

### 3.4.11: Why It Matters- Social Media

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#### Why use social media to present business messages?

While the *content* of business communications should be the central item of concern, there is no question that the type of media used to express the message is important. Social media, which has its origins all the way back to the 1970s ARPANET, or the original web, presents society with many conflicting and competing concepts. Some consider social media one of the greatest developments of the modern age, and people can be seen every day using their phones to connect with people across the world. However, others consider social media to be something sinister that saps real social connections and harms our ability to communicate more meaningfully.

Taking stock of where you personally stand on these issues can be an interesting exercise, and will most certainly affect your perspective on social media use in business. Most social media in business is used around two or three main functions, which are largely oriented around business marketing:

1. To bring services or products to market; that is, to increase awareness.
2. To engage customers, often with respect to service issues or problems.
3. To encourage a “buzz” or interest around a company, its product(s) or its service(s).

Do these seem useful, correct, interesting and helpful? Most certainly, bringing new products or services to market requires a well developed marketing plan. While marketing is outside the scope of this course, it’s easy to see the importance of and relationship between business communication and marketing. The relationship is around increasing awareness: have you helped your customers—external or internal<sup>[1]</sup>—to make meaningful decisions?

The following video explores the importance of social media in business communications.

A link to an interactive elements can be found at the bottom of this page.

Note the emphasis on awareness, especially awareness gained via relatively inexpensive and commonly found means. We might position *inexpensive awareness* as our core concept for social media and business communication.

In this module, we will address which platforms are the most popular. We will also look at why they are popular for a given type of message or communication. Lastly, you will gain insight on which type of social media might be best for your organization.

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1. **internal customer:** another member of your own organization, especially a non-executive or non-manager

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