Foreword

Social media has indeed become a facet of life, the tools of which have become widely used, thereby reducing the costs associated with maintaining lines of communication and connections between and among stakeholder groups. Social media has been described as inherently different from other types of media given the characteristics of the social networks so engaged. One study has suggested that social media contributes to the “self-developing” and “self-awareness” dynamic which creates opportunities for interconnectivity and interaction which can be beyond the control of an organization. Certainly, social media is associated with a specific set of management and interaction principles, the analysis of which is associated with its own metrics. The distinct nature of social media as an agent of information acquisition and dissemination makes it difficult to apply established principles of traditional communication. Consequently, a new cadre of insights is required to determine the impact of the application of social media to any given situation. Competently navigating the platforms have become somewhat of a challenge for those organizations which are less adept to technology. Actually, the increased use of social media as a formally established mode of communication is no doubt a by-product of globalization. The pace at which information is obtained and disseminated today is phenomenal providing an excellent platform for fostering an entrepreneurial dynamic that is unlike any other that has been experienced in the past. Such platforms though, do pose threats to traditional businesses. The need for organizations to include social media as part of their communications and marketing strategies is no longer contested, with an increase in the application of the same by both the public and private sector. To date, social media has been used, successfully to support organizational knowledge management, work flow operations, collaborative work projects and stakeholder management. An imperative at this stage of modern technological development is to have a clearer understanding of the strategies in social platform adoption, measuring their rate of return and identifying the key success factors associated with its use and implications of the non-integration of the same into the business operations. Further, consider that different contexts of social media applications warrant differing approaches to their integration. In the first instance the strategic, in terms of potential and actual, role of social must be carefully assimilated, followed by a careful consideration of the best modality of integration and application of social media to the various opportunities and challenges identified. From this perspective, this book provides a collection of discussions which will prove to be an invaluable resource addressing challenges and highlighting best practices across a spectrum of industries: from journalism to creative industries, information technology and education. Indeed, via the in-depth discussions pitched on the wide range of issues associated with the application of social media at the organizational level, this book creates a rich account of the possibilities for business survival and development in a globalized world. It provides some details as to innovative applications of the same and the impact of such experiments. Indeed, it is
recognized that the complexity of the social media platform offerings and the open channel nature of the stakeholder-firm communication in an ever globalizing world presents increasing challenges to firms. In this type of environment, firms must be weary that non-response can contribute to its marginalization in the market place. This book helps uncover the specific strategies for successful applications of social media for firm growth and expansion opportunities; as well as setting the foundation for a rich future research agenda on the topic.

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