

CUSTOMER CASES



24/7 WEBCARE FOR TUI

Time differences, flights departing all throughout the day, questions from passengers: these are just a few reasons why the travel industry is constantly in motion. This is why TUI's webcare department has been available 24/7 for the past three years. "In today's world and especially on social media, customers no longer want to conform to office hours," says Esther Kaptein, team leader of the Customer Services department at TUI. Having a high-quality tool is vital. "Everything comes together in a single location, where it can be measured and easily transferred. With the help of social media, we can proactively provide information to your customers, for example about calamities or unrest in holiday destinations. People respond very positively to this aspect of our service."

These are the main reasons to start providing webcare, Esther says: "The impact of social media is growing and, as a business, it is important to constantly monitor what people are saying about you. Your customer is on social media, so you want to be able to help them via those channels as well." For TUI, the most important reason is their desire to be there for customers at any time. Since 2014, TUI's webcare department has literally been available 24/7 with the help of the TUI contact center on Curacao and its 24/7 team based at Schiphol Airport. Every day, one or two people are responsible for managing TUI's social media accounts and handling incoming messages in Coosto. During the summer season (April through October), when the volume of travelers is the largest, the number of people in the webcare team is scaled up accordingly.



Esther Kaptein – team leader of the Customer Services department



24/7 WEBCARE WORKFLOW

The workflow of webcare has undergone continuous development based on new insights. "During the early years, we were still coming up with answers to questions like 'should we respond to posts that are not directly addressed to us, yet which still concern us? Should we respond to everyone? Should we only respond to customers or also to other people?' By constantly evaluating everything we do, we have become much more efficient and productive. As a result, we have not had to increase the number of people in the department, even though the volume of messages we handle has increased significantly. Being available 24/7 was an important step in this regard; it is crucially important to hand off everything properly to the people in the next shift. We set a high quality-of-service requirement for ourselves: 95% of the messages we receive must be dealt with within four hours. These rules also apply to the other countries in which TUI offers its travel products and has an active social media presence, such as Great Britain and Scandinavia." How is the team's performance monitored? "We generate overviews of the total workload in Coosto, the messages that were replied to and our response times. This report is not only shared with the team, but also with the Planning department and our contact center on Curacao. This approach makes our workload more insightful and allows us to optimize our staff management."

"Your customer is on social media, so you want to be able to help them via those channels as well"

QUADRUPLED VOLUME OF MESSAGES IN 2020

From 2013 on, Esther sees a significant increase of the volume of messages: from 114,000 messages in 2014 to 250,000 in 2016. She partly contributes that increase to the department's own efforts: "The more we demonstrated our presence on social media and the quicker and more often we responded to incoming messages, the more people began to approach us directly. The rate of increase is slowing down a bit, however. We expect to process approximately 415,000 webcare messages in 2020." The majority of these messages is sent through Facebook, while the number of tweets has been declining in proportion to the increase of Facebook messages since last year. A Facebook message is more useful to TUI's customers, because it is easier to tell your story when you are not limited to 140 characters. Twitter often requires multiple messages.

FACTS & FIGURES TUI



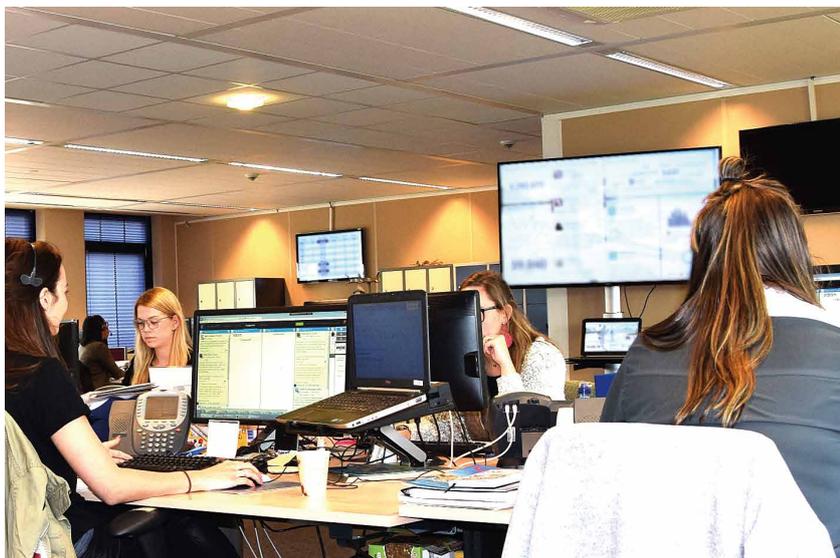
TUI & COOSTO

TUI's webcare team started out as just a single person, back when it was part of the Marketing department and Facebook was the only medium. When the volume of messages began to grow, it became clear that this was too much work for one person. It also became obvious that a webcare tool was needed, so several different versions were tested. Eventually, TUI opted for Coosto. "Webcare was integrated into TUI's contact center, back when the contact center team also handled our webcare. Every day, one team member was given the 'social media shift.' These days, TUI's webcare team consists of 27 people, distributed between the contact center in Rijswijk, our 24/7 Customer Care team at Schiphol and the contact center on Curacao," says Esther Kaptein, who is responsible for managing this webcare team and drawing up guidelines pertaining to the method and tone of TUI's replies.



TUI'S TONE OF VOICE

"The number of messages has grown significantly over the past few years and the style of TUI's replies has also changed. At first, our tone was more formal, as with an email, and we used standard replies in some cases. The latter was mostly done in the event of a calamity or for subjects that evoked a lot of response. However, this did not come across as particularly personable or empathic, which made people think they were dealing with a bot. These days, we have gotten better at this through experience. We try reply as personal as possible. We mirror the customer's use of language and adjust our tone of voice accordingly, without forgetting our general guidelines in the process. We avoid saying things like 'Enjoy your trip tomorrow,' because that will let too many people know that the customer will be away for a time. You can make a reply more personal by including a reference to the country the customer is traveling to and giving them some last-minute tips. Sometimes we urge the customer to continue the conversation via private messages, because it involves sensitive information."



TUI IN SHORT



Travel organization TUI Nederland operates under the travel brands of TUI and Kras. In addition to its own airline company, TUI fly, TUI also has 130 travel agencies and 110 mobile travel advisors. TUI arranges holidays for 1.8 million people every year, making it the Dutch market leader in the organized travel sector. TUI Nederland is part of the international TUI Group, which has its head office in Hannover. The TUI Group consists of over 150 travel organizations in twenty countries which all operate under the TUI name.

IMPULSIVE IMPACT AND PROACTIVE INFORMATION

"It is very easy to voice your dissatisfaction on social media in the heat of the moment and act too impulsively. Of course, we sometimes question a customer's tone. Nevertheless, we do our best to stay calm ourselves and contact these people. That immediately helps to calm down the person with the complaint, regardless of whether we can resolve their issue or not. At least they know we are doing our best. People frequently come to regret their remarks and realize the impact of what they said. Sometimes, they even delete the original message and post something more positive instead. In any case, we will not delete any messages ourselves." What Esther loves most are the positive reactions of customers after they have been proactively informed about an irregularity. "Think of, for example, a strike by air traffic controllers in Greece; we put our customers' minds at ease and inform them about the measures we are taking to deal with the problem. Another example is potential unrest resulting from incidents in other parts of the country, for example in Turkey or Egypt."

