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Introduction

The rapid growth of mobile and social technologies has made the world a giant network. People today are more connected than ever before, and the widespread use of mobile devices and social networks makes it easier for people to communicate, share information, and work together on complex projects. As a result, the value of bringing social technologies within the enterprise is becoming increasingly clear—and IT professionals are among those whom they impact and benefit the most.

In a Deloitte survey of nearly 1,000 IT executives, 60 percent of respondents said that IT should facilitate growth and productivity, while 36 percent said that IT needs to be a competitive advantage. In today’s rapidly evolving and highly competitive business environment, however, IT professionals can’t afford to pick and choose priorities. They must help their organizations achieve both productivity and innovation. Enterprise social technologies from Microsoft aim to help IT departments to do just that for their organizations.
Yet how, exactly, can Microsoft Enterprise Social help your company stay productive and innovative when your workforce is becoming more mobile and widely distributed? What tools will enable you to facilitate collaboration by connecting employees to information and each other? Which enterprise social technologies can enable you to help your organization address its most critical business challenges, always stay a step or two ahead of the competition, and, at the same time, provide the right levels of IT management? The tools you need to empower your organization to work like a network include:

- **Social software that encourages employee engagement** – According to the Gallup organization, companies whose employees are engaged have higher productivity, profitability, and customer ratings, plus lower turnover, less absenteeism, and fewer safety incidents. With Microsoft Enterprise Social, 83 percent of users experience improved engagement and connection to their teams.

- **Simple-to-use cloud collaboration tools** – Collaboration is essential to the success of every organization, but changing work styles and varying communication preferences among workers, plus geographic, functional, and information silos, create barriers that make it difficult for teams to work together and get things done. Meanwhile, collaborating with partners and suppliers poses many of the same challenges. Reliable cloud-based solutions can increase efficient collaboration both inside and outside your organization while reducing routine demands on your IT department and lowering costs.

- **Integrated business applications across departments** – Supporting a wide variety of systems, programs and applications across different business groups presents a huge challenge for most IT departments. To overcome scaling issues, companies frequently turn to integrated cloud solutions. Microsoft Enterprise Social spans Office 365 through the Office Graph, providing an integrated working experience across familiar work applications and connecting identities, groups, files, and conversations.

This white paper will explain how you can bring the power of enterprise social to your business. We’ll discuss how to enable your organization to work like a network using Microsoft technologies such as Office 365, Yammer, Lync, SharePoint Online and Microsoft Dynamics CRM. For a more comprehensive look at why IT leaders should implement enterprise social technologies in their organizations, see “The Benefits of Enterprise Social for IT Professionals.”
What does it mean to “work like a network”?  

Enterprise social technologies from Microsoft empower companies to work like a network, connecting individuals to a dynamic network of people and information through the Office Graph. With Microsoft Enterprise Social, employees can listen to what matters inside and outside the organization, quickly adapt to changing customer needs and market conditions, and grow their impact on the business through tailored insights, better collaboration, and faster decision-making.

Microsoft Enterprise Social provides a unified social experience across different Microsoft work products, including the entire Office 365 productivity suite as well as Yammer, Microsoft Social Listening, Microsoft Dynamics CRM, and Delve, the new internal search and discovery tool. With Microsoft Enterprise Social, there is now a connected social thread through all work communication and processes: collaboration, email, unified communications, and various non-Microsoft business applications. Employees can now choose the tools that make them most productive at work, because they are all linked with a social layer captured by the Office Graph. As a result, they can all work like a network.
Part 1

Listen to the conversations that matter and facilitate employee engagement

By adopting enterprise social technologies, organizations can connect, inform, and engage their employees more effectively. Executives, managers, and individual contributors—everyone from the CEO to the newest hire—all have a place to ask questions, inform others, and share insights and opinions across departments and cross-functional teams. This allows for a more transparent company culture and the ability to capture and preserve knowledge as the company grows.

Connect your employees

Microsoft Enterprise Social makes it easy for IT departments to listen and respond to users—employees, partners, and suppliers—and to connect them regardless of their physical location, work style, or type of device. For example, Yammer, the enterprise social network (ESN) within the Office 365 productivity suite, gives all employees an internal social networking platform for easy communication that supports strong security. Employees can monitor and participate in two-way conversations or group discussions, improve their understanding of teams and departments throughout the company, and discover content that is relevant to their current work. And because Yammer and Office 365 offer a cloud-based solution, the added productivity and connection it provides actually reduces demands on the IT staff which now has fewer servers to maintain and fewer routine problems to solve.

Yammer Groups provide workspaces where teams can take part in conversations, share content, and easily keep up on the latest information. Unlike many standard forms of communication such as email, where conversations often remain siloed and undiscovered inside separate employee inboxes, Yammer Groups enable dynamic team communication that transcends traditional barriers. The end result is an open
and transparent organization in which everyone feels more connected, and where IT professionals can spend more time on strategic work and less on routine tasks.

Some organizations also use Yammer to conduct “town halls” or “all hands” company meetings as a way to improve internal communications. This gives every employee a voice, encourages companywide discussions about important news and updates, and enables company leadership to learn from employee questions and opinions and the insights they reveal. IT leaders also find Yammer a useful tool for training employees, and an efficient way to share software updates and to communicate new processes and procedures. According to Yammer, workers who use enterprise social solutions from Microsoft experience 76 percent more visibility into other company departments or locations, and 80 percent are more informed about what is happening inside their organization.

Facilitate organizational alignment

By implementing Microsoft Enterprise Social technologies, IT departments can increase team alignment, enable teams to self-organize through the collaborative workspaces, and ensure teams make informed decisions. One enterprise social technology that enables this is Delve, an Office 365 app designed to help organizations increase visibility into internal teams and departments companywide. Delve uses the machine learning capabilities of Office Graph, which maps and analyzes Office 365 interactions, content, and activity—including those in Exchange Online, SharePoint Online, and Yammer—so that users can discover relevant information.

Delve exposes relevant information from across the company, further enhancing discoverability. Delve presents all relevant information as content cards in different boards, which may be named “Trending around me” or “Shared with me” and so on. These boards are personalized, based on insights learned from each user through machine learning, and dynamically updated. Additionally, in the People view you can gain insights about your colleagues and the content that is relevant to them. The organization is not presented in a hierarchical view, but rather a graph of your most relevant contacts generated automatically by the Office Graph, based on their interactions with people and content.

Engage employees with social technologies

As previously noted, the Gallup organization found that companies whose employees are engaged have greater productivity, higher profits, and better customer ratings, plus lower turnover, less absenteeism, and fewer safety incidents. As you might expect, employees who are connected and empowered by enterprise social technologies are also more productive and more likely to feel engaged, but there is another proven way to foster employee engagement.

According to Yammer, workers who use enterprise social are 80% more informed about what is happening inside their organization.
Openly praising employees for their contributions and recognizing the value of their work across the organization leads to deeper engagement—and Microsoft Enterprise Social makes it easy. Let’s say an employee named John develops a new app that streamlines an important internal process that leads to higher profits. Marilyn notices John’s success in Microsoft Dynamics CRM and shares a message with her team about his great work, without leaving the program. Marilyn’s praise is then pushed to her Yammer team group, where all of her team members can see that John has done an outstanding job, and they can also provide feedback by “liking” or commenting on the news. Such recognition from colleagues, as well as managers and executives, goes a long way toward boosting employee morale and helping workers feel more engaged.

Lync is another tool that can help workers feel more connected and engaged. Employees, regardless of location, can engage in face-to-face conversations through video conferencing. In addition, Lync also lets workers do a traditional call or send an instant message, which allows them to be productive regardless of their communication style. By putting a face to a name, Lync helps coworkers get to know each other better and feel more connected, which is especially valuable for large enterprises with thousands of employees in multiple locations.
Customer success:

How Red Robin listens to employees

Red Robin Gourmet Burgers got its start in Seattle in 1969, when a local entrepreneur bought a tavern near the University of Washington campus and added burgers and fries to the menu. Today, Red Robin has hundreds of restaurants in 44 states and four time zones, with 1,500 managers coaching and developing 26,000 employees. Although Red Robin has always been successful, the company realized at one point that it was not growing as quickly as the competition.

“In this economy, it’s not the big companies eating the small, it’s the fast eating the slow,” says Chris Laping, senior vice president and chief information officer for Red Robin.

Red Robin adopted Yammer and other enterprise social technologies to give employees a voice, improve communication, and create greater transparency between company leadership and employees. By using Yammer to listen to employees, Red Robin was able to improve its business by gaining insights from restaurant staff and learning more about the feedback that servers and managers were receiving from customers.

“Yammer has been a very important tool for us to give everybody a voice. We deliver our promise with a server standing right here at the end of the table. So if you can talk to those people, in a non-threatening way, it is extraordinary what you can learn, and the engagement and excitement you can generate.”

—Steve Carley, CEO
Red Robin

“Yammer has been a very important tool for us to give everybody a voice,” says Red Robin CEO Steve Carley. “We deliver our promise with a server standing right here at the end of the table. So if you can talk to those people, in a non-threatening way, it is extraordinary what you can learn, and the engagement and excitement you can generate.”
Part 2
Adapt and respond faster with easy-to-use cloud collaboration tools

Although the growth of mobile devices and social networks has created many new opportunities, it has also created new barriers to collaboration, and new challenges for IT professionals. Knowledge workers today are collaborating with colleagues who work not just down the hall, but in different buildings, countries, and time zones. They are also working on multiple devices, and often on multiple platforms. Functional and information silos, often created or reinforced by systems that are unconnected or not well-integrated, also hamper effective collaboration. Similar barriers also exist between companies and their external partners, suppliers, and customers, where reliance on telephone and email communication almost guarantees that important information eventually will be lost or locked away in individual inboxes or voicemail.

Increasingly, forward-thinking organizations are taking collaboration to a new level by bringing enterprise social networking to the business. With the right set of social technologies to support open communication and seamless collaboration—no matter where people work—companies can adapt and respond more quickly to changing market conditions.

Work better together internally

With Microsoft Enterprise Social, teams can work better together using the familiar and connected apps within Office 365. The Office Graph brings people, conversations, and content together in several ways. One way is through Office 365 Groups. With Groups, conversations are available to every team member in the Group feed so that all team members have the latest information and updates.
Bringing Social to the Enterprise:
How IT Empowers Organizations to Work Like a Network

Groups can be set up around anything—an office location, a department such as Information Technology, a cross-functional project team, or simply an idea—to enable open conversations and collaboration no matter where people work. Groups work equally well for a marketing team planning the campaign for a new product or the IT team working on a way to streamline product manufacturing.

Organizations that use enterprise social technologies see a 37 percent improvement in project collaboration, and almost 70 percent of users agree that Microsoft Enterprise Social solutions improve collaboration across remote locations.

Document Conversations is another tool that can help teams accelerate collaboration. Designed to enable companies to engage and tap into their entire network, Document Conversations enable team members to work together in real time on a Microsoft PowerPoint deck, Word document, or Excel spreadsheet, no matter which application they are in. At the same time, they can interact and discuss a file through side-by-side Yammer feeds. This way, individual team members can make updates, easily get their colleagues’ feedback in context, and take steps to make faster progress. A cross-functional team working on a spec document for a new internal application, for example, could easily engage team members in different groups and different locations to gather continuous feedback as the project progresses.

When your employees are on the go, they can collaborate and stay productive using the Yammer mobile app, which enables team members to keep up with important conversations and to access content, even when they’re not in the office. And because the Yammer mobile app is available on Windows, iOS, and Android devices, employees can be productive using the device of their choice. This kind of cross-platform performance, along with cloud computing, eliminates many of the IT challenges inherent in today’s BYOD (bring your own device) reality.

Make collaboration outside your business easy

Along with helping your employees collaborate better internally, Microsoft Enterprise Social solutions can help them work more effectively with external partners, suppliers, and customers. According to a Yammer study, companies that use Microsoft Enterprise Social technologies experience a 20 percent improvement in supplier and partner satisfaction.

With Yammer external networks, teams can create a dedicated workspace for collaborating with people outside of the organization, allowing team members to get feedback from partners, suppliers, and customers in real time. By communicating and collaborating in a single shared workspace with people outside your company, teams are better equipped to quickly respond and adapt to change. This also enables the IT professionals at each company to collaborate and develop joint solutions to problems that affect them all.

External collaboration typically also involves the need to share documents, reference materials, and sometimes very large files. OneDrive for Business enables team members to share online files—both inside and outside their organization—while helping to protect their information. Team members can also control access and editing permissions to ensure that files remain protected—and the cloud-based storage solution reduces the number of servers the IT staff has to maintain.

Along with Yammer external networks, teams can also use Lync to shorten the feedback loop with partners and suppliers. Using Lync, team members can call, send an instant
Bringing Social to the Enterprise: How IT Empowers Organizations to Work Like a Network

message, or set up a video conference in just one click, to meet with external collaborators and discuss the latest updates without incurring the costs of traveling to attend a meeting in person.

*Improve employee access to knowledge*

Microsoft Enterprise Social solutions enable teams and individuals to make smarter and faster decisions by improving access to knowledge throughout the organization. According to a study by McKinsey, 71 percent of business leaders report that enterprise social tools increase the speed of access to knowledge.⁹

Yammer enables employees to follow people, conversations, and content across the organization. This helps them build relationships with subject matter experts in other departments, participate in or stay informed about discussions that are relevant to their jobs, and build on the work of others to improve or advance their own. And because Yammer conversations are open by default, employees are able to see and act on information that would otherwise be hidden in information silos.

Delve also comes into play here, enabling better collaboration and knowledge access with its enhanced search and discovery tool that helps you search and discover relevant information across your Office 365 applications. Consider an IT lead named Gwen, for instance, who works for a global organization with branch offices and subsidiaries in several countries. Gwen often works on special projects and manages cross-functional teams whose members are located all around the world. As the teams work on their projects, conversations and file signals feed into Office Graph, which then delivers fresh insights to Gwen in Delve. This helps her to discover what the team is working on at any given time and to ensure they are on track with the project. At the same time, Delve shows Gwen relevant information from across the company, so she can identify changing requirements or new information in other departments that may affect one or more of her projects. When that kind of information surfaces, Gwen quickly shares it with the rest of her team so they can modify their work accordingly.
Customer success:

Esquel Group weaves in social to improve worker productivity

Esquel Group is a major textile manufacturer with over 59,000 employees in nine countries. Producing more than 100 million shirts every year—about seven or eight shirts per second—for clients such as Ralph Lauren, Tommy Hilfiger and Nike, Esquel Group needed a technology solution that would help it manage its complex and fast-paced business.

“We’re trying to encourage a collaboration of people across our supply chain, so that they don’t work in silos,” says Wilkie Wong, chief financial officer, Hong Kong and Overseas, for Esquel Group. “By working like a network, you sort of break that silo.”

Yammer and Office 365 give Esquel Group the tools it needs to enhance productivity and collaboration, enabling the company to communicate more effectively, capture knowledge and make it accessible to prevent it from being lost, and engage employees across its global organization.

“It’s actually helping us a lot, because we truly believe that a lot of the great ideas are coming from the bottom up,” says Edgar Tung, managing director of Group Human Resources for Esquel Group.
Part 3

Improve company growth with integrated business applications

In addition to fostering employee engagement and internal and external collaboration, Microsoft enables IT departments to modernize with an integrated line of business applications. For example, Microsoft Enterprise Social gives marketing the ability to zero in on targets ahead of the competition with Microsoft Social Listening; and allows sales to close deals faster with Lync video conferencing and Microsoft Dynamics CRM, and to support more customers with internal knowledge capture and sharing on Yammer.

Help marketing zero in on what matters most

Marketers today must be able to quickly assess where customers are in the buying and decision-making process and meet them there. They need a system that allows them to get up to speed immediately, and to quickly develop the insights required to engage prospective customers in a relevant way.

As part of the Microsoft Enterprise Social solutions, Microsoft Dynamics CRM provides a holistic 360-degree view of customers that lets marketing get to know the person behind the contact card. This includes profile information and important relationships as well as account, lead, and contact updates from more than 30,000 business and social sources delivered directly to your system. Having this information gives your salespeople valuable insights that make it easier for them to engage with customers, build relationships, personalize every customer interaction, and earn customers’ trust. CSO Insights reports that companies experience 8 percent higher win rates when sales reps are provided both internal and external data.¹⁰
With social network data from LinkedIn and Twitter integrated right into the Microsoft Dynamics CRM system, social insight becomes a natural part of the marketing and sales process. Microsoft Dynamics CRM delivers the latest market buzz and news along with corporate data, so that salespeople are always up to date on their customers’ activities. Getting this information in real time can make the difference between being ahead of the competition and lagging behind. According to Aberdeen Research, social sellers are 51 percent more likely to reach their quotas than non-social sellers.\(^1\)

In addition, Microsoft Social Listening helps product marketers gain early insight into issues that customers are facing, and connect with the most influential voices in the community. It also provides social buying signals. When people send a signal that they’re looking for something, are dissatisfied with their current solution, or need more information on a topic, that’s an opportunity for a seller to engage. Microsoft Social Listening scours social networks, analyzes the data, and presents it in easy-to-read charts and graphs. These visuals can help companies spot emerging trends, track marketing campaigns, respond to service issues before they escalate, gain insights about competitors, and develop a clearer view of their business.

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**Give sales the tools to close faster**

Replace cold calls with warm introductions by having your salespeople use an enterprise social solution to review the business and social data delivered there to see how they are connected to their prospects. They can use that information to either reach out for a referral, which will make a response more likely, or engage the customer directly in a more meaningful way.

Process flows drive best practices and consistency across the organization, while allowing salespeople to remain agile and deliver a great customer experience. While traditional CRM processes often use workflows that are cumbersome and difficult to understand, Microsoft Dynamics CRM provides intuitive, visual process guidance that uses an outcome-driven user interface to help ensure rapid, widespread adoption by sales professionals. And because the solution tells you what to do next, the ramp-up time is fast and training costs are low.

Microsoft Dynamics CRM includes business process templates with industry-specific best practices. These process flows can then be customized, or new processes can be created using a simple point-and-click process. This allows sales organizations to be agile and responsive. If a trend is identified and the organization wants to react quickly, the business process can be changed almost instantly to reflect the newly desired steps or outcomes. Capabilities like this are what enable an organization to take an entire sales team and make every member an all-star player.

**Create an informed and connected culture**

IT leaders can help to facilitate a positive and productive company culture by implementing the seamless social experiences to keep employees informed and connected with Microsoft Enterprise Social technologies.
As previously established, companies in which information is openly shared, and employees know that leadership wants to hear their ideas and concerns, benefit from active employee engagement. Yammer encourages communication and transparency throughout the organization, allowing all members to participate and discuss ideas, insights and opinions—and IT can spearhead the technology to foster this culture and create an environment for company growth.

The IT department can also help teams cut down on the roadblocks often associated with document collaboration with the Yammer feature, Document Conversations. Document Conversations enable colleagues to work together on documents and presentations in context, sharing feedback, brainstorming ideas, and creating deliverables more quickly to help respond to customers and close deals. To make Document Conversations even more useful, Microsoft is adding Yammer feeds to documents, images and videos stored in SharePoint Online and OneDrive for Business, and also providing Lync integration within documents.

By employing Delve and Office Graphs, IT can help employees gain access to relevant content from across their networks, based on their identities, their interactions with others, and the topics their colleagues are working on. This not only builds better connections among the workforce, but also helps sales and marketing teams tap into the knowledge within the organization to establish and build relevant connections with customers and prospects. And because Delve is available as a web interface in Office 365, a Windows 8 app, and on mobile devices, employees can access relevant content and Office Graph insights, and stay better connected and informed, everywhere they need to get work done.
Why choose Microsoft?

Microsoft, a longtime partner for IT, has evolved its business offering to include Microsoft Enterprise Social technologies that enable companies to engage, inform, and connect their employees, partners, and suppliers. In addition to being awarded the top position in Gartner’s 2014 Magic Quadrant for Social Software in the Workplace, there are three primary reasons that more than 400,000 organizations have chosen Microsoft Enterprise Social technologies to improve their business:

- **Enterprise-grade technology built for business** – Microsoft offers companies the experience, global footprint, and reliability they expect from enterprise cloud solutions, provides a solution that supports strong security, and also has the diversity of cloud workloads to match the diversity of its customers’ businesses.

- **A comprehensive and connected platform** – Microsoft offers a comprehensive and deeply connected platform for delivering seamless social experiences across many familiar applications as well as customers’ datacenters, service providers, and the Microsoft public cloud, and for intelligently mapping interactions to generate personalized insights.

- **Familiar and intuitive user experience** – Microsoft provides consistent, familiar, and intuitive applications across its cloud solutions to drive faster, lower-cost implementation and high user adoption, which lead to improved productivity and better business results.
Are you ready to work like a network?

At Microsoft, we believe that enterprise social technologies have the power to transform the way companies do business by making it easy for employees to connect, share information rapidly, and discover what they need to accomplish.

Our vision for Microsoft Enterprise Social is to empower companies to work like a network by delivering seamless social experiences across familiar applications that people already use. If you are ready to work like a network, learn more about how Microsoft can help at www.enterprisesocial.com
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