

SOCIAL MEDIA: STRATEGIES FOR EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Sometimes employers need to speak in many languages and many ways to really reach employees. One of those is the language of social media.

No longer can an organization publish an employee newsletter or update its intranet and assume that it has successfully communicated with employees. This is especially true for a younger generation who, as they enter the workforce, bring with them a strong habit and preference for social media. Unaccustomed to reading bulletin boards and not likely to pick up a newsletter, some under-30s even shun e-mail as outmoded technology. To reach them or any other employee more inclined to use Twitter than Outlook, smart employers build a strong social media component into any internal communications plan.

Why? Because employee engagement depends on strong, effective communications. And if you're not tapping that channel, others are – including labor unions that increasingly rely on social media during organizing campaigns and contract negotiations. Too often, these efforts are off the radar screens of organizations.

Does your organization have a social media strategy? Are you leveraging this communications channel to its maximum effect? IRI Consultants helps clients develop and implement custom social media strategies to help leaders communicate quickly and credibly with various groups, and encourage shared ideas, concerns and suggestions to better guide your strategies.

At IRI Consultants, we have the experience and expertise to leverage new communication channels to help you make the best use of social media to deliver messages that resonate.

ENGAGING EMPLOYEES WITH SOCIAL MEDIA

Blogs

Many blogs have evolved from online journals into sophisticated communications channels. Blogs can be used as a way to reach workers who prefer online communications, and are often promoted through tools such as Twitter, Facebook and Google+. This allows for quick distribution of messages – including advocacy campaigns and community service initiatives – to a broad audience.

By engaging employees through blogging, leaders can reach a larger audience and build credibility with techno-savvy workers. And as a tool for two-way communications, blogging allows readers to comment and interact with leaders and their co-workers, providing organizations unprecedented opportunity to learn about the issues most important to employees and respond appropriately.

IRI's experienced communications professionals guide clients with the strategic direction and carefully crafted messaging to maximize the use of blogs as a communications medium.

CAMPAIGN AND NEGOTIATIONS WEB SITES

Organizations facing union campaigns and contract negotiations are particularly vulnerable to social media campaigns against the company. A successful outcome depends on an organization's ability to counter those campaigns with a timely, effective and relevant social media campaign of its own.

Our experience and expertise helps your organization maximize the value of your online presence through:

- Toolkits for managers providing on-time and easily-accessible information to help frontline supervisors understand strategic objectives, stay current with new developments and communicate more effectively with employees
- Public websites designed to inform employees and key stakeholders about a campaign, negotiations or other developments critical to your operations



This online presence is a key component of any organization's social media efforts, whether through blogs that provide a communications channel for an individual or department or websites that showcase broad initiatives and provide organizational information to:

- Handle questions from front line supervisors and managers. This feedback loop will lead to faster and more relevant and effective communications
- Collect feedback, solicit questions and manage rumors. Your ability to gauge opinion and respond to inquiries about your organization will help you better control your message

- Manage operational change by sharing a vision and speaking to employee and community concerns

THE SOCIAL MEDIA SOLUTION

In today's environment, there is no more important component of a communications plan than social media, whether for an operational change, employee relations objective or reputational campaign.

One clear threat is organized labor, which continues to refine and expand its use of social media.

Our services include:

Scenario Planning

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Scenario planning helps organizations think through and plan for possible threats to their business and reputation. With IRI's experience, you will be able to plan for different scenarios so that your response is reasoned and deliberate rather than rushed and reactionary. Our approach is designed to help you craft an effective social media response to challenges ranging from:

- A union-run Web site launched to attack your organization's reputation for quality and safety
- A flash mob of union supporters, organized via Facebook and Twitter, converging on one of your facilities
- Union representatives posting videos of your employees touting the benefits of joining the union

Social Media Monitoring and Reputation Management

Effective social media monitoring goes beyond clipping services to measure trends and changes that could influence your employees or affect your reputation. Our services provide early warning and real-time intelligence about what's being said about your organization in the social media sphere and help you distinguish between isolated comments and actual vulnerabilities. Our monitoring services help you:

- Manage the online dialogue and shape the message in social media and traditional news coverage
- Track hits and commentary on high-traffic blogs
- Gather intelligence about union organizing and corporate campaign efforts

Corporate Campaign Preparedness and Response

With labor unions and special interest groups adopting social media as a primary weapon of attack against corporations and organizations, these online campaigns can wreak broad and lasting damage to your business, reputation and community standing.

Disparaging web sites

- Anti-company blogs
- Fake “grass roots” campaigns
- Negative commentary in the mainstream media
- Facebook and Twitter feeds designed to organize opponents

The negative noise of a corporate campaign can seem overwhelming. IRI has helped clients to mitigate the reputational damage caused by corporate campaign tactics. With extensive experience and robust social media capabilities, we can enable you to retake control of your organization’s key messages, helping you rally the community back to your side.

At a time when social media is rapidly evolving and growing as a communications tool that can be used against public institutions, organizations and companies, the best defense is a social media offense. Our specialized expertise and social media services will help you develop a powerful, effective presence in an evolving medium.



CONTACT IRI CONSULTANTS TODAY

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