

## Enterprise 2.0 Adoption :: Strategic and Tactical Considerations

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No conversation about Enterprise 2.0 proceeds very far without coming to the idea of Return on Investment (ROI). Often champions of Enterprise 2.0 within the organization must be able to tell a compelling ROI story to their management before they can gain approval to move forward with their project. Complicating this challenge is the fact that there is, as yet, no standardized approach to measuring ROI of Enterprise 2.0. This has to do, largely, with the fact that Enterprise 2.0 is not, itself, a single thing. Enterprise 2.0 refers to the broad spectrum of Web 2.0 participatory and social media tools that can be deployed inside the firewall, but no two implementations are likely to be the same – the needs of every organization are unique as are the specific ways in which Enterprise 2.0 tools will be implemented to meet those needs. As such, the standardization of measurement is difficult.

Still, it is possible to affect positive ROI when it comes to Enterprise 2.0. It's a matter of shaping the tools to the needs of your organization, knowing what you're trying to achieve before you begin and taking an active approach to adoption. It's about recognizing adoption not as something that happens, but as something you create.

The considerations that go into creating that adoption are the subject of this paper.

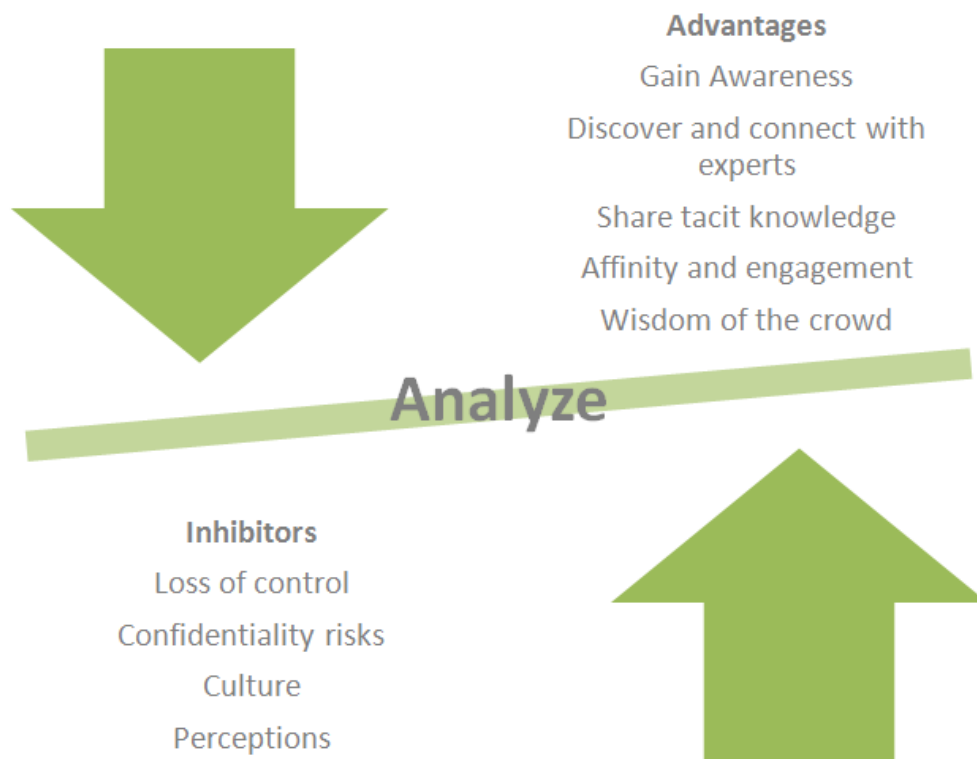
### **BENEFITS OF ENTERPRISE 2.0**

The potential benefits of Enterprise 2.0 are many and are widely documented, though it might be helpful to mention in passing, and as a reminder, that among those potential benefits should be listed the following:

- **Gain Awareness:** giving employees a place to share information and express themselves gives management a place to listen and to learn about opportunities, concerns, ideas and more.
- **Converse:** Conversation is the lifeblood of innovation. Conversation adds dimension to ideas. Analysts have even found that participation in social networking tools and the conversational exchange of ideas that happens there results in increased employee competence in their work. Enterprise 2.0 tools facilitate conversation for the benefit of the organization.
- **Affinity and Engagement:** Giving employees tools by which they can share and demonstrate their expertise increases their overall sense of satisfaction with their jobs, inspires them to greater creativity and increases their loyalty to your organization.
- **Make relevant information and expertise more discoverable:** Who can solve my problem? Who can show me new ways to look at the question I'm grappling with? Enterprise 2.0 tools open up closed systems of thought and deliver it to the people who need it.

- **Speed up the collection of institutional knowledge:** In many cases, a company’s most valuable commodity is the collective knowledge that exists in the heads of its employees. But those employees walk out the door every day and sometimes they don’t come back. Email facilitates the exchange of knowledge within the organization, but it’s not transparent and it’s not organized to collect and share information. Social tools such as wikis and blogs, on the other hand, give employees a place in which to exchange knowledge and preserve their exchanges so that whether those employees remain or not, they have left something of value behind.
- **Strengthen teams through social interaction:** To the knowledge worker, social connectedness is a tool not an entertainment. Social networks, therefore, have a distinct value in the same way that a screwdriver, a saw or a wrench each has distinct value to a trade worker. Rich social networks and the “norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them” have essential value to the knowledge worker in enabling them to complete tasks faster and more effectively than if they were left to try to accomplish the same things alone.<sup>i</sup>
- **Tap the Wisdom of the Crowd**

## Challenges for Enterprise Adoption



A better-informed, better-connected, more inspired, more loyal and more competent workforce are, then, potential returns an organization might hope to see on their investment in Enterprise 2.0. Yet one certainty stands in the way of all this positive potential. And that certainty is this: if no one uses the tools in which you invest, you're not likely to enjoy a positive return.

ROI, therefore, it needs to be understood, is a by-product of successful adoption. And adoption is, in turn, a by-product of doing things right in the shaping, creation and introduction of Enterprise 2.0 into the organization.

Organizations do better when they put significant effort into planning ways to support users in their discovery and use of the tools.

The challenge of Enterprise 2.0 adoption is not to *push* technologies out to people, the challenge is to create tools that are useful enough and relevant enough that they *draw users in*.

Users have to want to use the tools, they have to *need* to use the tools, they have to *feel* the benefit of the using the tools.

When you apply that thinking to your organization's technology choices, it becomes easier to anticipate the kinds of considerations you need to make to ensure better success with Enterprise 2.0. The adoption of your Enterprise 2.0 solution will be a by-product of your due diligence in meeting these strategic requirements.

#### **ENTERPRISE 2.0 ADOPTION IN THREE PHASES**

Successful adoption is not something that occurs by happenstance; it is within your control. But by the same token, successful adoption is not something you can force. There are those who argue that the notion of *driving* adoption is a mistake altogether because it turns the use of the tools into an end important to management that often gets pursued regardless of how well the tools serve the needs of the employees. Rather than *driving* adoption, they say, your energies should go into *nurturing* adoption. We believe you can build toward adoption success by dividing the effort into three distinct phases each with its own set of strategic considerations.

#### **PHASE 1:**

- **Position in Project Timeline:** Pre-development
- Characterized by efforts to determine what needs to be done

#### **Strategic Considerations:**

1. **Have a problem to solve:** Are you trying to connect a dispersed workforce? Facilitate collaboration on a project team? Capture institutional knowledge? Increase the discoverability of archived data? Raise real-time awareness of current work? All problems that Enterprise 2.0 can address, but is any one of them your problem? Let your organization's needs dictate the tools, the features and the design of your Enterprise 2.0 solution. First things first: know what problem you're trying to solve.

2. **Know your users:** You are not your users. If you overlook this fact and design a solution without really knowing who will be using it or how they prefer to work and to use technology, you might just as well burn money. Employees will use Enterprise 2.0 tools that solve real problems for them, that make their jobs easier, that are truly relevant to them. But you can't know what problems to solve, what friction points your employees encounter or what they consider relevant until you ask them. So ask them.

Business Intelligence is a key component to analyzing whether your Enterprise 2.0 solution is working after it's launched, but Business Intelligence should not be limited to post-launch metrics collection. Start your Business Intelligence efforts early in the form of user experience testing: conduct listening tours and surveys, interview your employees about what works and what doesn't work in their business processes. Understand their habits, what they're trying to achieve. Design around your users' needs.

3. **Leverage Existing Tools:** Oftentimes it can be helpful to integrate Enterprise 2.0 tools into existing tools and work environments with which employees are already familiar. One company, for example, that wanted to improve its ability to communicate important company announcements to its widely-distributed workforce chose to abandon email as a communication tool and instead integrated a message board into their Web-based time reporting tool. They could not guarantee that employees would read the company emails, but by integrating the announcement system with a tool employees were required to log in to at least once a week to account for their time for payroll, they increased their assurance that important information was reaching the employees without asking employees to learn new processes to find that information.
4. **Ensure executive support and active involvement** – As Dion Hinchcliffe has pointed out, Enterprise 2.0 succeeds “when top down meets bottom up”<sup>ii</sup>. When senior management backs the 2.0 initiatives, champions them, and empowers the grassroots-level employees to become active in them, then those tools become a “safe zone” for those employees. Don't underestimate the power of the CEO leading the way with Enterprise 2.0 tools if for no other reason than to show employees it's an acceptable way to spend time.

#### **PHASE 2:**

- **Position in Project Timeline:** Immediately post-launch
- Characterized by efforts to help people understand how to use what you've built

#### **Strategic Considerations:**

1. **Initial Training:** Confidence is a catalyst to adoption, but even the most intuitively designed system comes with a learning curve. You can shorten that learning curve and you can help people gain confidence by holding in-depth training sessions to bring them up to speed on the principal elements of your Enterprise 2.0 solution. Don't make training an afterthought; include training on the schedule from the outset of the project. Think of it this way: the launch of your

Enterprise 2.0 tool is not the end of the project; launch is the beginning of the training phase of your project.

2. **Incentives:** Often, Enterprise 2.0 tools replace existing processes and are, therefore, unfamiliar to users even if they are welcome changes. An Enterprise 2.0 solution designed around users' needs will generally find acceptance once people have used it to achieve improved results, but they may need a gentle push to try the tools for the first few times. Consider holding a contest as a component of your Enterprise 2.0 launch. For example, create a scavenger hunt for information that users can only find by engaging the Enterprise 2.0 tools – “who in this company wrote a white paper about topic X?” A contest such as this can motivate people to take the time to learn their way through the tools and as they do so can expose them to useful information. The contest can both teach them the tools and give them the chance to experience the benefit of using the tools.
3. **Give Attention to Get Adoption:** Contests can be an important catalyst to adoption, but they can't carry all the burden of motivating people. An additional useful approach is to shine the spotlight of approval on employees who participate in the Enterprise 2.0 tools early on. If you create blogs for employees, make sure management regularly comments on the blog posts employees create. If you create a team wiki for collaboration, make sure management acknowledges the employees who contribute their knowledge there.

In studies of organizations that have implemented Enterprise 2.0 tools in their operations the analyst firm Gartner has determined that the presence of content motivates the creation of more content, that participation breeds participation, but acknowledgement from management breeds the enthusiasm and energy necessary for employees to participate in the first place.

4. **Draw a line in the sand:** It's important to create tools that are relevant to people, that serve real needs, that solve real problems. If you do that, you improve your chances for adoption. However, uncertainty with new tools can sometimes trump the motivation to use them. For that reason, mandates from management are sometimes a useful tool to drive initial usage. If your goal is to reduce the amount of project communication that goes on in email and move that communication to a wiki instead, for example, consider a mandated shift. The project leader or, better yet, an executive, can state that “from now on, all communication on this project will be conducted through the wiki.” Any communication that goes on through email can be bounced back to the initiator with the instruction to please resubmit the content on the wiki this time. Often Enterprise 2.0 adoption is a matter of simply developing new habits and a mandate can accelerate the development of those new work patterns and habits as long as the tools truly have been designed with their users in mind and legitimately serve the users' needs.

### PHASE 3:

- **Position in Project Timeline:** Long-term post launch, ongoing
- Characterized by efforts to build on early enthusiasm and ensure an ongoing positive experience

## Strategic Considerations:

- 1. Highlight early success and recruit evangelists:** As part of the effort to give attention to get adoption, create a feedback process that encourages employees to report their experiences with the tools. Executive leadership, the project manager or some other stakeholder should monitor that feedback for examples of the tools helping employees succeed. Those successes can be highlighted in other communications such as newsletters and company announcements. Stakeholders should also be watching for particularly enthusiastic adopters of the tools and should recruit those users to reach out to other employees in the organization to tell the story of their success with the tools and to encourage others to use them too. These “internal evangelists” often drive more rapid adoption than do more formalized efforts to communicate to employees about the Enterprise 2.0 tools. It’s the principle of “word of mouth” at work inside the enterprise. Just as word of mouth can often be a better generator of sales for a business than more formal marketing efforts, it can also help drive adoption when employees hear their peers whom they respect and trust advocating for the use of the tools.
- 2. Community management:** Imagine going to a party that is full of people you’ve never met and is being held at a home you’ve never been to. You’re uncertain, but you enter. Inside groups of people are standing and sitting, talking to each other and you are now faced with the prospect of spending the evening silently in some corner of the room or picking a group and trying to break into the circle and make yourself part of an ongoing conversation. But consider how different your experience could be at that party if the host, knowing that you are unacquainted with the other guests and the location takes it upon herself to introduce you to other guests, to lead you into conversations, to make sure at every turn you have what you need and have at least one person at that party for whom your comfort is priority one.

As it happens, this basic principle of hosting that is so effective at helping people find their bearings in new social situations offline can have dramatic effects on motivating the adoption of Enterprise 2.0 social technologies online. Companies are increasingly defining full-time Community Manager positions and establishing them as part of their overall Enterprise 2.0 roll out. The Community Manager is the host of the party. Their job is to make sure anyone trying to use the tools is successful at doing so. The Community Manager monitors activity in the tools, watches for people who are struggling and shepherds them through the challenge. They study the feedback mechanisms looking for questions they can answer, peer-to-peer connections they can facilitate, or success stories they can highlight. In short, they keep the presence of the Enterprise 2.0 tools front and center in employees’ minds and work to ensure that people who venture into the tools succeed with what they’re trying to do. The Community Manager ensures a good experience and that increases the likelihood that people will return.

- 3. Ongoing training:** Initial training is an important way to reduce employees’ anxiety about using tools that are unfamiliar to them. But because that initial training will likely be a broad overview, there remains room for more targeted, task-specific training. That kind of ongoing training

should be a part of your overall project plan, as well. Before launch of your Enterprise 2.0 tools you'll be able to plan training sessions around specific task areas that you know users will need to understand.

After launch you'll also be able to study employee feedback to identify unanticipated areas needing more in-depth training. Your community manager can play an integral role in this topic identification effort. Ongoing training has the direct effect of making the Enterprise 2.0 tools increasingly more familiar and accessible to users, but also has the indirect effect of demonstrating management's commitment to new tools and processes as well as their commitment to making sure employees succeed. This demonstration of commitment to the employees' success can breed trust and patience among the employees which can translate into more successful adoption numbers in the long run as employees remain more flexible and willing to try new tools and participate in feedback efforts to make them better.

### **THE IMPACT OF TIME**

No Enterprise 2.0 conversation progresses very far without running up against the question of ROI. The answer to ROI, we've tried to establish here, is an intelligent, carefully constructed adoption. That adoption plan, rather than being something you begin work on after launch, should exist from the beginning as part of your overall project plan. It should acknowledge the adoption challenge as one that begins long before the shaping of tools or the writing of code and lasts well beyond the launch of the tools you develop.

But Enterprise 2.0 is not about technology alone. It is, in fact, about matching new technologies to existing work groups with existing habits and integrating those new technologies in a way that facilitates greater success. Enterprise 2.0 is about matching technologies to people. Even in environments where the need for the technologies is acute, across-the-board adoption will not happen suddenly. It is not unusual for small pockets of adoption to appear very quickly while in the rest of your organization the reigning attitude will appear to be indifference. A good deal of that indifference, which is more likely uncertainty bred of unfamiliarity, can be overcome with enactment of the post-launch elements of your adoption plan. It is worth remembering, however, that Enterprise 2.0 adoption has been characterized as being a glacier, not fireworks.

And so, the other tool of adoption is time.

Robert D. Putnam adds some perspective to this idea in his book [Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community](#). Cultural change within a society, Putnam tells us, can happen relatively quickly at an individual level, but that change will not be widespread and will potentially lack durability. Deep, broad and lasting change happens not at the individual level, but at the generational level<sup>iii</sup>.

It's helpful to consider your organization a society unto itself – with its own culture, social norms, rules and relationships. If we allow that cognitive shift, this notion from Putnam gives some guidance to our thinking about how to set our expectations around Enterprise 2.0 adoption in relation to time. New

practices should be built around the existing needs of the “society” and the “citizens” should be encouraged, cajoled and supported in their adoption of the practices, as described in “Phase 3” above. But it will be over time, as new members are added to the society that the practices and tools will grow inextricably into the fabric of the organization. For anyone present when the new tools are introduced, they will always exist – no matter how good they are – in relation to what existed before. For anyone joining the organization after the launch of the new tools, there is no before. That generation will accept the new tools as simply “the way we do things” and as the numbers of newer members of the society grow, so too will the breadth and solidity of adoption. Training, executive mandates, community management and the other adoption techniques described in this paper will gain you the success you require to deliver positive ROI, but time will turn the “new” into the “norm” and so the amount of time, energy and resources you’ll need to dedicate to nurturing adoption will drop off dramatically as the adoption numbers rise.

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<sup>i</sup> Bowling Alone, Putnam, Robert D., Page 19

<sup>ii</sup> “14 Reasons Why Enterprise 2.0 Fails”, Hinchcliffe, Dion

<sup>iii</sup> Bowling Alone, Putnam, Robert D., Page 34