

New Rules of Engagement

Why Strong Leaders Should Dispel Three Myths of Communications

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Lightning-fast advances in consumer technology have added life-changing conveniences practically overnight. Waze shortens our commutes, Evernote keeps us organized and FaceTime gives us instant video calls. As a result, employees, customers and even some in academia suggest business leaders embrace workplace transparency and consumerization to transform the enterprise: open all enterprise communications, leverage (often unsecured) consumer apps and devices at work, and adopt the consumer Internet culture.

But let's face it: The consumer Internet resembles a virtual Wild West where anything goes. People share astoundingly intimate details of their lives with hundreds -- even millions -- of "friends" and followers, and trolls feel free to attack perfect strangers with venom-fueled posts for which they face no consequences. Meanwhile, the sharing of information can lead to identity theft, cyberbullying and relationship problems.

Is this the model we want for our businesses?

Three Myths of Enterprise Communications

Theory and the real world are often at odds. Three myths of enterprise communications demonstrate why these ideals should remain just that. Don't fall prey to the latest corporate buzzwords. Rather, defy the conventional wisdom that perpetuates these myths and selectively leverage components of them to foster a culture of engagement.

The Myth of Openness: Enterprises should be as transparent as consumers with information and data. Armed with unlimited information, all employees -- and by extension, customers and investors -- will be more successful.



Reality: Taken to the extreme, transparency means every employee could view any electronic communication, including salaries, discussions about employee performance, early views of financial performance and problems with customers—which could then be shared in social media for all to see.

The Myth of Collaboration: By collaborating with others, enterprises will be more successful because employees will help each other achieve goals, regardless of the fact that each person possesses inherently different goals.



Reality: Enterprise employees will never collaborate the way consumers do: competition exists for promotions, pay raises, and recognition in the workplace; it doesn't in the personal world. When people collaborate, they typically don't have a shared goal or outcome. They're working together, but they still have individual goals.

The Myth of Consumerization: Enterprises should adopt consumer applications, technologies, and culture to attract the best and brightest, serve their customers and maintain competitiveness.



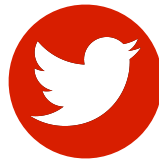
Reality: Consumer and enterprise may use similar technologies (mobile devices, publish-and-subscribe architecture, specific applications), but an enterprise must remain a protected, siloed confederation of communities if it is to survive and grow.

Customer engagement offers a means of providing excellent service and mitigating risk by controlling the flow of information from the enterprise to the consumer. Essentially, engagement is the formation of meaningful, communications-empowered connections between individuals, teams, and customers that increase participation across time and space and on any device and lead to better business outcomes – productivity, loyalty, enthusiasm and customer satisfaction.



Bridging Silos

90% of all companies will compete almost entirely on the basis of customer experience by 2016.
- Gartner



From Anger to Advocacy

By preparing for any conceivable crisis, customer engagement provides an opportunity to turn a negative into a positive, resulting in a win for everyone.



Context Is Critical

Shared information must be viewed in terms of context.



Be Proactive, Not Reactive

Rules of engagement also cover how to leverage social media with proactive, immediate responses.



Assess for Success

Deciding which rules to employ requires real-time assessment on a case-by-case basis.

Conclusion

1. Establish a named team of IT and business leaders to identify your rules for customer engagement.
2. The rules should include the types of tools to be used (contact-center channels, social media outlets, etc.), who has the authority to use them, and how much review is needed.
3. Identify the process for the team to work with internal corporate communications and marketing to educate employees about the newly created rules of engagement.
4. Determine the structure for formal training programs and whether all or certain employees are required to attend for consistency across the company.
5. Define success, and then create before-and-after metrics to measure success or failure, as well as a timeframe for measuring.
6. Don't fall into the trap of consumerization.
7. Don't manage your organization like a cluster of consumers trying to cultivate the autonomy and free information flow of the consumer world.
8. Do understand consumer experiences have raised the bar for what it takes to satisfy and delight them.
9. Develop a strategy for controlled engagement.
10. Leverage openness to the company's advantage. Control the conversation. If a customer uses social media to criticize you, have a plan in place that your engagement team can quickly activate.
11. Make sure you understand the difference between collaboration and teamwork – and set up teams with leaders, structure, and common goals.
12. Evaluate the silos that exist in your organization, both internally between departments and between you and your customer.
13. Determine the policies for permeating those silos.
14. Develop a plan to break down silos when, where, and with whom it makes sense.

Read more at: <http://www.avaya.com/usa/documents/new-rules-of-engagement-whitepaper-avaya.pdf>