Marketing campaigns need social business software

By Gys Kappers   20 Jul 2013

The use of social business software (SBS) can assist marketing campaigns by cutting through the scattered complexity and bringing together multiple work streams in an observable (social) way, thereby facilitating collaboration that is more efficient and improving campaign outcomes.

Too complex

Marketing, advertising, PR and other campaigns are distributed and complex, involving multiple media channels, agencies, subcontractors, freelancers and contacts within the client hierarchy, all collectively engaged in numerous co-creating workflows but interfacing via different touch points.

Traditional collaboration methods - e-mail, web-conferencing and endless meetings - have bedevilled the outcome of campaigns; their technological shortcomings render them ineffectual islands in the stream of campaigns, leading to rampant waste of resources (time, cost and duplication of efforts) as well as sub-optimal teamwork.

Social business software, on the other hand, reaches across organisational, functional and programme divides to bring together multiple work streams - some extra-organisational - on a common Web-hosted platform, making it easy to track campaign processes and delivery in distributed work scenarios.

This makes it possible for agencies to get input on campaigns from the clients sooner, avoiding costly resource investment and having to go back to the drawing board. It is possible for clients to get closer to the creative output and avoid the frustration of last minute deadline misses. It is also possible for clients to manage the input of all their agencies effectively, acting for a common purpose. No more playing the blame game between agencies for not delivering a piece of work paramount to the success of the overall campaign and deadline.

Collaborative

Social platforms use social media techniques that flatten typical enterprise hierarchies and promote participation, speeding up project initiation and on boarding, ideation and collaboration - in project groups as well as issue based sub-groups.

In ordinary language, this means creating communities that collaborate around discussion topics that broadly correspond with functional streams within the same overarching marketing campaign - such as strategy, web and app design, SEO, creative, copywriting, design, media platforms and PR.

Once a community has been created, members can join groups and participate without fear or favour, using tools such as document sharing and multimedia, which promotes effective and efficient collaboration and brainstorming in real-time; while always working off the latest version of copy, design, wireframe, document, campaign strategy, research data, video or other content.

Communication

In addition, SBS provides an effective communication platform, in which members gain kudos for contributing to the health of projects with timely, relevant information. So, for instance, an agency that picks up a potentially damaging media report, would enable the company and all its marketing to collaborate and respond in a coherent, professional and considerate way.

Another activity that can benefit immensely from using SBS as communication is when a campaign brief changes mid-stream. Using SBS gets all suppliers and stakeholders on the same page quickly and often provokes further discussion that may feed into future campaign efforts. One can change course instantly, irrespective of where people are based.

Gumtree, the local online classified ads site owned by eBay, recently inadvertently featured an ad for a baby. On being alerted to this, a sales rep posted it on the company's SBS platform. Three members in different cities were up to speed in no time, deliberating on a way to manage the crisis. In another example, Nando's, the feisty company admired for its market responsiveness, can easily be emulated by using SBS as a communication and collaborative platform.

Versioning

In copywriting and creative projects, version tracking becomes a cinch with the help of SBS topics that 'bubble up' new comments on the latest version and catalogues discussions around previous versions. E-mail, by comparison, is cumbersome and time inefficient.

By adopting SBS, IBM Software Group consultant Luiz Suarez reduced his e-mail from 800 per week to only 16, freeing up time for even more social collaboration that removes ineffectual copying and forwarding that accompanies the use of e-mail.

Companies that seek the relevance of Nando's, the freedom from e-mail or the responsiveness of Gumtree should break free from traditional tools and embrace collaboration and communication tools that exist in social business software.

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