

EXPLORATORY STUDY
IDENTIFYING BEST BUSINESS PRACTICES
FOR USING TWITTER AS A CUSTOMER SERVICE PLATFORM
A CREATIVE PROJECT
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Introduction

Businesses are always trying to improve their customer service. Building and maintaining customer loyalty is critical as it is six times more expensive to attract a new customer than to retain an existing one (Band & Petouhoff, 2010). Customers can be frustrated with long telephone support wait times, confusing web sites and support forums, and slow email exchanges. This can lead to lost sales, and sometimes lost customers, as 45% of customers will abandon a transaction if their customer service questions and problems are not addressed quickly (Band & Petouhoff, 2010). Finally, 42% of service agents are unable to efficiently resolve customer issues due to disconnected systems, archaic user interfaces, and multiple applications (Band & Petouhoff, 2010). These statistics make it clear that customer service is an area in which many businesses struggle to effectively meet customer demand.

Twitter allows for two-way, interactive communication between a business and its customers on a large scale thanks to the interconnectivity provided by the linkages of social networking. It therefore can be used as an effective customer service tool. Some companies are already employing Twitter for this purpose, and many others are expected to do so in the near future (Shankman, 2012). As a result, public relations practitioners of today need to understand the best practices of conducting customer service using Twitter.

This study will analyze customer relations interactions from the customer support pages of the United Parcel Service (@UPSHelp), Microsoft (@MicrosoftHelps), Comcast (@ComcastCares), and Amazon (@AmazonHelp) using the Grounded Theory Method (GTM). These interactions will be categorized using a post-purchase Customer Relations Management (CRM) framework. For each interaction category, response tactics used by the companies will be examined by gauging customer reaction outcomes. Those leading to positive outcomes will be

identified as best practices. Those leading to negative outcomes will be identified as practices to avoid.

Literature Review

Customer service is part of a broader concept used in academic research known as Customer Relationship Management (CRM). CRM deals with building and maintaining relationships between organizations and consumers that are mutually beneficial. These objectives are best accomplished by being attentive to customer needs and concerns (Swann, 2010).

Customer service is CRM that takes place after a purchase is made. Effective customer service can result in repeat customers and positive word-of-mouth endorsements (Swann, 2010). If positive relationships with consumers are maintained, it is assumed that sales will be higher due to repeat business. This review explains the concept of customer relationship management, its four categories (including customer service), and how it is fundamentally linked with communication technology. It will then briefly explain social networking theory and how it can be effectively linked with CRM.

Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

The concept of Customer Relations Management emerged in the vendor and practitioner communities in the 1990s. CRM is essential because it builds and maintains relationships with key customers (Payne & Frow, 2005, p. 168). Businesses place a value on maintaining relationships with existing customers who the businesses want to continue to buy and to recommend the business's products and services. (Band & Petouhoff, 2010). Today, CRM is often associated with technology and the way businesses use it to interact with customers. CRM is dependent upon effective communication, and technology facilitates that interaction.

The traditional model of CRM can be broken down into three main categories:

collaborative CRM, analytical CRM, and operational CRM (Mosadegh, 2011). More recently, the adoption of social networking has presented the need for a fourth category known as social CRM.

Collaborative CRM

Collaborative CRM is a coordination of all ways customers interact with a company, such as via telephone, email, online portals, and fax. The aim of Collaborative CRM is to improve overall customer satisfaction by using multiple channels of communication to address customer needs with greater responsiveness (Mosadegh, 2011). An example of effective collaborative CRM might be a company's technical support team sharing feedback gathered from a support call with the sales department so that the sales personnel can better explain how to use a product to the customer.

Analytical CRM

Brohman (2003) indicates that that good information processing capabilities are key to understanding the needs and wants of customers. Analytical CRM uses algorithms to process data from data mining efforts, data warehouses, customer databases, and other information systems to gain information about customers, around which business and CRM strategies can be developed. This allows for greater efficiency when dealing with customers (Wahlberg, 2009).

Operational CRM

Operational CRM is important to this study because it encompasses customer service. It is the day-to-day processes and strategies that businesses use to interact with customers. Customer service is a business's interactions with customers prior to a purchase, during a purchase, and after a purchase (Mosadegh, 2011). This interaction might take the form of answering questions, providing technical support, or simply making a customer feel appreciated.

Boulding (2005) describes this process as creating value for both the customer and the firm. This is important because Verhoef (2003) found customer retention is best achieved by creating closer ties with customers using effective commitments through interaction.

Post-purchase operational CRM can be broken down into customer complaint and non-complaint interactions (Kau & Loh, 2006).

Non-complaint Interactions

Non-complaint interactions occur when a customer engages with a company for reasons other than a problem with a product or service. Some examples include:

- Questions that do not relate to a problem (store hours, questions, company information)
- General comments and feedback
- Scheduled post-purchase customer service interactions (such as regular maintenance on an automobile at a car dealership)

Complaint Management

Complaint interactions are most important because they require a carefully planned response in order to reach a favorable outcome (Smith, Bolton, & Wagner, 1999). According a model developed by Jarrar, Verlinden, and Meersman (2003), customer complaint interactions are generally triggered by:

- Product Problems
 - Product Quality Problems
 - Product Documentation Problems
- Post-Purchase Service Problems
 - Guarantee Problems
 - Repair Problems

- Service Problems
- Contract Problems
 - Early Termination
 - Changing Service
 - Breach of Contract
 - Cancellation

Social CRM

Mosadegh (2011) argues that a fourth category of CRM is now necessary to encompass company interactions with customers using online social networks such as Twitter, Facebook, and Yelp. CRM that utilizes social media is an extension of traditional CRM that should focus primarily on building relationships and brand sentiment by identifying influential customers, participating in online discussions, engaging with customers directly, and monitoring content and dialogue relating to the company. Social network theory explains how maintaining relationships with some customers can impact a much larger audience of current and potential customers.

Social Network Theory

An essential part of Customer Relationship Management is effective communication. Social networks can enable the kinds of communication that are necessary for effective CRM thanks to the ability to improve an organization's relationship with a large number of people by building and maintaining positive relationships with a few.

Although today it is generally associated with online sites such as Facebook and Twitter, the study of social networking is not a new phenomenon. A study conducted in the 1970s proposed that social networks could be analyzed in order to determine what impact the strength of interpersonal relationships between two individuals had on the quality and quantity of

relationships between the friends or social groups of those two individuals (Granovetter, 1973). The findings indicated a clear link between these micro and macro levels of interaction. This study demonstrated that the quality of relationships between two people can impact the relationships of others in the surrounding social groups of those two people. This is important to this study because the strength and quality of the relationship between an organization and an individual can affect the relationship of the organization with the individual's social group.

Granovetter (1973) presents social network theory with a model that symbolizes people as a graph of nodes in which their relationships form the edges. Those who are connected through a relationship are a single link away, while distant relationships are only a few links away. Krause, Croft, and James (2007) found that in many social networks, most people are not more than 6 links away from any other person (J. Krause, D. P. Croft, & R. James, 2007). That research demonstrates how online social networking sites such as Twitter allow individuals and businesses to connect with large audiences by interacting with a relatively small number of people.

The Importance of CRM Through Social Networking

With the importance of CRM and its reliance on technology, social networks are impossible to ignore. Baird & Parasnis (2011, p. 36) found that 37% of social media consumers interact with companies via social sites in order to receive customer service. "Social media will become the gateway, if not the primary communications channel to connect with customers" (Baird and Parasnis, 2011, p. 36). Businesses can take advantage of the connective links of social networks to reach a large number of customers by interacting with very few. This provides a very cost-effective way to build the necessary relationships with key consumer publics.

Personal interactions with technology have changed the expectations of customers when

it comes to customer service. They expect the company they are dealing with to respond in ways they expect their technology to respond: with personalized, anticipatory, and aggregated information, within a very short period of time. Social media sites like Twitter are able to provide service in this manner (Soloman, 2012).

Methodology

The purpose of this research will be to observe how companies interact with customers via their customer service Twitter pages and recommend best practices based on those observations. To accomplish that, this study will analyze the customer support pages of the United Parcel Service (UPS) (@UPSHelp), Comcast (@ComcastCares) and Amazon (@AmazonHelp) using the Grounded Theory Method (GTM).

The GTM approach is a form of qualitative research in which findings are generated from an examination of data as it is collected. The processes of collection and analysis are interconnected (Strauss, 1994). Analysis and data collection start at the same time in order to direct following observations. Through this method, the research process is expanded to ensure all relevant aspects of data are captured. This method will be used to find common themes, practices that work, types of interaction, and ways to respond. A set of plausible relationships are presented between sets of data. For this study, those relationships are patterns of interactions between companies and consumers via Twitter. From these patterns relationships are identified, analytically developed, and concepts are conceived (Strauss, 1994). Recommended best practices can then be based on the concepts that are repeatedly present.

Data will be captured using screenshots of the Twitter feeds over three months from January 1st to March 31st, 2014. These interactions will be labeled as either complaints or non-complaints as identified by Kau & Loh (2006). Complaints will then be categorized based on

type of problem using the customer complaint management framework provided by Jarrar, Verlinden & Meersman (2003). For each complaint category, response tactics used by the companies will be examined by gauging customer reaction outcomes. Those leading to positive outcomes will be identified as best practices. Those leading to negative outcomes will be identified as practices to avoid. Only interactions where there is a customer feedback response will be looked at. Positive customer feedback is an acknowledgment that the problem is resolved or a positive statement ending of the interaction such as “Thank you.” Negative customer feedback includes any response indicating the problem has not been resolved in a satisfactory manner.

UPS, Comcast, and Amazon were selected because they as companies have highly active Twitter accounts dedicated to customer service. The sampling period was selected as it provides a manageable amount of data to analyze as well as recent pool of data from which to draw the most up-to-date information possible.

Results

Types of Problems

As customer service interactions with customers occur as the result of some failure on the part of the organization involved, it is important to first discover and categorize these failures. The customer complaint model developed by Jarrar, Verlinden, and Meersman (2003) classifies these problems into categories. For this study, Twitter interactions are being classified as resulting from:

- Documentation Problems

Documentation problems exist as a result of a failure by the company to provide adequate documentation for a product or service. Problems coded as product documentation problems

were done so based on several criteria. First, the documentation issue could be with the company itself such as information incorrectly listed or absent from a web page, a sales invoice, or a bill. It could also involve product documentation problems such as inadequate instructions which necessitate a customer service interaction. Documentation problems are not always factual errors. They could also be any documentation that is unclear enough to cause a customer to engage in a Twitter interaction due to a misinterpretation.

- Customer Service Problems

Problems that exist as a result of a failure by a company to provide adequate customer service after a product is purchased. It is important to make a distinction between customer service problems and product problems as the products of companies such as Comcast and UPS are a form of service. For this study, customer service problems are defined as problems regarding communication with the organization, delivery of physical products, the installation and repair of products, and problems with customer support. Service problems do not include services which are products themselves such as Comcast's cable and internet service or UPS's package delivery service.

- Product Quality Problems

Problems that exist as a result from a failure of a company's product to meet customer expectations. Product quality problems can take many forms. The word "product" is often associated with physical goods that have been manufactured. In those cases, product problems are typically some sort of physical defect or inadequacy in the product itself. In other cases, products are not physical goods. Instead, they are services provided. For Comcast this service is access to digital communication mediums such as internet, television, and telephone. For UPS, this service is the timely delivery of packages around the world.

Twitter interactions were categorized based on problem type and result of outcome.

Table 1: Problem Types

Problem Type	Number of Interactions	Outcome
Documentation	17 / 158 (9%)	14 positive, 3 negative
Customer Service	38 / 158 (24%)	22 positive, 16 negative
Product Quality	103 / 158 (65%)	62 positive, 41 negative

Documentation Problems

Although customers frequently demonstrated a great deal of anger and frustration, proper responses from customer service agents were able to defuse the situation. Interactions resulting from product documentation problems were the most likely interaction type to result in a positive outcome, doing so 21% of the time. In this instance, a positive result occurred after a customer service agent simply acknowledged the problem and offering to investigate.



The customer pointed out an example of inaccurate information listed on the product information part of the Amazon website. The customer service agent offered to pass on the information and the customer responded positively. In another instance that resulted in a positive response, the customer service agent simply provided the information necessary to answer the question that was left by the documentation error.



The error in this example is of a customer needing clarification on the content of a label. Although the label was accurate, it still required explanation, which led to a customer service interaction. In this incident, the customer service agent was able to resolve the problem by simply providing the necessary instructions. Similar solutions worked in most documentation cases except those where the response from customer service was more than 12 hours after the initial interaction. The time frame of responses was noted to be a very important factor in whether a favorable outcome will be reached. In all 14 documentation problem interactions that had positive outcomes, the response time was within 12 hours. .



In the above example, the customer service agent has responded late. She has offered an apology and asks if assistance is still required. The customer responds with an attack on the customer service itself.

Other documentation problem interactions resulted from issues with billing. Billing problems were classified as either documentation problems or service problems. The differentiating factor is whether or not a mistake was actually made by the organization or whether the documentation was unclear, causing the customer to mistakenly believe an error was made. The latter indicates a documentation error. In these cases, customer service providers were faced with a situation where the customer was in error and needed to be corrected.



In the incident above, the customer mistakenly believes his bill has increased without reason, when in fact the bill likely increased due to expired promos. The situation was resolved favorably although it is unclear what action was taken as a private communication medium was involved.



Other methods of correcting misconceptions included responding with an apology for “confusion” or “frustration.” This was used as a way to offer an apology to the customer without admitting to wrongdoing. This tactic was used in the example below.



The customer approaches Comcast support with a generic complaint. The agent is able to offer an apology for “frustration” without admitting to the accusation. This tactic was associated with a positive outcome 8 times in documentation problem interactions.

Table 2: Product Documentation Tactics

Tactic	Number of Interactions	Example	Outcome
Provide Necessary Information	15	“Your promos have probably expired.”	14 Positive, 1 Negative
Apologize	9	“I’m so sorry to hear that.”	8 Positive, 1 Negative
Prompt Response (within 12 hours)	14	Comcast responded within one minute on January 19.	14 Positive

Customer Service Problems

Service problems were more difficult to resolve favorably than documentation problems. They were not handled as quickly or efficiently. Individual cases required accessing personal information about the customer which usually resulted in longer conversations with multiple messages from both customer and organization. This was handled by customer service agents in several ways. Customer service agents often requested customer use other communication mediums. In fourteen service cases, the organization requested the customer to send personal information using a secondary medium as opposed to Twitter’s own private messaging system.



In five others, the customer service agent attempted to push the entire interaction away from Twitter and towards an alternative customer service medium (such as phone, email, or website) entirely.

 **ComcastCamille** @Comcastcamille · Feb 17
 @maxvoltage can you please email the details ComcastCares_Support@comcast.com and we'll have our local partners ...
goo.gl/hEI4j2
 Hide conversation Reply Retweet Favorite More
 10:01 PM - 17 Feb 2014 · Details

Reply to @Comcastcamille @maxvoltage @comcast

 **Scott Van Maldegiam** @maxvoltage · Feb 18
 @Comcastcamille @comcast I emailed, no response yet. Called & have been given the run around w/ CS asking me to make a payment. #itsnotlate
 Expand Reply Retweet Favorite More

Out of the nineteen total times the suggested use of alternative communication mediums were used, five were associated with positive outcomes, and in four instances, customers refused other mediums and asked that the conversation be kept to Twitter.

 **Amazon Help** @AmazonHelp · Mar 29
 @osbornebrendan I wanted you to talk w/ us to get your feedback. We can't look into it if we don't know what you'd like to see changed. ^EN
 Collapse Reply Retweet Favorite More
 12:35 PM - 29 Mar 2014 · Details

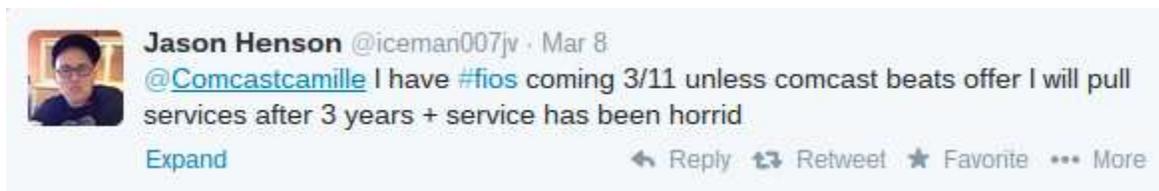
 **brendan osborne** @OsborneBrendan · Mar 29
 @AmazonHelp I understand, but you're routing me through a call center which is out of the loop. I'll try again later.
 Expand Reply Retweet Favorite More

In the above interaction, the customer refused to be transferred to a call center, suggesting the point of contact there might not be entirely familiar with his particular case. In the interaction below, the customer refuses to be transferred to email as he had already tried to receive support

via that medium with unsatisfactory results. That experience is what led him to seek support on Twitter and refuse to interact through email again.



Twitter interactions resulting from service problems demonstrated great hostility as customers directed anger towards the company itself as opposed to its products. It was not uncommon for customers to target the company and its support page on Twitter with harsh language, which happened 8 times during service problem interactions. Hostile exchanges involved forceful dialogue including threats to terminate service and/or leave negative feedback on consumer information websites if certain requests or reprimands were not made. In the instance below, a customer threatened to cancel his Comcast service unless they beat the price of a competitor.



Interactions involving hostile customers were the least likely to result in a positive outcome with only 14% of interactions resulting that way. In three cases the customer's mind

seemed to be already made up about what the outcome of the interaction would be.



In the above interaction, it is clear that the customer is very upset and has a strong negative predisposition. In this case, the customer service agent ended the interaction when it was clear that there was little to be gained from further conversation. In these no-win scenario interactions, no customer service response reliably provided a positive outcome. In every case, customer service representatives ended the interaction as soon as it was clear that it was going to be difficult or impossible to please the customer in order to limit the amount of public negativity.

Product Quality Problems

Defects in tangible goods are generally handled by manufacturer warranties, except when they present themselves within a retailer's return period. In 12 cases, customers approached Amazon on Twitter to complain about a physical product. In 11 of those, providing information about returns or directing a customer to a secondary customer service medium that handled returns was enough to achieve a positive result. In the example below, the customer found a product defect, and Amazon support was able to receive a positive reaction by providing a link to a product return form.



Much like the other problem categories, good timing was associated with positive outcomes. Out of 103 total product quality problem interactions, 67 received prompt responses from customer service agents. 87 those resulted in positive customer feedback.

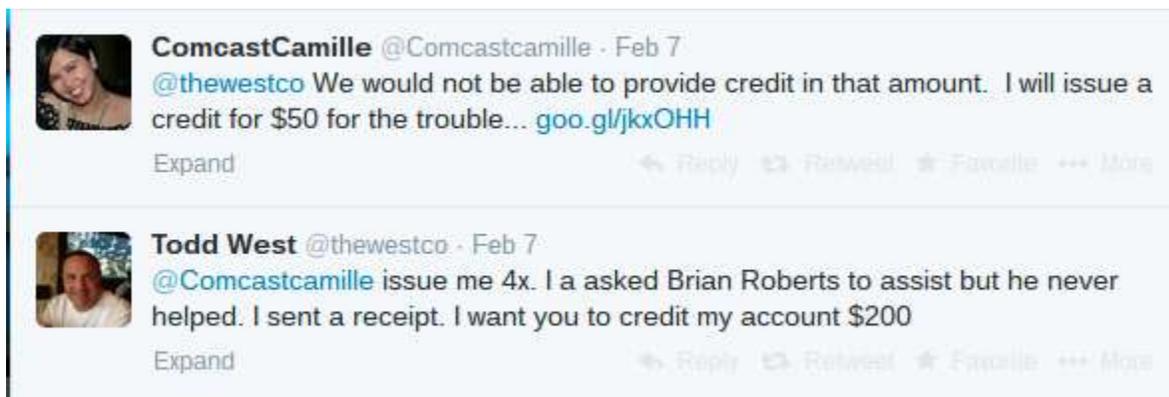


In the example above, the response from Comcast comes over 15 hours after the customer begins the interaction. That interaction ended with a negative response. In the example

below, the customer thanks the customer service agent for responding quickly.



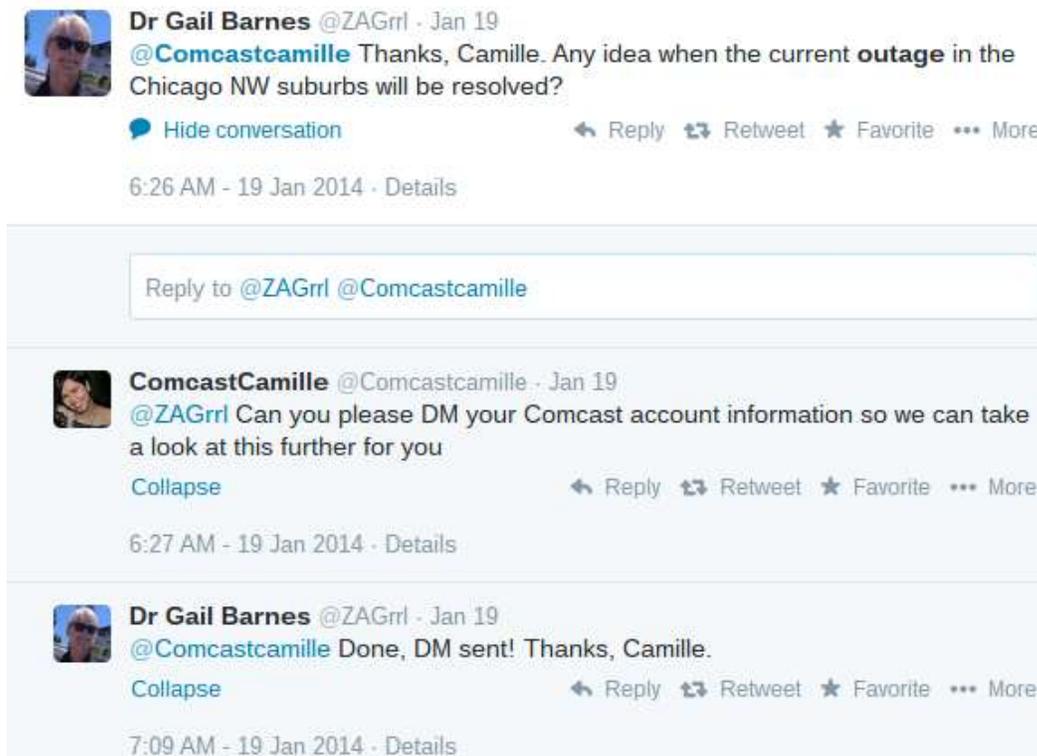
In two instances, customers demanded unusual compensation for quality problems. These demands went beyond what is contained within the standard return and refund policy. One interaction included a Comcast customer who was having difficulty with his internet service and subsequently requested \$200 in compensation for lost business revenue.



The Comcast customer service agent responded by asking to continue the conversation though a different medium.

For UPS and Comcast, most products do not involve tangible goods of any kind. Instead, they consist of services that are ongoing, which can be interrupted. Twitter customer service proved particularly effective in resolving problems with products that fall into this category. One example of this involved providing updates to customers regarding service outages. This was particularly important for Comcast and UPS. 24 product quality problem interactions with Comcast involved customers without service checking to see if the company was aware of the problem and to ask when the issue might be resolved. Responses to these inquiries were given quickly along with a brief explanation and apology. These interactions were associated with

positive responses 71% of the time. This high rate was the result of questions that were able to be answered quickly without involving any other communication mediums. In instance below, a customer Tweeted @ComcastCares to ask about an outage. One minute later, a representative responded asking for more information. Comcast responded quickly, and the interaction ended positively.



UPS uses similar tactics when an entire region is impacted by inclement weather. Customers are able to inquire about the delivery status of their packages and receive a prompt reply 80% of the time. The following is an example of UPS giving an explanation for a delivery



using Twitter. Again, the response is fast and direct. This particular response came within 6 minutes.

Another type of product problem interaction involved customers making suggestions on how to improve products and product offerings.



In the above interaction, the customer contacted Amazon to make a suggestion on how to improve the interface on Amazon's video service. The customer service agent responded by graciously accepting the suggestion and informing the customer that the necessary information would be passed to those in charge of that area. The customer's response was positive. In the next example, the customer makes a suggestion about how to improve Amazon's Kindle ebook interface. Again, the agent is receptive and offers to forward the information to the team working on the Kindle. He even goes on to compliment the suggestion as a way to reduce effort. The customer ends by offering thanks.



General Observations

Table 3: Tactics

Tactic	Number of Interactions	Example	Outcome
Medium Change	79	“Please contact our team at Help@UPS.com”	24 Positive, 55 Negative
Apologize	91	“I do apologize for the delay.”	46 Positive, 45 Negative
Prompt Response	123	UPS agent responds within six minutes on February 7.	87 Positive, 36 Negative
Identify Customer With Real Name	2 (Outlier)	“So sorry for the late response MR Wendell...”	1 Positive, 1 Negative

Discussion and Best Practices

Best Practice #1: Fast responses are more likely to be associated with positive outcomes. Responses given within 12 hours of the initial engagement were 70% more likely to be associated with a positive outcome than those given the next day or later. One incident involved a UPS customer who was concerned about a package arriving by Valentine's Day. The response did not come until the next day and the customer had decided to purchase the item locally instead. It is unclear why some queries go unanswered while others receive answers in the same time frame. Comcast apologizes for late responses 85% of the times they occur, but that tactic did not prevent negative responses.

Best Practice #2: Offer an apology. Offering a general apology was a common (but not universal) tactic used by each company. Apologies were included on 91 of 158 interactions. Both Comcast and UPS offered apologies, even when actual fault was still in question. The companies apologized for vague ideas such as "frustration" and "trouble" in order to demonstrate empathy without admitting fault. Phrases such as "sorry about the frustration" and "I apologize for your trouble" were used 74 times.

Best Practice #3: React as quickly as possible. Product problems should be met with a prompt response within 12 hours of receiving a customer complaint. Problems related to defects in physical products should be resolved by providing the necessary return or exchange information, accompanied by an apology. It is unknown how to best deal with customers who make unusual or unreasonable demands. It is particularly effective to use Twitter to provide customers with updates on service outages. Such updates should be provided as quickly as possible. In cases where it is appropriate, a follow-up message should be given which includes

additional details about the customer's specific problem and/or a request to be notified about how the issue progresses.

Best Practice 4: Make interactions more personal. Another practice used in two interactions by Comcast and UPS was addressing a customer by his or her real name (not Twitter handle) after looking up the customer's personal details through provided account information. There were not enough instances to determine if this practice was associated with positive or negative results, but personalizing interactions was a goal shared by both UPS and Comcast. In the interaction below, the Comcast agent addresses the customer as "MR Wendell" to add a more personal touch.



ComcastCamille @Comcastcamille · Mar 9

@codingdesigner So sorry for the late response MR Wendell we are little slammed today but I have escalated this f... goo.gl/APYj4Z

Collapse

Reply Retweet Favorite More

9:52 AM - 9 Mar 2014 · Details

Another method used to personalize the interaction was to provide the identity of the customer service agent composing each message. Each organization had a way of identifying the customer service agent responding to a customer. Amazon and UPS agents affix their initials to the end of each message. This allowed the customer to know whom they were speaking to. It also creates a reference point that can be used during future interactions.



Amazon Help @AmazonHelp · Mar 29

@fitfoodielife You're welcome! We care an awful lot about our customers, and want to see things made right. Have a wonderful weekend. ^EN

Hide conversation

Reply Retweet Favorite More

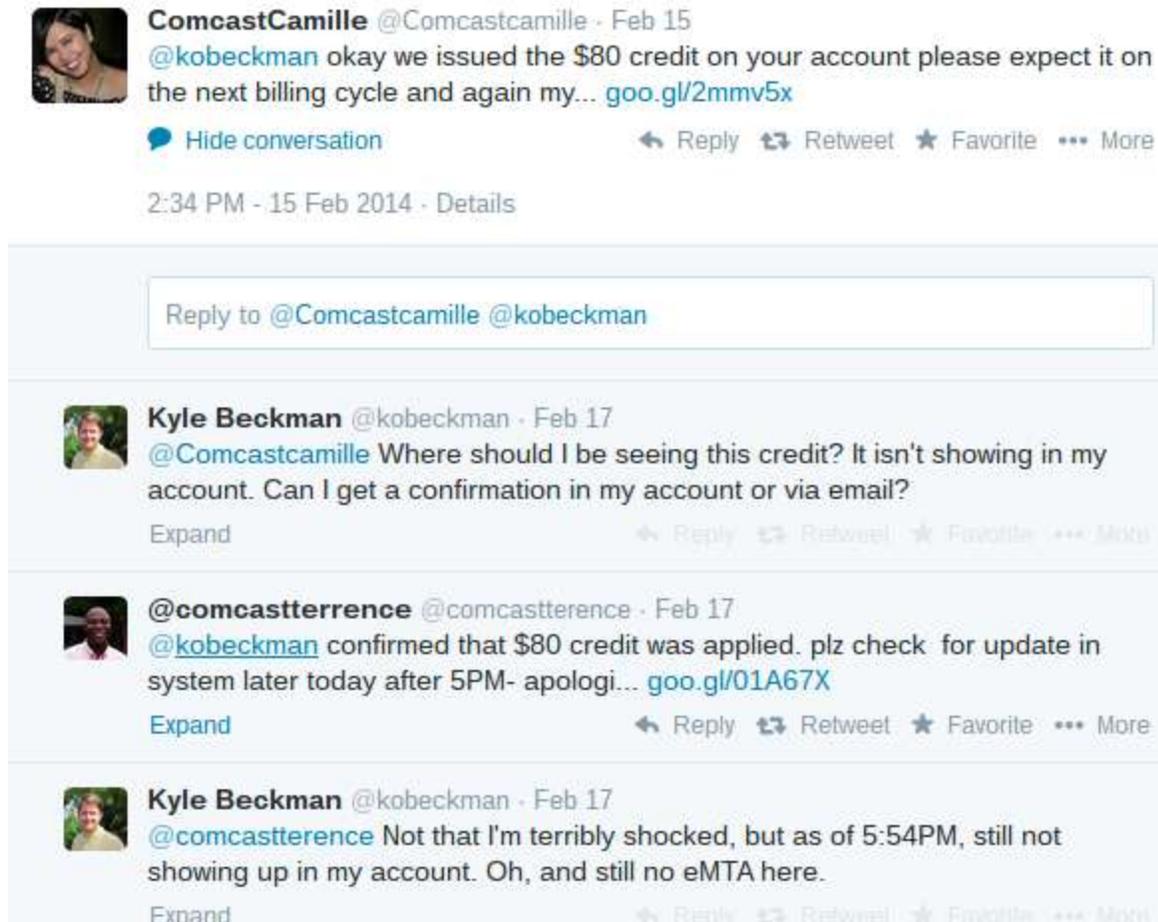
2:29 PM - 29 Mar 2014 · Details

Comcast has a different take on how to personally identify their agents. Customers requesting support send initial messages to a unified Twitter handle of @ComcastCares, but the response comes from an individual account belonging to a specific agent. Examples include @ComcastMelissa and @ComcastCamille.



In the interaction above, Camille from Comcast responds to a customer complaint. Her first name and personal picture are both publically available. It is unknown to what degree personalization helps achieve positive interaction outcomes, but it is a tactic used almost universally by all three organizations involved in this study.

Best Practice 5: Keep promises. On 4 occasions, customer service agents made commitments about service, and the customer later responded negatively that those commitments were not met. The interaction below shows the Comcast agent making a promise to apply a credit to the customer's bill. The customer responded negatively that the credit was not applied.



The screenshot shows a Twitter thread with four tweets. The first tweet is from ComcastCamille (@Comcastcamille) on Feb 15, stating that an \$80 credit was issued and will appear in the next billing cycle. The second tweet is from Kyle Beckman (@kobeckman) on Feb 17, asking where the credit should be seen and if a confirmation can be sent via email. The third tweet is from @comcastterrence on Feb 17, confirming the \$80 credit was applied and advising to check for updates after 5 PM. The fourth tweet is from Kyle Beckman on Feb 17, expressing disappointment that the credit is still not showing in his account as of 5:54 PM and that no eMTA has been received.

ComcastCamille @Comcastcamille · Feb 15
@kobeckman okay we issued the \$80 credit on your account please expect it on the next billing cycle and again my... goo.gl/2mmv5x
Hide conversation Reply Retweet Favorite More
2:34 PM - 15 Feb 2014 · Details

Reply to @Comcastcamille @kobeckman

Kyle Beckman @kobeckman · Feb 17
@Comcastcamille Where should I be seeing this credit? It isn't showing in my account. Can I get a confirmation in my account or via email?
Expand Reply Retweet Favorite More

@comcastterrence @comcastterrence · Feb 17
@kobeckman confirmed that \$80 credit was applied. plz check for update in system later today after 5PM- apologi... goo.gl/01A67X
Expand Reply Retweet Favorite More

Kyle Beckman @kobeckman · Feb 17
@comcastterrence Not that I'm terribly shocked, but as of 5:54PM, still not showing up in my account. Oh, and still no eMTA here.
Expand Reply Retweet Favorite More

The next interaction shows the Comcast agent promising a customer that they would receive a phone call to further discuss a problem. The customer later responds that the phone call never came. In both of these interactions, failure to live up to promises resulted in a negative response.



Best Practice 6: Always respond. For the organizations under study, it was important to respond to as many problems as possible and treat them with equal importance. Customer service agents responded to complaints no matter how unusual or eccentric they were. In the example below, a Comcast agent provides a professional response to an insult and profanity riddled complaint about customer service.



No matter how improbable a positive outcome might seem, there is still a chance of positive outcome. Customer service agents put full effort into responding to as many claims as possible as no response eliminates all chance.

Conclusion and Suggestion for Future Research

This Grounded Theory analysis has opened the door for future studies by providing a framework around which public relations and customer service practitioners can build a customer service platform using Twitter. As these platforms evolve, researchers will have a broader picture of how practices and patterns will evolve in order to generate solid theories surrounding the use of social media sites for customer service. It is currently unclear how much traditional customer service traffic will be replaced by social media, but this study has demonstrated that customers using Twitter respond favorably to the medium when it is used in ways that take advantage of its strengths relative to more traditional communication mediums.

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