

# **The Tweet Heard 'Round the World**

**by Curtis N. Bingham**

**CHIEF CUSTOMER OFFICER  
COUNCIL**

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## The Tweet Heard 'Round the World

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*Curtis Bingham is the recognized authority on chief customer officers and the first to promote this role as a catalyst for competitive advantage. He is the creator of the CCO Roadmap, a groundbreaking work containing 100+ critical strategies essential for customer centricity. As an international speaker, author, and consultant, Curtis is passionate about creating customer strategy to sustainably grow revenue, profit, and loyalty.*

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Reflect back with me to April 19, 1775...

With the might of the British Empire behind them, the British infantry believed it was utterly invincible. Imagine its surprise when it became surrounded by the Minute Men and later, many more men from the American militia. In the tension that followed, one nervous British infantryman fired upon the colonists, which started an exchange of fire from both sides. With this one shot that later became known as the shot heard 'round the world, the revolutionary war had begun.

Slightly more recently, in September of 2013, Chicago-based business owner and Twitter user Hasan Syed made history after British Airways lost his parents luggage on a flight from Chicago to Paris. Syed did something nobody has ever done before: he bought a series of promoted tweets on Twitter to express his frustration and displeasure.

*Don't fly @BritishAirways. Their customer service is horrendous*


*Checkout @British\_Airways state-of-the-art baggage handling system*

*@British\_Airways is the worst airline ever. Lost my luggage and can't even track it down  
Absolutely pathetic*

A full 7 hours later, @British\_Airways responded:

*Sorry for the delay in responding, our twitter feed is open 09:00-17:00 GMT. Please DM [direct message] your baggage ref and we'll look into this.*

By any account, Syed is no social media powerhouse. As of February 2014, he still had only 1,129 followers and 436 tweets. The sponsored tweet, however, for which he spent \$1,000.00, yielded 76,000 impressions and 14,000 engagements (replies, retweets, etc.), all of which sided with him against the brand or broadcast their own, similar stories. Syed's tweet also quickly entered the news cycle, where

A white silhouette of a lighthouse with a beam of light shining from its lantern room, set against a blue background with a yellow and orange curved line below it.

his story appeared on BBC News, Time, Fox News, the Guardian, NBC News, Mashable, Huffington Post, and others.

With Hasan Syed's "tweet heard 'round the world" on September 2, 2013, the revolutionary war for customer control of your brand had begun. That same day, Andy Witt (@designingWell) tweeted:

*What if patients were more forward and public with their frustration with hospitals like Hasan Syed was with @British\_Airways?*

Just like the British regulars, big companies have long thought they were utterly invincible—they controlled the messages, the media, and the conversations with their customers, when they bothered to have them. But to Andy Witt's point, what if one (or more) of *your* key customers – by size, revenue, influence, or other criterion – broadcast their frustration with your company to the public and to your other customers? What would the impact on your brand look like? Would it be inconsequential? Or could it cost millions of dollars in advertising to rectify?

Let's be honest. The age of cool products and feel-good service has come and gone. Social media, with all it empowers, is here to stay and still growing. It is not enough to listen to and pacify customers. Now, more than ever, reputations and relationships with customers can be tarnished, if not destroyed, with a few simple keystrokes. Customers are taking charge. They clearly want a voice.

We've entered the age of engagement. Today we have to engage the Hasan Syed's of the world: collaborate with them to help fix our problems and enlist them as our sales force to dramatically grow our businesses. In the days ahead, the most successful companies will grow only as they engage customers in customer acquisition, retention, operations, innovation, and even strategy.\*

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## About CURTIS N. BINGHAM



The first to promote the role of chief customer officer (CCO) as catalyst for competitive advantage, Curtis is recognized as the world's foremost authority on CCOs. He is founder and Executive Director of the Chief Customer Officer Council™ and creator of the CCO Roadmap and the Customer Centricity Maturity Model: groundbreaking, proprietary works that assist companies achieve customer centric culture and revenue growth. Curtis is a champion of customer engagement as a critical growth engine and first to identify engagement as the next evolutionary step beyond loyalty. An international speaker, author, and consultant, Curtis is passionate about creating powerful customer strategies and trusted for his business acumen, actionable insights, and commitment to measurable business results.

## About THE CHIEF CUSTOMER OFFICER COUNCIL

The CCO Council is a powerful and intimate gathering of the world's leading customer executives from widely diverse industries. The Council helps executives achieve objectives faster and more easily by leveraging best practices. It helps validate and refine strategies and initiatives to avoid experimenting at customer expense. Membership is by invitation only, and purposefully cross-pollinated with the most forward-thinking companies, large and small, so as to help customer executives deliver solid, customer-centric business results. For more information, email [info@ccocouncil.org](mailto:info@ccocouncil.org) or call 978-226-8675.



### LEARN MORE ABOUT CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT

***The Customer Engagement Trajectory*** - In this ***Bingham Advisory*** Curtis provides a framework for understanding where engagement emerges in the business-customer relationship to provide its greatest value.

In addition, you'll also learn how real world companies such as MetLife, Oracle, and Riot Games are engaging their customers and enjoying bottom line improvements to revenue and shareholder value as a result.

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