

SPECIAL PREVIEW

People & Strategy

PERSPECTIVES

Five Myths and Realities When Considering Using
Social Media Inside the Company

Jeanne C. Meister/Karie Willyerd

Counterpoints:

Rob Quish/Jim Bowles/Matthew Breitfelder/Anne Berkowitch/Chris Hoyt

HR | People & Strategy



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From the Perspectives Editor

Anna Tavis, Perspectives Editor

In this issue of *Perspectives*, we assess whether the growing popularity of social networking in the workplace is inevitable and, if so, why. Jeanne Meister and Karie Willyard, co-authors of *The Workplace 2020*, lead the discussion, and their viewpoint is clear: “Social networking is here to stay, resisting the groundswell will hurt the business and may carry high talent costs.”

We are not surprised that our discussants, coming from vastly different organizations, side with the lead authors in their support for bringing electronic networking to the job. What differentiates their responses is how much they question such unabashed enthusiasm and the cautions and pragmatism they offer.

Rob Quish of JWT is a most enthusiastic practitioner of social networking. Rob puts on his branding hat and proposes an easy workaround to the resistance he often encounters advising companies. He argues that changing the name to “Utility Media” would make it more palatable to blue chip companies and reflect its true value.

Jim Bowles, now of BTS and formerly with AT&T, suggests that business processes be wrapped around social media to ensure alignment with business needs. Standalone social networking has little place in business and should be left to personal time.

Mathew Breifelder does not have to sell social media at MasterCard Worldwide. He is blogging, twittering and friending through his day in the office, all in the service of the business. And Anne Berkowitch, CEO of SelectMinds, was among the earliest adopters. She offers a very pragmatic, step-by-step approach to thinking about social media when you are starting to experiment with it.

Chris Hoyt, whose role at PepsiCo is to push the traditional boundaries of recruitment, sums up the discussion by stating that companies should embrace what employees clearly value. Because they value social media, you should move past your anxiety to achieve a significant advantage in the Talent Marketplace.

This rich dialogue in *Perspectives* tells us that heavy use of social media is here to stay and highlights how you can best adopt it.

Five Myths and Realities About Using Social Media in Your Company

By Jeanne C. Meister and Karie Willyard, co-authors of *The 2020 Workplace: How Innovative Companies Attract, Develop & Keep Tomorrow's Employees Today* (Harper Business, 2010)

With Facebook now at 500 million users, it's pretty clear that social media has moved beyond a fad of a few insiders and into the mainstream. What does the future hold for social media inside your organization? Here are a few myths that should provide some clues as to how social media will soon become mainstream inside most companies.

#1 MYTH: Social media is a time waster at work and should be banned.

REALITY: Millennials have grown up

searching out and connecting to their tribe to ask questions, network with colleagues and look for new career opportunities. Some forward-thinking companies, with large and growing Millennial workforces, have recognized this and are using Facebook to source, network and recruit new talent. Professional service firm Ernst & Young was the first to create a Facebook page and now has more than 43,000 *friends* who routinely query the firm about possible internships, recommended courses to take while still in college and descriptions of job profiles.

#2 MYTH: Social media is a fad and will fade away in a few years.

REALITY: This couldn't be farther from the truth. While the face of social media will certainly evolve, using social networks will only grow in importance as the Millennial generation becomes 50 percent of the workplace by 2020. In the past year, Facebook has grown from the eleventh to the fourth most trafficked Internet site, according to ComScore (www.comscore.com). It now accounts for seven percent of all time spent online in the United States. We call companies that have

integrated social media tools internally “uber-connected,” and they are experiencing increases in internal collaboration, innovation and employee engagement as a result of creating a corporate social network.

#3 MYTH: If you build it, they will come...

REALITY: Wrong, wrong, wrong. Social media is not an add-on or an accessory to communications or learning, but it is surprising to see companies suggest they need to add some social media to the mix. In other words, it’s not a widget that can easily be plugged in when needed. To be successful, social media needs to be part of and aligned with a company’s strategic priorities, employer brand, messaging and the workflow of each and every employee. Like any change, introducing social media requires a change management strategy that includes setting a vision, stating why the change is necessary, providing leadership and communicating ceaselessly. Until change goes viral, implementing social media requires thoughtful planning.

#4 MYTH: My employee population is too old to deal with social media for learning.

REALITY: The fastest growing segment on Facebook is people between the ages of 35-49 years old. People are using social media in their daily lives to stay in touch with old friends, monitor their children’s and grandchildren’s activities, as well as play social games. More than 100 million people in the United States and the United Kingdom play social games such as Farmville and Mafia Wars, and their average age is 48. Using social media is fast becoming a way of life for multiple generations.

To be successful, social media needs to be part of and aligned with a company’s strategic priorities, employer brand, messaging and the workflow of each and every employee.

A company’s approach to using social media can fall into one of three areas: proactive, prohibitive or neutral.

#5 MYTH: Social media is difficult to measure in terms of a return on investment.

REALITY: Start with specific business goals such as increases in new hire retention, employee engagement scores or employee productivity. One study Capital Analytics did for Sun Microsystems showed a 75:1 return on investment for peer-to-peer learning. The savings were attributed to decreases in developing formal training programs to share best practices. Instead, Sun Microsystems accessed the company social collaboration platform as a training vehicle, often contributing content to share with peers.

The myths about social media illustrate how the market is still in the early stages of development and maturity. Over time, these myths will start to disappear as companies and people get a better appreciation of what’s really involved and how social media can be integrated into the strategic priorities of the company.

As we connect, communicate and collaborate with friends on a social network, we bring these digital expectations to the workplace. And forward-thinking employers will leverage social media to drive new business, communicate with customers and allow for greater innovation and problem solving

inside their organizations. However, companies must provide clear guidelines and training for how to use social media respectfully and responsibly. A place to benchmark is the 157 organizations that already have created detailed social media guidelines and see how these can be adapted to fit a company’s specific needs. These can be found at: www.compliancebuilding.com/about/publications/social-media-policies/

A company’s approach to using social media can fall into one of three areas: proactive, prohibitive or neutral. As we move closer to the 2020 workplace, it’s foolhardy to think one can prohibit usage of social media in the workplace. Rather, companies should use the next couple of years to be proactive, benchmark what works and what their competitors are doing and create policies, guidelines and training for how to leverage social media for improved business results.

Jeanne Meister is a partner in Future Workplace. She is an internationally recognized workplace learning consultant dedicated to delivering competitive advantage, innovation and improved business results for organizations.

Karie Willyerd is the former chief learning officer at Sun Microsystems and currently a partner in Future Workplace.

Meister and Willyerd co-authored the book, “The 2020 Workplace.” For more information, visit www.the2020workplace.com.

Social Media: Creating Richer Relationships in the Workplace

Rob Quish, chief operating officer, JWT North America, and chief executive officer, JWT Inside, an employee marketing communications agency.

Jeanne and Karie’s mythbusters are great and well-intentioned to a segment of business leaders who secretly or openly challenge the rising tide of change brought on by social media. Perhaps social media’s problem in the workplace is its name. Somehow ‘social’ sounds frivolous (a la ‘I’ll have a chardonnay to be social’) or dangerous (e.g., ‘be careful of social diseases!’). Let me first rebrand and redefine social media for the workplace. Then, I’ll come back and defend why ‘being social’ is key to developing an engaged workforce and why that’s all business.

Let’s think of social media differently. Call it Utility Media— digital workforce platforms to drive engagement. Here are three ways you can make it useful:

1. **Recruitment Relationship Marketing** — A common practice for some companies is to blast mass reaching approaches to ‘fish in the ocean’ for talent when needs arise. Utility Media like Facebook, LinkedIn or Plaxo allow companies and recruiters to cultivate relationships with potential hires over time. These deeper relationships before hiring logically lead to more of the right people coming onboard. These platforms allow companies to manage relationships with whole segments of your candidate pool (think of it as group intimacy) as one might have had in the days of rolodexes and phone calls with individuals (kind of like the executive search world today). Remember, though, if you want to build a relationship it has to be two-way: You’ll need to give to get. To earn these folks’ attention you’ll need (technology-led) listening skills and a content-creation machine to attract their attention, encourage connectivity and

Now we have sharing technologies, and yet we are reluctant to use them... Leveraging social media is not about cut-and-paste sharing, but rather dynamic and SOCIAL learning, people-to-people, enabled and enhanced by technology.

build a vital relationship. More like dating and less like fishing!

2. **Enterprise Learning** — Every company with which I’ve worked since the 1980s has talked about sharing best practices. Now we have sharing technologies, and yet we still are reluctant to use them. Ironically, one popular use of technology in learning is recreating a classroom experience on the PC. I have very few fond memories of classroom learning. So the thought of trying to recreate an imperfect setting seems crazy. Rich experiences like online gaming should be the success criteria for formal training, while mobile applications should be explored for quick-fix Q&A. Leveraging social media is not about cut-and-paste sharing, but rather dynamic and SOCIAL learning, people-to-people, enabled and enhanced by technology.

3. **Employee Engagement** — We like to say that in every company there is a string of connectedness between the CEO and every employee. And in strong companies that string is very short. When employees know the business purpose, why the goals are important and their vital role in making them happen, employees are well on their way to higher engagement. Getting people to participate in the company’s communications through online techniques like storytelling, chat and video sharing allows them to both understand and OWN the company’s aspirations. From there, engagement soars and businesses more profitably achieve outcomes. This shortens AND strengthens the string.

Okay, so why is ‘social’ important? TNS Employee Insights, the global engagement study powerhouse inside research giant TNS, tells me that relationships with co-workers are an essential element to the kind of productivity-driving engagement smart companies aim toward. TNS’s studies (numbering in the millions of employee surveys per year) have shown that in the hierarchy of employee needs, collaboration and other relationship measures rank just after the basics around job satisfaction and relationship with manager/boss. Employees connecting with co-workers using social media are a huge boon to richer relationships in the workplace. Bringing a new aspect to communications opens new possibilities for building trust, loyalty, sharing ideas and developing a stronger culture.

Last, ask yourself, do you want social people in your company? I walked by the employee entrance to the W Hotel on Lexington Avenue yesterday and there was an awning over the entrance (I assure you it is not the norm in NYC to have an awning to protect employees from the elements.) Printed in bold white letters on the chic black awning was: **Stage Door**. Being social is a prerequisite at the W and they want employees to turn it on the moment they walk in the door. Quashing social media within their employee base, rather than embracing it, would be like stopping politicians from kissing babies. . . it’s unnatural. Who knows, if you need social employees maybe your company should have a prerequisite for the number of Facebook friends for new hires.

Rob Quish is chief operating officer, JWT North America. He is directly responsible for JWT INSIDE, the employee marketing and communications agency.

NSFW? Shaping a Professional Approach to Social Media

Jim Bowles, Ed.D., BTS USA Leadership and Management Practice, and retired vice president Workforce Development AT&T Wireless

It may be a bit premature to suggest that doing anything but yielding to current trends in the evolution and proliferation of social media is prohibitive. In fact, at the risk of alienating friends, colleagues, my children and other power users of this technology, I would posit that as this technology movement continues to evolve, it will be ground down by the ever-present risk management/legal machine to a more controlled sustainable approach: a “business process aligned” model.

Business Process Alignment

The disciplined use and proliferation of social media applications certainly has broad and pervasive potential benefits to the business community. The fact that employees entering the workforce are skilled at using these tools will continue to enhance learning, efficiency, collaboration and innovation. Talent management professionals who recognize the strategic value of this technology can incor-

porate internal social media solutions that align clearly to the business. And through creating meaningful points of employee connectivity and alignment to the broader business strategy, they can positively influence inclusion efforts, employee engagement and all the related downstream business benefits that might naturally accrue from these.

The Continued Refinement of Social Networking

Unquestionably, there is a faddish element of the social networking movement. Now that many Boomers have experienced the thrill of finding old college buddies, they and their younger colleagues are finding that there are limits to the benefits this technology provides. Facebook recently has been cited as being No. 1 in customer service complaints, and has made the lists of companies that consumers loathe most. In addition, research continues to prove the downside of multi-tasking relative to productivity, as well as that humans can only manage so much information, or so many friends, in a truly meaningful way. More importantly, as privacy and exploitation concerns continue to surface, there will be a moderation effect, in which private use of these sites becomes more refined and to some extent, compartmentalized. This trend is already evident: In the world of professional networking, LinkedIn has become the go-to Web site for accumulating vast numbers of professional contacts. In business, expanding external, customer-centric use of social media/networking tools, likely will drive compartmentalization in contrast with more controlled and focused internal applications.

We also know, and will want to keep in mind, that the kiss of death for any movement like this is its adoption by the establishment.

When CNN is twittering and tweeting, it is a sure sign that a downturn in usage of that site, led by the young, is around the corner.

Fair and Balanced

In a more controlled, compartmentalized environment, companies taking a balanced or restrictive approach to on-the-job social networking should not be cast aside as reactionary Luddites. Given the yet to be understood (or litigated) legal, employee relations and competitive ramifications, abdication of rational controls appears to be a risky and costly business practice. Does this approach preclude some of the work/life balance benefits associated with the pursuit of ongoing connectivity? Absolutely not. For many (perhaps most) employees, much of this connectivity is occurring off network through wireless broadband access. Smart phones and PDAs are rapidly becoming the avenue of choice for those who want to stay in touch, yet there are certainly jobs/situations where even use of these tools should be restricted (public safety/public transportation, etc.).

Through aligning social media around business processes, the true wild card is the purely *social* social-networking element. Given the steep adoption curve of Facebook, it might seem that resistance to wide-open usage is futile. However, with an emphasis on leveraging aligned business processes, there are ample reasons businesses to approach the social networking issue with thoughtfulness and care. In the application of social media tools, a balanced approach to social networking—in which employees are encouraged to use their own time to maintain professional connectivity—is an appropriate business decision.

Jim Bowles, Ed.D., is managing director of BTS USA's Leadership and Management Practice. Previously vice president of workforce development in human resources for AT&T Mobility, Bowles led divisions of leadership, staffing, learning and organizational development at the company in a time of rapid industry growth and consolidation.

Talent management professionals who recognize the strategic value of this technology can incorporate internal social media solutions... to the business.

Myth #6: Social Media is a Technology Issue

Matthew Breitfelder, vice president, Global Talent Management and Organizational Development, MasterCard Worldwide

I completely agree with Jeanne Meister and Karie Willyerd that social media will help change the game on how companies are managed in the future. In their compelling article, Meister and Willyerd respond to five myths with concrete examples of what leading companies already are doing to dispel them. But a sixth myth lingers for me — that social media in organizations is still “framed” primarily as a technology issue.

Meister and Willyerd underline the importance of connecting social media with corporate business priorities and challenges. We should start framing social media this way: as a problem-solving tool to address persistent issues with which all companies struggle. This approach will help us move beyond the debates in companies about the risks of implementing social media toward more focus on the very real returns we can achieve to better serve customers, connect with stakeholders and execute strategy.

As with any new innovation, the early adopters do assume the most upfront risk, with fast followers benefiting from a clearer roadmap to success. Wise companies will connect the dots between early lessons in social media and longtime challenges in

As practitioners, we know the problem needs solving, but we do not have many tools in our toolbox. Social media enables employees to quickly receive information about what these stakeholders care about and to engage with them in new ways.

organizations to reframe social media as a problem-solving tool. A few additional thoughts:

- Most research shows that more than 70 percent of corporate strategy and change initiatives fail to deliver expected results. Equally alarming, 80 percent of employees at Fortune 500 companies are not “highly engaged” in their work. Social media can help us solve both problems — by quickly aligning employee energies against strategic priorities and connecting untapped employee knowledge with the greatest customer needs. This flattens hierarchy, fosters employee pride and speeds decision making.
- As Meister and Willyerd mention, social media is a powerful tool for learning. Ninety percent of corporate learning occurs informally — either on-the-job or from colleagues at work — but most corporate learning resources are allocated to formal courses and eLearning. As practitioners, we know this problem needs solving, but we do not have many tools in

our toolbox. Social media enables us to capture, foster and leverage informal learning efficiently and effectively.

- Most CEOs tell us that a critical new skill for leaders is engaging with a range of new stakeholders globally. In many companies this is uncharted territory. Social media enables employees to quickly receive information about what these stakeholders care about and to engage with them in new ways. Pepsi’s Project Refresh is one of the most innovative examples of this in action.

At our company, we are moving quickly to make the most of social media, both externally with customers, consumers and industry influencers, as well as internally with our employees. Across the company, we are tweeting, blogging, friending and You-Tubing. In July, on his first day as the new CEO of our company, Ajay Banga launched the organization’s first company-wide internal blog to engage employees in a dialogue about issues that matter to MasterCard. In just a few short weeks, more than 70 percent of employees have participated. If you listened carefully, you could hear a few myths fading away.

Social media can help us solve both problems — by quickly aligning employee energies against strategic priorities and connecting untapped employee knowledge with the greatest customer needs. This flattens hierarchy, fosters employee pride and speeds decision making.

Matthew Breitfelder is vice president of Leadership Development at MasterCard Worldwide, where he is responsible for a range of programs to build a strong pipeline of leaders and drive culture change.

What Does Success Look Like for Your Company: Social Media Starting Points with Measurable Returns

Anne Berkowitch, chief executive officer, SelectMinds

We've all read conflicting reports about how to enact social media inside a company — the questions the discussion raises loom large. Do we ease into social media? How prepared do we need to be when we open up the floodgates? What platforms do we try first, second or third? Do we need to hire someone to manage social media? How do we measure the value of our efforts and demonstrate that value to executives?

The answer to all of these questions lies in what our business objectives are for social media activity. Social media is no longer separate from marketing, branding, public relations, human resources, lead generation, customer service or any other facet of a business. It has the potential to be an integral part of each of those departments' daily activities and play a critical role in their success.

The questions we should be asking before any others include:

- What do we hope to gain from engaging in social media?
- Does our business lend itself to being social intrinsically?
- What does success in social media look like for our business?

And most importantly:

- How will we measure social media ROI?

When it comes to HR, social media should not be tapped only as a way to identify future employees, but also as a driver for attracting them to our business, retaining them moving forward and leveraging their own networks

for further growth. Let's consider for a moment an integrated social media plan for a company's HR department that would help practitioners find quality talent via the assets they already have on staff. Not only can a strong understanding and use of social media in business be an influential selling point for job seekers, but it also allows people to maximize their own personal networks to drive business growth. Growth generated via referrals is the best kind, especially when it comes to recruiting — referred candidates outperform job board candidates more than threefold in terms of retention and termination rates, not to mention that a referral candidate is 54 times more likely to result in a hire than a job board candidate.

When it comes to HR, social media should not be tapped only as a way to identify future employees, but also as a driver for attracting them to our business.

While the solution to creating a social media strategy may not seem clear, it is necessary to be able to measure the success and engagement of the actions a company takes online so that future decisions can be made. Deciding on an initial goal that aligns with business aims first, tracking its impact on the bottom line, and expanding from there is a recipe for success. Also, when it comes to corporate networking online, understanding the viral power of those networks is integral to one's own success — referrals bring in 25 percent of recruits at 50 percent savings per employee. Thus the impact can be enormous.

So as we start to think about creating a social media plan, let's keep this outline in mind:

- Evaluate where the company is in terms of social media activity — even if it feels like square one, it might not be.
- Who in the company is involved personally?
- Do they identify as part of the organization?

- Decide on initial and projected social media goals that align with current, overall business goals.
- How can social media and referral networking be leveraged — for recruiting, business development, branding?
- Benchmark where competitors are in this process.
- What platforms have they adopted?
- What level of activity are they maintaining?
- What other technologies might they be using?
- Test the social media waters via internal-facing social media vehicles.

- Internal chatting tools
- Private micro-blogging platforms
- Corporate referral networking solutions

A goal as simple as driving recruitment initially allows social media activity to be internally focused. By creating a channel for employees to leverage their personal networks, help their connections as well as their business, and potentially earn a bonus in the process engenders positive employee sentiment and will drive measurable returns for the organization as well.

Anne Berkowitch co-founded SelectMinds in 2000. Since then, she has played a key role in developing SelectMinds' client relationships, and in helping the company evolve into a leading provider of Purpose-Driven Networking solutions and services.

Let's Concentrate on Managing the People

Chris Hoyt, talent engagement & marketing leader, PepsiCo

Ms. Meister and Ms. Willyerd write an interesting article with many great points related to the validity of social media taking a somewhat permanent residence within our various working generations. To be clear, however, the definition of “social media” is communication built upon a platform that allows for the contribution and exchange of user-generated content. While Facebook has risen to become a giant among social channels, it certainly does not stand alone when considering the ever-growing need of people to collaborate and communicate on topics ranging from weekend picnics to billion dollar projects.

There are other social communication tools and networks that should not be ignored and are considered social in nature. In fact, many of them have been around and in use for years. Tools and platforms like Lotus Notes released in 1989, allow for threaded discussions and the collaboration of any number of projects. Today Lotus Notes offers features very similar to other products, like Microsoft's SharePoint, that include blogs, Wikis and seamless calendar and e-mail integration and are being rapidly adopted around the

...Twitter may seem to some as a silly collection of ramblings, many companies are seeing incredible success using it to offer service and/or sales options to their customers.

globe. These were never deemed “scary” or “time wasters,” because they were typically limited to internal company use and did not include surveys to help you discover what type of Disney Princess or virtual Farmer you might be.

What is typically a mainstream social network can be surprising as well. Twitter, a micro-blogging service that allows for 140-character updates, rocketed into popularity throughout 2009. And while at a glance Twitter may seem to some as a silly collection of ramblings, many companies are seeing incredible success using it to offer service and/or sales options to their customers. Are employees venting about their noisy cubical neighbors? Sure. But they are also connecting with peers to work on various projects or even using advanced search features to connect with talent within their professions.

While Facebook has risen to become a giant among social channels, it certainly does not stand alone when considering the ever-growing need of people to collaborate and communicate on topics ranging from weekend picnics to billion dollar projects.

And it doesn't end with Facebook and Twitter. MySpace is still a contender for highly trafficked social sites, and so are more professionally driven social networks like LinkedIn. The broad range of networks isn't

necessarily about niche topics either. We have an almost endless list of sites and forums from which to select because of a growing demand for constant communication in the formats that users desire.

My role at PepsiCo is to push the boundaries related to how recruiters find and engage top talent internally and externally. I get to see the creation and evolution of countless social networks and how they impact people and business. One thing is always constant: No matter the name or the appearance of the network and regardless of its casual or professional adoption rate, ease of use drives its evolution or demise.

Smart and savvy companies have moved past anxiety over social media and network phenomenon and have embraced their use for more than just customer interaction.

Incredibly valuable organizations, such as the Social Media Business Council and Word of Mouth Marketing Association, move to help educate (via collaboration!) both large and small companies about social media for business. I'm of the opinion that the companies that adapt the demands of their employees to fit their business needs and that concentrate on managing the people, not restricting the media channels, will see increased productivity, quality and even employee retention in the long term.

Chris Hoyt is a mobile marketing/recruiting evangelist and self-proclaimed Social 'X' addict. As Talent Engagement & Marketing Leader at PepsiCo, Hoyt pushes the boundaries of each aspect of full-cycle recruiting.

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