

# Application of Social Media Communication Tools for Effective Internal Communication

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**Abstract:** *This paper examines the impact of social media communication tools on internal communication effectiveness referring to different industries whilst the main attention was given on the consumer durable sector. It has made a comprehensive literature review as the main methodology to present the key insights on how social media is applied to result effective internal communications with reference to different industries. Alongside, it reveals the application gravity of social media platforms including WhatsApp as an emerging tool among professionals for internal communication. Furthermore, paper portrays the crucial role of employee social media skills and company-run social networks in leveraging social media for effective internal communication. In addition, this study highlights that companies require a tailored social media strategy. This should encompass training to enhance the competencies of employees towards social media and applications on social networks to facilitate information sharing and teamwork. The implications of this study suggest the need for a tailored social media communication strategy, focusing on training programs to enhance employee social media competency and the development of a firm-generated social network to facilitate information sharing and collaboration. Conclusively, this paper attempted to present a review on how social media is applied for different industries including consumer durable industry. Paper concludes the future research directions highlighting the futuristic value of the proposed research directions.*

**Keywords:** social media, internal communications, consumer durables industry

## INTRODUCTION

Social media communication tools have become increasingly prevalent in the business landscape, transforming the way organizations interact with both external and internal stakeholders (Enyinda et al., 2020; Nazir et al., 2024). This concept paper aims to explore the impact of social media communication tools on the effectiveness of internal communication within organizations. Previous studies have highlighted the significant influence of internal communication on various organizational outcomes, such as employee engagement, job

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Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development-UK satisfaction, and employee loyalty (Nguyen & Ha, 2023). Effective internal communication has been found to foster stronger workplace relationships and a sense of meaning and worth among employees (Karanges et al., 2015). In this context, the emergence of social media communication tools presents both opportunities and challenges for organizations seeking to enhance their internal communication strategies.

While traditional communication channels within organizations have been disrupted by social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and internal collaboration tools like Slack, have disrupted traditional communication channels within organizations. These tools have the potential to facilitate more streamlined, real-time information sharing, collaboration, and engagement among employees across different departments and locations. As practitioners have noted, the strategic use of internal social media can drive employee engagement, enable leadership endorsement, and foster a more transparent and authentic communication culture (Ewing et al., 2019).

However, the integration of social media communication tools into internal communication practices also comes with certain risks and challenges. Concerns around data privacy, security breaches, and the potential for the dissemination of negative messages or misinformation have led some organizations to be cautious in their adoption of social media. Additionally, the blurring of personal and professional boundaries, as well as the potential for employee distraction, have been identified as potential drawbacks of social media usage within the workplace (“Employees and the Use of Social Media,” 2017).

To effectively leverage the benefits of social media communication tools while mitigating the associated risks, organizations must develop robust social media policies, provide comprehensive employee training, and foster a culture of transparency and trust. As suggested by research, a strategic approach to internal social media use, including clear guidelines, leadership commitment, and the establishment of dedicated social media teams, can help organizations maximize the positive impact of these communication tools on internal communication effectiveness (Dreher, 2014).

Building on this, social media marketing has been found to facilitate sales processes by stimulating customer engagement and enhancing brand awareness. Similarly, internal social media can enhance employee engagement, streamline information sharing, and foster a more collaborative work environment, ultimately improving the effectiveness of internal communication (Lovita & Prabantoro, 2020). By embracing the strategic use of social media communication tools, organizations can strengthen their internal communication practices, improving employee satisfaction, productivity, and organizational performance.

## **PURPOSE OF STUDY AND METHODOLOGY**

The purpose of this concept paper is to investigate the application of social media communication tools on the effectiveness of internal communication within organizations, with a specific focus on the consumer durables industry. Alongside, this study reveals most

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Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development-UK commonly used social media communication tools in the consumer durables industry whilst specific attention was made for sales functions. Additionally, it addresses another purpose of examining the leverage and futuristic requirements of social media skills and the presence of firm-generated social networks for effective internal communication in the consumer durables industry. Paper attempted to conclude the discussions and future research priorities based on the main insights presented with scientific explanations and industry linked insights. Authors followed a literature review and case reviews as the main methodology to present the key insights. In addition, this study directly addresses the practice related knowledge gap found in the different industries whereas focus was made on consumer durable sector.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Social media tools**

The rise of social media communication tools has had a significant impact on how organizations engage with both external and internal stakeholders. Previous research has identified a range of social media communication tools that organizations can leverage for internal communication, including enterprise social networks, internal blogs and wikis, and instant messaging and video conferencing platforms. These tools can facilitate the exchange of information, knowledge sharing, and collaboration among employees, leading to improved coordination, decision-making, and overall organizational effectiveness (Nuji et al., 2023).

The literature suggests that social media tools can enhance the effectiveness of internal communication in several ways. They can improve information sharing and knowledge exchange, enabling the rapid dissemination of information and more transparent and timely communication between management and employees. Additionally, social media tools can foster a sense of community and camaraderie among employees, facilitating greater collaboration, idea sharing, and problem-solving, thus enhancing employee engagement and collaboration. Furthermore, the real-time nature of social media communication can enable organizations to respond more quickly to changing business conditions and employee needs, increasing their responsiveness and agility (Deloitte, 2024).

### **The role of social media in internal communication**

The extant literature suggests that social media communication tools can enhance the effectiveness of internal communication in several ways: Improved information sharing and knowledge exchange: Social media platforms can facilitate the rapid dissemination of information, allowing for more transparent and timely communication between management and employees (Enyinda et al., 2020; Dreher, 2014). Enhanced employee engagement and collaboration: Social media tools can foster a sense of community and camaraderie among employees, facilitating greater collaboration, idea sharing, and problem-solving (Dreher, 2014). Increased responsiveness and agility: The real-time nature of social media communication can enable organizations to respond more quickly to changing business conditions and employee needs.

**Social media application internal communication**

While the potential benefits of using social media communication tools for internal communication are well-documented, the actual implementation and integration of these tools within organizations can be challenging.

**Key considerations include**

Aligning social media use with organizational objectives and culture: The successful integration of social media tools requires a clear understanding of how they can support the organization's strategic goals and fit within its existing communication practices and organizational culture (Enyinda et al., 2020).

**Addressing employee privacy and security concerns:**

The use of social media in the workplace raises concerns about data privacy, security, and the blurring of professional and personal boundaries, which must be carefully managed. Addressing concerns around privacy, security, and control: Organizations must balance the potential benefits of social media with concerns around data privacy, information security, and the ability to monitor and control internal communication (Enyinda et al., 2020) .

Chaffey et al. highlight how social media marketing is a critical component of digital marketing, as it can facilitate effective communication with clients on an organization's own website or through various social media platforms. Moreover, they emphasize that a well-crafted social media marketing strategy has become a core element of business operations, helping to enhance customer conversion rates and improve employee efficiency (Enyinda et al., 2020).

Levine et al. emphasize that effective communication should have a "human voice" and sound natural. Chaffey's analysis, as shown in the radar diagram in Figure 1, illustrates the diverse range of social media platforms available for organizations to leverage. This can help organizations navigate the choices and identify the most appropriate methods to communicate effectively with their internal stakeholders.



Figure 1 : Social Media Marketing Radar  
 Source: Chaffey,D.Chadwick,F E., (2012)

### **Electronic Word-of-Mouth Marketing**

While the traditional word-of-mouth communication has evolved with the rise of the virtual world, the exponential growth of social networking sites has transformed the effectiveness of this mode of communication (Nuji et al., 2023). According to the literature, social media tools can facilitate enhanced internal communication within organizations in several ways: Social media communication tools can enhance internal communication in several ways. They can improve information sharing and knowledge exchange, enabling the rapid dissemination of information and fostering more transparent and timely communication between management and employees. (Shaikh et al., 2022) Additionally, social media tools can cultivate a sense of community and camaraderie among employees, promoting greater collaboration, idea sharing, and problem-solving (Enyinda et al., 2020). Furthermore, the real-time nature of these tools can equip organizations to respond more quickly to changing business conditions and employee needs (Enyinda et al., 2020).

However, the successful integration of social media tools for internal communication requires aligning their use with organizational objectives and culture, while also addressing concerns around privacy, security, and control. As noted in the literature, organizations must carefully navigate these challenges to leverage the full potential of social media for enhancing internal communication effectiveness.

### **Variety of Social Network Sites**

The rise of emerging generations has led to various social media platforms becoming more prevalent than traditional communication methods, resulting in a different approach to engagement between organizations and their stakeholders. Popular social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, as well as other platforms like Digg, Delicious, and Flickr, are being utilized for a variety of activities, including posting comments, personal selling messages, and advertisement ratings.

At the point investigations on social destinations for employees, in Verghese, (2018) has shown that Nokia's mantra is associating with people internally and externally. Nokia is using BlogHub for internal usage which is the powerful internal method enables to employees present their views and creatives in virtually. This has been successfully used by Nokia last few years. The case study of HOK demonstrates a successful approach to leveraging social media for corporate communication. HOK has actively utilized various social networks to engage both internal and external stakeholders. The key objectives were enrollment, inspiration, and retention. This effort allowed HOK to enhance external perceptions, portraying the organization as a large, innovative entity, which in turn helped sustain the business. Furthermore, HOK leveraged its YouTube channel to feature videos of sales managers sharing their personal experiences, which helped motivate the employees and their families (Sadia et al., 2023).

On the other hand, Chaffey and Smith (2008) mentioned social networks is a critical point when engaging with audience and socializing. However, they also noted that social network might deviate employees from the day-to-day job pattern. At the same time not easy to make all of

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them to discuss common topic on a virtual platform. This might create a disturbance to communicate the main message among employees (Wang & Cardon, 2019).

### **Firm-Generated Social Network**

The term "Firm-Generated Social Network" emerged around 2005 and has since gained significant importance in the media landscape. FGSN encompasses all content posted online by users, whether created by them or not. It can include text, images, audio, video, or a combination. FGSN can also incorporate games and virtual items for employees, leading to better understanding and collaboration between workers and organizations. Additionally, FGSN plays a crucial role in the democratization of news, providing diverse additional sources of information.

The best example is Virgin Media, which utilized FGSN to enhance the effectiveness of internal communication. Virgin implemented various FGSN elements, such as an intranet, web chat, virtual forums, wikis, a private Twitter account for sales and marketing employees, and blogs to engage their staff. Organizations wishing to be proactive with FGSN need to understand different consumer motivations and design campaigns accordingly. A telecommunication organization, has to implemented an incentive scheme to encourage employees to use FGSN (Geiger, 2020).

### **Influence of social media effectiveness on internal communication**

The impact of social media communication tools on internal communication effectiveness is multifaceted. Social media enables improved information sharing and knowledge exchange between management and employees, providing a more transparent and timely communication channel that enhances the flow of information within the organization and fosters a more collaborative environment. (Enyinda et al., 2020) Additionally, social media tools have the potential to increase employee engagement and collaboration, cultivating a sense of community among employees, facilitating idea sharing, and promoting better problem-solving across the organization. Furthermore, the real-time nature of social media communication equips organizations to react more quickly to changing business conditions, employee needs, and market trends.

However, the successful integration of social media tools for internal communication requires aligning their use with organizational objectives and culture, while also addressing concerns around privacy, security, and control. Careful planning and implementation is crucial to leverage the full potential of social media for enhancing internal communication effectiveness. (Nazir et al., 2024)

### **The Mediating Role of Digital Transformation and Moderating Effect of Organizational Culture**

The impact of social media communication tools on internal communication effectiveness can be further understood by examining two key mediating and moderating factors: digital transformation and organizational culture.

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Digital Transformation: The integration of social media within an organization's internal communication strategies is closely tied to its broader digital transformation efforts ( Wasantha, Dombepola, Ibrahim, & Gopal,2022). Successful adoption of social media tools requires an organization to have the necessary digital infrastructure, employee digital skills, and a change-oriented mindset (Nazir et al., 2024). Digital transformation not only enables the technical integration of social media, but also shapes the organizational processes and culture to better leverage these tools for enhancing internal communication.

Organizational Culture: The influence of social media on internal communication effectiveness is also moderated by the prevailing organizational culture. Organizations with a culture that embraces openness, collaboration, and knowledge sharing tend to derive greater benefits from social media tools. Conversely, organizations with a hierarchical, risk-averse culture may face challenges in fully realizing the potential of social media for internal communication (Nazir et al., 2024).

## **DISCUSSION**

Social media has transformed organizational communication by enabling real-time information sharing, fostering employee engagement, and facilitating more responsive and agile internal communication. Successful integration of social media for internal communication requires aligning its use with organizational objectives and culture, while addressing concerns around privacy, security, and control (Lovita & Prabantoro, 2020) . The impact of social media on internal communication effectiveness is mediated by an organization's digital transformation and moderated by its organizational culture. Successful integration of social media communication tools for internal communication effectiveness is contingent on an organization's digital transformation journey and the alignment of its cultural values with the collaborative, transparent nature of social media (Enyinda et al., 2020).

As Wollan et al. have stated, building and creating internal groups for social media communication is an essential element that businesses need to hone. The organization's objectives should align with the business and social media techniques utilized. Further, Wollan et al. noted that a significant number of multinational leaders have recognized the importance of these factors and invested in new strategies, such as social media communication execution plans and operational planning. Additionally, firms are focusing on reengineering their current teams to ensure they drive the success of the business. Recent articles in Bloomberg Businessweek indicate that many organizations are in the process of hiring social media communication specialists. For instance, companies like Google, Seras Holdings, Fiji Water, and Citigroup are currently engaged in this process (Zia et al., 2022).

Moreover, organizations need to ensure that their existing communication processes are aligned with social media marketing communication, including creating a brand community (Bandara & Dissanayake,2021). As cited in Forbes, the Warwick Business School shows that social apps and networks make employees more productive at work. The digital connectivity will boost employee metrics such as productivity and retention. According to research by the

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McKinsey Global Institute, most companies are not following the best practices to increase communication efficiency. However, 74% of companies are using social networks to improve communication, though very few are able to fully realize the potential of the process (Ziyadin et al., 2019). McKinsey suggests that there are possibilities for the practice of social media in companies, which will drive productivity to the next level. Furthermore, according to the Future Workplace's Multiple Generations Work survey, organizations need to understand the different generations of employees to achieve the desired outcomes (Dhillon, 2023).

The impact of social media communication tools on internal communication effectiveness can be seen across various industries beyond just academic and professional settings. In the service sector, for example, social media channels can enable real-time customer service and feedback, improving responsiveness and building stronger customer relationships (Ramanathan et al., 2017). Similarly, in the retail industry, social media platforms can facilitate more engaging and interactive communications with customers, driving brand loyalty and enhancing the overall shopping experience (Enyinda et al., 2020).

Furthermore, online platforms, such as e-commerce marketplaces and content providers, can leverage social media to foster a sense of community among users, facilitate peer-to-peer interactions, and gather valuable user insights to enhance their products and services. Across these diverse domains, the strategic integration of social media communication tools, aligned with organizational goals and culture, can significantly bolster internal communication effectiveness and unlock new avenues for growth and innovation. Even corporate leaders could use social media for personal branding strategies as well (Nanayakkara & Dissanayake, 2020).

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, the impact of social media communication tools on internal communication effectiveness is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon. It is contingent on an organization's digital transformation journey, which encompasses the necessary digital infrastructure, employee digital skills, and a change-oriented mindset. Additionally, the prevailing organizational culture, whether it embraces openness, collaboration, and knowledge sharing or is marked by a hierarchical, risk-averse approach, can significantly influence the degree to which social media tools are leveraged effectively for internal communication.

Further research in this area could explore the specific factors that contribute to the successful integration of social media communication tools within diverse organizational settings. This could include an in-depth analysis of the strategies and best practices employed by organizations that have been able to harness the full potential of social media for enhancing internal communication, productivity, and employee engagement. Additionally, investigating the challenges and barriers faced by organizations in their efforts to adopt and integrate social media communication tools could provide valuable insights for guiding future implementation efforts. Comparative studies examining the differential impacts of social media communication tools across various industries and sectors would also contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon.



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