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SOCIAL MEDIA

# The Do's and Don'ts of Interacting With Customers on Social Media

*Interacting with your customers on social media is a crucial aspect of your marketing plan*

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If there's one thing a brand cannot ignore today, it's social media. Gone are the days of just word-of-mouth or newspaper advertisements. Today, for most brands their customers are on social media

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Bhandar. These are the companies which still operate from the narrow alleys of Varanasi and Delhi and their offices are still inside medieval buildings with just electricity as a modern gadget.

Interacting with your customers on social media is a crucial aspect of your marketing plan. But how does one go about it? Entrepreneur India spoke to start-up founders and experts about how they believe one should interact with customers on social media.

### Why is Social Media Important?

In today's day and age, conversations happen on social media. Umeed Kothavala, CEO and Co-Founder, Extentia, believes that social media has become a customer service center for businesses, large and small. Social interactions provide benefits such as increased exposure, lead generation, reduction of marketing expenses, improve online search ranking and develop loyal fans.

"Understanding the platforms used by your audience is fundamental towards growing the business," he said.

Given the large numbers of people today using social media for various purposes, Shenaz Bapooji, CMO, Shopmatic believes that social media marketing is unavoidable. "You have to actively engage with your customers on social media or you lose the opportunity to gain more users," she said.

### Be Open on Social Media

Building a rapport with your customers is crucial for the growth of every business. Kothavala believes the better the relationship between the business and the consumer; the better positioned the business is to effectively sell and grow. He added that the strategy is simple but using it effectively can be a challenge for many small businesses to effectively engage their followers on social media. "Open up multiple communication avenues and be responsive & easy to find on social media. Stay integrated – make sure that social and call center teams communicate knowledge and best practices. Be proactive and engage with both positive and negative comments," he said.

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customer to share their opinion. You can later promote your product by offering solution for the problem statement,” said Kumar.

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## Act According to the Platform

There's no one single rule for social media. You have to learn and adapt your marketing strategies according to the platform you are using. Bapooji believes the best way to go about it is treat the customers the way they want to be treated, keeping in mind the medium you are using. “Each medium has its own rules. If it's Facebook, you can opt for a more informal approach, whereas in LinkedIn, it's a bit more professional. Similarly, if you want to share the story of your brand or customer testimonials, Instagram is a great platform,” she said.

## Engage, Don't Intrude

There are multiple things that you need to keep in mind while engaging with your customers. Bapooji said that you can't be seen as intruding their mind space. “Try to have relevant conversations with your customers,” she said.

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It's important to know and understand your audience. With the presence of multiple social media apps today, one can leverage social listening to acknowledge, resolve and thank customers. Kothavala said, "Have a purpose and develop a plan and set attainable goals are as critical. Never ignore feedback from followers and don't neglect your accounts. Also, avoid oversharing."



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