

Filling the digital skills gap through cultural change

OR

How to make your whole workforce social media-savvy and inject digital into the DNA of your business

By Patty Keegan, Director, Digital Chameleon

Tame the social media beast ...

... or it could come back to bite your business on the bottomline

By the time you read the following statistics, they will have changed. In fact, they were out of date by the time pen reached paper. Still, they're worth repeating if only to remind ourselves of the enormity of the digital era's most aggressively growing beast – social media – and why feeding it must become part of your company's culture or you risk being left behind.

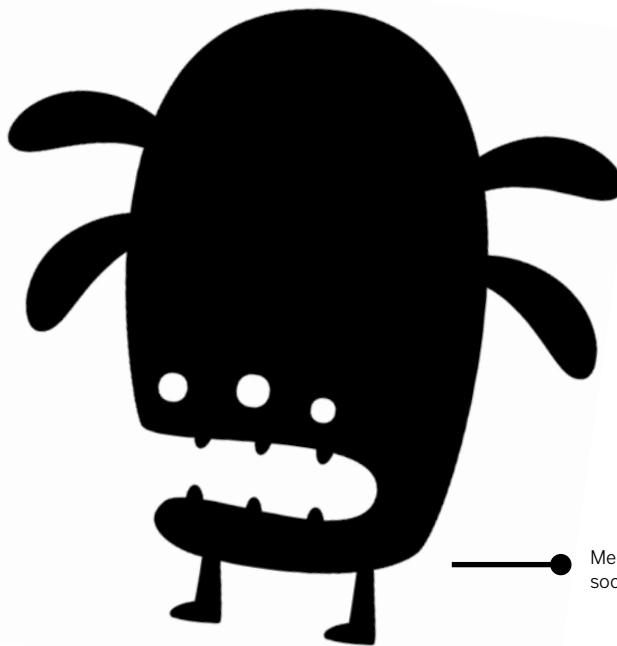
So here's food for thought; Facebook has 800 million users worldwide. That isn't just people who have registered we're talking active users. And those active users are behind two billion posts per day and 250 million uploaded photos. That's pretty 'active'.

Let's talk about the little program that could; Twitter. The first tweet was on 21 March 2006 and came from co-founder Jack Dorsey. On 11 March 2011 a staggering 177 million tweets were tweeted across the world.

In all, it took just three years, two months and one day for Twitter to hit the one billion tweets a week mark.

We won't even mention LinkedIn, YouTube (now the second largest search engine on the web), Google +, Flickr and so on. Each have added their own million and billion figure statistics to help form a critical mass of social networking that has become embedded in our cultural fabric and is, along with mobile technology, creating a generation of digital natives.

And yet, as social media users have grown, and more and more people have become digitally connected, they have splintered off into micro-communities, driven by individuals (did we mention there are nine million bloggers – a number which also grows daily) engaged around social groups, friends, subjects, topics,



Meet the monster: social media

interests, issues and, of course, brands and products.

This deep engagement with social media, and the digital platforms and devices that deliver it, has helped to spark riots, revolutions and flash-mobs, and given us all a little too much insight into Demi and Ashton's marital woes.

But it has also drastically shifted the once paternal nature of brand-consumer relationships ('brand talks, consumer listens') and re-configured the conversation (beyond 'brand acts, consumers talk, brand listens' to 'communities talk, brand engages, individuals decide, brands listens and responds').

These shifts have created a series of gaps for businesses struggling to keep up, let alone harness the horsepower of social media's growth spurts. They are holes that can be filled with short-term solutions, but which can't be completely closed without companies going through a cultural shift that embraces social media as part of their DNA.

THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST: FACTS ABOUT SOCIAL MEDIA

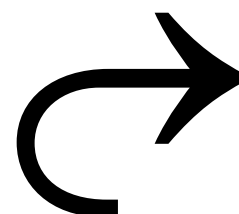
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800 MILLION
active users world wide

» TWITTER:

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tweets tweeted across the world on 11 March 2011



Why you can't hire your way out of the problem

Who's minding the digital skills gap?

Individuals can fill it, but only a deeper strategy can future-proof your business

Here are some other telling statistics; in a recent Digital Chameleon survey of on-the-ground media sales staff, zero per cent said they were 'very familiar' with social media marketing opportunities. Only 7.7 per cent felt 'very familiar' with providing multi-platform solutions to clients, and 64.5 per cent admitted they needed to know more about social media and digital skills.

Meanwhile, in a Mumbrella.com.au survey about which capabilities Australian and New Zealand CMOs believe they need to improve at over the next five years, social media rated a meagre 12 per cent.

The disconnect is indicative of the gap within organisations between managers that don't have the time, desire, resources or say so of their board to address social media, and younger staff who already live and breathe it.

It's a gap that businesses have tried to bridge with individuals, a quick fix solution of hiring single social media gurus and digital evangelists. But while individuals may have impact, it's rarely a sustainable, cross-departmental, long range impact – lone guns don't win the war, armies with good strategy and command do.

A strategic approach aimed at injecting social media into the corporate body's DNA via enterprise-wide training and incentivising exploits the potential ROI of social media and, just as importantly, future proofs businesses against the high expectations of the **millennial generation:**

AUSTRALIAN MEDIA SALES TEAM SURVEY

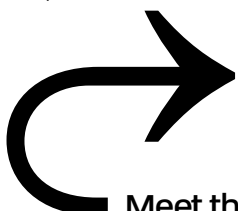
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Meet the millennials demanding digital natives and your clients-to-be...

5 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT

The millennial generation

1 They are the combined might of **Generation Y** (born between 1981 -1991) and **Generation Z** (1991 -2001)

2 They believe **technology** is what defines them as a generation

3 They are '**digital natives**' who inhabit a world where smart phones, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube are just part of everyday life

4 They are **advertising, marketing and media savvy** and are exposed to more of all three on a daily basis than any other generation – they expect brands to be transparent, honest and responsive

5 According to a survey by warc.com 80% of them **talk about brands** online regularly

The evolution of social media skills

From individual experts to enterprise-wide engagement

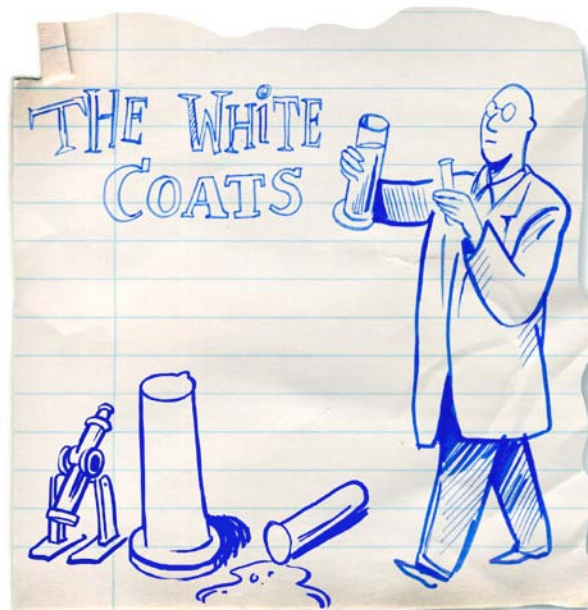
Not every company can be as agile as it might like, leaving the response to the social media revolution an evolutionary one for most businesses. CEOs, marketing departments and HR directors have largely felt their way towards short-term solutions in a digital landscape moving so quickly that long-term strategising feels like a luxury.

Along that evolutionary ladder, four transitional 'ages' have emerged which most companies are still working their way through:

1

WALKING WITH THE WHITE COATS

In the early days of search marketing and newly emerging digital channels, the White Coats often elected themselves as gatekeepers of the new technology. Their knowledge seems almost mystical and they aren't keen on sharing it. While they champion going online, they firmly close the gate on sharing their understanding of SEO and SEM, preferring instead to maintain a monopoly on digital skills and know-how. →



2

THE COOL KIDS ERA

As digital and social media grew and became too valuable to keep in the White Coats laboratory, companies could see the need for a different approach. The call for gurus and evangelists who would be publically anointed and expected to preach to the unconverted within the business grew. Relying on individuals brought in specifically to try and change wider company practices works to a limited degree, but spreads resentment and often means that the true keepers of the company's IP – the rank and file – are overlooked. And no matter how gifted and enthusiastic your guru is, there is only one of him.



3

SURVIVALISTS ARE DOING IT FOR THEMSELVES

The fact is, if a salesman sees that social media can help generate leads and that his competitors are doing just that, he is likely to take matters into his own hands. Enter the Survivalists, people who understand that the dividends of using social media can potentially pay, but are frustrated by the lack of management support or the chance of getting any air time with the company gurus. Why not just start talking to customers themselves via whatever channels customers are using? The result is everyone doing their own thing because there is no clear, company-wide strategy and that means the danger of rogue activity that triggers bad publicity. →



4

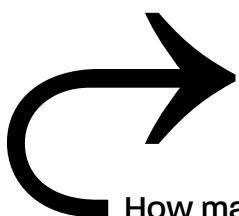
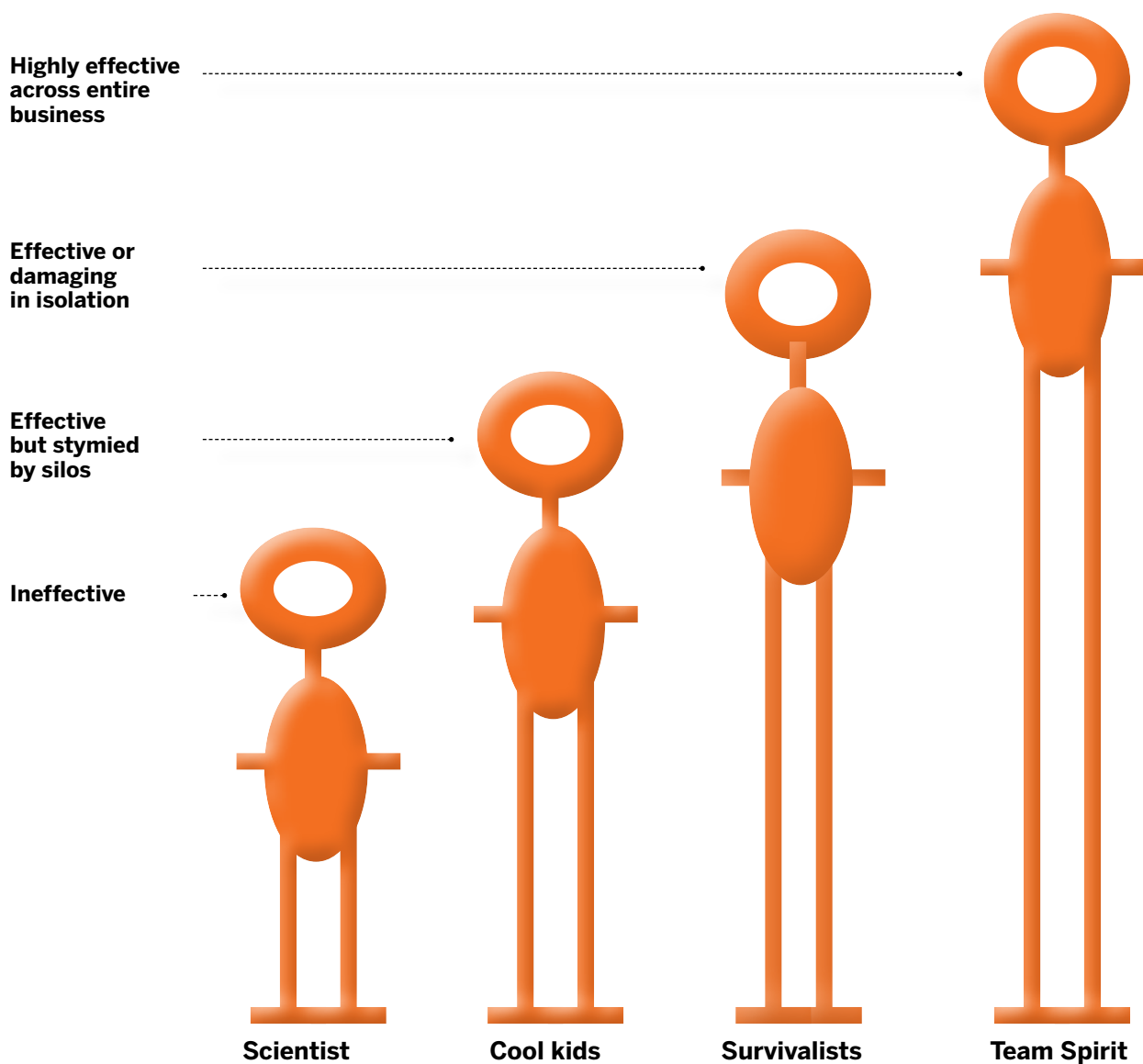
SMELLS LIKE TEAM PLAYER SPIRIT

A team player can only really come into their own when there is a team to play for. This final evolutionary stage means that harnessing social media must become part of a company's daily habits, across all departments and functions, to create a community spirit within an organisation, which in turn creates a single brand image being projected externally via social media channels. Not surprisingly, it's the hardest stage to get to, and the most difficult to implement as it means closing the digital skills gap so tightly through training that social media is no longer a risky or scary proposition.



Where is your business in the social media skills scale?

Where is your business in the social media evolutionary scale?



How making social media part of your business can deliver real returns

Strategy + training = sales

How social media can work
across your business

Inevitably, the profession that has felt the greatest impact from the growth of social media has been marketing (including PR and communications), which is why the marketing department has an evangelistic part to play in the roll out of social media skills across the business.

But it is the HR department that has the greatest role in creating true cultural change rather than a piecemeal approach of giving a handful of chosen individuals access to training and hoping they share.

A forward thinking HR department can change the game by providing enterprise-wide training that is ongoing, relevant and based in practice not theory.

More than any other digital tool, social media requires training not just to mitigate against the risks of getting it wrong but to transform employees from individuals who know their way around platforms like Twitter, to employees who use it as an effective tool relevant to their daily tasks and overall business objectives.

And if marketing and comms aren't the only players in the social media team, other departments can suddenly add their weight to the social media push and achieve much greater ROI.



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Australian media sales director



Learn how social media can work in key departments

Customer Service

Sitting on the front line between the company and the customer, the customer service department has the chance to share insights from customer conversations throughout any organisation. The immediate nature of Twitter makes it an ideal platform for customer service to engage with the happy and the unhappy. The result:

- Productivity goes up because your team are able to field more questions and react to more issues than if they were using the phone or email
- Staff can see the immediate impact of how they deal with a customer if that customer can react instantly, it makes staff more accountable, more engaged and forces your brand to be more transparent
- They can react in real time to avert any bad customer experience and avert potential PR nightmares so the PR department doesn't have to
- Your customer service representatives suddenly have a name and a face, or at least a thumbnail. They are human, making customers more likely to respond well
- Conversations can easily be tracked and provide useful insights into how the brand and products are viewed. Social media, e.g. a locked Facebook page, can be used for customer service to quickly share information with other departments
- Happy customers share their good experience via social media building positive brand awareness



AT DELL, WE HAVE COMPLETELY EMBRACED SOCIAL MEDIA AND CHANGED OUR ENTIRE CORPORATE CULTURE TO SUCCEED. TO BECOME A TRULY SOCIAL BUSINESS, YOU HAVE TO MAKE A COMPLETE CULTURAL CHANGE ... IT IS THE FUTURE OF DOING BUSINESS."

Damien Cummings is the Online & Social Media Director for the Consumer and SMB Division at Dell, based in Singapore in an interview with SAJE Communication

Who is doing it smarter?

Dell created various Twitter profiles, one of which is their customer service and support profile, DellCares. Its purpose is to help customers with issues in real time with personal responses. It's part of a company-wide Dell social media strategy which includes a Listening Command Centre that monitors thousands of Dell-related posts each day.

Product development

Producing new products and improving old ones is the lifeblood of any brand. But it is an expensive process in which the focus group has been the main method of gathering insights and information. Not only are focus groups costly to run, but they are a small window into the customer that could easily provide a wrong turn or conflicting conclusion. But social media can open the door to honest customer feedback that does not take months to gather. The results:

- Less focus groups and market research are needed, leading to budget savings
- Customers can be invited to provide reviews, ratings and feedback on existing products 24/7 i.e. your fans and followers are an extension of your R&D department
- The budget roadblocks to developing multiple projects is removed – you can do more research with less money
- You can choose specific users to actually test new products and provide feedback
- Social 'listening' around keywords gives an idea of the sentiment around a topic, brand or product
- Competitions can be run to encourage customers to get involved and actually come up with new product ideas and innovations for you



IT'S LIKE A LIVE FOCUS GROUP THAT NEVER CLOSES...IF YOU HARNESS THE POWER OF THIS COMMUNITY, YOU WILL BENEFIT. IF YOU TURN YOUR BACK ON IT, YOU GET FURTHER AND FURTHER OUT OF TOUCH"

Marc Benioff, CEO of Salesforce.com, which provided the platform for mystarbucksidea, talking to buzzmachine.com

Who is doing it smarter?

In 2008 Starbucks created a site, mystarbucksidea, which is a call to action to customers to help shape the future of the company and its offering. In the first year it generated 70,000 suggestions, including free coffee for Gold Card members on their birthday, a VIP card and splash sticks. Not only has it created a community, it's tapped into an endless source of development ideas.

Sales

Social media tools may not bring the target-hitting quick wins that drive many sales teams, so they have to be implemented by companies that understand their application in the sales cycle and have clear deliverables and ways to measure success from the outset. It's no good teaching your sales team to use Twitter, then getting on their backs because they didn't convert sales on day one. But if you train and incentivise sales staff to use social media, results may be long range, but they are more than worthwhile:

- The number of potential customers your sales team can reach is suddenly huge
- Say goodbye to cold calling for lead generation, social media produces active engagement by people interested in your brand and products i.e. it's like the telephone directory calling them
- Social media heightens awareness of a brand and product
- People constantly offer up information about themselves online, information which can readily tell you whether they are a prospect for your product or not
- Social media facilitates conversations, and conversations facilitate relationships that, if handled well, can last
- A good experience with a product or sales process means referrals, and lots of them
- If sales people are listening to customer conversations, they have an opportunity to join in, provide a solution and close a sale

The barrier to the kind of cultural change that would see all departments silo-free and working in concert using social media is, as ever, the existing culture. Many CEOs still consider Twitter and Facebook time wasting games their kids use.

It means that selling a social media training solution to them has to be scalable, measurable, cost-effective and, most of all, proven to work. If you can't measure success, you probably aren't succeeding.

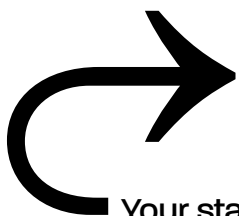


I SEE MY ROLE AS CHANGE MANAGEMENT. A DIGITAL DEPARTMENT IS SOMEWHAT PREPOSTEROUS, IT'S KIND OF LIKE AIR AND WATER, ITS EVERYWHERE."

Ben Edwards, VP of digital strategy and development at IBM, talking to streetmedia's Arun Sudhaman.

Who is doing it smarter?

IBM has developed a strategy to transform its US sales team into what it calls 'digital sellers' who are empowered to use Twitter and LinkedIn as part of their every day jobs. Some sales reps even have their own Facebook pages and blogs.



Your staff are social media friendly. Why aren't you?

'Like' or 'unlike' it, social media is here ...

... and your employees are
already using it

Here are some final, startling statistics; 31 per cent of companies ban employees from using social media sites such as Facebook at work. Meanwhile, a survey by IT services firm Telindus found that 39 per cent of 18 to 24 year-olds would leave a job if access was denied.

Switching the connection off is the type of knee-jerk, head-in-the-sand approach that ignores the fact that 1.6 billion people worldwide are online, and a major reason for them being there is to stay connected via social media.

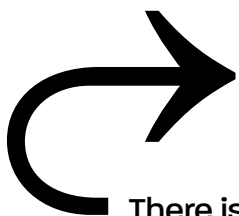
Outlawing it at work is pretty much like disconnecting the phone lines, shutting off email and barring the door to the post room. Or saying that only a few, trusted employees can have access to these 'modern mediums' at all.

The reality is, enterprise-wide engagement isn't a nice to have, it is a must have – and it is happening whether companies like it or not.



1.6

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There is an effective and fast way to fill your digital skills gap

Struggling with a digital skills gap? Digital Chameleon has the solution

Digital Chameleon is the only digital media and marketing learning company to combine modular self-paced e-learning with customised face-to-face workshops and training sessions for media and marketing professionals.

We help you stay ahead of the competition by enabling your organisation to adapt to the ever-changing digital, social and mobile landscape rapidly and within budget.

Whether you are working to integrate digital into your business or have staff that need more advanced social media marketing and online sale skills, we have a course that will deliver results.

Our modular approach is:

- » **Scalable** – you can roll bring whole departments or your entire workforce up to date with their digital skills quickly
- » **Cost effective** – access to our online modules won't blow your budget but will get your teams using digital channels to drive revenue and engagement
- » **Measurable** – you'll know our approach is working because we will back it up with metrics that show how much your teams have learned and how well they've learned it
- » **Up-to-date** – the digital world changes rapidly, and we are constantly responding to those changes with new courses and materials

To speak with us about how to fill your digital skills gap call us on +61 2 9997 4417. Or for a free trial go to www.digitalchameleon.com.au

