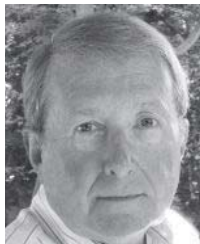


Your Social Wish List

Use networks to create services and share collective intelligence • BY JAY CROSS



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Social business is the flavor of the day in the C-suites of the Fortune 500.

Imagine a senior executive in your company returns from Thanksgiving weekend having read white papers from IBM that say social business is the next step in the overall evolution of business. Harvard Business Review, Forbes and Fast Company already told him brainpower has become the engine of innovation. He knows it's inevitable that businesses will construct networks that connect everyone in their ecosystems to co-create and deliver services that delight customers and share collective intelligence.

Social business is the flavor of the day in the C-suites of the Fortune 500. Front-running companies are installing social networks such as Chatter, Jive, Connections, Socialcast, Yammer, Socialtext, SharePoint, Ideo and HootSuite like there's no tomorrow.

That same executive secured a mandate from the executive committee to experiment with social networking in three areas of the company: international sales, manufacturing resource forecasting and learning and development.

You're a learning leader. You've been doing your own research on Enterprise 2.0 and learning networks. You appreciate that social business — connecting everyone in the organization in networks — makes sense. You've also sensed a groundswell in the learning and development community favoring social, self-directed pull learning.

You probably read a compelling argument recently that people in knowledge organizations learn three to four times as much from experience as from interaction with bosses, coaches and mentors. And they learn about twice as much from those conversations with others in classrooms and formal learning programs. You could deliver a much bigger bang for your training buck by greasing the skids to make experiential learning more systematic, coached and attractive.

The senior exec called you to his office and explained: "We're going to experiment to find out how in-house social networks might strengthen learning and development and a few other areas in the company. Several social network suite vendors have offered us incredibly deep discounts if we make

up our minds in the next two days. I need you to give me a one-page wish list of the capabilities you require from social software to make the most of social learning and carry out your vision of what we need to do."

What features would you need and why? For example, you might need mobile access. Half of America's workforce sometimes works away from the office. Smartphones have surpassed PCs for connecting to networks. More people tweet from their phones than from their computers. Without mobile capabilities, you could lose more than half of your audience.

Check your wish list against the eight features on ours.

Profiles: To locate and contact people with the right skills and background. The profile should contain a photo, position, location, email address and expertise — tagged so it's searchable. IBM's Blue Pages profiles include how to reach you — noting whether you're online now — reporting chain such as the boss and boss' boss, links to your blog and bookmarks, people in your network, links to documents you frequently share and members of your network.

Activity stream: To monitor the organizational pulse in real time, sharing what you're doing, being referred to useful information, asking for help, accelerating the flow of news and information, and keeping up with change.

Wikis: To write collaboratively, eliminating multiple versions of documents and email, keeping information out in the open, eliminating unnecessary email, and sharing responsibility for updates and error correction.

Virtual meetings: To make it easy to meet online. The minimum feature set includes a shared screen, shared white board, text chat, video of participants and ability to record. Bonus features: persistent meeting room — your office online — and avatars.

Blogs: To narrate work, maintain your digital reputation, record accomplishments, document expert knowledge and show people what you're up to so they can help.

Bookmarks: To facilitate searching for links to information, discovering what sources other people are following and tracking down experts.

Social network: For online conversation, connecting with people and all of the above functions.

Search: For locating needles in haystacks. [CLO](#)