

Assessing the Relationship between Social Networks and Organisational Development

Presented at the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation HR4ICT Forum 2013, Johannesburg, RSA

Date: 27th November 2013

by

Halima Letamo



Definitions

Organizational Development (OD) is defined as a planned effort to increase productivity and performance of the organization. OD is a planned, organization-wide process to change an organization and increase effectiveness and capabilities. It is intended to change the beliefs, attitudes, values, and structure of organization so that they can better adapt to new technologies and environmental changes (Al-Qirim.N, Mavridis.N, Albalooshi.N)

Social Network Sites (SNS) are defined as web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system (Boyd D.M & Ellison N.B, 2013)

Collaboration and knowledge sharing that online Social Networks platform creates; facilitates communications among different groups within organizations which in turn contributes organizational development, i.e. increasing the productivity and performance of the organization. (Al-Qirim.N, Mavridis.N, Albalooshi.N)



concepts

Social Networking vs Social Network Sites

Reasons for the use of Networks vs Networking

“Networking” emphasizes relationship initiation, often between strangers. While networking is possible on these sites, it is not the primary practice on many of them

Individuals who join the sites primarily communicate and link with people who are already a part of their extended social network.

So the primary role of the sites is to articulate already existing networks, and not to initiate relationships hence the use of “Networks” instead of “Networking”

Evolution of SNS's

- ❑ Began with systems dedicated to sharing and exchange of simple messages on a network (BBS in the 70's)
- ❑ Then moved to internet discussion systems (USENET in the 1980's) No central server or administrator
- ❑ Systems that gave users freedom to personalise their online experience and interact with others (CeoCities, theGlobe.com 1990's) as well as Sixdegrees.com based on web of contacts model (everyone is six steps from the next person)
- ❑ The 2000's saw systems that were build around connecting people with common interests like Friendster, Facebook, Twitter, Myspace

Evolution of SNS's: Implications for OD



2000's Connecting people with similar Interests

Able to meet other people with similar interests and collaborate.

Brand hacking and leakage of confidential information

90's Personalisation of online experience

Employees are able to create content and generate knowledge, search and share information online

Distraction (1 in 33 employees build profiles during working hours)

80's internet discussion systems

Business can use corporate software and intranets to create knowledge communities

Productivity losses due to time spent on intranets

70's exchange simple msgs

SNS can be used for Urgent messaging

Doubts about Authenticity of information

SNS's and Aspects of OD

Sales –	generate leads and track customers
Operations and distribution –	Forecast supply chains
Research and Development –	Brainstorm product ideas
Marketing –	search engine optimisation, making it easier for engines to find company sites and products

Networking tool now a business tool

1. Big companies have dedicated command centres for real time monitoring and analysis tracking tweets, likes and dislikes, customer sentiments
2. Organisations eager to make sense of social data engage in real time analysis and uses the data to inform business decisions.
3. Expect to see increase in the use of social media as analytical tools continue to improve and showcase ROI of social investments

SNS's and Aspects of OD

1. Performance Management
2. Talent Management
3. Change Management
4. Knowledge Management and Training

SNS's and Aspects of OD

1. Performance Management – process that ensures that business goals are set and are consistently being met in an effective and efficient manner

Positive Impact

- Allows for continuous engagement on goals through discussion forums
- Monitoring and evaluating performance
- Peer Reviews
- Every part of the business in constant collaboration and customers can be part of the conversations
- Barriers within traditional management structures are broken by discussion forums

Negative Impact

- Output can be affected due to distractions emanating from spending too much time on social discussions as opposed to professional conversations
- Even when the intent is to engage on meaningful conversations, one cannot avoid distractions from relentless advertising on the sites

SNS's and Aspects of OD

2. Talent Management- integrated process of ensuring that an organisation has a continuous supply of highly productive individuals

- Builds an image to attract the best
- Ensures new hires are immediately productive
- Helps to retain the best, facilitates continuous movement of talent to where it can have the most impact

Positive Impacts

- New employees are on-boarded faster than normal
- Enables managers to pick other employee competencies that may not be exhibited by employees executing their normal duties
- External opportunities for employees
- Opportunities to find other talent that sits outside the organisation

Negative Impacts

- Makes retention harder as other employers are able to locate employees easily
- Some discussions from misinformed persons could mislead employees
- Social media could be used to damage the brand

SNS's and Aspects of OD

3. Change Management – Systematic approach to dealing with change, most often using a framework to manage the effect of new processes, changes in organisational structures or culture

Requires agreement, tolerance, strong leadership, concrete plans and ownership

Positive Impacts

- Provides platforms to build acceptance for change and create ownership
- Real-time communication and centralised information sharing
- Allows employees to form virtual work groups and exchange ideas on centralised message boards
- Access to unprecedented amounts of information on client behaviour and preferences

Negative Impacts

- Tendency to form into groups with people sharing the same opinion
- Possibility to strengthen negative perceptions about the change if not managed properly
- Beliefs and opinions are firmly entrenched
- People are less tolerant than before as they interact mostly with people with similar views and kick out those with different views out of the online social group

SNS's and Aspects of OD

4. Knowledge Management and Training - process of consciously gathering, organising, analysing and sharing knowledge

It involves data mining and operation to push information to users, analysis of relationships between content, people, topics, and activity and produce knowledge maps or dashboards

Positive Impacts

- Data base of raw employee views
- Enables the push strategy to knowledge management to thrive
- Enables exchange of information fostering a learning environment
- Widens knowledge exchange networks
- Removes the costs of time, money and geographical locations associated with training

Negative Impacts

- Creates an opportunity for violation of employee privacy
- Fear to lose Intellectual property rights can compromise quality of information shared on SN
- Authentication of learner identity could be a challenge

What Should Managers Do

While research shows how online media could assist in increasing collaboration and knowledge sharing within organizations leading to better organizational performance, the concept of “networks” requires that leaders

Recognise that;

Being social is fundamental to the nature of human beings. We want to use whatever channels we have to communicate, whether its smoke signals or the net. (Kim of Dachis Group)

WWW is a social creation rather than a technical one (Prof Tim Berners-Lee Creator of WWW)

are **aware of**;

Existing networks between Colleagues

Social Structures in Social Networks

Strategies to Evaluate Impact on Organisational Performance and Survival

And are **able to**:

Build personal contact to create trust

Foster existing relationships and keep in touch with existing personal networks

Assists wok practices to evolve side by side with technologies

And **note** that

Companies that do not get on the bandwagon in the next 3-5 years will have their pace set by someone else

THANK YOU

