, customers and clients.

It involves using technology to organize, automate, and synchronize business processes for sales, marketing, customer service and technical support activities.

CRM's overall goals are to find, attract and win new clients, nurture and retain those the company already has, encourage former clients back into the fold, and reduce the costs of marketing and client service.

A logical evolution of CRM is social CRM. This combines the database technology of customer relationship management with the individual engagement information that is revealed by social media activities.

Social CRM involves the aggregation of customer information across multiple platforms, including Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+, Twitter, foursquare and other social networks to automatically aggregate better customer profiles.

Different buying and selling experience
In this new marketing paradigm, give-and-take between company and customer is much more important than the old, one-way conversations that traditional media used to broadcast features and benefits of products and services.

Now, successful marketers want to encourage timely and relevant conversations. This is, of course, driven by smart, albeit impatient, consumers who expect marketers to know not only what they are talking about, but when and where to say it.

This translates into a completely different buying and selling experience. Here is why:

Because there is deeper knowledge about the preferences and activities of the customer, social CRM messages and content are more relevant and compelling

With social CRM, customers have given the company their choice of the media from which they like to receive particular messages Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, email, text messages and traditional mail

Customers have given the marketer the time and frequency that they prefer to receive relevant messages and content, further confirming permission

A customer's recommendations to friends are incorporated in social CRM and this enhances the understanding of his or her preferences

As the company/customer relationship continues, the customer profile is enhanced by the addition of buying patterns, product preferences and other publically available data from social networks

This ensures that subsequent marketing messages and campaigns are customized to the customer and this leads to lower customer acquisition costs, more favorable response rates and higher click-throughs

SOCIAL CRM IS a fundamental shift from traditional, one-way marketing.

When done correctly, it eliminates much of the waste that is found in tactics that are based on interrupting the prospect with irrelevant information.

Finally, when a brand or marketer understands the social makeup of a potential customer, better decisions about messaging, timing and delivery media can be made.

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