

Jamming on social business

Exploring new approaches for the next era of business





The Social Business Jam

On February 8–10, 2011, IBM hosted an online conversation (called a “Jam”), bringing together over 2,700 participants—representing corporations, academic institutions, nonprofit organizations and government agencies—to discuss social business and the ways in which it can redefine how we work in the years ahead. For 72 hours, individuals from over 80 countries “jammed” on key issues and generated new ideas on the major themes:

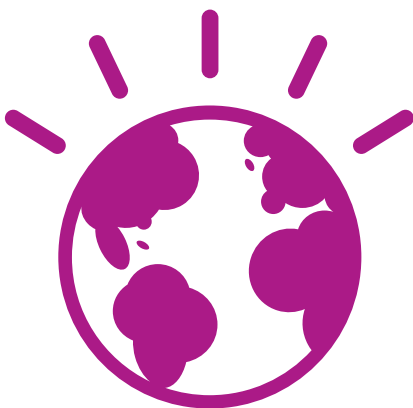
- Building the social business of the future
- Developing participatory organizations through social adoption
- Using social media to understand and engage with customers
- Determining what social means for IT
- Identifying risks and establishing governance

The Jam yielded over 2,600 discussion posts and more than 600 tweets. This report summarizes the key insights gathered from the comments of the entire community. Although it doesn’t necessarily represent IBM’s position on social business, it can serve as a blueprint for organizations that are considering adopting a social business strategy.

What is a Jam?

A Jam is an Internet-based platform for conducting conversations through brainstorming. It connects diverse populations of individuals to gain new perspectives on problems and challenges and to develop actionable ideas centered on business-critical societal issues.

In 2003, IBM engaged more than 300,000 of its employees, via a Jam, to redefine the company’s core values for the first time in almost 100 years. During the 2006 and 2008 Innovation Jams, IBM brought together over 150,000 clients, IBM Business Partners and other stakeholders worldwide, resulting in the formation of several new IBM businesses. And, in 2009, IBM gathered university students, faculty members, business professionals and industry experts to discuss how to make our planet smarter.



Jam insights, opportunities and innovative ideas for social business

Social networking tools are dramatically changing the way we communicate and collaborate—both at home and on the job. Many businesses have reached a tipping point, a moment of critical mass, with this burgeoning technology. They are effectively using social networking as a channel but, in many cases, are still attempting to discover how to internalize it and take advantage of the collaborative aspects and cost benefits that becoming a social business can bring. This Jam was an opportunity to explore the key issues, share insights and work together to better overcome the challenges of becoming a social business.

Each Jam forum is summarized below and includes a brief overview, key insights identified by Jammers and top ideas for innovation that surfaced during the event.

Building the social business of the future

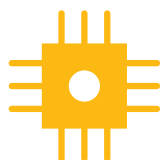
This forum was by far the most popular, perhaps because it covered a wide range of issues related to social business. Discussions touched upon the problems with email, how to create incentive for the sharing of knowledge, social networking's involvement in government and much more.

Key insights

The new ROI. A significant topic of discussion was how to adequately measure the impact of social technologies on the business, particularly with regards to return on investment (ROI). Of non-IBM participants in the Jam, over 25 percent said that their organizations have low to medium levels of adoption of social business practices, with a key concern being the pressure to quantify the ROI of social solutions.

Many participants believed that the usage of social media is absolutely quantifiable and measurable, but it involves tracking a new set of metrics. This includes monitoring of the following:

- How often the brand is mentioned in social media
- How engaged customers are by how often they comment on or share information about the brand
- How many customers are being exposed to messaging
- How many customers are active advocates for the brand
- How the efforts of these advocates are resulting in new customers or increased traffic
- How many issues are being successfully resolved—and how quickly
- How satisfied customers are and what kind of feedback they are providing



Instrumented



Intelligent



Interconnected



Jam quick polls

What is most likely to encourage you to use social software more often in your job?

7%

Increased use by executives

24%

Ease of use of the tools

13%

Available on any device

9%

Increased use by my customer

47%

Embedded in the applications I use to do my job

Others noted that calculating the ROI of social media is attacking the problem from the wrong direction. “You can successfully measure the ROI of social media,” one participant wrote, “but you must first understand your audience’s needs and motivations for engaging with social media.” Another asked: “Did we figure out the ROI of email, instant messaging or even the telephone? No. We just focused on measuring overall performance in our business objectives.”

Integrating social activities and business processes. To truly capitalize on social collaboration, it must be fully integrated into existing business processes and tools. This requires a coordinated, three-pronged approach, with leadership driving the initiative, human resources supporting the necessary cultural change and IT providing the necessary tools. This will result in a new kind of process. “We’re going to see a significant transition away from more-structured business processes,” one participant said, “to a much more socially collaborative process style. Employees will be much more aware of their processes via the communities in which they’re involved and will work in a much more dynamic and collaborative fashion.”

HR and the social business. Branching off from a discussion of how HR can promote cultural change came one of how that might work. HR needs to embrace the fact that employees have their own personal brands that exist both inside and outside the business and that it does not own these brands but merely “rents” them while employees are at work. Personal brands need to be measured and rewarded based on how they help your company throughout the social network. As employees transition and become alumni of an organization, it becomes even more important that HR maintains relationships with its alumni network. Social tools can help provide a strong, dynamic way to keep the alumni network active and useful, enabling the organization to keep an invaluable source of knowledge, mentoring and connections.

In order to take full advantage of the capabilities, HR must work with leadership to expand and instill the use of social technologies in practical and significant ways—a fundamental cultural change. Information can get lost and conversations can taper off when email is the primary form of communication. “I think leaders have a responsibility, where it makes sense, to move people out of email,” a participant wrote. “I heard someone once say that ‘email is where information goes to die,’ implying that we lose something by forcing knowledge into that channel.”



Jam quick polls

What percentage of your online time do you spend on social networking?

25%

More than 50%

20%

25–50%

33%

10–25%

22%

0–10%

Ideas for innovation

- *Reduce your reliance on email.* Leadership can promote cultural change by embracing social tools.
- *Provide incentives.* HR must reward employees who take full advantage of social networking tools.
- *Use your alumni.* Leverage the experience and connections of the alumni network.

Building participatory organizations through social adoption

How can social media help create a truly dynamic, collaborative business? That was the jumping-off point for this forum, which explored the challenges involved with integrating social tools into existing business processes.

Key insights

The evolution of middle management. The role of middle managers is changing—or perhaps disappearing altogether. Many social business capabilities reduce the need for typical middle management tasks. Social technologies provide networks, transparency, agility and a democratization of the workplace, which can flatten the hierarchies of yesterday. Today, expertise does not necessarily come from being in a certain position but from skills and experience. In the future, the role of manager may change depending on the task at hand, as opposed to being a permanent role.

The role of lurkers and the echo chamber. “Lurkers”—people who watch social spaces without participating—were discussed during the Jam. Some Jammers felt that lurkers needed to be encouraged to get involved and add to the conversation, whereas others believed that they bring value in their own quiet way. “Lurkers make very important contributions to the social ecosystem,” said one commenter. “It’s just that their contributions aren’t readily apparent in the immediate context. A surprising number of people use social information to inform their tasks, but they follow up through other, less visible channels.” Lurkers may actually help reduce the effects of traditional boundaries and silos, and so it could be beneficial to cultivate that practice among the entire workforce.



Jam quick polls

How often do you post a status update on your social tools for work purposes?

3%

Hourly

16%

A few times a day

32%

A few times a week

36%

A few times a month

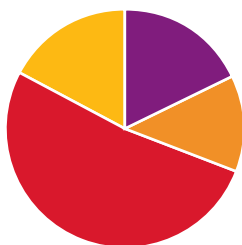
13%

Never

Closely related to the lurker phenomenon is the idea that users often censor themselves—or don't participate—in social networks for fear of disagreeing with others. On platforms where opinions are attached to identity, people tend to gravitate to the middle and not voice alternative or controversial thoughts. Social businesses need to encourage authenticity, diversity and a healthy respect for conflict and the innovation that can arise from it. This can help improve decision making and foster an environment of inclusion, not exclusion.

Openness, privacy and identities. How do we reconcile social media's reliance on openness with a business's need for privacy? Many agreed that these goals are not mutually exclusive. In fact, one can lead to the other. "A given level of internal privacy (and the trust that it generates) will lead participants to more openness," said one Jammer. "In the realm of collaborative work, privacy appears to be a prerequisite for openness among individuals." Additionally, participating in social networks is all about moving from faceless transactions to visible interactions between real people and organizations. Customers can now better understand what individuals and companies stand for and can engage them with authenticity. "Identification, authentication and reputation are fundamental in building trust," one participant wrote. "I always counsel complete transparency when talking about social collaboration, as it becomes self-regulating and ultimately self-fulfilling."

Soft is the new hard. A commonly made point was how the soft infrastructure—people, processes and problem solving—is much more important to social business than the hard infrastructure of features, functions and technology. Driving adoption of social technology by focusing on a particular platform or feature is missing the point. It's better to focus on creating a particular value or outcome. With new technologies, it takes time to evolve from exploring their novelty to actually using them for practical means. For example, Twitter has gone from "I'm eating a sandwich" to saving lives and transforming nations. It's important to communicate that social tools are no longer niche technologies, but are a force that can empower businesses to connect, innovate, create value and solve real problems in real time. This doesn't come from just implementing a new tool but from the soft "stuff" that transforms the way people behave and operate.



Jam quick polls

How does your organization use social software?

18%

Primarily as an internal tool used by employees

13%

Primarily use external social media as a marketing and communications tool

52%

Extensively, both internally and externally

17%

Only in a limited fashion

Ideas for innovation

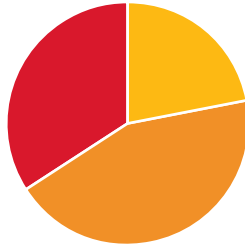
- *Focus on the soft infrastructure.* Focus on creating a particular value or outcome rather than the technology itself.
- *Don't be afraid of conflict.* Encourage open, honest discussion to improve decision making and foster an environment of inclusion.
- *Make privacy a priority.* Privacy fosters a level of comfort that encourages users to speak openly and freely.

Using social media to understand and engage with customers

The rise of social business is in many ways driven by the need to better understand and engage with customers. This forum discussed a wide range of smart approaches to accomplishing this, as well as ways to sidestep potential pitfalls.

Key insights

Building a customer-centric business. “Opening your organization and allowing your employees to interact with customers,” one participant said, “create opportunities that you won’t see with a traditional mind-set.” This important concept is key to leveraging social media to move from a vendor model to a service provider model in which the needs of the customer come first—rather than the products, services, production, supply chain, etc. “The necessary shift is to position the customer very early in the model,” said one participant. “We need to develop our customers instead of the company.” Using the full range of social tools—and allowing the personal brands that workers bring to their companies to help shape how customers see these businesses—can help make this process much more effective. Additionally, many organizations have implemented internal Social Business programs to help improve collaboration among coworkers. Others have only implemented external social programs to help them communicate with customers and partners. Jammers discussed the fact that organizations that are implementing both internal and external programs in conjunction with each other, are seeing an exponential boost to insight and productivity in both their external customer-focused and internal employee-focused programs. Launching and aligning a coordinated internal and external effort is essential to attaining the true value of a customer-centric model.



Jam quick polls

Does your organization measure ROI or business metrics impacted by social software?

22%

Yes, to a great extent

44%

Somewhat, but not consistently

34%

No, not at all

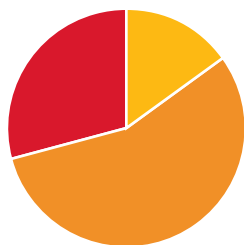
Making sense of the data. Social media can connect the business to a wealth of information. But that information can also be overwhelming without some system in place to filter it as needed. Social input must be monitored, analyzed and routed to the people who need it. “Social intelligence is a way for companies to get value from social business,” a commenter wrote. “Listen to what your customers are saying, filter out what is important for your business and quickly take action as an integral part of your business process.” It’s also important to be aware of the context that surrounds the person engaging with your company. That way, you will not only know *why*, but also *why now*. Monitoring every customer interaction at every point in the buying cycle will showcase opportunities to improve service using social capabilities. This knowledge can help you better understand the circumstances in which desired actions (such as buying a particular product) are more likely to take place. “Many corporations treat social media as just another channel to broadcast a tight social marketing message,” a Jammer writes. “The challenge is to go beyond that by identifying and leveraging pockets of relevant influence.” You shouldn’t necessarily be looking for trendsetters but for those who help spread trends and share useful information with their network and bring attention to your brand. This can require the use of public relations or customer service skills rather than traditional marketing approaches.

Ideas for innovation

- *Build a customer-centric business.* Social media can help you move from a vendor model to a service provider model, in which the needs of the customer come first.
- *Evaluate every customer touch point.* Monitor all customer interactions and consult with employees to improve service using social capabilities.
- *Align internal and external initiatives.* Improve internal collaboration and communication with customers as a means to boost insight and productivity.

What social means for IT

Although building a social business involves making fundamental cultural shifts, it also requires a smart, flexible technical infrastructure. This forum addressed the ways in which IT can support and enhance the social network.



Jam quick polls

Do you think HR departments will formalize measurement of an individual's "brand" through social metrics?

15%

Yes, they will be rigorously measured and evaluated

56%

Maybe, evaluated in an ad hoc, qualitative manner only

29%

No, this will not become a widely used HR metric

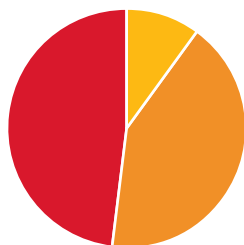
Key insights

The evolution of IT. IT used to be the last word on all things technical in the enterprise. But with social tools and third-party consumer applications coming to the forefront, IT needs to be more open to innovative strategies. "In many organizations, IT lacks the speed to keep up with evolving social networking," one commenter said. "Users have access to fantastic, affordable technology for personal use. IT needs to either figure out how to make those functions enterprise grade or face widespread rogue adoption of the consumer versions." IT can play a key role in creating a Social Business by leading the integration of social tools into enterprise processes, but should also take a more flexible approach to project management. "People are in learning mode," one wrote. "IT can provide 'how to' templates, but limiting functions, restricting access or applying controls at this incubator stage could curtail people's enthusiasm and creativity."

A driver for innovation. "The incredible pace of adoption of smart phones and tablets is the enabling partner for social media," one Jammer said. "But this requires a nimbleness and connection with end users that IT is not accustomed to." Social media is an opportunity for IT to develop innovative new approaches toward supporting the growth of the enterprise. These could take many forms, such as enabling a remote workforce to easily collaborate with different offices. Creating a smart, flexible strategy for mobile devices that balances the security the business demands with the mobile tools and applications that users want is one way to spark innovation. Providing analytical tools is another way that IT can play a part in social business. Analytics can help identify influencers and leaders, create taxonomies to provide a better context for incoming information and enable users to mine data from blogs, wikis and tweets, helping determine patterns and better quantify—in real time—brand perception.

Ideas for innovation

- *Make IT a partner, not an obstacle.* A collaborative relationship with IT is essential to implement a comprehensive, reliable infrastructure for social business.
- *Develop a mobility strategy.* Balance security and the need for mobile applications.
- *Utilize analytics to watch for patterns.* You can monitor the discussion of your brand or employee sentiment and spot trends early by mining data from blogs, wikis, tweets and more.



Jam quick polls

How significant a barrier is culture to social software use in your organization?

10%

High—Our organization may never come around

42%

Medium—It certainly slows adoption

48%

Low—Our culture readily embraces its use

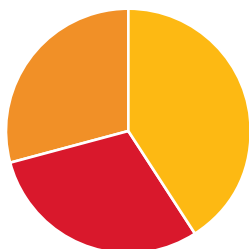
Identifying risks and establishing governance

This forum was intended to cover the challenges around security and management with regard to social business. In the end, it hit upon those topics but also pulled in a number of related issues.

Key insights

A new strategy for content management. Old, paper-centric solutions for enterprise content management are not robust enough for today's social business. Data is coming in from a wide range of sources, via a wide range of devices, and security demands and regulatory compliance are becoming ever stricter. "In day-to-day business communication," one commenter wrote, "social media communication streams would need to become more integrated into business systems and processes, as well as the way this content is managed." For shared knowledge and information to be truly valuable and actionable, a certain level of assuredness in the accuracy of their providers is needed. Digital signatures, the https protocol, Domain Keys Identified Mail (DKIM) and other technologies can help provide better authentication and security.

Empowering employees. To provide products and services that keep the business ahead of the competition, employees need to understand what your customers want, what the goals of the business are and how they can provide real value. This knowledge can be shared more readily, across all departments, with an intelligent application of social networking tools. Employees should also feel trusted by management and not like something that needs to be monitored and controlled. "Rather than pursue the safe path of mediocrity and sit on the sidelines, waiting for the competition to adopt social media," a commenter wrote, "it'd be better to list all the possible ways staff might damage the company, categorize those items into common themes and then proactively address those concerns prior to lowering the drawbridge." The reality is that the fear of employee social engagement is, for the most part, unwarranted. Companies often dramatically underestimate their main safeguard against abuse violations and risk—the inherent judgment and character of their employees.



Jam quick polls

Do you think traditional structured business processes will give way to socially collaborative processes?

41%

Yes, extensively and within five years

30%

Yes, extensively but over a longer period of time

29%

Maybe, for select business processes

0%

No, it will not be a widespread phenomenon

Professional versus personal. Because many social media tools are used at home as well as at work, the lines are blurring between personal and our professional lives. This can provide complications for employees who want to keep the two separate, and it may impede the adoption of social media in the workplace or prevent people from sharing information. “I’m in a position where I need to use Twitter for my job,” one participant said, “but don’t necessarily want friends and family following me. What I might tweet about personally and professionally are completely different. How do you keep the audiences separate?” Similarly, the wall between employee and customer is crumbling. Employees are becoming more connected to customers through social media and now develop social worth for the company. But what happens when that employee leaves? “Now, in a single tweet, all eyes can shift from one company to another, simply because the focus is on the individual,” one Jammer said. “This social status might well become the new negotiating stock of our next-generation knowledge workers.”

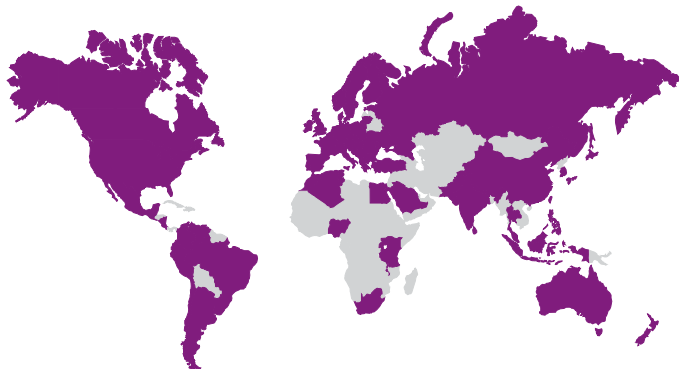
Ideas for innovation

- *Don’t fear transparency.* Create access and encourage transparency by providing people with social collaboration tools and establish a culture of information sharing.
- *Don’t underestimate character.* The inherent good judgment of your people can be the greatest safeguard against risk.
- *Develop a smart content strategy.* Put a system in place to keep the volume of incoming information organized and routed efficiently.

Our jamming experience

The social business Jam was an outstanding success, with lively conversations happening throughout the event, covering all aspects of social business. We were pleased that experts and leaders in the world of social business participated enthusiastically in the Jam, with more than 45 external special guests sharing their own experiences, engaging in rich dialogue and sparking thought-provoking discussions. Our entire community—partners, customers, corporations, academic institutions, nonprofit organizations, government agencies and individuals—came together to engage in an important dialogue around social business.

Like many organizations, IBM too is evolving to become a social business. We believe that the Jam has helped all of our stakeholders to come to a much better understanding of challenges facing businesses today. And that, together with our community, we can collaborate to generate the breakthrough ideas and innovative products that will define social business for the future.



More than 2,700 people from 80 countries participated in the 2011 Social Business Jam.

Next steps

The IBM Social Business Jam is just the beginning. We hope that you, as Jammers, take the positive energy and ideas from the Jam experience and develop concrete actions that will help us all create a Smarter Planet. Every post is available to download for your review. We have also created a social business white paper that highlights IBM's point of view—developed in part from insights gathered at the Jam.

Next steps include the following:

1. Review the key insights and ideas for innovation that Jammers collectively raised across each topic area.
2. Share your experiences about this Jam with friends and colleagues.
3. Determine if there is a role for this type of technology in your business, one that addresses specific challenges by leveraging the wisdom of crowds.

If your business is taking action on ideas that surfaced during this Jam, please visit:

ibm.com/socialbusiness

To learn more about IBM Jams, please visit:

collaborationjam.com



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