

# CRM

## CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MAKING

**Wendy Lewis unveils the new rules of three T's:  
two-way conversations, transparency, and trust building**

**S**OCIAL MEDIA HAS TOTALLY REDEFINED the rules for how business is done and thus, how successful practices and brands should be managed. The impact of this sea change has had sweeping effects on both sides of the aisle in medical aesthetics.

A decade or so ago, one unhappy patient might tell a few of her friends about her doctor or complain about a less than perfect experience. Today, one unhappy patient can literally broadcast her displeasure to all her fans and followers in a matter of seconds, which can spread like flesh-eating bacteria all over the planet. Those fans and followers can in turn share it with their own fans and followers, and the end result can be gut-wrenching for the practitioner. Once that unhappy patient presses the send button, her message is out there and it is virtually indelible. All it takes is one person to share it and it can take on a life of its own. Regrettably, the same holds true for medical device manufacturers, pharma companies, and skin care brands.

In 2016, practitioners are faced with deciding whether they are willing to take some risks and expose their human side to foster new relationships with patients and customers—or to stay in their comfort zone and just keep plugging along. The real risk of the latter strategy is certain eventual extinction.

The traditional, one-way ad campaign that was the standard way to promote your brand has evolved into a more personal and dynamic two-way dialogue—the

operative word being 'two'. Social media has facilitated this form of brand promotion, and allows companies to connect and engage with their customers in unprecedented ways.

### Instant feedback

An important way to gain customer perspective with social media is by learning how they use your product; brands often base new products or services on their customers' original ideas. Getting instant feedback from your customers' perspective is the new reality, whether you like it or not. Social media platforms give you instant access to positive or negative feedback, which can provide valuable insights on your patient and customer's perspectives. For example, if you launch a new product or introduce a new treatment and share it on social media, you will instantly learn what your customers think of it, the good, the bad, and the ugly.

Social media is all about instant gratification. Therefore, socially active customers expect brands and companies to respond often literally in real-time. In this way, social media is transforming what was formerly referred to as customer relationship management (CRM). Consumers expect a response and they want it rapidly. Younger, more avid social media users may expect you to reply to their comments, complaints, and queries in the course of an hour, or at least the same day. After 24 hours, it may be lost forever.

This does not mean that there is no place for the traditional methods of communication we have grown

accustomed to using, such as phone, mail, and email. Many brands and practices do very well with these tactics, and their customers have benefited by receiving special offers, product recommendations, timely responses to their complaints and questions, and more. However, the field has expanded.

Today's customers don't really want to be 'managed', they want to be heard. They want to have a voice and connect with a real brand ambassador who gets them. They don't appreciate form letters, or 'Dear (insert customer name)' emails, and most of the other thinly veiled guises of personalization. They are innately sceptical and can see right through these tired old tactics.

Think about your worst CRM experiences from other service businesses you frequent. Hotels, restaurants, airlines, and retailers have had to step up their game. Even Verizon and Time Warner Cable and other carriers like them have pushed the envelope to win back customers who have fled to competitors after being subjected to their flawed CRM solutions. For example, automated answering systems manned by customer service reps in an offshore call center somewhere that put you on hold every time you ask a question, and having to press an endless series of buttons to get to speak to a live person or get redirected to another department, etc. Time Warner recently launched a television ad campaign that has reinvented the brand by addressing customer complaints head on. The series of ads show friendly service reps arriving at a customer's home at a specific appointment time, confirmation email being sent with the reps' name and photo akin to Uber, thereby humanizing the entire experience of the former cable man visit.

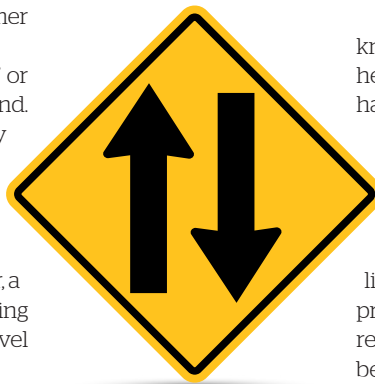
Communications addressed to me as 'Dear Windy' or 'To our valuable customers' are epic fails in my mind. They do not make me feel valued at all and they certainly don't instill customer loyalty. Customers are also wise to robots and they don't like them. In some situations, robots can be used to substitute a human when a simple request is needed, such as 'Is that in stock?' or 'What are your office hours?' However, a robot cannot replace a living, breathing, human being who is able to connect with customers on a deeper level and offer empathy.

American Airlines is my personal cause, as I feel entitled as a Million Miler™ to voice my grievances publically on Facebook and Twitter. I have racked up miles from phone charges just from all of the times I've had to book a flight that I couldn't do online, repeatedly stating my Advantage number and having it read back to me with a digit off or the LP comes back as LT or LB until I am left screaming to speak to an agent into the phone and clenching my teeth.



**WENDY LEWIS** is President of Wendy Lewis & Co Ltd, Global Aesthetics Consultancy, author of 11 books, and Founder/ Editor-in-Chief of [www.beautyinthebag.com](http://www.beautyinthebag.com). She is a contributor to a number of trade and consumer publications in the USA and Europe.

contact [wl@wlbeauty.com](mailto:w@wlbeauty.com)



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Another CRM tactic that gets scathing marks is when you sign up to receive a newsletter and thirty seconds later, the first in a constant stream of sales pitches for conferences, books, and webinars, enters your inbox. Bombarding your 'customers' with aggressive messages that have the sole purpose of generating revenue for your business or brand is so 2007. It will come across as exactly what it is—desperate, sales-focused, and offensive – and the end result will be nasty responses like 'Take me off your list!'

## Trust building

Building trust with your customers is like dating. The courtship phase doesn't happen overnight. It takes time, powers of persuasion and a healthy dose of sensitivity.

The old CRM model doesn't always take into consideration that customer relationships are not built just on disseminating the information required to make a purchasing decision; rather they are built on trust. Relationships also need to go both ways, which speaks to the heart of the disconnect with many brands and practices.

All businesses need to keep the human component in customer relationships, especially service businesses. It cannot be all one-sided; as in showing your hand on what you want to get from them. Customers can see right through this attitude. You have to give something to get something in return. Data is important of course, but at what expense? If you gain the data you want at the expense of alienating the customer, what you have ultimately accomplished is really nothing at all.

Customers or consumers have all the power and they know how to use it. They go online and make their voices heard and seek out like-minded individuals who may have had the same experience but may not be as vocal.

This opens up a dialogue that others will chime into, and an isolated complaint or negative review can snowball on you if you are not paying attention.

CRM is now two-way communication, rather than the one-way messaging of yesteryear. Start by listening rather than talking and responding rather than promoting. Social media is enabling company relationship management, the delicate balance of trust between a company and its customers can be better maintained. Enlightened companies know that by focusing on relationships, customers will manage themselves.

## Social customer service

Social customer service is the future of happy, loyal customers who keep coming back and send their friends and family. This is the benchmark of a successful aesthetic practice. Think of the 80/20 rule; 80% of your profits come from 20% of your patients or customers.

Practices are able to create meaningful relationships with customers through social media. Social media encourages relationships with prospective patients >

▷ and customers before, during, and after they have booked a consultation, had a treatment in your practice, or even visited your website. This kind of social dialogue between brands and customers is something traditional print, radio, and television advertising cannot really emulate. Social media engagement also offers a more cost-effective and measurable method.

To facilitate brand awareness and reach through social media, companies are assigning someone to the role of a 'Community Manager' who can foster relationships with online audiences and become an extension of your brand. This person can be in-house, or can also be a marketing consultant or external vendor who understands your brand and can feel comfortable enough to interact with patients or customers appropriately. The CM should be able to respond to simple requests in real-time, redirecting customers to your website, an email address or phone number, and follow-up if needed. In many cases, this person will act as the first point of contact on social media platforms, and respond as messages come in or posts appear online, and alert the Practice Manager or practitioner as medical questions arise, or a more specific response is required.

It is indeed possible to convert unhappy customers to brand advocates if complaints are handled swiftly and proficiently. Instead of the frustration

born out of the typical music-on-hold CRM experience, social messaging apps give customers almost instant access to representatives who may be empowered to make an impact on customer loyalty and solve problems.

**“Today’s customers don’t really want to be ‘managed’, they want to be heard. They want to have a voice and connect with a real brand ambassador who gets them.”**

CRM has gone mobile. The most popular social messaging apps boast hundreds of millions of monthly active users: Facebook Messenger, WeChat in China, and WhatsApp are leading the pack. Messaging is all about relationships. Global trends are showing that messaging is poised to take over email and call centers, and may play a crucial role in the way we do business. Making the most of

messaging means generating timely replies to customer complaints and inquiries, and building hyper-personal relationships. It is a fresh opportunity to reinvent how your brand deals with customers by offering engaging, relevant content to keep their attention and enhancing their experience. Messaging may be the perfect hybrid of live and digital communications.

**Stay human**

Practitioners and their staff work hard to build your brand’s singular personality and strengthen its reputation so it is important to carry these attributes through every aspect of your customer interactions. The human element is uniquely yours, and no one can steal that from you. Remember that anything you post to messaging apps, including photos, videos, and links, will live on indefinitely on your customers’ smartphones and can be quite easily shared across all social media channels.

Messenger apps do offer canned replies, scripted marketing jargon, and prewritten responses for business pages. However, these can only get you so far. It is still important to humanize these interactions, particularly when a patient or customer is already mad at you. Copy-and-paste replies do little to distill annoyance; in fact, they can quite often cause the customer’s dissatisfaction to escalate. We can always tell when the entity called ‘Joe’ or ‘Sue’ on the other end of the chat screen is a robot. How does that make you feel? It makes me feel unimportant, and like the brand isn’t so interested in helping me so they are taking the cheap and easy way out. It is important to stay on-brand so that messaging app chats sound like person-to-person conversations, not automated gobbledygook.

The power of social media lies in its capability to monitor trends, seize opportunities for growth, and create vocal brand advocates. In today’s world you want to be ‘friends’ with your customers, and keep them close. That is what consumers are demanding.

**OLD VS. NEW CRM**

<b>LANDLINE</b>	<b>MOBILE PHONE</b>
<b>EMAIL</b>	<b>TEXT</b>
<b>SNAIL MAIL</b>	<b>EMAIL</b>
<b>TEXT</b>	<b>MESSAGING</b>
<b>COMPLAINT FORM</b>	<b>FACEBOOK/TWITTER</b>
<b>TOLL-FREE NUMBER</b>	<b>CUSTOMERSERVICE@XYZ.COM</b>





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#### Pour les praticiens:

- Accepter de nouvelles consultations de dernière minute
- Être disponible même en dehors des heures d'ouverture
- Capturer une nouvelle patientèle.

#### Pour les patients:

- S'informer facilement des horaires libres
- Trouver rapidement un spécialiste, disponible et près de chez soi



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VOS RENDEZ-VOUS EN ESTHÉTIQUE MÉDICALE

## A local specialist

**Zestetik** lists aesthetic medicine specialists, enabling potential patients to book appointments online and on their mobile.

#### The practitioners' objectives are to:

- Optimise their appointment schedule
- Attract new patients
- Increase their online visibility
- Generate new last-minute appointments or appointments outside of office hours

#### The directory enables patients to:

- Effortlessly find a doctor close to their home
- See who is available



ANTI-AGE



Cherchez  
Look



Trouvez  
Find



Réservez  
Reserve



24/7  
24/7