

10 Ways to Use Social Media to Engage Staff

By Jeri T. Denniston, Denner Group International, February 2014

Takeaways: *Social Media is a powerful tool for gaining feedback on initiatives from staff and other stakeholders. Use contests and rewards to engage people in fun ways.*

We've all heard the maxim: 75% of all strategic plans fail to reach their objectives. The biggest reason is that most leaders fail to engage their staff consistently in executing the strategies that support the organization's goals. Planning is the easy part. Execution and consistent follow-up are where most fall short.

Getting feedback from mid-level managers and staff and their buy-in to support organization-wide initiatives becomes more complicated the larger the organization. How do you effectively communicate the vision, mission, values and goals in a way that is fun and interesting? How do you engage the hearts and minds of your people while supporting their own individual needs to learn, grow and succeed? How can you share strategic goals and make them fun at the same time?

Managed properly, social media can offer powerful tools for communication and feedback. Here are 10 ways you can use social media in your organization to share the strategic plan, get feedback from staff and other stakeholders, and keep them engaged in supporting the company initiatives.

1 Create a Private Facebook Group. Use this group to share images, videos, links and documents among staff and key stakeholders. You can upload documents, hold contests, share videos and pictures all within an invitation-only group. Use your public Facebook page to hold contests, surveys, and showcase products and events.

2 Hold Private Google Hangouts. Use Google Hangouts for planned and impromptu virtual meetings to share ideas, conduct surveys and gain feedback. Encourage staff to meet via Google Hangouts to share projects, ideas and progress towards goals.

3 Set Up a Corporate Wiki or Blog. Create a Wiki or a Blog that staff and key stakeholders can edit and add to for the purpose of gathering information about a specific topic or initiative. Assign usernames and passwords to control access and track participation.

4 Hold Contests to Generate Ideas. Hold periodic contests that you promote on your Facebook page or announce via Google Hangouts. Reward staff for finding ways to cut costs or for sharing unique ways they've supported key initiatives.

5 Use Twitter to Announce Successes. Post staff and organization wins on Twitter with links to a landing page for more details about the success. This shows appreciation for staff achievements and customer support, and recognizes those who are supporting the organization's value and goals.

6 Hold Google Hangouts on Air. Invite customers and the public to hear from company executives about key strategies and initiatives, and to gain feedback. Use these to take the pulse of the market before product launches and while doing market research.

7 Use Pinterest to Showcase Products. Create boards on Pinterest to promote and sell new and re-packaged products. Encourage staff to share with their friends and followers through contests.

8 Create a Google+ Business Page. Ask customers and staff to write reviews on your Google+ page and share feedback about specific products or key company initiatives. Send periodic surveys to customers asking them to post responses on your Google+ page.

9 Use Twitter to Share Strategic Plans. Post updates about your strategic plan on Twitter and invite comments and feedback from staff, the public, your customers and vendors. Create a contest and reward system to encourage their engagement.

10 Create Videos and Podcasts. Have senior executives and managers share updates via videos and podcasts you host on Vimeo or YouTube or your own internal network. Encourage people to subscribe to get regular updates. Make these fun and engaging using animation, music and contests.

Bonus: Create a LinkedIn Business Page. Engage senior executives to post progress their divisions are making on key initiatives and to showcase star performers.



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