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8 Don't in Leveraging Social Networks Successfully

I've yet to meet a manufacturer or distributor that didn't want to improve customer service and operational performance - and preferably yesterday. In today's new normal business environment, it is a tough competitive environment - you must be ahead of your competition in understanding your customers' desires and provide them at a competitive price while improving margins if you want to thrive.

Leveraging your social networks can help you gain that edge! There are countless ways to leverage social networks and social media to achieve these objectives. Top keys to success (from my ebook, [Leverage Social Networks to Drive Business Results](#)) include:

1. **Don't think you're in the product or service business:** You are in the relationship business. I'm hard pressed to think of a profession not focused on relationships in today's new normal business environment. How do you gain your next customer? How do you get service from your supplier when they are overwhelmed? Do you have your employee's loyalty? The answer depends on whether you prioritize relationships.
2. **Your relationship isn't with a company: it's with a person:** It's quite the challenge to have a relationship with a company yet we all try to pursue it. My customer or client is Boeing or GM. My supplier is Cardinal Healthcare. No. To be successful, your relationship is with Fred Andrews, COO of Acme.
3. **Don't shout about your products & services:** No one has time to listen with all the chaos in today's information overload work. The way to stand out in the crowd is to create a conversation - in person and on-line.
4. **Don't tweet or status more noise into the atmosphere:** No professional cares about your latest bell, whistle or feat; instead, they care what's in it for them. Provide value and folks will be interested.
5. **Don't be singular in communication:** Variety is your friend. With all the stimuli available in the new normal business environment, each person is only interested in what's meaningful to him/her. You must use varying modes of communication to reach your audience. Tweet, post statuses, develop a video, download an audio file, and pick up the phone...
6. **Don't just talk:** Talk is cheap. Listening is critical success factor to succeeding with social networks and social media. How will you modify your conversation to fit the person if you don't know what he/she needs?
7. **Don't be mundane:** To stand out in the crowd in the new normal business environment, you must be an object of interest. What will make your customers think "I must do business with Fred!?" What will make your employees proud to work at your company? What will make investors think your company is worth considering?
8. **Don't be complex:** There is too much noise in today's environment to be confusing in your requests and messages. Short and simple stands out from the crowd. Clarity wins the day.

Lisa's Tips: Capacity planning

The need for improved capacity and staffing analysis and decision-making arises frequently as a critical success factor with my clients, and so I thought a few tips would be beneficial:

- **Start simple** - Complex models don't drive results. Simple, easy-to-understand data will give you what you need to succeed. Get your load by work center and machine in labor hours, and you'll be ahead of the pack.
- **Data integrity** - Of course, one of the key issues with capacity and staffing data is whether it's based on accurate information. If your model tells you to hire a crew, you want to make sure it's based on a reasonable picture of reality before proceeding. Look at it from the 80/20 standpoint.
- **Reporting tools** - Most ERP systems don't do a spectacular job in laying out this data in a comprehensible format. Utilize Microsoft Access, Excel or a business intelligence tool to slice and dice the data.
- **Time horizon** - Look out at least a year in monthly buckets when reviewing staffing and capacity requirements. In some industries, 18 months is required. It will be too late if you wait until the customer orders tell you to make a staffing or capacity decision.
- **Flexibility** - When reviewing staffing/ capacity data, build in flexibility. Can you cross-train? Can you re-allocate and fill certain buckets of demand with temps? How about quick change?

Recommended Reading

APICS 2012's Elevate Supply Chain Performance International Conference Materials - If you want to stay on top of the latest supply chain and operations trends, the Association of Operations Management's 2012 International conference materials are a must. Innovation, sustainability, inventory, risk, collaborative supply chains....

Connections

Connections and relationships are the 80/20 of success! Please see this month's requests:

- My APICS (Association of Operations Management) Board of Directors is looking for Programs committee volunteers. [E-mail me](#)
- A client in Valencia is looking for a Planning supervisor. [E-mail her](#).
- My Ontario ProVisors group (a community of professionals who serve their clients as trusted advisors and collaborate for success) is looking for top notch Inland Empire attorneys. [E-mail me](#).

NOTE: To submit an item for this section, please send me an email with a short description of your needs and an email address. Please note that NOT all requests will be published as it must fit the guidelines and align with the Profit through People brand.

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