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Empowering People: Effective Social Work Approaches & Strategies



A STUDY ON THE SCOPE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AS A MEANS OF INTERNAL EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATION

KEYWORDS

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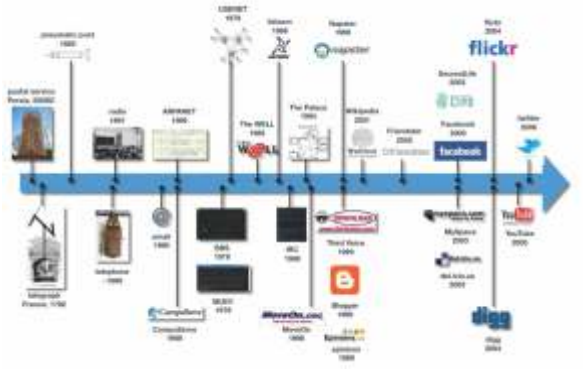
ABSTRACT *"Evolution is evolution – and it's happened before us and will continue after we're gone. But, what's taking place now is much more than change for the sake of change. The socialization of content creation, consumption and participation, is hastening the metamorphosis that transforms everyday people into participants of a powerful and valuable media literate society."- Brian solis. As more and more people are using social media in their daily lives, it is important to look at these tools as an internal communication method as well. Wright (2008) believes that "as people experience the benefits of social media in their lives outside the organization; the more they will demand the same features inside" (p. 25). Thus the researcher has focused on employee's perceptions about using social media as a form of internal communication. Hence, researcher has adopted Descriptive Research Design, which is apt to study the characteristics of a particular group / situation and the attitudes and views of the group and collected the data using Simple or Unrestricted Random Sampling is chosen.*

Introduction
Social Media in communication

"Social Media is about the people! Not about your business. Provide for the people and the people will provide for you. Matt Goulart"

Evolution of Social Media



With the advent of social media, the number of communication options has exploded. You can share among your employees almost instantaneously. As the speed of communication accelerates, your challenges to communicate effectively also increase. Keeping your communications accurate and informative becomes a daily challenge. "Focus on how to be social, not on how to do social. Jay Baer" "If content is king, then conversion is queen. John Munsell"

The purpose of the study is to explore how employees are utilizing social media tools as well as look at employee's perceptions towards the idea of using these tools for internal communication purposes to find out if this is something that they are open to, or whether or not they will be willing and interested in learning more about utilizing these tools in the future.

As more and more people are using social media in their daily lives, it is important to look at these tools as an internal communication method as well. Wright (2008) believes that "as people experience the benefits of social media in their lives outside the organization; the more they will demand the same features inside" (p. 25). This is important to this study, as the researcher will be looking at employee's perceptions about using social media as a form of internal communication. Social media has become a common form of communication for many people and today's technology enables us to easily access these social media sites and tools. Joseph Walther's Social Information Processing Theory was used as a basis in this study to look at social media as a way to enhance communication in the workplace. This study is used in survey research to explore employee's perceptions towards social media use as a form of internal communication as well as how employees are currently utilizing social media. The study found that although people generally have a positive perception about social media, the majority of people are not really eager to use these tools as a form of internal communication.

With all the social media sites and tools (status updates, blog posts, etc.) available for communication, this researcher is interested to know show how employees can use these tools effectively to enhance internal communication with other employees within their organizations.

Methods & Materials
In this study descriptive research design is used to find the state of affairs as it exists at present. The universe of the study was 425 from 3 major sectors; one is Ruksa Consortia, an architectural firm; MediSys Project Consultants Pvt. Ltd and the New Age Knowledge driven sector (IT).

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Objective of the study

1. To understand the various uses of social media in the organization.

2. To study the effectiveness of using social media in the organization for Internal Employee communication.

Sample Design

For the purpose of the study, Simple Random Sampling from probability sampling method is chosen. A simple random sampling refers to that sampling technique in which each and every unit of the population has an equal opportunity of being selected in the sample. The item selected is a matter of chance-personal bias of the investigator does not influence the selection. This method is helpful to represent the universe in a better way. The universe of the study was 425 and the Sample size chosen for the study is 80, 25 from Ruksa Consortia; 25 from MediSys Project Consultants Pvt. Ltd and 30 from IT Sector using lottery method.

Methods of Data Collection

The researcher used questionnaire to collect primary data for the study. Secondary data was obtained from books, journals and internet. Questionnaire was chosen for this research because:

- The method is less expensive
- It is less time consuming as the respondents have the liberty to fill up their responses by themselves
- There is a choice for respondents to apply their own ideas
- It is structured and standardized
- It can be self administered
- It can be filled by literate with ease
- It is free from the bias of the interviewer
- No pressure of time on respondents is required.

Analytical technique is used to obtain facts and arrange information in a logical sequence from the raw data collected. After the tabulation of data the tools provide a scientific and mathematical solution to the complex problem. Using Percentage Analysis the data collected was converted into 100%. There are lot many uses of social media both in professional and personal ways. To sum up the researcher would like to mention few reasons why social media for business is non-negotiable

Here are some Reasons why using social media for business is not negotiable. Social Proof, Aids customer service, Brand Exposure, Opens up conversation:

- Humanizes your brand
- Builds your sphere of influence
- Your competitor is using it
- Your target audience is using it
- Google counts social sharing when ranking
- Provides great brand exposure
- It's the next generation of Word of mouth marketing.
- Social media networking sites have high page rank
- Provides transparency.

The questionnaire focuses on the following major dimension of study.

- Demographic Details of the Respondents.
- Objectives of Communication.
- Sources of internal Communication.
- Use of Social Media

Findings

It is found that 38.8% of the respondents are below 25 years, 46.3% of the respondents are in the age group of 26 – 30 years, 8.8% of the respondents are in the age group of 31 – 35 years and 6.3% of the employees are in the age group of 35 years and above.

- It is found that 67% of the respondents are male employees and 33% are female employees.
- It is found that 77% of the respondents strongly agree while 21% of respondents agree and 1 % respondents have a neutral opinion on speedy delivery characteristic of objective of communication.
- It is found that 87% of the respondents strongly agree while 11% of respondents agree and 1 % respondents have a neutral opinion on knowledge repository characteristic of aspects of empowerment.
- It is found that 66% of the respondents strongly agree while 28% of respondents agree and 5% respondents have a neutral opinion on de-stressing characteristic of aspects of empowerment.
- It is found that 77% of the respondents strongly agree while 21% of respondents agree and 1% respondents have a neutral opinion on recognition characteristic of aspects of motivation.
- It is found that 77% of the respondents strongly agree while 20% of respondents agree and 2% respondents have a neutral opinion on acknowledgment characteristic of aspects of motivation.
- It is found that 67% of the respondents feel highly satisfied while 32% of respondents feel satisfied with the flow of communication through social media.
- It is found that 60% of the respondents feel highly satisfied while 38% of respondents feel satisfied and 1.3% of respondents have a neutral opinion with the satisfaction level with current social media tools.
- It is found that 48% of the respondents feel highly satisfied while 46% of respondents feel satisfied and 2% of respondents have a neutral opinion with 2% of respondents are dissatisfied with face-to-face communication as a means of internal communication.
- It is found that 42% of the respondents feel highly satisfied while 43% of respondents feel satisfied and 13% of respondents have a neutral opinion with E-mail communication as a means of internal communication.
- It is found that 75% of the respondents feel highly satisfied while 23% of respondents feel satisfied and 2% of respondents have a neutral opinion in believing social media tools can help to enhance internal communication in their organizations.
- It is found that 78% of the respondents strongly agree while 20% of respondents agree and 1% of respondents have a neutral opinion in agreeing that social media tools are user friendly.
- It is found that 66% of the respondents strongly agree while 31% of respondents agree and 2% of respondents have a neutral opinion on the impact of social media in organization culture.
- It is found that 61% of the respondents strongly agree while 33% of respondents agree and 5% of respondents have a neutral opinion in recommending using social media as means of internal communication.

Suggestions

This study helped to understand, how employees are currently utilizing social media tools both at work and in their personal activities. It also gives insight to the employee's perceptions towards social media in general, as well as their thoughts about these tools as a form of internal communication. As discussed in the review of literature, this study shows that there are many benefits of using computer as a mediate at the work place. These benefits were enhancing communication, getting information quicker; people are already familiar with these sites and tools, etc. The diverse group of people who participated in this study generally has a positive outlook on social media tools and sites and their perspectives were similar to study as discussed.

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Most participants indicated that they have used these tools and sites, whether at work or for their personal activities and thus the study revealed that these participants believe these tools are user friendly and they enhance communication.

Many companies remain skeptical, but the fact is that how people search or find, share and communicate information, has completely changed in the current years. The researcher also believe that five years from now it will go through another evolution, with almost all internal communication being produced and distributed online. HR should promote this use of social media for communicating with both internal and external audiences. It will lead to better communication, enhance trust and corporate-brand building. It can especially be helpful in times of crisis.

"If you're not using social media in your organization yet, internally or externally, it's never too late to start."

Conclusions

The majority of corporate communicators think that social networking tools have a part to play in internal communication. This was the verdict of this research titled 'A Study on the Scope of Effectiveness of Social Media as a Means of Internal Employee Communication'. More than two thirds (70%) of those questioned said they thought social networking could work for them, although they felt that any such tools had to be tailored to suit their particular needs. "It will have an impact in everything you do both personally and professionally". "Business is all about networking and communicating with colleagues and peers. Any tool that makes this easier, if used wisely, can only be beneficial." "Social media is a real opportunity for the organisation – and the organization can also help raise the internal communications methods and can drive benefits from it. By harnessing new digital channels, organization can demonstrate that their work can bring about real change in the culture of the organisation and can help drive people engagement and so business performance," "SOCIAL MEDIA IS NOT A REVOLUTION BUT AN EVOLUTION"

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