



Special Interests » Everything Digital

## Everything Digital

 Print Page

### Are You Socially Empowered?

By Larry Caretsky  
May 6, 2010

Social media is one of the biggest shifts in modern business. Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, blogs, Wikis and more have created new opportunities to interact and learn about customers, prospects, competitors and even your own sales force. Twitter alone boasts 50 million Tweets each day – that’s 600 per second. With all this information available in real time, how are you keeping up?



By combining social media with CRM, you can learn your target market’s cares and concerns, gain insight on what social media platforms they use, and actively participate with them to strengthen relationships and explore new opportunities. Through the combined power of social media and CRM software, businesses can collect and analyze different streams of conversations on the Web and then use this information to effectively target marketing messages and manage and measure their efforts.

Let’s look at three “A” ways to become socially empowered using CRM:

**Automation** – CRM is used by large and small companies to manage customers. Through the software, businesses can keep track of who they know, what they know about them and how they’ve interacted with them – and then use that data to manage relationships and develop relevant messages. Social media brings a new element to CRM. Instead of just managing data about people, a social media-enabled CRM also manages conversations and online relationships. Businesses need to select the right CRM platform which will enable them to directly link to these sites, capture the information and utilize it to gain a competitive edge.

**Analysis** – Online conversations provide valuable insight into customer buying patterns, likes and dislikes and behavioral data. Using CRM to track this information, companies can produce marketing messages that addresses the customer’s pain points and buying habits. By partnering CRM software and social monitoring, businesses can focus on the most profitable customers and understand not only how to interact with them, but where they should be focusing their efforts. Is your target audience primarily on Facebook and engaged in “fanning” their favorite products and solutions? Using Twitter to list a litany of complaints or concerns? By understanding what your customers and prospects are saying and where they are posting you can provide insight to your sales force and incorporate effective social media activity into your business processes.

**Action** – Once CRM and social media is “under one roof,” you can then begin to leverage social media in an efficient manner and move from transactions to interactions. By taking the role of a more active listener through CRM and social media, companies can design new programs or processes that respond to customer needs and make their brands more social. For example, if scouring social networks reveals similar complaints about your product or service, you can re-engineer your processes and then actively communicate the improvements you’ve made. Another benefit is gaining the ability to link social profiles with customer data. For instance, you can pull data from LinkedIn to populate your customer profile and get more detailed insight of your customers. By understanding more about your customer you can then target marketing messages that resonate with your buyer.

CRM software entwined with social media enables businesses to learn what’s in the hearts and minds of their customers and institute social responses that demonstrate they are listening and responding to their customers’ needs. Businesses can monitor and measure their social interactions, gain specific and detailed information about prospects and customers, identify qualified opportunities and create value-based interactions with their buying audience.

*Larry Caretsky is the president of Tinton Falls, N.J.-based Commence Corporation, a leading provider of CRM software which can be deployed in a Web-based, cloud-computing environment or on premise. Contact Caretsky at [sales@commence.com](mailto:sales@commence.com) or visit the company’s Web site at [www.commerce.com](http://www.commerce.com).*