

# The future belongs to social business



**Enterprise social media (ESM) represents an inevitable addition to the toolset required for the transformation of an organization into a “social business.” However, social business is more about cultural change, since transformation into a business of the 21st century is primarily based on improved knowledge sharing and relations that affect your business.**

Is social business only for IT companies? No. There are many myths about social business being only for IT companies. Actually, it is destined for each company that utilizes knowledge, experience, and information sharing. There is no company that does not need to share information – the social business model will do it more effectively.

Another myth that arises in relation to the topic of social business is about its suitability for big companies. If we perceive social business as a way to improve employee interconnection, in order to increase their productivity, then company size does not play any role. Perhaps the effect is even more visible in larger companies. ESM may significantly contribute to the interconnection of employees outside of the officially established organizational structure, as well as eliminate the so-called silo effects between various departments or divisions.

Customers are not interested in the internal structure of your organization. Your customers want to know whether you can provide them with added value regardless of where in your organization it originates. This is the essence of social business.

### Barriers to social business implementation

The primary barrier to implementation is a lack of knowledge of what social business is, what benefit it brings, and what impact on the profitability of companies it has. In many companies we encounter a situation in which we immediately hear “stop” when we say the word “social” – “Facebook is forbidden” or “we do not need people to socialize, we need them to work hard.” Integration of enterprise social media into a company’s internal life is definitely not about Facebook behavior.

A frequently occurring impediment to the implementation of social business is corporate culture. We often face a situation in which information is the source of power from the first managerial line upwards. If knowledge and other information is to become easily accessible

to employees thanks to social media, there are individuals who will feel threatened because they may lose their power of possession of information. These individuals protect their knowledge and it is very likely that they will oppose the introduction of such change. A cultural change is the major hurdle. Therefore it is important to look at implementation from another point of view and influence the behavior of employees as well as of managers. It is necessary to demonstrate that openly shared knowledge and ideas accelerate innovation and product solutions, and that this exchange will bring the company not only satisfied internal and external customers but also higher profitability.

Another barrier impeding the implementation of social business is the technology itself. Technology is not for free. If a company chooses social business it must not forget about investment into the appropriate platform and its maintenance, as well as employee training and internal campaigns on how to work with it.

On the other hand, we know from our experience that many companies fail to implement ESM because they concentrate too much on the technology and forget the people the technology should serve. In a social business, it is not enough to give people the technology only.

Among other things, you must give them committed leaders.

### Committed leader – success in the social business

The first step of successful implementation of ESM is the leader’s commitment. It is not enough to only be a project sponsor. The leader must be committed and serve as an example to employees, motivate them to change their behavior, and share knowledge and experience. The leader must also encourage open communication and actively manage this important change in the company’s life. And, we should also bear in mind that leaders may need some training as well.

Some examples of benefits of a properly implemented social business:

- Possibility to ask for necessary information in real time
- Acceleration of information flow and ideas that make work more efficient
- Higher employee commitment
- A sense of employee belonging, ownership, and responsibility
- Possibility to examine new business models
- More open communication among employees
- Higher work productivity
- Innovations and new product solutions
- Reduction of time loss within internal communication
- Higher productivity and competitiveness thanks to better offers, solutions, and implementations



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