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Enterprise Social Networks : Effective Internal Organizational Communication Strategies

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/ Enterprise Social Networks: Effective Internal Organizational Communication Strategies /

by

Makeda A. Boucaud

A Master's Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of

Montclair State University

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Abstract

Social Networking Sites (SNSs) such as *Facebook* and *Twitter* have reinvented how publics communicate with one another. *Enterprise Social Networks (ESNs)* are a form of Social Network Sites (SNS) which many organizations are adopting within their communication practices. The primary goal of ESNs is to engage employees through social interaction which is intended to create company communities which users can use to access business information, team updates and team performance statistics. The current study examines assumptions present in purveyor literature about how ESNs are intended to provide benefit in six aspects of organizational development: organizational communication, information communication technology, technology mediated communication, employee motivation, knowledge sharing and building relationship. Several ESNs were evaluated according to these six categories. Building Relationships and Organizational Communication were found in five of the ESNs analyzed; Technology Mediated Communication and Knowledge Sharing were found in four of the ESNs analyzed; Information Communication Technology was found in two of the ESNs; and Employee Motivation was not found in either of the ESNs analyzed. Overall, the study finds that purveyors intend ESNs to contribute to a variety, but not all, of the identified aspects.

ENTERPRISE SOCIAL NETWORKS
EFFECTIVE INTERNAL ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

A THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the degree of Master of Arts in Public and Organizational Relations

by
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2014

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Enterprise Social Networks: Effective Internal Organizational Communication Strategies

Enterprise Social Networks (ESNs) are a form of Social Network Sites (SNS) that many organizations are adopting within their communication practices. The primary goal of an ESN is to engage employees through social interaction which is intended to create company communities through which users can access business information, team updates, and team performance statistics (Ludwig, 2013). An ESN has several components: (1) it supports the concept of a rich user profile; (2) it allows users to communicate with each other in a way that is open and public by default; and (3) it is based primarily on relationships defined by organizational membership, not friendship (Dellow, 2012). Compared to organizational intranets, many users prefer ESNs because information is more accessible and they require less maintenance (Dellow, 2012). ESNs are preferred within organizational settings because they allow users to connect with the organization's internal network. Those users who actively engage in ESNs are considered high performing employees. High performing and effective employees are those employees who are able to "tap into large, diversified networks that are rich in experience and span all organizational boundaries" (Cantrell, Cross, & Davenport, 2003, para 1).

ESNs are increasingly being used by management to support the accomplishment of organizational goals and increase employee motivation; however there is limited research that evaluates the effectiveness of ESNs within organizations. The current study aims to understand how ESN purveyors conceive and intend them to impact organizations in the age of social media. Specifically, the study examines assumptions about how ESNs benefit six aspects of organizational development: organizational

communication, information communication technology, technology mediated communication, employee motivation, knowledge sharing and building relationships. These six dimensions emerged as important factors in organizational development as a result of academic literature review. To better understand how uses of ESNs are framed in contemporary organizational life, the research examines ESN purveyors' marketing materials, including "testimonial" examples of several organizations. Promotional materials are used to help identify some specific ways that ESNs are designed to fulfill contemporary organizational-communicative ideals. The research concludes with a summary table of findings and recommendations for future studies.

Literature Review

History of Enterprise Social Networks: From SNS to ESN

Social Network Sites (SNS) have attracted millions of users who have adopted the sites within their daily practices (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). SNSs allow their users to create and visualize their social network; connect with strangers or like-minded individuals; and they allow for the use of new communication tools and information (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). SNS are defined as "web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system" (Boyd & Ellison, 2008, p. 211). What makes SNSs different from other types of "networking" sites is that their primary function is not to introduce strangers to one another but rather to provide a framework to connect with the user's social network (Boyd & Ellison, 2008, 2008). Some functions of

SNSs include: developing personal profiles, creating friendship lists, and posting private and personal messages.

When creating a personal profile, users are initially prompted to complete a questionnaire to highlight individual characteristics such as age, location, interests, and they are able to create a personal message about themselves. Users are also able to upload personal photos and attach “applications,” which enhance some of their interests (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). After creating their profile users create their friendship list or social network. Users can differentiate categories of friends by labeling them as “Friends”, “Contacts”, or “Fans” (Ellison & Boyd, 2008, p. 213). The “connection” component to a SNS is the most vital part because it allows users to access their “friends” networks; furthermore giving users access to an even larger network (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). Though users have access to connecting with other users, most SNSs have a “bi-directional” confirmation system in which both users have to “accept” a friendship request (Boyd & Ellison, 2008, p. 213). Users are then allowed to post personal messages on their profile page and send private messages to other users within their network.

ESNs are a derivative of SNSs. ESNs have evolved within organizational communication in efforts to strengthen internal networks. ESN or *Enterprise 2.0* “is the use of emergent social software platforms within companies, or between companies and their partners or customers” (McAfee, 2006). In the 1990s, research began to show a positive relationship between organizations that invested in their Information Technology (IT) department (Zammuto, Griffith, Majchrzak, Dougherty & Faraj, 2007) and organizational success. IT was recognized as not just a tool for existing processes but “an

enabler of organizational changes that can lead to additional productivity gains” (Zammuto et al., 2007, p. 751). The benefits from IT increasing computing power, communication and the integration of capabilities opened the door for enterprise-wide systems to make significant impacts within the business process (Zammuto et al., 2007).

The earliest enterprise system dates back to the 1980s with the introduction of Manufacturing Resource Planning (MRP) that combined information from various activities in manufacturing functions (Zammuto et al., 2007). In the 1990s, MRP evolved into Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) that integrated information across different organizational departments that made information more accessible (Zammuto et al., 2007). These enterprise networks created opportunities for information to be controlled by various participants rather than solely upper management. Enterprise systems provided employees with the ability to access, distribute and receive information around their work goals (Zammuto et al., 2007).

How ESNs are intended to impact Organizations

The study examines assumptions about how ESNs benefit six aspects of organizational development: organizational communication, information communication technology, technology mediated communication, employee motivation, knowledge sharing and building relationship. These assumptions emerged as important factors in organizational development as a result of academic literature review. The following is a detailed analysis of the academic literature.

Organizational Communication

Hackman and Johnson (1991) define communication as, “the transfer of symbols” (p. 6); and the interpretation of these symbols determines one’s understanding of the

intended message. Symbols are created by the messenger and translated to the receiver to understand the intended message. Symbols can be words, pictures and or figures.

Effective communication practices within organizations are vital to organizational success. Waldeck, Durante, Helmuth and Marcia (2012) state, “Scholars, corporate recruiters and managers, research firms, and business writers have argued for years that the ability to communicate effectively is a leading factor in professional success” (p. 230).

Within organizations symbols are constantly transferred amongst management, leadership and employees in efforts to meet organizational goals. Transferred messages include, but are not limited to: team goals, financial statistics, company policies, and documentation of employees. An organization which can successfully adopt strong communication practices can experience positive work outcomes throughout the organization (Waldeck, Durante, Helmuth & Marcia, 2012). As the communication process has evolved, organizations are faced with the challenge of meeting the needs of employees, stakeholders, and organizational goals. The use of technology within organizational communication plays a vital role in organizations overcoming these challenges.

Organizational communication is how leadership, management and employees use various media outlets, verbal, non-verbal and technological resources to relay an intended message. Greenbaum (1974) describes organizational communication as:

[The use of] Written media (correspondence, house publications, bulletin board information), hardware (telephone systems, dictation equipment, computer units), and speech activities (interviewing, directing,

conferring). [Organizational communication] should be construed as including all behavior-modifying stimuli both verbal and nonverbal. It includes gestures and facial expressions as well as spoken word in conversations and meetings. It also includes symbols and colors along with written word in procedure write-ups and consumer advertising. Therefore, organizational communication is concerned most with the specialized disciplines related to human communication i.e. interpersonal communication, small-group communication, information systems, mass communication, and nonverbal communication. (Greenbaum, 1974, pg. 740).

Greenbaum (1974) emphasizes that organizational communication is a system which consists of three parts: *purpose*, *operational procedures* and *structure*. The purpose is to achieve organizational goals and operational procedures are the use of communication networks to reach the intended goals. Structure makes reference to several components: organization unit (i.e., department), functional communication networks (i.e., communication strategies), communication policies (how an organization enforces communication networks) and communication activities (how communication networks are carried out within the organization). As an organization, the successful integration of all three parts is essential to organizational effectiveness; however the core of the system is within the communication networks.

Greenbaum (1974) groups communication networks into four functional categories: Regulative, Innovation, Integrative (Maintenance) and Informative (Instructive). Each category is linked to four organizational goals (conformity,

adaptiveness, morale and institutionalization). Regulative communication “relates to securing conformity to plans to assure productiveness”; Innovation is the “adaptiveness of the organization to various internal and external influences”; integrative is “feelings of self, associates and work and is directly linked to employee morale”; and informative-instructive is “concerned with the getting and giving of information and the instruction needed in efforts for employees to execute job requirements” (Greenbaum, 1974, pp. 741-742). These functions and goals become important in the consideration of technological communication strategies.

Communication Strategies and ESN

Watson-Manheim & Belanger (2007) examined how various communication media can benefit organizational performance. Watson-Manheim & Belanger (2007) state, “Organizations increasingly rely on information communication technologies (ICT) to support flexibility in processes and organizing mechanisms, and to facilitate innovation and responsiveness” (p. 267). Communication media include: email, face to face, intranet, Blackberries and instant messengers as a means of communication (Berger & Iyengar, 2013; Watson-Manheim & Belanger, 2007). Additionally, the depth, severity or complexity of the message will determine which communication strategy is implemented. As technologies and social changes have evolved more organizations are adapting multiple means of communication using multiple tools in efforts to minimize the complexity of various messages (Berger & Iyengar, 2013).

Information Communication Technology (ICT)

The use of Information Communication Technology (ITC) helps to foster the successful completion of individual and group work. ITCs also help with carrying out

job duties amongst teams who are geographically dispersed in different work areas. ITCs include the use of blackberries, intranets, phones and instant messaging. Utilizing these technologies within complex work environments can have considerable results on individual and group productivity and efficiency (Watson-Manheim & Belanger, 2007).

Innovation has become a critical concept within organizational development. In light of this, organizations seek ICTs which can help to foster innovation amongst employees. Organizations today are faced with the question of how they can become more innovative and lucrative, while maintaining acceptable operational costs. As global competition has increased, organizations are challenged with cutting costs yet improving efficiency in order to survive (Monge, Cozzens, & Contractor, 1992). One initiative that organizations are taking in efforts to overcome this challenge is the implementation of participatory management. Participative management is the process of involving employees in how organizations improve organizational performance (Monge et al., 1992). Organizations foster an atmosphere of innovation by bringing employees together in work teams and developing organic ideas from these teams. These work teams are successful especially if there are motivated employees within the teams. Monge et al (1992) believe that these employees are motivated by various rewards and punishments associated with an employee's expected performance (i.e., job security) (p. 251). The key to this type of innovation process is that participation is not mandatory and the outcomes are not directly linked to the employee's individual performance. Participatory involvement can lead to increased organizational productivity, financially stronger organization, and enhance job security for all employees (Monge et al., 1992). ESNs can

provide employees with the opportunity to participate in decision making and to share innovative ideas with colleagues across organizational departments.

The use of ICTs is present in a variety of communication strategies (i.e., intranets, email, and chat). Intranets are often associated with ESNs; however intranets serve distinctive purposes. As early as the mid 1990s, organizations adopted intranets to “speed the distribution of information and to ease collaboration across organizational subdivisions and computer applications” (Mahler & Regan, 2003, p.422). Many organizations use the company intranet to relay information to employees; however, intranets have limited functions. Intranets support four organizational functions: Human Resource Support, Group Collaboration and Problem Solving and Culture Building.

As a HR support, intranets contain information on health benefits, retirement, company phone directory, and travel information. Keeping such information on an intranet saved time, effort, and money for employees and the organization (Mahler & Regan, 2003). Intranets also created an environment for group collaboration and problem solving to take place. Users were able to create virtual groups that in turn formed communities of interest, which fostered a sense of team collaboration (Mahler & Regan, 2003). Within these groups, users were encouraged to add members and content. As a result of these online communities, intranets allowed for organizational culture building. These communities helped employees to identify with traditions, identities, and various cultures within the organization (Mahler & Regan, 2003). As social interactions and communication technologies evolved, organizations sought improved ability to help develop communities and share information.

Technology Mediated Communication (TMC)

To help address the need for better communication tools, organizations began implementing TMCs. TMC includes the use of “new media” such as blogs and social network sites to generate a message (Veltsos & Veltsos, 2010). Furthermore, the use of the internet has increased and is changing the way messages are being transmitted:

“Ours [generation] is the age of the Internet, a remarkably multifaceted tool that has experienced an exponential growth and embedded itself in the daily lives of a vast number of people. As a new telecommunication technology, it allows the common individual to engage in a cybernetic system that is globally networked.”

(Notaro, 2006, para 3)

Web blogging or “blogging” is one of the ways in which communication has evolved. The “blogging” community has allowed users to create an atmosphere in which they are able to share their thoughts on a platform that can reach countless viewers. Notaro (2006) coins the blogging community as an “electronic democracy” in which users are allowed to “put their ideas, concerns and demands before all others” (para 9). Organizations are also embracing these new technologies within their communication practices as a result of the evolution of interpersonal interaction (Waldeck, Durante, Helmuth & Marcia, 2012). The use of new technologies is what separates organizations of “yesterday” and organizations of the future. Organizations of the future, as Kotter (1996) defines them, are organizations that are embracing both the challenges and opportunities which technological and social trends are presenting. Thus, in the evolution of organizational use of technology, ICT and intranets have been expanded into TMCs that include blogging and social networking capabilities.

ESNs are becoming more attractive to organizations because of their distinct TMC features which are utilized to help reach organizational goals. ESNs provide a unique interaction capability which keeps users engaged by integrating features most commonly found in popular social network sites such as Facebook, which are already familiar to many employees. Several characteristics define ESNs. ESNs contain a *social software* function which allows users to work together by using computer-mediated communication (CMC) and to form online communities (McAfee, 2006). ESNs contain *platforms* which are digital environments in which users can contribute and interact globally over time (McAfee, 2006). Contrary to an intranet, ESNs are *emergent* which allows for user patterns and structures to form organically (McAfee, 2006). ESNs are freeform which is “optional, indifferent to formal organizational identities and accepting of many types of data” (McAfee, 2006, para 6).

The social software function is an important component to ESNs. Cook (2008) refers to several components of social software, as the “4C’s”: *Communication, Cooperation, Collaboration and Connection*. Communication platforms allows users to “converse by using text, image, voice or video” (p. 13). Cooperation allows users the freedom to share content by utilizing video sharing, social bookmarking, or social cataloguing; Collaboration encourages users to work together either directly or indirectly towards problem resolution; and Connection allows network technologies to be used to connect people with content and other people (Cook, 2008).

Social software is displayed in various forms: *Blogs, Wikis, Social bookmarking, Tagging* and *RSS*. Blogs, or weblogs, are websites containing individual posts; each post has its own URL which allows viewers to post comments (Cooke, 2008). Wikis are

websites which “can be created, edited and linked by anyone who has access to do so” (Cooke, 2008, p. 21). Social bookmarking allows users to “store, organize, share and search web pages using a web service rather than the bookmarks or favorite functions” (Cook, 2008, p. 21). Tagging is used in blogs, wikis and social bookmarking and allows users to assign information or keywords to content (Cook, 2008). Really Simple Syndication (RSS) allows web content to be frequently updated which allows users to track websites without visiting the site multiple times (Cooke, 2008). These new forms of CMC are integrated into organizational TMC strategies.

TMCs have created tremendous opportunities for organizations. The use of new communication strategies are helping to bridge the communication gap. Furthermore, ESNs, which add the social networking features, are not just another social network site in which employees are engaging in social interactions, but rather combine the benefits of information from intranets with relational and motivational benefits. Thus, ESNs have become an emerging communication strategy which organizations are implementing in efforts to improve organizational communication and to reach organizational goals. Additionally, ESNs are showing positive effects in enhancing employee motivation, increasing knowledge sharing and in strengthening internal relationships across organizational hierarchies.

Employee Motivation

The study of employee motivation dates back as far as the fourth century B.C. when Greek philosophers referred to hedonism as the primary driving force in behavior (Korzynski, 2013). The study of motivation became a topic of various interpretations amongst the disciplines. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries philosophers coined

the concept of avoiding pain by seeking pleasure as an emerging topic in motivation; then in the nineteenth century motivation became an emerging topic in psychology.

Psychologists believed motivation and instincts are an important aspect in human behavior; instincts were then replaced with the desire for people to learn from their past; organizational researchers then noted that payment and measurement were drivers of performance and motivation; and social scientists argued that social needs were motivational drivers (Korzynski, 2013).

Employee motivation plays a vital role in management as well (Camilleri & Van Der Heijden, 2007). A manager who can effectively motivate a team will assist the organization in reaching its organizational goals and will increase productivity, performance, and organizational commitment (Jurkiewicz, Massey, and Brown, 1998). Though motivation is an important aspect of job development, researchers have found that many managers do not have an accurate idea of what motivates their employees (Jurkiewicz et al., 1998). In addition to not understanding motivational factors, managers also lacked understanding in how to accurately measure motivational programs. If managers cannot understand their employees motivational needs how can managers accurately measure the competencies and effectiveness of their employees in relation to their job duties? Also, what is the proper measurement for motivational factors? Understanding the Expectancy Theory as a motivational theory can help in addressing these questions.

Motivation theoretical framework. The Expectancy Theory states, “Motivation depends on how much an individual wants something relative to other things and the perceived effort-reward probability” (Jurkiewicz et al., 1998, pg. 233). There are three

components to this theory: expectancy (confidence that their actions will produce a certain performance); instrumentality (confidence that their actions will produce a certain outcome); and valence (the value a person gives to a specific outcome) (Korzyński, 2013). Understanding what employees “want” from their jobs opposed to what they actually “get” helps to reveal work deficiencies. The individual’s who “wants” are balanced with their “gets” will focus on achieving organizational goals. However, if an imbalance occurs with “wants” and “gets”, the individual’s organizational commitment may decrease. Thus the match between employee “wants” and “gets” is a key factor in determining long-term employer success (Jurkiewicz et al., 1998).

Understanding the expectancy theory is only one part of understanding employee motivation. Employers and employees must know how to effectively use communication tools in efforts to reach understanding with one another. Organizations of today are faced with the challenge of what to communicate and how to communicate it; furthermore what technologies can be used to not only help make communication effective but possibly change the interpretation of the intended message (Te’eni, 2001). An organization that can implement communication technologies to not only enhance the communication process, but also support positive motivation, can best develop motivated employees who are engaged in attaining organizational goals. How organizations utilize communication technologies to increase knowledge (i.e., understanding job duties and tasks) within an organization affects employee motivation (Osterloh & Frey, 2000).

Knowledge Sharing

The importance of knowledge sharing within organizations is an important component in improving organizational productivity and effectiveness (Kim & Lee,

2006). Knowledge is defined as, “a fluid mix of framed experiences, values contextual information, and expert insights that provide a framework for evaluating and incorporating new experiences and information” (Kim & Lee, 2006, p. 372).

Furthermore, Kim and Lee (2006) define three characteristics of knowledge: (1) Knowledge is a function of a particular perspective, intention or stance taken by an individual, and is about beliefs and commitment; (2) knowledge is always about some end, which means that knowledge is about action; (3) knowledge is context specific and relational, and therefore it is about meaning (p. 372).

Sharing knowledge within work groups involves active participation from an individual who is willing to share information. The four mechanisms for sharing knowledge within organizations are: (1) contributing knowledge to organizational databases; (2) sharing knowledge in formal interactions within or across teams or work units; (2) sharing knowledge within practice communities; and (4) sharing knowledge in informal interactions. Within an organization, knowledge sharing is most effective when the organizations vision and goals are clear; the environment is conducive to trust and openness, and employee knowledge sharing is promoted within social networks (Kim & Lee, 2006).

Employers often offer incentives to employees who participate in knowledge sharing activities; however these incentives often create negative outcomes for participants and offer limited rewards (Brzozowski, 2009). Low participation in knowledge sharing is usually a result of the employee’s perception of limited benefits; work constraints hindering participation; and employees needing confirmation that their

input will be valued (Brzozowski, 2009). ICTs, TMCs and ESNs come into consideration in this regard as platforms for knowledge sharing.

Prior research (Dimicco et al., 2008) conducted a study on why employees are motivated to use ESNs as a function to their job responsibilities. The authors identified three motivational reasons that help understand employees use of ESN: (1) caring (connecting socially at work), (2) climbing (personal career advancement), and (3) campaigning (gathering support for individual projects). All of these have a social, relationship dimension.

Building Professional and Personal Networks

Traditional work environments are believed to be places in which professional networks are built; however with the introduction of ESNs professional networks are also developing into personal networks. These relationships are classified as either strong or weak social ties. Boyd and Ellison (2008) discuss how many SNSs are believed to strengthen weak tie relationships; therefore it may be beneficial for organizations to invest in ESNs to strengthen organizational relationships, which as previously noted, has consequences for employee motivation. Doing so can become beneficial in various ways for organizations.

The Social Capital Theory (SCT) implies that investment in social relations will create expected returns (Lin, 1999). SCT gives four explanations towards why these social interactions produce profits: (1) the flow of information is facilitated through networks; (2) social ties influences interactions between employees and decision makers within organizations; (3) social interactions within organizations give employees “social

credentials” which gives them access to various resources; and (4) social relations are expected to reinforce identity and recognition (Lin, 1999, p. 31).

Current Study of ESNs

Most research primarily focuses on a single communication media (i.e., e-mail or face to face); however the current research examines how more organizations are implementing a combination of communication media strategies within their organizational structures. As a result of the rapid changing technological environment, organizations are presented with additional communication options. Current research seeks to evaluate ESNs as an emerging communication technology practice within organizations and understand how ESNs are helping organizations to reach organizational goals. Furthermore, current research seeks to understand the challenges and opportunities of ESNs as a new communication practice. Overall, this study explores the following questions:

Research Question 1: How are ESNs intended to promoted organizational communication?

Research Question 2: How are ESNs intended to affect employee motivation?

Research Question 3: How are ESNs intended to increase knowledge sharing?

Research Question 4: How are ESNs intended to strengthen professional relationships in the workplace?

The goal is to provide a concentrated review of current ESNs from the perspective of promotional literature, compare the promotional literature with academic research and to propose strategic communication practices, utilizing these new technologies, which can

be implemented in current organizational structures to support information sharing, employee motivation and relationship building.

Methods

In an effort to answer the proposed research questions, current ESNs are analyzed through a review of promotional literature. An internet search was conducted for organizations that currently utilize ESNs. From this, various ESN platforms were identified and for the purposes of this study focused on those ESNs which have social network capabilities (i.e., creating a personal profile, building a network, etc). Additionally, other ESN platforms no longer exist or existing ESNs did not have enough information regarding their purposes and features. Therefore, the current research only uses active ESNs with social networking capabilities which have clear distinctions of their purposes, features, and organizational testimonies.

Sample selection and analyses. ESNs selected include: Salesforce, Jive Software, Socialtext, Watercooler, Tibbr and GE Colab. Each ESN is described according to its purpose, features and testimonials from current organizations. The review of the promotional literature will allow for the analysis of each ESN based on the six categories referenced in the literature review. The six categories were selected based upon the review of ESN promotional materials and academic literature. The six categories were emerging theme within ESN effectiveness and organizational development.

1. Information Communication Technology (ICT) helps to foster innovation amongst employees and is conducive to participative management.

2. A component of Technology Mediated Communication (TMC) is the social software system which allows employees to engage with one another by the use of Blogs, Wikis, Social bookmarking, Tagging and/or RSS (Really Simple Syndication).
3. Organizational communication includes the transfer of messages such as team goals, financial statistics and/or company policies. Selected ESNs will be evaluated based upon whether users can access this organizational information through the enterprise network.
4. Employee motivation is vital towards employee productivity; therefore selected ESNs will be evaluated based upon whether employees are able to communicate “wants” and “gets” to their respective leadership and management teams.
5. ESNs will also be evaluated based on how organizations can utilize their technology to increase knowledge amongst employees.
6. Lastly, the ESNs will be evaluated based upon whether employees are able to build their professional networks.

Listed below are full descriptions of each of these ESNs based on the literature available from their websites. The organizations that were selected for testimonial review are well known organizations that audiences can identify with.

Salesforce: Chatter

Purpose. Salesforce was founded in 1999 by Marc Benioff, Parker Harris, Dave Moellenhoff and Frank Dominguez. The purpose was to build an “on demand information management service that would replace traditional enterprise software

technology” (“Executive team”, 2013, para 1). As a result of their groundbreaking innovation, Salesforce is now known as the leader in cloud computing.

Salesforce launched “Chatter” as their enterprise network (Figure 1). Chatter allows “teams to sync up and take action and powers communities to connect with one another” (“Overview”, 2014, para 1). Chatter was created in efforts to help businesses become more social. Chatter, “helps employees work more efficiently across organizational boundaries; collaborate on sales opportunities, service cases, campaigns and projects; simplify workflows and capture new ideas” (“Overview”, 2014). Salesforce claims, that by incorporating Chatter within an organizations communication strategy, employee productivity will increase 36%.

Features. Chatter contains five features: feeds, publisher, files, social intelligence and salesforce chatter mobile. Feeds allow employees to track and monitor projects, topics and teams. Employees are able to work together on job related duties (i.e. sales opportunities, campaigns, etc) and retrieve job related knowledge in one place. Publisher allows employees to create reports (i.e. expense, orders, etc) and customize actions for these reports for other employees or a third party. Files allow employees to share important business files in a secure, social and mobile platform. Social Intelligence is a recommendation database which refers employees who to “follow” within the organization. Recommendations are made based upon an employee’s activity and interests. This feature also allows employees to locate any topic and identify “experts” to retrieve information from. Salesforce Chatter Mobile gives employees the flexibility to access Chatter access features from any device. Salesforce has also launched “Communities” in 2013, which is an extension of Chatter (Ludwig, 2013). Communities

allow organizations to not only communicate with internal employees, but with external stakeholders (“Overview”, 2014).

Testimonial. Virgin Airlines is an unique organization in which 90% of their employees do not have access to a PC; however Chatter has helped to improve their communication process (Cush, 2013). Since culture is important to Virgin Airlines, chatter has helped to strengthen their internal culture by helping employees to communicate with one another; in addition to helping to customize culture for each customer (Cush, 2013). Virgin Airlines has benefited from the “community” feature as it allows external stakeholders to participate in a customized communication experience (i.e. passengers are able to use console devices to communicate needs to flight attendants; or connect with another passenger in another row). Chatter and Communities has helped Virgin Airlines to propel their campaign “Change is in the Air” in which they become one of the first airlines to implement ESN for internal and external stakeholders.

Jive Software

Purpose. Jive Software (Figure 2) is one of the leading providers of social business software and whose products help people to connect, communicate and collaborate to solve business problems (“About us”, 2014). Jive produces several types of products to assist various industries (i.e. Jive, Jive for IT, Jive for Social Intranet, etc) Jive’s products help to “improve productivity, alignment, innovation, supports customers, partner communities that drive higher sales, better service and greater satisfaction” (“About us,” 2014). Jive’s vision statement articulates the need for businesses to provide the same technology which people use in their personal lives, in their work lives; crowdsourcing provides invaluable information; customers need to be engaged-not

managed; and community and collaboration is the heart of the new enterprise” (“About us,” 2014).

Features. In 2009, Jive launched its “social” software for businesses in which organizations can combine both external (i.e. customers) and internal (i.e. employees) collaborations. “Foundation” (Figure 2) is the core of their Social Business Software (SBS) and its main purposes are: employee engagement, marketing, sales, innovation and support (Ha, 2009). Jive indicates a 15% increase of production with their products. The increase contributed to Jive’s ability to allow users to work in multiple communities, in one space. Additionally, users are able to use such features as videos, analytics, insights and social bookmarking within their communities (Ha, 2009). In 2013, Jive launched their “rooms” feature, which allows for users to collaborate on projects and integrate with cloud storage devices (Ludwig, 2013). Rooms include purposeful places and structured outcomes. Purposeful places are where sales teams can work together to structure campaigns. Structured outcomes are where Jive makes conversations track able for future reference. To compete with other ENSs, Jive broadened their software by allowing users to access Google Drive, Gmail, Twitter, Facebook and other ESN websites without having to leave their Jive pages (Blattberg, 2013).

Testimonial. T-Mobile is a national wireless voice, messaging and data service provider which services over 43 million customers and 38,000 employees (“T-mobile,” 2014). Jive helped to assist both T-mobile’s internal and external stakeholders. In 2013, T-mobile came out with their “uncarrier” initiative in which customers were no longer required to carry a two-year contract. Jive and T-mobile were able to “power employee and customer communities by providing a one-two punch that’s helped T-Mobile drive

higher satisfaction, retention and loyalty” (“T-mobile,” 2014). Prior to Jive, T-Mobile did not have a central system for tracking sales and training. Jive was able to launch “T-Community” in which employees had access to products, services, pricing, policies, troubleshooting and everything that pertained to their front line of business” (“T-mobile,” 2014). In a snap shot Jive successfully replaced 15 content management platforms, reduce training time, reduce labor by 67% and improve customer satisfaction by 20% and an additional 40% when T-Mobile upgraded to its newest version (“T-mobile,” 2014).

Socialtext

Purpose. Socialtext (Figure 3) is known as the early wiki company (Marshall, 2007); however it has evolved into offering social software for its business customers. Businesses can use collaboration tools such as wikis, and Twitter-style microblogging (Ha, 2010). Socialtext “makes it easier for employees to find the colleagues and the information they need to solve challenges new and old” (“About us,” 2014). Their platform allows users to use a simplified approach towards knowledge sharing; utilize an open platform for collaboration and helps users to drive more business for their organization. They have coined the phrase Saas (Software as a Service) that includes “fast deployment, fast iteration cycles, little or no maintenance and low cost of ownership” (“About us,” 2014). To enhance their system Socialtext launched several new features: users are able to create collaborative groups which can be public or private; posts can be divided by topics and teams and users are able to see if someone is logged into the system to have a real-time conversation (Ha, 2010).

Features. There are several features to the Socialtext website: dashboard, social networking, content creation, socialtext 360, integration and access. Dashboard displays

status updates, content and people who can help to get the users job done. Social networking provides information about peers, contact information, skills, groups, which the user is a part of and other communities of interest. Content creation allows users to work together, create pages such as wiki, online spreadsheets and blogs. Socialtext 360 is the “Visual Matching Engine” which allows users to identify colleagues in their network, which users can connect and collaborate with ("Socialtext 6.0 features," 2014). Integration combines CRM (Customer Relationship Management), HR and other content management platforms. Users can use tools to connect with other ESNs (i.e. Microsoft Sharepoint, Salesforce.com, etc). Access allows users to access Socialtext any time and from multiple locations.

Testimonial. The Hospital for Sick Children sought Socialtext’s assistance for collaborating using wiki’s. CAFAS (The Child Adolescent Functional Assessment Scale) was developed as a rating scale to assess emotional, behavioral, psychological, psychiatric and substance use problems. CAFAS serves as a “virtual meeting place” where clinicians can access all the tools they need for training purposes. CAFAS provides a place for community members to share information and nurture relationships. Socialtext also helps CAFAS with collaborative efforts by helping to organize face-to-face events.

Watercooler

Purpose. Watercooler (Figure 4) is an ESN which was specifically designed for Hewlett Packer (HP) in efforts to help employees to find and increase their knowledge concerning organizational knowledge. As the organization began to grow, it becomes more complex for employees to communicate with other employees across various

geographical spans (Brzozowski, 2009). After conducting research on the current organizational structure, current platforms in which communication took place and soliciting feedback from employees;

Features. Watercooler was designed with specific features. Features include: RSS (Really Simple Syndication), filtering, tagging, and microblogging. RSS aggregated the current social network platforms and created a centralized location which outlined the employee's name, location, management chain, job function and contact information. The RSS platform design was specific as it helped to retain the employee's and viewer's attention span while browsing various feeds. The filtering (i.e. results page) featured allowed for posts to be made available to viewers who can then filter these posts by source and organization (Brzozowski, 2009). Employees were allowed to filter their own pages and add other feeds, newsreaders or widgets to their desktop (Brzozowski, 2009). Creating communities was one of the biggest feedbacks designers received from employees therefore creating "tagging" and microblogging and implementing virtual teams helped to establish communities amongst employees. The tagging featured allowed employees to tag themselves and other employees to their posts. In addition, employees were able to create virtual teams by tagging others to team tags. Microblogging allowed employee's to write their thoughts and share their status in a text box feature (Brzozowski, 2009).

Testimonial. Researchers conducted observations for a year and captured feedback from surveys to determine how employees used WaterCooler. WaterCooler helped employees to find other employees with interests in specific technologies and to check status updates. A major theme for use was to help employees to understand the

organization as a whole. Employee's found WaterCooler especially useful as a tool to "orient themselves in the organization and to learn what other parts of the company are doing" (Brzozowski, 2009, p. 7). Additional feedback noted that employees felt utilizing WaterCooler helped to make the organization feel more human and they found reading other employee's personal opinions and experiences were very valuable.

Tibbr

Purpose: Tibbr (Figure 8) was created by TIBCO Software Inc. TIBCO coins Tibbr as the difference amongst other ESNs because it creates a simplified, integrated approach to social enterprise ("Why its better," 2014). The format is similar to other social networks (i.e. Facebook) and it helps to get new employees more productive in a shorter time frame. Users can integrate other business applications, in one location, and offers the ability to include apps within the network. Organizations can also customize their own organizational look.

Features: Tibbr offers similar features such as microblogging, profiles and creating subject specific posts. Tibbr also allows users to create polls and make recommendations. Users can create polls for anything; make them available across the entire organization; and offer responders the ability to add detail towards their responses. The recommendation feature allows users to learn about what is happening within the organization; receive feedback from people they know and do not know; and be a part of popular discussions.

Testimonial: Schneider Electric is a global energy management company which needed to revamp its business processes ("How schneider electric," 2014). One of the reasons Schneider choose Tibbr was because it created a "3D collaborative platform that

gave employees a rich experience” (Bhandary, 2014). As a company which is geographically dispersed, as a result of numerous acquisitions, Tibbr has helped to: bring different cultures together; improve efficiency of finding the right information; and has helped with locating expertise faster.

GE Colab

Purpose. GE Colab (Figure 9) is a social network which was specifically created for General Electric. It was introduced in January 2012 and is utilized by 115,000 employees across the world (Utterbeck, 2012). The network was created to help address the need to synchronize the collaboration tools which employees currently used; however they were not connected to one another. The purpose of creating GE Colab was to bring together, on one platform, email, telephone, video, chat, etc. Issues aroused as employees did not know what tools they had access to; how to integrate the different tools on one platform; and how to maintain the culture of collaboration within a global organization.

Features. GE Colab offers several features. At its core, Stream operates like Facebook in which when users log on they are able to view activity from their friends list (Utterbeck, 2012). Users also have access to groups, activities, who other friends are following, posts and the capability to file-share (Utterbeck, 2012).

Testimonials. One of the main successes in implementing GE Colab is that it has significantly reduced the time it takes to solve problems. Once an issue is posted, within minutes users can expect an immediate response from various locations, departments, etc (Utterbeck, 2012). Additionally, file-sharing has become more streamlined in which more people have access to file context and history. To foster two-way dialogue, GE Colab enables the organization to receive feedback from internal and external stakeholders.

Results

Case Study Findings

ESNs are an emerging topic within communications studies and within organizations today. Many organizations are finding positive advantages to implementing an ESN within their communication practices. The current research highlighted several areas in which ESNs are intended to impact organizations. The research analyzed several ESNs in an attempt to understand the following:

Table 1 displays the results of each ESN in relation to Information Technology Communication (ITC), Technology Mediated Communication (TMC), Organizational Communication (OC), Employee Motivation (EM), Knowledge Sharing (KS) and Building Relationships (BR). Based upon the previously stated purposes and features listed on the ESNs websites they were grouped into one of the six categories. The purpose or feature is listed within the categorized group. Grouping of features were based upon the following definitions of the six categories

Information Communication Technology (ICT) helps to foster innovation amongst employees and is conducive to participative management. A component of Technology Mediated Communication (TMC) is the social software system which allows employees to engage with one another by the use of Blogs, Wikis, Social bookmarking, Tagging and/or RSS (Really Simple Syndication). Organizational communication includes the transfer of messages such as team goals, financial statistics and/or company policies. Selected ESNs will be evaluated based upon whether users can access this organizational information through the enterprise network. Employee motivation is vital towards employee productivity; therefore selected ESNs will be evaluated based upon

whether employees are able to communicate “wants” and “gets” to their respective leadership and management teams. ESNs will also be evaluated based on how organizations can utilize their technology to increase knowledge amongst employees. Lastly, the ESNs will be evaluated based upon if employees are able to build their professional networks. Listed below are full descriptions of each of these ESN’s.

BR and OC were found in five of the ESNs analyzed; TMC and KS were found in four of the ESNs analyzed; ITC was found in two of the ESNs; and EM was not found in either of the ESNs analyzed. The following is a more in depth description of why the purposes and features were listed within a specific group.

Salesforce: Chatter

Information Technology Communication (ITC). The Salesforce website states Chatter, “helps [...] simplify workflows and capture new ideas (“Overview,”2014).

Technology Mediated Communication (TMC). TMC was not clearly stated as a function, feature, characteristic or outcome of the ESN.

Organizational communication. Salesforce gives user access to feeds which in turns allows employees to track and monitor projects, topics and teams. Additionally, employees have access to files in which they can share important business files in a secure, social and mobile platform.

Employee motivation. EM was not clearly stated as a function, feature, characteristic or outcome of the ESN.

Knowledge sharing. Employees are able to retrieve job related knowledge in one place and the files feature allows employees to share important business files.

Building relationships. Social Intelligence is a recommendation database which refers employees who to “follow” within the organization.

Jive Software

Information Technology Communication (ITC). The core of their Social Business Software (SBS) and its main purposes are: employee engagement, marketing, sales, innovation and support.

Technology Mediated Communication (TMC). Users are able to use such features as videos, analytics, insights and social bookmarking within their communities.

Organizational communication. Structured outcomes are where Jive makes conversations track able for future reference

Employee motivation. EM was not clearly stated as a function, feature, characteristic or outcome of the ESN.

Knowledge sharing. Jive launched their “rooms” feature, which allows for users to collaborate on projects and integrate with cloud storage devices (Ludwig, 2013).

Building relationships. The core of their Social Business Software (SBS) and its main purposes are: employee engagement, marketing, sales, innovation and support.

Socialtext

Information Technology Communication (ITC). ITC was not clearly stated as a function, feature, characteristic or outcome of the ESN.

Technology Mediated Communication (TMC). Socialtext is known as the early wiki company (Marshall, 2007) in which businesses can use collaboration tools such as wikis, and Twitter-style microblogging (Ha, 2010). Socialtext content creation feature allows users to work together, create pages such as wiki, online spreadsheets and blogs.

Organizational communication. Integration combines CRM (Customer Relationship Management), HR and other content management platforms.

Employee motivation. EM was not clearly stated as a function, feature, characteristic or outcome of the ESN.

Knowledge sharing. Their platform allows users to use a simplified approach towards knowledge sharing [...].

Building relationships. Social networking provides information about peers, contact information, skills, groups, which the user is a part of and other communities of interest. Additionally, content creation allows users to work together [...].

Watercooler

Information Technology Communication (ITC). ITC was not clearly stated as a function, feature, characteristic or outcome of the ESN.

Technology Mediated Communication (TMC). RSS aggregated the current social network platforms and created a centralized location which outlined the employee's name, location, management chain, job function and contact information. The tagging feature allowed employees to tag themselves and other employees to their posts. Additionally, microblogging allowed employee's to write their thoughts and share their status in a text box feature (Brzozowski, 2009).

Organizational communication. OC was not clearly stated as a function, feature, characteristic or outcome of the ESN.

Employee motivation. EM was not clearly stated as a function, feature, characteristic or outcome of the ESN.

Knowledge sharing. KS was not clearly stated as a function, feature, characteristic or outcome of the ESN.

Building relationships. Creating communities was one of the biggest feedbacks designers received from employees therefore creating “tagging” and microblogging and implementing virtual teams helped to establish communities amongst employees.

Tibbr

Information Technology Communication (ITC). ITC was not clearly stated as a function, feature, characteristic or outcome of the ESN.

Technology Mediated Communication (TMC). Tibbr offers similar features such as microblogging [...]

Organizational communication. The recommendation feature allows users to learn about what is happening within the organization; receive feedback from people they know and do not know; and be a part of popular discussions.

Employee motivation. EM was not clearly stated as a function, feature, characteristic or outcome of the ESN.

Knowledge sharing. KS was not clearly stated as a function, feature, characteristic or outcome of the ESN.

Building relationships. The recommendation feature allows users to learn about what is happening within the organization; receive feedback from people they know and do not know; and be a part of popular discussions.

GE Colab

Information Technology Communication (ITC). ITC was not clearly stated as a function, feature, characteristic or outcome of the ESN.

Technology Mediated Communication (TMC). TMC was not clearly stated as a function, feature, characteristic or outcome of the ESN.

Organizational communication. Users also have access [...] and the capability to file share.

Employee motivation. EM was not clearly stated as a function, feature, characteristic or outcome of the ESN.

Knowledge sharing. KS was not clearly stated as a function, feature, characteristic or outcome of the ESN.

Building relationships. BS was not clearly stated as a function, feature, characteristic or outcome of the ESN.

DISCUSSION

The current research sought to understand how ESN purveyors conceive and intend them to impact organizations in the age of social media. The study examined assumptions about how ESNs benefit six aspects of organizational development: organizational communication, information communication technology, technology mediated communication, employee motivation, knowledge sharing and building relationship. These assumptions were based upon review of ESN marketing materials and academic literature. The results are “intended” benefits of the ESN, rather than “actual” benefits of the ESN. Findings indicate that ESNs intend to build relationships within an organization; improve organizational communication; increase knowledge sharing

amongst employees and ESNs incorporate technology mediated communication to share messages between employees. The use of information technology communication to promote innovation was not a component found in the selected ESNs. Lastly, the use of ESNs to increase employee motivation was not found in any ESN.

Practical Implications

Information Technology Communication.

ITCs help to foster an electronic environment in which innovation can take place. ITCs enables employees to participate in the decision making process with leadership and management teams. Thus, participative management is one of the most cost effective ways in which organizations can utilize ITCs. The benefits of doing so can yield results for the organization and their employees. Participation [within ITCs] is not mandatory yet it leads to increased productivity, financially stronger organization and enhance job security for all employees (Monge et al., 1992).

Out of the six ESNs, there were only two which incorporated this feature. Considering that innovation is a critical concept within organizational development; not having this feature as a part of an ESN may hurt an organization who is seeking to advance within this technological world. Employees are use to completing surveys or participating in work teams; however with the introduction of ESNs organizations can make their interaction more interactive-while including employees from various departments. Using ITC's to help employees engage with leadership and management helps to build electronic work teams which more employees can be a part of. Geographical locations no longer have to be a hindrance as ITC's can help with bringing the team together.

Technology Mediated Communication.

TMC's are the corner stone to ESNs. TMCs allow for the use of social software which helps to keep users engaged by the use of blogs, wikis, tagging social bookmarking. Furthermore, the 4C's, (i.e. Communication, Cooperation, Collaboration and Connection), are the components of TMC which make engaging possible. Communication is not just limited to written or verbal conversations, but users can include video, voice or images to convey an intended message. Cooperation enables users to share videos and social bookmarking tools with their network. Collaboration enables employees to work together so that technology connections can occur amongst users. Blogs and Wikis allow users to personalize their pages and their messages. More importantly share these messages with other users who they may not be able to have access to through traditional forms of engaging. Out of the six ESNs, four incorporated this feature.

Organizational Communication.

Research Question 1: How are ESNs intended to promote organizational communication?

ESNs can help organizations with their organizational communication strategies because they help to transfer messages regarding organizational goals, financial statistics, company policies, etc. Five out of the six ESNs, incorporated this feature within their network. What was seldom discussed was the importance of leadership and management in the transfer of these messages. Leadership and management are both needed in organizations to achieve the successful integration of communication networks.

The concepts of communication, management and leadership go hand and hand within organizational communication. Leadership involves creating a vision for an organization which helps to direct the organization through organizational change (Fernandez, 2008). A leader must understand that communication is a process and that process is not always linear (Hackman & Johnson, 1991). Receivers translate messages in various ways; thus a leader must learn more than one way to communicate their message for understanding.

While leaders are those who are said to “do the right thing”, managers are noted as people who “do things right” (Fernandez, 2008). Manager’s tasks are inclusive of setting goals and plans, organizing, staffing, problem resolution and tracking results (Fernandez, 2008). Previous research has focused on managerial behavior of top managers which indicates their ability to help their employees reach goals as individuals, within groups and organizationally (Fernandez, 2008).

Leaders must be able to communicate organizational vision to management and their employees. Manager’s have the task of helping employees reach organizational and individual goals. Thus, in order for ESNs to reach their highest level of productivity within organizations-leadership and management must incorporate these tools within their communication practices. ESNs are a top down management responsibility which will help to motivate employees to inquire a grassroots effect of usage.

Employee motivation.

Research Question 2: How are ESNs intended to affect employee motivation?

One of the primary goals of a manager is to develop various ways to motivate employees. Motivation is an important component with the use of ESNs. However,

neither ESNs made reference to this as either a feature or outcome for organizations. Previous research (Jurkiewicz, Massey and Brown, 1998) has noted the difficulty managers have in understanding what motivates employees. Furthermore, the analysis of the ESNs is lacking sufficient information which helps to understand how utilizing ESNs can help to motivate employees. The analysis also lacks an understanding of how management and leadership can implement ESNs in understanding what their employees “wants” and “gets” are.

A manager who can effectively motivate their team will assist the organization with their organizational goals and increase productivity, performance and organizational commitment (Jurkiewicz, et al., 1998). ESNs show positive impacts in relaying organizational messages; however the needs of their employees are equally important. ESNs can possibly shed light on what employees need to further motivate them on their jobs which will also be beneficial to organizational goals.

Knowledge sharing.

Research Question 3: How are ESNs intended to increase knowledge sharing?

Compared to intranets which specifically focused on information content, ESNs have evolved the knowledge process from finding knowledge to find people who have the knowledge. (Brzozowski, 2009). Of the six ESNs, four implements this feature. One of the biggest assets to implementing knowledge sharing within a network is the capability it gives users to access a wide array of individuals who they would not normally be connected to. ESNs also helps to fullfill the four mechanisms of knowledge sharing which include: 1) contributing knowledge to organizational databases; (2) sharing knowledge in formal interactions within or across teams or work units; (2)

sharing knowledge within practice communities; and (4) sharing knowledge in informal interactions.

ESNs unique capability of providing access to the people with the knowledge which will help employees fulfill their job duties is perhaps one of their biggest advantages. Compared to intranets, ESNs offer an engaging component to knowledge sharing which benefits not only the employee but the organization as a whole. As employees find users with the knowledge, they are also increasing their professional networks, while providing that same access to their network. Knowledge sharing is increased because of the relationships that are developed.

Building professional and personal networks.

Research Question 4: How are ESNs intended to strengthen professional relationships in the workplace?

ESNs are helping to “humanize” organizations because they help to connect people to people. Social Network Sites allows users to create and visualize their social network; connect with strangers or like-minded individuals; and they allow for the use of new communication tools and information (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). ESNs purpose is very similar; however it is these personal connections which can help organizations reach their organizational goals. Social Capital Theory SCT gives four explanations towards why these social interactions produce profits: (1) the flow of information is facilitated through networks; (2) social ties influences interactions between employees and decision makers within organizations; (3) social interactions within organizations gives employees “social credentials” which gives them access to various resources; and (4) social relations

are expected to reinforce identity and recognition (Lin, 1999, p. 31). Of the six ESNs, five implement this feature within its network.

ESNs take SNS's to another level. Capitalizing on one's network and enabling the possibility for users to connect with their colleague's network allows organizations to expand and grow within this technological environment. The expansion helps to cut down costs for the organization; yet maximize employee relationships. Organizations are able to use features such as creating, microblog posts, blogging, wiki's, social bookmarking, videos, etc to transfer the communication process. These features offer advantage of two-way communication for the organization as well as their employees.

Recommendations

One of the goals of the current research is to provide a concentrated review of current ESNs and propose strategic communication practices, which can be implemented in current organizational structures. ESNs offer many advantages towards organizational development and communication; however communication studies and organizations can benefit from further research.

Organizations should adopt ESNs because of the way they address a broad range of factors that impact organizations. The primary goal of ESNs is to engage employees through social interaction which is intended to create company communities which users can access business information, team updates and team performance statistics (Ludwig, 2013). Most selected ESNs implemented building relationships and professional networks as a key outcome of use. These relationships are the key components towards ESNs effectiveness. ESNs help employees to become high performing employees by tapping into their organizational network. By doing so, employees are able to connect

with other organizational members who can connect them to information pertaining to their job duties. Additionally, as an ICT function employees are able to increase individual and group productivity because ESNs allow for participative management. Participative management helps to foster an environment in which employees are free to engage in group discussions and share innovative ideas amongst colleagues, leadership teams and their management teams.

Many organizations currently utilize intranets as a central point for organizational information. However, implementing ESNs offers organizations the unique ability to connect employees who will eventually share information with one another. Compared to intranets which connect people to information, ESNs connect people to people who contain the knowledge needed and makes information more accessible to users. The TMC function of ESNs gives employees the option of communicating messages through the use of blogs, tagging, wikis, social bookmarking, etc. These TMC functions help to increase knowledge sharing, which can also increase employee's benefits towards utilizing ESNs within their communication practices.

Through the use of ESNs: professional relationships are strengthened; knowledge is being shared and is accessed more efficiently; and employees are actively participating in the decision making process of organizations. As a result, organizational communication is being strengthened. An organization which can successfully adopt strong communication practices can experience positive work outcomes throughout the organization (Waldeck et al., 2012). These positive outcomes can positively affect organizational outcomes.

Organizations which adopt ESNs should utilize a strategic approach to ensure effectiveness. Previous research (Smith et al., 1994) has shown the importance leadership and top management play in organizational outcomes. Leadership and management are impactful in relation to innovation, strategy, performance and strategic change (Smith et al., 1994). Therefore, implementing ESNs must be both a top management focus and a grass root focus to ensure effectiveness. Leadership should first determine how employees communicate, what current communication strategies they utilize and why. ESNs are available in various styles and features; therefore an assessment of the organizations needs is essential in determining which ESN is an ideal fit. Information should be gathered through surveys and focus groups in efforts to capture the essential communication functions employees utilize within their daily job functions. Gathering information in this form not only helps for data purposes but also helps with participative management and employee buy-in. Once the ESN is chosen and implemented, it is vital that both leadership and management utilize ESNs in their daily communication practices. Employees should be encouraged to engage in communities, forums, surveys, etc through the use of ESNs. Implementing the ESN on a consistent basis is vital in ensuring that employees adopt ESNs as a new communicative behavior.

Future Research and Limitations

The current research analyzed “intended” benefits of ESNs based upon review of promotional marketing material. The value of the study is to help with advancing the understanding of ESNs; the various ways that ESNs approach communication functions and how ESN purveyors portray what factors positively affect organizational development. ESNs can serve multiple purposes for organizations; therefore careful

analysis of the various functions can help users to understand how to use ESNs within organizational networks. Communication studies can benefit from research that includes empirical studies of ideals of ESNs versus actual use of ESNs within organizations. For example, are ESNs actually helping users to share knowledge with one another, or are users solely using ESNs for social purposes? Additionally, research can analyze purveyor's portrayal of effective organizational development compared to actual organizational development effectiveness.

Employee motivation was seldom discussed as an outcome as a result of implementing ESNs within organizations. Organizations can benefit from research which will assist them in understanding how these networks can help to understand and increase employee motivation and morale. Furthermore, how this may affect employee productivity. Additionally, many ESNs make claims that sales and employee productivity will increase; however what was not clear where the specific measurements and research conducted to make these claims. Increasing productivity and sales would certainly entice organizations; however further research on these claims will be helpful not only to organizations but to the communication discipline as a whole. Lastly, many ESNs (i.e. Salesforce) are not just focusing on internal stakeholders, but external stakeholders (i.e. customers). The advantage of utilizing ESNs to foster two-way communication with customers; and how it impacts sales, communication, and customer satisfaction would help to advance the study of ESNs.

The use of new communication strategies are helping to bridge the communication gap. Furthermore, the use of ESNs and its social networking features is an emerging concept within organizational development. Azua (2010) discusses how

organizations are evolving from the information age to the social age. Compared to intranets, ESNs not only help to preserve and retrieve information; but it connects people to people that contain the information needed to complete job duties. Unlike intranets, ESNs connect people to people; not just people to information. Communication studies can benefit from the study of ESNs social software effectiveness within organizations. The research can help to answer the question of whether or not this social age is truly impactful to organizations.

Enterprise consists of many different features (i.e. telecommunications) which were not analyzed in this study. Jive (Figure 7) was founded in 2006 and provides “enterprise-grade Hosted VOIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol) and Unified Communications to businesses and institutions” (“About”, 2014). Jive created its own “Cloud” network which all of Jive services are hosted on, including Enterprise. Enterprise is a cloud service, which helps to centralize the communication process within organizations. Compared to other ESN, Jive is unique-instead of using a PC to create social networks, it utilizes the office telephone to create an ESN. Enterprise offers several unique VOIP features, which utilizes phone services to connect organizations. VOIP features include basic VOIP services (i.e. Conference Bridge 10-parties, individual call logs, etc); Call Management features (i.e. call history, do not disturb, pre-call announcement, etc); and Phone services (i.e. Jive Desktop, Multi-Site Compatibility, Cloud PBX, etc). To gain new business intelligence, employees can track calls by day, extension, and monitor employee performance with eavesdrop (“Taking cloud to”, 2014). Its unique phone features allows employees to connect anywhere in the world. Further

research on other types of enterprise and how they compare to the selected ESNs within this research would be impactful to organizations.

There are several limitations of the current study. The study only analyzes seven ESNs as online research limited the amount of ESNs which provided purposes, features and testimonials. Future research can benefit from including additional ESNs as a part of a complete research review. Additionally, there are ESNs (i.e. Beehive) which were specifically created for a specific organization. Future research can benefit from understanding how these specific ESNs have impacted the research questions within the current study. Lastly, analysis of the current study was based upon initial use of the ESNs; in effort to understand the long term affects of ESNs a post study analyzing long term and short term effects of ESN use would be vital to communication studies and organizational effectiveness.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the current research sought to evaluate emerging communication technology practices within organizations and understand how they are helping organizations to reach organizational goals. The research also sought to understand the challenges and opportunities of this new communication practice posed for organizations. The research found that Technology Mediated Communication (TMC), Organizational Communication (OC), Knowledge Sharing (KS) and Building Relationships (BR) are key components of ESNs. ESNs provide positive advantages for organizations by incorporating these functions and outcomes for employees. Though in its infancy stages, ESNs will continue to evolve along with technological developments.. Furthermore, as organizational needs change and evolve, ESNs have potential to meet the needs of

organizations at various levels. With each change, ESNs can be deployed as part of an effective strategy for communication.

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Figure 1

The screenshot displays the Tenaya Outfitters website interface. At the top left is the Tenaya Outfitters logo. To the right is a search bar and a user profile for William James Spender with links for 'User Dashboard' and 'Logout'. Below this is a navigation bar with links for Home, Directory, Teams, News, Chatter, Files, and Dashboard. A large banner features a photo of a man and the text 'CEO Corner: How Sustainability Affects the Bottom Line...' with a 'More »' button. A row of utility icons includes Book Travel, Helpdesk, Meeting Rooms, Benefits, Projects, and More Apps. The main content area is split into two columns. The left column, titled 'Chatter', shows a post input field and a feed of three comments from James Spender and Scotty Johnson. The right column, titled 'News', features an image of a stove and the article 'Know Your Stoves' with a 'More' button.

Figure 2

The screenshot displays the Jive software interface. At the top, the Jive logo is on the left, and navigation links for 'New', 'Your Staff', 'History', 'Browse', 'Colleagues', 'Groups', and 'People' are on the right. Below the navigation bar, the 'Home' section is visible, with tabs for 'All Content' and 'Your View (personalize)'. A search bar is located on the right side of the Home section.

The main content area is divided into several sections:

- ANNOUNCEMENT: J1 Launch a Success** - A notification with a 'Show Details' link and a page indicator showing '1' of '2' pages.
- My Profile** - A profile card for Frank Richardson, Director of Sales, Western Region. It includes his title, department, phone number, and email address. Below the profile, there is a status indicator 'Is on-site in Dallas' and a recent activity item 'Winning against the big boys'.
- Key Accounts Activity - Public Marketplace** - A section titled 'Recent activity by your friends' on 'Public Demo'. It lists three activities: 'dan kessler replied to Can't view videos on some web pages' (14 hours ago), 'chad oker replied to Savings examples on JPhone calling plans' (14 hours ago), and 'robert peete bookmarked jphone.org' (22 hours ago).
- Activity - Employee Marketplace** - A section listing various activities: 'eric quin modified Monthly Public Marketplace Update' (1 hour ago), 'kel tala bookmarked What are your favorite sites to get the latest news about our market?' (22 hours ago), 'kel tala bookmarked ReadWriteWeb - Web Apps, Web Technology Trends, Social Networking and Social Media' (22 hours ago), 'kel tala bookmarked Facebook Widgets' (22 hours ago), 'kel tala bookmarked J1 FAQ Doc' (22 hours ago), 'kel tala bookmarked Centralize your view of content and conversations about your customers and prospects' (22 hours ago), 'Jive Administrator bookmarked Talking about Clearspace on Twitter' (3 days ago), and 'Jive Administrator created What are your favorite sites to get the latest news about our market?' (3 days ago). A 'More' link is at the bottom right of this section.

Figure 3

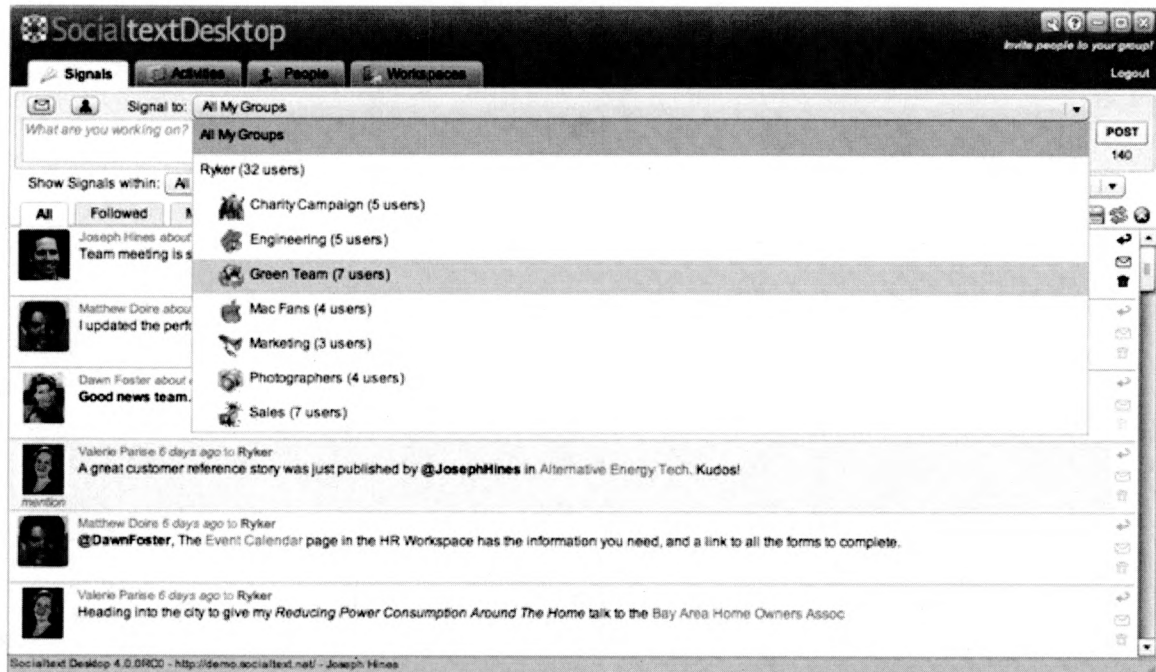


Figure 4

The screenshot shows the Manchester United Fans website. At the top left is the Manchester United crest. The main header reads "Manchester United Fans" with the subtitle "The unofficial Manchester United Fan Community" and "Part of the watercooler network". A "Recruit Fans!" button is prominent. Below the header is a navigation menu with links for Home, Blog, Discuss, Photos, Video, Trivia, and Quizzes. On the right, there are links for "Customize Profile Box" and "Recruiting Stats".

The main content area is divided into several sections:

- New This Week:** 14 Photos | 528 Waves | 20 Trivia Questions.
- Recruitment:** A banner for "Recruit Them" with the text "Get a new jersey on your profile by recruiting friends today!". Below it, a "Your Recruiting Level" section shows "Waterboy (0 points)" with "50 points to next level".
- Join Heroes Fans or find your favorite show!**
- Hi Eric!** A personalized welcome message: "Welcome to Manchester United Fans. Check out all the latest discussion, top players, standings and photos. Take the Manchester United Trivia Challenge and see how much you know!" It includes buttons for "Recruit Your Friends" (with text "Invite your Manchester United friends to display their fandom!") and "Smack Talk!" (with text "Want to spread the cheer? You can leave some smack talk on your friends walls by clicking on the 'smack talk' button on their wall!").
- Manchester United Fan Ranking:** "With 97439 fans, Manchester United Fans is #1 in the English Premier League." A "Recruit More Fans" button is below.
- Fan Matchup:** A quiz titled "Who is a bigger Manchester United fan?" with two options: "Adam Kalamchi" and "Calvin Plocher". A "See other questions >" link is at the bottom.
- Most Popular Quizzes:** A section at the bottom left.

Figure 5



Figure 6

The screenshot shows a social media dashboard with a dark header bar containing the 'Colab' logo and search, chat, and other utility icons. On the left, there is a 'What are you working on?' section with a text input field, followed by 'Filter by Activity' buttons for 'Feed', 'Blog', 'Following', 'Like', and 'Canvas', and a 'Filter by Tags (7)' dropdown menu set to 'None'. The main content area is titled 'TODAY' and features three posts. The first post by Samuel Hanson, 'Introducing Social Media Coll Canvas', includes a presentation thumbnail and 3 likes. The second post by David Brooks, 'Opened the 1st New Army Times today to see a full page GE Works ad -- pretty cool still!', includes a photo of a train and 4 likes. The third post by Laura Thompson, 'ISS Data Protection Backup Portal (Backup Digital Dashboard System)', includes text about backup standards and 4 likes. On the right, a 'Whom to follow' section lists four users: Nancy Anderson, Joseph Dawson, Robert Worlan, and Sarah Farrell, each with a 'Follow' button and a note about common colleges.

Table 1

Features of Selected Enterprise Social Networks (ESNs)

ESN	Information Technology Communication	Technology Mediated Communication	Organizational Communication	Employee Motivation	Knowledge Sharing	Building Relationships
Salesforce	✓		✓		✓	✓
Jive Software	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Socialtext		✓	✓		✓	✓
Watercooler		✓				✓
Tibbr		✓	✓			
GE Colab			✓		✓	✓
Total	2	4	5	0	4	5

Figure 7

The screenshot shows a Jive social network interface. At the top is a navigation bar with the Jive logo and links for Home, Content, People, Places, Apps, Links, and Create. A search bar is on the right. Below the navigation bar is a header for the group 'Redlink Mobile Q3 Opp' with a profile picture 'm' and options to 'Follow' or 'Join this group'. A secondary navigation bar includes Overview, Activity, Content, People, Projects, and Calendar, along with Actions, About, and Share options.

The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column features a 'CREATE' section with options like Status Update, Discussion, Uploaded File, Document, Blog Post, and Poll. Below this is a 'RECENT ACTIVITY' section with a 'Filter' dropdown. The first activity is a post by Reed Owens titled 'Redlink Mobile RFP' from 4 days ago, mentioning Susan Hawkins and West Region. The second activity is a Chatter Stream post from Amber Isen, 4 days ago, asking 'Can we get special pricing on this?' with a link to 'na3.salesforce.com' and a note 'shared via Chatter Stream'. At the bottom of the activity section, it says 'In Redlink Mobile Q3 Opp • Share • Comment • Like (1)'.

The right column contains a 'QUARTERBACK' section with a profile picture of Reed Owens, his title 'Field Account Manager Sales', and a 'CLICK TO GET HELP!' link. Below this is a gauge chart showing 'Needs Analysis (30%)' with data from 'Salesforce.com'. At the bottom is an 'OPPORTUNITY DETAILS' table with one entry:

Name	Redlink Mobile Q3 Opp