Engineering Your Company's Social Network

Posted At : March 30, 2007 8:03 PM | Posted By : Tom West

Related Categories: Business Process Management (BPM), Mack Hanan, ERP, Collaboration Products, Paul Greenberg, Tom's_Blog, CRM, Social Network, Kevin Roberts, social engineering

Engineering Your Company's Social Network
You don't want it "too social" so it will take away from the purpose, you don't want it too restricting, intimidating, or unfriendly to take away from the usefulness. I was inspired to write these thoughts because of the business I currently pursue and my recent readings of **Mack Hanan** and **Paul Greenberg**. My thinking as a provider of **ERP**, **SFA**, **CRM**, and **Business Process automation** is shifting towards the social aspects of these systems. The fact is, if you have a system that people will use, you will be a successful system provider, pretty much as long as people have faith in the system.

The ultimate goal is to provide a network that is lively, rewarding, interesting, inviting, captivating, and a hundred other positive words to describe the experience. Here are some thoughts on creating an ideal social network for your company. First of all, unless there is a better way we need to bring all the acronyms (ERP, SFA, CRM, and **BPM**) together in a way that doesn't turn everybody off. You want to create a network that people embrace, and use, and constantly tell you what new features they want. According to a recent **Blog by Kevin Roberts**, "we are moving from what you need to what you want". Here are a few thoughts on making that system:

1. You want to **be a good host**. You want to make it easy for the "get in and get out" crowd as you also want to make it inviting and accessible for the "logged in all day" crowd, and of course you want to make it the "end all be all" for those who make the company network their homepage. I have lots of time for anyone who uses our network systems.

2. You want to **input data into the system once**. Is there anything more irritating than inputting the same data over an over again?

3. You want the system to be **easy on the eyes**. Spend a few of that development budget to make the site relevant, beautiful, and credible. It only costs a little bit more to make your system look like a winner.

4. You want the system to be **easy to use** and even a bit **clever** to make the user feel they are actually doing something for the **greater good** of the company. It only takes a listening ear to figure out what people want in their system. It is always those clever little details that make the user feel like this system is worth their time to use it.

5. Not only do you want to **provide clever tools** for people to do their work but you also want to **make the user look good doing their jobs**. You want to provide useful reports, reports that are printed off and brought to meetings and discussed and used to help make important decisions. I do love less paper around my office, but the reality is, not everyone has a computer turned on an accessible at all times. The system should enable people to print "killer reports", you know the kind of reports that answer all those really hard questions that used to hit us unprepared in the past. Now you calmly produce your report state the facts, and carry on with the business at hand.

6. You want to provide a system that **makes business easy** and gets you **paid faster** in the process. This is actually the ultimate goal, but this is not necessarily the goal of those in your company that are going to use the system. This is the biggest point, how to socially engineer the system so it works for everyone in your company, and makes you more money at the end of the day. That is why I am not an advocate of do-it-yourself ERP, CRM, or any other system that requires social engineering. The infrastructure and support of a group of people dedicated to business process automation is worth having on board to help with the process. The process isn't simple, shouldn't be underestimated, and doesn't just happen all by itself.

You want to provide a system that looks like your company looks, and works like your company works. This is a good way to grow and expand your business. You want ERP, SFA, CRM, and Business Process automation and you want it your way.

I'd like to hear some other thoughts on this Blog.

Tom West, Technical Toolboxes Canada, Ltd., **twest@ttoolboxes.ca**, +1 403 235-3495 x201, **www.ttoolboxes.ca**, Skype: **twest1960**