

# GROUNDSWELL

## Winning in a World Transformed by Social Technologies

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The Web site for this book is at: [www.forrester.com/Groundswell](http://www.forrester.com/Groundswell)

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**MAIN IDEA**

The groundswell is a social trend first and foremost. Consumers are using online technology – like MySpace, blogs, YouTube and more – to interact with, share opinions and help each other rather than being limited to the products and services which are offered by corporations.

The groundswell is literally like a flood of consumer created information. From thousands of sources, your customers are today actively talking about your brand in ways which you certainly haven't approved, vetted or initiated. The groundswell can wash over traditional business communications and completely drown out what you would prefer to be said.

Whether you like it or not, the groundswell is here to stay. It's likely even more technology-enabled tools will emerge in the future which will let consumers interact more easily with each other. With this in mind, you should make a concerted effort to first understand the groundswell and then find ways to thrive in it.

The overriding principle which should embrace everything you do in relation to the groundswell is to remember you need to concentrate on building and enhancing the customer relationship, not worrying about the technology involved. It doesn't matter whether the customer chooses to use the latest and greatest online technologies or wants to communicate with you using Morse code. The customer relationship is everything. Make each and every contact with your company positive and the groundswell will work for you rather than against you.

*“The groundswell is a spontaneous movement of people using online tools to connect, take charge of their own experience, and get what they need – information, support, ideas, products and bargaining power – from each other. The groundswell, is broad, ever shifting, and ever growing. It's global. It's unstoppable. And it's utterly foreign to the powerful companies and institutions – and their leaderships – that run things now. If you're in a company, this is a challenge.”*

– Charlene Li and Josh Bernoff

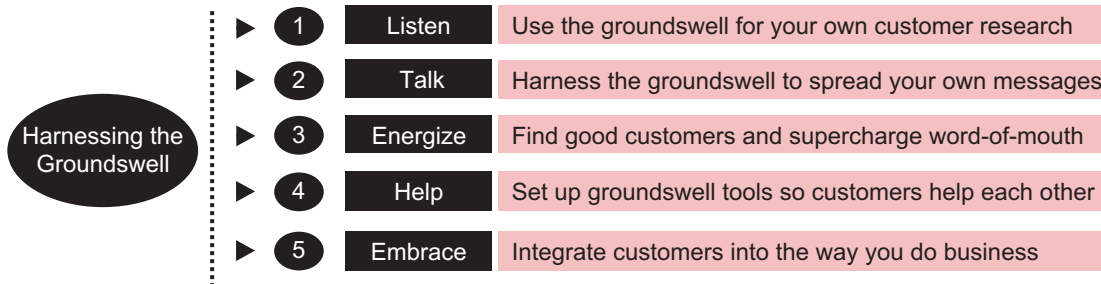
**1. Understand the groundswell . . . . . Pages 2 - 3**

The groundswell is a permanent shift in the way consumers decide what to buy. Instead of relying on advertising and other company generated information, they are interacting with other customers and learning from their experiences. People are connecting with each other online and sharing their opinions. The formats being used are varied:



**2. Five strategies for using the groundswell to advantage . . . . . Pages 4 - 6**

At first glance, the groundswell may appear to be a major threat but if you try and harness it rather than fighting it, the groundswell may be a great thing. It may enable your business to thrive. There are five strategies for achieving that:



**3. The future of the groundswell . . . . . Pages 7 - 8**

Now the genie is out of the bottle, business-as-usual just won't cut it anymore. The groundswell is irreversible, but that's okay. Connecting with the groundswell can actually transform your company for the better. It will force you to become customer-centric. And even better, groundswell technologies will enable great ideas to bubble to the surface from the bottom-up inside your corporation. To have a bright future, integrate groundswell thinking into what you do.

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