

how 140 characters can ruin your reputation

essential reading for retailers

it only takes 140 characters to ruin your reputation

The empowered consumer has you in the palm of their hand.

Most ecommerce businesses haven't felt the repercussions of when social media turns sour – yet.

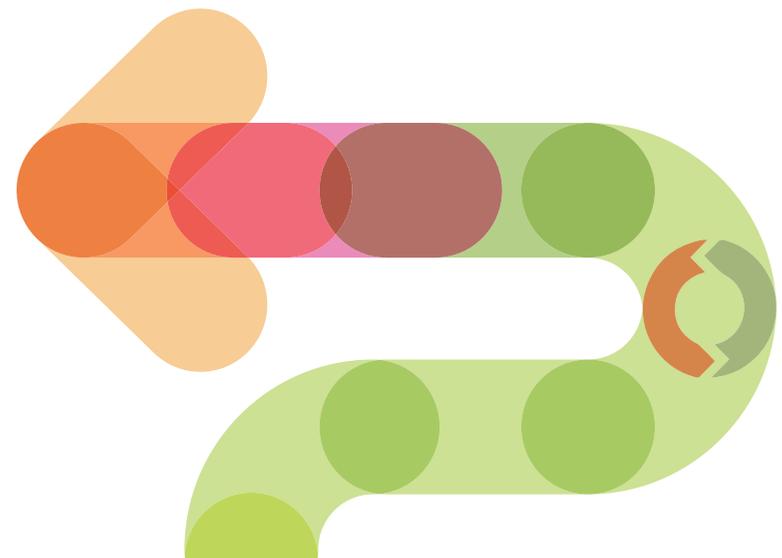
But keep someone needlessly waiting in for a delivery driver that never comes, and you can guarantee all their Facebook friends will know about it.

Use couriers that have a reputation for handing over damaged items, and the customer will be sharing a pic of the broken goods on their Instagram.

Or build up a delivery backlog after a crazy Black Friday and it won't be long before your Twitter handle is being spread all over the internet – and not for the right reasons.

It's pretty obvious that these scenarios are to be avoided at all costs.

But how?



what can be done?

Quite simply – do your job. And well.

Naturally, one side of it is making sure your business is the best it can be. But delivery and support – the main interactions your customers have with you after they press ‘buy’ – are crucial. If you’ve done everything right but your carrier does a bad job, it’s your reputation that will suffer.

Customers increasingly want companies to work the delivery of their purchase around them. Gone are the days when the customer would be happy with a vague idea of when their item would turn up.

We’re at the point where customers expect to be able to watch on a map as their parcel is being delivered to them. This isn’t a fad – these emerging delivery models are here to stay, and if you won’t embrace them, your competitors will.

If you’re not already using social media as a platform for customers to engage with your support team, you need to be.

Stats released by the Institute of Customer Service in May 2015 revealed a quarter of us have used social media to make a complaint in the last three months. 

For more than two thirds of these people, the way the company handled their complaint turned them very quickly from a keyboard warrior set on tarnishing reputations to an enthusiastic free PR machine, sharing the love for the company.

The benefits are three-fold. Not only are you handling delivery complaints quickly and more effectively, but you’re also quashing the customer’s anger (and protecting your reputation) and turning their frustration into respect.

Done well, it’s a powerful tool, and in a public forum where everyone can see everyone’s responses, companies have as much potential to be championed for their customer service as they do to be torn to pieces.



our five tips for improving your social media customer service

1

Make sure your team is qualified and up to date with training. Your customers are expecting speedy, knowledgeable responses and there's a lot to lose if they're not able to provide these.

2

Give your staff the tools they need to do the job. A centralised system that knows where any parcel is at any given time empowers staff to respond accurately.

See our eBook on 'Why Use A Delivery Management Platform' for more on this.

3

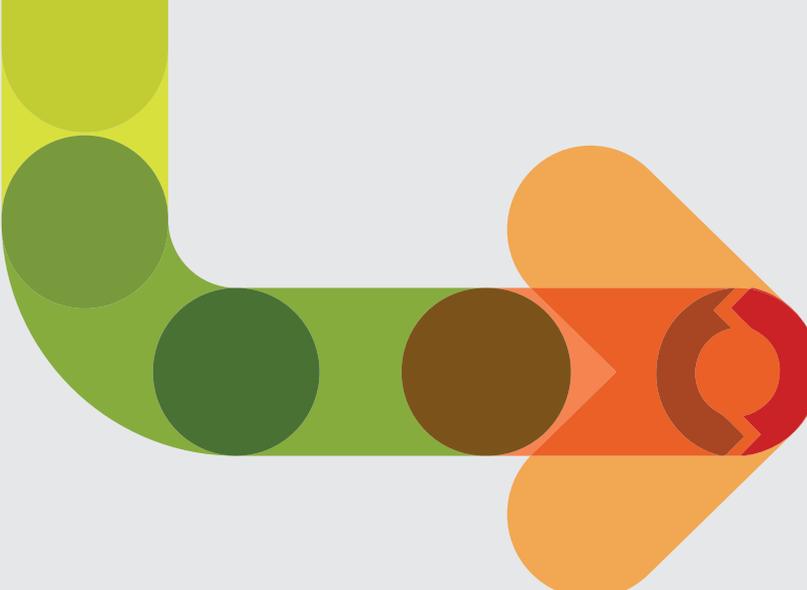
While social media is growing, it's not the be all and end all just yet. Make sure you're not alienating those who aren't ready to switch over by keeping email, post and phone communication an option.

4

Real people contacting you want to hear from a real person back. Ditch the stock phrases and script sheets and allow your staff the freedom to handle customers' problems like they would a friend.  It's a no brainer.

5

Internet shopping extends well past the 9-5 of the traditional bricks and mortar store. Don't forget this – customers certainly haven't. While round-the-clock support isn't always an option, extend it by as much as you can.



real-life examples of things done wrong... and right

And where would a guide on how social media can make or break your business be without a couple of our favourite examples.

First up, the good guys, AO.com, whose customer services team understands the damage that negativity online can do. The strategy is to respond quickly and honestly to any unhappy customers – typically replying to customers on social media within two to 10 minutes. The same customer service representative will also deal with the complaint from start to finish so the customer isn't passed from pillar to post.

The company also has a Facebook Feedback booklet that all delivery drivers can access. This contains positive and negative comments from previous deliveries. As AO's marketing director has been quoted as saying 'The drivers are the only people who meet our customers, so the impact they have is massive.'



But while AO.com handles social media with humility, humour and haste, the same can't be said for Santander, which attracted all the attention recently but for none of the right reasons.

After waiting 20 days for the delivery of a replacement bank card, one frustrated and impassioned embroidery fan decided to take things into his own hands by stitching his own.

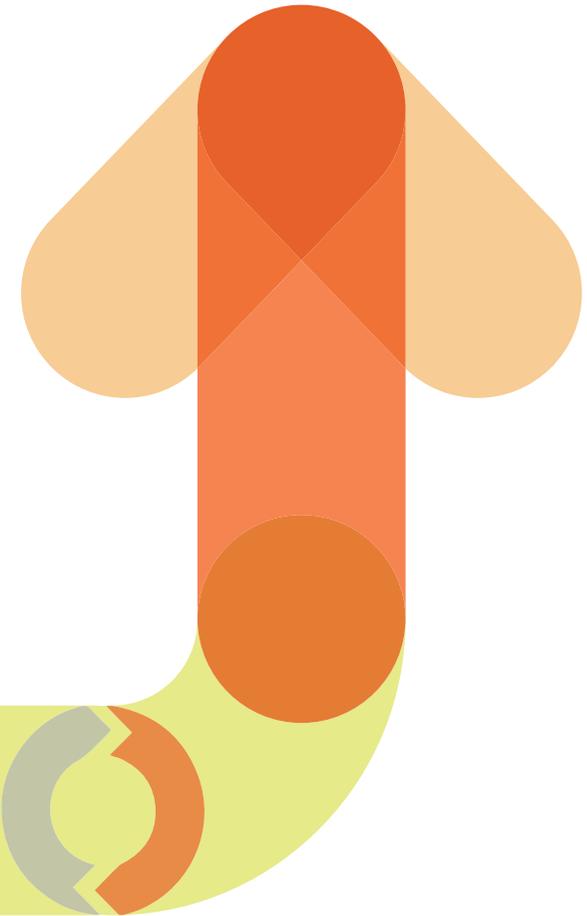
He shared an image of his creation on the company's Facebook page, which was then shared hundreds of times online and was reported by all the national press.

In the post, he said:

"I don't know how to make an actual debit card unfortunately. What I am good at though, really, really good at, is cross-stitching.

I spent a couple of hours yesterday stitching one for you, then I popped it in the post today, and Royal Mail assures me that it will be there tomorrow, along with a letter detailing all the ways that I'm mad at you for keeping me waiting.

I make that three working days.
Three days to make something, and get it to you."



After the damage had been well and truly done, Santander only then realised its mistake and offered an apology and £50 compensation.

A classic case of too little too late, but a great example of how the bad publicity could have been avoided by having more streamlined delivery processes and embracing social media better. 

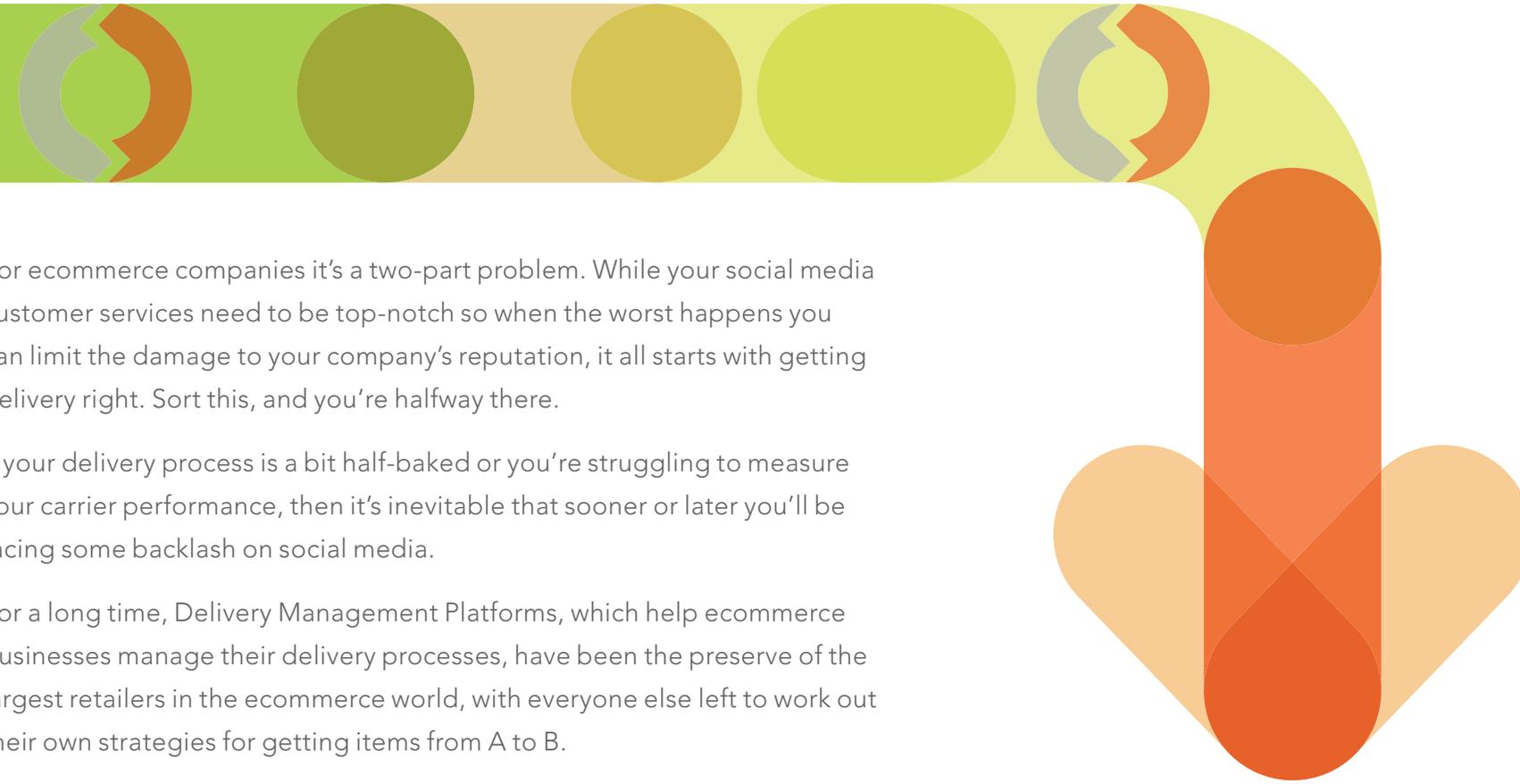
where to go from here?

For ecommerce companies it's a two-part problem. While your social media customer services need to be top-notch so when the worst happens you can limit the damage to your company's reputation, it all starts with getting delivery right. Sort this, and you're halfway there.

If your delivery process is a bit half-baked or you're struggling to measure your carrier performance, then it's inevitable that sooner or later you'll be facing some backlash on social media.

For a long time, Delivery Management Platforms, which help ecommerce businesses manage their delivery processes, have been the preserve of the largest retailers in the ecommerce world, with everyone else left to work out their own strategies for getting items from A to B.

Electio has changed all that. We know that you need to give your customers what they want, when they want it. As expectations keep rising, Electio gives you the tools you need to help you deliver on your promises – and feel social love rather than wrath from your customers.

A decorative graphic consisting of a horizontal bar with a color gradient from green to yellow, followed by a large, stylized arrow pointing downwards. The arrow is composed of overlapping circles in shades of orange and yellow.

**Discover more about
how Electio can solve your
delivery headaches**

Request a demo at www.electiodelivers.com

Ask us a question on 03300 555 284

Ping us an email hello@electiodelivers.com