

# Leveraging the Power of Social Networking

## to Drive Performance

Social media is emerging as the next frontier of innovative communication. Not since the dawn of the “World Wide Web” have we seen a communication medium that can deliver such a unique employee and community experience. And savvy companies are taking notice. What’s more, they’re quickly channeling the wisdom and energy of social media into smart business applications.

At its core, social media promotes communication among individuals, organizations and their employees, and employee networks. What’s unique about social media in a corporate setting? Employees are both the generators and receivers of information. That’s why using social media for business requires a well-designed plan that harnesses the immediacy and creativity of the medium and balances the business opportunity.

What are the opportunities? Supported by a well-thought-out strategy, clear messaging and intent, using social media can effectively help organizations:

- Make the workplace more engaging by leveraging how people naturally collaborate and communicate
- Quickly tap into the wisdom and knowledge of employee communities
- Promote an informal and self-sustaining learning culture
- Enable employees to build broad global networks
- Drive community and employee peer support to encourage financial and physical health
- Shape, develop and confirm messages related to brands, new products and services
- Reach disparate stakeholders — especially those who don’t typically have a voice through conventional channels

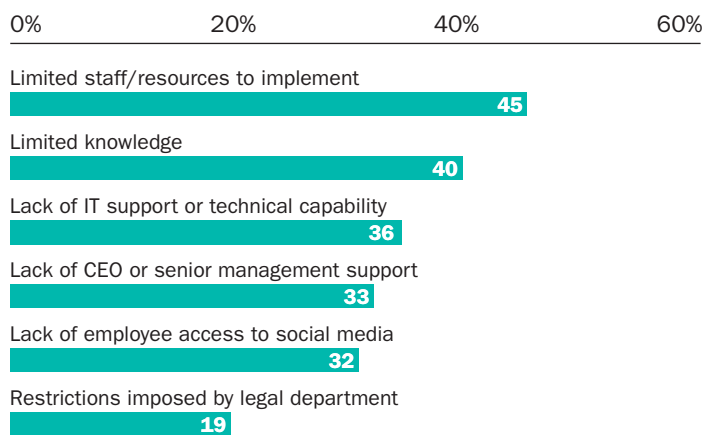
Since issues differ for each company and culture, we help you identify and evaluate the tools and techniques you will need to achieve your social media goals. We can also help you build a credible business case for social media in your organization and develop an innovative communication plan that spans from strategy and implementation to measurement and modification.

### Overcoming Potential Barriers and Misconceptions

As our research and client experience confirm, the most common obstacles to using social media are a lack of resources and knowledge (see figure). Companies can overcome some of these barriers by leveraging existing resources and by tapping into the energy and expertise of employees who are well versed in this medium and eager to help.

Yet another perceived obstacle for some organizations is that implementing social media will open the door to public relations risks and a host of other online

**Figure. Barriers to Social Media**

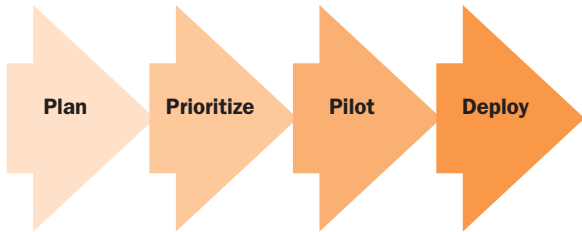


Source: 2009/2010 Communication ROI Study Report: Capitalizing on Effective Communication

issues. The good news is that your organization's code of employee conduct most likely includes many of the critical social media policy components and addresses the majority of situations that arise online. As employers well know, employees tend to take greater responsibility for their actions when they're given the right tools, education and guidance. On the other hand, if your organization doesn't have social media guidance in place, there's a good chance employees will adopt their own — a risk most organizations are not willing to take.

## Let's Get Started

Implementing social media requires minimal start-up costs. And the tools easily lend themselves to pilot projects. To get started, we recommend a four-step method: plan, prioritize, pilot, deploy. We can help you choose pilot groups, harness your learning and quickly move to production.



## ROI: Effective Employee Communication Drives Engagement

According to a recent Towers Watson Communication ROI Study report, effective employee communication is a leading indicator of financial performance and a driver of employee engagement. Companies that are highly effective communicators had 47% higher total returns to shareholders over the last five years than firms that are the least effective communicators. And in times of change, effective communicators use social media and other time-tested tools to engage an increasingly diverse and dispersed workforce. In fact, highly effective communicators are making greater use of social media than their less effective peers.

To learn more about how to leverage social media in your organization, please call us. We're eager to help.

### Contact us and learn more:

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## About Towers Watson

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