

Social Learning Playbook

Why social learning networks are important
and top tips for using them.

WHY USE THEM?

Social networks have existed ever since people have spent time together; the only difference is that now we can do this virtually through social media. A huge chunk of what we learn and how we get things done at work comes from the networks, connections and peers that surround us. As learning professionals, we can help people get the most out of these networks by creating, curating and facilitating spaces and conversations that can help improve performance.

WHAT ARE THEY?

Think Twitter, Facebook or LinkedIn but specifically for your company. Tools like Workplace by Facebook, Yammer, SAP Jam and Jive all provide ways to connect with our peers. One reason to use these (and not just something like Facebook) is because they're locked down so only people from your organisation can access them, meaning you can discuss work openly.

THE BENEFITS

Chances are, your employees are already using social platforms to learn, and you're missing out on rich conversations, knowledge sharing and connections that have been driven underground or off the grid. WhatsApp groups are being used more and more in organisations as people see the value in connecting and sharing in a more informal way than email, meetings or phone calls. As flexible working causes the lines between work and home life to become more blurred, our tech experience at work starts to follow suit.

SO IT'S LIKE TEAMS?

No. Social networks are more about nebulous conversations and connections, making links you wouldn't normally and creating a 'collective brain' of insight, knowledge and expertise that otherwise would stay locked in someone's head. Teams and Slack are great for collaboration between specific teams where a pre-defined group is working together on something, but they're not designed for cross-organisation conversation or serendipitous discovery.

Top Tips

01

Make sure you've got a 'community manager' lined up to help grow your communities. Their role is to nurture these groups and ensure the environment is a great space for learning to take place.

02

The aim with communities is not to drip feed endless content, but to provoke debate. The learning happens between peers.

03

Remember **70 | 20 | 10?** Your communities can form a big part of the 20, where people learn from their interactions with each other.

04

Try exercises to boost involvement - polls, likes and questions all work well.

05

Don't shut down thriving communities to force a corporate comms tool on people, it won't work.

06

Social media is not a broadcast tool or a comms channel - it's about sharing, asking questions, debate and two-way conversation.

07

Tell people about it - if they don't know about it, or see the benefit, they won't use it.

08

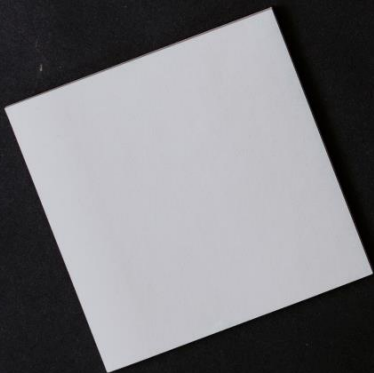
Go where the energy is - if there are passionate people already talking about the things you're doing, zone in on that. Give them a platform, a purpose and help to amplify their message.

09

Social media is all about flattening hierarchy and leading from the ground up - anyone can be a thought leader, regardless of their role in the organisation. Encourage posting from all levels.

10

Don't worry about it becoming a place people go just to post pictures of cats. It's about signal to noise ratio - we have to have enough noise going on to be able to pick up the useful stuff.



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