

RETAIL

## 45pc of brands ignore consumers' social media inquiries: report

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Brands are missing out on strategic advantages by neglecting social media. Image credit: Fashionbi

By DANNY PARISI

While the vast majority of brands have a Twitter presence, almost half ignore customer requests or inquiries through Twitter because they do not have the proper resources needed to manage the platform.

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This statistic is emblematic of a larger problem with social media among fashion retailers and brands, who invest in social media but not enough to get the full use out of them. This information comes from Fashionbi's new report, "How Are Brands Using Social For Customer Support and Care."

### Social media strategy

Social media is undoubtedly an important part of any modern retailer or brand's marketing strategy. Having a social media presence is a ubiquitous trait of most companies, with 88 percent having a Twitter account.

But unfortunately, many companies get to this point and choose to stop. Fashionbi reports that 45 percent of brands do not respond to customer inquiries on Twitter, due to a lack of resources needed to manage tweeted inquiries and comments.

Those brands that do that are missing out on a huge opportunity. Fashionbi reports that brands that improve their social media services can see a 30 to 50 percent increase in repeat purchases, up-selling and customers recommending products to others.



Benefits of a strong social media presence. Image credit: Fashionbi

While some smaller brands may truly lack the resources to properly manage their social media presences, most

luxury brands should be able to afford a team of dedicated social media managers to ensure that this opportunity is not going to waste.

Fashionbi recommends brands employ a team of employees to handle these kinds of problems as well use social media platforms such as Hootsuite to ensure social content is handled properly.

This applies not just to the traditional social media outlets such as Facebook and Twitter, but also to new platforms, particularly in the space of messaging apps.

Messaging is becoming a major player in the mobile space, and many brands are latching onto it with chatbots and messaging services of their own.

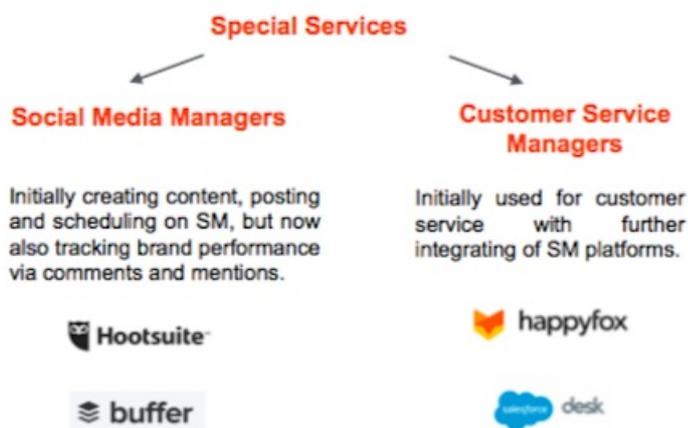
Through WhatsApp, WeChat and Facebook Messenger, brands are able to craft their own chatbots to automatically handle many of the problems a typical customer may encounter, though a human touch is always a benefit.

#### Resource management

Social media is an important motivator for consumers, especially when it comes to beauty products.

In a study from HRC Retail Advisory, findings showed that word of mouth is still the main avenue for consumers looking for recommendations on products. However, the channels in which these recommendations are delivered to consumers have shifted toward the digital world with YouTube tutorials and social media feedback, especially for the beauty industry ([see story](#)).

There is also some danger inherent to a lax social media policy.



*How to achieve social media greatness. Image credit: Fashionbi*

Brands could be missing out on a golden opportunity if they do not take advantage of local social media, an incredibly important part of the modern digital marketing landscape.

Speaking at Forrester's Consumer Marketing Forum 2017 in New York on April 7, a representative from SOCi, a company that specializes in local social media management, elaborated on the ways that brands can benefit from taking control of their local social media pages, and the harm potentially done by leaving them untended. The crux of the argument rests on the fact that social media is one of the top ways consumers find brands and an active local presence increases the chances of consumers heading into the store ([see story](#)).

While social media is without a doubt an important factor in any modern marketer's strategy, brands need to make sure that they are getting the most out of this powerful tool and not just going through the motions.