

For many chief information officers (CIOs), social media belongs in the realm of the marketing team down the hall. The idea of bringing Facebook or Twitter into the workplace seems to be one of sheer lunacy—surely this would create a host of security threats and privacy concerns. However, the demand for enterprise social collaboration is on the rise—and with good reason.

Social media has become an integral part of how people communicate in their personal lives. It is natural that this new communication has begun to change how they collaborate and communicate professionally in the workplace. With millennials becoming an increasingly larger part of the workforce, CIOs will be forced to face enterprise social collaboration (ESC) in the future. Intelligent CIOs—who are ahead of the trend—have already embraced it, leading to staggering results.

Enterprise Social Collaboration: An Overview

To label ESC as the utilization of Facebook or Twitter for work is a misconception that leads to the belief that these kind of tools are time-wasters that drain productivity. When properly integrated, ESC solutions empower both employees and employer. It can instill the intimacy and fun of social media into work-related communications, and lead to accomplishing tasks in new and more efficient ways. Trusted partners and valued customers can also be integrated directly into the network to everyone's mutual advantage.

A solid ESC technology is a secure online network that takes a static intranet to the next level with live activity streams, document collaboration, sub-communities for different projects and departments, and more. Early adopters have already realized significant value, and CIOs can't afford to ignore this technology any longer.

Taking the Social Plunge

A set of common concerns often come up when CIOs are presented with the question of whether to implement enterprise social collaboration tools. In addition to the concern that adopting such platforms will decrease employee productivity, many executives fear the failure associated with internal social initiatives. In fact, 70 percent of internal social initiatives eventually fail. For CIOs who often lack practical knowledge about social media and fear change, this statistic is enough to keep them from considering the potential benefits of enterprise social collaboration.

The question remains: why should CIOs implement enterprise social collaboration platforms if they're seemingly destined to fail? The answer is quite simple: the benefits far exceed the risks.

Constant Communication

For years, the social media revolution has been affecting how people communicate on a daily basis. Daily life has become increasingly digitalized. With the workforce becoming dominated by millennials, it is hard for employers to attract and keep a young workforce that thrives on and even expects social media to be integrated into their work lives. In addition, most enterprise social networks support mobile communication that has become so vital to today's global business practices. ESC platforms allow information to be accessed from anywhere at any time, across multiple devices.

Avoiding Security Issues

One of the biggest hesitations CIOs have about adopting enterprise social collaboration platforms is the potential security issues and threat to business critical data. While breaking down information silos and improving collaboration is great from a productivity standpoint, many believe that such platforms will result in the disclosure of confidential information. However, the opposite is true. Social collaboration tools have a host of security and governance measures in place to prevent such security breaches from happening. Administrators can easily control access rights for individual users and groups of users, making sure the right people have access to the right

information. In addition, modern ESC solutions offer features such as keyword based profanity filters.

An Organized Way to Communicate

A common issue surrounding communication in the workplace is email overload: extended conversations between multiple parties that result in a long string of emails that must be sorted through for the information needed. While email communication is still great for quick messages, it is not conducive to carrying on in-depth conversations. With the ability to break things down into topics, sub topics and specific groups, ESC tools allow for quick and organized communication and faster decision-making.

Cloud-Based ESC Solutions Eliminate Hassle

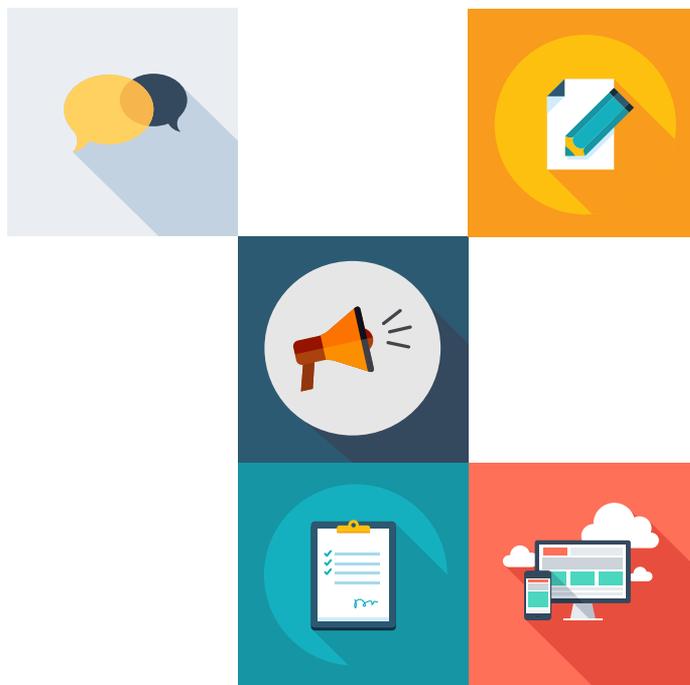
The cost of developing infrastructure can be high. Many platforms require constant upgrades and customization in order to maximize the benefits for an individual company. Enterprise social collaboration tools eliminate these hassles. Hosted and cloud-based ESC solutions reduce the need for further capital expenditure on infrastructure. They are easy to scale up and down in order to suit the number of users on the platform, and require minimal or no customization. Best of all, they eliminate the inconvenience of constant upgrading.

Solving Everyday Challenges

Today's CIOs are facing a host of challenges – and enterprise social collaboration platforms provide many of the solutions they require. Not only does it provide a centralized and organized place for company communication, but also it creates a comprehensive knowledge base and allows for easy document management. Furthermore, platforms can be adopted with ease. Many enterprise social collaboration tools integrate with current business applications and systems, such as HRIS, CRM, Leave Management System and more. Easy and seamless integration allows for maximized return on previous investments in infrastructure.

The Future Is in ESC

Getting social is inescapable. By 2016, 50 percent of large businesses will have implemented an enterprise social collaboration network. Thirty percent of these will be considered as crucial as email and telephones are today (Gartner). The enterprise social software market is expected to grow from \$4.77 billion in 2014 to \$8.14 billion in 2019 (Markets and Markets). The structure of business is changing from a network



of isolated islands to one integrated body. Whereas previously each company branch would function individually; now every part of the machine is aware of what the other parts are doing and all parts work together to accomplish organizational goals more efficiently.

Employees now expect a fast, hassle-free, unified enterprise network from employers that is comparable to the platforms they use in everyday life. The forward-thinking CIO must educate him or herself and fellow senior leaders on how the social media landscape functions outside of their company in order to determine

how it can be best leveraged as an enterprise tool. Failure to do so simply cheats themselves and their company out of increased productivity, and the opportunity to tap into employee ideas and talents.

The time to go social is now. The business landscape will continue to change into a more collaborative, social atmosphere—those who do not change with the trends will find their company left behind.

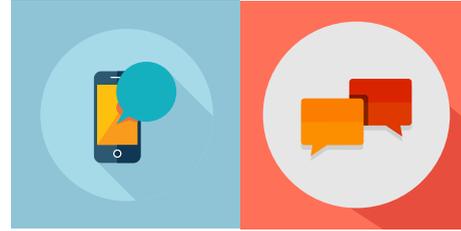
“Enterprise Social Software market expected to grow from \$4.77 billion in 2014 to \$8.14 billion in 2019”

Source: Markets and Markets



About the Authors

Aseem Pandit, Project Manager and Solutions Architect at AgreeYa Solutions: Aseem has more than 15 years of experience in the software world and is passionate about helping organizations design and build solutions to address their complex business needs. He has worked with numerous customers across the globe, and has experience with multiple technologies and frameworks around Open Source, J2EE, Oracle and Microsoft, most recently focusing on Microsoft technologies with SharePoint, BI and BPM. Aseem loves to talk about technology and is always eager learn more and share his knowledge with others. Aseem Pandit is a SharePoint practice manager and solutions architect with AgreeYa Solutions.



About AgreeYa Solutions

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AgreeYa has received considerable recognition in the industry for its technology leadership, quality processes, and customer success that includes Microsoft Gold partner, SEI CMMI, ISO 9001:2015. We engage with our customer as a trusted partner to live our motto "...building our future on your success".

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