

Social Media – Taking Diversity and Inclusion Further – Part 1

Using Social Media to Develop Your Employee Resource Group (ERG)

Overview

Diversity and inclusion practitioners are always looking for new ways to engage employees and drive business performance. Social media, and the Web 2.0 experience, has created multiple new ways of communicating with employees, clients and business partners. Innovative companies realize one-way speeches to employees and customers are not as effective. Today, progressive leaders realize the need for interaction, collaboration, and discussion – it's a two-way street. At JBC, we believe that social media can greatly increase the impact of a diversity initiative by: including more employees, engaging employees in new ways, and developing employees in their careers.

Employees have often connected with each other in static, unidirectional ways, through in-person meetings, emails, and intranet websites. Social media brings interconnectivity to a whole new level because it is multi-dimensional, and multi-directional. Further, it provides a way for employees to give instant feedback to management and to each other. Facebook and Twitter are only a piece of an effective social media strategy.

This report is a guide to applying social media to Diversity and Inclusion Employee Resource Groups (ERGs). It provides two things:

- Strategy** Why diversity practitioners need to use social media.
- Process** How to use social media in different ways throughout the entire life-cycle of ERG activities.

Social Media Strategy

What are the strategic benefits of using social media?

Social media...

- creates effective communities** and helps people communicate internally and externally - across the business. It shifts the focus from a one-directional speech to a dynamic conversation. For example, social media creates new opportunities for ERG development and programming as well as for diversity recruitment and ERG partnerships outside the business.
- increases speed and access to knowledge** across the business. The speed of conversation is faster than even before.
- provides direct, measureable and effective business impact** on initiative development.
- breaks silos between business areas.** With multiple modes of communication, various parts of a business (i.e. engineering, R&D, product services) can engage in conversations via social media – with employees and customers.

What is JBC?



JBC, a New York City-based **leadership and diversity consulting firm**, works with Fortune /Global 1000 clients to achieve organizational goals through **creative training, coaching, and innovation programs** for teams and individual leaders. The company supports the growth of cultural competency, strategic awareness, “brand” creation, and communication for global teams ... and the emerging leaders within them.

Our programs are **collaborative efforts**, harnessing our clients' collective wisdom, input, and involvement in both design and delivery. This is balanced with our thought leadership on **future leadership competencies, cutting-edge training techniques, and creative utilization of technology and social networking** in the service of collaboration.

Companies report measurable gains from using Web 2.0 technologies:

- **68%** report increased speed of access to knowledge
- **40%** report decreased travel costs
- **25%** report increased number of successful innovations for new products or services

•Source: McKinsey Global Survey Results – How companies are benefiting from Web 2.0. June, 2009

Important Tip: Stay Focused on Business Objectives

Remember to see beyond the shiny newest technologies and stay focused on business objectives. Link employee and community involvement efforts back to business metrics – not just social media metrics. Map goals to learning, culture change and active participation.

Overview of Social Media Technologies That Companies Use

Social Networking — Services that build an online community of people who share affinities, interests and/or activities. Most are web based and provide a variety of ways to interact, like: email, message posting, image/video sharing, and feedback polling. **Examples: Twitter; LinkedIn; Facebook.**



Video Sharing — Sharing videos online with a private access group or making them public in an online setting. **Examples: YouTube or in a Blog Post**



Blog — Self-published web log updated regularly with commentary. Blogs usually contain text, images, links to other web pages, and can contain embedded content such as audio or video.



Microblogging — shorter version of blogging with text updates, photos, videos, or audio clips published on the web. Microblogs may be submitted through: web, text, email, instant message or digital audio. Examples: Sending photos from phone to Facebook; Twitter, which limits users to make updates only 140 characters per post.



RSS — A syndicated list of all the updates that come from a web site. One example of a feed is the one within Facebook that shows you every time a friend makes an update.



Wikis — A knowledge management web site used in order to share information with a community. **Example: Wikipedia**



Podcasts — Downloadable audio and video content broadcasted in a series via a portal or engine such as a blog, RSS feed, or commerce site.



Rating — Choosing a value on a given scale of opinion to share viewpoints of a product, blog post, podcast, or any other item on a shared platform such as a social network or wiki. Online retailers such as Amazon employ a rating scale to get feedback from customers on not only their products, but also on the relative helpfulness of product reviews.



Tagging — the act of marking a post, photo, or other multimedia item. Tags can become searchable categories that help organize a larger amount of information, or simply identify important people, topics, or places included in an update. Facebook and Flickr are both sites that let you tag photos to identify people within the photos. Tags allow community interaction, and the ability to search for specifically relevant information such as location, affiliation, or relatively popular topics.



P2P — peer to peer, or person to person sharing. This is most often referred to when talking about a network of people sharing files with one another instead of relying on one central computer as a file server to distribute the information. In P2P, you rely on others to choose to share the files they have on their own computers.



Mashup — any digital media file which recombines and modifies existing digital works to create a fused, derivative work.



Stay Tuned for Social Media: Part 2 – Integrating Social Media into your ERG Development Strategy