

**Customer Service & Respect** (30/05/17)

Web Article

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# Are You Guilty of These 6 Social Customer Care Blunders?

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How much does quality impact the bottom line when it comes to customer care?

According to [recent research by McKinsey](#), successful customer service programs typically generate a revenue increase of 5 to 10% – and cost reductions of 15 to 25% – within just two to three years. The same research found that companies that offer excellent customer service can exceed the gross margins of competing brands by over 26%.

Because of their public nature, social support channels offer brands the prospect of positive PR in addition to the increased customer retention that goes hand-in-hand with quality care. If you're interested in reaping these benefits for your own brand, a good place to start is by identifying and improving on the weak links in your current program.

With that in mind, here are six of the most common social customer care blunders – and what you can do about them.

## 1. Failing to Respond Promptly to Negative Feedback

Negative feedback is a necessary evil: Besides making your brand appear more authentic in the eyes of consumers, it also offers a way to showcase your brand's professionalism and attentiveness to customer concerns.

Whether or not you're able to resolve a complaint, it's important to respond as quickly as possible: In the age of social media, [75% of customers](#) expect a response within five minutes!

If the error is on your side, apologize and take steps to solve the problem. If a customer acts unreasonable or puts your company on blast, treat it as an opportunity to respond with tact.

Sometimes it's necessary to take a conversation private. For instance, you may want to request contact information or offer a free product that you don't want to make available to the general public. In these cases, it's best to offer both a private and a public-facing response so you can resolve complaints after acknowledging them publicly.

## 2. Wasting Opportunities to Respond to Positive Feedback



[McDonald's](#)

- In addition to tracking @mentions and relevant hashtags, your dashboard should be set up to monitor contextual mentions. Smart brands regularly use this type of social listening to give helpful advice to prospects, recommend products, or connect with fans and reinforce a positive impression of the company.

McDonald's is an example of a brand that uses social listening as a core part of customer care:



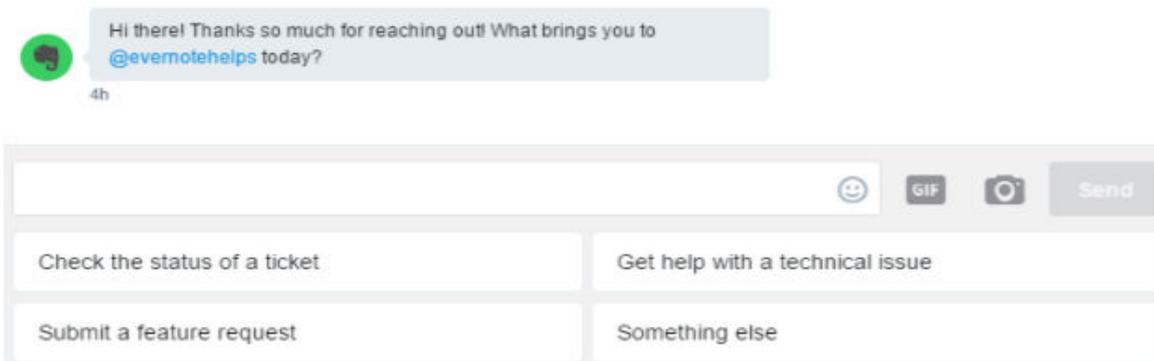
### 3. Sacrificing Quality for Convenience

When resources are limited and support requests are piling up, it can be tempting to cut corners. This leads to poor response times and canned responses, resulting in a poor customer experience and increased churn.

Here are a few ways to streamline your social customer care program without compromising value to the customer:

- Configure your social listening dashboard to display support history across different channels. All departments should have access to this information so everyone is on the same page.

- If it makes sense for your brand, opt to maintain a dedicated Twitter handle for support requests.
- Subscribe to the latest updates for the social channels you use. Developers occasionally release new features to help customer care teams operate more efficiently and provide better support. For example, Twitter’s [welcome message and quick reply features](#) are designed to help businesses reduce wait times, resolve problems quicker, and trigger automated workflows:



*Image belongs to author*

## 4. Making Customers Jump Through Hoops



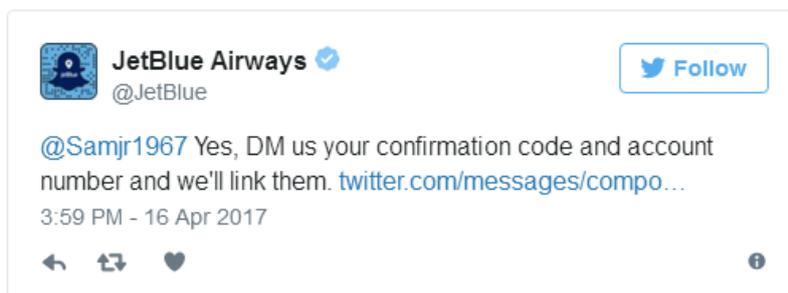
[JetBlue Airways](#)

Making it difficult for your customers to get hold of an agent may reduce support ticket volume in the short term, but ultimately you'll lose business to your competitors. [Research by Microsoft](#) found that, according to American consumers, the most important aspect of good customer service is "not being passed to another agent." The second most important aspect is first-contact resolution.

Provide multiple channels for customers to request help, and aim to resolve issues in the same channel rather than transferring customers to a different medium or department.

Problems that were traditionally handled over the phone can often be resolved via private message. Twitter's "[Send a private message](#)" feature lets support reps tweet a link to a direct message, making it easy for customers to follow up in private.

JetBlue Airways is an example of a brand that regularly uses the DM prompt to request additional information from customers.



## 5. Neglecting to Handle Issues Proactively



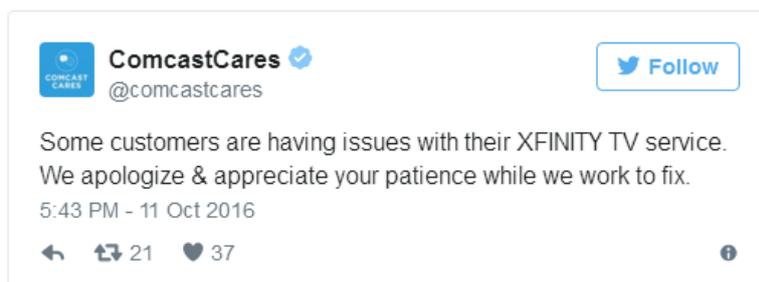
Social support volume can be greatly reduced by offering a self-service option on your company website, such as a knowledge base or help center. It's important to keep your help database up-to-date, especially if you sell products that undergo regular changes, like software. Consider implementing a system where customers can rate tutorials based on their usefulness.

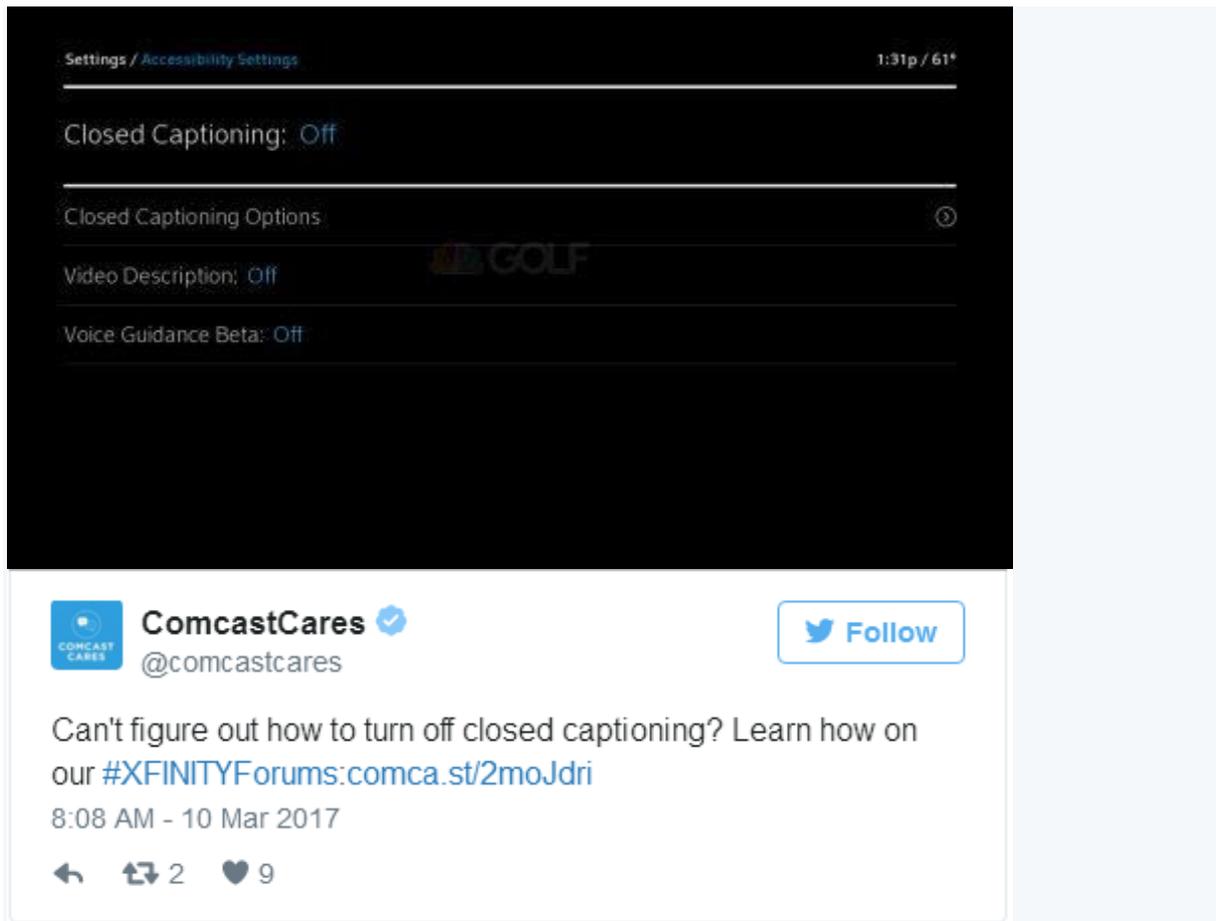
Another self-service option is to offer a peer support community. Encourage a thriving community by rewarding the most helpful community members with points or badges, or by allowing members to upvote the most helpful comments.

Finally, keep your social communities in the loop about existing policies and upcoming changes. Here are a few of the ways top brands use status updates for issue prevention:

- Alerting customers to technical issues
- Posting answers to frequently asked questions
- Linking to help articles or support forums

Comcast's support account, ComcastCares, demonstrates a few of these uses below.





## 6. Failing to Adequately Train Support Staff

Your customer care program is only as good as the people behind it. The better your reps understand the company vision for quality customer care, the more consistent your brand's image will appear across multiple support channels.

Make it a company policy to document common support requests and solutions as they occur, and include them in a training manual for new agents. Your training materials should also include the following:

- Your brand's style guide: language, tone, guidelines for using emojis, etc.
- Procedures for handling difficult customers
- Measurable goals for quality customer care, such as target response times

The best social customer care programs are adaptable: When you give your team leeway to use their best judgment and handle issues on a case-by-case basis, you empower them to provide better support in any situation that arises. After all, your customers are expecting to talk to humans, not automatons.

After you've addressed the problems with your social care strategy, it's time to change tack and focus on over-delivering – in the end, this is what will truly set your brand apart from the competition.



By [Ben Waldron](#)

Ben, a former journalist and corporate PR professional, joined the Sprinklr marketing team in 2016.