

The Executive's Guide to **ENTERPRISE SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY**

How Social Networks Are Radically
Transforming Your Business



Foreword
CHRIS BROOK
New York Times
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Trust Agents

Foreword

Frankly, this book is too fun to cover anything to do with the enterprise.

You're never going to convince anyone in your company that this book is worthwhile, because it's actually useful, and it's interesting, and much more than this, it's engaging and funny (I mean, snicker and blurt out a little laugh funny), and as I once racked up over 16 years in the enterprise telecommunications world, I know that funny and engaging are illegal inside companies.

How are you ever going to convince an executive that learning from other people at other enterprise companies who successfully implemented social media tools into their workplace is worth anything? By interviewing people inside and outside the gray cubicle nation, Dave Thomas and Mike Barlow are ruining anyone's chance of thinking this book was just concocted out of nothing one day while waiting for their laundry to dry.

I don't know Mike Barlow very well. I'm sure he's nice, or at least types fast, because otherwise, why would you write a book with him? But I know Dave Thomas—sorry, David B. Thomas. I met him while he was working for America's "Best Company to Work For" (well, that's what *Fortune* said), which was a big enterprise company, where Dave brought enterprise social media into its fold. Because I don't know anything about Mike personally, I'll just say that he invented dolphins. Yes. That's right.

I have a burning passion for enterprise culture, or, rather, whenever I visit an enterprise, I get the terrible and irresistible urge to change most enterprise cultures, because I feel like the front door was a time machine, in some aspects, and I just want to help them

understand that the world outside has changed since the days of President Reagan. This book, such as it is, is a time machine set to forward, set to next.

In all seriousness, the book does what I'm doing here: It coats lots of really important subjects and lots of actionable advice in a little bit of humor, a little bit of well-turned phrase, and actually manages the impressive duty of keeping one's eyes open all the way to the end.

This is to say, it's NOT LIKE OTHER BOOKS ABOUT ENTERPRISE PROCESSES, CULTURE, AND TECHNOLOGY.

So, go ahead. Try to get this one explained away on your expense report. Oh wait. You're not allowed an expense report anymore. It's the future. You have to buy things out of your own pocket and hope that no one else in the building steals this book, because it's that good.

The worst part of all this is that if you've smirked even once while reading the foreword, you're probably more like Dave and Mike than you know. You're at least a little bit like me (except maybe you don't take your coffee black and maybe you don't have a bunch of Batman action figures on your bookshelf thingy). And you might actually value what Thomas and Barlow (doesn't that make them sound like private eyes?) have written.

I'm giving this book a bad review, for having 100 fewer pages than most books I'm forced to read. In fact, I'm going to pan it when it comes out in the mainstream, because, frankly, only people who want their enterprise to succeed will read it anyway, and they don't care what reviews say. They run in search of facts and details and useful, actionable information.

In fact, maybe this book is like *Fight Club*. Let's not talk about it. Let's keep it to ourselves and appear BRILLIANT to the bosses. You with me? Say nothing.

Shhhh.

Chris Brogan, *New York Times* bestselling coauthor of *Trust Agents*, and publisher of chrisbrogan.com

Preface

When this book was initially conceived, social media was still considered a relatively new phenomenon, and the main purpose of the book was to address the sense of skepticism expressed by many top executives about the value of social media in enterprise-level business environments.

In the few months between this initial conception and the launch of the book project, the notion that social media was some kind of trend or fad had pretty much vanished. It was replaced by a more palpable sense of awareness that social media was growing and evolving so rapidly that only a fool would purposely ignore it.

This heightened sense of astonishment pushed the book in a different direction, and the finished text you are reading reflects this shift in emphasis. The original book would have started at the 40,000-foot level and stayed there for the duration. This version of the book offers a much broader and more immediately practical view of the current state of corporate social media. Most important, it includes actionable advice that can be put to use by any company, right now.

The Executive's Guide to Enterprise Social Media Strategy is composed of three parts: Part I is a high-level strategic overview of the impact of newer social collaborative technologies on society, culture, and business. It serves as a prelude and a foundation for Parts II and III, which dive into the nitty-gritty tactical details of developing and managing successful corporate social media strategies. Parts II and III include summaries titled "What You Can Do Right Now" to help you get started and focus on the tactics that will have immediate value.

All three parts of the book are entertaining, useful, and intentionally provocative. Part I was written primarily by Mike Barlow, a

business journalist and management consultant. Parts II and III were written primarily by David B. Thomas, drawing on the nearly two years he spent developing social media strategy, policy, and training as social media manager at SAS. In creating the content for this book, both authors have drawn extensively from their own personal experiences and from stories, anecdotes, and information culled from numerous in-depth interviews conducted with various expert sources.

Acknowledgments

DAVE

Almost every name you read in this book represents someone who went out of his or her way to talk to us and share what's working. One of the beautiful things about social media, at least here in late-2010, is how open and honest the practitioners are about what they're doing. The people helping to bring this revolution to the corporate world are doing it not just because they see a way to increase their profits but because they know that promoting a more open and honest philosophy and methodology of business communication can truly help make this a better world.

My thanks to all of them who shared so freely of their knowledge and ideas, including Lee Aase, John Bastone, LaSandra Brill, Jeff Cohen, Len Devanna, Bert Dumars, Craig Duncan, Jeanette Gibson, Nathan Gilliatt, Becky Graebe, Allison Green, Annette Green, Patty Hager, Shel Holtz, Nichole Kelly, Charlene Li, Chris Moody, Jeremiah Owyang, Katie Paine, Christopher S. Penn, Kirsten Watson, and Zena Weist.

Thanks to my SAS boss, Kelly LeVoyer, for her support and encouragement, and to the folks in my chain of command there who saw the value of this book, including SAS External Communications Director Pamela Meek and CMO (and blogger) Jim Davis.

My SAS colleague John Balla deserves a huge round of applause and maybe a big bottle of fancy olive oil for his help with the *Social Media Cookbook for Marketing*, some of which ended up in this book. John and his colleagues, ably led by Deb Orton, demonstrate every

day the perfect combination of level-headedness combined with a spirit of creativity and adventure that business folks need to make this stuff work.

Alison Bolen of SAS deserves a special mention as well. Even before I came to work there, she was showing people the value of these new communications channels. Working with her to bring these tools and techniques to fruition has been a joy. She has been an invaluable ally and sounding board (as well as a patient ear at those times when it wasn't such a joy).

I'd like to thank my friend and writing partner Mike Barlow for bringing me in to what was already a greenlighted book project with a great publisher like Wiley already on board. What more could a new author ask for (other than more hours in the day)? Mike taught me everything I know about writing a book. So if there's anything here you don't like, please take it up with him.

And finally, I'd like to thank my dad, David Thomas, career marketer and business leader, blogger, and author of *The Common Sense Manager*, for providing me with a lifelong example of how to be passionate about your work and the value of sharing that passion with others.

MIKE

From my perspective, this book is largely a work of journalism. As a result, I am indebted to my sources for sharing their time, knowledge, and wisdom so generously.

I could not have written my parts of the book without the active cooperation and participation of John Bastone, Steven Bailey, Matthew Chamberlin, Kendall Collins, Ginger Conlon, Kelly Feller, Christopher Gatewood, Paul Greenberg, Jamie Grenney, Winnie Ko, Brent Leary, Eugene Lee, Liza Emin Levitt, Christopher Lynch, Britton Manasco, Pem McNerney, Hunter Muller, Jeanne Murray, Viviana Padilla, Mark Polansky, Laurie Ruettimann, Brad Samargya, Jeffrey Schick, David Meerman Scott, Euan Semple, Ruth Stevens, Luis Suarez, Lucas Swineford, Teka Thomas, Pamela Warren, and Sean Whiteley.

I owe special thanks to Don Peppers for recommending several terrific books, including *The Wealth of Networks* and *The Rational Optimist*.

Don also planted several ideas in my mind that took root and blossomed during the writing of this book. For those ideas, and for the time that Don spent chatting with me on the phone, I am truly grateful.

I would also like to thank my mom, Edith G. Barlow, who remains the best copy editor I know.

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Introduction

There are some enterprises in which a careful disorderliness is the true method.

—Herman Melville

First, let's define some terms. Sharing a common understanding of these terms will help all of us dodge some of the confusion lurking around the subject of this book. These definitions are vast oversimplifications, but no matter. They will get us started on our journey, more or less together.

Social networking: Humans sharing knowledge with other humans outside of their immediate pair-bond families.

Social computing: Systems of hardware, software, and firmware that enable social networking in a digital environment.

Social media: Platforms specifically designed to make social computing available to anyone with a device capable of connecting to the Internet.

Enterprise 2.0: A term coined by Andrew McAfee, a professor at the Harvard School of Business, to describe the impact of social networking, social computing, and social media on business organizations.

OK, now we can begin. Clearly, you've already heard a lot about social media and you're wondering how it can help your business or help your career. That's probably why you're reading this book, right? Our goal is to take some of the mystery out of social media. After all, it's just another tool.

Or is it? Saying that social media is just another tool is a little bit like saying the telephone is just another tool or the Internet is just another tool. OK, maybe you're right. They are all tools. But from that perspective, fire is just a tool. The wheel? Just another tool . . .

Well, hold on to your hat. At first glance, *every* new invention looks like just another handy tool. But isn't it funny how some inventions wind up changing the world? The light bulb. The atomic bomb. The disposable razor. The birth control pill.

COUNTRY VILLAGE OR GLEAMING CITY?

Euan Semple speaks frequently about social media to corporate audiences. Based in the United Kingdom, he was director of knowledge management at the BBC, where he helped develop the BBC's first social networking tools. He has since served as a social media consultant to major organizations such as Nokia, the World Bank, and NATO (the North Atlantic Treaty Organization).

Euan sees social media as more of an enabling technology than a driving force. The distinction between *enabler* and *driver* is important, because it underscores what seems to be the inevitability of social media emerging as a common, worldwide platform. Here's what Euan told us in a recent conversation via Skype:

As is the case so often, it's not so much the technology that's driving the changes—it's that the technology has come along at a time when things were changing anyway.

The implicit or explicit contract between individuals of the organizations they work for has changed over the last decade or so. The old promise of stability and safety in return for allegiance has fallen apart. The days when you had a job for life are gone.

As a result, more and more people are aware of their need to build up their own capabilities and their

own networks and start looking after themselves, if you like.

Euan paints a picture of a world that is very different from the one described in most textbooks on corporate management. In this world, social media isn't just an emerging and potentially very useful business tool; it's the salient feature of an evolutionary—or perhaps *deevolutionary*—trend in which people are rediscovering their personal economic fragility and, as a result, gaining new perspectives on their responsibility for shaping their own destinies.

At the same time, corporations are rediscovering the intrinsic business value of their “humanness” and are making room for practices that encourage more participation and more engagement from their employees and their customers. “I think we’re trying to get back something that we’ve lost over the past 30 or 40 years,” says Euan.

From the Industrial Revolution until very recently, business has been all about “tidying and linking and categorizing things” into big chunks that appear manageable. But there’s a price for this illusion of manageability and control, says Euan.

I’m more and more convinced that we’re actually losing a lot in the process. Very often, the interesting bits happen in the cracks between the big chunks—in the unpredictable, in the unlabeled, in the unexpected, in the messiness.

The willingness to embrace that messiness, to work with that messiness and to make it effective, is really important.

I’ll often use the analogy of old villages that grow up haphazardly. There’s no predetermined architectural style, there’s no uniform color to their roofs. They’ve got windy paths and lots of human-scale architecture.

People can relate to these old villages. People feel comfortable in them. They know where the church is and where the pub is. There are these well-worn paths that people feel comfortable using. And people feel comfortable standing on street corners talking to each other.

Modern cities, however, can be cold, large, unfriendly, and ultimately confusing. “The scale of the buildings is inhuman. Each street

looks much like the previous street. You don't feel like hanging around and chatting," says Euan.

One of the lessons he learned when starting up the BBC's social media program was to keep it simple and let it grow organically—much like those old villages. Having too many rules—or setting expectations too high—can frighten people away from social media programs.

You don't want to coerce people into using social media. You can't force people to blog. You need to entice them into participating by offering something that's attractive and interesting.

Patience is the key virtue when introducing a social media program, he says. "Whatever you're trying to accomplish with social media will happen one person at a time, and for their reasons, not yours."

Corporations themselves face a choice, he says. They can model themselves to resemble old country villages or new cities. With social media, perhaps they can have both: the gleaming efficiency of the modern metropolis and the comforting messiness—and humanity—of the country village.

BEYOND DISRUPTIVE

There's no question that social media is a game-changer. It touches and transforms so many aspects of our lives that we've already lost count. Calling it "disruptive" somehow feels like an understatement. For the moment, let's focus on what social media is—and how it can help make our businesses more efficient, more effective, more customer-friendly, and more profitable.

We recently caught up with marketing expert David Meerman Scott, whose bestselling book, *The New Rules of Marketing & PR*, is considered the gold standard for practical advice about social media. David believes that social media is already revolutionizing business communications. Here's a snippet of our conversation with him:

We're going through a revolution in the way people communicate. I think it's the most significant revolution in communications since the invention of the printing press.