

Bank joins Twitter for CRM purposes

While First National Bank (FNB) is not the first bank to seek new ways to manage its online reputation, it has taken the development of its customer channels a step further with its active role on microblogging platform Twitter.



Says head of media at FNB Gisele Wertheim-Aymes; “We have actively tracked and reacted to ‘Tweets’ for the past six months as part of a strategy to extend our ethos of helpfulness. FNB's involvement in Twitter is also serving a market research function. It provides almost instant feedback on what customers are thinkin

“Initially, people were a little unnerved to find that the bank, through its on-line persona of RB Jacobs [[@RBJacobs](#)], was taking a keen interest in their comments about FNB. When they were complaining about a service problem, this sense of unease was quickly replaced with relief that we were resolving problems and delivering service on a platform that has not really played this role in the past.”

Fictional moniker

RB Jacobs owes his or her name to a fictional moniker created by FNB when it was the first bank to launch credit cards (a Barclaycard) in South Africa in 1969. Ever since then and to this day, FNB cards appearing adverts have the embossed account holder name ‘RB Jacobs’.

“You could say ‘RB’ is a number of people as queries and complaints have to be resolved in many different parts of the bank. We aim to resolve a complaint within 48 hours and ensure closure on Twitter. RB is there to engage with the community - to understand what the bank is doing right and help with queries, not to promote products and services,” says Wertheim-Aymes.

For those fearing to tread in an environment where personal opinion, biting criticism and quick-hits enjoy a high priority, FNB's experience has been that the majority of Tweets are valid.

“Some commentators are suggesting that Twitter could turn out to be a passing fad. However, in South Africa it's still in its infancy and FNB is deriving great benefit and insight by participating in this community,” adds Wertheim-Aymes.

Wertheim-Aymes plans to roll out further digital initiatives at FNB in the next few months as new, personal media channels expand at an ever-increasing pace.