Book The Manager's Guide to Social Media

Scott Klososky
McGraw-Hill, 2010

Recommendation

As a manager, are you expert in the use of Google Reader, Radian6, Hootsuite, Yotify, Netvibes and Scribd? How about cloud computing? Microblogging? Crowdsourcing? Managing virtual teams? Welcome to the brave new online world. Managing employees today requires understanding the virtualization of the workplace, Web 2.0 and social technology tools. Thousands of applications exist, and new ones show up daily. How can you stay on top of this high-tech deluge? Social technology expert Scott Klososky details the answer and takes the mystery out of social technologies. *BooksInShort* finds that his book is a valuable resource for any manager who wants to stay current with social technology.

Take-Aways

- Online "social tools" and technologies are becoming ubiquitous.
- Your employees can use social media to waste time or to be more productive.
- Managing employees became more challenging when social technologies were introduced into the workplace.
- Companies may block social tools on office computers and servers, but employees will still use their mobile devices to participate on social applications.
- Some companies permit office computer access to social tools but monitor their use.
- Social tools can benefit companies by improving employees' internal and external communication for optimum collaboration.
- Firms that provide access to social tools must establish rules for their use.
- Managers should be role models of the proper deployment of social tools.
- Ensure that employees know how to use such tools, and train those who do not.
- Social tools enable virtual teams, but leading such teams requires new managerial skills.

Summary

Let's Get Social

"In April 2010, Citibank surveyed more than 550 small-business owners in the United States about social tech use in their organizations, and found that more than 81% said they don't use social tech." Why would this be? Employees can use social media tools to advance the company's interests, increase its business networking, extend its markets and work more productively. However, keeping workers focused on their work has become more challenging with the advent of social media (Web 2.0 tools and applications), since employees also can use these tools during work to communicate with family and friends, make new connections, and engage in additional nonwork activities.

> "We can't stop the tide of socially augmented workplaces."

Social media tools are an aspect of "social technologies," a "collection of new forms of communication and community." The terms you need to know include:

- **"Social relevancy"** – Web links and user commentary concerning people and firms' online reputations, also known as their "digital shadows online."
- **"Social media"** – Online applications, tools and websites that facilitate idea sharing and promotion. Examples include Flickr, SlideShare and YouTube.
- **"Social networking"** – Online links and websites that enable people to communicate and connect with each other. Examples: Facebook, Twitter, MySpace.

> "Navigating our new socially infused world isn't a simple thing for managers."

The various types of social media technologies include:

- **"Communication tools"** – Communicate online: WordPress, Twitter, Blogger.
- **"eCommunity tools"** – Congregate over the Internet: Facebook, Ning, LinkedIn.
- **"Social media management tools"** – Manage online social media campaigns: Viralheat, Hootsuite, SM2.
- **"Aggregation tools"** – Combine specific categories of online information: Google Reader, TweetDeck, Netvibes.
- **"Listening tools"** – Track online references about your firm by using sites such as GoogleAlerts, Yotify or Addictomatic.
- **"Research tools"** – Find the information you need: Yahoo, Jigsaw, Answers.
- **"Measurement tools"** – Determine your online influence: Twittalyzer, Socialmention.
- **"Crowdsourcing tools"** – Put your employees to work online for you. Some 75 websites offer this service.
- **"Social media sites"** – Hundreds exist, including SlideShare, YouTube and Flickr.

> "There will be an adoption curve over the next 10 years and, until we get through that and standardize their use, social tools will require a lot of oversight and guidance."

Social technologies are now ubiquitous. Managers should learn which social tools their employees use and how they access them. Some firms block social tools on their computer systems. Others permit employees to access social technologies but monitor their usage. Your human resources department can set up monitoring and provide you, as a manager, with reports regarding which websites employees access and how often. With that data, you can deal with any problem employees on an individual basis.

> "Technology has proven to be a catalyst for either positive or negative impacts on organizational culture, depending on how its proliferation is handled."

Companies often benefit when they permit the reasonable use of social technologies. Social technologies offer powerful communication tools for reaching internal and external audiences. Savvy managers understand that social technologies can enhance productivity and provide benefits to their organizations. Typical office uses of social technologies include:

- **"Marketing"** – Twitter allows companies to communicate with their customers. Facebook enables firms to supply useful information about themselves. YouTube lets organizations showcase videos.
- **"Sales"** – Social technologies provide maximum word-of-mouth capability.
- **"Virtual teams"** – Work colleagues can now quickly and easily collaborate, no matter where they are.
- **"Internal communications"** – Social technologies provide numerous paths for employee communication.
- **"Personal networking"** – Social tools' primary purpose is providing online connections and networks.
- **"Information gathering"** – Secure your valuable data in real time. For example, HR departments routinely scour the Internet to find job applicants.
- **"Crowdsourcing"** – Many companies use online service providers.

> "Never engage in flame wars with competitors or angry constituents."

Employees' attitudes about social technologies often depend on their age group. The youngest workers, Gen Y (Millennials), grew up with the Internet. Generation X also feels at home on the Web. Baby boomers can be reluctant to adopt social technologies if there is no immediate payoff. Social technologies can confound "Traditionals," people 65 or older. "Because social tools started off as something that people used personally, there are many who feel it's an invasion of privacy to have an organization snooping in their online properties." A manager must ensure that employees from all age groups can work together via social technologies.

Your Employees Will Follow Your Lead

Become familiar with social technologies to become a role model in your office. Pick one social tech tool and teach yourself how to use it. Learn all its features. Once you know how, connect with your contacts. Create online profiles for yourself and your company. Include a head-and-shoulders, businesslike photo of yourself with your profiles. Communicate online with your employees. Don't use Facebook to connect with employees if you normally use it only for personal contacts; LinkedIn may be a better business choice. Alert employees to your business-relevant blog posts and Twitter feeds. Check Yammer, a "private microblogging platform" for designated groups, such as the employees of a particular organization. To save on long-distance communications, consider using Skype.

> "To ignore social tech as a powerful tool is to be ignorant."

Social tools provide enhanced methods of communication. However, traditional methods, including face-to-face meetings, often work best. Use in-person meetings for motivating staff members, discussing work problems, and so on.

Establish clear goals regarding the use of social technologies in the office. Typical objectives might include:

- **"Quantity of connections"** – Each connection provides an online contact for a website such as LinkedIn or for someone who views a professional blog created by your employees.
- **"Quantity and quality of content provided"** – Showcase your employees' professional expertise through quality online content.
- **"Number of positive mentions on the Web"** – Track how often others praise your workers online.
- **"Expertise within social applications"** – Hold employees responsible for learning social tech tools, like YouTube, Scribd and LinkedIn.

> "Be ready to interact with people who comment or reply to you."

Train employees who need assistance. Numerous online resources are available to help.

Standards of Usage

Corporate use of email and social technology tools is widespread, but few companies detail their email, Web surfing and use of social tools policies to new workers. You must explain your standards regarding social technologies to new hires. Make sure that your veteran employees connect with newcomers when they start on the job. However, be aware that "using social tools with your people does not mean managing them through these tools."

> "Social tech has not created a new human dynamic; it simply has enhanced our ability to communicate with others – anywhere, anytime, in multiple ways and usually for free."

Let employees know what you expect regarding their online profiles. Discuss the social media conversational styles you want staff members to use with clients. Explain what employees can reveal about the company and what they cannot. Make it clear whether and how they can combine professional contacts with personal ones. Provide guidelines on how to create the best online content. Advise people about how to react to negative online commentary. Suggest that they write or speak in a natural way, provide useful online information, and respond to comments and queries. Create a list of permissible social technologies workers can use. Ensure that all employees understand the security ramifications of their online activities.

"Rivers of Information"

Thanks to the Internet, great rivers of information – "blogs, eNewsletters, twitter streams, RSS feeds, Facebook posts, discussion streams and Web alerts" – are now available. Because so much new information is floating about, you must learn to filter and aggregate the data that most interests you. Find the best, most appropriate sources of information, such as Blogged.com and Twellow.com. Aggregate and store this information. Google Reader is a popular aggregation tool; to archive information, use Evernote or a similar application. Put this information to optimal use with an efficient review process. Allow 30 to 45 minutes daily for this review. Assist your workers as they create and manage their own rivers of information.

Virtual Teams

Technology is shrinking the world. You can send an email message to the next cubicle and to another continent. Videoconferencing enables people across the globe to meet as if they were in the same room. New collaboration tools allow employees to work together on project teams, no matter where they live. Basecamp.com is a worthwhile tool for this purpose. Virtual teams become more popular daily. You must familiarize yourself with the Web's various communication and collaboration tools, and you must efficiently manage your virtual workers. Employees react to virtual tools in different ways. Help those who are not initially comfortable. "People are getting burned out on the pace of change in...technology...and are getting jaded about continuously implementing new tools."

Measurements

Set goals regarding the use of social media, and measure the results. Dashboards can help. Download useful dashboards at Quadbase.com, idashboards.com and Cognosdashboards.com. Measure how quickly and how well your staff members and teams use social technology tools. You can also measure the results you achieve when you run a "social campaign." People will try to achieve results that the company measures, so "if managers don't have a process to measure social tech usage and progress, they aren't really managing."

Pilot Projects

To stay current, you must adapt new social technology tools to your operation. Pilot projects offer excellent opportunities to try something new. Such tests require superior organization, a thorough documentation of goals, an excellent plan regarding ways to use new tools and a list of lessons you want to learn from the testing process. Plan to have "at least three different dynamics" for each pilot project, that is, separate findings you hope to pursue.

Just Getting Started

Social tools increase efficiency. They enable team members to communicate more effectively and to secure the information they need. Employees can tap into the collective wisdom and expertise of specialists in your organization and across the globe. Social technologies have already transformed the world of work, but the current selection offers only the early iterations of these Internet tools. "It's no exaggeration to say that there is literally a new social tech tool coming onto the Internet daily." New and better tools will continue to become available. You must become expert at putting these tools to work and staying on top of new entries, both to aid your organization and to enhance your career.

About the Author

Scott Klososky consults with organizations on using social technologies.