

Social enterprise: more than just liking, following or connecting with your company

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As we engage in a century where everyone is not only a global citizen, but a valuable "Brand in Waiting," we begin to understand that the Internet Revolution IS in fact the Industrial Revolution of our time. It's a sweeping social disruption that brings with it not only new inventions and scientific advances, but perhaps most importantly revolutionises both the methods of work and we the workers ourselves.

It's the return of personal choice and personal definitions of value, as we increasingly define ourselves by the work we produce rather than being defined only by the work available.' (Forbes)

With the lines between internal and external communication all but disappear, effectively using social media to engage employees and build brand ambassadors, is becoming a top of mind topic for many high performing organisations.

The challenge though is to understand that this is beyond getting your staff to like your company's Facebook page or follow you on Twitter. It's more than just implementing an internal Facebook for staff behind a firewall. It's about building an Enterprise Social Network that encourages sharing, captures knowledge, enables action and empowers people.

But, let's take a step back (or forward for that matter). The future workplace will see employees having different communication expectations, where total transparency is not only expected but is the norm, where social media will become the most important form of internal communication (second only to face-to-face engagement) and where employees (along with your customers) are shaping your brand.

So, you may be thinking, 'why does this matter? After all, our company is active on social media channels, our employees are connecting with consumers through social media, people are talking about us online...' Or even, 'well we are a social business, we have even introduced our 'Facebook-like' channel and staff are using it to have conversations, post pics and share topics of interest'. This is not enough. Companies need to prepare for this future workplace by becoming a social business. Companies need to harness the power of employee and customer engagement through social media. And to do this effectively, it's about shifting your thinking of social media beyond Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube and the likes, and building an Enterprise Social Network that bridges the gap between internal and external.

A successful Enterprise Social Network focuses less on the technology and more on the opportunity to engage and empower people internally and externally. In the age of service, where your brand is no longer built around what you say you do, but what consumers say you do, building an engaged and empowered workforce where the client is at the centre of every process, system and interaction is more critical than ever.

Edgar, from icandi CQ, recently attending the first annual Yammer conference in San Francisco, and commented, 'what we're seeing is a social revolution, where organisations are being forced by clients and employees to restructure to become social - social not being about talking, but rather about being open. While total restructure is not always possible in an established large organisation; when the strategy and vision is clear, Enterprise Social Networks can build a more open organisation. The impact on employee engagement levels is paramount and this directly influences client engagement'.

Edgar goes on to say, 'think about it this way, so you have brand presence on social media platforms. Clients interact with you via social media. What happened on the other end though? Are client queries and business challenges being solved socially, or do you revert to a traditional siloed process internally, compromising the overall client experience? An Enterprise Social Network means the interaction stays social when it moves into the internal space. The result: collaborative problem-solving, innovative solutions, quicker solutions and an improved experience - that will get people talking.'

At icandi CQ, our expertise lies in helping you shape your culture and prepare your employees to adopt a social way of working. We can assist in developing a strategy for implementing an Enterprise Social Network that works and the resultant engagement metrics that need to follow. Chat to us if you're interested in finding out more.

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