COLLABORATION AND SOCIAL COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY IN A DIGITAL FIRM

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ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes several factors and approaches in the implementation, acceptance, and use of collaboration and social communication technologies in digital firms. In comparing firms who have and have not adapted to using some form of collaboration technologies, this paper attempts to identify any value these technologies provide and also discusses the challenges of implementing, learning, and using collaboration technologies. The results indicate that organizations which effectively implement collaboration and communication technologies will produce happier employees, which in turn maximizes worker productivity perpetuating the success of the organization.

Collaboration in the workplace is when two (one-to-one) or more people (many-to-many) work together through idea sharing and thinking to accomplish a common goal. Collaboration can be short-lived, lasting just a few minutes or a long term, depending on the nature of the task at hand and/or relationship among the participants.

Business practices have changed throughout the century as management theory, resources, and technologies have evolved. The rate of change is still increasing rapidly in today's world. For an organization to become and remain successful, it is critical that it adapts to the ever-evolving needs of the environment. Advancements in technology and availability of social communications tools such as high speed Internet, web-based programs, file sharing, email and video-conferencing, collaboration has become a more productive way of doing things.

One significant change to business practices that has evolved is how people view collaboration and how collaboration is accomplished. In the past, employees may have considered collaboration as extra work and unnecessary. Not only was it viewed as an unnecessary waste of time, it was also viewed as a possible threat to one's job security. Individuals could leverage value and a competitive advantage by keeping their ideas and knowledge to themselves. Today, innovative workers focus on the beneficial aspect of collaboration in order to provide a better outcome for the company and all involved. People make themselves valuable by seeking ideas and solutions from outside of the organization, working collectively with others and utilizing the expertise that others possess.

There has been a tremendous growth in expenditure of information technology over the past two decades. Companies have invested in information systems and have come to rely on functionality, reliability and availability of these systems to fulfil business processes effectively. Within the same period of time there has also been a tendency to increase connectivity within the organization through the use of local and wide area networks. Use of these technologies to increase communication and collaboration amongst employees, customers and suppliers has improved organization's ability to survive and succeed by increasing efficiency and productivity. Therefore, organizations that are using these systems and technologies may have advantages, are more likely to survive and become successful in today's digital world.

The information age has seen an influx of social networking and communication technology. Endless options of networks and applications have revolutionized the way people communicate. A business meeting, with managers on two different continents, can occur through video conferencing. While in that meeting the teams can share documents from the company's cloud collaboration storage. Management's agenda can consist of reviewing consumer comments and feedback made on the company's various social network platforms. In an attempt to sustain its customer base, management can decide to set up a branding campaign through their various content publishing platforms. This scenario is an example of a company fully engaging in digital communication and collaboration technology. Organizations who use these technologies can enhance their business performance.

Today's businesses are relying more and more on technology for communication and collaboration with employees, customers and suppliers. Many different tools are available and companies implementing these tools have happier employees who work more effectively and efficiently which leads to company being more successful and having higher profits. Businesses who provide these technologies find their employees feel they support engagement, professional development, and feel valuable to the company. Companies that are currently not using these technologies should analyze their organization's strategy, culture, environment, etc. in order to determine what the best fit would be for them. Difficulties in implementing collaboration and communication technologies can be overcome by carefully planning all steps of implementation and including engagement of end users from the very beginning of the process.