

# KLM: A Truly Socially Devoted Company

## KLM Sets A Global Standard For Customer Service On Social Media



For more than 90 years KLM Royal Dutch Airlines has operated flights throughout the world. With more than 32,000 employees serving more than 133 international destinations, KLM is one of the largest and most successful international airline companies. Moreover, KLM is dedicated to providing more than a reliable and cost efficient mean of transportation. KLM has taken the initiative for

Corporate Social Responsibility directed at customers, employees and society. This initiative sets a standard for how global corporations should focus on achieving more than just high profits, and instead, is also trying to affect the customers they are serving, the people who are working for them, and the environment which they are living in. For this reason, KLM utilized social media to more fully achieve the company mission of Corporate Social Responsibility.

## Social Media: How It All Began

KLM began using Twitter in 2009 and Facebook in early 2010. However, their true social media initiative had an explosive beginning following the eruption of the Icelandic volcano, Eyjafjallajökull, in April 2010. The volcanic eruption produced an ash cloud that spread across Western and Northern Europe; causing airline flights to come to a stall for a period of 6 days. During this time, KLM experienced a large influx of customer service requests, which jammed their call centers and posed a threat to providing high quality and efficient customer support.

Therefore, KLM turned to social media, and with the help of internal volunteers they were able to respond to Facebook and Twitter user requests and provide regular service updates. The effect of using social media networks as a form of customer interaction was profound, and KLM received a lot of positive publicity about resolving customer service issues socially during a crisis. This culminated with the CEO of KLM, Peter Hartman, declaring that the company would invest heavily in developing an ongoing social media strategy, centrally focused around enhancing customer centricity.

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KLM acknowledged three key factors about social media. Foremost, KLM strives to deliver excellent customer support via social media. It is paramount to respond to user's comments or questions enthusiastically and with alacrity. Secondly, KLM recognizes that consumers are talking about brands on social media, affecting the reputation of a brand in a very public manner. By proactively monitoring and actively influencing the conversation around the brand, KLM is successfully managing its social reputation. Last but not least, social media is a great "acquisition channel" since consumers are more highly influenced by their fans rather than by company marketing campaigns or messages.

With these three key themes in mind, KLM institutionalized a company-wide policy that involved a joint effort of multiple departments aimed at leveraging "service, brand and commerce" via social media. A social media management team was formed to consistently post creative and engaging content and campaigns, develop social products and to provide their customers 24/7 service. The most progressive aspect of their social customer service policy is that KLM aims to respond to every user comment or question within 60 minutes and every issue must be resolved within 24 hours.

## Socially Devoted Benefits: What Changed For KLM

- Reframed KLM's business model to be more customer centric. A higher internal emphasis on servicing the customer by enhancing communication via social networks.
- Direct social contact and feedback with KLM customers resulted in product improvement, more efficient internal processes and an added commercial value.
- KLM receives a lot of compliments via social media, the result being a more united and proud employee base.
- A more efficient and friendly method of resolving customer service issues and developing customer relationships.
- With an increased knowledge of their customer base, KLM has optimized their daily social content and organized highly creative and engaging campaigns.

## Campaigns: A Truly Customer Centric Company

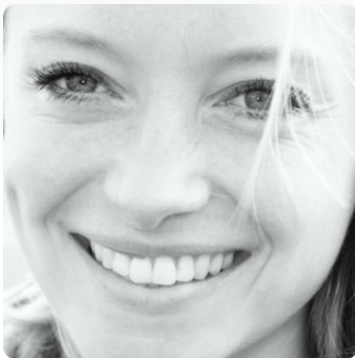
KLM's highly dedicated social media management team wanted to move beyond solely responding to user comments and posting content about their services. Therefore, KLM began introducing innovative campaigns to show their true dedication to social customer service. The execution of these campaigns led to a more satisfied customer base, a more engaged social community, a drastic increase in fan growth and an increase in brand awareness. Some of these ingenious campaigns included:

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- > **Live Reply:** In September of 2011, KLM wanted to show their customers how truly dedicated they are to customer service. With more than 500 internal volunteers, KLM responded to each individual tweet or post with a 1 minute customized video of KLM employees holding letters to form the appropriate response. Check it out here: <http://sbks.co/KLM/Live-Reply>
- > **Meet and Seat:** This social product allows for KLM passengers to search for other passengers on the same flight, connect via Twitter or Facebook and then arrange to sit next to each other. This product is especially useful for entrepreneurs to gain valuable insight when traveling to new markets. Click here <http://sbks.co/KLM/Meet-and-Seat> to see how KLM passengers are connecting socially for upcoming flights.
- > **Trip Planner:** The product is designed to allow users to plan a trip, invite friends and then book KLM flights all within a social application. This product not only provides customer service, but it also directly measures and increases KLM profits originating from social media. Check it out here: <http://sbks.co/KLM/Trip-Planner>
- > **KLM Surprise:** KLM's social media managers ran a campaign that involved monitoring passengers' social profiles and discovering if there was something particular that a passenger wanted to do or have on a trip. When the passenger arrived at their destination they received a surprise gift as a token of appreciation for flying with KLM. Check out the YouTube video here: <http://sbks.co/KLM/KLM-Surprise>

## Overview of all social media campaigns

<http://sbks.co/KLM/Overview-of-all-social-media-campaigns>



*“In early 2010, KLM experienced first hand the power of responding to users on social media. Instead of holding on to traditional methods of customer communication, we decided it was critical to dispatch a social media management team in order to provide high quality customer service around the clock,” said Anna Ketting, Social Media Manager at KLM. “Today our social two way communication results in more efficient customer service and enhanced internal product development and processing. But most importantly, KLM employees are proud to be a part of the most socially devoted company in the world.”*

Anna Ketting, Social Media Manager at KLM

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