

SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT: TRENDS, CASES & THE NEW MODEL IN ACTION

PART TWO

Employee Engagement

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ARTHUR W. PAGE SOCIETY

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Sometimes, internal communications can be the forgotten component, or an afterthought, of communications strategies, which so often are focused on driving sales, marketing, media relations, maintaining share price, and nurturing relationships with external stakeholders. But if the New Model is correct, and corporate character is the core from which an effective communications effort springs, then surely character is first built and nurtured at home. Moreover, because so much of the *activation* of corporate character takes place in parts of the organization outside the direct control of the CCO, effective internal engagement is essential to making corporate character a meaningful influence on corporate action rather than something merely aspirational.

To illustrate the importance of internal engagement to the New Model, it is helpful to consider the graphic below.

Internal communications can also be the way companies get their feet wet before committing to a more expansive external effort. It can help get wary CEOs, unaccustomed to the loss of control associated with anything other than one-way messaging, to appreciate the potential value of social media. And for highly regulated industries, it can be a way of exploiting the benefits of social media without incurring the regulatory challenges that may be associated with an externally facing effort. One pharmaceutical company, for example, developed an internal crowdsourcing platform and

What CCOs Can Do

This simple model can apply to any organization, with different specifics for each. Further, these dimensions of corporate character can be seen not just as individual categories, but as a progression, a system.

LOOKS LIKE...	SOUNDS LIKE...	THINKS LIKE...	PERFORMS LIKE...
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At the left side of this series—the “Looks Like” dimensions of character—most of the elements are owned by Corporate Communications and Marketing. They include things like the design of publications, websites, signage, advertising—in some cases, even the company’s products.

As we move to “Sounds Like,” many elements and channels are still within our functions’ control—from executive speeches, to advertising copy, to other forms of thought leadership. But moving across the spectrum, toward the actual performance of the

company, requires deeper degrees of collaboration—with Human Resources, Sales, Customer Service, Product Development and beyond.

This, in turn, suggests an emerging role for the CCO as a catalyst for collaboration across the C-suite. Many of the Page Society members interviewed for this study noted that the activation of corporate character—and, indeed, more and more dimensions of our work today—involve multiple responsibilities that CCOs do not own.

implemented a “chairman’s challenge” designed to help the company solve problems and seize opportunities. The approach also enabled the growing company to maintain a small-company feel by engaging people through social media’s functionality.

As Chapter 1 discussed, the entrance of the social media generation into the workforce has been a major driver of business migration to social media, and perhaps the first place this was felt was in internal communications. Informally, individuals made their workplace colleagues Facebook “friends” (and occasionally came to regret it), and the growing expectation of 24/7 availability, along with telecommunication, have blurred the distinction between “at work” and “not at work.”

After an initial period of wariness, in which many companies blocked Facebook and similar sites from their employees’ computers, companies began to recognize the capacity of social media technology to enable employees to communicate with each other more effectively, allow executives to speak directly to individual employees without the filter of middle managers, surface (and solve) problems, create new products, boost morale, and recruit new people. Ultimately, employee engagement becomes a critical component of the journey toward full social engagement.

From Informal to Formal

Sometimes, employee engagement is an outgrowth of more informal arrangements that are themselves an extension of employees’ personal use of social media for workplace interactions. At Xerox, informal Yammer groups had emerged, and Xerox decided it would invest in a premium “official” Yammer network. Employees began creating personal profiles on Yammer to indicate their areas of expertise, their projects, and their interests. The Xerox Yammer network began leveraging this information to connect employees who could help and bring value to each other’s work.

The effectiveness of this new network extended beyond collaboration. Executives began using it to directly communicate new initiatives throughout their teams, rather than relying on the “cascading” effect (and inherent distortions) of sending the information down through the chain of command. This allowed program creators and executives to communicate directly with frontline employees and get their feedback. Yammer now acts as Xerox’s “corporate memory” and helps people all over the world stay plugged into the company. Overall, the effort improved corporate communications effectiveness, enhanced collaboration and productivity, and produced support and advocacy for external social media initiatives.

This cultural transformation is enabled by technology but driven by a conviction that the business case has been made for social engagement. Sometimes, “let me show you what the competition is doing” helps change skeptical attitudes. It is clear that until minds are aligned and senior management lets go of some of its fears about loss of control, enterprises are unlikely to fully realize the benefits of full social engagement.

Stitching Together a Global Company

Aon, the reinsurance giant with 66,000 employees in 120 countries on six continents, wanted those employees to be more globally engaged, customer-focused and loyal. In October 2011, Aon devised a “Pass It On” campaign built around the symbolic passing around the globe of three Manchester United footballs (soccer balls). Although it was also a very public program, it had a strong element of employee engagement on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and the company’s website. The social media effort demonstrated how employee engagement can be inseparable from, and essential to, marketing success. “Colleague engagement is a key priority for Aon,” says CMO Phil Clement, “and it is a major part of how we help clients.” In 2012, “Pass It On” was named the top B2B social

media non-tech marketing campaign by the readers of *BtoB Magazine*. In eight months, more than 3,200 photos were uploaded, and ultimately 8,000 employees donated a total of 27,000 hour of volunteer service in 46 countries.

Crowdsourcing and Connecting Execs to the Shop Floor

General Motors wanted to enhance direct communications between its executives and its employees, and at the same time wanted to improve ease of sharing information and expertise across a sprawling organization. For both of these goals, GM decided that enabling real-time communications was essential, so it used SocialCast to power a proprietary social network that it called *Over-Drive*. The platform is open to all GM employees across the globe, and it enables real-time dialogue for brainstorming, crowdsourcing, gathering feedback and other forms of online collaboration. To facilitate the desired improvement in executive-to-employee communication, GM expanded the program to include “Town Hall” chats.

Trends in Enterprise Social Networking

There’s no doubt that the use of social media for internal communications is continuing to grow. But there are nagging questions about its

effectiveness that may, in large part, be the result of organizations failing to take advantage of the available tools, and failing to train employees properly in their use.

In May 2013, Towers Watson published a study into social media usage in internal communications, asking 290 organizations in Europe, America and Asia about their internal communications behaviors.¹ It found that 56% of the employers surveyed currently use various social media tools as part of their internal communication initiatives to build community — creating a sense that employees and leaders are in it together and sharing both the challenges and rewards of work. However, when asked how they would rate the effectiveness of social media tools, only 30% to 40% of respondents rated most of the tools as highly effective. And only four in 10 (40%) rated the use of social media technology as cost effective.

These findings are consistent with a broader survey conducted by PulsePoint Group that found organizations to be over-reliant on email to perform tasks that would be more efficiently performed using social media platforms, such as crowdsourcing and sharing information within

	% THAT USE	% OF THOSE THAT USE AND FIND IT EFFECTIVE
Instant messaging	73%	48%
Streaming audio or video	61%	48%
HR or other function journal or blog	55%	35%
Enhanced online employee profiles	54%	37%
Social networks	53%	29%
Employee journals or blogs	52%	37%
SMS messaging	51%	39%
Leadership journal or blog	48%	36%
Collaboration sites	45%	33%
Video-sharing site	44%	36%
Apps or other mobile approaches	44%	39%

Source: 2013 Towers Watson Change and Communication ROI Survey

¹ <http://www.towerswatson.com/en/Press/2013/05/just-over-half-of-employers-using-social-media-tools-for-internal-communication>

the organization.² The report, *The Future of Enterprise Social Networking*, says the biggest reason workers say they aren't using those other platforms is that their co-workers aren't using them. That, the study says, creates an opportunity for organizations to train people in the use of these alternative channels. Increased training and education appear likely to increase intra-company use, driving familiarity and satisfaction that will enhance usage and productivity. Other frequently cited reasons for not using these alternative tools are lack of data security and the distractions they cause.

It's clear that workers are skeptical that the use of alternative platforms will really reduce the overall burden, and they fear that it will merely spread the burden across multiple platforms, each of which must be learned and managed, without putting a dent in overflowing email inboxes.

Although this challenge may be slowing the progression toward full employee engagement, it also represents an important opportunity. These obstacles can be overcome by educating workers (and leadership) on the value proposition of using these more efficient platforms for specific purposes. This training needs to explain the use cases and be very specific about when and how to best use these programs. The organic approach of "letting the community decide" doesn't seem to be working.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the *Future of Enterprise Social Networking* report found that small companies are taking the lead in using social media alternatives to email. Those with 2,000 to 5,000 employees are more likely than "mega-size" companies (20,000+ employees) to use social networking channels that workers say make them feel more productive. And, workers at those smaller companies are more likely than their giant counterparts to receive information on how to use those channels effectively.

PRACTICE POINTERS

- As *Building Belief* notes, research proves that an enterprise's employees are by far its most credible representatives. Build that credibility within the company by empowering, equipping, and enabling employees to play that role.
- To spur action, work with colleagues in HR to develop training programs that accomplish this.
- Collaborate with the CIO to create companywide platforms that engage employees as partners in organizational change initiatives.
- Work with the CIO and CHRO to ensure that companywide performance evaluation, recognition, and reward systems provide continuous reinforcement for desired behaviors.
- Use social media to provide robust feedback systems that help employees take ownership of outcomes. These can leverage both existing internal systems and external platforms, such as social influence and recognition ratings.

² *Future of Enterprise Social Networking*, PulsePoint Group, July 2013

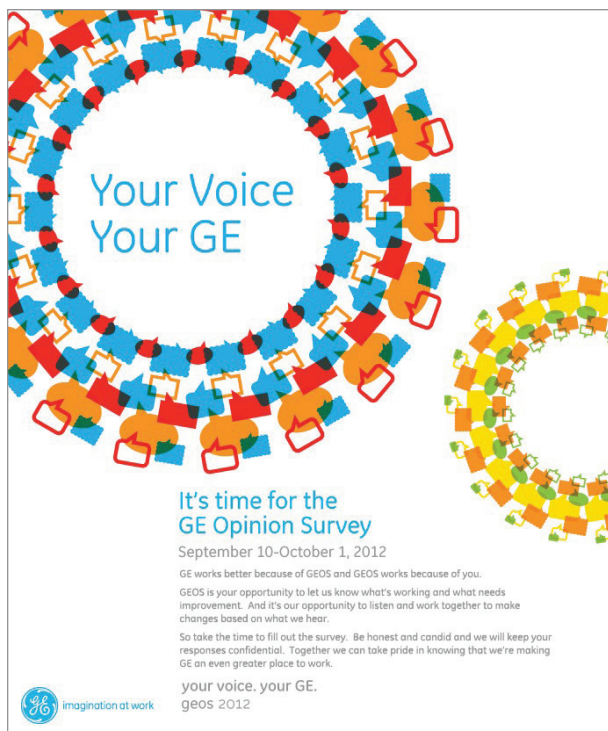
CASE STUDY



Employee Engagement Through Social—GE Employee Opinion Survey 2012

The Challenge:

Every two years, the GE Opinion Survey (GEOS) gives employees an opportunity to provide insights on many aspects of their work environment and measures capabilities critical for team and organizational success. However, the company felt that employees weren't taking full advantage of the opportunity, and set out to develop a system for driving employee participation in the survey.



The Solution:

A multi-faceted overhaul of current intra-communications strategies and the integration of new communications software, including:

- Reversing the traditional communications cascade – Scrapping the traditional top down approach, GE started with communication to employees from their managers/closest leaders.
- Crowdsourcing questions from employees via the company's intranet, GE asked employees to tell them what other questions they wanted to address and what other opinions they wanted to share.
- Developing and utilizing Manager Snapshot, a new digital tool that allowed the company to reach managers with regular, short communication updates throughout the survey process (pre- to post-).
- Applying Grassroots communication – GE encouraged leaders to use existing channels such as face-to-face meetings, blogs, newsletters, etc., to communicate about the survey vs. one-off email messages.
- Integrating a Colab “Like” button into the internal GEOS portal, the GEOS manager portal and inside GE articles on GEOS. Employees could click the button to tell their Colab followers that they have completed GEOS and invite them to do the same. When one hits the “like” button, it appears in their stream for all other followers to see.

Results:

- Achieved 80+ participation rate – maintained/surpassed same participation rate as with standard communication approaches
- Crowdsourcing: 400 employees suggested almost 900 potential new questions, 8,000 employees took part in the voting process and cast more than 22,000 votes to select the final three questions added to the survey
- Colab Likes: 20,000, with 11% engagement—very high compared to industry standards
- Colab Comments: 250+
- GEOS Portal: 60,000 page views, ¼ returning visitors—8,000 employees went directly to survey from the page

Key Learnings:

There are a number of important lessons to be learned from the success of the new program. First, GE learned that the cascade model is broken. Using social channels and peer encouragement proved to be far more effective in engaging employees than the outdated top down approach. Engagement also spiked noticeably when they used the channel where employees already were— leadership blogs, Colab, etc.— instead of creating standalone email messages. Including employees in the survey creation process was important, too – giving them the chance to help shape the survey led to a higher investment in the project. Constant collaboration with Communications and HR colleagues was the glue that held the program together, driving consistent communication strategy throughout.

CASE STUDY



Finding Expertise through Social Business

The Challenge:

It is difficult for most organizations to locate the best expertise needed to quickly resolve problems or best address a business opportunity, whether that expertise resides inside another employee or within published content. Employee engagement, effectiveness and productivity suffer as a result. Externally, this lack of readily available expertise leads to failures in closing sales opportunities as well as lower satisfaction among existing customers requiring service and support.

Common challenges faced by organizations that could benefit from applying Social Business include:

- Employees do not proactively share expertise or knowledge with each other
- Employees and business partners cannot locate the expertise needed to help them support customers and resolve internal process issues
- Profitability drops because the same solution is ‘invented’ many times by different employees and business partners
- Sales efforts fail or drag on with no conclusion because the organization does not convince the prospect with relevant information and expertise
- Research and Development efforts do not delight customers or produce desired products quickly

- Expertise of employees approaching retirement has not been captured before they leave the workforce

The Solution:

IBM established a new social website and web service called Voices, a real-time data service that showcases live social feeds of IBMers who are experts in big data, mobile, social business, cloud, cognitive computing and much more. But it doesn't end there. Voices then marries the individuals' thoughts with IBM's company feeds (@IBM, @SmarterPlanet, @IBMResearch, etc.), as well as a word cloud that shows visitors what's trending via data visualization technology originating from IBM Research.

This juxtaposition of unfiltered feeds of individual experts alongside “official” channels captures expertise across the entire company in a new way. In doing so, Voices exemplifies IBM's values-led culture and massive social media footprint.

In Beta versions of Voices – also accessible at ibm.com/voices – the Communications team developing this program demonstrates the application of algorithmic scoring to the content items (e.g., individual blog posts, images or videos), the channels (e.g., a feed from Twitter, etc.) and the individual participants (the subject matter experts who have opted in to the program).

“At its core, IBM is a company of experts. Both the activation of corporate character and building of advocacy at scale at IBM relies first and foremost on the IBMers themselves who must engage and share their expertise with others to drive our business. IBM’s social web service - Voices - uses data analytics to serve up our best and brightest thinking in a way that is informative and compels interaction with IBM.”

- Ben Edwards
Vice President, Global
Communications & Digital
Marketing, IBM

The scoring algorithm, which is proprietary to IBM, applies a different weighting to the relative reach, engagement and amplification of social media activity in near real-time. With this scoring mechanism applied, IBM can create visualizations of the pool of dynamic social media data based on what is most meaningful, popular and the

most or least shared. The purpose is to create information services that help IBM’s clients, employees, investors and others find the very latest and most compelling content from those within the company.

Voices is a way to discover content and people. Visitors can browse people to discover great content, but they can also browse content to discover people. IBM is building a variety of interfaces on top of this data set to prioritize or emphasize different kinds of interactions. The scoring algorithm aids both forms of navigation and discovery - it can be applied both to content objects (URLs) and to channels (people, brands).

Creating the Voices data service and website demonstrates IBM’s authentic, people-centric approach to social business. For a true social business, this kind of mash-up can augment or even replace the traditional “About our Company” or “Community” pages. Voices launches with a total of 150 feeds, which will scale tenfold by year-end. IBM has already used the Voices web service to power the social media aggregation and visualization for the Watson Business Unit announce-

ment and also to create the data visualization wall for the company's presence at the 2014 National Retail Foundation Conference where IBM's CEO spoke.

Voices is primed for today's era of data transparency. On this new social playing field, the organizations that win will be those whose employees can improve the culture by embodying their company's character to the world at large. Social brand strategists need to create intentional systems of engagement that allow employees to convey and ultimately shape the brand experience. That's especially important for a business-to-business company such IBM.

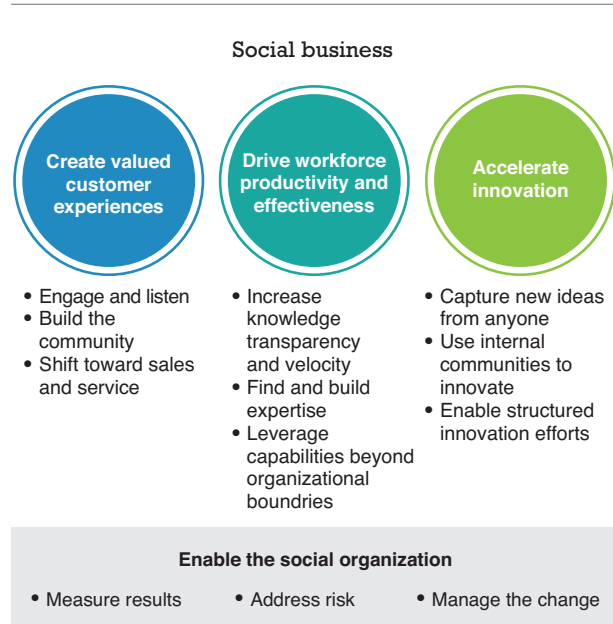
It also represents a natural evolution for IBM, which takes social business seriously, whether it's to collaborate and innovate, to stay connected with clients, universities and other communities, or to train the next generation of leaders. And this should not come as a surprise when you consider that IBM was one of the first big companies to issue social computing guidelines, which, among others things, encouraged employees to participate in social conversations whether inside the company, at their desk, at home on the couch, or while on the road.

Key Learnings:

Social business can be a force for organizational change and business value. A recent IBM survey found that more companies are tapping into the power of social business. Almost half of the companies surveyed increased their social business investments in 2012.

Through its research and conversations with leaders in social business, IBM learned that there were three areas in which firms were investing to be competitive and effective in their use of social business practices:

- Create valued customer experiences
- Drive workforce productivity effectiveness
- Accelerate innovation



Source: IBM Institute for Business Value.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Arthur W. Page Society would like to acknowledge the following individuals for their contributions to this chapter of *Social Engagement: Trends, Cases & The New Model In Action*.

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