Chapter 39
Social Media Driven Management Education

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ABSTRACT

Business schools are under growing pressure to engage in significant programmatic reforms in light of the business community's call for web-savvy, problem-solving graduates. Even AACSB has gotten into the reformation act by recommending the adoption of a comprehensive collaboration learning strategy. To meet these and related challenges, many schools of business are turning to social media to provide learning opportunities at a time and place that is convenient to the student. The purpose of this paper is to highlight the growing possibilities for using social media to enhance learning outcomes and to outline strategies for implementing this revolutionary process throughout the management education community of practice.

INTRODUCTION

Dramatic change is in the wind throughout the management education universe (Doh, 2010; Kao, 2011). Globalization, demographics, and technology are three of the major factors driving this revolution. Not surprising, the call for significant improvements in MBA programs via a pro-active mission-based approach is not new (Kleiman, 2007). To that end, the creation and delivery of alternative models of management education is receiving increased attention (Lorange, 2012; Thomas, M., 2012). Specifically, the deployment of network-based learning models is at the forefront of this paradigm shift. Speed, agility, and adaptability are three key characteristics of this new learning zeitgeist. Many in the management education community agree that variance in instructor competence and delivery methods are determining factors in learning effectiveness (Rubin, 2013).

Business schools must be able to respond quickly to the changing requirements from both the business community and students. A recent study, sponsored by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), revealed a wide gap between the changing needs of the business community and the programs being offered by the business management community (Bruner, 2011). The AACSB report

specifically calls for strengthening international partnerships, expanding internationalization within the curriculum, and connecting various global activities through a comprehensive collaboration strategy.

Collaboration among a variety of groups within the institution creates opportunities for educational change. Engaging the educational community in the curricular change effort helps create a common vision and a culture that supports the institution's educational efforts. Addressing the potential barriers in the educational change effort ahead of time helps an institution plan more efficiently and effectively for curricular change (Oliver, 2011).

One way to provide access to these learning collaboration networks is through the use of social media. This communication technology has already seen widespread utilization throughout higher education, albeit in an application not normally associated with the leaning process – –namely, crisis management (Armour, 2010; Bender, 2012). In that role, social media networks (SMN) have linked college campuses in an interactive dynamic communications environment, which is not dissimilar to the use of social media in a learning context. Specifically, a recent study indicates that Twitter appears to be a preferable platform for crisis communication when it comes to secondary notification (Snoeijers, 2014). The fact that these systems are already in use by administrators, faculty, staff, and students helps ameliorate the challenges associated with transitioning to a web-centric learning universe.

The ubiquity of social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter) is no more apparent than at the university. Social media are increasingly visible in higher education settings as instructors look to technology to mediate and enhance their instruction as well as promote active learning for students. Many scholars argue for the purposeful integration of social media as an educational tool (Tess, 2013).

Social networks continue to grow in popularity, particularly among the millennial generation, on a worldwide basis. Today they are improving workplace productivity by enhancing the communication and collaboration of employees, which aids knowledge transfer and consequently makes organizations more agile (Dubose, 2011; Lohikoski, 2016). A majority of managers now believe that social media is important to the long term viability of their organization and that proportion is growing (Kane, 2014). Specifically, millenniums are utilizing the new platforms of the digital era—the internet, mobile technology, social media—to construct personalized networks of friends, colleagues and affinity group. This cultural and technological phenomenon suggests great potential for utilizing SMN throughout management education for enhancing the learning process and learning outcomes. Social media can open up multiple options for adding new dimensions to learning and knowledge acquisition by allowing students to connect in both formal and informal learning settings (Arqueroa, 2013; Wodzicki, 2012).

Traditional-aged college students have embraced social media technology; it has become a major part of their everyday lives. In this way, the boundaries between online and "real-world" communities are rapidly stretching if not completely deteriorating. Particularly, as we consider the generation for whom such social media technology exchanges have existed their entire lives, there is a fluid interchange between digital and physical experiences. For this generation, social media technology is a primary means of communication and information seeking, and possibly, a central component of their identity and community building (Davis, 2012).

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