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Community eBook

If Not Now, When? Socializing the Enterprise.

APRIL 2010 ISSUE





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Introduction

“Change is the only constant,” so said the famous Greek philosopher, Heraclitus. Isn’t it amazing what was true two thousand years ago remains so relevant today?

There’s a huge amount of energy in the social media space being focused on tools to implement social media objectives and strategies, but we can’t forget the human element involved: the enterprise that needs to be educated and the teams who will carry out these lofty new plans. The path to social media integration won’t always be smooth, and it definitely won’t be immediate, but the key to making the transition as easy as possible is setting reasonable and realistic expectations. Now is the time for you to explore, ask questions, and put the social media boogieman to rest so you can achieve real success in the online social space.

When getting started in social media, it’s important you don’t dismiss or ignore fears about social media engagement. [Social media success](#) depends on a drastic change in corporate culture’s thinking and execution processes. In this ebook, we’ll help you get started instilling change in your organization by providing you with actionable items you can put in motion every step of the way. As you forge this path, expect to encounter obstacles, but don’t be surprised if you see unplanned positive ideas and experiences pop up along the way, as well. The more you persevere, the more you’ll see the success of your efforts make its way through the walls of your organization.

Socializing the enterprise internally and externally is certainly a challenging task to take on, especially because change doesn’t happen overnight. Leading change management thinker, John Kotter, outlines an [eight-step change model](#) to achieve success in challenging situations. Is your organization even [ready to enter](#) the social media space? Do your homework and find out what you are up against in making social media a reality in its own time in your organization. As you embark on this journey, integrate your findings into Kotter’s change model for a smoother transition:

1. Increase Urgency
2. Build the Guiding Team
3. Get the Vision Right
4. Communicate for Buy-In
5. Empower Action
6. Create Short-Term Wins
7. Don’t Let Up
8. Make Change Stick





STEP 1

Increase Urgency



Are you one of those people who would wait until the night before an exam to study? As nerve-wracking as that habit might be, procrastination creates a sense of urgency that allows us to push through our fears and other obstacles to complete the task at hand. Motivate your company to change by giving them a realistic view of the organization through the lens of the community.

Sometimes even bringing in outside perspectives to share these findings is helpful in stirring up urgency. Beware, though, of sharing your findings with only those at the top of the organization; it's the people in the middle of your workforce who will make or break your change efforts. Ensure your organization has a wide sense of urgency and create the buy-in necessary to stimulate change.

How do you begin to motivate or create a sense of urgency?

1. **Identify cause of urgency:** Change typically begins to manifest in an organization when stakeholders notice a point of vulnerability in the organization. Determine what soft spots have been revealed in your organization's communication strategies with the advent of social media tools.
2. **Recognize the causes of complacency:** Understand why the organization is fearful of direct connection with the community and address those fears through education about how to safely interact and what the value is of long-term relationship building.
3. **Determine strategies to increase urgency levels:** Sometimes one of the best motivators to get organizations involved in social media is to demonstrate how they, their industry, and their competitors are being perceived in online conversations outside of the organization's control.
4. **Implement strategies and monitor progress:** Set up listening alerts to monitor online conversations and share your findings with other stakeholders and influencers in the organization.
5. **Remind yourself and your organization of the deadline:** It is important to feel a level of comfort and be educated before jumping into social media interaction, but you don't want to be the last one to the party. Set a deadline for when you will enter social media and use the time prior to launch to alleviate fears and educate your organization about how you want to participate.



STEP 2

Build the Guiding Team

One person cannot change the tide of an organization on his/her own. A collaborative effort is required. Finding and recognizing the individuals necessary to blend together and drive a social media vision is not a difficult process, but must be thorough and set the proper stage for the remaining change management steps.

How do you build your core guiding team?

1. **Determine Purpose:** The guiding team should ensure change is successfully implemented and entrenched within the organization. Their vision and goals must be clearly defined before they get to work, but we'll talk about how to ensure clarity in future steps.
2. **Create Well-Rounded Team Composition:**
The team should balance a [whole range of skills](#), experiences, and viewpoints and include people who are trusted, respected, and share an understanding for change, strong leadership, and communication skills, and represent all levels of the organization. Finding your [social media superheroes](#) is a great first step to building your guiding team. However, you need more than the social media savvy to make your vision a success! Don't forget to invite your harshest critics into the fold (like your [legal team](#)). Learning up front what their concerns are and inviting them to help overcome those obstacles is the quickest way to establish buy-in and help the [enterprise socialize](#).
3. **Establish Emotional Commitment:** It is essential all members of the team be emotionally aware this change is much more about the future health of the organization than it is about them. Team members must be invested in the wellbeing and growth of this team and vision through both good times and those rocky, turbulent moments.



**STEP 3**

Get the Vision Right

Social media has rocked the way organizations communicate with their communities. While social media is nothing new (*we have always endeavored to foster mutually beneficial relationships*), the tools are new and the dialog is open and direct without a middle-man interpreter. This turbulent change may be uncomfortable at first, but if you stick with it, it has the potential to rocket your organization into another dimension of community engagement. Know where you want to go with a [relevant vision](#) and the sky is your limit!

How do you establish a relevant vision?

1. **Be creative:** Quantitative data is always a necessity, but go beyond the number crunching and discover the [emotional needs and desires of your community](#). Find out what they want to talk about and, most importantly, what they expect of your organization.
2. **Capture clarity:** One of the hardest things about change is communicating goals so other people see them as you do: with the same passion, intensity, and drive. [Draw a clear picture](#) of your vision for others to understand. Demonstrate the engagement that can be achieved.
3. **Grasp low hanging fruit:** Get the organization behind your team by scoring quick wins with easy opportunities discovered while making the case for change. Don't try to tackle the big items on [your agenda](#) without first proving your team has the ability to succeed.



STEP 4

Communicate for Buy-In

Change cannot be defined and shouted out in the confines of a boardroom. Successful change must be communicated in a clear, concise way to capture the minds and hearts of the entire organization.

How do you communicate the vision for buy-in?

1. **Keep it simple:** Speak the language of your organization, and no, we don't mean acronyms or business lingo. Think of water cooler and coffee break discussions. Communicate concisely and establish an emotional bond by explaining how their buy-in will address their concerns and anxieties.
2. **Cut through the clutter:** In the same vein as keeping it clear and concise, communicate the vision in channels outside of the norm to help generate excitement. Go beyond the memos and form emails and find ways to incorporate feedback. We are talking about social media integration, so consider how to incorporate these new tools within your organization first. Give your folks the warm and fuzzy of internal dialogue before opening up to external communities.
3. **Sell solutions:** Be wary of selling the tools you will be using to implement change, because these tools will evolve. Sell the solutions and how these new principles and change of thought processes will aid workflow and align with overall business goals.





STEP 5

Empower Action

With the integration of social media, organizations have an incredible opportunity to reevaluate old policies and controlling behaviors. By removing obstacles and encouraging smart participation in social channels, your organization's social media plan could be realized because of the power of the people within your organization and their influence in the community.



How do you empower action?

1. **Set Expectations:** It's vital to provide [clear guidelines](#) for engagement and disclosure, so that all employees can represent themselves and the company clearly and professionally. By allowing your workforce to do what they do best and act as your representatives, your organization can gain valuable social capital, credibility, and opportunity.
2. **Give Constructive Feedback:** Your ultimate goal throughout these steps for successful change is for the people of your organization to act on your vision. You don't want to hamper their success by scolding them about mistakes they make along the way. Let's be realistic. Mistakes are how we learn, and we should be prepared for when they do happen. Having clear guidelines in place will lessen these instances, but also, giving constructive feedback and remaining positive will encourage future behavior promoting ideal interaction.
3. **Relay Experiences:** Shout out all experiences from the mountain top! Share stories and feedback throughout the entire company to spur change and believability in your organization's vision.



STEP 6

Create Short-Term Wins

It's easy to get wrapped up in all the big-picture things we want to achieve with social media. Ever heard of the slogan, "Think Big, Act Small"? While it may sound a bit hokey, often times, to succeed in getting buy-in for turning your social media campaign into a viable program and getting it integrated into the business, you have to score some small wins to give senior leadership and those on the front lines a warm and fuzzy feeling.

How do you find and create short-term wins?

- 1. Set and Communicate Measurable Objectives:** First and foremost, set SMART objectives with the purpose of enabling control of your social media strategy, motivating your workforce to achieve common goals, and provide an agreed upon, consistent focus for all functions of the organization. SMART objectives are **specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely**. Ensure you have communicated these objectives to your entire organization. Think long-term goal, but don't forget to include short-term wins that will get the ball rolling to securing social media as an integrated business function.
- 2. Establish Progress Reports:** Stop the naysayers in their tracks by informing your team, department, and organization of the status of your measurable objectives. Give those easy wins the limelight they deserve!
- 3. Build Momentum:** Demonstrate how people are fulfilling your vision for social media integration and resistance to change will begin to subside. Avoid focusing on only the stats of the objectives in the progress reports, but share the feel-good stories and relationship-building that is occurring.





STEP 7

Don't Let Up

Whew! We are almost at the end of the eight steps for successful change management. Can you begin to see the light at the end of the tunnel? The title of this next step sounds more like something that would be nominated for a Grammy Song of the Year, but is fundamental to achieving long-term success in your organization. Focusing on smaller benchmarks and remaining persistent in your efforts is key in seeing change make its way through the entirety of your organization.



How do you keep the drive going and not let up?

- 1. Eliminate Non-Essential Work:** The easiest way to defeat change within your organization is to hamper the development with meaningless tasks. Use this period of change as a springboard to reevaluate processes and routines for better streamlining of time and resources.
- 2. Share Stories:** Stats may communicate to the C-Suite, but you want change to seep into every fiber of your organization. Do this by sharing stories of strong relationships built between your internal team and external community and the positive effects of relationship building. Keep the momentum building!
- 3. Identify and Capitalize on New Opportunities:** There are golden nuggets of opportunity lying in wait amongst those stories and lessons learned throughout the change management process. Keep your eye out for these opportunities to seek new ways of implementing your change vision.



STEP 8

Make Change Stick

We have reached the end of our change management journey. This process takes time, commitment, and passion. While there may be times when you become overwhelmed or stuck in a rut, do not waiver. Keep your vision in sight. Your drive will encourage and inspire others to take up your mantle and assist you in making changes endure for the better.

How do you make the change stick?

1. **Create Tradition:** Change may falter if the steps established along the way to make the vision happen are not ingrained into the current culture. Remember you are changing habits. Establish processes to support the vision and create routine.
2. **Establish Support Structure:** Go beyond your typical employee orientation and find fun and innovative ways to communicate steps required for change. Create internal evangelists to help promote new vision instead of relying on boring video or dry handbook material.
3. **Reinforce Vision:** The last two steps have emphasized this, and the third time is the charm to establish this new behavior. Continue sharing stories and letting people know how your efforts are positively affecting your organization in small and big ways. Keep the momentum building by demonstrating the change in action! Highlight the quick and big wins.





Wrapping Up

Now that we've walked you through the steps to get started mobilizing change, are you able to see how and where you can begin taking those steps within your own organization? The key is to be persistent and pay attention to the small changes that are occurring throughout your organization; highlight those small wins in your reporting and discussions, and use them as stepping stones and examples to support your continued efforts and bigger steps for change.

Remember to regularly visit the bigger, abstract concepts of change management and tie them back to the hard strategies and tactics you're using to keep on track. By doing this, you'll remain focused on the idea of and work behind change and will avoid getting lost in the smaller details and processes that might push you off your path along the way.

Need Help?

Need help figuring out how to begin the change management process within your organization? Let us know! Socializing your company will require time, dedication, and a thorough tack that's regularly reviewed and takes into account the results of your work and how those results tie back to your goals and objectives for change. We'd be happy to talk with you about how the data and stories you compile relate to the bigger picture.

Questions, comments, or feedback for us? Please get in touch.

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