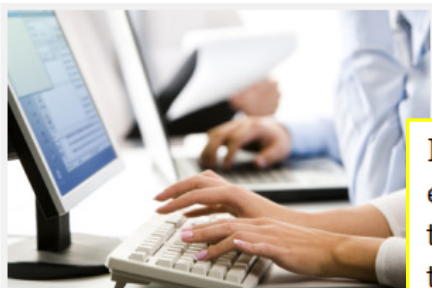


Social Connections That Work For The Enterprise

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By [Scott Koegler](#)

Social business is growing more sophisticated, with social business tools moving beyond simple business-to-consumer product and brand promotion to sophisticated platforms for both internal and external communication and collaboration.



(photo credit: iStock)

The use of social communication tools for specific purposes within the enterprise is making a difference in the way people work and in their ability to share information securely. Business social platforms like Jive, that link internal staff across organizational and geographic boundaries, bring ideas and personalities to life while keeping conversations internal to the organizations.

This trend is part of the movement toward a [knowledge-based organization according to](#) Justyn Howard, CEO of [Sprout Social](#), a social media management platform for businesses. He recommends that organizations “coordinate strategic adoption of social media across multiple functions of your business—including marketing, customer service, product development, sales and HR—because each have a different role to play and your brand benefits from becoming involved in social conversations at various levels.”

All of this is a far cry from the not-so-distant past, when some companies banned public social media, citing privacy and liability concerns.

Vishal Sankhla, co-founder and CTO of social media marketing platform [Viralheat](#), cites some of the issues companies have been concerned with—and how they have started to overcome them: “When large companies have multiple people working on their corporate social accounts, compliance and liability often get lost in the shuffle, making social media blunders more common,” he said. “Enterprises have turned to social media management tools that offer team and seat management—a feature that allows users to designate roles, permissions and tasks to specific team members.”

Forward-thinking enterprises are more effectively engaging their staff by providing social media tools that balance flexibility and accountability through the use of managed connections.

With its diverse and widely distributed workforce, [Houlihan’s Restaurants](#) is taking advantage of this more controlled social media platform type. “Houlihan’s social internal communication platform has allowed us to evolve from one-way communication—HQ messaging to employees—to three-way communication—HQ to employees, employees to HQ, and employees to employees,” said Jen Gulvik, senior vice president of marketing and creative director, Houlihan’s. “With the look and feel of public social platforms, all content has a commentary field, so managers often assist other unit managers, and clarifications take place directly on news stories. Previously, we would have sent a second system-wide clarification to everyone’s inbox whether they needed it or not.”

At Elastic Path Software, a software development company, free-flowing, secure communication has been key to employee productivity. “As a global software company, we have developers working all over the world,” said Harry Chemko, [Elastic Path](#) CEO. “For our internal software development team, we’ve gone social by using wikis and GitHub to create what we call Hive, our internal social coding website. It allows developers to hack and iterate collaboratively on code that often makes it into our finished product. Our internal collaboration tools allow us to share everything from programming tips and tricks to project updates.”

Companies should expect to see this social model integrated into more and more of the software and services they use every day.

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