



## Making the Most of Social Media

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Social media has come of age, and utilities should grasp the opportunity to use this powerful tool to help create customer delight.

The social media phenomenon is a new business reality for the utility and energy industry. Marketers and consumers are actively engaging on social media, with blogs and forums accounting for 43 percent of social channel usage, and Twitter accounting for 39 percent of social channel usage. What's important at this juncture is: utilities must gradually move to strategically align social media with their contact center practice for delivering uniform customer service across all channels.

To stay ahead in the game, utility companies will need to build a social media strategy that incorporates aspects of engaging with consumers, building awareness, educating the consumer and offering customer service. Key aspects of the strategy would be to:

**Build Consumer Connect:** Social media engagement needs to be aligned with the broader customer interaction strategy to ensure a consistent approach across all channels – the contact center, Twitter, Facebook or in-person interactions. When there is a power outage or a gas shortage in any area, the Tweets can go out in a few seconds, followed by calls, emails and physical customer care visits in the next few hours.

**Create Customer Awareness:** The awareness level among customers is far from what utilities would like it to be. Many customers are only partially aware of what their smart meters can actually do. Utility companies can

effectively use YouTube and Facebook to educate customers on topics such as energy management, advantages of smart meters and industry trends.

**Create Brand Awareness:** Social media presents utility providers the opportunity to manage brand perception and map customer sentiments towards the brand. This can also be used to calculate the brand's Net Promoter Score (NPS), which provides a good view of customer loyalty.

**Offer Energy Advice and Tips:** Social media can be effectively used to educate customers about energy saving and better use of electric equipment. Companies can use this cost-effective platform to reach out to customers rather than adopting the traditional expensive way of creating and managing audio-visual campaigns. This mode can also be used to promote Web-based tools to help consumers analyze their monthly usage and work towards generating lower energy bills.

WNS provides smart social media solutions and platforms to customers across geographies and industries.

For utilities in particular, WNS recommends a specific social media start-up strategy based on our understanding of the industry trends that focuses on tracking and analyzing customer behavior and thus results in engaging for better customer experience.

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