

# Enterprise social networking

## The value and requirements of successful enterprise social networking

### ABOUT THIS PAPER

Social networking is on the rise, not just in our personal lives, but also in business and government.

The benefits of implementing an enterprise social networking platform are tremendous, but many organizations are unclear on the best path to take.

This paper explores the key challenges, benefits and requirements of implementing a successful enterprise social networking platform, highlighting CGI's own experience in introducing such a platform to bring together its global workforce.

### The rise in social networking

Social networking has transformed the way we communicate in our personal lives. Now it's doing the same for many commercial and public enterprises, linking individuals across the globe and providing greater opportunities for collaboration and information sharing. The use of an enterprise social networking platform benefits individuals, teams and communities. For individuals and teams, enterprise social networking facilitates the achievement of common objectives. For communities, it promotes the advancement of common interests.

While many public and private organizations are sold on the value of social business collaboration in theory, its implementation in practice remains an unclear proposition. How does an organization select the right enterprise social networking tools? How can these tools be implemented securely and efficiently, while creating the most value across the organization? How does an organization stay current with rapidly moving technology while ensuring privacy and security for both the organization and its employees?

These are some of the critical issues organizations must address as they consider the implementation of an enterprise social networking solution.

### New challenges

New business structures, created in part by globalization, are just one of several critical challenges bearing down on organizations and calling for a new approach to information sharing and collaboration. Employees face increasing team fragmentation due to outsourcing, offshoring and telecommuting.

While these efforts are aimed at saving organizations time and money, the resulting lack of communication across business units can result in duplication of effort, a decreased ability to understand and re-use the organization's own intellectual property, and time inefficiencies in searching for and identifying the right expertise and information.

The challenges extend to the onboarding process as a new wave of Generation Y and Z workers join the workforce armed with smartphones, tablets and other handheld devices. They're tech-savvy, connected, and "wired" to subscribe and see information on one central webpage that's home to syndicated news feeds, event notices and more.

Organizations must also contend with an increased adoption rate of technology and connectivity standards. Added to this is a growing demand for corporate transparency and an increase in the amount of information generated and stored by employees.

### Information-retrieval: A costly status quo

Finding the right information in real time is becoming more difficult and costly. The average knowledge worker spends 13 hours a week reading and writing emails. If the employee's annual salary is \$45,000, the time spent gathering information costs a company \$13,500 a year per employee without calculating the cost of employee benefits.

There is a growing expectation among customers, citizens and employees in both the private and public spheres to receive the right information and the best solutions in a timely manner. This encompasses the tools, frameworks, and platform to enable and encourage collaboration and innovation among employees.

If an organization isn't delivering on these fronts, customers and employees will go elsewhere and citizens will become increasingly frustrated, demanding more from their government leaders..

Organizations need enterprise social networking tools and content management systems that are driven by industrial strength search engines. These tools and systems will enable them to efficiently capture, store and search for large amounts of data, content and information, leading to improved productivity in key domains.

Today's businesses and government agencies are also facing dramatic employee retirement rates without sufficient succession management plans in place. They face the task of not only replacing retiring employees but also of finding solutions to re-capture the knowledge and experience that is now gone. This has an immediate impact on the organization's ability to maintain its competitive advantage.

The business of managing, maintaining and offering government services also requires a new approach to communication and collaboration. Amid declining revenues, staff shortages and budget shortfalls, the need for greater cross-organizational collaboration to more efficiently deliver vital government services and create innovative solutions continues to increase. This must be supported by a comprehensive enterprise social networking platform.

### The solution?

An enterprise social network platform enables employees to better engage, collaborate, and organize. This, in turn, enables them to more easily capture, generate and integrate new information and knowledge to deliver the best solutions and achieve the best results. Such a platform also significantly increases an organization's speed in providing guidance, feedback and recognition to enable its employees to grow both personally and professionally. The end results are reduced operating costs, improved talent acquisition and retention, and increased competitive advantage.

### Today's organization and the enterprise social network

Essential to public and private organizations is a new way of thinking about information retrieval, communication and collaboration. Growth, productivity and innovation—the three holy grails for any organization—require ongoing engagement, communication and collaboration among employees and between employees and their customers. It is also essential that an environment has the right infrastructure to promote greater means of interaction across disparate regions and time zones. In short, an enterprise social network is required.

Over the past decade, many organizations have sought to address knowledge silos among employees, the need for two-way dialogue and cross-functionality gaps through the use of intranet sites. However, this approach is no longer enough. No single communications team can see across all business lines or provide all relevant information, at all times to a growing base of employees scattered in offices around the world.

Modern business and government organizations need to equip their employees with the power to search, find and combine information in order to reach out, connect and create conversations across all business lines and have these collaborative

communication capabilities in one central, secure location. That's where a new business model arises—the enterprise social network.

### Beyond information silos

The aim of any organization moving ahead with an enterprise social network is simple—to tear down knowledge silos that inevitably build up among employees due to distance, day-to-day demands and plain old “business as usual.” This is accomplished by providing each employee with the ability to engage more efficiently with colleagues.

The power that an enterprise social network brings to an organization has four main focus areas:

- **Content:** Articles/wikis, documents, videos/podcasts/slides, rating/voting polls, comments, news feeds, tags
- **Communication:** Instant messaging, statuses, push notices/alerts, third-party integrations
- **Community:** Profiles, activity streams, forums, blog/microblogging, events, following capability, groups, sharing)
- **Collaboration:** Whiteboards, conferencing, task lists, project management, social search, courses/training.

Each capability is consolidated onto one central homepage with personalized information streams that provide an opportunity to establish, grow and maintain connections and relationships.

### CGI's approach to enterprise social networking

The results generated by an enterprise social networking tool are substantial. Enhanced knowledge sharing aided by features such as instant messaging, activity feeds and news feed subscriptions translate into greater team productivity. Another result is higher employee engagement, which leads to more creative and innovative business solutions.

The implementation of an enterprise social network platform using CGI's cloud computing solutions enables employees to accomplish the critical elements needed in any successful organization—creating identities, sharing expertise and content, and breaking down barriers to collaboration. Understanding and evaluating the needs of an organization and its employees is the first step toward successfully implementing an enterprise social networking tool and ensuring its adoption.

CGI launched an enterprise social network platform in 2011 within a short timeframe. In just seven weeks, a 65 percent participation rate was achieved and more than 500 practice and interest subjects based on specific business needs were created.

To draw employees to the platform and build engagement, employees were given the opportunity to name the new platform as part of a contest. After a final tally, the name of “CynerGI” was selected.

*“The aim of any organization moving ahead with an enterprise social network is simple—to tear down knowledge silos that inevitably build up among employees due to distance, day-to-day demands and plain old ‘business as usual.’”*

With CynerGI, CGI has succeeded in eliminating the boundaries of business lines, time, geographies and departments, bringing everyone together.

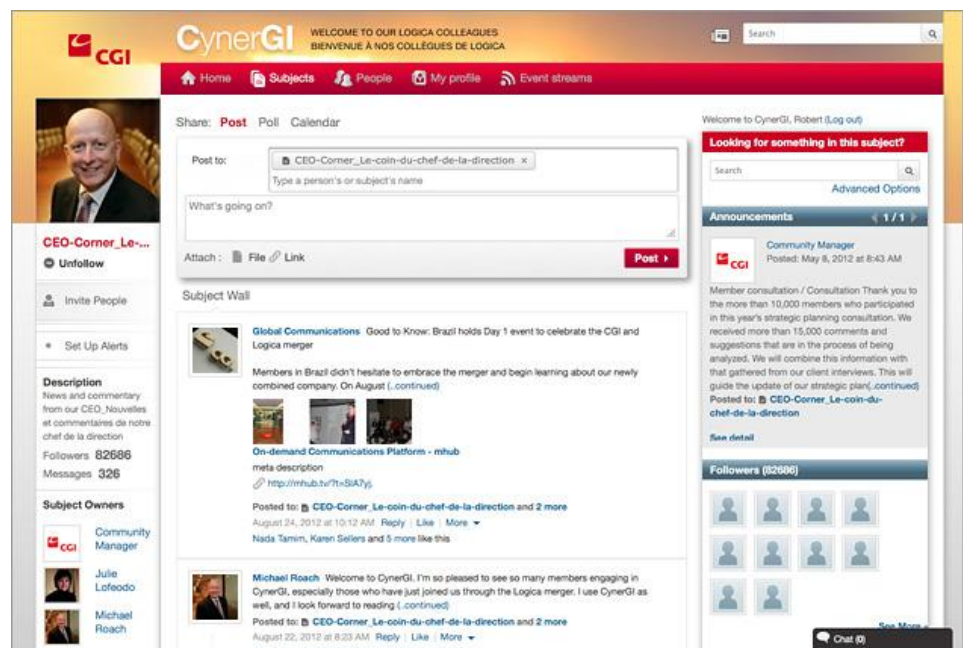
Equally critical is the impact on CGI's revenue-generating activities. The bid-and-proposal process, which often requires global team collaboration across different team zones, saw time and distance barriers collapse.

An additional benefit was greater ease in locating and engaging internal experts. New employees also benefited from transition teams quickly establishing buddy and onboarding programs.

The end result is an environment in which members can:

- **Engage:** continuously gain knowledge and collaborate
- **Encourage:** foster new ideas and dialogue and give credit for collaborative accomplishments
- **Build respect:** value members' input and knowledge to build trusting relationships that help achieve CGI's goals

*“With CynerGI, CGI has succeeded in eliminating the boundaries of business lines, time, geographies and departments, bringing everyone together.”*



## Effective implementation and security

CGI's effective implementation of CynerGI involved three main focus areas:

**1. Social business strategy.** This helps an organization gain a balanced view of key business imperatives, define solution requirements and establish a long-term community management structure. It delivers the following end results:

*“Following the successful launch of an enterprise social network platform, community management must be ensured. This involves interacting with and monitoring employees, partners and resellers from a single interface. It also involves leading by example; that is, setting the tone for effective social business engagement across all organization lines.”*

- Exceptional user experience
- Creation and maintenance of enterprise knowledge through interaction definitions
- Identification of existing knowledge management pain points and tailored collaboration solution features that fit various community segments and needs
- Foundation on which to base technical implementation activities

**2. Adoption.** This involves establishing and executing a plan to ensure initial usage and nurture ongoing engagement. Additional benefits include the following:

- Addressing adoption challenges ahead of an official launch
- Identifying key advocates and community engagement leaders for the promotion of platform usage
- Establishing processes for ongoing tracking and promotion

Key performance indicators for tracking the adoption and sustainability of an enterprise social network tool allow organizations to measure the results of increased collaboration and content organization. Dashboards can be displayed to employees to show hot topics within the organization, as well the overall success of the platform. Metrics also create a relationship between the organization's objectives and the adoption and sustainability of the platform.

**3. Solution deployment and integration.** This ensures that the collaboration solution seamlessly assimilates with existing systems such as enterprise security, enterprise search engines and enterprise content management systems. Additional benefits include the following:

- Reducing ambiguity by clarifying roles and responsibilities, policies and standards
- Managing risks by putting in place mechanisms to measure the performance of the ecosystem
- Facilitating relevant and ongoing communication with key stakeholders
- Fostering the development and recurring refinement of community management activities

### CGI's SOCIAL BUSINESS360 and SOCIAL GOVERNMENT360

CGI's effective implementation of CynerGI Each of the three areas highlighted above involve services offered through CGI's SOCIAL BUSINESS360 and SOCIAL GOVERNMENT360. The advantages of each offering include the following:

- Right information at the right time
- Knowledge bridges
- New knowledge and content
- Trusted relationships
- Encouragement and engagement
- Reusable and easily accessible content

## ABOUT CGI

At CGI, we're committed to helping all of our stakeholders succeed. Our 72,000 professionals in more than 40 countries provide end-to-end IT and business process services that facilitate the ongoing evolution of our clients' businesses.

CGI is committed to helping our clients achieve their business goals; to providing our professionals with rewarding careers; and to offering shareholders superior returns over time. At CGI, we're in the business of delivering results.

To learn more, visit us at [www.cgi.com](http://www.cgi.com) or contact us at [info@cgi.com](mailto:info@cgi.com).

- Increased mentorship
- Employee recognition viewed across the entire organization
- Increased speed of access to internal expertise
- Improved succession planning initiatives
- Reduced costs
- Improved services
- Added value to existing vendor solutions through IT integration
- Improved government accountability and broader civic engagement
- Enhanced agency communication
- Quick identification and collaboration with knowledge workers and specialists

Following the successful launch of an enterprise social network platform, community management must be ensured. This involves interacting with and monitoring employees, partners and resellers from a single interface. It also involves leading by example; that is, setting the tone for effective social business engagement across all organization lines.

CGI's own tool contains critical privacy and security controls, such as individual and group settings for asset and communications management. Just as critical, the tool is cloud-based, driven by in-country data centers that are both industry- and government-certified.

### Enterprise social networking: Where to begin?

So where should an organization begin? Organizations are different and have unique cultures that are based on their unique core values and goals. In helping organizations evolve into social enterprises, CGI's approach is to establish goals and objectives, define a governance model and adoption processes, and create strategies to manage organizational change to create a cultural transformation, while staying aligned with the core goals of an organization.

This is accomplished by conducting a top-down and bottom-up needs assessment, delivering the best solution based on that analysis, and integrating and harmonizing the technology environment to ensure a smooth evolution.

It is also essential to create executive briefings and business value assessments on an ongoing basis. Assessments must keep pace with the ever-changing nature of enterprise social networking.

Throughout, one constant remains; enterprise social networking is happening and it's time to get connected!