

# Top Objections to Social Networking

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Kevin Jones 11 posts since

Jul 30, 2008

In November I will be giving a presentation at a [Learning industry conference](#) about the top objections to social networking. This topic was taken from [a series of posts](#) I did.

I would love anyone's feedback on how to overcome / answer these objections. How have you answered some of these? What has worked for you? Feel free to pick one (or more if you would like) and focus your response - don't feel you need to give an answer to every one before you reply.

Thanks!

## Top Objections to Social Networking

But all they will do is socialize! This is disruptive! Our culture will never support it. This doesn't have anything to do with training. Who will control this free flowing information? We can't let them post anything and everything! How will we know it is accurate? What will we do if the information is wrong? What will we do if the information is out of date? Our people are not technical. They won't know how to use this. We don't want them wasting time. There will be too much info that they will be drowning in it and not be able to find what they need. It is that way already with our public drives and with everyone creating information it will be even more the case. How will you measure that it is working? How do you determine ROI? (a different discussion than #12) Prove that it works - are there other case studies?

Tags: answers, objections



Howard Greenstein 3 posts since

Aug 2, 2008 1. **Re: Top Objections to Social Networking** Oct 16, 2008 8:27 AM

Kevin, Great list and great questions.

Some thoughts:

> 2. This is disruptive! Our culture will never support it.

If you don't set it up so that there are incentives for the employees to support it, they won't. Remember when Lotus notes boards was going to 'replace email?' When video conferencing was going to 'replace travel'? That only happens when people see the clear value and are given incentives to support the disruptive technology.

Is there a group that is especially collaborative in the organization? Maybe they're an early adopter group.

>9.our people are not technical. They won't know how to use this.Well, are they already using Facebook, LinkedIn external to the company? They figured those out without training. You're obviously going to have to do some training, and some goal setting on what the use of a specific social effort is, and again find supporters or adopters who will go first to show the way.



[bobjewell](#) 152 posts since

Jan 14, 2008 2. **Re: Top Objections to Social Networking** Oct 16, 2008 8:52 AM

In deploying a solution like Clearspace, we've stumbled into many of the same questions.

My general response to questions regarding productivity:

These social platforms tend to self-control this according to the culture. If you're posting jokes on a webpage that everyone else can see, then you're publicly doing something that is not work, as opposed to leaning over the cube wall or talking at the water cooler. People don't want to have a formal record of their non-business socializing, unless it's already part of the company culture. If it is part of the culture, then that is what needs to be addressed (if you desire to prevent that from happening in an online tool.)

to questions regarding oversight, organization/accuracy of content, control of content:

There is definitely a generation gap that I see. A large portion of users like to think in terms of deep hierarchies of information and control. Users need to learn a new way to think about data. We no longer depend on a Table of Contents for finding our information, because we can let the users make smart content, and let the content be searchable in an effective way. Good content floats to the top in any good social collaboration environment.

This lets people call out bad content and commend good content. Fraud is generally only as much a concern as it would be if people were talking to each other in hallway about something. I like to make the analogy to selling elevator passes to the new guy:

Yes, that's possible. Just like it is possible to do in person, or via email or phone. A social environment can police to some extent because we call out bad content, but it is not designed to prevent it - just like email is not designed to prevent someone from convincing you that they are legit in their attempt to sell you an elevator pass for a free public elevator.

The social environment does not replace your HR department. It does not replace your formal, published company handbook. It doesn't even replace what the helpdesk tells a user to do about a problem. There are always greater authorities and experts on subjects, but the point is that in the vast number of situations where the collaboration tools are useful, the official policy of an organization is not disputed - people are just disseminating information. (What I've found is that it, in fact, helps us bring problems with the policies into light.)



[Rick Palmer](#) 227 posts since

Nov 14, 2007 3. Re: **Top Objections to Social Networking** Oct 16, 2008 1:32 PM

Great questions Kevin. Mind if I borrow them when I speak to admins taking Clearspace training? 😊

Here are a few answers, some taken from internal discussions we've had at Jive about these same issues:

1. But all they will do is socialize!2. This is disruptive! Our culture will never support it. Lead by example, and make sure your managers and execs are using the tools and showing how they can be leveraged to actually get more work done. Force people to use the tool to access resources they need, such as a document listing team member milestones (or better yet a project module that lists tasks on a calendar), or put important forms/documents in the tool so they have to use it to get at those resources. In larger companies I've worked at, the concern is more that we'd be perceived as not working, or might get frowned on by using online tools. Seriously, I've been at companies where personal email and IM weren't

allowed at all (yawn... yeah, boring, but you gotta pay the bills sometimes, and I'm in a much better place now).

4. Who will control this free flowing information?5. We can't let them post anything and everything! I think a quick discussion about using common sense, showing professionalism and restraint, and avoiding the same topics that should be avoided around the break room/ water cooler (religion, politics, etc) - all are applicable to social networking at the workplace.

Sure, you could post a code of conduct, but I don't know how many people actually read those, and it's probably better stated in a quick discussion posted on the HR space.7. What will we do if the information is wrong?8. What will we do if the information is out of date? Correct it... together That's the beauty of letting multiple people edit the same document... and as long as you have some good tools for identifying who changed what, you can actually get the correct information out there faster, because people can come right behind you and correct your typos or point out mistake. Much more effective than sending out Word docs for review before sending out that group spam.. erm, mailing.9. Our people are not technical. They won't know how to use this.

How about providing some quick videos they can watch, or making some elearning materials available for quick reference?

Also, if the tool you're using is intuitive and consistent, that helps a lot along the way (ie. learn how to blog and you'll automatically know 95% of how to author a document or start a discussion)

Also, have some of the younger/more technically savvy employees reach out to the tech-fearful employees who know the business and ask them to be mentors. The mentors have the industry expertise and the mentees can use the tool to document their learning, which will eventually drive the less-tech-savy folks back to the tool (and as a mentor, it's a lot easier to ask for help when you've had the chance to help someone out in another area in which you're a pro!)



[Kevin Jones](#) 11 posts since

Jul 30, 2008 4. **Re: Top Objections to Social Networking** Oct 16, 2008 2:27 PM

Great replies, guys! Thank you. For everyone else, keep'm coming!

A couple thoughts on what has been said already...

Rick, you mentioned two things that I think really fit together.

1) You have to force them to use it. I have talked before about the need to substitute current tools and processes using this technology. If you don't replace it, the task of using it becomes 'extra' and they will say things like, "I don't have time to..." because they see it as more work. The best successes I have had is in the replacing (lovingly forcing).

2) Age. Even though many younger people are more conversant in this technology, it doesn't mean that they will use it. "Pit technology against culture and culture will win every time." If those who understand this get into a situation where the culture won't or doesn't sustain or encourage or even allow experimentation with the technology, they will fall into the old ways of doing things to fit in. It is a natural place to be. Just because they may be younger doesn't mean they will automatically use what they use in their real life. They will more likely fall into the old, traditional paths. But if they are given the flexibility and can start to substitute/force, then there's some change!

So, Bob, what if it isn't part of the culture? What ways have you found to make it more acceptable and, thus, usable?

I know it is a little off topic and doesn't answer one of the questions, but it popped into my wee little mind and I wanted to share.



[Rick Palmer](#) 227 posts since

Nov 14, 2007 5. **Re: Top Objections to Social Networking** Oct 16, 2008 2:35 PM

Good points, and I know I was generalizing a bit there on my last post.

That being said, age differences aside, the more process-oriented a job may be, or that an employee's personality may be, the harder it will be to get them to use a different tool. It doesn't work to just hold up a shiny new toy. You have to define and train on how the new tools will allow them to perform specific job functions.

And when rules are broken or privileges taken advantage of, then the specific offenders need to be dealt with individually, instead of putting the brakes on the entire program.

I had that happen a while back at a large company here in Portland, where they caught a few contractors surfing the web one weekend when they were supposed to be working overtime (not me of course 😊). Instead of dealing with just those contractors, they made a company-wide, yes company-wide, decision to not allow web surfing at all, any longer.



[Kevin Jones](#) 11 posts since

Jul 30, 2008 6. **Re: Top Objections to Social Networking** Oct 16, 2008 4:33 PM

Wow! That is extreme! Unbelievable. (Not that I don't believe you, but ... 😊)

BTW - Yes, feel free to use any all questions/answers any way that would benefit you. We are all in this together!



[Mike Oswalt](#) 8 posts since

Jul 31, 2008 7. **Re: Top Objections to Social Networking** Dec 5, 2008 5:36 AM

This reminded me of a list I have used in the past to try to overcome non-specific objections to initiatives \ change.

## 120 Ways to Deter Innovation

*Which ones do you use?*

1. The savings are only peanuts.
2. That's beyond our responsibilities.
3. That's Joe's job, not mine!
4. Not enough help.
5. It's against company policy.

6. We don't have the authority.
7. Have you gone through proper channels ?
8. Lets get back to reality.
9. Can't teach an old dog new tricks.
10. Good thought, but impractical.
11. Let's think about it some more.
12. Management would never go for that.
13. The client won't like it.
14. They won't hold still for that.
15. Let's put it in writing.
16. We'll be the laughing stock.
17. Not that again!
18. Weld lose money in the long run.
19. We did all right without it.
20. Where' d you dig that one up.
21. It's never been tried.
22. Let someone else try it first.
23. That's been tried before.
24. What's the use?
25. Not enough time.
26. Too hard to sell.
27. I don't see the connection.
28. It's not practical.
29. What you are really saying is . .
30. It leaves me cold.
31. It won't stand up.
32. Let's all sleep on it.
33. You're right, but . . .
34. I'm not convinced.
35. We've tried that before.
36. We've always done it this way.
37. It won't work.

38. We can't pay for the tools.
39. It costs too much.
40. If I thought it'd work, I'd have used it.
41. It's not in the budget.
42. Where will the money come from?
43. You can't do that!
44. You should know better.
45. We're not ready for that.
46. This isn't the right time for it.
47. We're not considering hardware yet.
48. Everybody does it this way.
49. Too academic.
50. Not timely.
51. It's a gimmick.
52. It isn't progressive.
53. Not for us.
54. Too hard to administer.
55. No good!
56. Plain stupid.
57. Screwy.
58. Too radical.
59. Too complicated.
60. The idea is unsound.
61. It isn't feasible.
62. Too difficult.
63. Impossible!
64. Production won't accept it.
65. We can't hold up production for that
66. Engineering won't approve it.
67. My Boss won't like it.
68. I can't see it.
69. Too much trouble to get started.

70. So what? We're making a profit!
71. We don't have the manpower.
72. We haven't time for detail.
73. The design is frozen.
74. Schedule won't allow any plans.
75. Who is going to do it?
76. Takes too much time.
77. We don't do it that way here.
78. Our product is different.
79. Too much work.
80. It won't apply to our problem.
81. Don't move too fast.
82. It will set a precedent.
83. Not enough background.
84. Why can't we do it another way ?
85. We've got something just as good now.
86. Don't be ridiculous.
87. We know all this . . .
88. I'm too busy to decide now.
89. We haven't enough facts.
90. What about the directive?
91. That will take two years to test.
92. It will make present equipment obsolete.
93. It's not permitted by specifications.
94. It's not according to standard changes.
95. We'll come back to it later.
96. Let's form a committee.
97. Cost doesn't matter.
98. Why change it - it works.
99. We can't help it - it's policy.
100. Forget cost - just get it out.
101. The way we're doing it is best.

## Top Objections to Social Networking

102. Why?
103. Runs up our overhead.
104. That's too "ivory tower."
105. What do our competitors do?
106. What can we expect from the staff?
107. Has anyone else ever tried it ?
108. It won't work in our industry.
109. It won't work in my department.
110. No, no, no.
111. Too theoretical.
112. Personnel aren't ready for this.
113. The users won't go for it.
114. Its new.
115. We have too many projects now.
116. We don't want to do this now.
117. It's not standard stock.
118. We don't have enough volume.
119. Let's shelve it for the time being.
120. Could a vendor supply this for less ?



[DWSNJ](#) 2 posts since

*Dec 4, 2008* **8. Re: Top Objections to Social Networking** Dec 5, 2008 6:01 AM

My favorite is: I agree with everything that's been said, HOWEVER....



[Kevin Jones](#) 11 posts since

*Jul 30, 2008* **9. Re: Top Objections to Social Networking** Dec 5, 2008 8:06 AM

What a fabulous list! Thanks for sharing these gems.



[Mike Oswald](#) 8 posts since

*Jul 31, 2008* **10. Re: Top Objections to Social Networking** Dec 5, 2008 8:21 AM

By the way...

## Top Objections to Social Networking

I'm not sure when that list was originally used but, I got it from my Dad who received it as part of a course titled "Response to Resistance Can be Deadly" conducted by the "Value Engineering and Cost Reduction Division" of a US Atomic Energy Commission contractor in December of 1965.

Clearly, there are some things that never change.