

The image features a light gray background with a subtle gradient. In the top-left and bottom-right corners, there are several realistic water droplets of various sizes, rendered with soft shadows and highlights to give them a three-dimensional appearance. The text is centered in the middle of the frame.

**NO BODY CARES ABOUT YOUR STORY UNTIL WIN
SO WIN**

The background of the slide is a light gray gradient with several realistic water droplets of various sizes scattered across it. The droplets have highlights and shadows, giving them a three-dimensional appearance. The text is centered in the middle of the slide.

DIGITIZATION AND INNOVATION IN LIFE INSURANCE

PROJECT INITIATION

Y CO. ONLINE PRESENCE PROJECT CHARTER

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Y CO. IS GOING TO ESTABLISH IT ONLINE PRESENCE IN THE COMING FEW YEAR. IT TARGETS TO SERVE ITS CUSTOMERS/PARTNERS ONLINE, THROUGH THEIR MOBILE, SELL AND MARKET ITS PRODUCTS ONLINE, AND POSITION ITSELF AS LIFE INSURANCE MARKET LEADER.

BUSINESS OBJECTIVES

- PROVIDE ALL CURRENT SERVICES ONLINE TO CUSTOMERS AND PARTNERS IN THE COMING 3 YEARS
- DIGITAL PRODUCTS SALES DOUBLED BY THE END OF THE 3 YEARS
- BRAND IS RECOGNIZED AS NUMBER #1 DIGITAL LIFE INSURER IN 3 YEARS
- **PROJECT OBJECTIVES**
- Establish the needed online presence strategies / infrastructures / processes / plans / organization
- Duration : 18 month

Expected (Benefits) or (Losses if not done now)

- Doing this project now will help Y CO. to target higher customer segment = Higher premium range
- Increasing market share before competitors
- Better brand recognition
- Save time and cost leading to customer satisfaction and company higher profitability

Y CO. ONLINE PRESENCE PROJECT CHARTER
PROJECT SCOPE

Major Deliverables	Brief	Approving Unit
1. Digital Marketing	Value proposition and digital marketing plans, process, systems	Board
2. Digital Marketing Team	Team structure, Job descriptions, HR Policies, Hire, train, performance KPI's, performance reporting	Human Resources
3. New Digital Products & pricing model	Products suitable to online sales and does not conflict with channels and design new pricing model	Products / Researches unit
4. IT Digital Team Infrastructure	Digital marketing requirements as well as Call centers requirements	IT
5. IT required applications / Systems	E-applications, workflow, optimization and monitoring Complaints System, new quotation and offering, integrating to back office systems	IT
6. Call Center	Call centers agents, systems, performance, cycles	Process / IT
7. Online Services, Sales Cycles	Design new processes with streamlining	Process / IT

Y CO. ONLINE PRESENCE PROJECT CHARTER
PROJECT SCOPE (OUT OF SCOPE)

Out of Scope	Brief	Who then
1. Group Life	Group business is out of scope	Next Phase
2. Group Medical	Group medical business is out of scope	Next Phase
3. It Tech. Support	After installation and set up, IT technical support will be take over based on their processes	IT
4. Legally sensitive claims (murders, ...)	Manual	As usual
5. Payroll	Policies and systems	HR
6. Office preparations	Desks, chairs, desktops, networks, ... for digital marketing team as well as call centers	Administration
7. EFSA and Legal Approvals	Future products and procedures to approve future cycles	Legal/EFSA

Y CO. ONLINE PRESENCE PROJECT CHARTER
SUMMARY OF MILESTONES

Milestones description	Date
Planning Phase	31-3-20**
Requirements Phase	30-6-20**
Design Phase	30-9-20**
Implementation Phase	28-2-20**
Testing & Evaluation Phase	30-6-20**
Go Live	1-07-20**
Digital marketing	

Y CO. ONLINE PRESENCE PROJECT CHARTER
ASSUMPTIONS & CONSTRAINTS

Assumptions	Constraints
NEW PRODUCT DON'T CONFLCT WITH SALES	EFSA Regulations
AVAILABLE RESOURSE	Culture changes
EXPERT PEAPLE COULD BE HIRED	Holding company regulations
Legacy system and new system interfaces will allow for future digital marketing requirements	Project Budget and Time

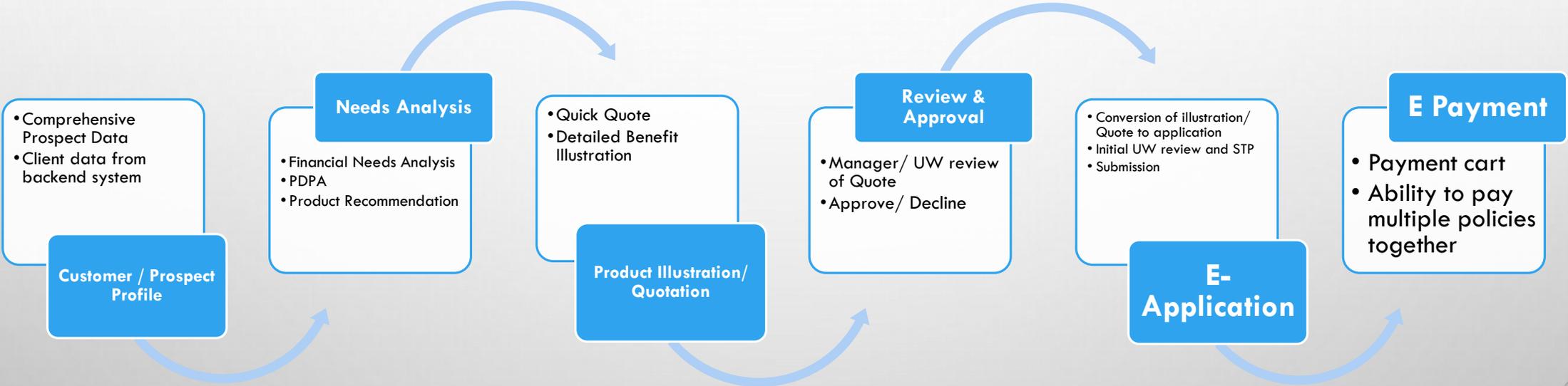
Y CO. ONLINE PRESENCE PROJECT CHARTER
HIGH LEVEL RISK PLAN

Risk	Probability	Impact	Mitigating Action
channel conflict	High	High	Different product Target segment higher premium Sell online presence as benefits to channels and tool
Lack of Y CO. resources to work on digital marketing project and in the market	Medium	Medium	Outsource to agency Training exiting staff
Culture (market to accept)	Medium	High	Educate public about insurance and gain trust
Resistance (cut jobs)	High	High	Educate shift in technology = shift in roles
Foreign Exchange risk	High	Medium	Keep \$ Reserve Hedging

Y CO. ONLINE PRESENCE PROJECT CHARTER
PROJECT TEAM

Role	Responsibility
IT development	Responsible of IT applications development
IT administrator	Responsible of technical support and infrastructure
Research and development	Responsible of product development And marketing research and processes
Actuarial	Responsible of pricing new product
Marketing & Sales	Responsible of Digital marketing
Call centre	Responsible of services after sell

Go live Business Process Management



The Communications Plan

Context analysis . Key issues



MARKETING
RESEARCH

Communication objectives

Communication strategy

- . Target audience
- . Creative and media strategy
- . push. Pull and profile strategy

Integrated communication plan

Budget

- . Scheduling
- . Implementation



Digital Marketing Team
training proposal

Social Media workshop
How to plan Digital Marketing



Introduction Social Media

Social networks **became one of the most Powerful Communication way** that ties us together. **Thinking** about what happens when you meet someone new **or asking where they work, where they grew up and which school they went to**. Eventually, you realize that your childhood friend was in this guy's fraternity in college. Even though you've never met **him** before, you're both **a** part of the same social network -- a friend of a friend.

A social network is a social structure that maps out the relationships between individuals. Technically we all belong to one giant social network, but we also belong to smaller, tighter social networks defined by our families, our friends, where we live, where we work, where we went to school, our hobbies and interests and much more.

If you sat down with a pen and paper, it would be **very** difficult to map out all the people with whom you're connected and all the people with whom they're connected. That's why social-networking Web sites are so powerful.

Social-networking sites "make invisible social networks visible" by allowing us to see (with pictures and links) who our friends are, who our friends' friends are, and who our friends' friends' friends are -- all in an easy-to-use interface.

look up old friends; make new ones

share music, photos and videos

join groups based on interests such as politics, hobbies or favorite TV shows

find jobs or love; or browse for the weirdest profile picture



Social networks can be defined as "our connections with other people." [source: BT Technology Journal] You're connected to your friends, who in turn are connected to their friends, and so on.

Your relationship to others in the social network can be measured by degrees of separation. Your friend is one degree of separation away from you. Your friend's friend is two degrees of separation away from you, and so on.

Social networks are important because they give us social capital. Social capital is the "resources accumulated through the relationships among people" [source: Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication]. These resources can come in several forms.

Useful information: medical tips, driving directions, movie recommendations

Personal relationships: family, friends, neighbors, colleagues

Ability to organize and form groups: local government, sports teams, knitting circles

Social capital makes it easier for us to find useful information and increases a community's capacity to organize and achieve goals. Social networks can also breed negative side effects.





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There are many relationships that make up social networks, and it's natural that some people in your network will be more closely related to you than others. Sociologists identify two major types of relationships in social networks: strong ties and weak ties.

Examples of strong ties could be family, close friends and immediate co-workers, while weak ties could be a childhood friend you haven't seen in 10 years, the clerk at the bookstore or a classmate with whom you don't hang out very often.





Strong ties are harder to maintain than weak ties because they require frequent contact and more time and attention. Since strong ties require so much energy, there's a limit to how many an individual can maintain. Weak ties, on the other hand, are practically limitless, since they include people you may have met only once or know in a very specific social context (the secretary at your dentist's office, for example).

The main advantage of weak ties is that they serve as bridges to unexplored areas of the social network. At college, for example, it's natural for your first social network to be limited to people who live in your dorm. Then, one day, the kid sitting next to you in calculus class invites you to a party at his dorm. Suddenly, this weak tie has opened up a completely new segment of the college social network.

Weak ties are also important for exposing us to "non-redundant information," meaning opinions and ideas that are outside of our circle of strong ties. This type of "novel information" could help us locate a wider range of dating possibilities or land a new job in a company we'd never heard of before





There's evidence that social networks are most effective at generating social capital when they come about naturally, rather than being created. Self-made networks are called informal networks, while those imposed by an outside source -- like the bureaucracies and hierarchies in large companies -- are called formal networks.

Social psychology experiments in the 1930s first proved that workers are more productive within informal social networks. People, it seems, resent being told who to work with, where to get information and how to share it.

For businesses, that's led to a rise in "flatter" organizational structures, in which instructions don't necessarily come down from above and information works its way slowly back upward. Rather, ideas and management decisions can move up, down and sideways, with an emphasis on "peer-to-peer" collaboration.

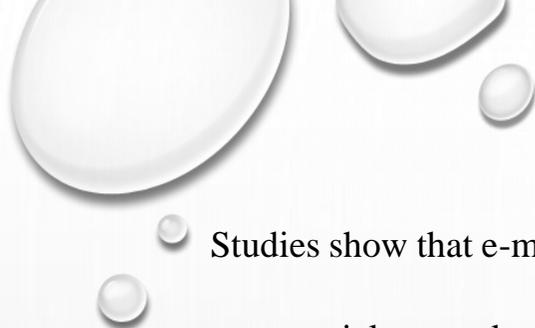




Preindustrial social networks were largely confined to geographic locations. Without an airplane, a car, a telephone or an e-mail account, people formed relationships primarily with the people who lived in their towns or villages. As transportation and communications technology improved, social networks grew larger and larger.

E-mail, instant messaging (IM), cell phones and the Internet are some of the most powerful technologies for cultivating and maintaining larger social networks. In an era of instant communication, it's much easier to keep in touch with a wide network of both strong and weak ties. The Internet makes it possible to leap outside of your offline social network entirely, finding and connecting with people whom you would never have met otherwise



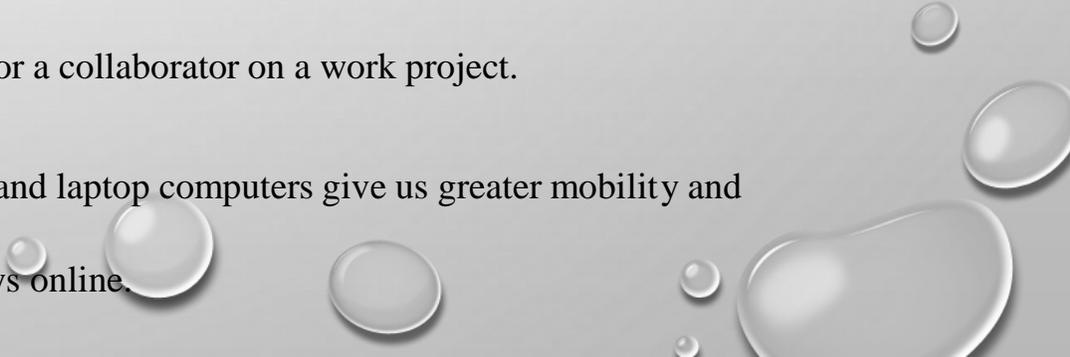


Studies show that e-mail -- far more than phone calls -- is the most effective way to keep in touch with a large network of acquaintances. In most social networks, the larger the network becomes, the less often people communicate with each other. That's true with phone calls and in-person visits, but not with e-mail. According to a 2006 report by the Pew Internet & American Life Project, no matter how large their social network became, respondents still e-mailed an average of 20 percent of their "core" ties every week.

The Internet is, by definition and function, a tremendous network. Although powered by impersonal routers, servers and computer code, it's essentially a tool for connecting people and information. The Internet knows no geographical boundaries. It enables what some researchers have termed glocalization, the free flow of information between local and global social networks.

When e-mail, IM, cell phones and the Internet work together, they empower something called networked individualism. Networked individualism is the idea that we switch back and forth between many different social networks based on the particular social capital we're seeking, whether it's advice on which car to buy, info on single women in the area, or a collaborator on a work project.

Wireless technology is key to networked individualism. Cell phones, BlackBerries and laptop computers give us greater mobility and connectivity than ever before. We can go and be wherever we want, yet we're always online.



There's no longer a need for the office- or home-based network that reaches out to the larger network. The individual floats freely through his world, joining or creating online social networks when and as he needs them. And, we do need them. In a 2004 survey, 60 million Americans said they'd used the Internet in the past two years to help make an important life decision [source: Pew Internet & American Life Project].

Examples of these decisions were:

1.Helping themselves or another person with a major illness

2.Changing jobs

3.Moving to a new location

4.Making a major financial investment

5.Choosing a school for themselves or a child The Internet has proven to be a powerful tool for searching out and engaging in various forms of social networking. But the real leap forward came with the launch of Web sites called social-networking sites whose exclusive purpose is to build and maintain social networks.

Social Media

What is

Social Networking involves the use of the internet to connect users with their friends, family and acquaintances. Social networking websites are not necessarily about meeting new people online, although this does happen. Instead, they are primarily about connecting with friends, family and acquaintances you already have in real life. The most well known social networking sites are Facebook, Twitter and MySpace.

These sites allow you to share photos, videos and information, organize events, chat, download music and even play games like Scrabble and Chess online.

Often, each of your “friends” (Facebook) or “followers” (Twitter) will be “friends” with several of your other “friends”. Just like in real life, the connections between people aren’t just one-on-one, but a network of connections. This online social network is very useful in spreading information, pictures and videos. For example, you can easily set up a web page with details and pictures of an event you might be planning, such as a school fete. The site allows you to easily send out invitations to other users of the social networking site. Then, if given the option by the host, those who are invited can send out more invites to their friends who might like to attend – hence, the network.



Social Media
Types of

Email and IM

Web Forums

Conferencing

Web Logs

Wikis





Social Media Types of

Podcasts

Content Sharing

Social Networking

Collaboration and Content Management

Virtual Worlds



User interface design (UID)

or
user interface engineering

is the design of websites, computers, appliances, machines, mobile communication devices, and software applications with the focus on the user's experience and interaction. The goal of user interface design is to make the user's interaction as simple and efficient as possible, in terms of accomplishing user goals what is often called user-centered design. Good user interface design facilitates finishing the task at hand without drawing unnecessary attention to itself. Graphic design may be utilized to support its usability. The design process must balance technical functionality and visual elements (e.g., mental model) to create a system that is not only operational but also usable and adaptable to changing user needs.

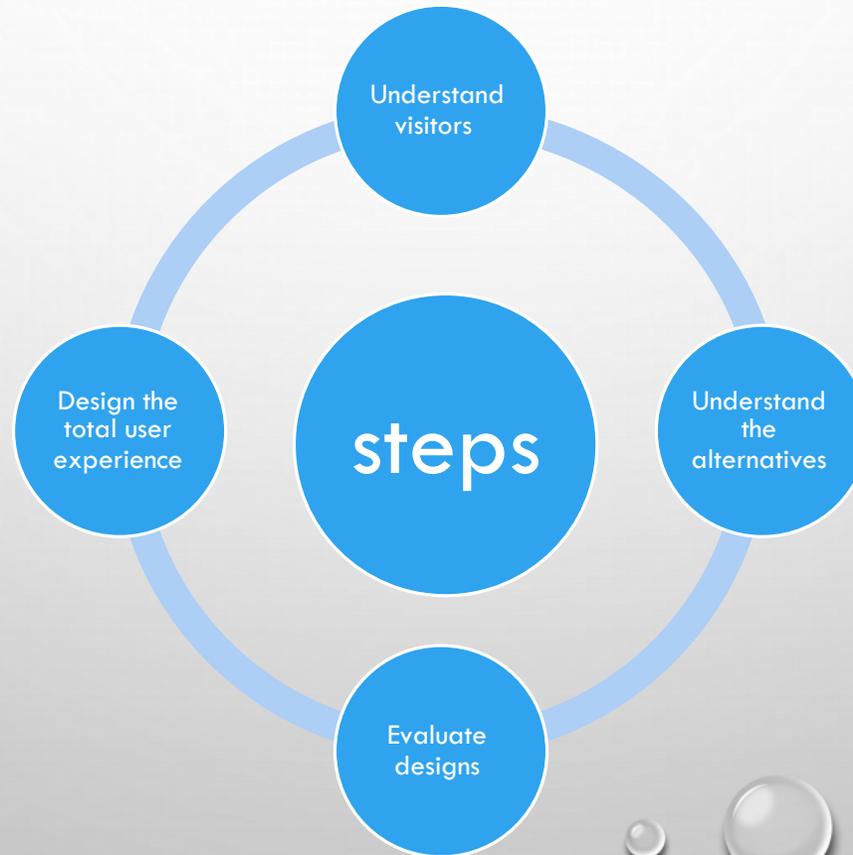


Designing for Interaction is...

- Setting objectives: Determining the target audiences, intended users, and success criteria is central to all design and user participation.
- Understanding audience: A commitment to understand and involve the intended visitor is essential to the design process. If you want a user to understand your solution, you must first understand the audience.
- Understanding the alternatives: Superior design requires ongoing awareness of the “competition” and its customers. Once you understand your visitors' tasks, you must test those same tasks against competitive alternatives and compare their results with yours.
- Designing the total user experience: Everything a visitor sees and touches is designed together by a multidisciplinary team.
- Evaluating designs: User feedback is gathered early and often, using prototypes of widely ranging fidelity, and this feedback drives solution design and development.

Continual user observation: Throughout the life of the redesign, continue to monitor and listen to your users, and let their feedback inform your responses to your redesign efforts.

Designing for Interaction is...



the use of specialized tools and methods

- A methodology typically focuses on teaming, gathering and validating requirements in a non-invasive matter.
- It identifies high impact initiatives with the largest ROI or best strategic fit.
- It employs best practices from ourselves and from our learnings with others.

1. Intent

Approach Development

Innovation Workshops

2. High-level design

Business Strategy

Digital Branding

System/platform Design

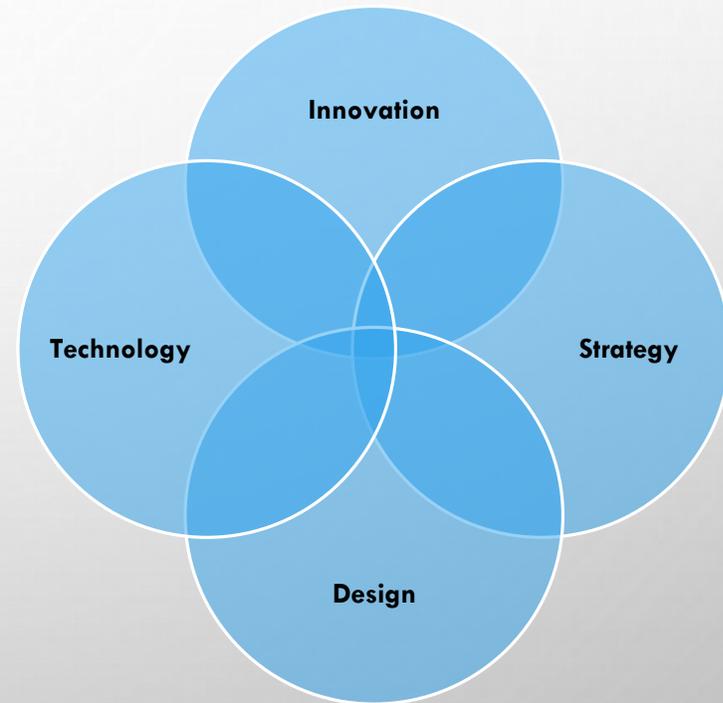
3. Low-level design

Information Design

Interface Design

Environment Definition

Technical Architecture





4. Implementation

Content Integration

Design Implementation

Technology Integration

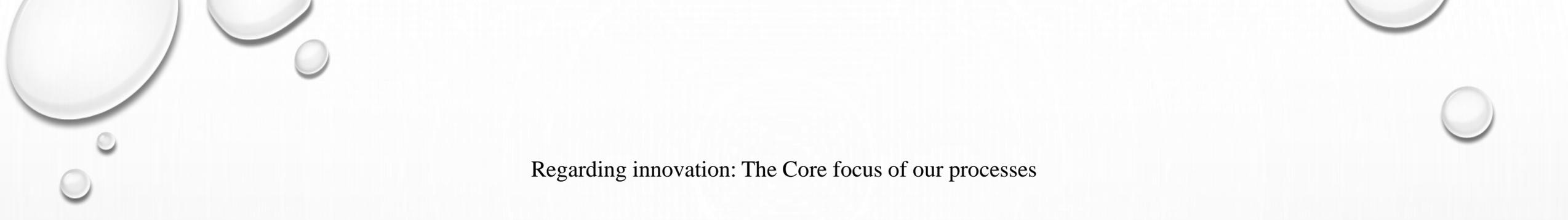
5. Deployment & Feedback

Initiative Launch

Initiative Metrics

Initiative Management





Regarding innovation: The Core focus of our processes

- Redefining the specifications of design solutions which can lead to better guidelines for traditional design activities (graphic, industrial, architectural, web, etc.); Incremental Innovations, Best Practices, Asset or Component-based Solutions
- Exploring possibilities and constraints by focusing critical thinking skills to research and define problem spaces for existing products or services—or the creation of new categories; Breakthrough Innovations
- Managing the process of exploring, defining, creating artifacts continually over time
- Prototyping scenarios and solutions that incrementally or significantly address the problem

SOURCE: NATE BURGOS AND ADAM KALLISH, WIKIPEDIA



Social Media In workplace

Social media offers a variety of platforms and tools that can be used to communicate with others. Many of these platforms and tools are proving to be very useful in the workplace. After completing this course, you should be able to:

- Describe methods of enhancing work with social media
- Identify the benefits of using social media at work
- Define the need for a good social media policy

When we think of social media, the first things that come to mind are Face book and Twitter. While these are both great social media platforms, there are many other platforms and tools that can prove to be especially useful in the workplace

Social media is all about communication. Many organizations may already be promoting communications between employees with email and shared calendars, which are well-established forms of social media. Some organizations might implement instant messaging, too. Instant messaging lets people have off-the-cuff conversations in a way that's even faster than email.



Web and video conferencing can bring employees together across wide distances for meetings, training, or collaborative work. Both forms of conferencing provide an "in-the-room" feel that adds a great deal to any communication.

Many companies distribute podcasts to employees to provide news about company events, sales successes, and corporate policies. Podcasts can also provide up-to-the-minute training. Employees can listen to or watch these podcasts whenever they have time. They can easily refer to them when they need a refresher later

Social media platforms can provide libraries for sharing the documents, images, and templates that people need to perform their jobs. A company might start with a simple system of online folders in the Internet cloud or in a more protected space on their own network. Organizations can also institute check-in/check-out and version control policies to provide advanced security and control over library contents

For more power and flexibility, organizations can establish systems that let people tag documents with helpful terms. Employees can use those tags to search for the documents they need. When people work together on projects, they often pass documents back and forth to add, modify, or remove details. There are social media tools that can simplify this collaboration





Social networking profiles let employees list their skills, knowledge, and work responsibilities. People who need help with a particular task can search profiles to see who else has dealt with similar issues. Employees can use social media tools (such as blogs, wikis, or Web forums) to build libraries of job knowledge. These become invaluable resources when new employees are brought onboard.

Virtual worlds can provide innovative training for employees who need to learn new skills. This can be especially important if people will be operating expensive equipment or performing complex or dangerous tasks. A virtual world can provide job experience with little cost and little risk to the employee, the trainer, and the job site. Commercial and military pilots have been training in virtual world simulators for years.

As with any business decision, the key to determining which forms of social media an organization will implement in the workplace is to first understand what they're trying to accomplish. Once the organization knows what they want to accomplish, they can consider how best to meet their goals. Another important point: If a company wants employees to use social media tools to accomplish workday goals, they need to provide training and incentives to use those tools.



Companies should give employees a starting point, then encourage people to explore, brainstorm, discover, and share new uses for tools

Identifying Social Media Tools The important concepts are: Instant messaging Lets people have off-the-cuff conversations in a way that's even faster than email. Web and video conferencing Can bring employees together across wide distances for meetings, training, or collaborative work. Provides an "in-the-room" feel. Podcasts Often used to distribute news about company events, sales successes, and corporate policies. Can also provide up-to-the-minute training.

Social media libraries Often used to share documents, images, and templates that people need to perform their jobs. **Identifying Social Media Tools** The important concepts are: Document tagging Allows employees to quickly search for the documents they need. Social networking profiles Let employees list their skills, knowledge, and work responsibilities. When employees need help with a task, they can search these listings to see who else has dealt with similar issues.

Blogs, wikis, or Web forums

Social media tools that can be used to build libraries of job knowledge. Can be invaluable resources when new employees are brought onboard.

Virtual worlds

Often used to provide innovative training for employees with little cost and little risk to the employee, the trainer, and the job site.

social Media Marketing and Support

Companies are always looking for better ways to communicate with their customers and to market their products. Social media opens new doors for reaching customers in very effective ways. Many of the methods for using social media can be of benefit to the business world

What business can survive without happy customers? Attracting customers is at the core of growth and success. When new and valuable tools emerge that can help build the customer base, it's up to each business to learn to use these resources in the best ways possible

Not long ago, if you wanted to reach customers your best bet was to put advertisements in the newspaper and on the radio or TV. You might send mass mailings too. But as a lot have noted, customers don't want to be talked at anymore. They want the organizations they do business with to listen to their needs... ..and to respond appropriately.

Old-fashioned one-way broadcast messages can't provide the give-and-take that modern consumers expect, but social media can.

Marketing done through social media should position your organization as a trusted authority. People make buying decisions not just on price, but also according to who they trust. To become that trusted figure online, be genuine, honest, and accurate about what you're offering.



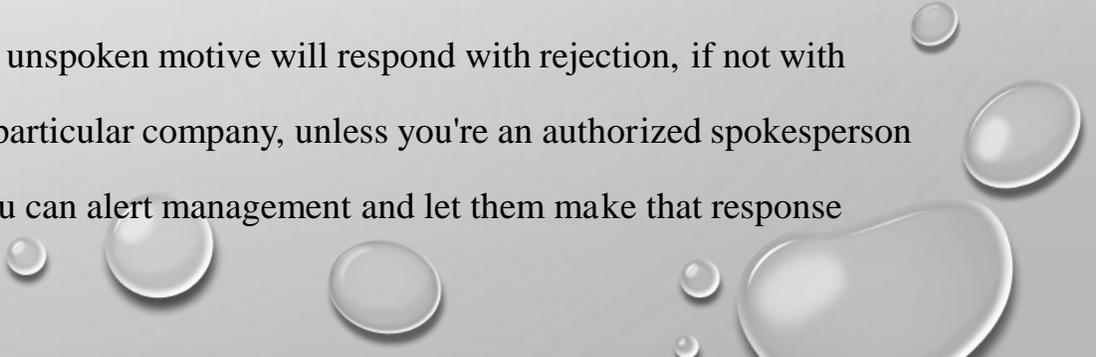
Be an advisor, not a salesperson.

You want to promote long-term relationships. While you're doing that, your brand will enter the social media universe. Blogs, podcasts, and having a presence on sites like Face book and YouTube can help. Contributing to wikis and web forums, and building an online library of whitepapers, will display your proficiency

Having employee profiles on LinkedIn and similar sites can establish your employees as the go-to experts. Hosting web conferences that anyone can join will get your message out. The idea is to become a trusted source of information -- the source that people turn to when they have issues you can resolve. You need to have a clear plan for how you want to use social media to become that trusted authority

Understand how social media will coexist with or replace your other marketing tools. Look for synergies to build between your social media efforts and your traditional methods. The best corporate approach to social media keeps guidelines as simple as possible. For example, IBM has a set of 12 social media computing guidelines... ..and the healthcare company Roche has 7 social media principles.

People who discover that they've been lead to a conclusion by someone who has an unspoken motive will respond with rejection, if not with anger. Make it clear that your opinions are your own. Even though you represent a particular company, unless you're an authorized spokesperson you're still speaking as an individual. If you think an official response is needed, you can alert management and let them make that response





Show respect and humility in all communication. Use common courtesy and common sense in all discussions. Avoid offensive or demeaning language... ..and withdraw from unproductive discussions. Be a positive force and influence, not a negative one. Use good judgment in sharing information

Whether it's confidential company data or private confidences from a friend, you shouldn't be the source of secrets that other people don't need to know. Remember that the online world is a public space, and anything you put there can be copied for use elsewhere. Along with this, be aware of the restrictions that copyright laws place on using content that you didn't produce

Know that what you say is permanent. Even if a web site goes offline, search engines can find web pages stored in Internet archives. Everything on the web is there forever, for anyone -- bosses, subordinates, competitors, and clients -- to see. So be careful about what you say and do.



- Don't be the online equivalent. Make your social media efforts targeted, appropriate, and low-key. Don't become the brand that everyone hates.
- You can probably already list the many things consumers hate about marketing. Junk mail? Phone calls during dinner? Billboards cluttering the highway?

When customers have problems, want information, or need to communicate, they usually want to do so immediately. The best response for businesses is to find a way to meet their customers' requests as effectively as possible. Social media platforms can provide the kind of support that customers want

Customer support has traditionally meant having a telephone number or email address where customers can send complaints or ask questions. While you may receive lots of calls or emails, every interaction occurs in a silo -- no one but you and the individual customer gets anything out of it. Expanding your customer support through social media tools can turn it into an extension of marketing that reaches a wide audience.

Customer support through social media has much the same goal as social media marketing -- to position your organization as the trusted authority. The primary difference is that you're addressing people who've already made the decision to buy your products or services. You're strengthening your relationship with those customers, and hopefully turning them into an unpaid sales force. Let's consider marketing specialist Heidi Cohen's guidelines for providing effective customer support with social media tools



Present a human side to customers. Customers want to talk with people, not corporations. Social media interactions let you go beyond the impersonal image, and that reinforces customer trust. At the same time, these interactions help you listen to what customers are saying

Whether they're speaking through your web site or leaving reviews on other social media sites, customer responses are the best early warning signal you have when problems arise. Make sure customers can find out how to get in touch with you, provide multiple channels for contact, and make sure those channels work. Be proactive. A key part of being successful is being proactive

Don't just wait for customers to come to you -- use Face book, Twitter, blogs, web forums, and other tools to engage them. Give people tips, tricks, and how-to guides -- anything that adds value to their purchase. Ask customers to fill out surveys and answer polls. Use social media to provide special online offers that "un-social" people won't hear about. Sites like Groupon can even help businesses set up online sales promotions



Answer questions. If one customer has a question, you can be sure that other people probably want to know the same thing. Use your blog, wiki, tweets, or forum to answer questions in public so everyone can benefit. Use the customer input you're receiving to establish a FAQ -- a list of Frequently Asked Questions. Your public responses present a welcoming face to customers

Those responses can also reduce the number of service calls you'd otherwise need to answer. Give customers ways to communicate with each other. When customers can respond to each other through a web forum, Face book page, or other tool, they share experiences, ideas, and deals they've heard of. Customers can rate and review your products and services, and explain how well something worked

It's true that you may see some negative messages. But social media lets you provide a quick response, and customers will appreciate that you've done that in public. Share the feedback customers provide. Customers will share opinions on the web no matter what you do, so why not encourage them to share those opinions in your own controlled environment?

Whether you implement a simple rating scale or an open-ended comments section... ..or simply post the positive messages you've received... ..you can turn customer feedback into a powerful marketing tool. A customer's actual experiences may carry more weight than any of your sales or marketing efforts. Celebrate customers

There's no better way to promote your products and services than to let your customers do it. Use social media to highlight customer successes. Encourage customers to post stories, pictures, and videos on your social media sites. Help them show other people how they've benefited from their association with you. How do they make macaroni?

Who decides what color umbrellas will be? Is working for an online magazine really as zany as it appears? People are always curious about where things come from and how they're made. Go behind the scenes. Use social media to show customers what it's like in your corner of the world. Post photos of sales events, or videos of manufacturing processes.

Ask your customer service reps, sales associates, and product developers to blog about their jobs. Go beyond the polished image presented on your web page and give customers a peek at the messy day-to-day details. They'll love it.

Identifying Guidelines for Customer Support The important concepts are: Present a human side to customers Make sure customers can find out how to get in touch with you and provide multiple channels for contact Be proactive Give people tips, tricks, and how-to guides Answer questions Your public responses present a welcoming face to customers Celebrate customers Let your customers promote your products and services Go behind the scenes Post photos of sales events, or videos of manufacturing processes

Social media is already a major player for helping companies communicate with their customers. Business leaders have enjoyed successes from using the various platforms. But just how much difference does it make? You'll learn ways to gauge the effect of social media for business

Suppose that your marketing and customer support groups have made a major move onto social media platforms. You've got a Face book page... ..and a Twitter account. You're posting how-to videos on YouTube. You contribute papers to a variety of industry web sites. How can you measure the success or failure of your social media effort?

Interactions Many social media tools can help you determine how many "fans" and "followers" you have. Other tools can determine what people are clicking, and count the number of times customers enter your web site. This is important information you should be tracking and analyzing. Google's Website Optimizer can help you fine-tune a site's design and content to get the customer activity you want

Issues

Brand monitoring tools will help you identify and respond to issues that customers raise on social media platforms outside your own web site or Face book page. For example, Google Alerts offers information on the searches people have done. Technorati is a blog search engine that makes it easy to learn what bloggers are saying about you

The Back type service, along with Board Tracker, Friend Feed, Jive, and Social Mention, lets you find blog comments, web forum discussions, Twitter tweets, and other social media that mention your name. Many of these tools are free

Content

Keep track of such customer-generated content, and realize that even negative reviews can give you data. Are customers using your rating system? Are they leaving comments or reviews? Are they uploading testimonials, pictures, or videos that showcase their use of your product?

Sales

This is an easy one. Once you begin implementing social media tools, what happens to your sales? If you roll out different tools over a period of time, you should be able to measure their individual effects.

Resources

If you're using social media appropriately, you may see fewer inquiries coming in from other channels. People who don't normally want to make a call or write an email may interact with your customer service on the newer social media platforms. That may affect your bottom line, since social media probably costs less to operate and maintain than traditional tools

And when you consider the ratio of contacts made through traditional channels versus contacts made through social media, you may see a need to shift people and other resources, and change your efforts. Finally, make sure that whoever's in charge of keeping your social media effort updated is up to the task and on the job. This isn't a job for some intern who knows all about social media because he or she's a college student

This is a role you need to take seriously. Your social media guru needs to be familiar with your organization's overall goals and the intent of your online campaign. They should be aware of copyright and fair use issues. And they should understand the pros and cons of linking to external content that's not under your control. If multiple employees will be responsible for your social media presence, make sure that they're all sending the same message

Consider whether you want a single person to approve the content produced by these people before it's posted for all the world to see. Less oversight is generally better, as long as your content producers follow company policies. The result will be more spontaneous and will give your organization a friendlier online face. There's one last thing. Keep your social media presence current

There's nothing sadder than a wiki that was begun with great excitement and expectations, only to be abandoned a few months later. Online articles will become outdated. If they see that the blog on your web site hasn't been updated since last year... ..what reaction will customers have?

Connecting and communicating with others through online social media has amazing possibilities. The sky's the limit for where social media may take you

Identifying Practices for Measuring Social Media Success The important concepts are: Interactions Counting the number of times customers enter your website Issues Using brand monitoring tools to identify and respond to topics that customers raise on social media platforms outside your web site Sales Measuring the individual effects of rollingout different tools Resources The effect of using social media on various marketing channels