

Social Technologies - 10x Collaboration!

Social Technologies are the tools that allow your community of employees, staff on demand, customers and others to communicate and collaborate quickly and easily. These tools enable faster conversations, faster decision cycles and faster learning. The lag time between an idea being shared, accepted and implemented can essentially be eliminated!

Today, cloud services such as Slack, Google Docs and Zoom video conferencing enable teams all over the world to work seamlessly together with transparency and trust.

Note - This attribute is *not* about encouraging the use of social media for marketing. Instead, it is about improving *internal* operations by encouraging social interactions via technology that shape communication, collaboration and workflows.

'Social Objects' empower Social Technologies

Slow down, here. This 'Yoda' moment will make the difference in getting your implementation of Social Technologies to thrive in your community. A lonely truth is that people do not easily connect unless they feel they have something in common. A **Social Object** is 'remarkable', that is, it gets people making *remarks* that start the conversations that *connect*.

- *TEDTalk videos* are the social objects. When shared with others they provoke conversations that deepen social connection.
- For *Star Wars* fans, the social objects are the episodes, characters and dialogue (*Yoda knows - you see!*).
- When someone wants to greet your dog, then ends up in a conversation with you, your dog is a social object (10x for Labrador Retrievers!).

The most important Social Object for your Exponential Organization (ExO) is your Massive Transformative Purpose (MTP)!

To engage your community to connect through any of these social tools, first choose good social objects for the core of the application (MTP, projects, causes, shared interests) and then create ways for people to share the social objects and socialize around them.

Classes of Social Technologies, with examples

Applications in this space are evolving at a furious pace, so research the latest developments before implementing anything! Slack was only launched in 2013 and its competitors more recently. Both **Virtual Worlds** and **Emotional Sensing** show great business potential, but are not (yet) in mainstream use.



Workstream Collaboration: collaboration through persistent messaging, activity streams, content sharing, integration of third-party apps through APIs. e.g. [Slack](#), [Yammer](#), [Facebook Workplace](#), [Telegram](#), [Discord](#), [Microsoft Teams](#)



Collaborative workspace: these apps allow for teams to work collaboratively in real time. [Google G-Suite](#), [Microsoft Office 365](#), [Evernote](#), [RealtimeBoard](#). [AirTable](#)



File sharing: Cloud services to share easily and securely for collaboration inside and outside the organization. [Dropbox](#), [Box](#), [Google Drive](#), [OneDrive](#)



Task and project management: [Trello](#), [Hive](#), [SmartSheet](#), [Asana](#), [Wrike](#), [Basecamp](#)



Telepresence: [Zoom](#), [Webex](#), [GotoMeeting](#), [Skype](#)



Virtual Worlds: [Strivr](#), [Rumii](#), [Sansar](#)

Emotional Sensing: [BeyondVerbal](#), [EmoShape](#), [Affectiva](#)

Related ExO Attributes: [Massive Transformative Purpose](#), [Staff-on-Demand](#), [Engagement](#), [Interfaces](#), [Dashboards](#), [Experimentation](#), [Autonomy](#)

What to implement first

Two features lead the pack in providing immediate benefit to most teams: activity streams (Slack's chat 'Channels') and real-time collaborative document editing (G-Suite Docs, Slides and Sheets).

For startups and companies without heavy regulation:

- Start with Slack and Google G-Suite (with Google Drive and Hangouts). Add Zoom for excellent video conferences.
- For international teams with less reliable connectivity, [WhatsApp](#) is a good addition for persistent group messaging.

For larger, regulated or high-security organizations:

- Take inventory of what productivity suite is already approved, available and deployed. Properly-configured, Microsoft Office 365 or G-Suite can both work.
- Implement a Workstream Collaboration app right away.

Tips to drive adoption:

- Recruit allies and champions within your IS/IT functions.
- Start with a small pilot, and obsessively collect user feedback. Try multiple tools because once you implement a tool like Slack organization-wide, it is very disruptive to switch.
- Deploy mobile versions of the apps from day one.
- Train your potential late adopters, early. Make sure the CEO and C-suite also use the tools for important conversations, decisions and announcements.
- Use these tools to develop 'shared consciousness' and break down silos. Deploy across functions and hierarchies, and anywhere you have lean and agile initiatives.
- Keep it lean and streamlined. Choose a primary tool that has a rich ecosystem of plug-ins and [app integrations](#), (e.g. Slack) or use [Zapier](#) to create your own.
- Create and post a stream of relevant, sharp, funky and precise content about both fun, emotional and professional topics. Keep going, you're building culture!

Social Technologies and Cybersecurity - work *with* your CISO!

It's frustrating to be told 'No' to Slack, Dropbox or G-Suite due to corporate security policies. You might be tempted to circumvent IT policy and industry regulation, but *please don't*. Data breaches, ransomware and government penalties are *devastating* organizations with increasing frequency. Instead, work with your Chief Information Security Officer and IT to achieve the same ends with tools designed for higher-security, regulated environments - *and the tools may already be deployed!*



- [Slack](#) alternatives for FEDRAMP, HIPAA, PCI, etc. include [Mattermost](#), (hosted on-premise) [Microsoft Teams](#) and [Cisco Webex Teams](#).
- If [Dropbox](#) does not meet requirements, evaluate [Box.com](#).
- If [Google G-Suite](#) is a non-starter, [Microsoft Office 365](#), OneDrive and Microsoft Teams can offer real-time content collaboration.
- Instead of [Zoom](#), consider [Cisco WebEx Meetings](#).

Social Technologies - Checklist for Success*

- ☐ Is our senior management leading the use of the tools?
- ☐ Are we using social technologies to support our critical decision-making?
- ☐ Are we supplementing our use of social technologies with periodic in-person connections for relationship-building?
- ☐ Are our staff and customers readily adopting the social tools? Are they aware of the tools and the training available?
- ☐ Is our Information Technology department supporting (and not blocking) the use of social tools?

*From [Exponential Transformation](#) - The Ultimate Playbook to Evolve Your Business and Change the World for the Better ©2018 by Francisco Palao, Michelle Lapierre and Salim Ismail. Used with permission. ExOfoundation.net

See also **Chapter 4 - Inside the Exponential Organization** in *Exponential Organizations* by Salim Ismail, Michael S. Malone & Yuri van Geest.

The Exponential Organizations Master Business Course is a part of the Growth Institute MBD Program. To learn more, visit www.growthinstitute.com/exo
Share this tool - info.growthinstitute.com/social-tool

To prepare for your first pilot project, answer the following...

- 1. What is your MTP?** Your MTP is your first Social Object - the reason to collaborate. If you haven't created an MTP, or you want to check your existing one, download the ExO MTP Tool, [here](#).
- 2. What is the end result you want from this experiment?**
Want to learn about a tool? Improve a workflow? Form or strengthen a team? Stimulate innovation? Reduce time-to-market? Retain talent? Briefly note your objectives, and *how you would measure progress and success*. See [Dashboards](#) for tips on creating solid metrics.
- 3. What is current reality about your social environment?** You might need a separate sheet of paper for this step. At a high level, map out the key people / groups who make your business model work. Indicate existing social and community interactions. Who is communicating and how? Where are interactions missing that would be beneficial? Are there any obvious communication or workflow breakdowns?
- 4. What social technologies do you use today? Where do they fall short?** List your current active tools, and note what works and what doesn't.
- 5. What social technologies does your organization already have access to?** Befriend someone in IT, and procure a list of services bundled with your current productivity suite *license*. List applications mentioned on the previous pages.
- 6. Who is your 'customer' for your pilot program?** Who are you doing this experiment for? Who will be *most* impacted by the outcome of your experiment? Select a team that you think would make good early adopters, and who have an existing bottleneck in communication, collaboration or workflow.
- 7. What is your hypothesis (assumption)?** *e.g. We believe that...*
"Our distributed teams around the world are not as productive and agile as they could be due to current collaboration tools and workflows."
- 8. Decide which tool to start your experiment with.** For your first run, we suggest you implement a Workstream Collaboration tool: Slack, Microsoft Teams, Webex Teams, Yammer, etc.
- 9. Socialize your pilot idea with departments and people who will be affected.** The list could include IT, InfoSec, compliance, the pilot team's directors and managers, and others. Set out guardrails for your pilot so its success isn't undermined from the outset. Identify who in IT and infoSec can assist.
- 10. Design your experiment carefully, especially your pass-fail criteria.** Download and use the ExO Experimentation Tool: blog.growthinstitute.com/exo/experimentation.