

## How Can Next Gen SSOs Build Strong Collaboration Platforms with Social Media?

### A WNS Perspective

Shared Service Organizations (SSO) have undergone a sea change since they became prevalent a couple of decades ago. The evolution is as much a reflection of changing market needs as it is of the increased maturity and technological capability of SSOs. The modern-day SSO is a globally integrated service delivery center with regional hubs and centers of excellence. Today, mature SSOs offer services that involve data analytics and social media. Social media is, in fact, emerging as an enabling technology that can take shared services to their next level of excellence.

The rise of social media in the enterprise space has been a subject of significant interest of late. A Forrester report in Dec. 2011 mentions that the enterprise social media business will touch USD 6.4 Billion by 2016. IDC pegs the figure at USD 4.5 Billion by 2016. According to Forrester, new capabilities of enterprise social software will include grouping and rating of people, information and new processes to make sense of environment complexity.

### Why SSOs should look at Social Media

SSOs are growing in complexity as global, multi-functional organizations that offer complex services. In addition, they are supported by multiple providers in hybrid sourcing environments. SSOs cater to a variety of service stakeholders, which include vendors, customers, business units, IT and other support functions. In order to be successful, SSOs must focus on effective process co-ordination and collaboration.

According to a report by the Altimeter Group, *Making the Business Case for Enterprise Social Network*, the top three goals of enterprise social network and of SSOs are aligned. These goals are:

- Aim to share best practices
- Enable cross-department collaboration
- Improve employee information and collaboration

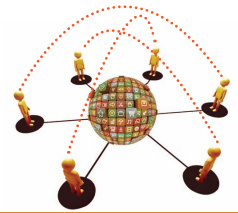
What will work well in an SSO environment is the weaving of social capabilities into processes and embedding them in the workflow system. For instance, Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), Match.com for vendor selection or a Human Resource Information System (HRIS) that tracks social performance reviews and social learning capabilities.

The Altimeter report lists the following as key drivers of social media in SSOs:

- **Promote sharing:** It connects people globally, brings in a personal sense of business, encourages two-way dialog and bridges the gap between employees and management. With enterprise social media, there is also better cohesion and team building
- **Capture knowledge:** It enables the transfer of knowledge with centers of excellence and encourages implementation of best practices. It also identifies expertise and avoids duplication of effort
- **Facilitate action:** Processes are streamlined, resulting in faster problem-solving. With more inputs, timelines are reduced on collaborative projects, and there is improved accuracy. This results in smoother functioning of multi-department processes. Shared ideas and comments also lead to greater innovation
- **Empower people:** Social media provides employees across all levels a chance to voice their opinions, and increases engagement, satisfaction and retention

### How to Set Up a Social Media Framework in SSOs?

The team that puts together a social media framework must have knowledge and experience in different functions, and must be associated with various stakeholders. Team members must be well-versed in functions like sales, marketing, public relations, human resource, product management, IT and customer service. The program must cater to customers, vendors and business units across the enterprise.



A successful social media strategy is one that is sustainable and scalable, which means there has to be executive sponsorship right from the beginning. The following are some of the key considerations that should guide an SSO social media program:

- Which divisions in your SSO are already on social media? What platforms are they using? What do they discuss? Who are your stakeholders?
- Who is your target audience? Does the social media platform match your target audience? What are the positive, negative or neutral sentiments? What could be the trending topics in your industry? What do your customers want? What value can you create?
- Identify the opportunities and the tools needed. What process and cultural changes are needed?
- Get the executives involved
- Build systems to boost transparency and create an open culture
- Create incentives and rewards for participation

## Operationalizing Social Media in Your SSO

There are a few basic steps to make an effective social media strategy for your SSO.

### 1. Identify the Objectives

The first step would be to lay out your objectives. Identify and prioritize the gaps that social media relationships can fill. Chalk out your long-term goals and define the purpose of your social media strategy. Use the expertise of subject matter specialists.

### 2. Create a Climate of Collaboration

The SSO staff has a big role to play. Facilitate conversations and encourage problem-solving among employees. Foster an environment where you aim to improve processes through sharing of ideas. Encourage collaboration between different functions within the organization, involve external stakeholders, share information on leading practices, create discussion groups and encourage many-to-many dialog. A crucial aspect here is to provide a governance framework to employees over

appropriate social media usage and behavior in the organization.

### 3. Extend Technology Support

A successful strategy needs the right technology support. The right technology may not be the one that offers the maximum number of features but the one that facilitates the kind of relationships that the SSO wants to build. It may be prudent to deploy the new technology in phases, so that iterations can be made, if necessary, for the next phases. User feedback is the best parameter to gauge the technology's effectiveness; so incorporate feedback to make changes as you go.

### 4. Define the Metrics

The last step would be to develop metrics to monitor and manage its adoption. It's not enough to measure the engagement but also measure closing of gaps initially identified as crucial to this exercise. Similarly, it is important to track relationships and not merely conversations.

One of the most prominent outcomes of operationalizing social media in the organization are active online communities, which would collaborate to solve business problems. SSOs will realize that employees can now help each other by sharing insights. Customer service representatives can access socially enhanced knowledge bases to provide better answers to resolve client queries. Inquiries can be driven to social tools, thereby reducing call and e-mail volume. There will also be better productivity with improved first call resolution. Customer service agents, who interface with customers through social channels, will have access to improved ideas and solutions.

SSOs are turning towards mature Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) providers to develop a workable social media strategy. SSOs can leverage the existing infrastructure of the BPO provider and avoid start-up investments, gain labor arbitrage savings and improve speed-to-market. A specialized outsourcing partner can provide analytics tools to sort the social media data within your SSO according to message relevance, customer intelligence and data enhancement to gain value. With cloud-based BPO services, they can consolidate on common platforms and optimize the use of hardware and software applications, thereby building higher efficiencies.

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