



Which tech trends do you think have been overhyped in recent years? Will they ever live up to the hype?

Over the past two to three years, the hype factor surrounding social media has been extensive. Suffice to say, the social media bandwagon is now full - and in many ways rightfully so, but when it comes to scalable customer service, the evidence suggests that we are asking too much of social media. Specifically, I am referring to the promise and impact of social media as it relates to customer experience management and engagement.

Today, there are a myriad of social media tools and technologies, ranging from those that enable the conversation (Twitter) to those that attempt to make sense of the conversation (Radian 6). However, as illustrated by Gartner's Emerging Technology hype cycle, we have rapidly reached the top of the curve, heading for the trough of disillusionment and this is especially true when it comes to online customer service.

Social Media Disillusionment: Emerging Technology Hype Cycle



Customer Service or Complaint Management?

A deep dive into the actual use of social media solutions such as Twitter would reveal that they are often the virtual "dumping ground" for spurned customers who ended up there because the

core customer experience channels failed miserably. Sadly, the "United Breaks Guitars Guy" and others have relied on these social media environments to resolve issues that weren't resolved through the primary interaction channels.

In my opinion, the amount of investment companies are making in social media as a customer engagement strategy is at present, misguided. Based on our analysis of real customers and their volume of interactions across current channels such as the web, we find that less than 0.02% of exchanges in social media are actionable from a customer experience point of view when compared to the number of interactions taking place on the corporate website. I am not referring to whether someone "likes" or "dislikes" a product, but whether there is truly an opportunity to engage with the customer. I often ask our clients whether they are truly delivering customer experience through core channels such as their website, as we typically find that massive customer engagement problems usually originate there. We also ask our clients whether allocating a disproportionate part of their budget to address 0.02% of the problem is the best use of their resources, when 99.98% of customer interaction volume is demanding their attention on the web.

The final question that often arises is this: "Why spend all that time, effort and budget to bring your customers to your website, only to turn and dump them to a 3rd party like Twitter?"

Does Mobile fall into one of your top 5 priorities for 2012? If so, how will you be attacking it? If not, why not?

Yes, absolutely. For the past three years, we've been keenly focused on enhancing and delivering customer self-service mobile applications starting with the iPhone, then moving into native solutions for Android. Now our mobile solutions encompass other devices that are capable of participating in a mobile environment (tablets, eReaders and others). Mobile itself is such a broad category, often blurring the lines around what mobile truly constitutes. IntelliResponse approaches the mobile market by focusing on the fundamental notion of "un-tethering" the customer, whereby the customer experience must be delivered where the customer is, regardless of the channel they choose to interact through. With the rapidly expanding mobile market, consumer adoption and expectations of technology will continually change the concept of "place."

These changes will continue to accelerate and require organizations of all sizes to adapt. Markets today that find mobile technology cost prohibitive, can expect the rapidly declining cost

of the device and service accessibility to accelerate adoption, thereby driving the ubiquity of mobile.

From IntelliResponse's perspective, it is about engaging the customer in the channel of their choice at a time and place that is convenient for them. Delivering customer experience within the mobile environment will be critical, not only to all our clients, but more importantly, to the end consumer. The heightened expectation of 7x24x365 delivery will fuel this expectation and we will continue to provide the solutions that meet our clients and the end consumer at the point they need to interact, creating a powerful level of customer engagement.

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