Connect Your Enterprise World

Weaving Social Media into the
Enterprise Technology Ecosystem

Hootsuite™

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Social media is at a critical point in its evolution as a business driver. Teams throughout the enterprise are using social media internally and externally to support their objectives, but most efforts are managed at the departmental level or below. Data sets are typically fragmented, with groups using different technologies, systems, and processes to drive their social media activities. Unifying customer engagement and intelligence practices across departments is now a top priority for many enterprises.

Meanwhile, customers have come to expect personalized and responsive experiences from businesses on whatever digital channel they prefer, at nearly every hour of the day. A host of enterprise technologies has emerged to help businesses deliver such experiences and make sense of all the data that they generate, from marketing automation to CRM, business intelligence, and ecommerce. The pressure is now on enterprises to get all of these systems working together to create value for the customer.

The disjointed state of social media activities and the fractured technology landscape are related issues that enterprises must address together. By consolidating social listening, social engagement, and social intelligence across multiple departments and networks, organizations can create a managed framework for harmonizing social media with other business tools. The outcome is a socially integrated technology ecosystem.

Businesses that synthesize social media into technology ecosystems benefit from enhanced efficiency, intelligence, and collaboration, while their customers enjoy seamless and highly personalized digital experiences. This white paper will outline the key elements of a productive technology ecosystem and explore the major opportunities that stem from blending social media into everyday business.

The Changing IT Environment

New digital platforms in the enterprise are dramatically changing how organizations manage information and interact with customers. Cloud-based applications have minimized the need for on-premises software, allowing enterprises of all sizes to move away from monolithic technology stacks. The overall IT budget has also become less centralized, with the marketing department in particular taking greater control over the selection of business tools.

Explosive growth in the number of applications used in the enterprise mirrors the ongoing proliferation of customer channels. More social networks and media platforms arise every year, creating new opportunities for brands to provide engaging customer experiences.

Marketers and other customer-facing groups move quickly into these new channels, often deploying additional cloud-based apps to manage and measure their efforts.

The consumerization of IT is further fragmenting the technology landscape within the enterprise. Digitally-savvy employees are increasingly using informal solutions to meet their business needs, both inside and outside the corporate firewall. According to [Forrester](#), "25% of employees globally have brought in their own mobile apps to work so they can get their job done effectively."[1] The lesson is clear: if organizations don't provide the best tools available, employees will seek out their own solutions.

As the number of applications multiplies, it is crucial to keep them all working together effectively. With most new technologies appearing first in the consumer space and then entering the enterprise, organizations must create flexible, forward-looking strategies for maintaining security, compliance, and productivity.

Key Elements of an Enterprise Technology Ecosystem

1. The power of choice

An anything-goes environment for technology procurement decisions is not a prudent path for most organizations, but unlocking the power of choice at the departmental or team levels can greatly increase business performance. Fortunately, there are middle paths between chaos and top-down micromanagement. For example, some IT departments are now curating solutions in certain technology categories by creating enterprise app directories. These portals resemble consumer-facing app stores and can positively influence the development of a healthy, secure, and scalable technology ecosystem.

Meet your unique requirements with the best technologies available

When it makes sense to adopt standardized solutions, organizations should select vendor-neutral platforms that interoperate with other best-of-breed technologies.

These connective platforms create a solid foundation upon which a productive ecosystem can grow and evolve over time. They allow enterprises to safely decentralize other technology decisions without creating unnecessary data silos or security vulnerabilities in key systems. Furthermore, they provide teams with the flexibility to use the best tools available, both now and in the future.

Support your ecosystem with a social relationship platform

The dual benefits of consistency and flexibility are especially notable in the realm of social media. In order to effectively aggregate social data and engage audiences at an enterprise scale, organizations must begin to consolidate their fragmented social media management systems and extend a common social relationship platform (SRP) across departments. This platform consistency creates a unified source of social media data and a secure switchboard for external social communications. However, various teams will always have unique and evolving objectives for social media.

The key is to build a social media infrastructure that supports a broad ecosystem of other technologies. This enables teams in every functional area of the business to not only align their efforts around social intelligence, listening, and engagement, but weave social media into the tools and processes that are critical to their success. Once social media is secured and coordinated by an enterprise social relationship platform, it can be deeply integrated into the technology ecosystem at an enterprise scale.

2. Depth of integration

The openness of an organization's social relationship platform should be matched or exceeded its ability to integrate with existing systems, tools, and applications, so that social media can become embedded in business rhythms. In a socially integrated technology ecosystem, people are able to phase out inefficient workarounds and simply get down to work. Data moves freely between applications and into meaningful contexts, which makes it significantly easier for teams to measure social ROI and act upon business insights from social activities.

Weave social media into every functional area of your business

For example, when a social relationship platform and CRM solution are linked by a two-way integration, users of both tools gain easy access to relevant information that would otherwise be obscured. If social intelligence can be piped directly into CRM records from the SRP, sales professionals enjoy more complete views of customers and prospects. Social media becomes a natural extension of their current processes, accelerating their ability to qualify leads and close deals. Conversely, users of the SRP are able to build relationships with customers far more effectively when incoming social messages are paired with existing records in the CRM database.

3. Scalability

Leading enterprises now interact with customers through numerous social channels and at every stage of the customer lifecycle, from awareness to purchase, and from retention to advocacy. This engagement involves a broad cross-section of the workforce, including subject matter experts, account managers, and customer service representatives. However, scaling up social media activity requires more than just activating new teams or setting up additional accounts. Enterprises must think of each social interaction between the company and the customer as part of a continuous relationship that extends across every channel and business function. Integrated cross-team workflows and a unified view of the customer are critical.

Drive organizational effectiveness by extending integrated workflows across teams

To bridge operational gaps between siloed teams and technologies, enterprises require a scalable social relationship platform that can serve the entire business. The platform's scalability depends not only on how well it maps to the structure of an organization, but how readily it is adopted throughout the workforce. Forrester has identified adoption as a key measure of success when deploying social or collaborative tools,

due to positive network effects that accrue from every additional user.[2]

Carol Rozwell, vice president and distinguished analyst at Gartner, has argued that "social initiatives require a 'pull' approach, one that engages workers and offers them a significantly better way to work. In most cases, they can't be forced to use social apps, they must opt-in." Therefore, a social relationship platform should not only help weave social media into routine business practices, but allow teams to realize greater value from tools they are already using.

When adopted at scale, a social relationship platform can also bridge the divide between external and internal social networks, enabling the organization to collaborate more effectively around customer needs. Crowd-sourced concepts, customer service issues, and thought leadership can all stream into the enterprise through its employees' personal social networks. Teams can identify business opportunities and potential crises by monitoring public channels, pull that intelligence into their discussions on an internal network or collaboration platform, and then deliver a coordinated response through customer-facing social accounts.

The Customer-Centric Enterprise

Customers never see the inner workings of a well-functioning technology ecosystem. They only experience its outcomes: better service, better products, and a better relationship with the brand. However, the unseen business processes that power an enterprise must be as fluid as the customer experience itself. To create seamless experiences for customers, businesses must also look inward to create seamless experiences for employees. By fusing social media into key workflows and applications, organizations can harness the value of social relationships among employees, partners, and customers, driving business growth through deeper personal engagement at every level.

1. Forrester Research, Inc. "The Future Of Business Is Digital". March 10, 2014.

2. Forrester Research, Inc. "Social Business And Collaboration Success Hinges on Effective Change Management". February 4, 2013.

About Hootsuite Enterprise

Partner with Hootsuite to accelerate your social transformation

Social Media Management

Social Marketing

Social Customer Service

Social Selling

Hootsuite Enterprise empowers organizations to execute business strategies for the social media era. As the world's most widely used social relationship platform, Hootsuite Enterprise enables global businesses to scale social media activities across multiple teams, departments, and business units. Our versatile platform supports a thriving ecosystem of technology integrations, allowing businesses to extend social media into existing systems and programs.

We help organizations create deeper relationships with customers and draw meaningful insights from social media data. Innovating since day one, we continue to help businesses pioneer the social media landscape and accelerate their success through education and professional services.

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