

Enterprise Social Networks: What Business Leaders Need to Know

Key takeaways from a presentation by John Gerstner at the October 2014 IABC Heritage District Conference in Providence, RI.

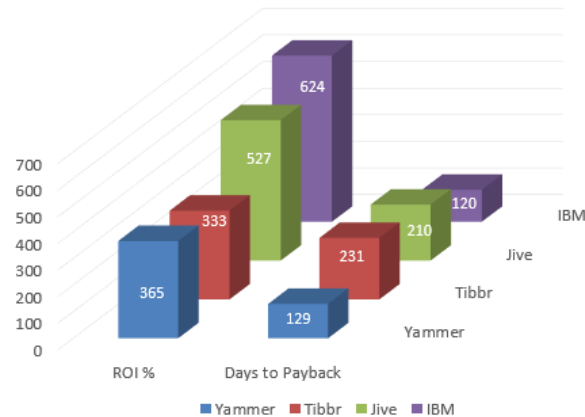
All businesses are in a VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous) era. Innovative, disruptive value creation is critical to success, and this requires employees that are seamlessly connected, engaged and empowered.

Enterprise Social Networks are the engines powering the “social business” journey that leading companies are taking. They empower free-flowing conversations, expertise identification, knowledge sharing and archiving, crowd-sourcing of ideas and innovations and collaborative teaming and learning.

Introducing a collaborative social layer into the workplace is a potential “game changer” for organizations, with both direct and indirect ROI rewards. An ESN plays directly into initiatives promoting openness, innovation, agility, employee engagement and customer experience. Studies by a range of industry experts show ESNs, if deployed and managed strategically, can make employees up to 25% more productive due to better tools for communication and easier access to critical information and expertise. (See vendor ROI and payback chart above).

Enterprise Social Network ROI & Payback Estimates

(Based on 6,500 employees - 2014 research by John Gerstner)



Enterprise Social Networks should not be seen as just another technology implementation. Their success or failure rests on how seamlessly the ESN integrates into existing workplace tools and how well it helps employees do things easier, solve problems they’re having or allows them to do things they couldn’t do before. This requires a sustained focus on adoption, community management and a governance process to assure continuous improvement.

Since employee trust is critical to sharing knowledge and collaborating across silos, leadership must be willing to support and model best collaboration practices, seriously listen, tap the collective wisdom of the organization and accept the inherent unpredictability of empowered networks.

The mobile, social workplace is here. Just as Facebook and other consumer social networks have changed how family, friends and acquaintances connect, ESNs are becoming a common workplace communication and collaboration tool. The tangible and intangible benefits are simply too important to ignore.

If you would like an overview presentation on this topic for your team, contact John Gerstner at jjg@communitelligence.com or call 904 588-2074. More information at www.Communitelligence.com.