

Social Media Change Management Trends & Tips

by

Todd Pitt, Zero Strategist

Executive overview

Paper objective

The objective of this paper is to share trends in social media and provide practical tips to other change managers currently engaged in enterprise 2.0 or social media change campaigns.

Outline

1. Web 2.0 Terminologies
2. Trends in Web 2.0/Enterprise 2.0
3. Benefits and Risks of Social Media
4. Economic Effects on E2.0 Campaigns
5. Cultural Nuances and Change Obstacles
6. Why Most Social Media Campaigns Fail
7. Tips for Enterprise 2.0 Change Managers

1. Web 2.0 Terminologies

Social Media (Web 2.0)

The terms "Web 2.0" and "Social Media" and "New Media" are commonly associated with web applications that facilitate interactive information sharing, interoperability, user-centered design, and collaboration on the World Wide Web. Examples of Web 2.0 include web-based communities, hosted services, web applications, social-networking sites, video-sharing sites, wikis, blogs, mashups, and folksonomies. A Web 2.0 site allows its users to interact with other users or to change website content, in contrast to non-interactive websites where users are limited to the passive viewing of information that is provided to them. Source:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web_2.0

Enterprise Social Media (Enterprise 2.0)

the use of web 2.0 technologies (Enterprise Rich Internet Applications / Software as a Service) in the context of the enterprise, for business or commercial purposes. Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enterprise_2.0

Government Social Media (Government 2.0)

Web 2.0 technologies as used in the context of the governments, for public services and diplomacy. Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Government_2.0

2. Trends in Web 2.0/Enterprise 2.0 Benefits and Business Drivers

The last two years (2008–2009) have been a huge years for the growth of social media across the board. World leaders saw how the Barack Obama's election team effectively used web 2.0 technologies (Change.gov) in his presidential campaign and now they are seeing him start to integrate them into the U.S. Government using websites like White House.gov to engage the general public post election. The most important trend it is that the these historical milestones have changed the global public perception and increased overall awareness of social media. Skeptics of social media made the argument since 2004 that web 2.0 was just a fad or Internet bubble. Six years later, the explosion of social networking sites, social bookmarks, blogs, microblogs, wikis, mashups, widgets continues with no sign of slowing in sight.

Rising Demand for Web 2.0 Change Managers

Post election, leaders across all types of organizations are asking how they can use social media tools to help organize, improve products and services, collaborate across geographies, provide seamless customer experiences, and be more efficient in meeting their missions. Four hot areas trending towards use of social media tools are businesses, associations, nonprofits and governments. In all of these areas and across a variety of industries the demand for skilled social media change managers has increased significantly. With the forecasts of business spending on enterprise social business software projected to be in the billions over the next decade, the demand for individuals with this hybridized fusion of social media and change management experience will continue to rise, outpacing demand.

3. Benefits and Risks of Social Media Benefits and Business Drivers

Here is a brief summary of key areas where web 2.0 technologies can add value, provide substantial benefits and offer new

opportunities for organizational improvements –

- Branding
- Collaboration/Sharing
- Communication (Internal/External)
- Crisis/Disaster Response
- Customer Relationship Management
- Competitive Analysis
- Customer Service/Engagement
- Events/Conferences
- Fundraising
- Ideation (Creation of Ideas)
- Information/Data Distribution
- Knowledge Management/KM
- Marketing
- Market Analysis
- Organizational Efficiency
- Organizing Constituents
- Business Process Engineering/BPR
- Product Improvement
- Public Relations
- Recruitment/Retention
- Reputation Management
- Research
- Training/Education

Business Risks of Doing

Though web 2.0 presents potential benefits, efficiency opportunities, process improvements, new product possibilities, direct engagement with customers and constituents, it also brings significant risk factors into organizations and businesses. Social media represents a radical culture shift towards openness, information sharing and a trend towards a flatter more integrated organizational model. With the social web comes diverse cyber-culture, specific Internet jargon, a philosophy that

can be counter to traditional corporate norms and established business cultures. Not all organizations will be able to successfully bridge the gap and make the transition from enterprise 1.0 to enterprise 2.0, most will encounter intense resistance and difficult change obstacles on multiple levels. Those organizations that do not staff change managers and community managers to implement social media change management plans or utilize dynamic change management strategies are much more likely to fail in the implementation of social media. Social media is not free, nor is it cheap to implement because of software, time and human costs. When companies fail at social media it typically happens in a painfully public way resulting in bad press, brand damage, legal issues, information security problems, intellectual and human capital losses.

4. Economic Effects on E2.0 Campaigns

It is apparent that the market landscape has shifted significantly over the past three years. Leading economists have already said that by definition, we are in the midst of the second Great Depression. Old business models are not keeping pace with and were not designed to survive in an increasingly digital age. Music and publishing companies in particular have been hit hard by the rising digital tide. Despite the change in business climate, it is clear that people have changed how they consume media and what they are willing to pay for it. Online media has become deeply participatory, giving rise to a exponential surge of user generated content (text, images, videos, multimedia, photos). Individuals are empowered by social media platforms to act on digital word of mouth by participating in the co-creation of brands, marketing, product reviews, making news, forming agile communities which are reshaping the physical world. The decrease in income and organizational revenues have caused budgets for innovative projects, IT and software to slow or shift. The funds for social media change management teams

can be scarce and viewed by leaders as an optional afterthought, becoming low priority relative to the physical IT infrastructure and social software design. It is no surprise that Enterprise 2.0 adoption rates remain low and failure rates are high.

5. Cultural Nuances and Change Obstacles

Every organization that makes the decision to bring social media into the fold will undergo radical culture, workflow, communication, structural, strategy and process changes. Some will have to reorganize, fire workers, entire teams or replace floundering leaders to make the shift to socializing their organization. Each organization has its own unique cultural identity, structure, brand, and hierarchy which has been developed over the course of many years or decades. In order for these organizations to evolve, they will have to change and adapt to survive the digital and social mediums. Yet, it is very common for the organization's own culture to present itself as the largest change obstacle to effective implementation of social media platforms on an enterprise wide level. This is why it is called social software, because it is about people, not just implementing new media technologies. Without the adoption of end users, social software simply does not work.

6. Why Most Social Media Change Campaigns Fail

Here are common ways E2.0 CM initiatives, projects and campaigns fail –

- Failure to have a change management team or plan
- Failure to integrate change management and project management
- Staffing the wrong people on the change management team (coalition)
- Selecting the wrong enterprise social software solution

- Failing to recognize when a custom software solution must be built
- Lack of organization wide training and education on social media
- Failure to create enterprise level social media guidelines and policies
- Lack of resources, staffing and funding for the change initiative
- Lack of change sponsorship in general
- Lack of propensity to see the change through to fruition
- Failure to develop a long term strategy
- Political obstacles, barriers and debacles
- Change manager is seated too low in the organization, is on the wrong team or in the wrong silo
- Failure to staff permanent positions in support of enterprise SM services
- Staffing only interns or volunteers to run social media change campaigns

7. Tips for Enterprise 2.0 Social Media Change Managers

Gain and Maintain Top Cover

You will fail in your enterprise social media campaign if you do not have adequate top cover (executive sponsorship). Enterprise 2.0 represents a massive culture change, a dramatic shift towards openness, sharing, acting as peers and openness facilitated by a social software. Unfortunately, not every executive or manager learns how to share information, communicate well, work collaboratively, be open and transparent (sometimes it may not be in their personal interest). But with all of the recent press, media buzz, marketing hype about social media it is not really hard to gain top cover in the beginning. It is much harder to maintain, then it is to gain it initially.

Have Gall and Guile, Be Cunning

Being a social media change manager is not for the faint of heart. You must have both

gall and guile. You will be put in challenging, impossible and socially awkward situations. You must have the gall to say no repeatedly say NO to the CEO, executive team, legal teams, IT crowd, marketing managers, project managers and employees who will act in the interest of self preservation, attempting to control or manipulate the roll out social media tools for numerous reasons. Some do it out of fear of change or obsolesce. Others simply because they can or like to play political games. Certain people mean well, but honestly just lack certain social skills.

Know Social Media Technologies

It is very easy to lose credibility as a change agent or trust agent in the organization if you have no knowledge of the social technologies you are expected to implement. Strong knowledge of social media technologies, Internet trends, cyber-culture, and the lexicon of social web jargon is required for enterprise 2.0 change managers to run these campaigns well. Hiring a great change manager with no social media knowledge, experience or background is one sure-fire way of decreasing the adoption rate. If you do not know the technologies you will not know how to employ or leverage them to your advantage in the change process. If you are not very social media or tech savvy and are put into the position of managing this type of change, learn as much as you can as fast as you can without losing focus. Also, be humble about your level "technical knowledge" around IT staff or technical team members and listen to them when they speak.

Be the Culture and Navigate the Lexicon

For change managers who are used to bring in a subject matter experts (SMEs) to neatly handle technical or project details, this approach will not work for social media campaigns. If you want to effectively lead a social media changes in a business, you are going to have to do it by leading from the front, socially. You have to know both yourself, the history and the culture of organization. This means not just knowing the culture, but actually being part of it. It

definitely takes a certain kind of person to do these social media change transformations well. The simple fact is that not many people exist who have the right combination of charisma, knowledge, technical skill, social media smarts, change management ability and steely resolve to make it happen. Before taking on the responsibility of leading or participating in an E2.0 campaign you must ask yourself if you are ready to change the organizations entire culture. In order for you to do so you MUST understand the language, the many nuances of social media, and be able to navigate the virtual realm effectively. I have found that the only way to learn social media is through first hand experience, continuous learning, engagement and participation over time. You must become a social media practitioner, not just a manager of change.

Communicate Effectively With Change Champions and Leaders

Most companies still operate primarily on email. You will have to learn when to write a blog post, when to send out a quick microblog (i.e. twitter or yammer), when to email everyone, just the leadership, a limited team, or tailor communications to specific individuals. Most of all you have to know when to pick up the phone and what communication modes will get the most efficient response to make change happen. Different teams, departments and key players will have different communication preferences. Know when it is time to pickup the phone, have a meeting or make the walk to their office to get what you need done in the right time frame. Figure out quickly what communication medium is going to most effectively mitigate your risk or solve the problem rapidly.

Trade Offs and Balancing Acts

Once you come into the organization and bring this type sweeping social change with you, you will become a symbol of that change. You will become very popular amongst certain teams or individuals and very unpopular amongst others. Either way you will be in high demand, with limited resources and with extremely lofty

expectations put upon you. The work load will be more than any one change manager will ever be able to do. This is why rapidly building a quality social media change team is a key to E2.0 success. The quicker you build bandwidth for change, the sooner you can develop a strategic way of tasking to individual strengths. You must be able to both trust your team and effectively delegate tasks or responsibilities consistently. Whenever something good or bad happens, many people are going to contact you and consume your prime change time. Change champions will be knocking on your door needing advice, guidance, training and strategy. Resistors will be busy trying to scope you out, anticipate your next move and sabotage the initiative by doing really obnoxious annoying things that burn precious time or deprive the change team of needed resources. Before you spread yourself too thin or over commit yourself think about the tradeoffs to each action and how it will effect your capacity to do another task. Spend your time where you know it will have the most impact, but also maintain the change balancing act.

Things Get Out of Control, Keep Your Cool

Enterprise 2.0 social media change campaigns change direction on a dime and can get out of control very quickly. All it takes is one poorly written blog, one controversial wiki entry, one haphazardly filled out social networking profile, one indecent social bookmark, one video link and you can have an instant firestorm. Always have a thick skin, stay calm, level headed, rapidly assess the situation, the problem source, assess various solutions, select what you believe to be the best path and act decisively. You will become a master of rapid risk mitigation and damage control techniques. In certain cases you will have to sit with leadership and let them know that it is O.K. to lose control, both inside and outside of the organization. Reassure them that this is part of actualizing a long term strategic vision (no matter how bad it seems). Also, make sure they stay proactive and do not become

reactive to every hiccup, because there will be many along the way.

Manage Expectations From The Beginning

The expectations of organizations and their leaders is high when it comes to social media. Many of them will honestly believe that they are ready to dive straight in to Enterprise 2.0, when they don't even know what it is! Project managers and core stakeholders will view the rollout of your enterprise social software as if it is like the deployment of every other information technology product or process change they have experienced in the past. Show them other enterprise 2.0 case studies that will distinguish it and prove how it is different. When forming your CM team or recruiting change champions into the team, channel passions and manage expectations so everyone is on the same page from the beginning. Set very reasonable or even modest initial goals, then systematically build it from there. Doing great social media and E2.0 takes years, not weeks or days. But when it is executed well, it looks beautiful, simple and easy. Therein lies the danger, because it is not.

Develop Training Early, Educate Informally

A sure way to have your Enterprise 2.0 change campaign go directly south and fail is to under train or not bother to invest in educating your organization about social media. If employees do not have a strong understanding of social media tools, how can they figure out how to integrate them into products, services, processes or adopt them in daily work? If people cannot grasp the concept of a culture of openness, they will not be able to create or participate in one. Be sure very early on that you develop strong ties to the training or e-learning team, because they represent one of the greatest forces for organizational change awareness of education. Get that social media 101 course development started and running in parallel with the campaign creation as soon as possible. Place an emphasis on informal social experiential learning while the courses are developed in order to bridge the gap. Be mindful that humans tend to retain those forms of

informal training more readily and find it easier to apply it to their own work.

Some Organizations Will Never Be Ready, Always Have a Backup Plan

There is no avoiding it, some organizations will never be ready for the plethora of changes social media thrusts upon them. But just as we know some humans lack the capacity to adapt to changes in work flows, new processes and changing job responsibilities, the same applies for entire enterprises. In many cases businesses will start an E2.0 change campaign because social media is popular, they seek to maximize marketing budgets, or because competitors are doing it. But few will do it well, most will execute it poorly with little or no engagement and then fail quietly, fading out their campaigns. After learning the hard way the magnitude of the challenges before them, they will lose the will to implement it and abandon change entirely. In these cases Enterprise 2.0 change managers will be let go because the changes they are making are simply too large for the organizations established culture to take without causing considerable upheaval. As a social media change manager you must be tough enough, never internalize it, always have a backup plan and be willing to leave the rest to Darwin.

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