



WHITE PAPER

# Unlocking the Power of Enterprise Social Networks

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A conversation  
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*The layer of social intelligence that an enterprise social network provides can add value and enhance existing social networking tools, CRM applications, business intelligence, knowledge management and predictive analytics, among others.*

*Enterprise social networks allow organizations to harness their collective “social intelligence.” Social network intelligence is the information that helps locate relevant expertise, furthers collaboration efforts, and finds important relationships that can be leveraged to help close deals, among other benefits. Knowledge that once might have been overlooked or lost is captured and applied to develop powerful new innovations. The layer of social intelligence that an enterprise social network provides can add value and enhance existing social networking tools, CRM applications, business intelligence, knowledge management and predictive analytics, among others.*

## **What is an enterprise social network?**

An enterprise social network consists of employees, customers, partners, stakeholders and the way they interact, collaborate and transmit behaviors and attitudes. The intention is to generate collective knowledge, relationships, and value for the organization. Social network intelligence software is an emerging category of software that aggregates and unifies data from multiple sources; and smartly learns, maps, analyzes, and predicts information on social networks.

## **Why is enterprise social network intelligence important to organizations?**

While social networking software may receive a more mixed verdict, the actual human relationships it’s meant to reflect can be a vital part of every organization’s success.

Two key trends have coincided to create tremendous value for organizations. First, the fast pace of business and disparate, global and mobile work forces have placed pressure to connect employees, clients, partners, and stakeholders in new ways. Second, the social activity with employees, customers, prospects, and partners is increasingly scattered across multiple channels such as corporate email, instant messaging, phone calls, documents, transactional systems and social media chatter. Valuable information can get lost in these silos.

Individual networks help employees locate specialized skills and expertise to solve problems, shorten decision and action cycles, and avoid duplication of efforts. They can

be leveraged to make introductions outside the company that can impact a broad range of functions including sales and marketing, R&D, human resources, and supply chain, among others. For example, better understanding external relationships can provide insight into prospects to help close deals, help retain existing customers by developing broader and deeper relationships, and identify customer relationships at risk. Stronger internal ties help people better coordinate their efforts within and across departments to optimize workflows.

Effective enterprise social network intelligence can provide early indicators on a project’s success or failure, predicting probability of sales pipeline, identification of critical talent, and proactively addressing risks.

Simply put, a more socially interconnected workforce is more productive, effective, and efficient, and thus more rewarding.

## **Why do enterprise social networking applications so often fail to deliver that kind of impact?**

The premise seems sound: by providing tools for employees to develop networks and identify valuable connections within and outside the business, you can help them access the knowledge and relationships their work requires. But simply rolling out tools like Salesforce.com Chatter, SharePoint, Yammer, Jive, LinkedIn, or others does not automatically lead to a more interconnected organization. According to Gartner, a staggering 80 percent of social business efforts will fail over the next three years.

Introducing a new social networking application does not guarantee that employees will want to use it. More often than not, these applications require employees to input data, and/or change their work habits and workflows. This does not appeal to workers who are already very busy or feeling overworked. Participation may also be challenged by personality or cultural differences.

This is the paradox at the core of enterprise social networking tools. The value proposition of such tools is that they help people identify the most relevant people within and outside their company with whom to collaborate and build relationships.

The value of the information, however, may be limited by the level and extent of participation on the social network. Infrequent participation may restrict the usefulness of the information.

Wouldn't it make more sense to map their expertise and relationships by the activities around which their jobs actually revolve—the meetings they hold and attend, the emails and documents they create and read, the research they access, and the enterprise systems they interact with?

## How should you approach building “social network intelligence” for your organizations?

Building organizational social network intelligence requires an application of data science and smart computing. This involves a series of tasks:

- Unifying the information stored in multiple systems throughout the enterprise in a central location
- Accessing and mapping the unstructured data that represents the majority of enterprise data, including emails, documents, chats, social networking updates, and other workflow and business applications activity
- Learning behaviors and mapping networks based on the people and projects each user interacts with, and the content they create and consume, in their day-to-day work
- Adding intelligence from external social networks, the Internet, and third-party databases such as Dun & Bradstreet
- Extracting relevance from all this data and making it easily searchable and accessible for users and for other reporting and analytics applications
- Doing all this while meeting global privacy and security policies

## What questions should interested organizations ask?

There are many applications, from sales to marketing to product development to human resource management to risk mitigation; management has to prioritize the business problems they want to solve. Every corporate

function can benefit by giving employees visibility to find the best colleagues to solve their day-to-day problems, and equipping management with the predictive analysis and reporting on the organizational social networks.

So, the first and most important question is what is the most pressing problem? Then you must ask what information you already have to solve that problem. Finally, you must determine where that information lives right now. For instance, who are your customers in the U.S., Europe, and Asia? Which employees are already dealing with customers in those locations? Such knowledge may be scattered in daily communications and collaboration systems and external social networks.

## What are the existing social networking applications that should be harnessed to create enterprise-wide social network intelligence?

Email and shared calendars still comprise the largest social networking applications for enterprises. Then you have CRM systems, social media tools, transactional ERP, content management systems, and multiple internal and external social networks such as LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook. Of course, there are other third-party data providers (such as D&B) and publicly available information on the Internet.

## What is the biggest ROI of an enterprise social network?

When the dust settles, it's about transparency, accountability, and visibility. Companies can make better decisions, employees can be more effective, customers get better support, more deals can be closed faster, and risks can be proactively mitigated, among other compelling benefits.

Simply implementing enterprise social networking tools and calling it a day misses an important opportunity to harness the full power of social connections to drive business value. Companies that take a more serious and comprehensive approach to empowering social networks for their employees and leverage social network intelligence will be rewarded with real competitive advantage.

## About Messagemind

Messagemind helps enterprises around the world improve performance by harnessing their collective social network intelligence. Its patented technology is unique in the way it captures, maps and analyzes an organization's relationships & expertise networks from its internal data and unifies it with external social networks, public internet content and business directories. Since 2010, Messagemind has used D&B Direct API technology to integrate company and people data into its dashboard.

For more information, please visit [www.messagemind.com](http://www.messagemind.com).



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