Chapter 6

DEFINING CUSTOMER AND CONSUMER INTERACTIONS

Now that you are aware of the five types of digital relationships your organization has formed, you should look at each of these relationships from a pragmatic, historical perspective. More specifically, you should understand each interaction that your organization has had with each consumer—from the moment you first interacted with them until the moment the consumer stops being engaged with your organization. Doing this will establish a baseline that shows the relationship between the results that these interactions are creating versus the ideal results, or behaviors, that you are striving to produce.

This analysis may reveal that some consumers behave in ways that are far from ideal. Prospects will fail to become customers, customers will depart too quickly, influencers will fail to influence in your organization’s favor, and competitors will counteract your intentions. These discoveries, though, provide information that allows your organization to become more effective and move toward the Big Social Mobile ideal.

This analysis will apply most directly to customers and prospects, and to a lesser extent, influencers. You may find that with some influencers your organization has had no interactions; you have not yet built a relationship to be leveraged. In these cases you should try to determine who they have been interacting with and the impact this has had on your decision making. For partner
organizations, examine their interactions comparatively—how their interactions compare to your own and how a partnership might make both of you more effective. It is likely that you have had no interaction with competitors, but the techniques discussed in this chapter will help you analyze how well (or how poorly) they’re leveraging their digital relationships.

To provide a sense of the value that can be derived by defining customer interactions, consider this example of an organization that benefited from this knowledge.

**KNOWLEDGE FUELS PERFORMANCE**

National Oil and Gas, marketers of Marathon, Phillips 66, Sunoco, and Clark gasoline and diesel fuels as well as co-located convenience stores, was having problems with their customers who traveled on highways or interstates through their service areas but often didn’t know about their stations. Customers would randomly choose a station, selecting the one closest to the exit ramp or choose the one with the lowest advertised gas prices. Those customers that did select National Oil stations often failed to fill up their tank completely, didn’t always shop in their convenience stores, and sometimes failed to come away feeling any loyalty to their brands—all behaviors that were in the company’s best interest.

While National Oil was aware of these customer behaviors, they did not have a holistic solution that would change them; they also lacked an understanding of how they might capitalize on specific behavioral changes. They decided to partner with iSign, a provider of wi-fi and Bluetooth mobile technology that delivers location-aware messages to consumers, engaging them at both the right time and the right place to influence behavior. iSign’s technology uses a physical device to communicate with mobile technologies that enter its area, gathering data from these devices, and sending back to them, via text message, an offer. While this offer could be anything depending upon the needs of the company, National Oil offered potential customers a $.10 off per gallon of gas coupon when they filled up.

The theory was that potential customers driving down the local highway would pass the iSign antenna, receive a text message, and know that the cheapest option to fill their tanks was the National Oil station just ahead. The company recognized that text messages have the highest and quickest open rate of any communication method. Of the over 2.7 million connections made, over