Chapter 81
Social Business: A Way to Promote Organizational Transformation

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ABSTRACT

Information systems and technologies (IST) are the essence of up-to-date organizations, and changes in this field are occurring at an uncontrollable pace, interrupting traditional business models and forcing organizations to implement new models of business. Social media represent a subset of these technologies which contribute to organizational transformation. However, by itself, the adoption of social media does not imply such a transformation; changes in the organization’s culture and behaviour are also needed. The use of IST in an appropriate and integrated way with the organization’s processes will depend on an individual and collective effort. For organizations to take advantages of these technologies within the context of Social Business, a comprehension exercise is required in how to demonstrate their usefulness. To this end, this paper will provide a comprehensive view of a new context of labour faced by traditional organizations i.e. social business supported by mobile IST – mobile_Create, Share, Document and Training (m_CSDT) – in order to improve the well-being of these organizations through the collective intelligence and agility dimensions.

INTRODUCTION

It is widely acknowledged that organizations have suffered a large evolution at the social, economic and technological levels, with particular predominance in the last 10 years, where the traditional barriers of transferring information and knowledge have been progressively eliminated. This evolution allowed the elimination of silos, the breaking down of hierarchies, the connection of internal and external stakehold-
ers and the empowering of employees (Berkman, 2014). According to Bear (2015), Social Business has contributed to this end, and has proved its value across nearly every business function, from marketing and commerce, to product development and human resources, to internal collaboration and intelligence.

Social Business (Yunus, 2007; IBM, 2013; Bear, 2015) can be defined as the ability of an organization to share information, produce knowledge collaboratively, manage knowledge, eliminate communication and sharing barriers, accelerate business processes, approaching the business partners, namely suppliers and customers, and create innovative products, services and business models. It is thus essential that such products, services and models are created and properly documented, managed and shared.

Information systems and technologies (IST) are the essence of up-to-date organizations, and changes in this field are occurring at an uncontrollable pace, interrupting traditional business models and forcing organizations to implement new models of business. These changes need to be accompanied by new modeling methods that, for instance, drive the evolutionary changes of requirements, as argued by Gustas and Gustiene (2012). A change of paradigm in what comes to the use of IST in the day-to-day life of every citizen, by itself, does not sustain such a transformation; it is also necessary a change of culture and behavior. On the one hand, the use of IST in an appropriate and integrated way with the organization’s processes will depend on an individual and collective effort, which may be called “collective leadership” (Friedrich et al., 2009; Paunova, 2015). On the other hand, the younger generation, accustomed to sharing, often through mobile devices, personal information on Facebook, Twitter, among others, enters the job market looking for similar tools. These new “social tools” allow the production, sharing and management of information and knowledge within the organization between peers and other stakeholders, allowing the barriers elimination of the communication and sharing.

Therefore, we may infer that Social Business is much more than just collaboration and sharing, since the IST that are currently available allow the organizations’ processes to be more dynamic, more “social”.

Following these developments, and according to the European Commission report “A Roadmap for Advanced Cloud Technologies H2020 under”, the environment of IST (market research, industry, education, training, etc.) is undergoing constant changes. These changes originate, typically from the conflict between the technical restrictions and the “new” needs experienced by users. Thus, it is necessary to identify the major changes that can be expected in the next years and can, or will, affect the environment of IST. It is expected, for example, storage for all and the internet of and for things (World Economic Forum, 2015).

The growth of social media is already happening at a tremendous rhythm (Schultz, et al., 2015). The arrival and development of mobile internet applications has set to double the intensity of social media use (Gulbahar, and Yildirim, 2015).

The arrival of mobile internet has fully democratized the World Wide Web. Yesterday’s non-internet users now only need a smartphone and a location with free wifi access to go online. In the past, it was needed a workplace, a computer and an internet subscription, which was too expensive for many people. This barrier has now, however, disappeared. As discussed in Van Belleghem (2012), the situation in the United States proves this beyond doubt. The highest smartphone penetration levels are to be found in the poorer Hispanic and Asiatic sections of the community. In 2011, the research company Nielsen found that in the traditionally more affluent white community only 27% had a smartphone. These figures are the reverse of what would be rationally expected, and they mean that all target groups in all social classes will soon be approachable on a large scale via social media.

The combination of internal and external conversations is well suited to take advantage of the changes ushered by mobile internet. If the company staff makes great use of online media, they will be ready
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