

The 18 Social Business Imperatives.

A strategic roadmap.

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Executive Overview: The Social Business Imperative.

The first wave of the Internet revolution had a profound impact. It created new markets, generated industries, and reshaped the Fortune 500. Those companies that moved the fastest produced measurable, material competitive advantage. Those that didn't were crushed.

The second wave of the Internet revolution is well underway. The effect will be even more profound than the last. Social Business is the term used to describe this profound reshaping of the global business landscape. We now stand at that rare tipping point where technology and innovative business models combine to create a real and lasting disruptive force.

Social Business is already producing simultaneous breakthroughs in knowledge worker productivity, business cost structures, and corporate ability to attract and retain customers. Business as we have

known it is changed and will accelerate in changing the model of business as usual. That's what makes Social Business the new way to drive revenue, costs, and innovation.

The initial wave of Internet innovation (Web 1.0) was focused around two drivers: commerce and content. This current wave (Web 2.0) is driven by the power of communities and collaboration. Business leaders who take the initiative to lead and leverage the opportunity Social Business delivers will more than realize the expected returns.

The biggest business opportunity in a decade.

For the past decade, the bulk of technology innovation has centered on tools for the consumer web. Moving beyond personal email, hundreds of millions of consumers have now integrated social networks, smart phones, tablets, social gaming, rich media, etc. into their daily lives.

Shopping, paying bills, watching movies, listening to music, planning travel, banking, texting, and sharing daily experiences with communities of family and friends are all fun, easy, and now “natural” extensions of our personal lives.

Now think about your work life. We do more and more of the same: email, ERP, CRM, and intranets, with innovation constrained to email on more devices. Getting work done is no fun and feels difficult.

It’s time to cross the chasm between how consumers experience technology and how people get their work done. The innovation and power of the social web will forever change the enterprise. Employees, customers, shareholders, suppliers, and management collaborating in communities driven by Social Business will reshape the business environment.

“A systematic approach is required to adopt social business successfully. Business processes must be integrated into the Social Business deployment in order to gain meaningful competitive advantage.”

Nikos Drakos, Research Director, Gartner

Social Business is business.

Social Business drives revenues, reduces costs, and accelerates innovation in three principle areas:

1. Engage Employees

Drive collaboration

Social collaboration helps employees build meaningful relationships, find answers and share ideas in a fun and productive way. Workers in separate departments that otherwise would never cross paths are now able to globally collaborate as if they were sitting right next to each other.

Heightened employee engagement results in increased productivity, reduced turnover and creates a highly attractive environment to compete for new talent. Breaking down walls for new employees to access tribal knowledge instantly drives the learning curves down and results up.

2. Engage Customers

Create customer communities

Increase sales and drive brand value by connecting with your customers and prospects in your own social network. Reduce support costs and improve innovation by proactively engaging in an open and collaborative environment to rapidly solve problems and collect important product/service feedback.

3. Engage the Social Web

Social Media Marketing & Monitoring

Whether it's prospecting for new leads or gaining instantaneous product feedback, the social web (wikis, blogs, social networks, and any web content) provides insights into what is being said about your company, brands, market, and the competition. Companies that treat social media as solely Marketing's domain leave money on the table. Sales, R&D, Support and HR all stand to benefit.

In the Social Business model, engaging the social web has three critical components:

- Pro-active marketing via social networks, blogs, advertising, community building, and content creation
- Re-active monitoring via tracking critical wikis, blogs, social networks, and web content for leads, customer sentiment, service problems, market trends, and competitive insights
- The ability for employees to collaborate and share information to maximize results in the preceding two areas

Into today's business world, these three engagement areas are not optional business strategies.

They are core to the Social Business principles that are required to compete and thrive. Or not.

Within these core areas of Social Business engagement there are 18 business imperatives that will drive meaningful competitive advantage. This paper is the first publication to outline them. They are your roadmap to Social Business success.

The 18 Social Business Imperatives.

Engage employees.

Break down silos to connect people, information and expertise.

Imperative #1

Expertise location/corporate directory.

Who can help me with this? A simple question.

It doesn't matter if you're the CEO or a new kid on the block just starting your first corporate job. The simple reality is, it is difficult to find answers within the vast repository of every enterprise. Just trying to determine an escalation path or an answer to simple questions like "Who are they? What do they do?" takes cycles that are constantly repeated again and again throughout the organization. The cost in wasted time simply searching for basic org chart answers in any organization is frightening.

Social Business makes it fast and easy to find subject matter experts and answers. When each person within the business has an accessible profile that includes their background, expertise, relationships, their connections to all of the critical projects, groups, messages, and documents they have worked on or are actively working on, their expertise reveals itself.

Social Business expects you to find who and what you need at "Google speed". The days of the long email threads read by masses of highly paid talent stating

"Does anyone know....?" are over. No longer are the right people and answers buried in the bowels of the business. Layers are peeled away in seconds.

Once you've found the right experts, you engage them. Cross-functional project teams are formed rapidly. When the need exists to swarm on an opportunity, or to solve a customer's problem, or to mitigate a risk, you create an instant expert community of subject matter experts. Talent in different fields can "roll on" and "roll off" projects as required, regardless of their location, title, or place in the organizational chart.

In many ways Social Business makes the "org chart" obsolete. The minute teams can self-organize to produce rapid results, org charts have little value. Your knowledge, experience, and ability to drive the right outcome matter most. The simple task of finding the right experts unlocks the key to hidden depth and new levels of innovation and results.

"Collaboration is key to our sustained growth. Jive's Social Business Software works as a communications operating system for our business. It has significantly improved our ability to collaborate, drive decision-making and become a more agile company."

Tony Uphoff, CEO, UBM TechWeb

Imperative #2

Innovation accelerated.

Let's face it; the global enterprise has its challenges. It begs for new, creative ways to leverage talent distributed to the four corners of the planet.

Social Business communities—designed to reward the sharing of new ideas across business units and regions—can instantly shrink the globe and accelerate innovation.

Social Business enables ideas usually lost at the water cooler to be shared and almost instantly stamped with market validation. Innovation is on steroids and woven into the fabric of the business culture. And it is no longer the sole domain of R&D. It now extends to everyone and anyone engaged and interested in your company.

Innovation is now driven by capturing, collaborating, and capitalizing on the best ideas gathered from across the social graph, all occurring within one open platform. Ideas submitted from any level of the organization are encouraged, enabled, instantly vetted, refined, and voted on by anyone interested in participating. The business now has a view into who provides fresh and needed perspectives, so the appropriate incentives and rewards can further accelerate contributions.

Rather than death by meeting, Social Business enables dynamic community creation, the retention of content, and the inclusion of the right experts at the right time. Social Capital expands and drives the acceleration of innovation.

Imperative #3

Corporate communications.

Confused employees pose a bigger threat to your company than all your competitors combined. The confusion stems from the social rumor mill: Google alerts and Twitter feeds that are full of competitor FUD, analyst opinions, negative reviews, and customer complaints.

The one-way, top-down communications model is obsolete. Corporate newsletters don't align employees. All-company emails don't produce results.

Social Business operates on a multi-channel, high-definition employee community. Executives post blogs to share strategic initiatives and KPIs in real time. Rumors are defused and concerns are addressed by commenting directly where they're posted, in a discussion, status update, or question.

Instead of generic corporate speak, videos provide a personal way to convey important news. The most popular discussions and blog posts rise to the top, instantly plugging management into what employees are paying attention to. It's easy to discover influencers in your company and engage them openly and constructively. Interaction flows in every direction, collapsing boundaries and tearing down hierarchies.

Social Business gives you a powerful way to monitor employee sentiment and a podium for clearly and broadly communicating what matters to your business. Create the focus that drives results.

Imperative # 4

Merger & acquisition integration.

Failed M&As represent billions lost. It's time to fix this.

Once the deal is announced, confusion and anxiety reign. Employees feel betrayed. Gossip and feelings of job insecurity lower productivity. Retaining talent essential to continuity and future success isn't guaranteed. This is when competitors pounce.

Social Business directly addresses key M&A success factors such as change management, adoption, and communication. It reduces risk and shortens time required to merge corporate cultures.

A social community integrates people, systems, and cultures. Employees at all levels from both sides have a forum for voicing concerns and fostering understanding. Instead of relying on email, frequent and open communication about the merger takes on multiple forms in blogs, discussions, comments, and status updates. Rich social profiles help the merger go from transactional to personal. Expertise is discovered. New teams can immediately form to speed joint development and new revenue opportunities. Integration accelerates.

Social Business enables a new culture to take shape almost organically, all without dependency on the M&A team. "Your way" vs. "my way" becomes "our way".

Imperative # 5

Contact center enablement.

Want to improve customer satisfaction and retention? Start by giving your contact center agents better support.

Every customer complaint creates an uphill battle for your agents. “Who has the expertise to resolve this issue? Am I the only one working on this problem? Where has the answer to this been documented? Who can help me right now?”

No wonder contact centers are plagued by high turnover. Agents feel disconnected from the rest of the organization. They struggle with painful, disjointed tools that yield few answers.

Social Business gives contact center employees immediate and direct access to product experts, the collective knowledge of the business, and fellow agents.

Agents can crowdsource answers and immediately make them available to the team. Searches produce both relevant expertise and content, producing answers more quickly. Instant documentation rapidly adds to the intellectual capital of the business. The most severe cases immediately surface for your “A team” to address.

Social Business gives contact center agents access to the collective knowledge of the business, at the moment of customer pain. Issues get rapidly resolved. Support costs are lowered. Satisfaction goes up.

Imperative # 6

Sales channel enablement.

Enabling a sales channel is fraught with challenges: outdated information; competitive pressures; complex customer requirements; and remote employees.

Sales channel enablement is more than strategic. It’s the life source of revenue for your business. Social Business can deliver high quality, vetted content to the right sales team for the deals in front of them and the opportunities they didn’t know about.

Social Business provides sales with single platform for collaborating on deals, leveraging expertise, asking for help, and sharing intelligence. Community brings visibility to qualified opportunities. Sales reps and partners are connected directly with their peers to share tips, contacts, and competitor insights. It’s easy to find the resources in the business that know the prospect, and know how the solution maps to the prospect’s needs. Opportunities or threats can be signaled and swarmed upon immediately.

Social Business is the most effective way for distributed, virtual sales teams to stay engaged and synchronized. The results: a healthier revenue stream through increased pipeline and revenue opportunities.

“Much of the enterprise technology used today was built for transactional efficiency rather than collaboration. Business-focused social software can enable faster response and breakthrough outcomes by introducing a new approach to how business gets done.”

Chris Fletcher, Research Director, Gartner

Engage customers.

Create communities that generate business outcomes.

Imperative # 7

Event communities.

Businesses spend a lot of money on in-person events without reaping the benefits. Enthusiasm fades quickly, connections are lost, and content is forgotten.

Show over means game over.

Events are about building relationships, educating stakeholders, listening, and uncovering new opportunities. Social Business reinvents the corporate event calendar to create communities of interest that extend the value of live conferences, or in some cases, replace them completely.

Your community members—customers, prospects, partners—convene online with each other, your product experts, and account managers. Long after the event is over, attendees have 24/7 access to event presentations and videos. Social Business gives them the tools to self-organize a group around a topic, post ideas, share advice, and make lasting connections.

The community creates value for your organization too. Community engagement fosters loyalty and investment in your company. Account upselling, product ideas, and support issues become immediately visible. In many cases you can eliminate the need to host a live event altogether, a significant cost savings.

Imperative # 8

Social commerce.

The new point of sale is wherever customers are talking. Why aren't you there?

"Someone like me" has become the most trusted source for purchasing decisions. Consumers skip your website go straight to product reviews. They ping their social networks for advice. They read blogs and participate in forums to find the information they need to make a decision.

Authentically re-engage your company in the buying process. Social Business creates rich communities of interest. Members can connect with product enthusiasts, build trusted networks, find reviews, engage in discussions, contribute content, and join a fan base.

Social Business integrates directly into your existing commerce systems to leverage the credibility of user-generated content. It's a social, authentic way to create points of sale that don't scream "Marketing".

"Jive allows us to connect with our customers and engage in conversation that matters to them. We have found our customer community invaluable as a channel for us to get messages out broadly and quickly, allowing us to develop deeper, more meaningful customer relationships."

Barry McPherson

Executive Vice President

Worldwide Technical Support, McAfee

Imperative # 9

Community-based support.

Why are your support agents wasting time on issues customers have already resolved?

There's zero patience for offshore call centers, faulty voice recognition systems, and long support queues. Unless you have a monopoly and customers have no options, the support experience will make or break your business.

Bad service has driven customers to resolve issues on their own at "Google speed". They've become experts at crowdsourcing answers. They know more than your support agents.

Social Business transforms customer self-service into business value. Rich social support communities let customers not only answer each other's questions, but also get help from service agents or product experts.

The community becomes an asset in resolving issues, reducing time to resolution and distributing solutions broadly and rapidly. Discussions are captured so customers and support agents can reference them again and again. Customers get faster issue resolution, and support agents are freed to resolve more serious issues.

The customer experience is no longer frustration first, resolution later. The customer becomes the engine driving business value for themselves and your business community.

Imperative # 10

Account management.

You're guilty of neglecting your clients.

Most organizations only have one or two points of contact for clients to go to. At most. As a result, your clients feel like nobody is listening. Their ideas are going into a black hole. Their issues aren't being addressed.

Start paying attention. Social Business drives customer retention by removing bottlenecks and enabling broader collaboration between employees and clients in a protected, private setting.

Social Business creates one central place for everything including meeting notes, reports, questions, or ideas. It removes bottlenecks by making it possible for employees outside of the account team to respond. They don't have to rely on account managers to quickly disseminate information internally. Instead, anyone who wants real-time or weekly alerts can sign up for them, and as a result, engage directly with clients.

Equally important, as more employees have the ability to collaborate and connect with clients, a better understanding of client needs and ideas becomes the new normal, helping further drive research and product efforts.

Social Business. It's the new way to discover new opportunities and deepen client relationships.

Imperative #11

Social marketing.

Marketing as usual will get you fired. Social marketing will get you promoted.

Marketing as usual has been completely disrupted. You now engage your market directly on Facebook, Twitter, and other social media services. Social feeds are real-time psychographic and demographic research. You pro-actively build communities of interest where prospective customers can discuss their interests, and where you can build authentic relationships without expensive sales and marketing campaigns. Your community members and their content become an extension of your marketing strategy.

Social Business also provides your marketing team with access to communities in ways never imagined. These communities are the marketer's pipe dream; they are focus groups on steroids at little cost and of tremendous value.

The Social Business now drives pro-active marketing, leveraging social networks, blogs, advertising, community building, and content creation. It's the most powerful means to actively find and retain new customers; increase wallet-share with existing customers; and create raving fans since the invention of word-of-mouth.

Engage the social web.

Social media monitoring and marketing.

Imperative # 12

Customer innovation.

No one knows the value and limitations of your products or services; the effectiveness of your marketing; and the quality of your employees better than your customer. If you're not engaged with them, you're stagnating.

A Social Business doesn't just listen; it acts. Decisively. It transforms the feedback into new product lines and revenue streams.

Social Business uses community to engage in dialogue with customers. Solicit feedback, collect ideas, and collaborate on proposed changes. Create specialized communities for focus groups and advisory boards. Make it possible to proactively learn from your key constituents, no matter where their conversations are occurring across the social web.

Customer communities provide continuous R&D. Improve products to capture bigger market share. Shorten the decision-making and development processes required to bring new features and services to market. Stay ahead of the competition, way ahead.

Imperative # 13

Product launches.

You can't rely on traditional focus groups and briefing a handful of analysts to successfully develop and launch your product. The social web has opened up a world of product feedback and market influencers you can't afford to ignore.

Social Business drastically reduces time to market, maximizes market acceptance, and aligns every product influencer in advance of the new product's release.

Product launches can leverage crowdsourced ideas from a broad cross-section of constituents in real-time. Product marketers can monitor social conversations centered on brand; they can identify influencers; and incorporate product feedback into product development processes much earlier in the product design process.

With Social Business, products ready for launch have been socialized long before they are on the market. Not only is marketplace primed, but the entire "go to market" team has a heightened awareness of the product's market value.

“Listening and engaging in meaningful dialogue with customers both on our site and in social media outlets like Facebook, YouTube and Twitter helps National Instruments provide quality support, improve products, and build loyalty. Jive, combined with social media monitoring, helps teams manage these conversations and ensure accurate, real-time responses.”

Deirdre Walsh, Social Media Manager,
National Instruments

Imperative # 14

Community-based recruitment.

It is costing your company far too much time and money to acquire the right talent.

The social web has created a new channel for recruiters. Recruiters can now set up agents that work 24x7 on their behalf. They can highlight tweets and conversations relating to specific job searches. A recruiter can scan open Facebook groups for conversations about working for you or the competition.

Social Business lets you find and dispel negative impressions about your company. It provides the opportunity to track conversations about what it's like to work for your competition. It provides a powerful means to attract and hire the best by engaging candidates in an open, social way.

The social web provides HR recruiting with a 360-degree view that includes visibility into the profiles of existing and previous employees and applicants, while building a rich view of the external landscape. It provides a way to stay connected with "alumni" employees and generate qualified referrals.

In addition, social web activity creates a positive brand perception for potential candidates, especially those who've grown up social.

Imperative # 15

Social brand management.

If your brand management strategy does not have the social web at its core, it's irrelevant.

Stating that the brand game has changed understates reality. The social web has revolutionized brand strategy.

Customer feedback, analyst rankings, and product reviews go global instantly. Effective brand management on the social web is both reactive and proactive. It's not just about listening and responding to brand perceptions. You can now engage customers before and after marketing initiatives. You can quickly identify opportunities and threats, broadly share them in real-time, and collaboratively respond.

Social Business helps align brand strategy and its execution from start to finish. There is no longer a delay in measuring the market's response to an initiative. You're always ready to respond to positive or negative company buzz on the social web. Negative impressions in the millions can be defended in a timely and intelligent way.

Brand management on the social web is about engaging in multiple conversations and communities that interact with your brand on a scale that you have never before experienced. Brand management is more about engaging and influencing community than about ad campaigns that contain "the right message."

It's not only about faster interactive responses but also about proactive brand management. Companies need to and can track and measure the buzz about their company, brand, or product prior to campaigns, as well as, during and after the campaigns are completed.

The social web is not the future of brand management. It is now.

Imperative # 16

Service everywhere.

Your customers are online, complaining. You are not prepared to respond.

On the social web, a customer issue can escalate into crisis mode instantly. You can't afford to limit service to in-bound, "close the service ticket ASAP" modes. Service everywhere requires more than a game change; it requires a frontal commitment to social web engagement.

Social Business enables companies to engage and support customers on Facebook, Twitter, blogs and other social networks. When service representatives can identify and address customer issues anywhere on the social web support, costs go down, satisfaction goes up, and crisis is proactively managed.

Thorny issues are easily pulled into internal conversations so they can be solved collaboratively. Resolution gets documented and the service knowledgebase continues to improve.

Social Business gives your brand presence, visibility, and accessibility on the web. It is about providing improved service, driving customer loyalty, and managing and mitigating risks.

Imperative # 17

Social selling.

Qualified leads are online, signaling readiness to buy. You are ignoring them.

The social web has transformed the sales process. People aren't just sharing personal information on social networks, they're also blogging, tweeting, and posting their business challenges, frustrations, and questions. It's an invitation to connect.

Social Business gives Sales an immediate and authentic way to engage. "Insider information" that was impossible for Sales to access two years ago is now just a search term away. "Who's the right contact? Is a competitor already engaged? Are they thinking of making a switch? What are their pain points? Who influences them?" It's now possible to create automated agents that scan the web for pertinent content and highlight them on a rep's personalized dashboard.

Social Business means credible, immediate, and relevant engagement. It's the Holy Grail for sales.

Imperative # 18

Competitive intelligence.

Google alerts and digging around online databases like Hoovers and LexisNexis won't crush your competitors. But it will get you fired.

Social Business takes competitive intelligence to a new level. It guarantees you'll know more about your competitor's business, products, customers, brand perception, and employees than they do. It renders traditional competitive research obsolete.

Social Business enables real-time visibility into competitive activity, communities, issues and commentary that can expose product gaps and vulnerabilities. It's your direct link to competitive intelligence like executive departures, product reviews, customer complaints, and disgruntled employees. You now have the ability to exploit competitive weaknesses by instantly engaging, commenting on a thread, or otherwise giving a reason to reach out and potentially capture customers from the competition.

Competitive intelligence teams can now access trend reports delivering visibility into macro competitive trends that can be shared in virtual war rooms, and internally with product and sales teams.

If your competitive intelligence gathering doesn't involve the social web, you have surrendered.

Join the Social Business revolution.

Change is always met with a high degree of resistance.

It's time to choose between business as usual or Social Business. Being a Social Business is about breaking down barriers between the internal and external world. It's about empowering knowledge workers to collaborate in ways that email, ERP, CRM, and legacy portals or websites will never let them.

Opportunities like Social Business don't come along often. If you choose business as usual, the view from behind won't be very interesting.



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