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THE FUTURE OF SOCIAL CRM

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THE FUTURE OF SOCIAL CRM

Social CRM has entered the marketing lexicon and is widely acknowledged as being the future of customer relationship management. The majority of consumers use social media channels to communicate and receive information and they expect the brands they use to be proactive and available over these channels.

This means CRM marketing companies are desperately trying to find the solution to the social media "problem" with varying degrees of success. When potential clients investigate a CRM system they are asking about social. A lot of the time they are not entirely sure *what* it is they want but they know they need something!

Marketing and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) are undergoing significant changes. The days of firing marketing material at a customer base are over. Social media has empowered customers and they are dictating the terms. In order to efficiently market and maintain good customer relationships brands have to engage and interact. Social media channels are the perfect place to do this.

As is to be expected a variety of dedicated "Social Media Management Platforms" have sprung up offering their take on the best way to capitalise on social CRM. There is currently no "big player" that has dominated this market in the way Salesforce or Amazon have done in theirs. This is because there is no consensus on the right or wrong way to approach social marketing.

Single Dashboard
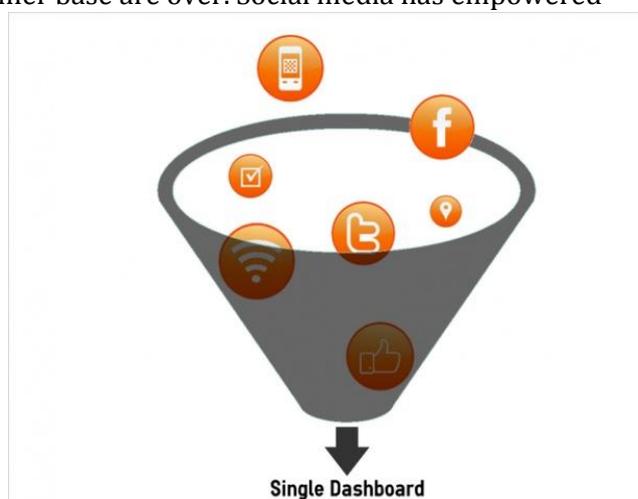
Most agree however that in order to run a successful social media platform brands need to adhere to the following criteria:

BASIC FEATURES OF SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGEMENT PLATFORMS

1) **To provide a single interface for social media platforms**, allowing users to send/receive messages across all platforms, schedule messages for future release and reply in Real-Time
2) **Allow users to research and track key terms across all platforms**; companies can search for relevant mentions and connect with appropriate contacts
3) **Supply visual reporting** which allows users to determine which campaigns work best across which social channels

Single Inbox: A dashboard/interface within the solution where all a client's social media channels are shown. Users can respond in Real Time.

Teams/Permissions: A feature within the Single Inbox that lets users set and filter social media contacts as leads or customers as well as allocating conversations to team members.

Keyword Research: A feature for users to search social media portals for mentions of their company or key phrases of their choice. Can be used to create marketing lists or dig out potential leads. Usually part of the **Single Inbox.**

Message Scheduling: Allows users to send out a message or a series of messages at a specific time and over specific channels i.e. a series of press releases over Twitter and LinkedIn and then later over Facebook.

Social log in: Provides an option for customers to sign up/enter competitions etc. using their social media details, capturing them to the database.

Social Campaign Management: Has the functionality to run a full social media campaign, from building a list to analysing the ROI.

Landing Pages/Links to social media within campaign: Provides links or widgets to dedicated social media landing pages within marketing content.

Share on social media buttons: Gives customers the option to share any content on social media pages themselves.

Analytics: Users can create visual representations of their social media presence and determine which channels are the most successful as well as, for larger companies, which social media "champion" is bringing the most leads in.

Content for release: Provides actual, often automated content for posting on specific industries. Unusual but not unheard of.

Polls/Competitions: Users can import social media handles via polls, competitions or sweepstakes.

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There are a wide variety of social CRM Solutions. These range from basic add ons to an existing product to a completely integrated marketing solution. Although there is a lot to choose from, and they all promise a lot, we are able to "map" the general points of social media marketing:

Basic Posting and Sharing: This includes a single inbox where all a client's social media platforms are shown live. Users are able to post and respond in Real-Time and collect data from their contacts. In some systems they are able to essentially make mailing lists for tweets/messages and can allocate individual contacts to teams.

Data Import: This moves away from just using social media within an existing solution and gives users the chance to import social media handles into their database. This may come in the form of links within an email campaign, polls and competitions or using social media details to login to certain content.

Reporting: Most platforms come with some form of analytics allowing users to see how they are performing over social media channels.

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SINGLE SOCIAL VIEW

The logical extension of the **Single Customer View,** the ability to hold **key social contact information** at a person level:

Twitter

Facebook

LinkedIn

Google Plus

More channels can be added as required but these are the four core platforms. Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn are the big players whereas Google Plus is "the next big thing".

The Single Social View essentially involves listing social media handles at a person level. It also allows users to contact these people through the CRM system. A user could send a contact an individual tweet, or add them to a contact list for a series of automated tweets. If a user selects one of the handles they are taken to the **Social Media Dashboard** (see below).

SOCIAL MEDIA DASHBOARD

The nerve centre of Social CRM. An interface where users can view their **own** social media streams in a single dashboard. This makes it possible to manage multiple accounts simply and efficiently, users can:

Send a message out over multiple feeds

Quickly view all incoming data and respond to it, or else allocate it to relevant team member

Allocate individuals as "leads" "prospects" "customers" etc.

Search for keywords used by their social contacts, or any usage over a particular time frame

Filter social contacts by geography/preference. For example a Birmingham based restaurant could run a search for all Tweeters in the Midlands who have tweeted about "Restaurants" or "Food" in the past month and contact these people.

SOCIAL MEDIA LINKING

Users are able to add social media links to marketing material and track the results. Dedicated landing pages are also created to ensure best results. For example if a contact follows a link for a competition, they arrive at a Facebook page specifically designed for that competition, rather than the companies "home" Facebook page.

Inbuilt widgets offering the chance to "share" content on social media are also included on all Blogs, Email campaigns etc.

SOCIAL ANALYTICS

Visual representations of social media performance including:

A graph of social connections over time

Activity over time; number of statuses posted versus number of connections

Most popular updates

What percentage of followers are leads/customers/competitors

The percentages of the people they follow who also follow them back

SOCIAL MANAGER

A key system for dragging social media handles into the CRM Database. Social Manager acts as an online portal for engaging customers in a "conversation". Brands collect social details and use them to tailor marketing efforts accordingly. Social Managers will often prompt users to login to the database using social logins thus gaining relevant information.

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For more information on Social CRM or MarketDeveloper v5.1 please visit
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