



Sprout Social helps keep NJ TRANSIT's social strategy on track

50 million

Twitter impressions
in 2020

142%

increase in reply rate
year-over-year

30 minutes

average first reply
time for H1 2021

In 2020, COVID-19 disrupted the transportation industry, but the nature of the unprecedented pandemic made it all the more important to keep customers informed and safe. The previous year, NJ TRANSIT served nearly one million daily riders across its trains, buses and light rail each day. Those customers rely on these services and, through the upheaval of 2020, social media was the first place they turned with questions and concerns about their trips.

Customer experience is at the heart of the NJ TRANSIT brand. “Our company’s goal is to give customers the best experience possible through social media so they have everything they need for an enjoyable trip,” said Carol Mack, NJ TRANSIT’s Director of Events and Social Media. To deliver a great customer experience, NJ TRANSIT needed a social media management solution that would help them optimize customer care efforts, streamline response management and provide timely updates about their services. They needed Sprout Social.

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Carol Mack

Director of Events & Social Media, NJ TRANSIT

Supporting cross-functional strategies

While NJ TRANSIT uses Instagram as their primary platform for branding and LinkedIn is for more professional purposes, they're most engaged with their customers on Facebook and Twitter. What's unique about their Twitter strategy is that in addition to their main [NJ TRANSIT Twitter account](#), they also run [14 accounts that are each dedicated to a specific transit line](#).

Their content strategy for each line account is simple: provide real-time updates for travelers. Having service-specific accounts keeps important, relevant information organized and accessible for transit riders. It also means that the NJ TRANSIT social team can focus their corporate Twitter handle on their brand messaging, news, initiatives and anything else that's important to the customer.



Another important characteristic of NJ TRANSIT's customer care and social strategies is how they draw attention to the people behind their brand. "When people think of transit, we don't want them to think of just equipment and stations so we use social to give our employees a voice and to humanize them to the public," said Mack.

For example, the NJ TRANSIT Police Department does much more than provide high-quality safety and security for the transit system. They also have an outreach program staffed by five outreach officers throughout the state that helps connect the homeless with necessary social and medical services, as well as housing opportunities. The police department's Twitter account gives them a platform to share those lesser-known efforts, which has made a major impact on humanizing the department.

The Police Department has an intelligence division that uses Sprout's powerful Listening features to monitor conversations across social. Using keywords and location-based searches provides the department with timely access to conversations occurring across the transit system. This intelligence gathering allows them to deploy resources to maintain the safety of our customers and employees systemwide.

Highlighting their people and initiatives also helps shape NJ TRANSIT's employer brand and influence recruitment. "Hiring qualified people is very important to us. We've taken extra efforts to make sure we use social media to help our human resources department get the best talent that they can," said Mack. "When we started using social to assist with hiring bus operators, we saw a 60% increase in resumes."

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Kevin Minott

Senior Communications Coordinator, NJ TRANSIT

Keep your wheels turning on social

While the content strategies differ between the line accounts, the police department account and their main account, the entire NJ TRANSIT social team uses Sprout’s Smart Inbox to monitor each account in a single feed. Before using Sprout, the team would have to log in natively to each line account to respond to customers, which negatively impacted response time—an important metric for the team’s customer service strategy.

The confusing, disorganized user interface of their former platform negatively impacted response time. “We work directly from Sprout’s Smart Inbox and it’s straightforward just like a Twitter stream, so it’s also very easy to get people up to speed on how to use it,” said Kevin Minott, NJ TRANSIT’s Senior Communications Coordinator. “I was able to get our SVP of communications and customer experience up and running on Sprout in just one day.”

“I am in love with the Task feature. It ensures that all the information we need in order to respond stays with the right message.”



Carol Mack

Director of Events & Social Media, NJ TRANSIT

Don’t lose your train of thought

Whether customers are asking about a technical issue or need information about a schedule change, they want to know they’re being heard. The NJ TRANSIT social team works to respond and communicate with empathy and accuracy, which often requires collaboration with other departments.

For example, they are currently working with their IT department to build a comprehensive response team in Sprout. Sprout's Tasks feature in the Inbox helps make that collaboration seamless.

If, for instance, they receive a message on social about a problem with their mobile app, the social team can assign a Task to the IT Sprout user. Then, that person will look into the issue and provide context or an answer to the social team in Sprout. The social team will polish the copy and respond to the customer.

"I am in love with the Task feature. It ensures that all the information we need in order to respond stays with the right message," said Mack. "Before using Sprout, we'd have to copy and paste from the platform we had into email and vice versa." For someone like Mack, who gets around 400 emails a day, keeping that thread of information separate within Sprout is essential.

The results are in

According to the Sprout Social Index™, Edition XVI: Above & Beyond, **79% of customers** expect a response from a brand in the first 24 hours of sending their message. In the first half of 2021, NJ TRANSIT exceeded those expectations maintaining an average first reply time of 30 minutes.

It's not just the Smart Inbox that speeds up processes for the NJ TRANSIT team. "Sprout has amazing analytics tools that we didn't have access to with our last management platform. Now, we run engagement reports for our senior vice president of communications and customer service, monthly reports for our board, weekly communication reports, response reports and more," said Minott. "Sprout has allowed us to do this with ease."

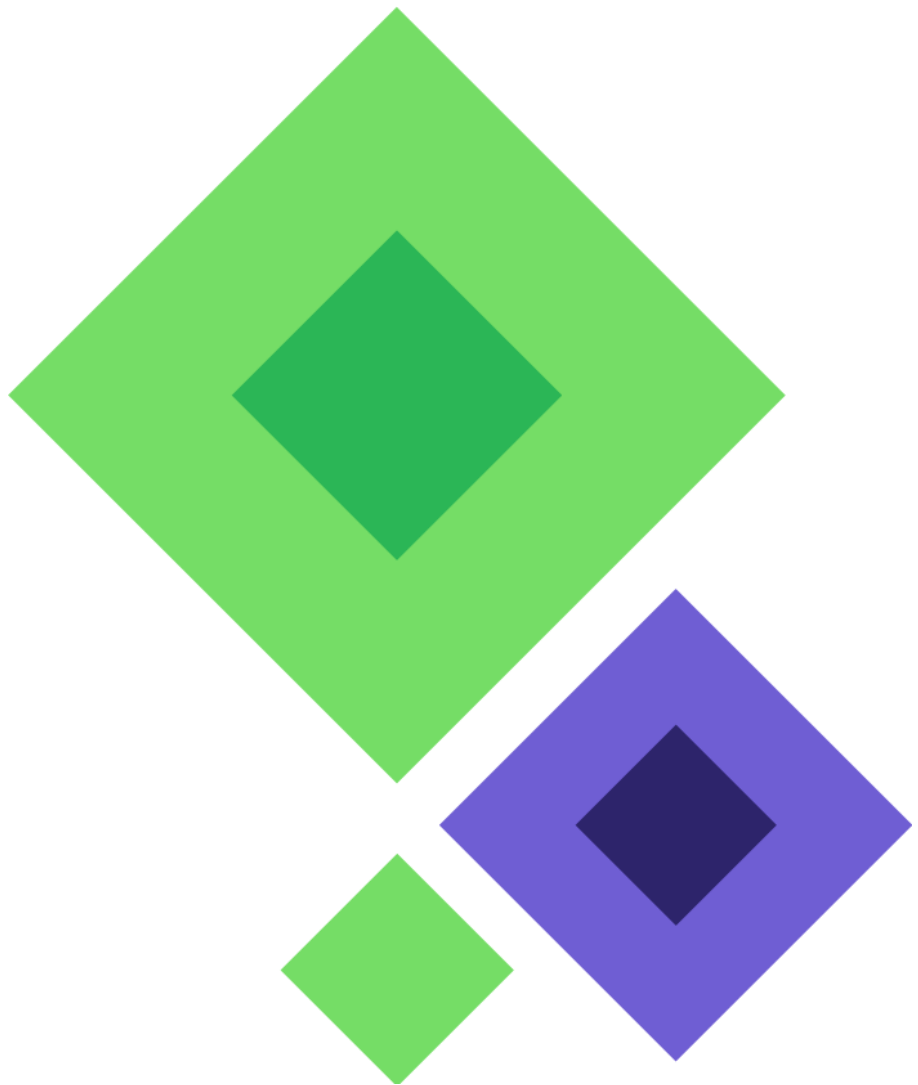
"To give you an idea, Kevin used to spend three days on reports that now take three hours," Mack continued. "We used to have to calculate response time manually because in our old platform, it would count us as being non-responsive when we were offline. With Sprout, we can put work hours in so the Engagement Report calculates our real response rate for us."

Sprout Social, at your service

Customer care and experience are what NJ TRANSIT's brand is all about. When selecting a new social media management platform, they were looking for a software and team that would give them the same level of support. High-quality customer care was an important deciding factor in their decision to work with Sprout.

“Where Sprout came out on top was understanding us and treating us as individuals. They didn’t give us a one-size-fits-all approach or treat us like anyone else. We’re a transportation agency, so we have different needs, and that understanding of who we are really matters,” said Mack. “Every time we reach out, Sprout gives us the same customer care that we were promised from the first time we spoke to them. They really are just 100% there for us.”

Our team of experts will always respect your unique needs and treat your business with care. [Start a free, 30-day trial](#) today or [request a demo](#) to get a customized tour from our team.



Sprout Social offers deep social media listening and analytics, social management, customer care, and advocacy solutions to more than 25,000 brands and agencies worldwide. Sprout's suite of solutions supports every aspect of a cohesive social program and enables organizations of all sizes to extend their reach, amplify their brand and create the kind of real connection with their consumers that drives their businesses forward. Headquartered in Chicago, Sprout operates across major social media networks, including Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram and LinkedIn.