

Fuel Your Business Engine: Burning Up The Technology Trail

31 May 2012 (Thursday), 10am to 11am (Singapore Time)

Questions & Answers

Q: How can I relate social media in teaching & learning? Actually I'm working in education sector as IT Officer.

A: My friends at the American School of Bombay - who are the tops in the world right now at integrating technology into the classroom - are doing things like these... Teaching the kids how to use crowdsourcing in the classroom to get work done. Using social tools to communicate with parents and students jointly, teaching students how to build their own rivers of information on course subjects so they can learn faster, and know how to use that technique. It is a great idea to develop an appropriate use course for the various age groups that teaches student the appropriate use of technology in their lives. This includes where to find the best information, when to use devices and when not to, and what is appropriate for them to view online and what is not. And finally, teach kids about managing their reputations online.

Q: Can you repeat again the tools for information & listening?

A: You can actually go online and search for listening tools and get a list of them. To give you an example, the Number One tool that most corporations use is SYSMOS. RadiantSix by Salesforce is quite popular as well. There's a tool called Viral Heat, there's a list of tools, what I would suggest is you can just go do a Google search for online listening tools and you will get a list of them. And the other thing you can do if it helps you at all, we actually have a grid that shows all the listening tools, how much they cost, what their features are, etc. If you'd email me, my office could send you that grid if that would be helpful to you.

Q: Can we say that social technology is a part of knowledge management?

A: And somebody made a comment that social technology is part of knowledge management, I think that it is a piece of knowledge management; and the reason why is because when we talk about things like citizen journalism, and the fact that knowledge comes from information. What social has dramatically increased the flow of information, and it has also given us a great tool to increase our knowledge management capabilities. Social technologies have given us some new tools around knowledge management.

Q: What are the disadvantages of social media in education?

A: Students using social networking during class are distracted and miss content. Social connections give students digital courage and many of them use that to say things over the wire they would never say in person. Students are using social to bully other students in ways that are more public and instant than we had seen in the old days. Social networking is hurting some students' abilities to have critical conversations in person because they are getting used to isolating themselves from others with technology when the discussion becomes emotional.

Q: How effective our social communication if we only count on the social media tools rather than the advertisement?

A: You made a good point that if you were going to use a social tool, i.e. blog, you can write a real high-quality blog but if you have methods to make sure that you get that information out there and somehow advertise the blog, then it may be very difficult to get people to subscribe to it. Same thing that you can create a fantastic viral video, you can put that video on your website or YouTube. But if you don't have some type of marketing or outreach or advertising ability to get that video out to a core amount of people so they can go viral, you can have a great piece of content, but really not have it go out to the world. I think you need those, you really need a high quality type of social communication, you need ways to have an outreach for it and get it out to prospects and

customers. It's usually a lot easier to advertise something to customers, because you have their contact information. It's harder sometimes to advertise out to your prospects if you don't have their information, you definitely have to do the outreach.

Q: Compared to other technologies, how do you think Web2.0 will impact businesses?

A: I often think about the fact that in Web 2.0, we talk about the 1400 and the GoogleDoc Press. When we got the GoogleDoc Press, and we were able to print books, that would have a huge impact on humanity. I have a very strong feeling that in 100 years, we will look back at social tools and we will understand that they have a much larger impact on humanity than what we understand today. I don't think that most people today have any idea that these tools are going to make. I am seeing now that clients of ours who are really implementing these tools are really winning in the market I mean really doing well against the competition. I really believe that social tools are five times more powerful than most people understand and they'd just slowly use them. That's a shame, because the faster they'd adopt them, they faster they could get advantages in the marketplace.

Q: Can you explain again about the reputation value, can you measure it by an internal team or outsource?

A: You can measure it yourself, there are websites like SocialMansion.com, CLOUT, Twitterliser, there are a number of free sites to help you analyse your reputation; calculate what your sentiment ratio is, how many positive or negative comments you get, analyse how many people are talking about you, etc. You don't have to hire a third party firm to help you analyse your reputation, you just need to get hold of the right sites.

Q: Where do we start if we really want to be good in using social tools?

A: One that would be helpful if you got the book that I wrote called Social Technologies, because that book shows what the 12-step process is what we help clients implement social tools. But if you don't want to buy the book, I will give you a couple of things that I think are critical. The first place to start is you really want to understand what are your goals; are your goals to sell more, to cut costs, to try to use social tools to beat the competition in your market, I think you have to be very clear, and what you are trying to accomplish with these tools. The second thing that you have to do is put together a team of people even if you have a small company, maybe a team of two or three people who are going to, as part of what they do, touch out these tools and get them out into the market. The third thing to do is to pick out three or four concepts that I covered today, and try to get those concepts done, to learn those things, in other words, to create an organisational voice, to get that done, figure out how you could use crowdsourcing in some way to save money to get work done cheaper, faster, better. Learn how to build rivers of information so you can be smarter. You may not be the biggest, but you can be the smartest company. That will cost you nothing except the time invested to get smarter. I always tell that to the small businesses.

Q: What are the biggest mistakes people are making today in social tools?

A: One is that they are moving too slow to use them; I think too many people are waiting for competitors to show them how to do it. So, especially smaller businesses are always waiting for bigger businesses to show them how to do it, but the problem is; you will always be behind. I think that moving too slow in using these tools is probably one of the biggest mistakes. Another mistake is some people hire a young person, and giving this job to that young person, I think that can sometimes be a mistake because they may understand social tools, but not business. So they don't really know how to apply those tools. Some other companies have sales people because they are not teaching salespeople how to use these tools. So they are missing a lot of opportunities and benefits that they could have, or be able to sell better, those are the few mistakes that I see today.

Q: How much of a value do we hear in social technology is overhyped and how much is real?

A: I think that there are parts of it that are overhyped, and some under hyped. For example, I think Facebook and e-Communities are overhyped. We hear so much discussion about sci-fi Facebook and that is really just an e-community. As a concept, t we are spending too much time talking about e-community and not nearly enough time talking about rivers of information or crowdsourcing or online reputation. So I think there are parts that are overhyped or under hyped. I think social as a concept is not overhyped. There's a lot of talk about it, but it's a very powerful new way of tools. For instance, when the Internet came out in the late 90s, it was very hyped, was it overhyped? I would say no, because the Internet is a very powerful tool and we are learning that every day, social tools are the same way. They are not overhyped in general, just specific types are overhyped.

Q: If we are in a traditional type of business, should we spend much time and energy experimenting with these tools?

A: Yes, absolutely. The interesting thing that I've seen in the market this year is that three or four years ago, most of the clients that came to us were non-traditional or more aggressive like consumer products companies. But this year, most of the clients that came to us were the traditional or conservative organisations; banks, financial services, insurance, CPA accounting firms, etc. No question in my mind that there's a lot of value in social tools for conservative companies, there's no reason just because somebody is conservative that they should think that that means we should be really slow and we don't need these tools. It's the same thing that people would say that GRs are really business to consumers, are they really just B2C tools, do people really use them for B2B? The answer for that is absolutely, we see companies that are b2b that are using these tools, just as much value to them as to consumer companies. There's no question that more conservative industry should be using these tools today.
