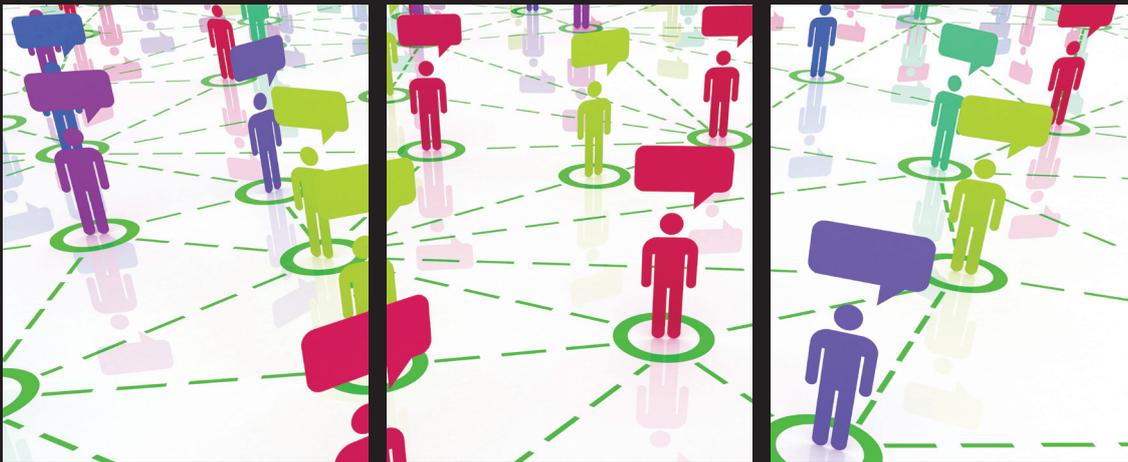# Social Strategies in Action: Driving Business Transformation

DR BONNIE CHEUK

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Executive summary

THE USE of social media has exploded in the past five years. Consumers are now spending over 20 per cent of their time online on social media sites, and the use of social media to communicate surpassed the usage of e-mail by the end of 2008, according to Nielsen Online.[1] Social media is defined as a range of online tools which allow users to easily share and exchange content with one another. With these new tools, the way people connect with one another, how companies engage with their customers, and how governments engage with their citizens is changing. Specifically, they have transferred the power from companies to customers, who now have the ability to easily exchange ideas with one another, and no longer passively receive information provided by companies.

The use of social media by businesses is commonly referred to as 'social business'. There are two aspects of this; one relates to the use of public social media sites as channels to reach, engage, and listen to customers, suppliers, external partners, etc. The other aspect is the use of social media within organisations to transform the way employees connect, communicate, and share knowledge. When social business is used in this report, it refers to the latter aspect, i.e. driving business transformation from the inside out.

Since communication is key when using social media, in Chapter 2 the authors argue that good communication practices must be introduced to avoid superficial social business adoption. In fact, the worst way to embrace social business is by replicating poor communication practices online. Think about all the poorly facilitated meetings, brainstorming sessions, lecture-style presentations, and faceless and dry communication messages employees experience today; should these be replicated online? Or, does social business represent an opportunity to transform communication practices? Dervin's Sense-Making Methodology is introduced to provide a framework to think about how meaningful communication happens, and how important it is to draw on over forty years of research to inform social business design.

In Chapter 3, the challenges of introducing social media within organisations are discussed. In the initial phase, many business leaders ignore the use of social media within the enterprise, assuming it is a non-business and time-wasting tool. Then, some business leaders become early adopters, and start piloting business-focused use cases. In doing so, they realise the technological, cultural, and behavioural challenges, and the need for an habitual process change. Mature social businesses have learnt from these challenges, set realistic expectations about the time frame to drive change, and planned for interventions to address these challenges.

The author has had the opportunity to introduce the concept of social business to many senior executives and business managers. The common questions they

ask are: Why should I embrace social business? What is the purpose of using these technologies within my company/ function? How are other companies using it to create value for employees? This report provides insights to answer these questions, drawing on real-life examples that have been rolled out in various large multinational organisations. Note that, whilst these studies reflect actual use cases, some have been anonymised in the interests of confidentiality.

As more companies continue their social business journey, they can benefit from hearing how others have started, what they have achieved, and the lessons they have learnt. With the advancements in technology and the emergence of traditional vendors who have reinvented their products, as well as new vendors offering innovative solutions, the use of social media within organisations is predicted to become mainstream.

The case studies in this report showcase the different ways in which social media can be used to transform various aspects of business, including:

■ Innovation – crowdsourcing ideas from employees;
■ Internal communications – increasing staff engagement with new-style newsletters;
■ Sharing knowledge – using the social intranet to publish product information and marketing materials, interact with users, and share subject matter experts' insights through a blog;
■ Events management – building and continuing momentum for strategy meetings;
■ Project management – enabling project managers to connect with project team members, facilitating discussions, and sharing updates, meeting minutes, and project documents;

■ Sales enablement – connecting the sales team to align sales priorities, connecting the global sales team to serve global clients, and gaining real time market and competitor insights;
■ Operational efficiency – reducing support costs and building a dynamic knowledge base; and
■ Learning and development – enabling social learning to allow deeper self-reflection and learning from peers.

At the end of each case study, there is a discussion of the lessons learned and an analysis of the changes made. The discussion specifically focuses on how the introduction of social media results in a fundamental change in the business model, the way management engages with the employees, and how employees connect with one another to get their work done.

Part Three of this report draws on the case studies to list the critical success factors for ensuring the successful implementation of social business strategies, and discusses some of the business challenges which need to be addressed.

The report ends with a call for social business practitioners, many of which are information and knowledge management professionals who are introducing social business to their organisation, to dig deeper into understanding how human beings make sense of the world. If social business is ultimately about transforming the way employees communicate, celebrating an increase in adoption rate (i.e. an increase in membership and quantity of content shared on the social platform) may not be a reflection of true value. This comes from the quality of dialogue which opens up new ideas, challenges the status quo, and brings in new insights. To facilitate this, informed by Dervin's Sense-Making

Methodology, communication practices need to be disciplined, with coaching and toolkits introduced to promote genuine dialogue in order to create social business solutions which truly transform business.

It is not the aim of this report to provide a recipe or step-by-step guide to rolling out social business practices. The author does not believe such a recipe exists, as each business is unique and has their own visions, goals, and organisational DNA. The art of introducing social business lies in understanding these business goals, recognising the dominant company culture as the starting condition, identifying opportunities where social media can resolve issues and create value, and then driving change in behaviours and mindsets to deliver the benefits for the business as well as for each individual employee.

Reference

1. See www.nielsen.com/us/en/reports/2012/ state-of-the-media-the-social-media- report-2012.html.

About the author

Bonnie Cheuk

Bonnie is passionate about finding ways to improve knowledge sharing, communication, and collaboration. Currently she is a director with Citigroup, and is recognised as a strategic yet hands-on leader driving the adoption of social business within the Institutional Clients Group.

Bonnie started her social business journey with Citigroup in 2010, when she was recruited to be the global head of knowledge and collaboration within Citi's Transaction Services business. Leading a five person team, Bonnie established the global knowledge sharing and collaboration strategy and implemented two generations of enterprise-wide social business platforms for the business. In mid-2013, she began to introduce social business strategies to other business units, namely Global Markets and Corporate Banking.

Before joining Citi, Bonnie was the global head of knowledge and information within ERM, the world's largest environmental consultancy firm. Within this role, Bonnie managed the intranet and internet team and was responsible for internal communication, social media, and external communication. She helped ERM win numerous awards, e.g. the Environmental Business Journal Award for Organisational Innovation (2008), and Nielsen's Top 10 Best Intranet Award (2009).

Bonnie received her PhD in information science in 1999. During her PhD research period, she started to apply Dervin's Sense-Making Methodology to study how engineers, auditors, and architects seek information and experts at work. Bonnie continues to use Sense-Making Methodology to inform her practice. She has taken on senior information and knowledge management roles in the British Council (London), Improvement Service for the Scottish Government (Edinburgh), and Arthur Andersen Business Consulting (San Francisco and Singapore). Originally from Hong Kong, Bonnie is married and lives with her husband and daughter in London.

Bonnie learns from reflecting on what she has done and writing down her experience. Her work has been published in international journals and she speaks frequently at conferences and universities. Bonnie can be contacted via:

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Brenda Dervin

Brenda L. Dervin is Professor Emeritus, Communication, Ohio State University, Columbus. She received her PhD from Michigan State University and holds an honorary doctorate from the University of Helsinki. She holds an adjunct appointment in communication at Eastern Washington University, and in library-information science at the University of South Carolina. She is director of the Sense-Making Methodology Institute, Meridian, Idaho. Her research and teaching focus on using genuinely communicative methodological frameworks for understanding users and designing procedures/ systems for serving users well in myriad contexts, including mass, organisational, and interpersonal. She is fellow and past president of the International Communication Association, and long-time member of the International Association of Media and Communication and the Association for Information Science and Technology.

Susanne Etti

Dr Etti is a trained Biologist who earned a PhD in Natural Sciences from the University of Bonn in collaboration with the University of Oxford. She has experience in academic scientific research and implementing sustainability, climate change and knowledge management in global organisations (profit, non-for-profit, NGO).

Dr Etti started her business career at EcoSecurities, a carbon origination and trading company, when they had just 20 people. EcoSecurities went on to register the first carbon credit project under the CDM mechanism and be listed on the London AIM market.

At ERM she is responsible for the knowledge management of the global sustainability program for the global 5,000 employee organisation. She has published on the role of knowledge management in fast growth service companies.

Environmental Resources Management (ERM) is a leading global provider of environmental, health, safety, risk, social consulting services, and sustainability related services. It has over 140 offices in 39 countries and territories employing more than 5,000 people. ERM is committed to providing a service that is consistent, professional, and of the highest quality to create value for clients. Over the past five years it has worked for more than 50 per cent of the Global Fortune 500 delivering innovative solutions for business and selected government clients, helping them understand and manage the sustainability challenges that the world is increasingly facing.

Sue Mucenieks

Sue Mucenieks is the Deloitte UK collaboration lead. With over 15 years of practical experience in information and knowledge management, she is currently responsible for developing and deploying new collaboration technologies that enable better ways of working within and across Deloitte, and equipping people with the skills and techniques to use these tools effectively. An example of

this is Deloitte's enterprise social network which has grown from 1,000 members in April 2011 to nearly 10,000 today and is changing the way that people are communicating, connecting, and collaborating within the firm. Sue is leading the roll-out of SharePoint 2010 team sites in the UK firm, using her grounding in knowledge management to create a business led solution which is user-friendly, with a supporting infrastructure and training programme designed to increase adoption and ease the change management process.

Prior to joining Deloitte in 2008, Sue was the knowledge services manager at the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, with responsibility for the intranet, EDRMS, and leading the implementation and deployment of new online collaborative workspaces accessible by both internal QCA teams and key external partners. Sue has also worked at PwC and IBM where she was EMEA learning and knowledge lead, working with senior leadership to create and deliver industry knowledge management and education programmes across the communications sector business to leverage best practice and support sales and project delivery activities.

Euan Semple

Euan Semple is a speaker, writer, and consultant on the social web for business. Twelve years ago, while working in a senior position at the BBC, he was one of the first to introduce what have since become known as social media tools into a large, successful organisation. He has subsequently had seven years of experience working with many organisations including BP, The World Bank, and NATO to help them try to do the same. Euan can be contacted at euan@euansemple.com.

Acknowledgements