

TMC'S ADVISOR

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From Call Centres to Social Immersion

By Ellen Koskinen-Dodgson

Customer service has come a long way over the past few decades. Customers used to put up with a poor level of service because the bar was set low – choices were few and limiting technology and corporate policy meant that complaining didn't help. Now, customers have more choices and complaining can be much more effective. In fact, a complaint posted on Facebook or Twitter might go viral and a viral complaint can cause more damage to a company than a multi-million dollar advertising budget can repair. Here are the top issues to consider when implementing your Social Strategy.



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[The End Of Roaming?](#) - By Peter Aggus

Since Cellular began we have been charged high fees for using the service outside our home area—known as 'Roaming'. Most Canadian plans now include free roaming within Canada but still stick to charging for international use. The European Court has recently ruled that roaming charges are discriminatory and new plans will allow European users full calling and roaming throughout the EU without extra charge. In North America, new players and new plans from existing players look set to challenge the status quo. Could this be the end of Roaming and Long Distance charges for us as well?

[Cascading Disasters: One Thing Leads to Another](#) - By Guy Robertson

Cascading disasters begin with negative events that lead to numerous other problems. A recent example occurred in Atlantic Canada, where accidental damage to a fibre-optic grid resulted in the loss of Internet, TV, wireless and landline service. Airports were forced to delay flights, frustrating airline customers at airports across the region. Meanwhile, many Maritimers were unable to use their credit and debit cards.

[Business Innovation Using Analytics](#) - By Lee-Ann Dittrich

In the 2017 MIT Sloan Management Review research study, 2600 survey respondents from around the world plus interviews with experts led to four key findings about the value of analytics on business innovation. The first finding is very encouraging—more companies are now reporting competitive advantage from their use of data and analytics, reversing a three year trend. Here's why as well as the other major findings.

The ROI on IT Assessments

Our clients have hired us to assess their IT operations for a variety of reasons including:

- As part of an IT Strategy
- Solving reliability problems
- Improving customer service levels
- Cost reduction
- Benchmarking
- Assessing staffing levels and skills
- Assessing IT Process Maturity

For more Information - Contact Ellen for a complimentary copy of **IT Assessments 123**.

ellen@tmcconsulting.ca or 604-506-2905

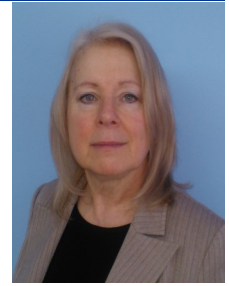
What Type of IT Department are You?

- Run** Keeping the lights on
- Grow** Improve existing systems
- Transform** Change the nature of the business

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Customer service has come a long way over the past few decades. Customers used to put up with a poor level of service because the bar was set low – choices were few and limiting technology and corporate policy meant that complaining didn't help. Now, customers have more choices and complaining can be much more effective. In fact, a complaint posted on Facebook or Twitter might go viral and a viral complaint can cause more damage to a company than a multi-million dollar advertising budget can repair. Here are the top issues to consider when implementing your Social Strategy.



How Social?

Generally speaking, every business needs to create and implement a social strategy. Social strategy can mean various things, but we suggest the definition of *how to relate to and communicate with your stakeholders*.

Every organization needs a different approach to a social strategy, though those in similar organizations would have similar needs. It's not a bad idea to start by looking at what some of your peers are doing.

Why?

The first question is why are you doing this? Reasons could include:

- General branding
- Customer service (help desk, FAQs, chat...)
- Promote new products
- Encourage feedback
- Encourage design input
- Drive traffic to site
- Provide deals/coupons

This can be difficult but spending time on the needs assessment will support



better answers to the remaining questions and the most efficient/effective use of funds.

Who?

The next step is to define who you want to interact with. Most organizations focus on customers but in addition to customers, stakeholders can be:

- reviewers of your product/services
- crowdsource participants for new product ideas
- Suppliers
- Regulators

- staff...

Where?

Once you decide who you count as stakeholders, you need to find out where your stakeholders go to communicate. This might be LinkedIn, Facebook, a community section of your website. Your stakeholders will know what they want you to do.

Focus on Them

What do your stakeholders want to talk about? This is a large topic and deserves serious investigation.

Who do they want to talk to (reviewers, other customers, their friends, product support...)?

The only way to maximize participation is to either help deliver a stakeholder's unmet social needs (connection and interaction) or to provide an appropriate incentive—what's in it for them?

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Ellen Koskinen-Dodgson is President and Managing Partner of TMC IT and Telecom Consulting Inc. She is an IT and Telecommunications Management Consultant, electrical engineer, author, speaker, media resource and Expert Witness.

The End Of Roaming? By Peter Aggus



Since Cellular began we have been charged high fees for using the service outside our home area—known as ‘Roaming’. Most Canadian plans now include free roaming within Canada but still stick to charging for international use. The European Court has recently ruled that roaming charges are discriminatory and new plans will allow European users full calling and roaming throughout the EU without extra charge. In North America, new players and new plans from existing players look set to challenge the status quo. Could this be the end of Roaming and Long Distance charges for us as well?

20 Years Ago

When Cellular services began, long distance (LD) communication was expensive. It cost over 35¢/min to call Vancouver from Victoria and international calls approached \$1/min.

For cellular users, roaming fees were imposed to recover the cost of connecting calls to a phone in a remote area. LD charges covered calls made back to the home area.

The Real Cost Today

Thanks to falling electronics costs and fibre-optic line systems, LD charges are no longer really relevant as a cost recovery mechanism. That \$1 call to the UK now costs less than 5¢. Internet service is billed only as a bandwidth access charge—with no distance component. So why should cellular traffic be any different? It is all just data these days.

Wholesale vs Retail

Consider using your bank card to buy some groceries. You can use a retailer who banks at the same bank as you, so the fee comes from your account into their account in one step. You can also use a retailer who banks with a different bank, so the fee has to go between banks. The groceries still cost you the same.



As a cellular user, you would like the service to work in the same way, and this is the argument recently won in Europe. You do not care who provides the service any more than you care which bank your retailer uses. Your own service provider is paid the ‘retail’ cost of calls you make under your plan with them and they should pay the service provider who serves you whatever the ‘wholesale’ cost is.

Most carriers have dropped roaming fees within their network—proving that the fees no longer relate to a service cost. However they still apply if you ‘roam’ onto another carrier’s network. You will do this crossing an international border, into the US or over to a different continent.

Competition

Bell, for example, offer a basic phone plan with unlimited use in Canada (no roaming or LD fees) for \$40/month. To use the phone in the US will add either \$5/day or \$40 for 30 days—and that only covers 200 minutes of calls.

The new Freedom service from Shaw offers unlimited Canadian use for \$25/month. For \$15/month (\$20 from October) their phones can be used in the US for up to 2400 min of calls.

The Freedom plan looks like a good deal—which it is compared to others. However even their lower \$15 fee reimburses them for fees that are no longer relevant. The European argument is that the handling carrier simply charges the owning carrier the wholesale cost for the call—which is exactly what the owning carrier would pay themselves if they routed the call.

The Future

LD fees should be extinct and all costs should come from the service subscription fees. Roaming fees are discriminatory and should also go.

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Peter, as an engineer & technology management consultant, has developed innovative & cost-effective solutions for clients in many industries.

Cascading Disasters: One Thing Leads to Another By Guy Robertson



Cascading disasters begin with negative events that lead to numerous other problems. A recent example occurred in Atlantic Canada, where relatively minor damage to a fibre-optic grid resulted in the loss of Internet, TV, wireless and landline service. Airports were forced to delay flights, and many Maritimers were unable to use their credit and debit cards. Hurricane Harvey in Texas was orders of magnitude worse.

A Bit of Panic

"The inconvenience of a few hours of phone outage underscores our vulnerability," said a retired university professor in St. John, NB. "Things could have gotten much worse. But lots of people had no idea about what to do when their phones stopped working. In some workplaces there was a bit of panic."

Enter Harvey

The residents of Houston, TX experienced far worse in late August when Hurricane Harvey hit the region with record-breaking rainfall and widespread flooding. The hurricane served as the primary event; after that, there were countless other disasters—large and small—that caused even more damage as well as fatalities. Power outages occurred across the region, communications networks failed and rivers flowed down streets and highways.

Unexpected Damage

"This situation became one of the worst disasters—or series of connected disasters—to have struck Texas in modern times," said Al, an emergency management instructor at two



southern Texas colleges. "We assumed that [Hurricane] Harvey could get ugly, but we didn't expect it to damage so much of our regional infrastructure."

Problems included the disruption of water supply and sewerage, the loss of computer hardware and data in thousands of offices, difficulties with food and pharmaceutical supply to millions of residents, the risk of disease outbreaks, and the costs of cleanup.

"Realistically the cleanup will take years and cost many billions of dollars," said Al. "Consider one aspect of the cleanup: the restoration of an IT system in a medium-sized office. Every workstation on the ground floor

has been submerged for several days, and must be replaced. Many disaster plans do not address the challenge of timely hardware replacement, or deal with post-disaster accessing of backup data stored off-site. Under the circumstances, IT suppliers have problems of their own, like a shortage of functional delivery vehicles and the closure of local gas stations. And employees in many companies will be absent for lengthy periods, as they are busy protecting their families."

Review Your Risks

While disasters are infrequent, and the worst disasters are rare, we regularly review our clients' risk analysis to recognize their region's changing risk profile. Regional disasters such as floods, forest fires, and earthquakes can cause an enormous cascade of subsequent problems that you should not discount. To do so could leave you and your operations under water.

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Guy Robertson is a senior planner at TMC and an instructor at the Justice Institute of BC and Langara College. He has published two books and numerous articles on corporate security and disaster planning, and offered workshops and lectures at conferences across North America and in the UK.

Business Innovation Using Analytics

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In the 2017 MIT Sloan Management Review research study, 2600 survey respondents from around the world plus interviews with experts led to four key findings about the value of analytics on business innovation. The first finding is very encouraging—more companies are now reporting competitive advantage from their use of data and analytics, reversing a three year trend. Here's why as well as the other major findings.



1. Analytics Advantage

There are three reasons why companies are changing their thinking on the competitive value of business analytics:

- Wider use of analytics within companies (more groups are getting involved)
- Better knowledge of what analytics can deliver
- A stronger focus on specialized, applications that target specific deliverables.



2. Innovation Surging

Hand in hand with the increasing view that business analytics provide competitive advantage, 70% of respondents said that they had access to more useful data than before. Similarly, 68% reported that analytics have helped them innovate.

3. Analytics Maturity

Companies are categorized according to their level of analytics sophistication:

- **Analytical Innovators**—have a culture of making data driven decisions and rely on analytics for strategic insights and innovative

ideas

- **Analytical Practitioners**—use analytics primarily to guide operational improvements
- **Analytically Challenged**—this category is self-explanatory

The number of Analytic Innovators jumped for the first time and stands at 17%. The Analytically Challenged still stand at 33%.

Analytic Innovators report high levels of success with using analytics to improve existing processes, existing products and services, and in developing new processes, products

and services—87 to 93% vs. 16 to 20% for the Analytically Challenged.

4. Sharing Data Helps

Organizations with a high ability to innovate report that they make a practice of sharing data both internally and beyond company borders at much higher levels than other organizations.

Categories	Innovators	Non-
Customers	63%	38%
Prospects	58%	35%
Suppliers	43%	21%
Internal	80%	53%
Competitors	15%	8%

Our Experience

Clearly, effort is required to move from the ranks of the Analytically Challenged to the Analytic Innovators. Our clients find that the rewards make it worth the effort.

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Lee-Ann is a researcher and business analyst that oversees benchmarking studies.