



Best Buy case study

Social CRM connects customers and drives \$5M benefit



about Best Buy

Best Buy is a multinational retailer of technology and entertainment products and services. With operations in the United States, Canada, Europe, China, and Mexico, the Best Buy family of brands and partnerships collectively generates more than \$45 billion in annual revenue and includes brands such as Best Buy; Audiovisions; The Carphone Warehouse; Future Shop; Geek Squad, Jiangsu Five Star; Magnolia Audio Video; Napster; Pacific Sales; The Phone House; and Speakeasy. Approximately 155,000 employees apply their talents to help bring the benefits of these brands to life for customers through retail locations, multiple call centers and websites, in-home solutions, product delivery, and online communities.

business challenge

How does one of the leading electronics retailers in the world engage its audience, provide support, build advocacy, and provide recommendations across multiple channels, in a scalable and manageable way?

solution

In early 2008, Best Buy took the initial step to begin engaging customers, publicly and transparently, outside of the traditional channels of retail stores and customer support (phone, email, and direct mail).

The Best Buy team, which would ultimately become the Social and Community team, proactively monitored the blogosphere for customers in need of either customer service support or

technical assistance and then helped resolve their questions or guided them to the answer.

In 2008, the team took a big step forward launching the new Best Buy Community, powered by Lithium Technologies. The community offers a place where customers can engage in conversations with Best Buy's advocates including Blueshirts, Geek Squad Agents, and the community teams, as well as with other customers. Users interact with peers; ask questions, rate answers by giving them 'kudos', and mark the best replies as 'accepted solutions'.

To ensure they were engaging with customers in all the correct channels, the team also started to utilize Twitter in multiple languages (English, Spanish, and French), moderating the official Facebook page and creating bi-weekly

videos. The team also runs a set of Lithium-powered blogs covering lifestyle and electronics topics for all their community users.

"Our customers are active in multiple channels, and it's important for us to be there too," said Best Buy's Community Manager, Gina Debogovich. "Through these engagements we are providing our customers with access to knowledgeable experts who can assist them with their questions and help them get the most out of their technology experience."

scaling the community

With the explosive growth in social network usage, especially that of Twitter, it is becoming increasingly difficult for teams to scale their resources to adequately cover the flow of questions.



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factoring in call deflection and sales influence, our online community engagements provide around a \$5MM benefit to the organization.

Gina Debogovich
Community Manager, Best Buy



"Purely adding more team members to cover a single channel is not a scalable, or sensible solution for any business, not just Best Buy," said Debogovich.

The solution? Working with Best Buy, the Lithium team developed a new, innovative approach to managing the surge in Twitter content by leveraging the power and content available in the community.

In July 2009, Best Buy launched its new Twelpforce initiative – along with a national advertising campaign. To help support this national campaign, the Best Buy Community added a TwelpForce board which integrated a TwelpForce Twitter feed, powered by Lithium's unique, bi-directional Twitter integration.

Unlike traditional Twitter feeds which have shown incoming questions or comments from specific hashtags,

Best Buy's Twitter integration allows the community team (and any other user with permission) to respond to questions directly from Twitter. Not only that, should useful information be in a tweet, a community team member can automatically create a new thread directly in the board and add that information to the community's base of knowledge.

"The Twelpforce initiative really helps users connect with Best Buy, and they know that if they ask anything to @Twelpforce, they are going to get assistance," said Debogovich. "Having the Twelpforce tweets exposed directly into the community really helps us continue the conversation with people, helping more than just the person who asked the question originally. It also means that we can start to manage our social channels from a common location, the community."

results

Best Buy's community is thriving. In an average quarter the team sees activity in the region of 600,000 customers visiting the community and posting 20,000 messages (over 77,000 messages and counting) and looking at over 22 million pages of content. The success of the first Best Buy Community has spurred the team on, and they now run four Lithium-powered communities, with the newest being dedicated to Mobile devices.

"Best Buy runs its communities for a reason, we believe very strongly that customers deserve the best service and advice we can give them," said Debogovich.

Visit the Best Buy community:
<http://forums.bestbuy.com>