Social Media Strategy to Transform Integrations

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The Problem

- When one company acquires another, the acquiring company tends to have limited knowledge of and relationships to its new acquisition (its people, knowledge assets, capabilities, etc)

- It is like integrating a black box where the contents of the box are, in good part, unknown and disconnected

The Challenge

- Engaging everyone from both companies in creating the new company
    - Find the best variety of ways to bring critical knowledge to the forefront and build the core capabilities of the new company
- Seeking out the most valuable knowledge assets of the acquired company, which are "embedded"
    - They are part of how people operate and what they know and are not necessarily written down
    - Even if they were, those knowledge assets only have maximum value if put to use by the people who developed and know them

What an Integration Team Faces

- Acquisitions bring high levels of uncertainty
  - The acquired staff do not know the acquiring company staff
  - Their jobs and futures are at risk
  - Under these conditions they have little basis to trust the acquiring company to act in their best interests.
- Trust has to be earned - Relationships have to be built and cultivated.

Using Social Media to Turbo Drive Integrations

- Linking social media to the existing communications strategy
  - Sets the stage for a networked organization
  - Radically expands your channels for knowledge sharing and collaboration
- Appropriate use of social media can enable people from both companies to begin feeling they are part of and operate as one "new" company, with no more "us" and "them"

What is Social Media Really About?

- Building organization wide "water coolers" to enable "productive conversation"
  - Engage in conversations that bring new understandings
  - Actions that flow from these conversations reflect and embody those new understandings
- Using what ever array of tools that are available
  - Blogs, wikis, Twitter, You Tube, Facebook, etc.
- Making social media tools available to users in ways they find it easiest and best to use
- Continuously prototyping and experimenting to build the best configuration and be open to change!

What Social Media Can Do for an Integration?

- Develops a dynamic network of users for internal and external conversations
- Enables participation from the user's point of view on any subject, from any where, at any time
- Speeds and transforms integrations by accessing critical and intimate knowledge and experience
- Provides real time feedback loops for all integration issues to facilitate resolution
- Makes everyone an active participant in the integration

Take the Time to Do It Well

- Social media tools are not a quick fix
- It takes time for people to talk meaningfully about issues that would be relevant to the new organization
- Bringing social media in a rushed way can alienate people who are not well integrated into the new firm

Steps to Using Social Media Successfully in an Integration

- Build a supporting culture
- Incrementing will get you there
- Find the "right" leaders
  - Look for people already working in this way
  - Identify early adopters and people "feeling enough pain" to want to try something new

Begin the Conversation

- Ask good questions
  - Set up the conversations that need to take place
- Engage Different Populations in the Way They Need
- The Biggest Risk - Not Taking People Seriously

Simple, But Not Simple

- Involve all of the tribes
- Leave room for messiness
- Keep the social media organization simple

Shape Your Shoes as You Wear Them

- Be open to experimenting
  - You won't know what you need until some way down the road
- Don't focus on a "killer app" – things change too fast
- Think in terms of "ecology"
  - Have a variety of tools and a range of options that are relatively low cost, enabling you to migrate without too much pain

People Will Make This Happen

- People have to see this as a pathway to get somewhere
  - They need to a passion for it, with commitment and energy
  - They have to see it as a vehicle for getting somewhere in their lives
- This is about a big shift in how people work and perceive their organizations - not just another system that people need to learn

It Costs a Lot Less Than You Think

- The technology can be relatively off the shelf and customized as needed, with a degree of local expertise.
- The core group can be three or four people who guide and develop the initiative
- In real terms, it would take a fair amount of people's time and energy, but in terms of dedicated jobs it is very manageable
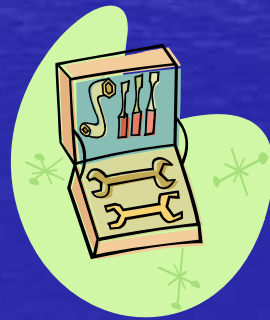
Confidentiality and Security

- To some extent centralized security is doomed to fail because it constrains things too much or does not keep up with the speed of changing technology
- The ability of users to be in control of what they share with others will be more important but people do need to be educated as to the sensitivity of the data
- Give people the tools to manage their own security but spend the time explaining to them what is risky and how to avoid that risk

What is the Measure of Success?

- The key measure is: Making something better or doing something that couldn't have been done otherwise happen

- There is great room for unprecedented gain when every individual can readily contribute their knowledge, experience and effort to the building the new enterprise

9 Elements of a Social Media Strategy

Create &
Integrate
Measures
for Success

Work with
Senior Team
to Achieve
Buy In

Monitor Process
Provide Feedback
& Guidance

Appraising
Needs &
Capabilities

Develop Plans
For Rollout

Map Out
Goals, Vision
& Strategy

Training of
Trainers

Select & Configure
Social Media
Technologies

Assist with
Communications
& Training
Materials

To Start Your Social Media Integration Program

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