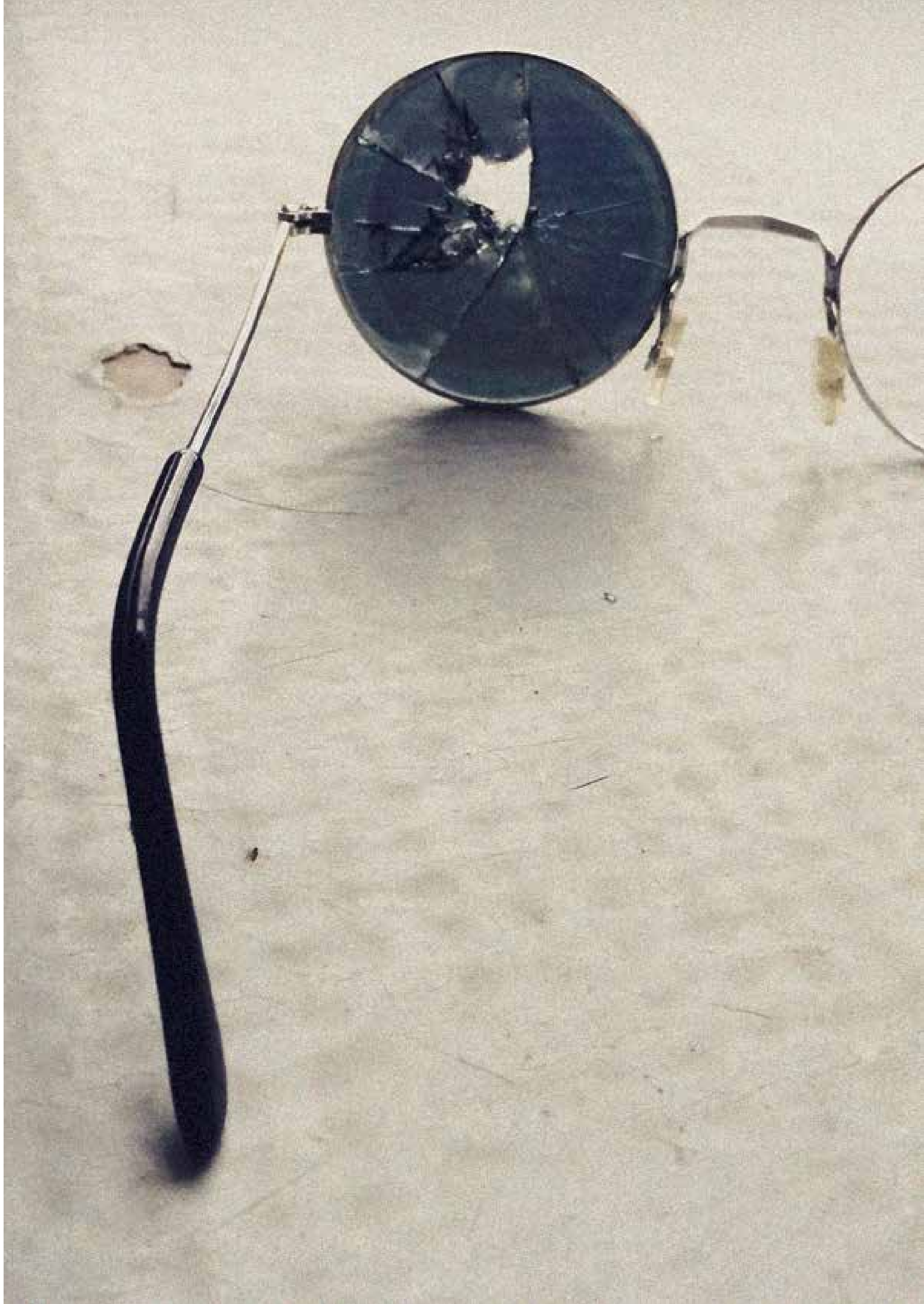
ouch

where does it hurt?



I just spent 30 minutes
on your website.
And now this?
What's wrong with
you people?

This book is for people who understand the vision of customer engagement at scale – and want to do something about it.
Two principles apply:

Human first

The human-first principle prioritizes the desires of customers and future customers above all else. It embraces understanding, connection, and intuition.

Enterprise engagement

The enterprise engagement principle calls for mobilizing your entire organization to create, measure, predict, and optimize the experiences of every customer. Wherever, whenever.

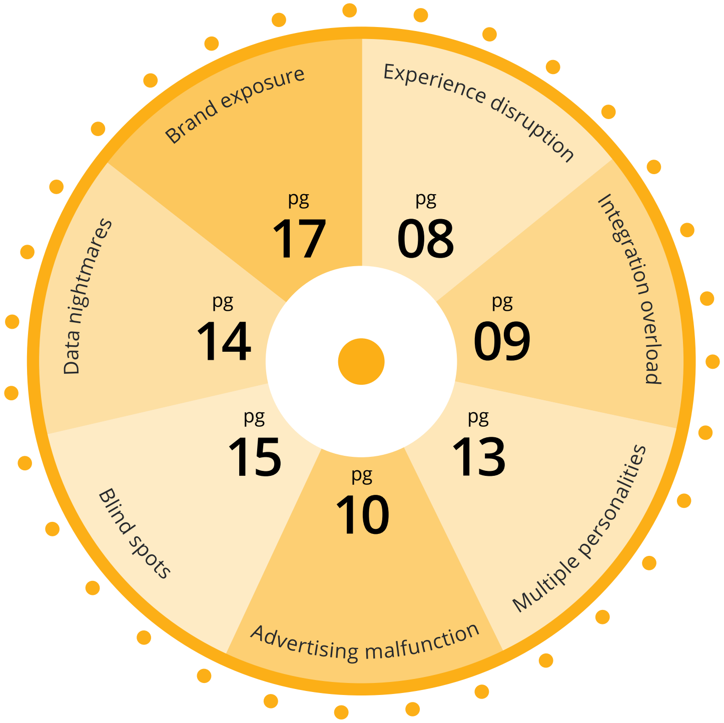
where does it hurt?

Companies that don't put customers first have a hard time getting social engagement right – and the results can be brutal. Customers can get hurt, as can shareholders. And the negative impacts can ricochet throughout your value chain. Increased churn. Lost sales. Higher costs. Missed opportunities. Customer confusion. And worse.

Why, then, do so many companies get it wrong?

Wheel of misfortune

Social disruption knows no favorites, and no one is immune. Here are seven common challenges we've seen global brands struggle to resolve.


Experience disruption
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Customer experience is a disconnected mess

There are few things more frustrating for employees than wanting to do a great job serving customers – but not having the information and tools needed. It’s a set-up for constant aggravation for workers and customers alike.

The main culprit is disconnected data systems. Where there is a lack of integration and workflow between different systems, there’s simply no way for employees to make the connections customers expect.

In the past, customers had to put up with this kind of dis-integration. Not anymore.

It costs a fortune to integrate point solutions

Buying software is the easy part. Making it all work together is where things get interesting.

This is a familiar problem to anyone in IT, but is especially challenging for people involved in social engagement at the enterprise level. Companies that have to manage thousands of touchpoints for millions of customers have their work cut out for them.

And it’s going to get worse before it gets better. By the end of 2016, mid-sized and large companies will spend a third more on application integration than they did in 2013. By 2018, more than half of the cost of implementing new large systems will be spent on integration.*

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*Gartner. Predicts 2013: Application Integration.

We’re sending ads to the wrong people

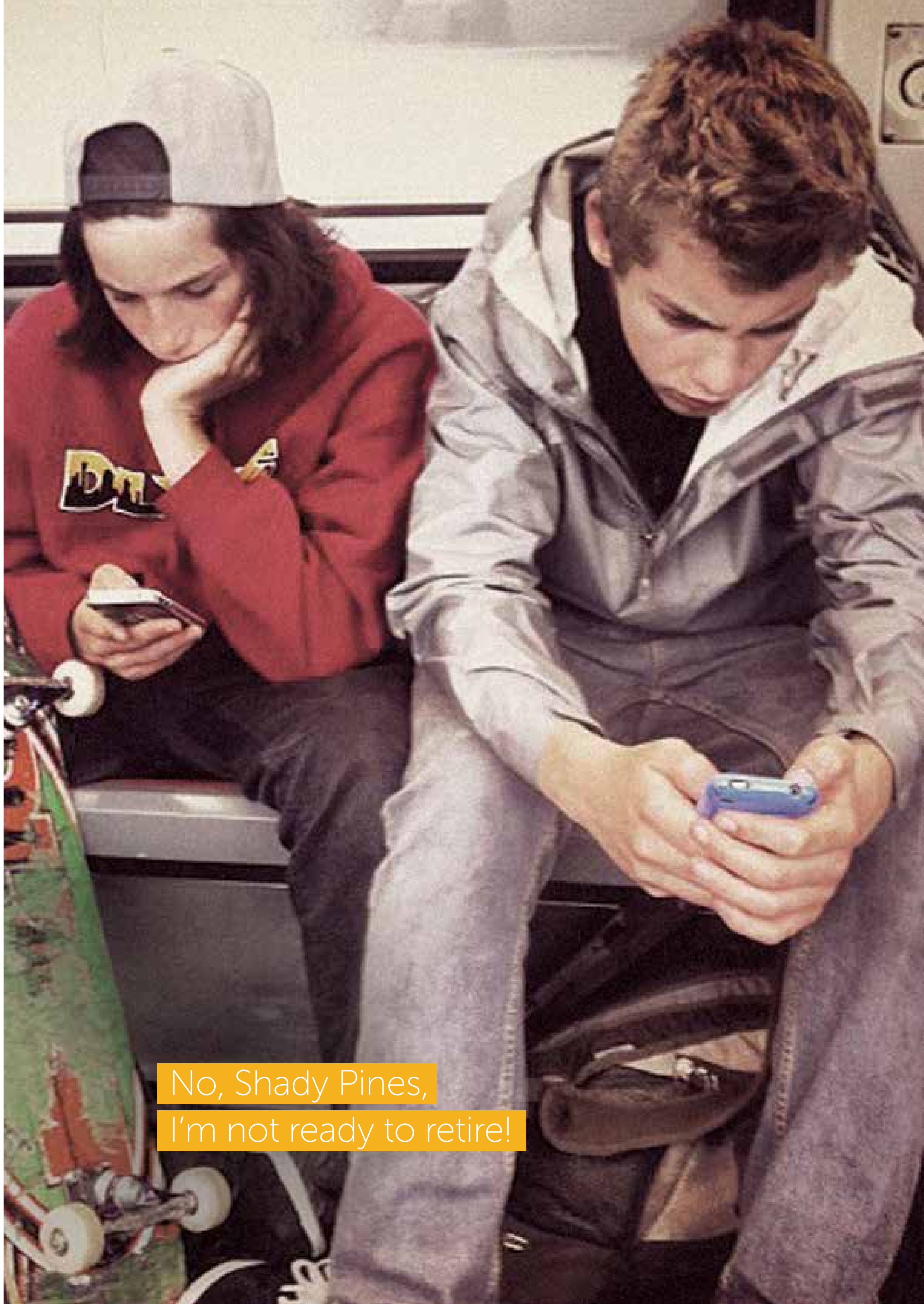
CFO: Sorry, Pat. We’re going to have to cut your social budget.

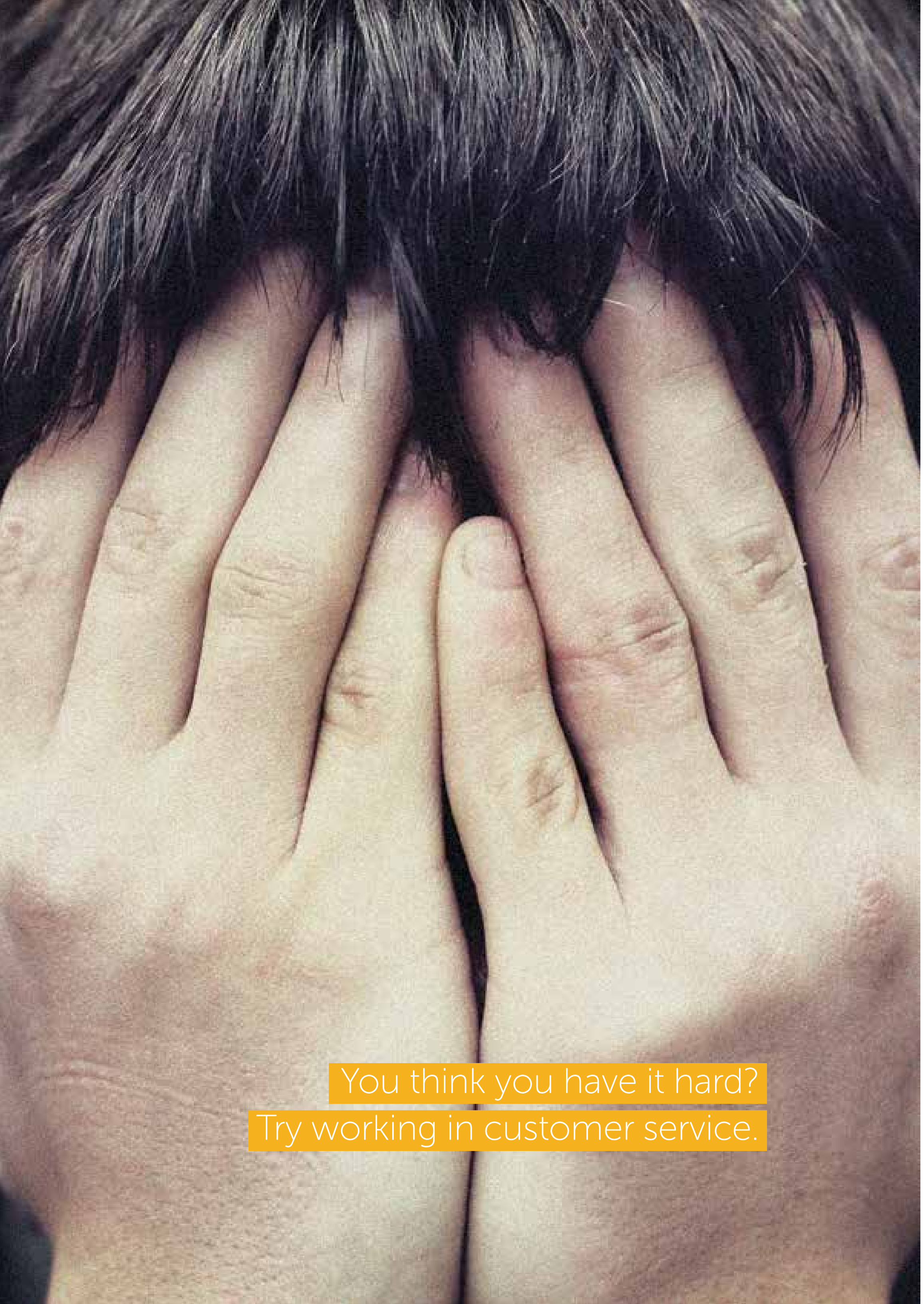
CMO: We can’t do that. We’re barely squeaking by as it is.

CFO: Maybe so, but it’s not working. We’re sending ads to the wrong people. Even my kids are getting stuff from us.

CMO: Your kids? Really?

CFO: Yep. Really.


No, Shady Pines,
I’m not ready to retire!


You think you have it hard?
Try working in customer service.

We’re struggling with multiple personalities

Nike is Nike, no matter where you go. In store. Online. TV. Outdoor. You name it. The same with Starbucks, Apple, and scores of other brands. From New York to New Brunswick to New Delhi, and everywhere in between, leading brands engage their customers with a unified voice.

Not every brand has this kind of discipline. Because when one marketing team in one area can’t see what other teams are doing, it all falls apart. The risk? With employees all over the world posting off-brand content, you look like 50 different companies. That’s not what customers want.

A bottom-up approach to customer engagement can work for a while, but when you have to operate at scale, things can unravel fast. And many times, it’s the people stuck in the middle who have to meet unrealistic expectations.

Data governance is a nightmare

Nothing in the new world of social engagement is more important than protecting customer data. Two decades into the digital revolution, and the hackers are still ahead of the cyber-cops. That may not change anytime soon, but how you deal with it can.

Consumers are increasingly sensitive about how brands capture, use, and protect their personal information. You are stewards of their identities, and they expect you to operate in their best interests. At the same time, they also want to control what you know about them.

That means you're in the "protect and liberate" game, a delicate balancing act where there's no room for failure and no easy answers. Lose control and you lose customers. Keep control and you lose customers. How's that for an existential dilemma?

The solution starts with your technology strategy. A unified social technology infrastructure – a bona fide system of engagement – is the first step toward enabling both outcomes: protecting customer data and enabling customers to control how personal data is used.

Upstart competitors are crashing the gate

More than a few CEOs have embarrassed themselves by telling investors they don't need to worry about "all that social stuff." That may have been true five years ago, but today new threats can come out of almost anywhere and eat your lunch.

Many new competitors think and act social-first. Your job is to match that mindset and raise the stakes. A disciplined approach requires executive sponsorship for enterprise social engagement – and a system to deliver what's needed. Without both, you'll struggle to be successful.

We made the front page. Not good.

Unintended consequences can turn a simple new business initiative into a global brand crisis. It blows up first in social channels, right before it spills into the mainstream media.

Corporate announces your bank is doubling fees for ATM transactions. A loose cannon in customer service triggers a firestorm about your new pricing plans. The social sphere responds at light speed, and there's nowhere to hide.

Are you prepared to respond to customers, journalists, influencers, opinion leaders, and shareholders? Can HR, legal, customer service, marketing, product, logistics, and franchisees all work together? Can they all access the same data? Can they share and distribute the same content? Can they see how the crisis is playing out – and respond appropriately – in real time?

This is the new world of crisis management, and it requires more than a binder on a shelf called *Crisis Management Plan*. When was the last time you stress-tested your organization's readiness to respond when the sugar hits the fan?

it's time for a check-up

This book explores seven common challenges companies face on the journey to becoming a customer-first enterprise. Use the chart on the opposite page to see how your business is doing.

	Low pain									Intense pain
Customer experience is a disconnected mess	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
It costs a fortune to integrate point solutions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
We're sending ads to the wrong people	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
We're struggling with multiple personalities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Data governance is a nightmare	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Upstart competitors are crashing the gate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
We made the front page. Not good.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Scoring

< 28	*You're in good shape. Keep fine-tuning.*
28 to 49	*There's room for improvement. Focus first on using social data to inform all customer interactions.*
> 49	*Either you haven't invested enough in the right processes or technology, or you're not yet aligned for social engagement. Use our* ***Roadmap to Creating and Capturing Value from the Connected Customer*** *to start with a clean slate.*

help is here

There are lots of ways to screw up the social arena, and there will be more. Technology is changing so fast that it's hard to get out in front of it. But get there you must, because inattention and neglect come with outsized risks.

Brand leaders recognize the need for a system of customer engagement to enable their business strategies and create experiences their customers love. Making the commitment to explore options is a good place to start. That's why we created our *Roadmap to Creating and Capturing Value from the Connected Customer*. It reflects what we've learned working with hundreds of global brands that have embarked on their own journeys to become customer-first enterprises.

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