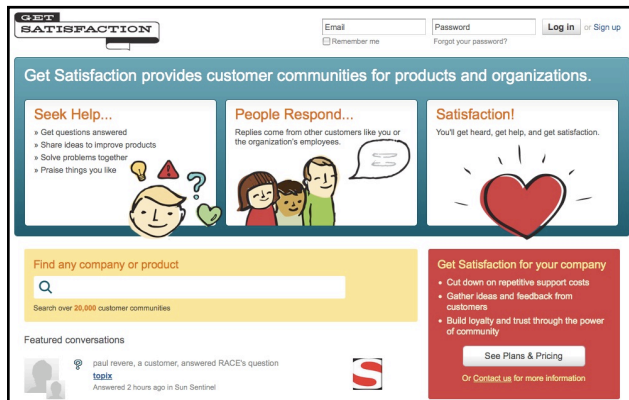


# GetSatisfaction.com



According to their website, Get Satisfaction “provides customer communities for products and organizations.” However, I think they’re selling themselves short. If you are a customer looking for product or service support in the future, Get Satisfaction might be your first stop! With a single sign-on you have access to support from over 20,000 brands, like Zappos and Nike. Will Get Satisfaction change the way corporations offer support and build communities? It just might. ■

## Inside This Report

Each week, the analysts at Tippingpoint Labs release a New Media Life Cycle™ report designed to help marketing professionals understand the new media landscape.

These reports use empirical data and a sound methodology to help ad agencies, PR firms, marketing consultants, interactive agencies, and chief marketing officers make educated and informed new-media decisions.

Each report looks at the quality of the content on a channel, the state of the medium, and the key forces shaping the channel, and presents an analysis of the life cycle and the audiences participating on the platform, a forecast for the channel’s future, and sound content recommendations for participating by adding value. ■

1. Channel Overview
2. Resource Analysis
3. Forecast Analysis
4. Key Forces
5. Content Potential
6. Medium Overview
7. Phase Analysis
8. Recommendations
9. Appendix

## Channel Overview

# Get Satisfaction Makes Finding Support Easy

In a support world where old conventions like FAQs, forums, and printed or even PDF manuals still rule the day, Get Satisfaction is a refreshing new player looking to change the way consumers find answers to their everyday issues.

### Support from the consumer's perspective

What's great about Get Satisfaction's approach to providing support to customers around the world is that it's a customer-centric model. Anything good for the consumer is good for the brands participating, so let's look at some of the main issues a customer faces with a few of the traditional support approaches.

#### *Multiple Register / Logins*

If consumers want support for a product, more often than not they are asked to register or sign up to ask a question on a forum or sometimes in order to download a manual. If they're desperate enough (and can't find the answer in the pathetic FAQ section), they have to go through the registration process and remember (or store) one more login.

Solution: Get Satisfaction addresses this issue by allowing users to sign up once and access more than 20,000 support communities.

#### *Customer Interaction Options*

Most support sites are focused on very specific interactions: solving customer issues. However, some customers (more than you'd imagine) want to share an idea or even give accolades to the support or product development team. Finding the right place to add this kind of content is almost impossible on most corporate support sites.

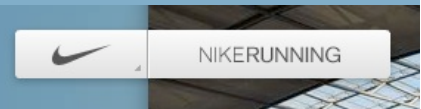
Solution: Get Satisfaction classifies the content in their support communities, allowing users to "ask a question, report a problem, share an idea," or even "give praise."

#### *User Experience Issues*

Every company's support site is different. Some categorize support by product, some ask you to interact on their forum, some provide you with complicated "support-trees" designed to help you "find your solution faster." The problem here, is that a consumer must learn a new interface every time they're looking for support.

Solution: Get Satisfaction provides you with a consistent user experience across brands. ■

## Nike+ Integrates Get Satisfaction



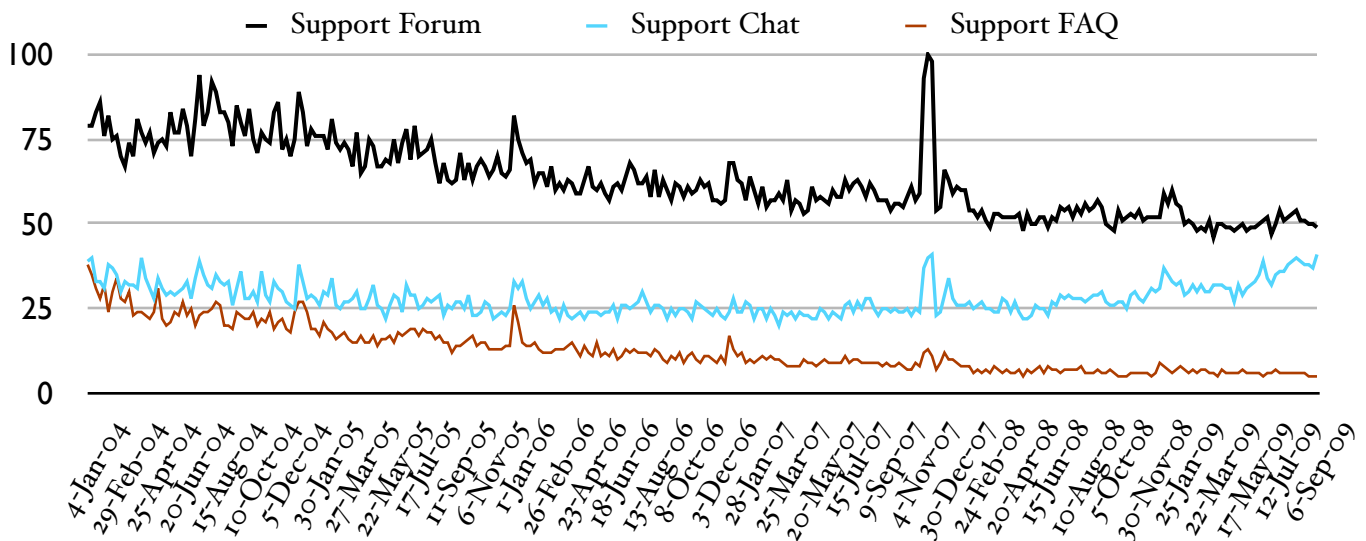
In September of 2009, Nike, one of the most reputable consumer brands in the US, decided to integrate Get Satisfaction into their customer support program.

Nike+ (a utility designed to track your running progress) invites users to participate on Get Satisfaction, where five Nike employees respond to each question or problem.

Although it's only been a few weeks, it looks as though Nike has been overwhelmed by the response. With over 3,500 topics already posted and hundreds of great ideas seeing popular support, Nike has certainly witnessed the power of Get Satisfaction. ■

Platform Analysis

Support Platform's Evolution (Search Share)



Source: Google Insights

The chart above shows the evolution of three of the most popular support mediums: forums, FAQs, and chat.

## Support is Long Overdue for an Overhaul

Online customer support, if handled well, is one of the best ways to reduce support costs. On the other hand, choosing the wrong platforms, building over-complicated user experiences, and not integrating your online support into your offline support processes can actually increase your support costs and frustrate customers even further.

For years, the evolution of online support has focused around the introduction of new kinds of interaction tools or formats to help facilitate the support interaction.

Live chat, toll-free phone numbers, FAQs, and customer forums have long been the mainstay for corporate support strategies. However (as the chart above shows), consumer demand for forums and FAQs has slowly declined.

It should be noted that Live Chat seems to be experiencing a slight increase in interest since 2008, possibly spurred on by the increased attention to real-time communication channels like Facebook and Twitter.

### Third-party support integrators

There are hundreds (possibly thousands) of third-party support applications, integrators and even SaaS vendors on the market today. However, none of them (to our knowledge) offer a customer-centric approach like that of Get Satisfaction.

Most of these integrators (including UserVoice.com) ignore at least one of the three things that makes Get Satisfaction unique in their space: single sign-on, multiple customer interaction options, along with a consistent user experience for support across brands.

### Evolution of support in its infancy

As support platforms evolve, we expect to see new players encroach on Get Satisfaction's model, with new feature and function integration. But with a few big brands filling the sails, Get Satisfaction is making waves already.

## Forecast Analysis

# Delivering a Consistent User Experience Will Drive Customer Support Evolution

### **Support has changed**

Products today have more moving parts than in previous generations. This is a natural progression. Also, just because the box is opened, doesn't mean a product is never new again. High-tech goods are upgraded all the time. Take the iPhone for example. The release of the 3.0 software enables existing iPhones to become much more powerful devices; almost as if the user had purchased a new iPhone. This will, predictably, increase the need for Apple to re-teach its product's users to use it.

Support is no longer about fixing spot issues. Get Satisfaction fills a need for brands to efficiently and transparently build a relationship with their users — an activity that is vital to success in a world where there's a constant, relevant conversation going on.

What Get Satisfaction enables brands to achieve is customer life-cycle management. What Get Satisfaction enables customers to achieve is attentive, valuable support from the brands that affect their lives.

### **Harnessing the power of influence**

It's true that only a certain percentage of web visitors are creating the content. For example, Wikipedia, the third most heavily trafficked website in the world and a channel that "anyone can edit," only gets contributions from about 1% of its visitors. However, these influencers have tremendous power to shape the conversation online. Addressing and building relationships with the influencers where they are creating their content enables a brand to not only fix problems but build reputation — something that previous models of support couldn't accommodate.

End user relationships and constant communication with influential customers will become more and more important. Tools that enable this flow of

communication with customers will continue to grow.

### **Competitive forces begin to build**

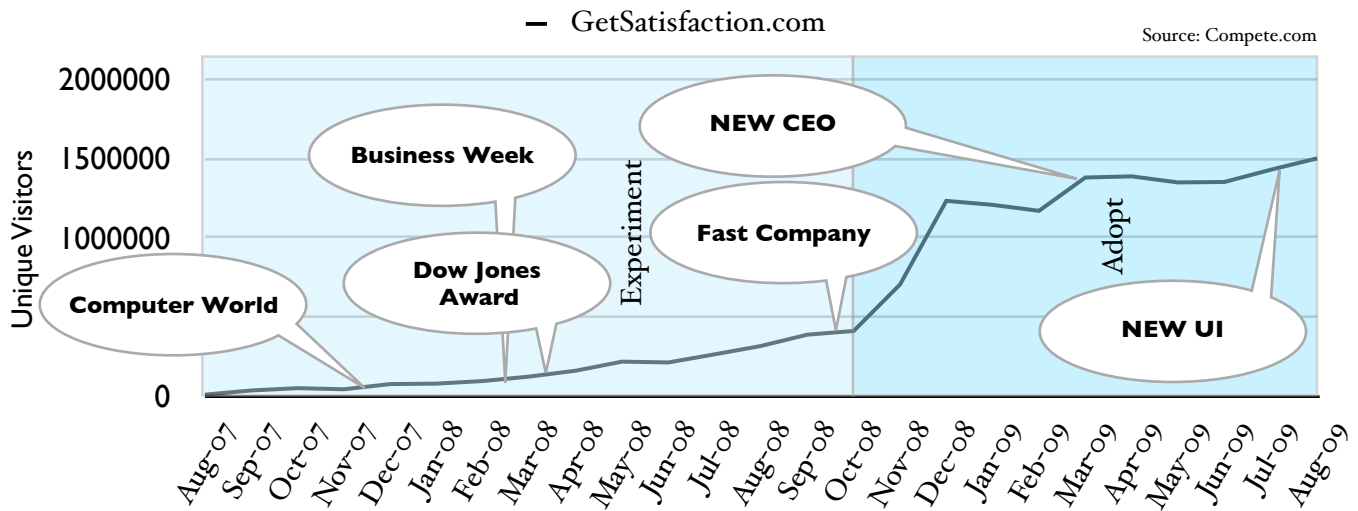
As the needs of support continue to evolve and increase, Get Satisfaction will see greater competition from interfaces previously closed and developed with other functions in mind. Internal FAQs and Wikis meant for support technician edification will be opened to the community to satisfy its growing needs.

New opportunities will exist for services like UserVoice and BazaarVoice to evolve beyond sales tools into support tools, as trusted user-generated reviews grow in both quality and quantity. Start-up apps like the chat feature powered by Campfirenow will lead companies away from phone support, which is inherently inefficient, and toward networks of people who are invested in the experience and who spread valuable knowledge farther and in a more trusted way than the brand is able to.

### **Volume leads to standards**

As more tools and content are available, the big players will be forced to standardize their formats of content delivery to keep up with demand. Eventually, relationships will grow so important that user pressure on innovations will force major channels to identify which methods work the best. Those key methods of message delivery will gain sway, and variations from channel to channel will diminish. Customer support will become easier to deliver and quality content will drive growth. The channels with the most robust support offering will win.

### Life Cycle Analysis: GetSatisfaction.com



Get Satisfaction is in the adoption phase of its life cycle. Pushed by positive press exposure and the adoption by Zappos as a channel of choice, Get Satisfaction should expect another boost this autumn from Nike’s experiment with Nike+.

#### Phase Analysis

## Get Satisfaction Pushing Towards Gestation

Get Satisfaction entered the adoption phase shortly after they garnered exposure from a *Fast Company* article in September of 2008. Today, Get Satisfaction claims more than 20,000 communities. Many large companies, including Apple, “monitor” but do not participate on Get Satisfaction. Nonetheless, customers and ‘prosumers’ interact with each other, trying to solve issues and problems on their own.

#### The Zappos Effect

Although we can’t confirm this, we believe that shortly after the *Fast Company* article, Zappos began integrating Get Satisfaction into their support repertoire for a limited line of products (primarily Nike). At this point, Zappos accounts for about 20% of the referral traffic to Get Satisfaction. As more corporations like Nike, Dell, and Microsoft (currently participating) begin to participate, we expect the proportion of referral traffic to change late in the Adoption phase, shortly before the channel moves into Gestation.

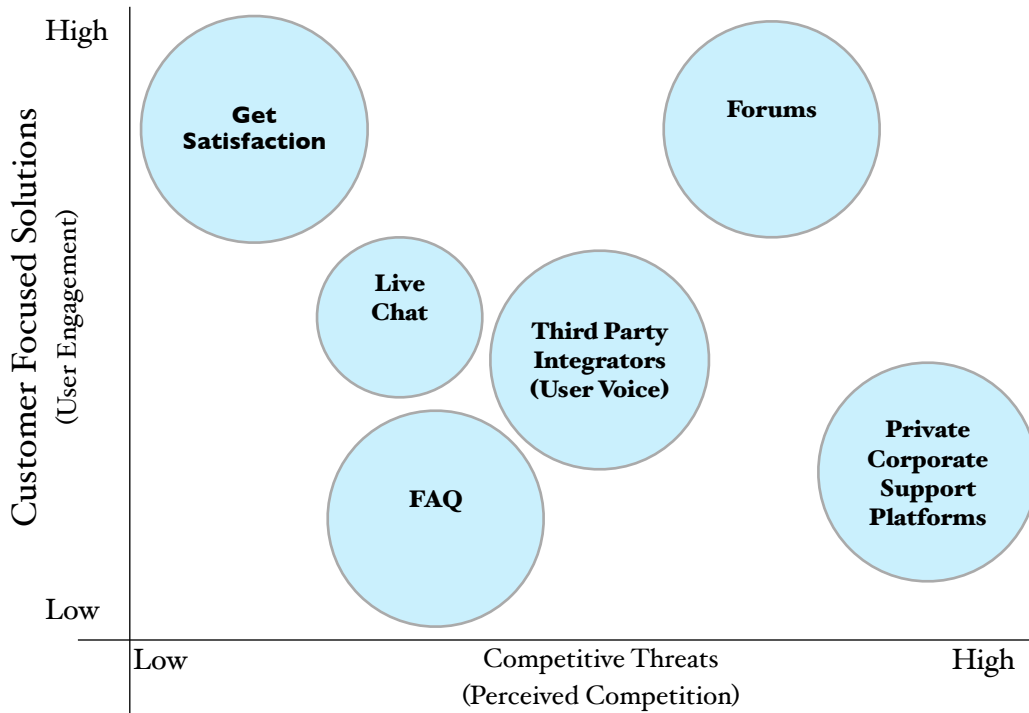
#### The Adoption Plateau

The new user interface, announced and released by Get Satisfaction in July, has greatly improved the user experience both for participating companies and for customers seeking support. We expect this enhancement to help push adoption even further as new users are introduced to the channel. As Get Satisfaction’s adoption moves slowly towards the Gestation phase, we expect high-profile press outlets to feature the channel and some of its success stories.

#### Feedback Button implementation key to success



Get Satisfaction allows participating companies to add a “Feedback Widget” to their website. The key to wider adoption and movement into the Gestation phase will hinge on the wider implementation of the Get Satisfaction widget. ■



Key Forces

## User Pressure Point to Corporate Control & Perceived Competition

The four key forces that act on any new channel as it moves through its phases in the New Media Life Cycle™ are expressed as Exposure, Momentum, User Engagement and Competitive Threats.

### User Engagement

One of the biggest challenges to wider adoption will be getting corporate support personnel to adopt the new concept that Get Satisfaction is pushing: open customer support provided through a third party. Learning and integrating a new support system is a slow process, and Get Satisfaction will be treated (for the interim at least) as an additional support channel on which to participate. Organizations without existing support tools will be quick to engage on Get Satisfaction, and these small companies will help continue growth through the adoption phase.

### Exposure

Get Satisfaction has received little press, given how large it's already grown in the adoption phase.

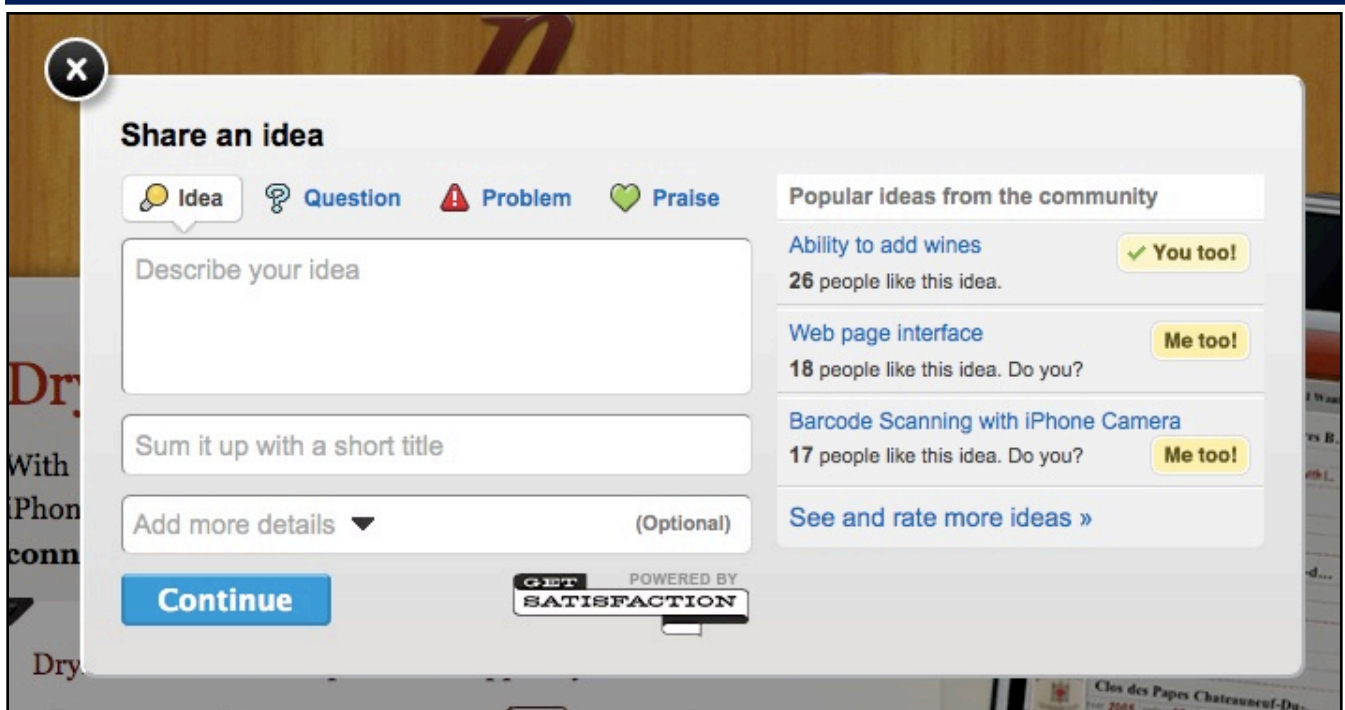
Whether it's intentional or not, this controlled public relations effort is actually helping the channel adjust as the influx of new users are integrated and they deal with the large volumes of content created on the channel everyday. Look for an increase in organic press as the channel grows.

### Momentum

The slow growth of the channel in adoption is needed to help manage the creation of support tools needed to categorize and manage the various types of content created on the channel. The new user interface has helped, but the staff must remain focused on integrating new tools that help support staff manage the load.

### Competitive Threats

The largest threat to adoption of Get Satisfaction takes the form of perceived competitors like User Voice. And for many companies, a previous investment in custom tools and platforms will hinder adoption. ■



At Drync.com (a site promoting a wine iPhone Application), hitting the feedback button generates the Get Satisfaction pop-up.

## Content Potential

# Open the Floodgates on Open Support

In an era of open online communication, Get Satisfaction allows for, and encourages, the creation of four key types of support content.

### 1. Ask a question

Content created here is designed to help users ask a question of the support team, even if they don't exactly have a problem. For example: "How do I manage my account?" These questions tend to start with *how*, *why*, *what*, or *can*. You can think of this as a highly evolved FAQ.

### 2. Share an idea

From a product development standpoint, the platform allows users to share their ideas about how to improve the brand's products or services.

### 3. Report a problem

Many of the traditional support issues end up here. Customers with product or service issues explain their problems in detail, allowing other consumers or brand support teams to solve the issues.

### 4. Give praise

In addition to helping solve issues and sharing ideas, Get Satisfaction allows users to basically review a product or service. Many users who've added issues seem to have added praise as well. This bodes well for many of the participating brands.

### Vote up

One of the best features integrated into each of the four content types is the ability to 'up vote' any one specific question, problem, idea. This is such a wonderful way to avoid duplicate content and to tier responses for any support team.

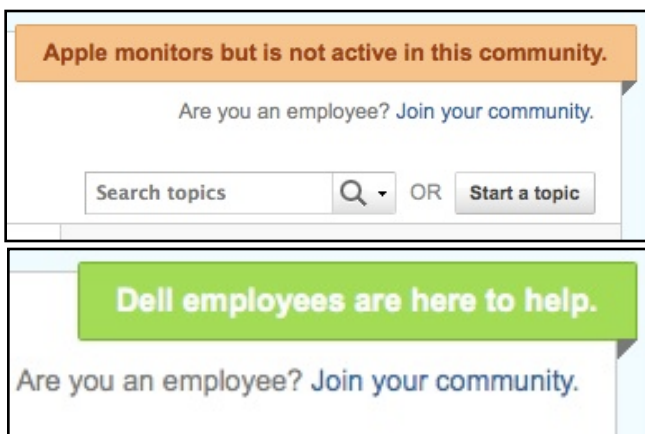
### Completely open

Keep in mind that Get Satisfaction is completely open. This kind of open communication showcases how support staff handles issues, how your product development team handles new ideas, and even how gracious your team can be when the praise rolls in. All in all, a customer can get a good picture of how they will be treated if they do have an issue.

## Recommendations

# Get Started with Get Satisfaction

Get Satisfaction is a wonderful concept that's managed to build a positive community of consumers looking for support. But Get Satisfaction did not stop there. They provided the ability to rank products, services and brands using the net promoter score, and that's extremely valuable. Get Satisfaction also added ways for passionate consumers to share ideas, give praise, and even help brands solve other consumers' problems.



Get Satisfaction stands to make big headway in their ability to attract big brands. In fact, earlier this year the platform received some backlash from a few powerful online voices saying their platform made it appear that brands that were not 'officially participating' did not 'care' about their consumers. Get Satisfaction responded rapidly with some additional functionality that allows brands to display a variety of status notes about their level of participation (pictured above).

## Recommendations by role

### Marketing Executives

If you see that your users are already posting problems or issues on Get Satisfaction, we recommend you get involved immediately. Without participating even on the free version of Get Satisfaction, you are ignoring users in a public forum who are expressing their interest in helping your brand.

If you don't see users participating on the channel, we believe you should check frequently and watch how some of the largest participants on the channel interact with their customers. When you are ready to participate, you should avoid the integration of the "feedback widget" until your entire team is focused on understanding the use of the platform and ready to integrate it into their daily support processes.

Finally, when you're ready, integrating the feedback widget will open up a flood of new content. Make sure you are ready for this influx. (Nike's been unable to keep up, in our opinion, and they seemed unprepared for the influx of interest in improving their Nike+ product.)

### Venture Capitalists & Investors

One of the largest opportunities in the customer support space is actually accentuated in the Get Satisfaction "share an idea" sections added by users: "integrate product documentation into real-time search." We don't believe this is a good task for Get Satisfaction to tackle. However, integrating an online platform on which product information and the insights gleaned from Get Satisfaction are then formalized and available for consumers in the form of an official online "manual" could close the loop on many of the issues resolved or functions integrated from Get Satisfaction user input.

### Content Creators

If you are working on creating content for a client, make sure you are aware of the insight you can glean from customers about your client's products and their competitor's products. Listening to the ideas and sharing the problems of consumers on Get Satisfaction is one of the greatest opportunities for content creators, today. Embracing user ideas and addressing their issues with high-quality content outside of the Get Satisfaction platform will be embraced by your user base. ■

## Glossary

# Terminology

**Medium** – A form of communication.

*Example: Blogging or video on demand.*

**Platform** – A framework for a medium's application.

*Example: The iPhone is a platform for the mobile application medium. WordPress is a platform for blogging.*

**Channel** – The service provider of a medium.

*Example: Scribd is a channel for document sharing. Blogger.com is a channel for blogging.*

**Content** – Medium expression.

*Example: A blog post is content delivered through the blogging medium.*

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# About the New Media Life Cycle™

The New Media Life Cycle™ is the brainchild of Tippingpoint Labs Chief Strategist, Andrew Davis. It is a framework for analyzing new media with an emphasis on quality of content, user adoption, and demographic migration. The New Media Life Cycle™ Analysis is designed to put any given subject (a channel, platform, or medium) in context with the larger new media landscape.

Designed specifically for Chief Marketing Officers and marketing executives, the life cycle analysis is designed to help quickly and effectively understand the new media landscape. ■

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## Intrigued by our analysis?

Find more of our content at: [TippingpointLabs.com](http://TippingpointLabs.com) or contact Scott Loring at 617.332.8261