Manufacturers and Social Collaboration Tools – A Mechanism for Innovation

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If you've been in the manufacturing industry for any length of time, you may have experienced challenges that come along with siloed operating functions. Hopefully, you've also seen the value that can be found when we break down the barriers between silos. For example, imagine that someone in customer service had an idea for a new product. Now imagine that the silos between sales, marketing, customer service, supply chain, product development, and manufacturing were removed, thereby streamlining collaboration among all roles throughout the product development and production cycles. How much more quickly and efficiently could this idea be incorporated into the product and brought to market?

Enterprise social tools can play a significant role in accelerating the time to market. I'm sure that when some people hear the phrase "enterprise social" they think, "This is something my kids do. It has no relevance in my workplace." Or maybe they think social networking is more appropriate for the marketing team. But a worldwide survey [1] recently conducted by Ipsos found that using social tools has increased productivity for nearly half of those surveyed; while less than one in ten say these tools have been detrimental.

In fact, 79 percent of respondents from the manufacturing industry would like to use new technologies that make them more productive at work. Manufacturing respondents, more than any other industry segment, were more likely to download

restricted social applications on their work computers or phones. And overall, a third of all respondents would actually spend their own money on a social tool if it made them more productive at work.

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