EXPLORING CONTEMPORARY MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES:
Use of Social Media in Management

UCSD EPSE Student Research
Assignment 2011-12;
Combined Findings
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, interviews, survey)

- Look for common themes

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

- Six team reports
  - 29 researchers
  - 12 science and technology companies
  - 53 interviews
  - 199 survey respondents
  - Extensive literature review – 106 citations

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

- **Team 1**
  
  - **SM currently being used for**
    - Product refinement and promotion (market “buzz”)
    - Employee recruitment
  
  - **Concerns/Themes:**
    - Volume of information difficult to manage
    - Reputation is being discussed (difficult to manage)
    - Security and privacy (need policy)
    - Ease of use vs. value
  
  - **Ideas/examples of use (in the literature)**
    - Retention through mentoring and community building, on-demand training/development, “crowd sourcing”.

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FINDINGS

Team 2

- Broad awareness that external conversations regarding the company are taking place via SM;
  - CRM use and best practices well-defined
  - but little current use for internal business functions
    - 74% feel SM *can/should* be made useful for business

- Themes for Use:
  - Works best with a broad customer base
  - Maximize ability to serve real-time information sharing
  - Integrate with an SM-experienced workforce (training)
FINDINGS

- **Team 3**
  - SM being used for brand management and recruitment, but little use elsewhere and most do not deal with SM well (not well integrated)
    - 72% use SM for recruitment
  - Concerns:
    - Securing proprietary information/IP
    - Protecting the reputation of the company
    - Securing access to information systems
  - Sci. & Tech are early adopters, but not of SM
    - Need to enable a pilot group of employees to build trust in the tools and produce useful results
FINDINGS

- **Team 4**
  - Took a broad definition of SM (incl. cloud storage and internal info-sharing tools)
    - Broad use, but little commitment or serious application
  - Concern/Development Themes:
    - Manage security
    - Policy and strategy (need guidance, not just control)
    - Move toward higher-value use
    - Need good analytics given the volume of data
FINDINGS

Team 5

- 70% positive view of SM, but only 28% support for use in a business setting

  - Primary use is to ease info-sharing and collaboration
  - Governance/security is a universal concern; accuracy and accountability for information provided or obtained via SM is also a concern
  - About have of organizations have SM policy, few employees are aware of the details of it
  - Only 33% feel SM makes them more productive
  - 90% felt SM in the workplace was distracting others in their work, but only 15% felt they were distracted by it
  - Execs don’t want the exposure risk of public SM, interested in creating internal social media tools
FINDINGS

Team 6

- Majority use SM for external communication (e.g., sales, marketing, media), but little commitment elsewhere (some use in recruiting)
  - Many employees required to use SM tools at work, but most don’t prefer it as a communication method
  - Generally positive opinion, but not much measurable result

- Development Themes:
  - Govern it effectively
  - Coordinate/integrate its use
  - Measure/validate results in order to justify more investment
COMBINED FINDINGS

- Widespread use of SM for external audiences (incl. potential hires), little use in other science and technology business functions
  - Surprisingly little discussion of use of SM in product development/management or project management
- Fundamental concerns regarding security and governance of SM for business
- Reliable measurement of value, and concrete results will be required for greater use and integration
- Well-planned pilot use, including trained and willing employees, will be required for greater use and integration
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 EPSE class (e.g., what management issue is your organization struggling with)?