EXPLORING CONTEMPORARY MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES: Use of Social Media in Management

UCSD LAMP Student Research Assignment 2012; Combined Findings
OUTLINE

- The Value of Research
- The Assignment
- Information Received
- Combined Findings
- Discussion
THE VALUE OF RESEARCH

- **More aware** of management challenges, and responses, at your organization
- **Experience** the process of seeking objective information and multiple viewpoints
- **Contribute** to better understanding of common practices across companies and industries
THE ASSIGNMENT

- Understand the challenge
  - identify the current and best use of social media in running a science and technology company

- Gather information (literature, survey, interviews)

- Look for common themes

- Document findings, present best practices, give personal analysis and recommendations
INFORMATION RECEIVED

- Six team reports
  - 30 researchers
  - 16 science and technology companies
  - 68 interviews
  - 393 survey respondents
  - Extensive literature review – 151 citations

- Swift and professional effort in completing the project and producing coherent and useful reports (eight weeks)
FINDINGS

- **Team 1**
  - Looked at six specific applications
    - disasters, tech. comm., inter-dept. comm., advertising, product support, recruiting
  - Broad use and acceptance in communities, yet skepticism within sci-tech companies
    - managers favor conceptually, but worried about security and loss of info. control
  - Apparent big payoffs in pilot projects at some global firms
    - intuitive value in conversation beyond traditional organizational circles
FINDINGS

Team 2

- Began with in-depth framework for social media
  - (1) common-interest networks – incl. blogs, (2) bookmarking – incl. geolocation, (3) file sharing – incl. media, (4) collaboration – incl. wikis and web meetings
  - “unfettered” communication between people comes first, technology second

- Potential use of selected in-house tools rated very highly
  - wikis help in conducting projects and in training, esp. with multiple sites; tools can be a type of crowd sourcing to vet best ideas
  - universal concerns about searchability and organization of information, privacy and security, outdated information and record keeping, software and hardware compatibility

- There is value in a company policy about SM
  - Focus on the purpose and value
  - Most employees don’t know their company policy
Team 3

- Discovered three themes for using SM
  - (1) Inform, (2) Connect, (3) Collaborate

- High-value purposes
  - Information discovery and sustain tribal knowledge (replace knowledge-loss)
  - Tap into knowledge pools outside of traditional circles (e.g., users, critics)
  - Connect to employees outside of traditional circles (esp. large companies)
    - 60% support SM for internal connecting and collaborating
    - studies suggest increased collaboration breeds increased innovation
    - highly-specialized ideas require more specialized “crowds”

- Lots of apprehension
  - 77% say SM risks productivity, 70% say it presents unmanageable risk
  - Bias toward building tools; don’t be tool-focused (Geek Squad story)
Team 4

Three primary uses conceptually
- (1) new business and brand capture - marketing, (2) business to consumer dialogue – customer support, (3) internal dialogue – knowledge base and project management
- focused particularly on how tools are currently being used

Current use
- Facebook and Twitter common, with some success, most benefit with mass market, but they can promote individual relationships
- Forums for customer support, scaling and searchability an issue
- Wikis for internal communication, searchability/organization issue

Tips
- Don’t force Social Media
- Stay focused on purpose and value, not tools
- Actively manage tools that are used to get maximum benefit
FINDINGS

Team 5

- Use of Social Media on corporate networks is up 700% in one year
  - mostly personal use, but as familiarity and proficiency grows, bleeds into professional use as well

- Most common uses
  - wiki, file sharing, blogs, forums, Facebook
  - Need critical mass of users to be effective; generation plays a role

- Best practices
  - Integrate into workflows
  - Use for recruiting and training
  - Bridge geography
  - Employee recognition
  - Test and manage to gain greatest benefit
FINDINGS

Team 6

- Stark contrast between SM for personal use vs. use of SM workplace tools

- B2C uses
  - Can be powerful tool, but must have clear strategy
  - High information security threat
  - Cultural resistance (internal and external – often generational)

- Internal uses
  - Great for collaboration, but best with broad/diverse base
  - Wiki’s well received (60% acceptance)

- Recommendations
  - Policy to guide (not control) use
  - Use the right tool for each situation (training and proficiency)
  - Designate a Champion to drive and inspire
  - Use Consultants to craft strategies for implementation and acceptance
COMBINED FINDINGS

- Findings are tied somewhat to how social media is defined; central theme is open and immediate information sharing

- Widespread personal use of tools, general interest and enthusiasm for internal uses, anxiety about serious use with external audiences

  - Perhaps two-tier strategies use
    - Internal – open and collaborative for the purposes of innovation and productivity
    - B2C – more controlled and scalable for the purpose of efficiency and risk management

- Must be purpose (not tool) focused, well planned, and routinely assessed/adjusted for continued value
DISCUSSION

- As a manager, what single action can you take to “pilot test” the use of social media for a productive business purpose in your organization in the coming year?

- Suggest a research topic for next year’s LAMP class (e.g., what management issue is your organization struggling with)?