

The Future of Social Media:

PERSONALIZING BUSINESS BY FOCUSING ON PEOPLE (NOT PROFILES)

MENTION



LUCY M. (Marketing Manager)

Has 2,345 followers

Description:

Brand strategy advisor, hiking enthusiast.

Latest Tweet:

GREAT resource! Download @HubSpot's New ebook: 15 Business Blogging Mistakes and TI

LEAD



JOHN P. (Digital Strategist)

Viewed pricing page 7 times

Sales Rep:

John Smith

Latest Tweet:

"the business results speak for themselves"
Foster, Salesforce <http://Desk.com> on using
@HubSpot Software <http://bit.ly/17oDphi>

CUSTOMER



SARAH W. (Dir. of Marketing)

Customer for 3 years

Package Level:

Enterprise

Latest Tweet:

Roughly a month later and @bhalligan @dharmesh followed through on their promise. Called @HubSpot support and got right in, no wait!



IS THIS EBOOK RIGHT FOR ME?

Not quite sure if this ebook is right for you? See the below description to determine if your level matches the content you are about to read.

INTRODUCTORY

Introductory content is for marketers who are new to the subject. This content typically includes step-by-step instructions on how to get started with this aspect of inbound marketing and learn its fundamentals. Click here to read our introductory-level ebook on this topic, [How Twitter Can Solve Challenges for Marketing, Support, and Sales](#).

INTERMEDIATE

THIS RESOURCE

Intermediate content is for marketers who are familiar with the subject but have only basic experience in executing strategies and tactics on the topic. This content typically covers the fundamentals and moves on to reveal more complex functions and examples. After reading it, you will feel comfortable leading projects with this aspect of inbound marketing.

ADVANCED

Advanced content is for marketers who are, or want to be, experts on the subject. In it, we walk you through advanced features of this aspect of inbound marketing and help you develop complete mastery of the subject. After reading it, you will feel ready not only to execute strategies and tactics, but also to teach others how to be successful.

THE FUTURE OF SOCIAL MEDIA: PERSONALIZING CONVERSATIONS BY FOCUSING ON PEOPLE (NOT PROFILES).

WRITTEN & DESIGNED BY ANUM HUSSAIN

Anum Hussain is an Inbound Content Strategist at HubSpot, where she manages content plans for various company goals. She strategizes which content types, formats, and ideas should be implemented for each content plan, and then works on the execution and analysis of each. Anum was recognized in *B2B Marketing Magazine* as one of ten 2013 Rising Stars.

She is an active writer for the HubSpot Inbound Marketing Blog, has previously written for the Boston Globe and LinkedIn, and also maintains her own blog on content strategy at [anumhussain.com](#).



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Introduction: Putting the social back in social media.

Let's think about *offline* conversations for a moment.

Can you imagine referring to your mother as a lead at the dinner table? Or starting a conversation at a food lovers convention about how much you hate the existence of food?

Now hop back online and think: Why don't we use that same logic in social media conversations? As soon as we put our marketing hats on, we take off our human pants. We forget that behind every social media profile, there's a living, breathing, human being. One who has unique interests and needs.

We hear this often: Social media has introduced windows of opportunity for brands to improve their business. What we don't hear is *what is behind that window*.

This ebook opens the curtains and unveils that opportunity: context.

Our marketing and sales conversations have been lacking context. Rather than conducting scripted conversations, use social media to provide authentic, but non-creepy, information to personalize your sales and marketing. This ebook will dive into how you can use social media to do just that.

Key Terms Used in this Ebook.

Here is a list of useful terms that you'll want to know and learn before diving into this ebook. The terms define important aspects of what we have described as the future of social media.

Marketing Database: Similar to an address book, a marketing database is your information bank of contact information for all persons who have shown interest in your brand by sharing information through transactions, form submissions, applications, reward programs, and so on.

Segmentation: A tactic rooted in targeting your business or organizational communications to specific audiences based on their expressed interests or needs.

Social Intelligence: Information collected from social media platforms when a prospect interacts with your content via retweets, shares, comments, and the like.

Social Influencers: A social media user with the capacity or power to be a compelling force on or produce effects on the actions, behavior, and opinions, of others.

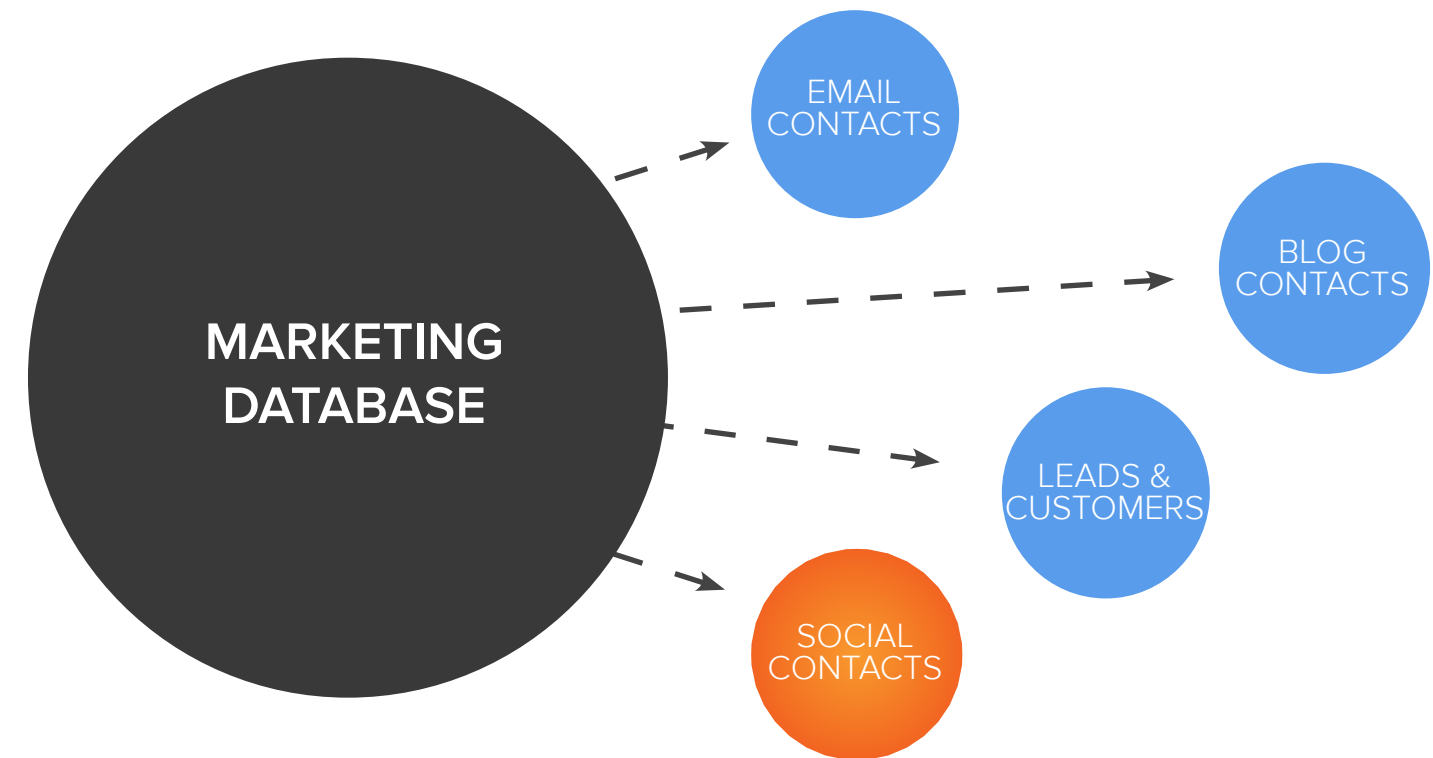
CHAPTER 1

THE SOCIAL PART OF MARKETING: DATABASE GROWTH

Social Followers & Your Marketing Database

Your [marketing database](#) is essentially your business “following.” Your database consists of your email and blog subscribers, leads, customers, evangelists, and so on.

Rather than having your social media followers exist in a separate spectrum, these users should be understood as a vital component of your database. Your database is the key to ultimately integrating social media information into the rest of your marketing efforts and overall strategy.



i By using one unified marketing database, you can add a layer of social media insights into your existing contacts, thus gaining valuable information to target messages, nurture leads, and attract new contacts to your business.

Comparing Your Social Database to Your Email Database

Your email database consists of contacts who have subscribed to receive email communication from you. They have opted in to receive your marketing resources, announcements and promotions, and (if your email list is healthy) should be interacting with your content by opening, clicking, and forwarding your content.

Your social media database works in a similar fashion. It consists of followers and fans who want to engage with your brand online. They're retweeting, resharing, and repinning your posts. These actions show a clear interest in the messages you are sending and, potentially, the product/service you have to offer.

In this context, the interests and actions of your email recipients and social followers overlap. The act of opting in to receive email updates from a company is very similar to, for instance, hitting the 'Like' button on a Facebook page. In each scenario, someone is willing to hear from you.

The future of social media requires capitalizing on the context social media has openly provided. As you grow your social following, you'll add more and more social intelligence to your marketing database that can help personalize your marketing and sales conversations.

EMAIL DATABASE



ACTIONS

- Opting in
- Opening emails
- Clicking emails
- Sharing emails

SOCIAL MEDIA DATABASE



- Following
- Reading
- Clicking on updates
- Sharing updates

CHAPTER 2

HOW TO GROW YOUR FOLLOWING & FIND INFLUENCERS

The Social Media Machine

In order to build your social database, you need to build your following. The rate at which your following grows — whether you're a widely known consumer brand or a small software business — has consistently been a pain point for social media marketers and users. You can solve this challenge by understanding what content is appropriate for your business and who you should be sharing that content with.

Content is truly at the root of attracting new social media followers. The content you post on social media platforms travels well beyond the current followers you have.

Just be careful not to confuse growing your social media following with seeing success on social media. While gaining a following is critical, have real, human, conversations with those followers is just as critical. We'll discuss that component further in chapter three. For now, let's focus on gaining a following by examining how the social media machine is powered with content.

THE SOCIAL MEDIA MACHINE VISUALIZED

As you can see in the social machine illustrated here, the best way to increase your own following is to infiltrate that *extended reach*. This is the area many social media users often don't consider when building their social growth strategies. There's a reason Facebook newsfeeds are based off its [EdgeRank Algorithm](#), an algorithm that essentially dictates what content appears in news feeds based on who is engaging with it. Here's an illustration of how your social media content spreads.



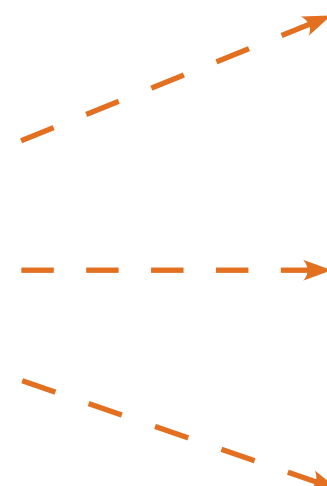
CONTENT



UPDATES



SHARE/LIKE
RETWEET



ACTIONS FROM
EXTENDED REACH



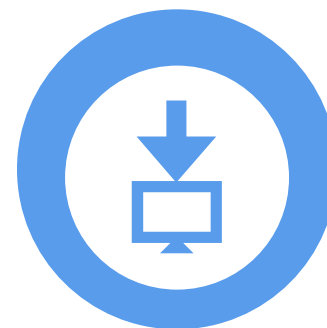
FOLLOW



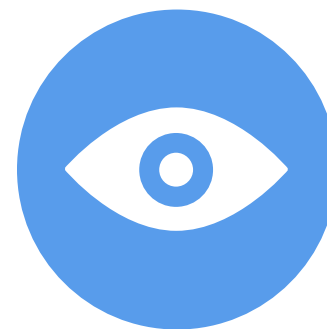
SHARE/LIKE/
RETWEET



CLICK



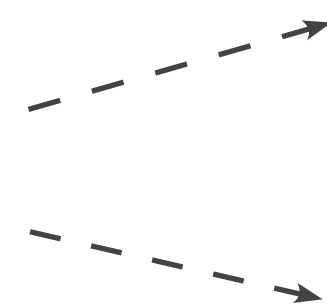
DOWNLOAD
CONTENT



VISIT
CONTENT



CLICK



ACTIONS FROM
CURRENT REACH

Color Legend:

- Company
- Followers
- Followers of Followers

5 Ways to Grow Your Social Media Following

As this ebook is titled, business needs to focus on people -- not the profiles in front of those people. In order to grow your social media following, you need to create content targeted to those people. Here are five ways to connect with the human behind the profile.

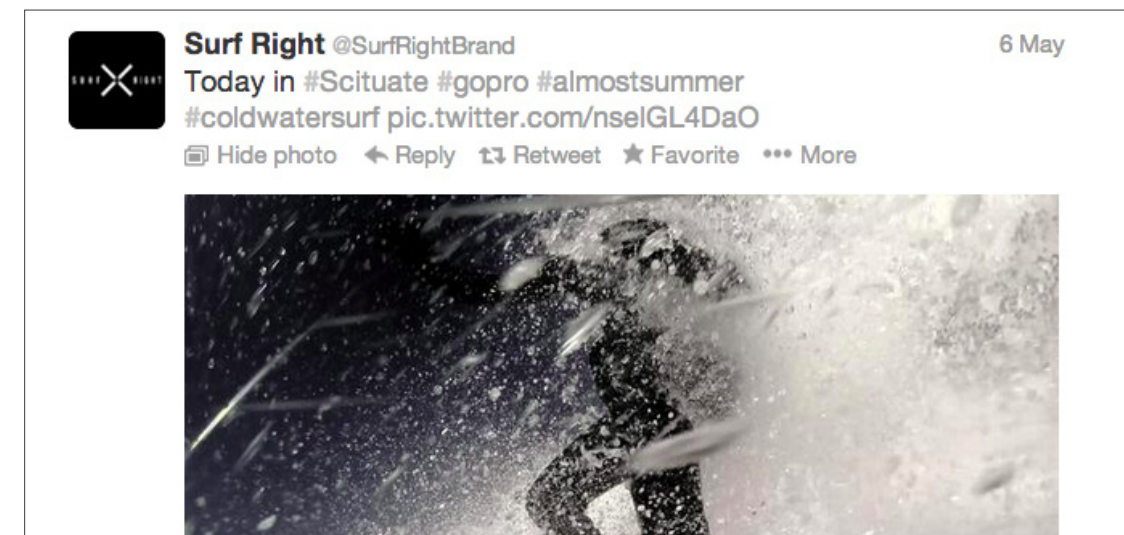
1) Have a Little Fun

When people are browsing a social network like Facebook, they're often looking for content that will add some entertainment or amusement to their day. Eric Nakagawa, the creator of 'I can Has Cheezburger,' says the goal of his social presence is to simply make people smile for five seconds a day. There's no reason your brand can't do the same when appropriate. Oreo does this incredibly well.



2) Create Visual Content

Visuals are processed 60,000X faster in the brain than text. Think about visuals on every social level. What image are you including in your blog posts or website that will eventually be shown on social? What images are you creating to share on your Facebook page? How are you scripting tweets to tell people you're sharing an image? Invest time in ensuring your images are as great as your messages.



3) Educate Your Audience

Social media users are looking for easy-to-digest content when browsing their feeds. But despite the needed brevity in your social content, users also love retweeting or resharing content that benefits them and their audience — or simply makes them look smart. If they see value in a data point or influencer quote your business posted, they will gladly repost it to share their newly gained expertise to their own networks. That, in turn, will help extend the reach of your content.

4) Encourage Employee Sharing

Your employees have networks that can help increase your own following. Social media users are following your employees purely because of the content they share, industry they're in, or relation to the user. Send your employees "lazy tweets," pre-crafted tweets that they can simply copy and paste into their own streams. If they're handed the message, they'll be more willing to share, which will result in a more streamlined effort and help new followers discover the original curator of the message: you.

GaggleAMP is another effective way to involve your employees.

GaggleAMP is a social marketing platform that lets companies amplify their social media reach by leveraging individual employees (or customers and partners).

My History	Leaderboard	Manager Dashboard	Select Gaggle: FIR
Edit	Added On	Share or No Thanks?	
AmEx brings its Foursquare marketing approach to the UK. @jangles explains it all on this week's FIR. http://gag.gl/MLVI	06/04/12	Share on Twitter	No Thanks
AmEx brings its Foursquare marketing approach to the UK. @jangles explains it all on this week's FIR. http://gag.gl/pamC	06/04/12	Share on LinkedIn	No Thanks
AmEx brings its Foursquare marketing approach to the UK. @jangles explains it all on this week's FIR. http://gag.gl/SQlj	06/04/12	Share on Facebook	No Thanks

5) Interact with Influencers

Spend time researching who your influencers are, whether they're customers, industry experts, avid fans, or active community members. Then find ways to mention them in order to incorporate their Twitter handle or Facebook Page in your message, giving them a reason to reshare or retweet your content to their following. In this way, influencers spread the word about your brand, helping you earn new followers, and possibly leads and customers.

Stay in touch with your influencers over time. If they are true fans of your product or service, gauge when to involve them further. For example, if you're about to launch a new product, you could reach out before the public announcement to give them the inside scoop for sharing. If you're not sure who your influencers in your following are, try using a tool like HubSpot to pull a list of influencers from your database.

Name your list

Social Media Influencers

Should HubSpot update this list over time?

Yes, make a smart list No, make a static list

Describe the contacts who should be in this list

Follower Count is greater than 2500

AND

Twitter Clicks is greater than 1

AND

Most Recent Social Click is later than 06/01/2012

Add "OR" Save

i HubSpot's lists tool is a simple way to gather your influencers. Simply create a list with criteria similar to those shown above, and a list will populate with all users in your contacts database who match that criteria.

CHAPTER 3

THE VALUE OF SOCIAL MEDIA CONTEXT IN YOUR OVERALL MARKETING & SALES STRATEGY

The Value of Social Context for Segmenting

Now that you've built your following and you've focused on your social growth by targeting social influencers, what do you do with these contacts?

Eighty-four percent of B2B marketers use segment marketing in their email campaigns. However, 37% of these marketers say a lack of user data is a major obstacle to effective segment targeting.

That's where the value of a unified marketing database and the value of social media followers come into play. Use that follower information to segment your messaging effectively and to the right people — those who are already interacting with you on social platforms.

For example, Coach occasionally emails their active Facebook fans to alert them of their latest 25% coupon.



The Value of Social Context for Marketing

Content may be king, but context rules the entire empire. Without context, our conversations are dry and meaningless. Social media provides that needed context. Here are three examples of where context from social personalized a brand conversation with its consumer or lead.

1. A Tweet Come True

Social is often a place for sharing random and sarcastic thoughts — at least that’s all Peter Shankman seemed to be doing when he tweeted:



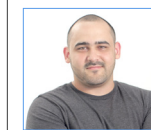
Hey @Mortons -- can you meet me at newark airport with a porterhouse when I land in two hours? K, thanks. :)

But to Peter’s surprise, he left the airport and was met by a man in a tuxedo outside. He worked for Mortons, and brought him a Porthouse steak, an order of Colossal Shrimp, a side of potatoes, and bread.

Now that’s a great example of how you can use context on social media to delight a customer.

2. A Call for Samosas

Sam Mallikarjunan, a HubSpot employee, noticed one of his Twitter connections talked frequently about samosas. He responded by saying:



@RakeshTheKumar every time I see your profile and read @Social_Samosa I get hungry for samosas lol.

In response, Social Samosa, a social media marketing business in India, used the information provided in Sam’s profile about where he works to locate a local samosa provider ... and send Sam samosas.

Now that’s a brand Sam, and the various HubSpot employees who got to enjoy the samosas, are avid fans of. It’s a story Social Samosa was able to [share on their blog](#), and landed them in our ebook. It’s a story that couldn’t be told if it weren’t for the real, human, context Twitter provided.

3. Touchdown Tweeting

Let’s move on from food-related examples. Gary Vaynerchuck, founder of the WineLibrary.com, once asked his marketing department to closely follow a customer’s Twitter account. The result was countless tweets about the Chicago Bears and the team’s quarterback Jay Cutler.

Using this social context, [Gary sent him a Bears jersey signed by Cutler](#). The customer responded in delight, thanking him for the gift and wondering how Gary knew to send the jersey.

Even though the customer had openly tweeted his interests, he never thought that a business would be interested in what he has to say. But that's exactly what we're getting at, using social media to have meaningful conversations with people.

What We Can Learn from These Brands:

Social media provides information and insight into your fans, customers, and so on. This unique insight is what helps your brand communicate with humans, not the accounts that those humans use.

With those three stories in mind, here are three pieces of context social media provides for you to use in your marketing:

- 1. Job Title:** This provides insight into the type of decision-making impact the user has at their respective companies.
- 2. Lifecycle Stage:** Who is this user in relation to your business? A casual Twitter mention, a qualified lead, or an actual customer?
- 3. Content:** Knowing their latest shared content can help inform your response, or the user's connection to your businesses.

The Value of Social Context for Sales

1. Employ Context in Conversations

Spreading your leads' social information will empower you to perfect your sales and marketing alignment. Here's a small demonstration of the difference social lead intelligence and context can make on a sales call:

Hi Anum, I noticed you work in HubSpot's marketing department and thought you might be interested in learning about how our product that helps you do marketing better. When is a good time to chat?

VS

Hi Anum, Thanks for sharing our latest ebook on Twitter! Did you enjoy the read?

Do you have any questions still lingering after checking out that post, and if so could I help clarify or provide further assistance?

The first conversation shows a sales rep has some information and decided to call, whereas the second one shows a personalized approach to starting the relationship.

2. Use Information to Maintain Communication

As our sales team will attest, maintaining communication after a sales leads converts into a customer is just as important to a business as closing the customer in the first place. Here's one of the many tweets Danielle Herzberg, a senior sales manager, sends to customers she sees on Twitter.



Whether you're in marketing or sales, these examples show how social media intelligence can help personalize your conversations for greater business success.

CONCLUSION & ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Conclusion: Just be human.

Gary Vaynerchuk clearly understood the need to emphasize people, not posts, when he said:

*“Social media requires that business leaders start thinking like small-town shop owners. This means taking the long view and avoiding short-term benchmarks to gauge progress. **It means allowing personality, heart, and soul of the people who run all levels of the business to show.**”*

That’s what context can provide: personality, heart, and soul. Context helps personalize your sales and marketing conversations. It helps you communicate with other humans so that they want to not only talk to you, but actually consider you in the buyer decision process, and ultimately buy.

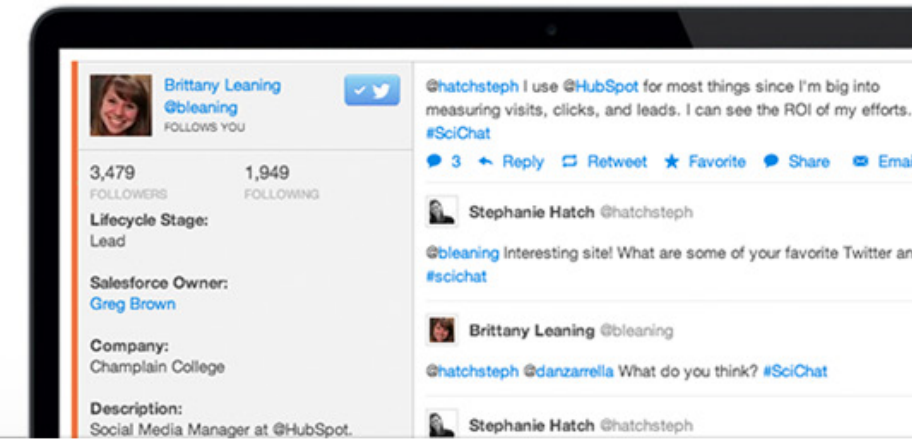
So the next time you begin a conversation or draft an update on any social media platform, stop and think: What would this conversation look like in real life?

It’s not media — it’s **social** media. You don’t need to be revolutionary, just be human. Imagine that!

INTRODUCING

HubSpot Social Inbox

Make social personal again.



FIGHT THE NOISE, PERSONALIZE YOUR RESPONSES, AND DELIVER REAL SOCIAL MEDIA ROI WITH SOCIAL INBOX.

HubSpot’s latest social media tools, titled Social Inbox, gives you the context you need to elevate the conversations that matter most to your business. With social inbox, every social media interaction hits your Contacts Database, allowing you to personalize interactions like never before. [Click here to request an early demo.](#)

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WANT EARLY ACCESS TO
THE NEW SOCIAL INBOX?**

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SOCIAL INBOX IN ACTION
WITH A FREE DEMO.**

[Click here to request an early demo of social inbox, and learn how to develop a scalable social strategy for every department in your](#)

