

# STORIES

## Marketing in 2010

*social media becomes operational*

10 marketers reveal direction - presented by:  
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## WHY OPERATIONAL WORKS *by Valeria Maltoni*

When we talk about brand awareness, consciously or not, we correlate “brand” with one specific phase in the marketing funnel. Many have defined brand as a set of expectations and experiences.

These in turn generate stories we identify with as we develop our relationship with the brand and the company and people who represent it in our minds and interactions over time. Brands that set themselves apart command a premium.

Brand impact in valuation has been a challenging, but not impossible, feat to measure. It’s a mixture of qualitative and quantitative data collected about the brand’s public profile, its present role in creating demand, and its future strength as an asset.

I equate brand with the infrastructure upon which everything else sits. It needs to contain the integrity of a good reputation, the capacity for trust, the flexibility for evolution over time, and the simplicity to be understood and infused with your customers and employees stories.

Applications like sales, product development, engineering, customer support, and all of the other functions you associate with operating a company sit on that infrastructure and borrow from its characteristics.

Brand also includes the environment or context a company builds around itself to operate, its culture.

This is the sum total of rites, stories, and dynamics that bind people, inside and outside the organization. It in-

cludes channel partners and joint ventures. It may also include vendor relationships. An important point to consider as the service and media industries continue to consolidate.

Now think about social. Through the tools we have at our disposal we extend the reach of those interactions and experiences. The results flow back into how we think about our products and services (or they should). The stories your brand creates extend it beyond the company walls and, by reflection, deep inside them.

Execution in social media enriches brands and the people or tribes that make them work. It means you are changing the world and allowing the world to change you as a business in commensurate parts, while you interact with it.

What are the ingredients of this exchange that make social operational?

1. Tribe and networks (people)
2. Direction or compass (objectives)
3. Action and outcomes (measurable goals)
4. Maps (strategies)
5. Tools and tactics (media)

Engagement and outcome derive from the active - and continuous - participation of individuals and groups in the knowledge flows - within their tribes, and outside them. We constantly evaluate, consider, test, experience, adopt

and filter information and ideas while we get them and us done.

How can we use these connection points between ideas and people to change businesses and their stories? This is the question for 2010 - social media becomes operational. Read on.

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I asked 10 professionals who are walking the talk to give us some coordinates for marketing in 2010. More than prediction, their advice indicates direction.

This will be the year marketing becomes operational again.

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## OPERATIONALIZING IN 2010 by Jason Baer



Marketing has changed a lot since an enterprising caveman promoted his arrow points as “superior in every way - mammoths don’t stand a chance.” But, the real-time Web will change marketing more in 24 months than in the proceeding 20,000 years.

That’s because the real-time Web and its social media gasoline fundamentally change the relationship between company and customer.

Every marketing shift heretofore has been rooted in the company being able to reach its customer in a more impactful (TV) or more efficient (demographics and psychographics) fashion.

Now, however, the taxonomy of war that defined marketing (targeting, flight, impact) is an anachronism. Campaigns are eroding. In this real-time epoch, every interaction with a customer or prospect is a separate, fluid, and potentially critical marketing initiative.

The balance of power has moved, inexorably and forever, from the company to the customer. When a real-time meme can erode brand trust that has taken years or decades to establish, we as marketers are no longer in control of the asylum.

The good news is that many brands have chosen to embrace the real-time Web and social media as a groundbreaking way to foster customer kinship with the brand, rather than trying to ignore or squelch consumers’

newfound power.

And in 2010, we’re going to move from experimentation to methodology. It will be the year that the real-time Web and social media become operationalized. There are already plenty of companies clearing a path for everyone else, but this will be the year when we all start to get on the same page as to what’s “right” and what’s misguided. I see five key areas where this will occur.

### 1. **What’s the Point?**

There is a growing dichotomy between brands that use social media and the real-time Web as an outbound marketing tactic, and those that use similar tools and outposts as a customer service and CRM effort. (consider how Dell and Comcast use Twitter very differently, but successfully)

To date, companies have been able to seamlessly experiment with both approaches, using similar tools, venues, and personnel. This year, however, brands will pick one strategic use (either customer acquisition or customer retention) and flesh it out, or create bifurcated programs to address both – but in separate venues. (Twitter for promotion and a private brand community for feedback solicitation, for example)

We’re going to see best practices and conventional wisdom coalescing around what the best and highest use is for particular tools and platforms.

## OPERATIONALIZING IN 2010 (cont'd)

### 2. The Marketing-Centric Enterprise

The real-time Web makes everything marketing's responsibility. It used to be that if you had a problem with a hotel, you'd call the front desk. Or if you really had an issue, you'd call the 800 number, or write a letter and your concerns would be addressed by the hotel's operations or customer service department.

Now, you can send a tweet, update your Facebook status, write a blog post, or craft a review on Yelp, or TripAdvisor, or Google Sidewiki. Then it becomes the responsibility of the marketing department to locate, triage, and assuage your concern.

This puts marketing at the center of day-to-day corporate existence in a way it has never been historically. Operational shortcomings, customer service snafus, financial mishaps, R&D blunders, CEO peccadilloes. It all has the potential to bubble up in the real-time Web, and therefore it all impacts marketing.

Thus, we'll see marketing as the binding agent that brings disparate corporate departments together to create cross-functional teams. The real-time Web forces collaboration, with marketing as the quarterback.

### 3. Staffing and Budget Clarity

Fortunately, the misguided notion that social media and conversation marketing are inexpensive is fading away. The expense is simply shifted from media and production,

to personnel.

In 2010 we'll see the emergence of best practices around real-time Web staffing. What types of employees are needed? Do you need round-the-clock monitoring? What's the role of the agency, in comparison to the brand? All of these questions are being answered by brands via trial and error today.

While the issue of social media for customer acquisition vs. customer retention will impact staffing decisions somewhat, we'll see the adoption of social media execution "field manuals" – similar to how corporate social media policies are achieving greater standardization in late 2009.

*(Note that my friend Amber Naslund has done some excellent work on social media staffing patterns, and has an ebook about that subject)*

In addition to increased clarity regarding personnel and roles, we'll see social media become a budget line item for a majority of companies in 2010, even mid-sized and small businesses. The resources needed to harness the real-time Web now clearly transcend the "test and learn" method of skimming a few budget dollars from here and there.

### 4. Rules of Engagement

As Amber said recently in a MarketingProfs Webinar we did with Beth Harte and Ann Handley, "one negative tweet doesn't mean you have a brand crisis." This is true. Except when it's not.

## OPERATIONALIZING IN 2010 (cont'd)

Because the real-time Web puts all manner of customer communication through the bailiwick of marketing, we need to develop far more numerous, and nuanced mechanisms for engaging with customers, prospects, and critics.

In many companies today, the same people are responding to positive and negative customer comments, on an ad hoc basis, with very little in the way of predetermined messaging, or desired outcomes.

2010 will be the year that the real-time Web forces marketers to act more like call center managers. We're going to need to create or codify rules of engagement for who and how and why and whether the brand responds to or interacts with consumers.

This will unavoidably remove some of the spontaneity and spunk from social media interactions, but the tradeoff of a more logical, assured communication program will be a worthy exchange.

### 5. **Back to the Future – Social Media in Retrograde**

Maybe we've gotten a little ahead of ourselves?

In our zeal for YouTube videos, and Facebook apps, and iPhone wizardry, and augmented reality we've in many cases neglected the many ways we can socially enable the marketing we've been doing all along.

In 2010, we'll retrofit our email marketing, search marketing, banner advertising, even print and TV, to include social components universally. I hope we'll focus on getting the basics done well before we move forward with the cutting edge opportunities. Because that's a long-term positive.

Sure, the real-time Web is disruptive and powerful, but it can't do all the work all by itself. We need to treat social media as a marketing ingredient, not a marketing cure-all, and adding conversational frosting to our historical communication methodologies is the first step toward moving beyond hype and toward operationalizing.

Here's hoping 2010 is the year that the real-time Web and social media become less special, not more. Eventually, every company will have a social component, and then it will just be the way marketing gets conducted in the modern age. Let's start down that path together in the months ahead.

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## NEXT EVOLUTION BETWEEN BUSINESS WORLD AND SOCIAL MEDIA *by Olivier Blanchard*



For the sake of simplicity, I won't give you a Top 5 or 10 list this time around. Instead, I will focus my attention on just two key points that will drive the next evolution in the relationship between the business world and Social Media in 2010.

**1. The idea that Social Media professionals are *one-size-fits-all* (the current multi-purpose Social Media go-to guy stereotype) will begin to disappear in the next 12 months.**

You wouldn't know it from reading most articles and blog posts on the subject, but Social Media isn't all about community management and customer engagement. If an organization is going to properly leverage social technologies, it needs to take into account the less "sexy" but equally important types of functions that also work closely with social media, from conversation monitoring and online reputation management to process integration and data analysis. A Social Media professional probably can't wear every social media management hat: strategy, operational management, market research, marketing management, community management, customer service, data analysis...

The complexity of driving a social media "program" requires a deliberate and specific division of labor within the organization. Specialization comes next. You simply can't expect an "expert" blogger to suddenly transform himself into a

business strategist for a Fortune 100 company, lead a 10-person community management team juggling 18 different channels and an ambitious editorial calendar, drive 38% YoY growth in product adoption with the help of five distinct product teams, increase net new customers by 7%, funnel customer feedback into an innovation incubator, and... well, you get the picture. No one can do all of this. A talented community manager probably isn't (and shouldn't be) the resident expert on measurement and R.O.I., for example. Division of labor is key. Specialization is inevitable.

Within organizations with more than 6 months of social media program management, the one-size-fits-all "social media specialist" model just can't survive very long. As more and more companies approach their first full year in the space, 2010 will see the start of a shift towards a richer definition of social media expertise within their organization.

**2. Social Media will cease to be an add-on marketing program and will begin to shift to a fully operationalized and integrated business model.**

When you start actually building the structure of a Social Media program, especially for a large/enterprise space organization, things get complex fast. It is crucial for C-suite executives (on down) to realize that Social Media isn't just a new marketing religion. The reality of Social Media is that it provides a rich (and broad) mechanism for radically upgrading an organization's competitiveness. Management can no longer afford to leave the social media expertise

## NEXT EVOLUTION BETWEEN BUSINESS WORLD AND SOCIAL MEDIA (cont'd)

to consultants and “experts.” They have to start taking ownership of Social Media if they have any hope of making it work for them.

A good place for them to start is by bringing clarity to the Social Media “question.” Lesson 1: Effective, sustainable, scalable social media programs all have a basic underlying framework, and at its simplest, you are looking at four major building blocks and operational elements:

- **Social Media program development** (a strategy-heavy function that starts with identifying business goals, then devising ways to leverage social media to accomplish those goals.)
- **Social Media program integration** (almost exclusively an ops piece, especially in the enterprise space: How to “plug” social media into every business function, from customer service and marketing to HR, IT and Legal.)
- **Social Media program management** (the broadest of the three, basically dealing with the execution of the program itself.) Some examples of management functions are community management, online reputation management, keyword and conversation monitoring, content management, campaign management, etc.
- **Social Media program measurement:** A function

that includes not only the actual measurement, but also calculation and analysis (the latter being very unique functions within measurement).

No need to add the next layers of complexity just now. This will be a good first start for 2010.

As companies begin to realize that business objectives drive strategy, *then* tools and tactics (not the other way around) 2009’s focus on “getting on Facebook and Twitter and YouTube” will become last year’s little “we were all just learning how to crawl” inside joke. 2010 is the year that we should start to see companies get serious about their investment in social media, get savvy about how to integrate and deploy social technologies and thought leadership across their organizations, and move away from “shiny object syndrome” to a more appropriate “business process and best practices” approach to the space.

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## ARE YOU WILE E. COYOTE OR THE ROADRUNNER? by Danny Brown



When I was growing up, one of my all-time favourite cartoons was the one with **Wile E. Coyote and Road Runner**. For anyone not familiar, Wile was (as his name suggests) a coyote, and he was always trying to catch his titular nemesis, the Road Runner (a large bird whose signature sound was “meep meep”).

The problem was, no matter how many times Wile tried to catch Road Runner (and they were numerous!), he always seemed to fail in ways almost as spectacular as his plans were. It usually ended with Wile being flattened, falling off a cliff, being run over by a train or truck and more.

So what has this to do with taking social media and marketing from **theory to operational**? More than you might imagine.

### Planning for Prolonged Success is Crucial

One of Wile’s biggest failings is that he only saw the immediate future and what he could do to make Road Runner his next meal. While short-term goals are fine for your business, it’s the long-term strategy that will see you succeed or fail.

Going for the quick hit may result in initial success, but you have to really plan for prolonged success. This should include:

- **Being fluid with your plans.** Twitter and Facebook may be the golden child now, but you only need to look at MySpace and Friendster to see how the mighty can fall. You wouldn’t put all your eggs in one basket offline – why act differently online? Watch to see how networks are being viewed by the analysts and be ready to change ahead of any meltdown.
- **Building Partnerships for Profit.** Wile relied on Acme Products for some of the traps he put together to ensnare Road Runner. Having a loyal client partnership is one thing, but again, do you really want to just have one partner? Look at what your marketing needs are; look to see who’s enjoying significant success in the social space with tools that will meet your marketing needs; and build partnerships with each. Be prepared so if one partner falls, you won’t fall with them.
- **Having a Solid Back-Up Plan.** Every time Wile failed to catch Road Runner, he’d move onto his next harebrained scheme, which was also doomed to fail. As the economic meltdown last year showed us, we never know what can happen – but we can be prepared. Make sure you’re not relying solely on social media to make your business a success. You still need to adhere to the **Four P’s of Marketing – Product, Price, Place and Promotion** – and build upon your offline success with this matrix. Some products and services just aren’t built for a social audience – use the Four P’s to define whether yours is or not.

## ARE YOU WILE E. COYOTE OR THE ROADRUNNER? (cont'd)

### Operation Social Audit

While on paper it might look like Wile had everything planned to a tee, the truth was a lot different. He didn't really have any QA measures in place, and his projections on project success were always way off. Again, he was blinded by the target and the possibilities as opposed to the mind of the target and the potential pitfalls.

Your success in mixing your marketing needs with the social media space can be defined early on by a social audit. This allows you to get into the minds of your target and also catch any pitfalls before you trip up on them operationally later on – something Wile could have learned from.

- **The target is not the only thing to shoot for.** Any business needs to know its target audience, sure – but you also need to know how to aim properly. Connect with your existing audience **before** adapting to any social tools and ask if they'd benefit from you being there. If not, and you're not aiming for a new audience altogether, do you really need to pull the trigger on an empty target?
- **Social media is not cost-free.** No matter how many times you're told social media is inexpensive, it's not. It may save you on "traditional" advertising or marketing costs, but the time expense and the strategy meetings, research and follow-through all cost money as well. A poorly executed social media strategy could cost you

much more money in the long run as you count the cost of wasted man hours, talent, development and execution. The Price part of the Four P's is very evident here – make sure you scope your long-term investment costs and how you'll measure return.

Another way to make social media operationally viable for you is to think how *you* can service *your* clients. Wile failed because he never had anyone in a similar situation to share his views with, and they could have corrected or recommended other methods to his approach, and taught him from their experience.

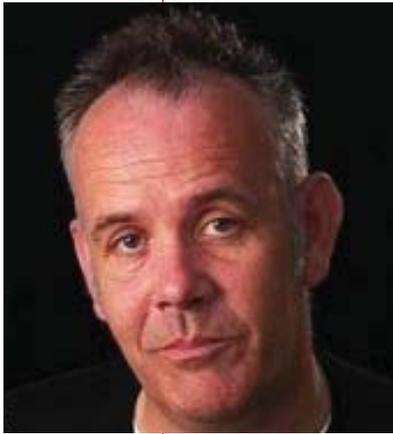
Your success so far has been because of your expertise in your sector. Clients and customers trust you. Why not **use that trust and build on it**? Share some of your social marketing success with your clients and help them grow. Ask what's worked for them. Build ideas together, both brick and mortar and online. There's no success more solid than shared victories and strengthened partnerships; as your knowledge and social marketing success grows so can that of your partners and clients, all led by you.

The Why of social media and marketing is long gone; the How is the now. Plan ahead; plan for longevity; build strong partnerships and best practices. Learn from Wile E. Coyote and be the Road Runner. Be that one step ahead.

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## THE MOOSE WILL PROVIDE by Mark Earls



There are lots of super smart people who can describe in practical terms for the do's and don'ts of building the newer kind of "Social" organization - folk like my excellent co-authors of this fabulous e-book. So, rather than repeat what they have to tell you or needlessly quibble on the details, I'd like to share one simple idea that underpins all best practice in the field of change management- one idea whose absence is a hallmark of failed attempts to "socialize" business; whose presence is a strong indicator of success.

That idea is this: "The Moose will provide".

Yes, that's right, "The Moose WILL provide".

Or, "The Moose will PROVIDE" (if you prefer - it's your call, after all, which is part of the lesson I'm trying to impart btw).

Some readers might well recognize that this concept comes not from some management guru, nor from the latest psychological theory, not from "social" marketing or from the "social" technology but rather from the theatre - *Improv theatre, in fact*. From the Canadian **Loose Moose Improv School**, (and for me, via my friend, blogger and ace facilitator **Johnnie Moore** and from Rob Poynton, co-author of the excellent book, *Everything's An Offer*).

Improv Theatre is not like regular theatre. There is no script to be followed, no fixed storyline to be stuck to, no particular tune to sing. Rather - much like the kind of organization many of us are trying to build today - it is a much more fluid and (simply) much more human kind of thing: individuals respond openly and honestly, to other individuals in real time. It is the repeated interaction of these individuals with each other that creates the complexity and the value: the story simply - almost magically, it seems - emerges from these human-on-human interactions.

While I'm by no means an expert, as far as I understand it a large part of the training of improv is teaching control-freaks like me and you to learn to live with the messiness of human contact and with the uncertainty of outcome - indeed, to revel in the wonderful unpredictability of the human co-created outcomes.

But above all to trust that "The Moose Will Provide": that the open and honest human-on-human interactions will lead to good stuff and that trying to impose anything more substantial and directional is largely self-defeating.

All too often in recent years, I've found myself feeling under pressure - perhaps from my clients or (to be absolutely frank) just as likely from myself - to force a specific outcome on the organisation I'm working with and its people: perhaps to ensure that its people or its customers behave in such and such a way or maybe to organise themselves according to some specific organisational "blueprint" that

we've cooked up, some detailed plan. Maybe you have a similar experience, also; maybe you have felt this pressure, too. Most people have.

This not at all surprising - it's how we've all been taught to think of strategy and its relationship with outcomes, about how change is brought about: what you need is a really good plan - insightful and detailed and then some fine ruthless implementation. We know what's best if only people would listen to us and do what we say.

The significance of this for folk like you and I as we go about building the new kind of Social Organization that the real time Social Web demands is this: when people adopt the connective technologies which we all champion it creates the same kind of environment as the world of Improv practice; one in which it is the very human interaction of the individuals which creates the outcomes, not the external authorities like authors or strategists. Big Apriori Plans and Sweeping Grand Ambitions become less relevant: it's what emerges from the interactions that matters.

Not just in theory - when the organisation has adopted the technologies - but during the very process of adoption. You can't make them do it the way you want to; you can't force them to adopt it to the ends you had in mind. And yet all too often that's what we social media folk end up trying to do.

That's why it's important to for us learn to trust that the

Moose *Will* Provide (so that's how you say it!) and a waste of time and energy pretending otherwise. Far better to do what you can to encourage adoption of these technologies on the people's terms - to enable them to interact. And then to retire, respectfully, to the wings.

It is, after all, their show (and not yours).

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## OPERATIONALIZING SOCIAL MEDIA *by Rachel Happe*



The adoption of social tools and techniques has been one of the fastest growing trends in corporate history and it is changing much of the way organizations interact with their constituent groups. This trend has been thrust upon companies by the rapid pace of technological change, the subsequent rise of consumers using social tools, and the ensuing demand by customers to be heard. Because of this pace of change, there is still a lot of confusion around the terminology, approaches, and best practices in this space.

At The Community Roundtable, we've laid out eight competencies that are essential as organizations attempt to operational a social strategy.

- Strategy
- Leadership
- Culture
- Community Management
- Content & Programming
- Policies & Governance
- Tools
- Metrics & Measurement

All of the competencies except for community management exist in organizations today, but will have to adapt to effectively harness the power of communities. operationalizing a 'social' strategy is not just about hiring a discrete team and providing resources for them to execute it, it will also require some fundamental changes to areas like leadership, culture, and governance. Building a community management center of excellence that helps the rest of the organization achieve that change is a tactic used by many leaders in this social transformation. One of the core roles of community management teams is to coordinate internal resources, train and evangelize internally, and provide secondary support to business teams looking to leverage social tools and techniques.

As a social approach filters through organizations, leadership becomes more collaborative and distributed, culture becomes less centrally mediated, and governance places more responsibility and authority on each individual. Tools provide much of the glue that allows this transformation to take place in a way that keeps the organization coordinated while enabling distributed decision-making.

This social transformation of business occurs in stages – going from experimentation to explicit strategies to formal incorporation of a cross-functional approach to a transformational of organizational structure. It is about both front line skills and how organizations are structured to respond to the market. Some companies will find that

## OPERATIONALIZING SOCIAL MEDIA (cont'd)

they want or need to proceed further along this maturity path than others – likely affected by how dependent they are on information as a core asset.

As maturity and commitment to social approaches gain traction, operational disciplines are also emerging and with them new competitive advantages and core competencies. For the organizations that succeed in this realm, being social is not just about being conversational; it is about harnessing the vast power of collective interests to move markets.

While these leading organizations are starting to emerge, the process of transforming a business takes years.

As we move towards this stage the period of hot flash successes and social media rock stars will fade, replaced by consistent improvement to customer experience and a natural integration of the voice of the customer into the daily decision-making process of organizations. 2010 may not be nearly as exciting as the past couple of years, but the progress will likely be much more impactful.

### Community Maturity Model™



	Stage 1 Hierarchy	Stage 2 Emergent Community	Stage 3 Community	Stage 4 Network
Strategy	Familiarize & Listen	Participate	Build	Integrate
Leadership	Command & Control	Consensus	Collaborative	Distributed
Culture	Reactive	Contributive	Emergent	Activist
Community Management	None	Informal	Defined roles & processes	Integrated roles & processes
Content & Programming	Formal & Structured	Some user generated content	Community created content	Integrated formal & user generated
Policies & Governance	No Guidelines	Restrictive	Flexible	Inclusive
Tools	Consumer tools used by individuals	Consumer & self-service tools	Mix of consumer & enterprise tools	'Social' functionality is integrated throughout
Metrics & Measurement	Anecdotal	Activity Tracking	Activities & Content	Behaviors & Outcomes

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## SOCIAL MEDIA IS LIKE WATER by Gavin Heaton



It's easy to get caught up in the excitement of social media. The speed with which you can BEGIN to engage your audiences is enchanting, the responsiveness of the crowd can be addictive and the opportunities that present themselves appear real, achievable and seductive. But before you know it, the hour spent on Facebook and Twitter each morning has taken on a life of its own. There are discussions, images, links to share and videos to watch and comment on. Successful social media is built on micro-interactions –

but what happens when the sum of your interactions tells a divergent story from the rest of your marketing? What happens when the tactics overwhelm your strategy and set you off running through the empty cubicles of your mind?

The key to success is alignment.

It is important to consider social media when you are in the process of building your marketing strategy, not some time later. If you “bolt-on” social media it's easy for it to be dislodged or disregarded – like the squeaky wheel on your well-oiled machine. One approach that you can take is to provoke your thinking – consider social media as either:

- Leading your communications efforts; or
- Amplifying your communications efforts

What do you need to do to your business if social media LEADS your communications? How do you need to rethink the marketing plan to accommodate this? Where do you need to change the patterns of your spending and how does this impact your team, your agency and your larger organization? Particularly consider other business units as well:

- What does this mean for HR and recruitment?
- What is the downstream impact for your Alliance partners?
- Where will this impact your suppliers?
- How does this change the technology landscape or standard operating environment (SOE)?

Now, apply the same questions to the concept that social media will AMPLIFY your communications efforts. How do the answers change? Is there a demonstrable difference?

You see, social media is like water. You may think that your enterprise is water-tight, that your SOE is locked down, that your employee contracts are unambiguous and that your firewall will keep your secrets in and your competitors out. But what about the smart phones that your employees use? What about the Blackberrys or iPhones that are issued to executives? And what happens when your staff go home? You see, water runs downhill. It finds the easiest route. It waits. It erodes barriers. And at the earliest opportunity it turns to a torrent. So it is with social media.

## SOCIAL MEDIA IS LIKE WATER (cont'd)

It is important to remember that social media is not a technology – it is a people-driven movement that allows us to find, share and connect with others of like minds, passions and interests. And we can't prohibit social media. We might be able to stop a trickle to Facebook in the office or to Flickr over the iPhone, but there are too many workarounds, too many exceptions and too many desires to connect. For the first time, social media is visualizing the fact that our organizational membranes are porous – information enters and escapes at almost every touchpoint.

On the surface, this sounds disruptive to business. However, enterprises have been harnessing this type of energy for decades. It is the same impulse that delivers results from teamwork. It is the building blocks of knowledge management. It is what drives the “skunkworks” projects at organizations as diverse as IBM and Procter & Gamble. And it comes from the same social space as recognition, rewards and remuneration.

Working across lines of business, the opportunity for any enterprise lies in the harnessing of existing efforts. The first step here is to turn the lens inwards. It means being strategic.

Taking a strategic approach to social media means working creatively across the organization to identify emerging best practices, developing links between innovations and those people or groups who are leading the activities, and helping to guide various work streams that are taking place

– either officially or under cover. Rather than attempting to repress or eliminate the social media activities that are already taking place (look, listen, track them down – you'll find them soon enough), executives have the opportunity to support and even amplify the work that is already taking place.

The interesting thing is, that social media takes effort. It takes time to create some traction – to build an audience or community. So if the fledgling efforts of your teams are finding an audience, you can bet it is fulfilling an un-met need. The question is whether this need is best addressed by your business or not. Does it fit within your strategic framework? Can the parameters of this project be adjusted to fit your business imperatives? Are there lessons that can be applied in pursuit of other outcomes?

Where there is a good match with your business strategy, look at what can be amplified. Consult with those team members responsible. Find out where they need help – what can be improved or accelerated with funding, re-sourcing, technology or promotion. Refocus efforts around narrow objectives designed to deliver on strategic outcomes. Appoint an executive sponsor – make sure that this sponsor has more than a passing interest in social media. Perhaps more importantly, ensure that the executive has KPIs aligned with the success of this project.

Finally, make sure that you bring the disciplines of the business to bear on your social media activities. Work with

## SOCIAL MEDIA IS LIKE WATER (cont'd)

your HR team to ensure that job descriptions and KPIs accurately reflect changes in work practices. Ensure that technology supports your social media efforts as required. Consult widely within the business to produce workable social media guidelines and best practice documents. And work with your finance group to set aside budget to grow – and monitor – the revenue and cost implications.

The potential of social media in the enterprise is immense. What starts with a trickle can, with guidance and vision, become a powerful business tool, whose benefit is only limited by your imagination. And it's not a question of dipping your toe in the water – it's a matter of finding who is already learning to ride the waves.

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## SOCIAL MEDIA 2010: IT'S TIME TO GET BORING by Jackie Huba



2009 is feeling a bit like 1999 when it comes to social media.

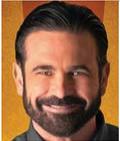
CNN, Ashton Kutcher and Oprah helped stir the hype for Twitter. Social media and **Twitter conferences** sprang up everywhere. Social media **snake oil salesmen** prowled Twitter. Lots of hype, but not a lot of process-driven action.

My prediction for 2010: social gets integrated into business functions.

That means: social media policies, aligning social media strategies and tactics with overall business objectives and revenue goals, and realigning functional teams. Yeah, not as exciting as another viral video but those are as reliable as a Vegas roulette table. Social media process is hard work, so it's time for social media to get boring! For process geeks like me, that's pretty exciting.

What was hot in 2009 is out in 2010.

OUT	IN
Influencers	Fans
 Turning your <b>home page</b> into a Twitter search for your brand name	 Turning your <b>employees</b> loose on Twitter for customer service
Return on conversations	ROI (always in style)
Email threads	<b>Yammer</b>

Advertising on Twitter	Insights from Twitter
Taking feedback	<b>Taking action*</b>
<b>Interns</b> in charge of posting on social media	The <b>CMO</b> participating in social media**
	
Showing off	Showing up
Focused on yourself	Focused on your customer
Number of followers	<b>Net number of promoters</b>
Blocking employees from using social media	Incenting employees to use social media
<b>The Audience Conference</b>	<b>The MIMA Summit</b>
 Bill Mays	<b>Ramon de Leon</b> 
Corp comms department	<b>Evangelism department</b>

\* Via **Sean O'Driscoll**

\*\* An **Ant's Eye View** client

[Reposted with permission]

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## THE BUSINESS OF SOCIAL MEDIA by Jonathan MacDonald



Throughout history, new technology has continually reduced the gap between people, meaning that our circles of conversation become increasingly wider, and at an increasing pace. We are more connected and enabled than ever before. The tools, platforms and channels we chose to communicate on are the 'media' for us to be 'social'. For many though, the initial reaction is to find ways of exploiting these media, populating with advertising and marketing communication in the hope of monetising the new opportunities, mostly regardless of the human conversations taken place.

At the time of writing, the topic of social media is one with a volume of corporate interest outweighing commercial reality for many companies. It is my belief that this is down to a lack of understanding of how people are, and the use of old fashioned commercial principles that are simply not suited to human conversation.

Unsurprisingly, there are many questions that this topic raises, all of which should be framed, in my opinion, within basic psychological principles. At 'this fluid world' ([www.thisfluidworld.com](http://www.thisfluidworld.com)), we help organisations achieve their full potential in the context of a changing communications and business world, by helping them identify, understand and utilise new opportunities. Many of the clients who approach us are asking questions like:

- We have a limited marketing budget, how can we use social media in the right way to increase sales?
- New technology is fundamentally changing our industry, how can we use it to our advantage?
- How do we incorporate social media into our marketing mix?
- We have a great social media idea, but how can we develop a sustainable business model?
- Suppliers of social media tools are knocking on our door every day; how can we understand what is going on in new media so we can make the right decisions?
- We desperately need to innovate around our products and communications, how can we do that with limited time and budget?
- There are so many new areas and things we have to get our head around in order to succeed moving forward, yet how can we enable the right skills internally to do so?

I see a significant need for education and best practice to be established, but in addition, I feel it imperative that social media is considered as an approach to activate a wider strategy and purpose, infiltrating the entire organisation, rather than a stand-alone effort that has no bearing on the company in general.

## THE BUSINESS OF SOCIAL MEDIA (cont'd)

This is because social media has changed the way companies are seen, discussed and portrayed, forever. To benefit from this phenomenon, organisations need to understand and harness the power of human interaction as soon as possible. In addition, I believe companies must seek an understanding of social media and its role in society. Only then can positive brand building and revenue stream generation be facilitated through the use of social media methodology, tools, platforms and channels.

At this fluid world, we provide a service called 'Social Media Protocol'. Within this, there is a core mission in understanding the impact that social media can have on corporate and brand communications strategy and the 'Social Media Crisis Management' service helps companies put systems in place to identify and handle social media crisis in a timely and effective way.

We see this as vital for all companies, as in our ultra-connected society; a single blog post by an individual with no professional training can tarnish a giant organisation forever. What used to be a PR issue in controlling and limiting damage is now a business-wide challenge in an environment of permanent risk and high-speed conversations that are un-controllable and un-predictable.

*“Social media has changed the way companies are seen, discussed and portrayed, forever. To benefit from this phenomenon, organisations need to understand and harness the power of human interaction as soon as possible.”*

At the time of writing there are very few companies who have systems in place to deal with a social media crisis, yet all face these risks and, predictably, case studies are emerging of what can happen when issues are not addressed in an optimum way.

To me it seems mandatory that protocols are put into place and stitched into the fabric of a company. Evidently this requires a slightly more in-depth approach than creating a Facebook, Twitter account or a 'Web2.0' site!

Companies need to understand the origins of social media, its relevance in people's lives, community behaviour, norms of communicating on current platforms, methods of using social media as a brand-building tool and its potential impact on revenue. In addition to this, there should be focus on measuring the affect of social media, above and beyond

'eyeballs' and 'clicks'. This is because despite the extensive coverage and hype, organisations are looking at social media as a potential commercial platform but often seeing limited results.

Thus, it is my wholehearted belief that the digital world of personal brand communication requires new rules and regulations in how we create, produce, provide and deliver products, services, solutions and content.

Because I feel so strongly about this, I have scoped out these requirements into 8 methods. Combined, these make up what I have termed: *Involvism*. You can download a free,

## THE BUSINESS OF SOCIAL MEDIA (cont'd)

detailed whitepaper about Involvism, including examples and viewpoints, from [www.involvism.com](http://www.involvism.com)

I believe that Involvism ensures the most efficient, productive, profitable and scalable execution in this fast-changing business environment. Involvism is a philosophy that can be integrated into the way businesses work, internally and externally. It's a method that can be applied to the usage of new media formats.

It's an approach that can be chosen in marketing and advertising. It's a way of doing business in harmony with society.

Here are the 8 methods:

### **Involvism Method 1: Collaboration**

Widening your skills to incorporate those of others is a fundamental component of enabling value, efficiency, productivity, profitability and scale. Allowing creation to be jointly achieved enables increased perspective and commercial advantage through enhanced knowledge and understanding of the industry and the public. Co-creation of experiences makes others jointly accountable and therefore more eager to address negatives and accentuate positives.

#### **Key Actions**

1. *Adjust* demand for control into a demand for openness
2. *Accept* that 'your way' is only ever one part of an

ultimate mix of proposition

3. *Allow* sharing of materials and utilities for co-creation
4. *Announce* the collaborative capability so that others know they can build with you

### **Involvism Method 2: Conversion**

Identifying, respecting and rewarding influencers is a fundamental component of enabling value, efficiency, productivity, profitability and scale. The conversion of recommendation into purchase is the mechanism that highlights word-of-mouth power in commercial business. The benefit of such conversion should be spread to advocates as remuneration of their faith.

#### **Key Actions**

1. *Create* or invest into tools that identify influencers
2. *Configure* payment processes so that profit can be distributed to influencers
3. *Construct* mechanisms that ensure integrity of advocacy
4. *Collate* methodology and utilities for the proper understanding of people, so as to reward in accordance with understood value perception
5. *Correspond* with advocates and new fans to complete the feedback loop

## THE BUSINESS OF SOCIAL MEDIA (cont'd)

### **Involvism Method 3: Connectivity**

The creation of tools that facilitate connections of value for people, products and services, is a fundamental component of enabling value, efficiency, productivity, profitability and scale. The connectivity between what we do, use, buy and make, enables an acceleration of experience and is the wiring of our everyday life. The construction of such connectivity should be a paramount intention of those with the capability to do so.

#### **Key Actions**

1. *Learn* the real-life journeys that citizens make in seeking, discovering and experiencing value
2. *Listen* to the real-life preferences, habits and tastes that citizens express implicitly or explicitly
3. *Lower* the transit time and other barriers between one experience and another
4. *Leverage* the technological components that join functions of consumption, custom and creation together

### **Involvism Method 4: Cohesion**

The cohesive link of beliefs, values, approaches and strategy across all company activity is a fundamental component of enabling value, efficiency, productivity, profitability and scale. Activity in the public facing part of organisations must match the mindset and methodology of internal structures.

Conversely, there must be the same cohesion between the way of working and the approach to citizens. Only when all parts of an organisation are working cohesively can real benefit be gained.

#### **Key Actions**

1. *Formalise* key values, offerings and ethos into a clear, understandable core direction and proposition
2. *Familiarise* all sectors of an organisation in the above direction and proposition, encouraging belief and inheritance of core
3. *Focus* especially on the silos that act without link to the core - adding flexibility and agility to their operations
4. *Follow* the guidance of citizens in adjusting the core direction and proposition - become jointly accountable with them in enabling a cohesive approach

### **Involvism Method 5: Creation**

The creation of new product, service, experience and format is a fundamental component of enabling value, efficiency, productivity, profitability and scale. Even a successfully static model is at risk of being replicated or replaced with a newer, cleaner, easier or more valuable version. Creation of 'the new' is more than a production mandate - the mentality of constant renewal is a safeguard against bland, boring and unemotional offerings.

## THE BUSINESS OF SOCIAL MEDIA (cont'd)

### Key Actions

1. *Accept* that current propositions are limited in longevity
2. *Allow* flexibility in concepts for iteration
3. *Account* positive and negative trends in response, interaction and discussion around versions
4. *Apply* revisions openly and unapologetically

### Involvism Method 6: Convergence

Citizens choose media channels for consuming and experiencing content due to ease, convenience, context, price and availability. As the capability of technology increases, the approaches to specific media channels must de-silo. The convergence of technology must be matched with a convergence of approaches that typically were unique to each channel. As media devices become more capable, personal and contextual, a convergent methodology centered on remarkable experience, rather than single-channel engagement, is a fundamental component of enabling value, efficiency, productivity, profitability and scale.

### Key Actions

1. *Start* communication approaches from the point of citizen experience rather than channel choice
2. *Set* minimum user experience guarantees as a priority over revenue generation

3. *Simplify* ways for people to interact, collaborate and share

4. *Show* a unified and ethical approach in all channel usage

### Involvism Method 7: Credibility

Building an identity and nurturing the trust of others is based on solid credibility. What is valid for interpersonal relationships is valid for business to citizen relationships also. Organisations must have clear values and stick to them. They must be honest, trustworthy and genuine. They must admit when they are wrong and humble when they are right. They must ask for the help of others rather than pretend omnipotence. Credibility in business must be of the same standard as the credibility of a citizen to truly enable and create real value, efficiency, productivity, profitability and scale.

### Key Actions

1. *Clarify* the core values you and your organisation have
2. *Correspond* all internal and external activity to your core values
3. *Create* and prepare for scenarios that would test the credibility of you and your organisation
4. *Communicate* with all internal and external stakeholders, what you stand for and what that means

### **Involvism Method 8: Courage**

Courage is the internal drive that enables us to take chances, try new approaches and accept change as a desirable factor in business environments. Courage is the determining trait in whether many things are executed or shelved. Courage sets apart those who settle for the mundane, from those who continually push forward in creating remarkable products and services. Courage is mandatory in efforts of enabling value, efficiency, productivity, profitability and scale.

#### **Key Actions**

1. *Accept* that many activities will fall outside your comfort zone and start to embrace those chances
2. *Assess* the importance of familiarity and whether it is more important than creating the remarkable
3. *Accelerate* your involvement in new creations, re-prioritising the static to sub-prime
4. *Award* and reward those who assist and enable positive change, re-prioritising those who promote the status quo

In summary, I believe that the methods outlined above and the approaches needed in understanding humans, are critical to successful business in harmony with society. There are many opportunities for insightful companies and despite the digital environment looking mature, I see our current commercial climate as embryonic in comparison to what is possible in the not-too-distant future.

In closing, I would like to thank Valeria Maltoni for inviting me to contribute to this document and I hope you find it of value in some way.

Enjoy the ride.

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## BRINGING SOCIAL INSIDE *by Amber Naslund*



Discussions of social media almost always center around company-to-customer communication. External stuff, usually from a marketing, public relations, or customer service perspective. And all of those have incredibly valuable, legitimate applications when viewed through a strategic lens. Several other folks in this eBook are probably discussing smart ways to do exactly that.

But an oft overlooked application for social media concepts is right inside an organization's walls. The very essence of a brand is nurtured and bred by the humans that drive the business, and socializing and personalizing communication within a business can have dramatic impacts on culture, work ethic, and native brand stewardship.

### **Brand Is Internal, Too**

Brand building is often heavily focused on external perceptions and concepts. How the customers view the brand. How the prospects view the brand. How we stack up against the competition's brand. What our differentiators are in the eyes of our stakeholders. All that jazz.

But your best and most adept brand stewards can often be found within your own walls. And as communicators, we sometimes do a terrible job of getting them involved in

our brand development efforts. We treat branding as the purview of the communications department alone, instead of letting the communicators be the hub for the brand, and letting it branch into all of the areas of the company where it might have impact (hint: that's most all of them).

As much as we view social media as an opportunity to build our brand online through external channels, similar if not better opportunities exist to reinforce, build, and refine the brand within your own walls.

### **Testing, Testing**

One of the largest and most universal barriers to social media adoption is the big four letter word: RISK. The fears that come from potential failure, negative backlash, inability to measure impact accurately, resources and time involved in deploying and managing social media.

Building a social media initiative internally keeps the laboratory experiments safely inside your own walls, giving you the ability to tweak, correct, and even jettison them altogether before you put them out for public scrutiny.

Bring your best and brightest social media enthusiasts and skeptics into a room, and discuss the ramifications. What if we launch a blog internally and no one participates? What if someone leaves a comment trashing their boss, or puts inappropriate pictures from their weekend in Tahoe on the employee social network? What happens if someone

## BRINGING SOCIAL INSIDE (cont'd)

shares confidential information over Yammer? How are we going to tell whether the company Wiki is having a positive impact on productivity or training? How much time will this take? Who's leading the charge, and how will roles shift to accommodate these new initiatives?

While internal social media needs careful consideration too, especially in large and heavily matrixed organizations, it's a bit of a testing ground for ideas and assumptions about how social media might work externally. Things like the need for guidelines and policies, establishing resource allocations, and noodling with measurements and reporting can all be discussed, implemented, tested, broken, reworked, and executed on friendly turf.

### **Culture is Everything**

Truth: social media adoption and successful execution has a lot more to do with a company's culture than its operations.

Consistently, companies that thrive with social media share some key values. They put the customer experience at the top of the priority pile. They listen, gather feedback, and act on what they learn when it's for the greater good (even if that means admitting flaws or accepting criticism). They're enthusiastic about exploring new ways to communicate

*“Companies that thrive with social media share some key values. They put the customer experience at the top of the priority pile.”*

and connect with customers, and they focus on the potential upsides. They look at potential downsides from a realistic perspective, not a paranoid one. And they know that the balance of human interaction and value perception is at the core of nearly every business or sales decision. If an organization is steeped in a culture of mistrust, power, control, and the notion that they always and only know best, social media is only going to highlight those problems and exacerbate them.

Initiating discussions about internal social media adoption can draw some of these issues to light, and help start an honest conversation about them. It takes the courage of a passionate few inside an organization to broach these subjects, but doing so can help determine whether the culture barriers are surmountable with some careful planning and conversation, or whether the issues are more deeply rooted in the organization (which social media, internal or external, will never alone solve).

### **Knowledge is Power**

Tribal knowledge exists in every organization. You know, the kind that lives in people's heads, in their notebooks, in their individual computers or collectively in pieces among a group of people. It's the stuff you have to work hard to seek out when you need it, that's never in a convenient or easy to find place, and is usually housed through limited access channels.

## BRINGING SOCIAL INSIDE (cont'd)

Internal social networks - more accurately, collaborative knowledge bases - can change all that. Wikis. Blogs. Help forums. Document sharing and collaboration. In short, homes for all the stuff that gathers dusts in folders on the intranet, never to be seen or found or updated again.

But what if you could not only house the information, but everyone had the ability to contribute to it, build on it, make it better? Tag it and annotate it for easier and more threaded classification (and therefore easier to find through any number of means)?

And think about the implications for productivity, training, ongoing education, and cross-functional learning. The morale boost from employees realizing that their expertise not only has a home, but an impact. Remember, social media doesn't just mean snippets of conversation online. The nature of the term "social" means that it's human-powered. And the most powerful knowledge about your company is already there, inside your walls and the heads of your resident experts, looking for a place to land.

### Where to Start?

Start with a discussion. Bring people in the room from two distinct camps: those that are enthusiastic and passionate about the potential for social media in your company, and those that are utterly skeptical. Ask questions about why this matters. What you might accomplish with it if there

were no boundaries. What you're afraid of. What you do and don't understand. Your goal is to arrive at the core things you would want to achieve through social media, and why they matter to you as an organization. That's going to take several discussions, perhaps lots of patience and negotiation, and a relentless focus on the question "why does this matter?"

Then, and only then, should you consider the mechanisms. The tools are the last consideration, but their characteristics and functions are important. Collaboration. Sharing. Feedback and input. Access to people and information. Connections to like minds without geographical barriers. The ability to build a brand, collectively.

You can be the place where it starts. Anyone can. Where, how, and how far it takes you? You'll never know until you start.

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## BECOMING A SOCIAL BUSINESS *by Shannon Paul*



Being a social business means that information and ideas can travel quickly, regardless of tenure or position, through the organization in order to create a genuine culture of collaboration.

Social businesses don't necessarily have to have a flat structure, but they feel flat.

This is a culture where customer service representatives have a direct line of communication with the CEO, where the CEO is responsive to the conversation with the customer service representative.

In a social business, communication and the free flow of ideas and collaboration can happen across business units, departments, disciplines and levels.

In the social business, each individual is empowered to make contributions to the organization that transcend title, salary and position.

Becoming a social business is nothing less than revolutionary. It requires an absolute culture shift for most companies; and while it may make sense for someone in your company to shoulder responsibility for consulting with each department's social media needs and adapting marketing messages for better traction in social networks, acquiring a single talent to own all things social media will probably not be enough. To truly engage with the public in a meaningful way, people and processes inside the

organization will need to change.

### **Bad Service with a Smile**

We've all been there, right? A friendly waitress is genuinely apologetic when our food takes hours to arrive at our table, but doesn't offer anything to compensate for the inconvenience, or a believable apology from a retail clerk who tells us the item we want is out of stock without offering to check the warehouse or another location.

This is what it's like to be involved with a very *un*social business with decent, well-intentioned employees. Chances are pretty good in either scenario that the process for offering to better serve you are prohibitive for the employees on the ground.

Processes to improve customer experience are often cumbersome for employees on the front lines and may require extra effort in the form of paperwork and research that does not accrue to better performance reviews or increases in compensation. Some company cultures also have a pervasive type of social pressure that actually prohibits better customer service. This can take the shape of an us-versus-them mentality with regards to their own customers as well as management. Employees may have to obtain written approval from an ambivalent supervisor or risk social backlash from getting another employee in trouble just to provide good service when the general protocol fails.

## BECOMING A SOCIAL BUSINESS (cont'd)

Most of us can appreciate any attempt of a business to pay attention to our expressed concerns in blogs and online social networks, but if no real feedback loop is adopted inside the organization to help the company adapt, you may be setting yourself up to run around the Internet making empty apologies and missing out on the opportunity to be a better company with a better product or service.

Complaints about bad customer experiences should ultimately lead to better customer experiences, not more apologies.

I'm not saying the customer is always right -- they're not. Just like you, they're human. Sometimes clarification and explanations help customers understand the point of view of the company and turn angry critics into strong supporters of your position. However, customers often have a very different point of view from those inside the organization, and staying in touch with what they want should help your company be more successful.

### Steps to Becoming a Social Business

How do you connect the dots between where you are now and becoming a social business?

*“Customers often have a very different point of view from those inside the organization, and staying in touch with what they want should help your company be more successful.”*

### 1. Start Listening

Social media engagement will require a strong understanding of what is already being said about your company online. Get to know not only what is being said but the culture inside some of the networks where conversations are taking place.

Look for opportunities to address what people are saying about your company as well as other opportunities to participate when they're NOT talking about your company. Become a genuine participant in the community whenever possible. Making friends with people in social networks helps your company establish real roots in online communities.

Don't forget to look at sites like **Glass Door** where present and past employees rate employers. These are places where former employees will often post grievances and details they felt uncomfortable addressing in exit interviews.

### 2. Bring Down the Silos

In a culture of fear people hoard information and keep secrets as an ad hoc pathway to job security. Other silos are simply a byproduct of a team culture where even healthy competition amongst teams can often prevent information and resource sharing.

Many conditions inside companies are collaboration killers that can lead to wasted hours of duplicated effort

## BECOMING A SOCIAL BUSINESS (cont'd)

and research. To encourage collaboration create honest feedback loops for current employees and make it safe for them to provide input on what can be improved to make their jobs easier and inherently more rewarding.

Reward employees that provide feedback regardless of sentiment and encourage information sharing across teams and disciplines. Think beyond creating a comprehensive database or wiki chock full of data and instead, make it easy for employees to ask each other questions.

### 3. Build Capacity

Your company needs to learn the ins and outs of engagement in order to make the effort sustainable. This goes back to the idea that one person cannot make your business *social*. Building capacity for engagement in social networks means building capacity throughout the organization in order to become agile enough to respond and adapt to customer demands and other opportunities to delight your customers and other relevant stakeholders.

For example, I used to work for a professional sports team and one of my first questions from a fan on Twitter was about what the view and purchase process was like for wheelchair accessible seats. In order to answer his question, I first had to learn where the wheelchair accessible seats were located in the arena. To do this, I had to contact the box office to learn what sections were available for wheelchair accessibility, and inquire about the reservation and purchase process. I then went to that part

of the arena to see what the view was like. Since what is considered a “good view” is subjective, I snapped a picture and posted it in a reply on Twitter so he could see for himself.

My point here is when you start engaging with real people, the notion of the FAQ is often useless. When provided with a convenient point of contact, real people ask questions companies almost never think about. This is why it's essential to have access to information in all areas. What if the box office ignored my email? What if I didn't have access to the arena? I suppose I could have rattled off the section numbers where the seats were located, but that wouldn't have really answered his question.

If your company or product is web-based, building capacity can often include making your product more conducive to sharing in social networks or making popular parts of your website easier to access and navigate. This can also include making network-specific landing pages to bridge the gap between the conversation on that network and what your company has to offer. Thinking around user experience needs to get beyond the confines of your own site to encompass search, advertising, mobile applications and activity in social networks.

Some useful questions to ask:

- How do people arrive at your site? Bringing people to the homepage can result in a weird user experience if someone accesses your company based on an

## BECOMING A SOCIAL BUSINESS (cont'd)

interaction in a social network or an organic search term. How can you help them get what they're looking for?

- What useful information can they take with them when they leave? By useful, I mean useful to *them*). Does each image, video, tool, etc. have its own URL or do they only exist as pop-ups in flash or javascript that inhibit sharing?
- How can you make it easier for them to return? Blogs and other regularly updated features offer great opportunities for asking people to return to see your content. This gets their foot in the door, but you have to provide content they actually want to read.

### 4. Define Strategy and Metrics

What are some of the things you want to achieve by becoming a social business? Do you want to directly increase sales or are you looking for more brand awareness? Are you hoping to decrease customer service call volume thereby cutting costs? These are all questions that lead to strategy development. Since (hopefully) you're already listening to online activity -- even better if you have done some type of segmentation research to identify opportunities and get to know your customers a bit better,

*“The bottom line for aligning strategy and metrics is that if you aren't measuring the right things you won't really know if your efforts are successful.”*

you're in a good position to strategize how best to reach them.

Where a lot of companies make missteps is in outlining meaningful objectives and focusing on the *right* metrics. To many companies, web-based communication, user experience and search engine optimization are very new. This can create a lot of confusion around which metrics indicate what.

Some companies that identify increased sales as a goal of online community engagement are placing too much weight on things like mentions and incoming links. While both are important, if the right people aren't talking and linking, this does little to improve sales. A good metric would be actual conversion. Although social media conversation alone probably won't convert at a satisfying level for a sales-driven organization. This typically requires an integrated approach that includes landing page development, search engine marketing and optimization, and a user interface that encourages and rewards buying. Companies that are very successful at this test a wide variety of landing pages for traffic from different sites, including social sites as well as search and advertising.

An increase in brand awareness might come from combining the number of on-topic mentions with an increase in direct traffic to the company's website or an increase in searches for branded keywords.

## BECOMING A SOCIAL BUSINESS (cont'd)

The bottom line for aligning strategy and metrics is that if you aren't measuring the right things you won't really know if your efforts are successful. I'm of the opinion that a lot of social media efforts are abandoned too quickly because companies don't realize that they're simply measuring the wrong things. ROI calculations lose all meaning if you don't have a real understanding of what metrics actually ladder-up to your goals.

### 5. Build an Army

In the book, *Trust Agents*, Chris Brogan and Julien Smith devote an entire section to army building because it's that important. Building an army inside your organization doesn't just require tapping people to form a committee, it means rallying people to a cause.

Every cause needs a story, not *just* a strategy. This goes much deeper than telling people how many blog posts per week or Twitter post per day they should be posting. It gives them direction to know not just *how* to share, but *what* to share, promote and monitor. Giving people permission to be human and off-topic is important, but just like any other skill you must learn the rules in order to know when you're breaking them. If I'm having an off-topic conversation in order to enjoy a level of genuine engagement as a member of that community, I want to

*"Becoming a social business is about evolving the company to be better at what it already does, NOT about building a political campaign for a cult of personality."*

be aware that I'm doing so -- I don't want any confusion around my overall goals and objectives.

If you're working to transform your business into a social business, you'll need to share more than numbers you hope to achieve. You'll need to address what's in it for others to join the cause. I say *the* cause rather than *your* cause on purpose. It's too easy to get embroiled in politics when social business transformation becomes about one person's agenda. Even for those who are well-liked, personalizing any culture shift can be dangerous and counterproductive. Becoming a social business is about evolving the company to be better at what it already does, NOT about building a political campaign for a cult of personality.

Remember this is not about you -- it's about the future success of the company and everyone in it.

Don't forget that past change inside organizations probably led to painful reorganizations, job eliminations, forced retirement and cut backs. Many seasoned employees probably have good reasons to fear any sweeping change promising to make its way through the company. This fear is a hurdle to culture change and it's not a fear that should be brushed aside as ignorant or frivolous, but addressed with empathy and understanding.

While each story should be somewhat unique, the reasons for becoming a social business have to do with unleashing the creativity and ingenuity of the workforce, encouraging

## BECOMING A SOCIAL BUSINESS (cont'd)

relationship building with those inside and outside the organization, fostering real trust, decreasing the power distance between employees at all levels, and establishing a culture that encourages openness and collaboration. These things make it easier to do our jobs and delight our customers.

Transparent, real-time communication requires a visceral understanding of the company's story, position, strengths and limitations in order for effective, genuine communication to take place. It requires being a liaison between your company and the social networks identified for engagement.

The army inside the company can then rally the troops outside the company -- granted it doesn't always happen in this order, but that's part of the inherent messiness of becoming a social business: rigid controls give way to an empowered workforce that is aligned with the company's mission for its own sake.

Your army is the foundation for real word of mouth to take place. Each member of your army has his or her own relationships out there in the real world. By real world, it's important to note, I mean online *and* offline.

Most people want direct answers from the people they feel represent the horse's mouth. When asking is made easy, most people would ask rather than search for

answers. The workforce of the social business is not just empowered, they are also accountable inside and outside the organization.

While this idea may seem controversial to some, this accountability increases the level of skin in the game for members of your army. Employees of social businesses do not punch a clock. Work is part of life. This isn't meant to imply that there is no longer a work-life balance, but that the goals of the company become more closely and explicitly aligned with personal goals and the person may even be recognized among certain networks and peer groups as an accessible representative of the company.

There may still be a place for "official" spokespeople, but obviously prepared statements, executive power distance and mass media filtering do little to foster trust and a sense of ownership amongst customers, employees and other community stakeholders.

### 6. Manage Tactics

Establishing a social business is about creating a culture of collaboration inside and outside the organization, it's one where all of us -- customers and employees alike, are not in opposition, but realize we're all in the same boat. We take "you people" out of our vocabulary. We strive to make our interactions with customers win-win. We feel badly when this is not possible and we are free to express it. Be flexible enough to take this approach into new networks when they become relevant to your business.

## BECOMING A SOCIAL BUSINESS (cont'd)

Social networks come and go. New opportunities will arise and old ones will go away. It's probably silly to believe that Twitter and Facebook will be as relevant five years from now as they are today. The tactics will change, but the collaborative relationship between employees, constituents, customers and communities enabled by the real-time web and mobile access will not.

### Your Company Already Lost Control

Unlike the invention of the automobile or discovery of the polio vaccine, this is one innovation where companies aren't driving; people are. Most companies never really had total control of their messaging beyond the mass media channels anyway. Bumper stickers mocking company slogans, a badly drawn mustache on the face of a CEO on the cover of a magazine and jokes about poor quality products are nothing new, but now these negative sentiments can potentially garner the same level of visibility as your corporate website.

The good news is that this doesn't have to be a problem. Those who vocalize complaints are also more likely to vocalize praise of products or services they like. A little positive interaction can go a long way... so can having enough humility to appreciate a joke at your company's expense. Keep a positive attitude, let people know you're learning from them and thank them for the feedback; then do whatever it takes to help others inside your organization understand the tone, sentiment, context and relevance of

the feedback.

Control over messaging has never been equal to control over sentiment. While there can be a correlation, one is not entirely dependent on the other.

### Think Network, Not Channel(s)

The social business embraces the gap between company messaging and public sentiment by forming a collaborative relationship with stakeholders as co-creators. This collaborative relationship between individuals and the company, and between each other then informs the evolution of the brand down to its very core of operations and far beyond its physical doors or home page.

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# STORIES

How can we use these connection points between ideas and people to change businesses and their stories?

This is the question for 2010 - social media becomes operational.

CIRCUS

Thank you for reading

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