

Assignment: Thesis Question

***(Working title)* Social media and corporate culture formation: A comparative study of mission statement implementation and the role of social media**

Mission statements were established as an important business practice in the 1980's and 1990's, but the empirical research of the last decade does not bear out the associated behavioural and financial benefits (Bart & Baetz, 1998; Bart & Burke, 1998; Desmidt & Prinzie, 2008). Recent studies suggest that the problem lies in how mission goals and objectives are communicated and align with member and stakeholder groups, particularly as larger, multi-level organizations become the norm (Peyrefitte & David, 2006; Desmidt & Prinzie, 2008). While many organizations have begun to adopt social media tools such as blogs, wikis, and social networking applications as a means of improving communication at different levels of management, few if any have deliberately used these applications as a vehicle for communicating their mission or vision (Sang Lee et al, 2006). This project proposes to examine social media implementation as a means of mission statement dissemination, and to determine if Web 2.0 strategies might assist in understanding and solving the problem of communicating a shared vision for multi-level organizations.

Social media represents a compelling and perilous proposition for communication in business. McKinnon, director of the Enterprise 2.0 strategy team at Open Text Corp., indicates that one of the principal advantages of social media is its ability to engage the user; however, still in the early stages of implementation (McKinnon, 2009), the business community must contend with a number of significant challenges such as information governance, and as demonstrated in Sang Lee et al.'s study of usage in Fortune 500 companies social media can even negatively impact efficiency when improperly implemented (2006). The fundamental problem, in many cases, is the lack of a specific design or purpose in implementing these new technologies (*ibid.*); a possible solution is to reframe social media use in terms of mission statement dissemination. The purpose of a mission statement is (a) to inform and mobilize an organization's members and stakeholders by providing a deeper meaning that transcends business needs, and (b) isolating the core values and direction of the organization as a whole in order to achieve higher returns and more effective use of resources (Bart & Baetz, 1998, pp. 826-27). The affordances of social media would appear to naturally align with the demands of achieving these goals, especially in multi-level organizations.

Works cited

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