

Improve employee engagement: engage with social media



By [Charles Nightingale](#)

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Numerous research studies have shown that engaged employees are the basis of a company's success and drive tangible performance results. Their contribution is particularly essential during a lengthy period of economic recession: engaged employees have a genuine intellectual and emotional sense of ownership and are willing to do whatever is needed to support the organisation's success. They take pride in doing so, and thereby acquire individual job satisfaction.

Social media is an intrinsic component of how we live and work, and more and more companies are recognising social media and social networks as valuable tools for refining employee engagement, communicating their business strategy across the board, and measuring impact. Between 2009 and 2010, social networks traffic increased by 43% (Nielsen study) - and today, social networks are the primary activity.

The new way to handle communication and the global growth of social media and networks

The Towers Watson *Change and Communication ROI Study* late last year, discovered that:

- Approximately two-thirds (64%) of respondents were more knowledgeable about using social media tools than they were a year ago;
- 69% planned to increase their use over the next 12 months;
- But only 28% reported these tools were cost effective at their company; and
- Just 15% had measurement tools in place.

The respondents that found social media tools cost effective were investing in social networks (63%) and leadership journals or blogs (58%).

The global leader of Communication Consulting at Towers Watson, Kathryn Yates, says that change and communication professionals can no longer do things as they have always done them. She says there is a greater than ever need to deliver information to employees in a way that creates a sense of community and motivates change. Yates opined that new social and networking media provided a valuable opportunity for companies to increase engagement with employees for dialogue, and swiftly integrate employees into the culture and create a sense of community. She said that companies hesitant to try social media could end up limiting their ability to attract, retain and motivate certain key groups of employees.

The TW/ROI study also included research to identify the best communication and change management practices at top-performing companies. Responses were forthcoming from 604 global organisations:

- 56% of companies that were highly effective communicators, measured the communication function's contribution to meeting strategic business goals;
- 62% used their measurement findings to plan future initiatives or make business decisions. That compared with less than one-in-four low-performing companies taking these initiatives.
- Only 37%, across all participants, measured progress against their change goals. The high-effectiveness change management companies were six times as likely as low-effectiveness companies taking this important step.

Among other findings, the study found that companies highly effective at both communication and change management were 2.5 times as likely to outperform peer companies not highly effective in either area.

(Acknowledgement: Nielsen/TW-ROI study)

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