



WHITE PAPER

# Social Media In Technology

A Unified Strategy for Success

Hootsuite™

# Social Media In Technology

## A Unified Strategy for Success

Technology companies pride themselves on being early adopters of the newest portals in the digital marketplace, and this openness extends to social media usage. Different departments across the organization are using social media to keep a pulse on customer, competitor, industry and community insights and trends. Too often though, technology organizations have the tendency of keeping their social media strategies siloed, isolating communication and engagement within one single function or department among many. In order to deliver key business goals in the digital era, all departments throughout an enterprise should work together to employ social media, both for internal analysis and external communication by means of a unified social media strategy.

When technology companies are able to access the social media marketplace with a unified social media strategy, they are in a better position to track ROI, increase customer satisfaction, hire better quality employees, generate more sales leads and secure brand assets.

## A Unified Social Media Strategy

Whether your core social team rolls up under Marketing, Communications, IT or reports directly to the CEO, access to social media should be a resource that serves the entire organization. Without a cross-functional approach to social media implementation in your organization, you will miss countless opportunities to engage with your customers, distribute branded content, and outpace your competition. Being immersed in the technology world of immediacy and action makes your company perfectly poised to adopt and benefit from a unified social media strategy.

## Social Media Success Across Departments

Each department within a technology organization has a different relationship with social media, and each can capitalize on social media's unique benefits. Here is an overview of the top challenges and opportunities that face each department as they integrate with a technology company's social media strategy:

### Marketing

Marketing's relationship to social media seems obvious: social media can be a channel for market research, to amplify campaign messaging, and to engage directly with a customer. However, as organizations empower more of their workers to participate, ensuring consistent branding and messaging becomes a key issue.

Branding is intrinsic with social business: the voice of the enterprise that is generated through posts, forums and tweets gives the audience much clearer insight to the company than the carefully selected logo. Social media gives your business a personality, and tests that personality against your own clients. How does your brand sentiment perform when it is an active, engaging presence? How does that sentiment translate to generate revenue and client satisfaction? Because the potential reach of social media is so great, proper training and the ability to manage your social media in accordance with your team structure is essential.

B2B Technology companies experience notoriously long sales cycles. When you track your social efforts and tie ROI to specific posts, you are in a position to identify micro interactions on a macro scale of success. Unlike B2C organizations that can easily track conversion by click-through, B2B organizations need to focus on building meaningful relationships with prospects. Tracking such specific social information not only gives you insight into successful semantics, it reveals who in your organization is doing a great job of reaching out

---

and relating to prospects at any lead qualification stage. The analytical tools provided by a social relationship platform address this ROI need with real-time and aggregated feedback tools to measure every social media interaction.

IBM is a great example of an early social media adopter who learned to transform social media messaging into meaningful relationships. Howard Pyle, VP of Digital Strategy at IBM, stresses that social media has been part of IBM's culture "from the ground up." When Pyle discusses his company's pioneering involvement in social media, he mentions the team effort intrinsic to its success: "Social media is evolving from just collaboration and connections to the insight organizations can gain from these activities and the power that potential affords." By producing training materials, launching social media hubs, live-blogging events, reaching out to connect with experts, IBM has captured 14 percent of the voice happening on social media.

**"Marketo takes advantage of Twitter's targeting capabilities to reach potential buyers. In the same way that content is mapped, Marketo maps their tweets to the appropriate audience. An example is when we released an eBook about email marketing and used Twitter targeting capabilities to identify email marketing experts and their followers, resulting in a higher number of targeted prospects."**

*Carra Manahan  
Marketing Programs Specialist, Marketo*

"The shift to embracing social is no longer about just blogs, wikis and tweets. Now, social concepts are fundamental to business transformation and to collaborating with employees, partners and clients more effectively," says Howard Pyle, VP of Digital Strategy at IBM.

### **Customer Service**

Today's customers expect to move between different physical and digital mediums without having to repeat themselves, backtrack, or wait for companies to catch up. As an enterprise scales up its presence on the social web the number of ways for customers to interact with their brand will only increase.

The customer service management team is likely to feel the pressure of some very practical needs: to increase customer satisfaction, decrease overall response time, and decrease the percentage of lost and incomplete orders. Social media empowers customer service teams to proactively find unhappy or unsatisfied customers through searching hashtags, brand mentions, or relevant keywords, in order to respond to glitches, issues, and queries.

However, it is important for teams located across the world to effectively manage customer relations from a single platform. This increases internal collaboration, assignment to the most relevant department or team for responding, and the ability to engage in multiple languages. Once social media is integrated as a real-time channel for responding to individuals, its cost-effectiveness compared to a ticket-based help desk becomes obvious. Also, customers enjoy the benefit of having their needs addressed in a way that feels personal and attentive.

Texas Instruments is a great example of a technology company that is effectively using their social communities to increase customer satisfaction and decrease call volume. They established a forum in which customer questions could get answered by both internal employees and external members of their social communities. About half the answers come from inside the company, and about half from knowledgeable customers who are able to answer each others' questions. This creates a strong community where customers are turning to their peers for answers, with the benefit of the customer service team having full visibility of the forum.

### **IT**

The IT department plays a large role of deploying and implementing social media, as well as the set up and maintenance of organization-wide solutions. Technology companies are likely to be early adopters of social relationship platforms, therefore it is especially important to make sure that these platforms are scalable and easily implemented. As large organizations activate more teams, departments and regions on social media, the IT department must have visibility in order to understand the increasingly complex security challenges that large companies face.

In recent years, there have been several high-profile social media hijacking that have resulted in

---

damaging brand reputation and loss of customer confidence. Issues such as securing the company's publishing environment and social profiles need to be addressed and continually monitored. It is also important for companies to conduct a social media asset audit to identify unauthorized and fraudulent accounts. By adopting a comprehensive solution for social relationship management, complete with risk management, organizations can reap the rewards of enterprise-scale social communication without overwhelming security professionals or putting your brand at risk.

**“Nearly two-thirds of security and risk professionals have no social media policy in place or if they do, they lack tools to sufficiently enforce and support the policy.”**

Forrester

*“Manage The Risks Of Social Media”, 2012*

The next frontier in social media is already emerging — mobile. According to research by Unisys, mobile employees “are more likely to define the new rules of customer engagement.” These employees are using consumer applications to interact with customers and partners — which puts them in a good position to better understand their clients, but in a risky position when it comes to security and brand-guidelines. A centralized social relationship platform with a mobile application mitigates your employees’ need to engage with prospects outside office hours, and simplifies your IT team’s stringent security. This mobile trend creates an additional security risk, and requires IT’s expertise in establishing secure social media usage and governance policies.

### **Sales**

Technology organizations are increasingly experiencing the benefits of using social media to close deals faster. According to McKinsey & Dachis Group, organizations that use social media as part of their global sales process show a 10% increase in revenue.

The need for social selling stems from a fundamental shift in the way people buy goods and services in an online world. Social media has allowed buyers to become better informed and better connected. This change in the buying process requires a strategic response from sales organizations. Success now

depends on reaching buyers at the right times, while knowing more about them and their needs than they know about you and your product.

A great opportunity for B2B sales teams is the visibility of buying signals across social media channels. Potential customers are generating expressions of purchase intent and indications that a company is in a position to buy in real-time on Twitter, LinkedIn Groups, and other social networks, as well as blogs and forums. Sales representatives that are active on social media have the opportunity to pro-actively find these buying signals and begin a conversation with the prospect when they are actively looking to buy, which has the potential to significantly decrease the length of the sales cycle. A social relationship platform that consolidates social networks into one dashboard and provides comprehensive keyword searches and geographic targeting is a necessary tool to effectively find buying signals.

Being seen as an industry leader is a key way to establish credibility and trust from prospects. In the digital era of social media profiles, your LinkedIn and Twitter profiles are your first impressions. Having knowledge, experience and interest in your industry can drastically influence whether a prospect will respond to your outreach. Your profile also acts as an outlet for the industry news you care about. Publishing industry updates and trends offers prospective clients a view into your areas of knowledge. Your comments corroborate that confidence. The most mature organizations have seen social evolve the relationships between the sales and marketing team to one that collaborates on and has an in-depth understanding of the kind of content that resonates with prospective buyers. Receiving high quality content from your marketing department allows your sales team to publish targeted, quality content that builds credibility and increases the opportunity to engage with prospects.

### **Human Resources**

The use of social media in HR has increased dramatically over the past few years. According to a 2011 Society for HR Management (SHRM) poll, 56% of organizations polled said they were using social media for recruiting as opposed to only 34% in 2008. Social media has allowed remove HR teams to hire better quality candidates, faster. This is based on 3 key factors: broader and targeted reach of job postings, continuous communication with the talent pool and proactive searches using social networks.

---

Industry leading companies, such as Accenture, expect to conduct up to 40% of hiring directly through LinkedIn and Twitter. In addition to attracting higher quality candidates, using social media as a recruitment tool enables a HR team to reduce job board and recruiting agency spend. According to Gartner, the world's leading technology research and advisory company, social recruitment leads to cost reductions of at least 30%.

“Social recruitment is the ultimate levelling of the playing field. It allows small companies and large companies alike to go head to head on employer brand despite budget differences. Some of the best employer brands are small companies with fantastic social media brand ambassadors.”

*Ambrosia Humphrey  
VP of Talent at Hootsuite*

### Technology and Social Media

Businesses in every industry need to integrate social media throughout their entire enterprise, but as early adopters of digital solutions, technology companies have a unique ability to drive their business goals through a unified social media strategy. Social media provides different value to each department in your company. However, a consolidated approach to social not only reveals customer needs and personas, it gives your different departments a new way of understanding each other and how they all contribute to company success. Long-time players, like IBM and Texas Instruments, attribute significant gains to their social media strategies, but we must also recognize that it is people co-operating and teams working together that carry out those successes. In the digital era, the most successful technology companies will not only be on the cutting edge of product, they will be the ones who use social media as a part of their overall business strategy.

### Sources

- <http://itknowledgeexchange.techtarget.com/itanswers/>
- <http://www.ere.net/2012/10/24/how-linkedin-is-eating-the-recruitment-industry/>
- <http://www.bersin.com/News/Content.aspx?id=14998>
- <http://www.bizjournals.com/triangle/blog/socialmadness/2013/04/how-ibm-uses-social-media-to-sell.html?page=all>
- <http://www.slideshare.net/TiffanyWinman/ibm-social-media-marketing-12330030>
- <http://public.dhe.ibm.com/common/ssi/ecm/en/gbd03109usen/GBD03109USEN.PDF>
- <http://www.businessinsider.com.au/best-22-tech-companies-to-work-for-2013-12#no-22-salesforcecom-knows-how-to-work-hard-play-hard-1>
- <http://www.socialmedia.org/blog/live-from-blogwell/texas-instruments-amplify-your-sales-teams-with-communities-live-from-blogwell/>
- <http://www.convinceandconvert.com/social-pros-podcast/social-media-lessons-from-the-open-source-movement/>
- <http://www.bizjournals.com/triangle/blog/socialmadness/2013/04/red-hat-we-use-social-media-to-listen.html?page=all>

# About Hootsuite Enterprise

Partner with Hootsuite to accelerate your social transformation



Hootsuite Enterprise empowers organizations to execute business strategies for the social media era. As the world's most widely used social relationship platform, Hootsuite Enterprise enables global businesses to scale social media activities across multiple teams, departments, and business units. Our versatile platform supports a thriving ecosystem of technology integrations, allowing businesses to extend social media into existing systems and programs.

We help organizations create deeper relationships with customers and draw meaningful insights from social media data. Innovating since day one, we continue to help businesses pioneer the social media landscape and accelerate their success through education and professional services.

Request a custom demo today by visiting [enterprise.Hootsuite.com](http://enterprise.Hootsuite.com)

## Trusted by 744 of the Fortune 1000

