

Cisco bets on social media tools

In addition to its acquisition of Five Across, which makes social-networking and forum software help companies improve their internet marketing strategy and their communications with customers, Cisco sealed a deal last week to purchase software assets from, and acquire employees of, social-networking site operator Utah Street Networks.

 By [Sally Falkow](#) 13 Mar 2007

[Comments Andrew Conry-Murray](#), NWC business editor:

“It’s not difficult to imagine social-networking tools being integrated into Cisco’s Unified Communications suite. Corporations that create social networks to boost collaboration among employees may find value here. For instance, how about updating a corporate wiki by sending new te from your BlackBerry? Or providing presence information for geographically diverse coworkers as the collaborate on a long-term project online? It’s possible there’s a real business model here.

Yes, there are more ways than one to skin a cat. Social media tools have many advantages, internally and externally.

In another [article from a sceptical PR person](#), I came across this comment from Chris Clarke about social media:

Give me the big news media hits over the blogosphere today, tomorrow, and the day after that. Each have shortcomings, but the shortcomings of the blogosphere today far exceed those of mainstream media today. No matter how many times Dan Rather screws up, I’m betting on his reporting every tim over the blogosphere. The news organisations of the world have facts, data, evidence, copy, budgets salaries, experts, and most importantly, trust. What does the blogosphere have? Opinions, virtual information, link bait, buddy lists, spam, and the freedom to grab stories from mainstream media and make it their own.

That may be so, but it’s not all they have. consumer recommendations are the most trusted form of advertising today, according the recent Forrester Research report. Newspapers, magazines and other mainstream media are way down that list.

I feel like we’re waiting for a train (made of clues?) that we’re not sure is even coming, continues Clar A crowd has formed, people are excited as to where the magical train might take us, and the anxiety is feverish. And we wait. And wait. And the platform is getting crowded. And we’re hungry for having waited so long - we’re hoping there’s a snack car on this train, of course. And we wait. Does anyone know if the gravy train is coming? If you really think it’s coming, would you say it’s running late?

Some PR people are indeed milling around on the platform wondering where the train is. It has left the station. And those who are ahead of the game got on the Cluetrain years ago.

That does not mean we threw out traditional PR and media relations. It just means we recognise that this is not an ‘either/or’ choice. Social media is a new way to reach influencers you might not connect with in the mainstream media anymore.

And companies like Cisco have not only bought a ticket, they're helping to drive the train.

ABOUT SALLY FALKOW

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