



How Effective is Your Enterprise Social Network?



Content

1. Summary	1
2. Changing Work Place	2
3. Enterprise Social Networks	4
4. Octopus	6



Summary

1

This paper explores the needs of a smart and agile work place and changes that Enterprise Social Networks (ESNs) are bringing into enterprises. It then introduces the ESN Octopus (riding on the robust IBM Connections), which favors free flowing but structured social media aligned to an enterprise needs rather than pure free flow social media.

Octopus helps an enterprise derive maximum efficiency by transforming how its employees, customers, business partners and stake holders connect, communicate and collaborate

to drive greater work force productivity and outpace the competition. With an entirely new class of cloud-based social business applications, it helps manage all project deliveries, operational processes, customer related interactions, social learning & knowledge sharing, ideation & innovation, online collaboration and employee engagements taking place across the business.

This paper is intended for anyone with interest in ESN Adoption and in 'More Effective ESN' based Workplace of the future

2 Changing Work Place

Change drivers (societal change, Gen Y, economic growth)

Current times and generations have some major differentiators with earlier ones:

- Most substantial economies are now more connected globally than ever before
- Information is more easily accessible, leading to populace which is remarkably knowledgeable
- Why is Facebook so successful? - It connects everyone. It allows people to form groups with complete freedom. Everyone has a chance to be popular, noticed, and visible. Everyone starts equal. You can discover friends that might not have happened in real life. It has conversational chatting based communication that feels way more interactive than emails. As a result, a vast majority of emerging taskforce is social media savvy – and very often dependent on it to be able to express freely. Organizations are keen on adopting this as a means to unlock more productivity and business value
- There is a need to reflect social peer-to-peer relationship at the workplace
- Technology has continually become cheaper, enabling it to penetrate various strata of society. Consequently technology – especially the internet and mobile – has now become a staple part of every household in the developed and developing world

Essentially, the emerging workforce comes pre-armed with technical knowledge. They want to utilize it the ways they are used to – this benefits them as well as the organizations because the workforce does not have to undergo an unlearning experience in order to adapt to the workplace. This workforce is connected to multiple online groups which are essential parts of their life – and as a result, the workplace is being asked to change in a positive way and to harness the new workforce profile.

Change in work culture

With the workforce more knowledgeable and informed than earlier, the emphasis has shifted from “vision and direction comes from the top” to “the people on the floor have the best idea – tap it from them.”

The ideal team is now a dynamic, efficient, and empowered group that attaches (and detaches) pieces from the organization as and when required at the right time. Free flow of information is favored over information coming through well defined channels; a flattened team hierarchy is favored over structured bureaucracy.

Everyone should be able to connect with everyone. The person with the best skill for a task should be the decision maker – not the hierarchy. Everyone can contribute creative ideas – and the team can quickly pick out the best ones. The person who is best informed about the customer knows the change needed – but how does one find that person? People should be quickly able to locate information – and authorization should be imperceptibly checked behind the scenes.



Earlier organizations would often hire externally when senior management saw a need for change. The focus is now shifting to “the employees know the changes required” and “we likely have the best team to manage the migration in-house.” – this becomes even more important considering that technological progresses are forcing organizations to adapt and evolve faster than ever.

Overall challenge that organizations face is that they need to be like start-ups – but cannot be because of sheer size – oversimplified but accurate. This sums to a workplace that is changing – and workplaces that adapt faster

are likely to be competitive winners and leaders.

Need to be more transparent

In the age of information, a lot of the mystery of ‘how does the senior management operate’ in the minds of people on the ground has disappeared. Employees are no longer content to work inside the box – they practically demand to be able to influence decisions/direction if it is within their area of expertise. With a growing favor of flattened hierarchies, organizations face a great demand in being more transparent from the top down.

Enterprise Social Networks

Enterprise Social Networks (ESNs) are social networks inside an enterprise to boost social media based communication and collaboration.

Enterprise Social Media is no longer a fad – it's an emerging trend for a reason – a culture based on democracy, skill-authority and free flow of information which is indeed an improvement over hierarchy and rigid workflow based business practices in traditional commercial organizations. Free flow of information, spot collaboration, crowd sourced / team sourced solutions and live discussions are favored to hierarchical chains and passive emails.

An ESN cuts across all, thus in theory being capable of forming a team dynamically that's suited perfectly to a given task. An ESN can also help detect experts and talented employees. Employees can connect freely to one another and form communities of like-minded people pursuing common goals. This

encourages cohesion and stickiness between the employees – people stay together in a community even if they are on different official teams.

One can reasonably believe that ESNs can be force multipliers – traditionally, employees networks are limited to teams that they work in and a few individuals beyond the team boundary. An ESN provides organization-shapers/senior management an opportunity to reach – and be reached by – everyone in the enterprise. Employees can now actually feel that they know the important things that are going on. This feeling of transparency and participation does help in forging a better bond between the employee and the organization.

However, like any technological disruptor, ESNs do have their pluses and minuses. The biggest doubt comes from the fact that as of yet, there is no easy way to know the impact of Social Media.



Effect	Statement
Plus	ESNs have the potential to cut across traditional boundaries of teams and departments
Plus	ESNs by their very nature encourage free flowing, democratic and skill-authority based collaboration
Plus	ESNs can connect separated entities – like execution teams, customers, and stakeholders
Plus	Social listening allows organizations to undertake sentiment analysis more effectively
Plus	Social Collaboration encourages teams over individuals while recognizing individual brilliance more effectively
Plus	ESNs can connect the right people quickly leading to shortened workflows and processes
Plus	ESNs bring crowd sourcing as a realistic use, thus providing the ability to leverage entire organization's expertise
Minus	The demarcation between a professional and personal conversation can blur quite easily. Uncontrolled ESNs can easily degenerate into pursuit of non-professional goals
Minus	Due to its free flowing and democratic nature, ESNs can cause disproportionately high number of groups and communities to be formed – with rather limited ability to assess the most effective ones
Minus	Organizations above a certain size are necessarily hierarchical and this will not change in the near future. ESNs do not provide any easy option to adapt social collaboration to this hierarchy
Minus	There will always be processes and workflows which are necessary in certain cases; ESNs do not easily support such methodologies
Minus	ESNs have the potential to divide the world of MIS and Social into discrete entities, which is not the right base for most organizations, as it causes an upfront division
Minus	Social Analytics are still into the infancy stages
Minus	There is no easy way to measure the ROI of Social based networks

Social Media provides organizations a tremendous potential to unlock hidden talent, ideas, and a self-dependent and self-sustaining community based growth. However, this value can fall away very quickly due to the uncontrolled, difficult-to-measure and extra emphasis on popularity based nature of Social Media. As such, it still represents a double-edged sword.

Enterprise Social Networks (ESNs) implemented with a complete lack of structure creates an unviable impasse between data, collaboration and information, resulting in enterprises still struggling with most of the pain points impacting their business efficiency. An organization needs a balance of both - that is where Octopus comes in.

Octopus

What is Octopus?

Octopus is an ESN built on top of IBM Connections, available on Internet, Mobile (iOS, Android, Blackberry) and tablets.

Octopus is an ESN with a purpose. It aligns social media to an organization's structure, keeping the pluses of ESNs and simultaneously bridging the gap between organizational structures and free flowing social media. It delivers social media in a structure that promotes freedom, free flow of information, skill-authority rather than hierarchy - but in a way that aligns to business needs and weaved with enterprise entities, functions, structure and team definitions. It unifies the enterprise, simplifies processes, centralizes information and brings in business efficiency – all on one social networking platform.

Overall, this product provides an integrated and holistic approach to implement workplace technology. It provides an interactive workspace for a thorough adoption of social media aligned to common enterprise needs. It helps enterprises address some key pain points that are impacting their efficiency:

- Too many silos in a team, and across teams
- Inability to engage employees actively
- Too many calls and e-mails leaving little time for critical thinking
- Lack of transparency in execution

- Lack of 360 degree views
- On-boarding time of 4 to 8 weeks for a new joinee
- Inability to track customer knowledge retention & commitments made
- Enterprise Knowledge is anchored around a few individuals
- Complicated workflows

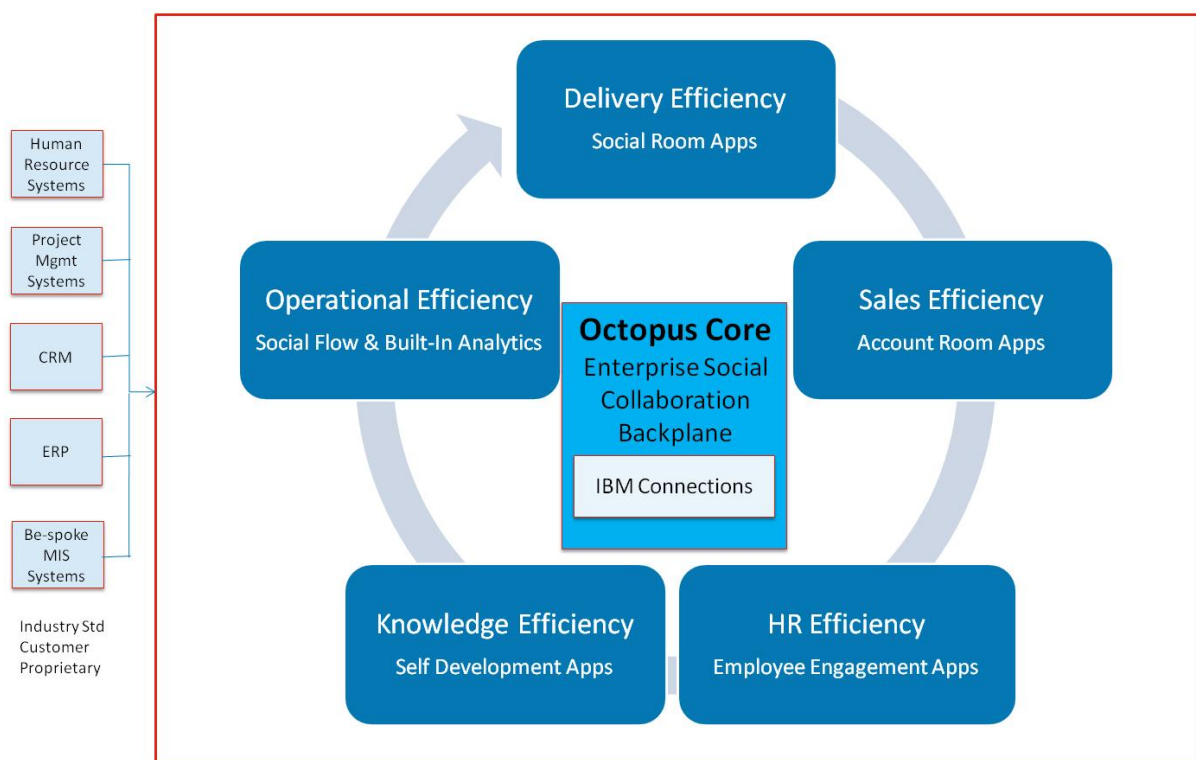
Octopus equips an enterprise for efficient business with social team rooms, knowledge proliferation and employee engagement in a unified workspace. It is based on modular apps and consists of several social applications built using IBM Connections and uniquely weaved. The ready-to-use Social apps of Octopus defines a standard way in which enterprises should adopt ESN.

The best way to understand Octopus is to regard it as a social media based integrator. Examples:

Social media produces unstructured data; MIS produces structured data – Octopus brings these data sets together to generate a unified view.

Organizations have teams to do the job – social media has communities that need not map to any team. Octopus solves this by creating social team rooms.

Octopus - One Integrated Workspace



Most organizations requirements at the basic level are:

- Generate Work
- Execute Work
- Keep the employees engaged
- Upgrade the organization's knowledge repositories and employees
- Improve the operating margins
- Provide cross-functional support services

Octopus is designed to support this basic philosophy, on a social media collaboration base.

Social Room Apps

A Social Room provides an “online team workspace” which facilitates social team coordination, management, tracking and holding single source of truth of an enterprise team's activities / data. **It aggregates social apps, form based apps and hybrid apps as per an organization's requirement.**

Social Rooms are created aligned to organization structure to match kind of teams that an organization has. (Imagine that an organization is compartmentalized into a set of rooms, a.k.a. teams). They are extensible to define any kind of “room types” – e.g. Project Rooms, Account Rooms, Business Leadership Rooms, etc.

A room encapsulates multiple aspects for a team and its related activities, such as (not limited to):

- Goals
- Broadcasts & Messages
- Conversations
- Meeting MOMs
- Action Items
- Milestones
- Appreciations & Concerns
- Management Metrics & Indices
- Artifacts
- Etc.

A room has 4 walls (views):

- Timeline View – Chronological sequence of activities happening in a team
- Management View – Enables a room visitor to manage / track / analyze the team activities
- Collaboration View – For engaging the team
- Artifacts View – The repositories of the room

Octopus replaces social media communities with social team rooms that are created on demand by an admin authority. This preserves the freedom inherent in social media, but controls the explosion of communities. Creation of ad-hoc Collaboration rooms for collaboration cutting across teams is possible by the end-user with some restrictions on creation limits per person by role, again to control the explosion of un-used communities.

Octopus provides interfaces for MIS data so that the team view can be enriched by data from specialist systems to deliver a complete picture in one place.

Account Room Apps

Account rooms are social rooms designed primarily for Sales Team, and to link the key entities: Sales Team, Account Management Team, the Customer, and the project teams.

Account room apps extend the concept of social rooms to deliver additional functionality –customer and contact 360 view and history, managing leads & opportunities, and interfaces with teams external to the account room.

This can be extended to link to each other transparently – for example, specific aspects of project rooms can be summed up to the owning account. This extracts the hierarchy out from the rooms, while still delivering the key requirement of hierarchy – summarized information, while preserving the privacy and autonomy that different teams expect.

Employee Engagement Apps

Octopus equips an organization to keep its work force engaged by making them visible, well connected, motivated and addressing their un-stated needs. Octopus provides a set of apps directed at keeping employees engaged:

- Knowledge circles open for participation across the organization – meant to ask questions and to share knowledge
- Common Interest Circles that depart from the professional side to bring in the fun element – Sports, Music, Books, Classifieds, etc
- Notifications Centre that updates employees on activities in every context in which they are involved – segregated as work-related updates from various team rooms, public networking updates, organization cascades, public discussion circles and global site-level updates
- Private Conversations for confidential discussions



- Employee 360 view Public Wall (with collaboration board for communicating & collaborating with the entire enterprise, profile, resume and skills). Ability to network with people outside the team and “follow” their public walls
- Redeemable Points based appreciation for on the spot based peer-to-peer recognition

Self Development Apps

Over time, all organizations gather knowledge. Also, knowledge is automatic byproduct of social collaboration in a professional context. Enterprise Knowledge is encapsulated in multiple forms: Technology Standards, Design Standards, Domain Standards, Processes, Policies, Generation Information & Announcements, FAQ, Known errors, etc. Therefore Octopus provides apps to centralize and proliferate this knowledge that also serves the twin purpose of employee self-development:

- Knowledge Circles (Ask Me / Share) – Social build-up and evolution of knowledge standards
- Knowledge Repository – Hold enterprise knowledge in Knowledge Wikis, FAQ / KEDB and as Public Docs
- Knowledge Cascade – Cascade knowledge updates to all employees globally or to pre-defined groups
- Knowledge Search – Search for knowledge experts with specific skills, previously solved problems, similar issues, documents, etc

Social Flows and Analytics

Two key strategies to improve operational efficiencies are to shorten workflows, and to enable the right decisions by mining analytics from the data of various enterprise workflows.

Social Flows

Enterprise workflows tend to become rigid over time, and sacrifice team / individual expertise to process definition and adherence. There are cases where this is required, and specialist systems exist to handle such cases. However, in many instances, such workflows do nothing except create bureaucracy and red tape. Octopus provides conversational social flows to shorten such processes. Adding workflow actions to conversations and adding simple forms converts processes to conversations, allowing teams to speed operations.

Analytics

The role of Business intelligence systems is to equip decision-makers with fact based business insight. These facts are generated by data collected at various levels in the organization and rolled-up to the required level.

Octopus supports interfaces to MIS data. Added to these attributes is its position as a common workspace for the entire enterprise. This enables Octopus to have all the high level data to sum up all the important aspects of an organization's BI dimensions into one centralized view. A drill-down for example would transition user to the social team room.

When combined with the social analytics available out of the box in Octopus, it represents a unique value proposition for an enterprise: explore relationships between Social Analytics and Functional Analytics.

Why is Octopus needed?

Unrestrained enterprise social media leads to a prolific growth in communal interaction that fails to deliver proportionate business value.

An ESN is a potentially tremendous weapon – but just like any weapon, it has to be harnessed effectively to be useful. The key component in effectiveness is the right mix of freedom and discipline.

Octopus defines a complete blueprint for the organization to adopt social media – it retains almost all the positive aspects of an ESN while fulfilling the needs of an organization to be practical. Octopus achieves this by putting together a vast set of individually simple features that add up to a vast improvement on a basic ESN, like:

- 1) Groups are created by an admin team on requests that are deemed acceptable. This leads to a huge cut-down on unnecessary or duplicate or legally-susceptible groups
- 2) Octopus consolidates information from various sources and presents a unified view as defined by the enterprise. This in itself leads to huge gains:
 - Octopus collects structured information and combines it with ESN data to provide an overall view – thus giving a single window view of the world
 - By refusing to be a generator of structured data, Octopus retains the true nature of social media. It also does not try to replace any structured data system in an enterprise – thus making it an integrating layer over systems. This in turn means that Octopus is an amalgamator and not a disruptor to existing MIS systems
 - The unified view includes the key analytics of the integrated systems – thus providing a ‘natural’ and simple BI
- 3) Octopus replaces complicated workflows with social conversational workflows. This allows an organization to eliminate unnecessary processes, while retaining important workflows (and associated systems)
- 4) Octopus defines various room blueprints out-of-the-box which means that all levels in the organization can generally find a type of room that they naturally fit into
- 5) Octopus segregates notifications as work-based updates, corporate announcements, informal networking updates, knowledge base updates, site level updates, etc resulting in better consumption of various information floods that result with a use of enterprise social media.

Social media needs to be aligned to an organization just like technology needs to be aligned to business. This is why Octopus is needed.

What are the benefits of deploying Octopus?

Overall, Octopus helps increase efficiency in delivery, sales, operations, knowledge management and HR. With its innovative design, the Octopus Way of Working enables its customers to derive multiple benefits from one workspace. It helps improve communication within the organization and with its customers, partners and vendors.

With its effective use of social rooms and its 360 degree views, central information storage and knowledge management, Octopus is able to unleash the right chemistry in teams, has shown reduction in effort in various execution and operations and has reduced employee on-boarding time and attrition. Analysis of Octopus implementation in Polaris FT has shown that it has ushered in 8 percent reduction in effort, lowered attrition by 4 percent and has reduced on-boarding time by a whopping 75 percent. Polaris is no longer reliant on email to record, deliver and collaborate on projects and has improved the way it communicates and engages internally and with its customers.

Listed below are specific value derivations from an Octopus rollout:

Social Rooms – Business Benefits:

Team 360: Get a one-stop team workspace with centralized control and 360 degree views. No silos of information / knowledge that a team has to consume.

Live Updates: Stay informed real-time with activities across various rooms that one is part of, streamed on a single wall. Room-wise auto categorization of all updates in a common inbox.

Zero Team E-Mails: Have right conversations at the right place. No decentralized or fragmented communication (correspondence) within a team or with teams.



Open Kitchen: Deliver real-time transparency to customers, stakeholders and managers on team activities / progress, facilitating them to log appreciations or concerns for the team or specific individuals.

Non-Intrusive Audit & Governance: Audit, review and govern team activities in real time saving time and dependency.

Smart Induction: Induct a new joiner in a quick and seamless manner

Active Coaching: Deliver live coaching to your next level of leadership in the play field, not in classrooms

Crowd-Sourced Reviews: Improve deliverable quality with concurrent team, customer and stakeholder feedback

Customer 360: Retain customer knowledge with Account rooms. Build history of customer meetings, events, promises resulting in increased customer satisfaction and cross-sell

Social Flows: Build speed and cost saves with implementation of rationalized conversational workflows and implicit business rules using Room Service Walls.

Plug Intranet MIS: Unique weaving of social collaboration with structure and entities held in existing MIS to meet any functional needs of a team in addition to social collaboration needs.

Knowledge Proliferation – Business Benefits:

Knowledge 360: Maintain and proliferate all forms of knowledge with penetration measurements and knowing employee reaction

Ask the Experts: Leverage experts in your own organization to get quick issue resolution.

Share Innovations: Share innovations & best practices with all leveraging Share Circles

Spot Smart Talent: Spot talent among young employees and search for niche skills beneath 100 feet

Live Knowledge Streams: Reduce training costs with continuous self development and upgrades

Employee Engagement – Business Benefits:

My Identity: My Wall provides a public identity to each employee.

Internal Social Circles: Build internal social circles for employees to pursue common interests and mix fun with work. Engage for specific purposes like car pooling and related go-green initiatives, lost & found, classifieds, etc

Ideation Theatres: Run very large open space workshops with ideas from all employees weaved within ideation theatres within an organization unleashing new business opportunities and focus areas.

Just Appreciate: Build a culture of on the spot appreciation for any one by any one.

Internal Opportunity Exploration: Provide opportunities to enhance job interests and productivity with open job postings

Break the Hierarchy: Empower employees to suggest, recommend, like and comment within a team or globally.



Polaris Financial Technology Limited

About the Author

Avaneesh Kumar is a Solution Architect at Polaris Financial Technology Limited. He has over 18 years of techno-functional experience in creating solutions across multiple verticals. Avaneesh holds a B. Tech degree from IIT Kharagpur.

He can be contacted at avaneesh.kumar@polarisFT.com. You may call him at (+91)9702604594.

About Polaris Financial Technology Limited

Polaris Financial Technology Limited is a global leader in Financial Technology for Banking, Insurance and other Financial Services. With over 25 years of expertise in building a comprehensive portfolio of products, smart legacy modernization services and consulting, Polaris owns the largest set of Intellectual Property for a comprehensive product suite, Intellect® Global Universal Banking (GUB) M180. Intellect® is the world's first pure play Service Oriented Architecture (SOA) based application suite for Retail, Corporate, Investment banking and Insurance. Its acclaimed products, solutions and services enable unprecedented operational productivity for the global Financial Services Industry by Building, Maintaining, Expanding and Extending highly complex and Integrated Financial Technology Infrastructure.

This makes Polaris the chosen partner for 9 of the top 10 global banks and 7 of the top 10 global insurance companies. The company has a global presence through its 40 relationship offices across 30 countries, 6 international development centers and 8 fully owned Business Solution centers. Polaris has a talent strength of over 11,500 solution architects, domain and technology experts. For more information, please visit <http://www.polarisFT.com>

