



Putting Social to Work for Your Business

A Guide to Organizational Models for Scaling Social

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Individuals Own the Conversation

Governments, corporations and NGOs around the world face a serious trust deficit. Although high-profile institutions have weathered the storm of negative public opinion since the 2008 financial crisis, the 2012 Edelman Trust Barometer reveals that a tide of skepticism is sweeping through most of the world's biggest economies. At the same time, social networks are enabling consumers to connect and collaborate on a massive scale when making decisions.

People are wary of companies that do more telling than listening, and more likely to trust their peers than a CEO. Asked whose word they trusted when forming an opinion about a company, Edelman's respondents judged "people like themselves" nearly as credible as academics or experts. They put little stock in information from authority figures; the credibility of CEOs and government officials experienced the worst annual declines in Barometer history.¹ These results stem from multiple economic and cultural trends, and they vary by country, but it is clear that social media has given consumers new awareness of their market power.

Recognizing this shift, many businesses have embraced customer centricity as a core principle and have employed social media to make it a reality. According to IBM's Global CEO Survey, more than 70 percent of CEOs are seeking a better understanding of individual customer needs and improved responsiveness. They also believe social media utilization for customer engagement will increase by 256% over five years to become the second most common way to engage customers after face-to-face interactions.²

In 2009, author and management consultant Paul Greenberg provided a definition for the new customer-centric approach, which he termed Social Customer Relationship Management:

"... a philosophy and a business strategy, supported by a technology platform, business rules, workflow, processes and social characteristics, designed to engage the customer in a collaborative conversation in order to provide mutually beneficial value in a trusted and transparent business environment. It's the company's response to the customer's ownership of the conversation."³

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Instead of treating social networks like broadcast media, leading businesses are using them to engage customers as individuals. Engaged customers feel an authentic connection to companies that reach out to them, and are more likely to think of them when making a purchase. Even better, a business that delivers on value propositions can convert engaged customers into dedicated brand advocates.

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Anatomy of a Brand Advocate

- Invested in your brand's success
- Willing to defend your company
- Aligned with your core objectives

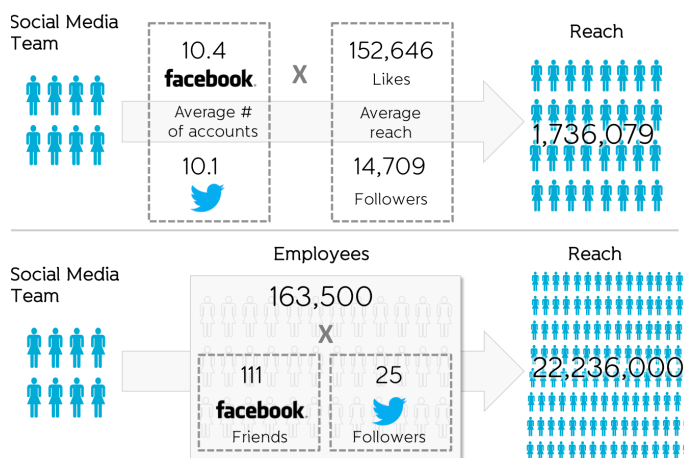
In social media, there is nothing more powerful than someone advocating for your brand. Advocates give their friends, families and colleagues trusted advice that is far more credible than any source of advertising. They defend a business against negative messaging in the countless small interactions that determine a brand's health. They volunteer ideas for product and service improvements. And they do it all for free.

It's no wonder, then, that just about everyone is looking for advocates. Companies are executing deliberate social media programs to find, activate and maintain these vital assets. Understandably, current engagement efforts are focused on making evangelists out of customers, widely considered the most authentic and valuable spokespeople. Influencers in the news media, academia and other fields are also cultivated. But while enterprises reach out to these external constituents, the best potential advocates hide in plain sight — their own employees.

Employee blogs and social media profiles allow workers to build personal brands online and form public records of expertise that also reflect well on their employer.

Employees Are Your Best Advocates

While not without its challenges, widespread employee advocacy is the surest, cheapest way to scale up a company's social media reach. Instead of achieving linear growth in customer advocacy through incremental investments in social media teams, an enterprise can magnify its reach at very little cost by activating a broad cross-section of its existing workforce. The following illustration compares the maximum achievable social audience of an average Fortune Global 100 company to the maximum achievable social audience of its employees.⁴



The aggregate figures do not represent “unique” followers because corporate accounts have overlapping audiences, and employees have a number of social contacts in common with other employees. But in the case of employees, this overlap, or “network density”, is less significant than common sense might suggest. Pew Internet found that on Facebook, “people’s friends lists are only modestly interconnected”, with a network density “low in comparison to studies of people’s overall personal networks”.⁵ Your employees’ Facebook networks aren’t echo chambers, but viral gateways.

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Each employee can be the first link in a long chain of intimate, person-to-person shares. By increasing the number of starting points for social sharing, a company greatly improves its chances of viral marketing success. Although many advertisers have sought the support of highly-connected “influentials” to initiate viral marketing campaigns, research indicates that the most likely path to virality is a “big seed” strategy. In this approach, viral ideas are seeded by a large selection of first-generation sharers, instead of a relative handful of highly-connected people.

Big-seed theory emerged from the computer simulations of sociologist Duncan Watts, but it has real-world evidence to back it up.⁶ A combined study of billions of page views by BuzzFeed and StumbleUpon found that “stories go viral when lots of people engage with their normal-sized circles to share content.”⁷ Marketing researcher Yuping Liu-Thompkins has also determined that when seeding content, “it is better to have a large number of easily influenced individuals than to have a few highly-connected hubs in a social network.”⁸

Don't Keep Your Thought Leaders Hidden

Follower and friend counts are only part of the story. When the impact of their social messaging is considered, employee advocates look like marketing powerhouses. The Edelman Trust Barometer reveals that 50% of the international public consider employees either extremely credible or very credible sources of information when forming opinions about a company. The numbers are even more impressive for specialized employees: 65% of respondents regarded “a technical expert within the company” as either extremely credible or very credible, just one percentage point less than an academic expert.⁹

Enterprises strengthen their brands enormously by activating these internal thought leaders on social media. Employee blogs and social media profiles allow workers to build personal brands online and form public records of expertise that also reflect well on their employer. Hewlett Packard, for example, has leveraged the vast knowledge base of its employees by encouraging them to share their thoughts about computing and other topics on personal blogs. These thought leaders aren't just executives, or project leaders, but people from all areas of the company.

It's not hard to see why workers of HP, a technology giant, would attract an audience, but is that the case for employees in a grocery store? Or a car dealership? Or a hair salon? In fact, these hypothetical workers probably know more about organic vegetables, anti-lock brakes, or shampoo, respectively, than any of their friends. One of the first questions we typically ask a new acquaintance is, “Where do you work?” The answer to that question greatly influences what topics of conversation we are likely to pursue with them. Social networks make those conversations visible to a wide audience and confirm the employee's knowledge.

Adopting these communication technologies for professional use is not a difficult transition for employees. Statistics show that people are embracing Twitter, for example, at the same rate personally as they are professionally.

Today's workers see social media as a basic way to communicate, so they don't miss a beat when companies introduce internal social tools like Yammer or HootSuite Conversations to help them collaborate and amplify external messaging on behalf of their brands. Corporate education programs can accelerate the workforce transition and turn typical employees into social media power users.

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Engaged Employees Engage Your Customers

A desire to see the company succeed is crucial for advocates, and this cannot be created by corporate mandate. Compulsory advocacy negates the entire point of bringing employees onto social media: creating a transparent and authentic business environment that resonates with customers.

So what motivates an employee to advocate on behalf of her company? The same factors that motivate her to do anything more than go through the daily motions at work. In other words, if she feels engaged in her work, she's far more likely to engage customers. In Germany, Gallup found that 81% of engaged workers are willing to provide positive recommendations of their employer's products and services, compared to 18% of actively disengaged workers.¹⁰

“To connect with the new generation of employees,” one CEO acknowledged, “we will need to change communication methods. We are the e-mail generation; they are the social network generation.”

The 2012 Global Workforce Study (GWS), conducted by Towers Watson, an HR consultancy, measured the extent of engagement in more than 32,000 workers in 29 countries. Employees are categorized as “highly engaged” in the GWS if they commit discretionary effort to achieving work goals, work in an environment that supports productivity in multiple ways, and feel energized by a work experience that promotes well-being. Disconcertingly, only 35% of respondents fit

this description. But this year's study, like previous editions of the GWS, indicates that employees want to be engaged. Generally, a lack of incentives is not the issue. Instead of relying exclusively on reward-oriented programs, companies can attract, motivate and retain talent by changing the texture of everyday work life:

*First... the drivers of sustainable engagement focus almost entirely on the culture and the relational aspects of the work experience. These include the nature, style and quality of organizational life... Second, the impact of these drivers is felt through thousands of interactions — positive and negative, large and small — that play out daily across an organization.*¹¹

If corporate leaders want a passionate, stimulated workforce, they should focus on the culture and technology that define how people interact within their enterprise.

Executives seem to be listening. IBM's worldwide survey of 1700 CEOs reveals that business leaders see customer centricity and employee engagement as integral aspects of the same transformative mission. According to the report's authors, CEOs now see technology primarily as an “enabler of collaboration and relationships”. Furthermore, they see a need for internal collaboration tools that their workers can relate to. “To connect with the new generation of employees,” one CEO acknowledged, “we will need to change communication methods. We are the e-mail generation; they are the social network generation.”¹²

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If CEOs take to social media, they can not only close the trust gap with customers, but also engage employees. A large majority of employee respondents to BRANDfog's 2012 CEO, Social Media & Leadership Survey believe that CEOs can use social media channels to build better connections with customers (89%) and employees (85%). Their visible leadership is critical to the success of social initiatives, whether customer-facing or internal.¹³

Social media use for internal collaboration engages employees and makes them feel like true stakeholders in the brand that management would like them to promote. Therefore, any strategy for employee advocacy on external networks should take into account how the psychological conditions for advocacy are created on internal networks. Internal networks also directly support external employee messaging. For example, collaborative tools such as Yammer and HootSuite Conversations amplify employees' reach and impact on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn.

This dovetailing of internal and external social tools is accelerating the creation of the "extended enterprise", a business with blurry organizational boundaries. Networking technologies not only bring employees closer to customers, but connect them to business contacts in the enterprise's extended value chain, including suppliers, vendors and agencies. In this light, the distinction between business-to-consumer and business-to-business marketing starts to recede, and employee advocacy looks a lot like internal branding. Organizational permeability presents challenges and opportunities that each enterprise has to weigh as it formulates a social strategy.

It's important to know where your business stands before you head down the path towards broad social adoption across your employee base. But regardless of your industry, your company will eventually fall behind if it doesn't formulate a plan for connecting customers with employees throughout the organization. Enterprises that keep social media on the periphery or silo social media activities within particular lines of business will miss out the compounding advantages that come with scale.

Most companies, however, have a long way to go in activating their employees as social advocates. The vast majority (81%) of executives surveyed by the Economist Intelligence Unit agree that social engagement has tangible benefits, but only 17% have responsibility well distributed throughout the organization.¹⁴ The good news for any executive who is just beginning to expand his or her company's social footprint is that two strategic models of social media adoption have emerged from the trials and tribulations of early adopters.

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How Companies are Scaling Up: Two Models for Broad Social Adoption

- **Empowerment: participation and reach**
- **Containment: security and control**

Early corporate ventures in social media typically began as organic experiments by separate teams in marketing, public relations or customer service.

Today's leading social businesses have moved beyond this experimentation phase toward holistic social media strategies that bring the activities of disparate social teams together, sometimes under the aegis of an enterprise-level Command Center. These integrations ensure that social media programs have direction and purpose, but they don't abrogate the need for broad social participation across the workforce. In fact, one of the key benefits of an enterprise-wide social strategy is that it enables greater advocacy by employees outside of dedicated social media teams.

The Empowerment and Containment models are two different approaches toward the same goal of bringing more employees into social media on behalf of the company. Each model makes a set of trade-offs between freedom and safety, initiative and supervision. Since they are enterprise-wide frameworks, both of them require the support of C-level leadership, and both of them have a place for centralized social media resources. In addition, both models depend on having educated employees who understand social media.

Empowerment

In an empowerment model, employees are encouraged to take initiative on social media, but they aren't left to go it alone. They're given the support they need

to achieve maximum impact. This support begins with the visible enthusiasm of executive leadership, who set the tone for widespread participation. It continues with the activities of social media managers and network administrators who maintain technical and procedural infrastructure.

The Five Foundations of Empowerment

1. Collaboration

There's simply no way to align an entire enterprise around a social strategy unless its people are able to share ideas. Employees need to be able to react to customer messaging, rally around opportunities for content sharing, and coordinate their efforts. They should also be able to collaborate at multiple levels, across the organization or within teams. The right technological platform lets employees and managers seamlessly pull ideas from outside the organization into their internal discussions, and push messaging out when the timing is right.

2. Content

Employee (and external) advocates need support from the marketing department and other official content sources within the organization. It's vital that advocates are aware of media-rich content for social sharing, and of official company positioning during a public relations incident. The enterprise needs to create efficient conduits for this material.

3. Localization

The platform should give employee advocates the ability to listen and speak at a local level. This humanizes their interactions and allows them to match content with context. With these tools, empowered employees can decide when and how to advocate on behalf of the brand, but still act in harmony with company-wide social initiatives.

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4. Culture

The best technology only empowers employees who actually feel comfortable and willing to contribute ideas. Therefore, corporate culture is an integral part of the Empowerment model. If a company doesn't have a work environment in which employees feel respected, the necessary cultural changes are likely going to be more difficult to achieve than any technological or procedural adjustments. However, if a nucleus of engaged employees does exist, and senior management is serious about developing the company's human capital, collaborative social tools can help spark cultural change and ultimately drive employee advocacy outside the enterprise.

5. Brand

For empowered employees to properly advocate a brand, they have to be able to express what differentiates it from the competition. Even the most gifted technical experts can be helpless when it comes to concisely explaining their company's key value proposition. Gallup found that only 41% of employees strongly agreed with the statement, "I know what my company stands for and what makes our brand(s) different from our competitors."¹⁵

Basic social media education in an Empowerment model needs to ensure that employees are all on the same page regarding the brand they're going to support. Even though they can be very credible advocates when they describe the company in their own words, their messaging should be rooted in common understanding. In an empowered social business, employees may collaborate to refine the brand, and even facilitate customer influence over the brand, but they should always know the brand.

Containment

Not all enterprises can afford to let employees speak freely about their work on external social media networks. Financial services and other regulated industries must ensure that employee messaging is compliant with the law, so they have created social strategies based on the Containment model. In this model, technological platforms and business procedures value security and control over participation. Still, employee participation can be scaled up over time if the right strategy is put in place. For companies with complicated legal considerations and sensitive data, Containment is the surest path to social media confidence.

Security is the foundation of Containment. This is provided by a social media management system that includes centralized control of corporate profiles, multilayered permissions, secure single sign in, and an encryption protocol such as https. Compliance might also necessitate automatic archiving of both internal and public social messaging.

The next layer of Containment is a clear policy that lays out the rules of engagement for all social media practitioners. This document is aligned with the company's guidelines for email, text messaging and all other communications with clients or the public. Because social media management is part of the company's overall security and compliance policies, the Chief Information Officer and Chief Risk Officer may be involved.

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Once solutions are in place, the enterprise can broaden its approach to social engagement, bringing more departments or local branches online. Formal social media training programs get new practitioners up to speed and centralized control of corporate profiles keeps messaging compliant and aligned with objectives. Continuous archiving of all incoming and outgoing messages, along with granular reporting and analytics, lets administrators see who's saying what.

Containment of external social messaging does not preclude internal collaboration. In fact, teams at large financial firms are using social tools to dramatically increase their productivity. Tom Poole, managing vice president, mobile and social media, at Capital One, told MIT Sloan Management Review that his team's use of Facebook private groups "promotes connection throughout the day." He's "optimistic we can make this scalable and keep security where it should be."¹⁶

Meanwhile, Canada's TD Bank Group is proving that financials can scale up collaborative tools to truly ambitious levels without compromising security. Its enterprise social network has more than 4,000 communities and thousands of blogs and wikis, so employees can easily find expert colleagues from anywhere in the 85,000-person corporation. District leaders can communicate naturally with their customer service teams without having to filter their messages through branch managers. All of this happens privately within a secure network that was mapped to fit TD's organization.¹⁷

Advocacy is Built on Authenticity

Employee advocacy on social media raises questions about the "proper" use of tools that are not even a decade old. Is it unseemly for someone to promote her employer on her Facebook page? If an employee advocates her company's brand on her Twitter profile, is she an official spokesperson? And what do companies do about employees who communicate offensive speech through the same personal profiles that they use to advocate?

Social media is a disruptive technology that's putting existing customs, laws, and business practices to the test. Certainly, it's breaking down the distinction between work and home life. But while the power of the Internet is unprecedented, today's conflation of the personal and professional is not. Businesses looking to broaden social media participation in the workforce are actually rejoining the historical mainstream; for most of human history, employees were deeply engaged with customers, in social relationships so intimate that they required no media whatsoever.

The good news is that employees and employers can both prosper in today's universal social setting. Year after year, the Global Workforce Study has identified work/life balance as a driver of engagement. Balance, however, does not mean segregation. If individuals need to act more professionally in social media, companies need to reciprocate by engaging their employees, as well as their customers. Above all, they must aspire to openness and authenticity. Since we all trust "people like ourselves", acting more like ourselves can only be good for business.

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How HootSuite Helps



Centralize Social Management

With a Social Team in place and strategy determined around your approach to social business, the next logical step is to consider a tool that allows you to centralize management and control of your social programs. Simply put, that's what we do. HootSuite provides sophisticated tools for desktop management and reporting on social activity.



Go Mobile

You can take your HootSuite Dashboard on the road with you. Perfect for professionals with huge frequent flier mile balances, HootSuite is optimized for iPhone, iPad, Android, Blackberry and Ketai platforms.



Partner with Top Social Networks

HootSuite is partnered with all of the top social networks and often we have a top-tier partnership. These relationships give us deep capabilities from analytics, engagement and publishing perspectives. We add new networks almost weekly.



Organize Teams

HootSuite Teams provides management on a large scale, but also offers a granular level of control suited to smaller teams. It's designed to mirror your organizational hierarchy and easy to scale, empowering growing teams to engage effectively while restricting full network control to managers, senior managers or executives.



Assign Tasks

HootSuite Message Assignments allows you to assign ownership of messaging within, and across teams. Administrators can view all assignments within a Social Team or Organization, depending on permissions level, in order take a top-line look at and monitor outgoing conversation.



Schedule Publishing

HootSuite Publisher lets you track how many messages are going out and on what subjects. You can monitor which audiences you are talking to and audit what time of day and in what regions around the world you are scheduling messaging.



Manage Permissions

Flexible permissions control allows you to manage what team members can access which social profiles. Changing permissions at any time to remain consistent with shifts in your business needs is simple and intuitive.



Secure your Social Assets

You never have to share passwords to your social networks with team members or contributors. You can build your team and scale your social offering without compromising security.

For Enterprise clients, our secure profiles function adds an extra level of security to prevent accidental publishing. Our Limited Permissions setting allows you to grant read-only permission to some employees to give your even greater control over your accounts.



Prepare Reports

Use Facebook Insights, Google Analytics, Google+ Pages Analytics, Twitter Profile Stats, our own custom Ow.ly Click Stats and more to create easy, drag and drop social analytics reports you can share not just with your own networks, but any HootSuite user.

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About HootSuite Enterprise

HootSuite Enterprise is built for business. With the most advanced tools and services available for security, collaboration, engagement and measurement of your social media strategy. Learn how this top tier plan can help you organize your social enterprise.

Request a custom demo today by visiting
hootsuite.com/enterprise

Top 10 reasons clients choose HootSuite:

1. Service

Highest Service Level Possible - Account Manager, Premier Technical Support, Phone Support, Prioritized Product Feedback.

2. Ease

Implementation is simple and efficient allowing for scalability and ease of use throughout the organization

3. Security

Exclusive Security Features to ensure control messaging and access.

4. Setup

Personalized Account Setup and Assistance to Launch Faster.

5. Analytics

Unlimited Analytics and Reports to analyze and optimize the performance of communications and users including exclusive Enterprise Analytics.

6. Education

Includes Online Education, Live Training and Premium Options.

7. Collaboration

Build out teams from 10 to 1000s of users under global governance that scales and mirrors the structure of your organization.

8. Tracking

Track volume and engagement metrics while you measure social media ROI on campaign specific conversions on your web properties.

9. Integrations

Exclusive Integrations and Apps Specifically for the Enterprise: LinkedIn Company Pages, Google+ Pages, SocialFlow, Adobe Genesis...

10. Features

Branded Shorteners, Geo & Language Targeting on Facebook, Archiving and more!

Brands Using HootSuite

