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Love it? Hate it? Either way, I'll say!

A research note from The Yonder Digital Group, April 2017

We're now just as likely to share positive experiences as bad experiences

New research, commissioned by Yonder Digital Group, has shown that we are just as likely to share good experiences with family and friends, as bad ones. • The research shows this is true either when talking to family and friends, or when posting on social media. It is likely that the years since the Millennium, which have experienced the boom in social media usage, have turned us into a 'like' culture.

Not only have Facebook, LinkedIn, Pinterest and Snapchat quite literally encouraged people to share things they like, but there has also been solid growth in, and appreciation of, peer recommendation networks such as TripAdvisor.

This research note tackles a number of received wisdoms such as:

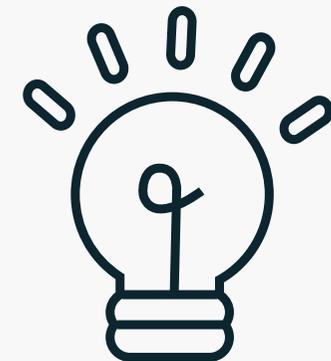
- consumers are more vocal about complaints than they are about recommendations
- digital recommendations are reserved for the young
- data must be an exchange of value

Read on to find out how Yonder's research turns these statements on their head

The effect on sharing positive customer experiences is wider than just the 'digital native' generation – in fact there is little variation between age groups. Nine in every ten people share good experiences, whether they are in their twenties or in their sixties. On the other hand, social media sharing of good experiences does vary with age. Whereas almost half of people in the twenties will do so, this drops to around a fifth of people in their fifties and sixties.

Companies wishing to encourage customers to 'spread the good news' about their positive experiences need to understand the best medium through which to do so. Excellent customer experiences – which do result in better commercial outcomes – are being delivered by pioneering organisations that understand each customer's individual mix of channel preferences – email, mail, phone, social, webchat, etc.

Therefore, a new science of actually encouraging good experience sharing by customers is being developed – but most effectively by those who recognise that a mix of live interactions and social media will lead to the best commercial outcomes.



Overturning received wisdoms

How many times is the old adage repeated:

Twice as many people tell others about bad experiences as good ones.

Yet, as is so often the case, such received wisdom is not wise at all. In fact, latest research commissioned by Yonder Digital Group from independent research organisation MindMetre would tend to tell us that this old belief is now simply plain wrong.

The last fifteen years have seen the rise of social media, which has proved a hugely popular medium for sharing the good experiences in life. And its effect is now being felt not just on the digital native generation, but resonating throughout society, rich and poor, young and old, north and south.

The scale of the social media revolution can be illustrated through a few vital statistics. The average LinkedIn user spends seventeen minutes on the site each month. Almost **40%** of Europeans are on Facebook. **Three quarters** of Facebook users and **half** of Instagram users use each site daily. And Pinterest drives **25%** of all retail referral traffic.

Sharing good experiences

This social usage has major implications for companies as they try to keep customers, gain new ones and persuade each customer to spend more of their 'wallet' with them. We are now a society that likes to share good experiences (as well as bad ones!). This means that new techniques need to be developed to remind us to share, and to make the process easy.

	Total	Gender		Age					
	Agree	Male	Female	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
If I have a good customer experience with a company I usually tell my friends and/or family	89%	87%	92%	84%	88%	91%	88%	91%	92%
If I have a bad customer experience with a company I usually tell my friends and/or family	84%	83%	86%	78%	82%	87%	86%	87%	87%
If I have a good customer experience with a company I usually post something about it on social media	38%	39%	38%	49%	60%	45%	32%	23%	22%
If I have a bad customer experience with a company I usually post something about it on social media	31%	32%	30%	38%	46%	41%	27%	22%	14%



It's not just social media

However, simply to focus on social media would be a terrible commercial mistake. A far greater proportion of people 'tell' friends and family about their good experiences (89%) than 'post' it on social media (38%). And this proportion of people 'telling' each other about these good things is consistent across all age groups. Therefore, a proper understanding of the 'customer journey' and how it involves sharing good experiences is required – one that doesn't fall into age-stereotypes but is based on good, objective analysis of customer data and behaviour.

While consumers should rightfully feel that, from their point of view, the aim of data collection methods such as loyalty schemes is to reward them for their business, companies operating schemes need to take a more analytical approach. Data and its resulting insight is the company's reward – and a valuable one at that.

Access to customer data is a value exchange: companies give something the customers deem to have worth (such as redeemable points, vouchers and coupons, exclusive offers, first access to new products and deals, special privileges and perks, and preferential treatment) in return for consumers providing information on themselves and permitting their actions to be tracked and analysed.

This exchange not only gives companies the ammunition they need to retain their best and most promising customers, but it arms them to extend those relationships, encouraging more and more frequent spending and flagging up opportunities for cross-selling and upselling.

The use of this information is not the automatic entitlement of companies, but a privilege that is earned through the effective and responsible use of customer data. Companies have to continually earn the right to utilize customer data by using it judiciously to offer a mix of contact channels, improve the communications they send, inform interactions, better the service they provide, and win the confidence and trust of customers.

Research from Kitewheel showed that 28% of companies concede that the reason consumers most often unsubscribe from emails is that they are receiving too many irrelevant offers, while the consumer half of the survey shows that an underwhelming 10% of respondents find the majority of the marketing sent to them is relevant to their purchasing interests.



Offering a range of channels, either to contact the company or to interact with other customers, is critical in this process. Crude attempts to push all contact online and automated – usually driven by management simply focused on saving budget – can often drive customers away, rather than fostering and encouraging their engagement and their business.

Another recent research report from Yonder underscored the desire from customers to be able to contact a live person (by phone or in person), regardless of age, when they have a more complex or individualised query. This is not to deny the usefulness of online channels, automated chatbots, and the like. It is more to emphasize that customers want both live and automated channels, and will abandon companies if such a mix is not offered.

Multi-channel experience sharing

This current research note extends customer desire for live interactions to an emerging science of encouraging the process of sharing good experiences. This is a new element to be introduced into the practice of customer relationship management (CRM). The way customers are currently sharing good experiences needs to be captured, analysed, understood and – ultimately – encouraged or facilitated. And live contact (with the company and with each other) is evidently a key channel for experience sharing. Social media is very important, but by no means the full picture.

Modern marketers who do not recognise that experience sharing is such an important element of customer behaviour – and adjust/deploy their customer analytics contact strategies accordingly - will be overtaken by those that do.

The Yonder Digital Group

Today, consumers are increasingly concerned not just with purchasing products but also with the experience and interactions they have with brands. As a result, four out of five companies now consider customer experience as their competitive differentiator to drive revenue growth.

Yonder Digital Group leverages over 20 years operational experience in customer service delivery and technological innovation. We service clients across a range of industries with our 24/7/365 omni-channel, multi-lingual approach rooted in expert analysis of customer behaviour and optimising returns from every brand touchpoint.

Yonder boasts 700+ seats across two UK contact centres-of-excellence powered by cutting edge technology, data analytics, tools and insight. Our proof-of-concept incubation services can help you nurture the development of new channels and innovations such as live chat, self-serve, automated knowledge management, chatbot and webRTC, all of which we provide as off the shelf solutions.

We are not however limited to automating the customer contact process, and champion the use of highly trained live brand ambassador agents where appropriate to blend the experience of human to human contact with the very latest digital technology. Yonder can help you revolutionise your customer experiences by making brand interactions seamless, meaningful and memorable and drive a measurable ROI alongside uplifts in revenues and customer satisfaction.

If your customer contact provision is currently under consideration, or you are actively looking at ways to reduce customer effort and operational costs whilst increasing revenue and customer satisfaction, we would welcome the opportunity to come and meet with you.



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