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The SAC® Release

What Are the Benefits of Social Media in the Workplace?

The Society for Advancement of Consulting® (SAC®) has asked its global membership to reveal how clients are using social networking media and phenomena in the work place. "It appears to be one of the communications dynamics," notes Alan Weiss, Ph.D. and CEO of SAC, "that can raise or lower productivity, so it's important to manage it properly.

These two inputs summarize the overall findings:

Dr. Maynard Brusman is a consulting psychologist and leadership coach and president of Working Resources, a strategic talent management firm in San Francisco, California. (www.workingresources.com). He specializes in executive coaching for developing emotionally intelligent leaders and lawyers. He offers a few insights:

Talent minded executives at companies such as Intel, Jet blue, IBM, Deloitte, Best Buy, McDonald's, Oracle, Cisco, and Ernst and Young are implementing Web 2.0 and Social Networking into their talent management strategy. The strategy is not only for engagement and learning and development purposes, but increasingly for sourcing and/or on-boarding. In "The War for Talent" companies are increasing creating a presence on Facebook, LinkedIn, You Tube and Second Life. Employees are able to share information and best practices. It will also likely spur easier recruiting.

Of course, without policies and guidelines created by 'member' companies for their employees, what their employees post on Facebook and how these employees use Facebook are entirely up to each company. It could be helpful or potentially harmful. The media have been replete with examples of employees and even managers displaying poor judgment regarding making questionable personal behavior public. New social media websites invite employees to comment about what it's like to work at a particular company. It could have a positive or negative effect on a company's sourcing strategy. In a world of increased transparency and less privacy there are tradeoffs.

Several of my accountancy and law firm clients are actively creating a presence on social media sites and writing blogs with the intention of attracting job candidates, landing real clients and making money. There is some early limited success. The future will determine whether social media is a blessing or a curse.

Linda Popky is President of L2M Associates, Inc., a Redwood-City, CA-based strategic marketing consulting firm that helps organizations improve their return on marketing programs, processes, and people (linda@Popky.com). "Social media, when used wisely and judiciously, can be quite helpful in the corporate workplace," she said.

"Tools like Facebook, MySpace, and Twitter, can help companies stay connected and in-tune with their key audiences, such as customers, prospects, employees and

investors. Many companies are going to the next step—creating their own private communities where early access to information and incremental services are available to targeted groups of customers who participate and support the community.

“Key to success is being open and upfront about corporate identities and intentions: don’t pretend to be something or someone you’re not. Above all, remember that the web is enduring, not endearing. Messages, pictures, audio, and video posted on the internet stay available and accessible for long periods of time. What seems humorous now may leave a lingering bad impression. When in doubt, leave it out,” she added.

SAC is an international association of consulting professionals who subscribe to an industry code of ethics and have provided evidence of significant consulting results among their clients. For more information, please go to <http://www.consultingsociety.com>, write to info@summitconsulting.com, or call 800/825-6153 (401/886-4097).