

SOCIAL NETWORKING

The adoption of new technology brings new challenges. As the power of cell phones continues to dramatically increase it drags along the challenges management paradigms. Many companies challenge the use of cell phones and social networking as a "Disturbance to Flow" but can it be leveraged into a positive enabler?

An over all philosophy statement used now by many companies often looks something like this: "While you are on company time, please refrain from online activities that don't bring value to the Company. Think of your personal time online just as you think of personal phone calls or emails." Many managers would say they have a very significant time theft issue going on in the workplace (unproductive social media use) and also that it is not that easy to deal with or properly address. Sound familiar?

Many employers now block access to certain websites such as game sites, social networking sites, entertainment sites, shopping/auction sites and sports sites. Some companies even use URL blocks to stop employees from visiting external blogs.

The other side of all this is the fact that social networking sites are a valuable part of marketing and advertising in today's market from a business perspective. Many organizations are figuring out how to leverage off this, as an example, having a corporate facebook page for all employees to contribute to.

Many managers would tell you they are having difficulty in drawing the line on use of social media in the workplace. I often hear that employees want access so they can communicate at lunch or on breaks as this is the best way they know of quickly getting up to date with everything going on as opposed to even a few years ago when numerous (more time consuming) phone calls would serve the same purpose. What is an employer to do when an employee has MSN open all day on their PC so they can communicate with their spouse who is at home with the newborn? Every time the employee hears a "bling" they stop what they are doing and connect on line with their spouse. Get the point – where is the dividing line? Employers need to take into consideration that social media has quickly become an important and significant cultural mainstay with how people choose to communicate, especially the younger generations.

So, what is the answer then? Some companies for example have a very simple blogging policy which says. "Please be smart in your on-line activities. They reflect on both you and the company. The ability to publish things that never go away and can be forwarded endlessly, well, it gives us pause, and we hope it does you, too."

However, you can beyond a simple policy that just makes the problem supposedly go Away. Better is to acknowledge and leverage the power of the new tools. Social networking is making communication happen at a pace unprecedented before.

If you truly have that "Adult to Adult" environment why not allow your Employees to use social networking to stay connected with your Customers and suppliers instead of having to work their way through The several filters within your organization.

Imagine the power and strategic differerator you would have.

"Unless you try to do something beyond what you have already mastered, you will never grow."

Ronald. E. Osborn

Where Lean Thoughts can become Reality

Richard Kunst

President and CEO

Tel: 519 651 2341 E-mail: rkunst@kunstartofsolutions.com

Web: www.kunstartofsolutions.com

KUNST

Solutions Corp.

AS A MANAGER, YOU MUST KNOW HOW TO PROVIDE FEEDBACK

- **Get the facts** – first, do your homework. Ask questions to get the facts, get the **right facts** and get the **facts right**. Be open to new information, for, if you have partial information you will predictably give inaccurate feedback. You will then look bad.
- **Know who you are dealing with** – Assess how the other person will react and tailor your message and method of delivery to that person. Generally, give positives in public and negatives in private; however, break this guideline if the person gets embarrassed easily and prefers these types of conversations to be done privately.
- **Give them the feedback FIRST** - The recipient of feedback deserves respect and courtesy – especially if the feedback is about something that went wrong. If you talk about someone behind their back and then, if they hear gossip from another person, you become the executive ‘weasel’ whose leadership role has now been compromised.
- **Do it face-to-face** – Particularly if feedback deals with criticism, mature adults deal with tough situations face-to-face, not by impersonal emails or by phone. Give it in person - this also lets you see the person’s reaction, thereby ensuring that the appropriate message has been received.
- **Do it fast** – People affected by important information need to hear it quickly – whether it is good or bad news. Few things are worse than waiting in suspense and feeling you are being controlled by someone. Once all facts are on the table, people are more relaxed and it is easier to deal with virtually any situation.
- **Deliver the message in balance** – Try to sandwich the positive and negative messages. This is all about balance, not manipulation, e.g., you could discuss a person’s positive intentions, critique a specific situation that did not work out, and then express confidence that you believe in them and that you see they are motivated to get better results next time.
- **Do it with tact** – Be direct and be sensitive. Give feedback on a person’s actions/issues, not on their personality. Never assault their personality. If you need inspiration for this, think of your own worst experience, that is, when you were on the receiving end of a poorly delivered feedback that didn’t sit well with you.
- **Keep cool** - Discuss things professionally. If you find yourself being hooked into a mental or emotional battle, ask questions for clarification. Or, if someone is ‘losing it’, take a breather. Buy some time - things said in anger rarely turn out positively.

There are certain truths that endure: People want to be important, want to matter and be valuable. They crave self esteem. By what people say and do, one message they regularly deliver is: “... notice me ... I count! ...”.

Effective feedback is a gift that will make most people in most companies more successful. While your gift to them costs you just a little time, recipients say that receiving it is priceless!