
Benefits of Using Social Media in Your Project Management Practices

By Jerry Ihejirika

Now, what if there was a way to communicate, collaborate and engage with your project team and stakeholders from anywhere in the world and share your ideas and plans faster and more efficiently than having to physically talk with them every time you wanted to get your message across? What if your message could get spread globally on a passive basis with or without your presence? Well, there is a way and Social Media is the solution.

Being someone who is passionate about project management, I am excited to see the social media evolve into a power tool that is creating a new and vibrant paradigm which is shaping the way we practice project management – creating real opportunities for communication, collaboration, engagement and improving productivity.

In no specific order, here are some of the huge benefits of using the social media in your project management practices:

1. **Global Communication:** The social media is having a global impact on communication. It is changing the way we communicate, thus affecting the processes involved with information services supporting project management. Communication is the necessary process by which the four most important management functions are accomplished. PMI's Pulse communications research finds that effective communications leads to more successful projects, allowing organizations to become high performers. Everyone on the team needs to be clear on their assignments and understand the goals of the project which can only be achieved through proper communication. So by creating, managing and maintaining formal accounts on relevant social networks, organizations can enhance communications between their project team members and stakeholders.

2. **Collaboration:** Collaboration is working with each other to do a task. It is a recursive process where two or more people or organizations work together to realize shared goals. According to Bryan et al. (2007), "Social networks, both within and outside of companies, increase the value of collaboration by reducing the search and coordination costs of connecting parties who have related knowledge and interests." To effectively collaborate with your project team and stakeholders, you will need to map out a social networking plan you will use, the approach that will benefit all parties and generate better outcome. With the social media, you can create an early, personal and collaborative engagement with your stakeholders, irrespective of their location or country, build their confidence, and give them an emotional stake in the project. Without

this early engagement, which can be difficult if the parties involved are at distant locations but possible with the help of the social media, it becomes much harder to manage expectations from the outset.

3. Networking: How many times do you say to yourself that you need to meet more Project Management Professionals (PMPs) from around the world? Building relationships is perhaps one of the biggest challenges facing most Project Managers. The social media can help you meet, network and maintain good relationship with other PMPs around the world. I have met a lot of project management practitioners on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn and have built good relationship with some of them. We share ideas and knowledge and update each other on the latest happenings in the profession.

4. Cost and Time Efficiency: How do you maintain your communication and engagement with your team members, stakeholders, or consultants who are in distant locations or in another country? The social media can help you manage your communication's cost and time efficiently and effectively. You do not need to travel long distances to get your messages across as it can help you deliver such messages very fast, either in written, audio, video or pictorial format. Successful project managers avoid wasting valuable time, minimize cost and are more productive.

5. Passive: One of the powerful tools the social media offers you is the ability to be involved in a live meeting without being physically present. With instant messaging platforms and video-sharing technology, you can join any live meeting from anywhere in the world.

6. Access to Information 24/7: Are you short of ideas? Do you need access to some of your company's information? Or, are you scared your hard disk might get affected with virus and crash thereby losing vital information? Most social media platforms created for project managers, do not only allow to save information on their database, but also offers you means to securely access such information online, anywhere, any time. Social media tools typically handle the capturing, storing and presentation of data, usually written but increasingly including audio, video and pictorial formats as well.

7. Personal Branding: A lot of PMPs now have accounts on various social networks and some are actively involved in blogging. Sharing relevant ideas and knowledge either on your blog or on any of the social networks can help you put yourself as an expert in the field. This in turn can lead you to more opportunities in the project management world.

8. Feedback: How often do you receive or give feedback? Do you wait till the next project meetings to receive or give feedback? What if some of your stakeholders or members are in distant locations? The social media provides an interactive platform where project team members and stakeholders and give or receive feedback and engage in other relevant data. Timely feedback can help reduce project risks, minimize cost and maximize time.

9. Virtual Team Building: Virtual teams are a fact of business life for most of us and running them effectively is fast becoming a major challenge. There is good news though as many project management organizations across the world are discovering how to build and make virtual teams work leveraging various social media platforms.

10. It is Mobile: As a Project Leader, how do you attend a very crucial meeting with your team members or stakeholders when at the same time you need to rush your wife to the hospital on an emergency situation? The social media provides a platform for “mobile” communication, that is, communication on the go, where ever and whenever. You can actively participate in, and even create meetings, from anywhere in the world. There are very good mobile applications for Project Managers and their teams who need constant access to status information and feedback. However, organizations and companies that use some of these social application software will have to plan on how to make those software available to their project teams and teach them how they can install and operate it effectively.

11. Promote Your Products and Services: Some project management professionals and institutes have well-written books and journals that offers ideas and insights into Project Management (PM) principles and practices. Some have also created social software applications can help project managers become more organized and productive. The social media offers you various platforms to promote your PM products and/or services. You can choose from an array of marketing strategies such as article marketing, press releases, posting classified advertisements, blogging, video marketing, forum postings, etc. These methods are popular as well as effective.

I have just shared with you some of the major benefits you can tap into and leverage on while connecting the social media with your project management practices.

However, social media does not replace the foundation practices in project management but instead, offer new and exciting ways of communicating and collaborating with people around those very same practices.

Are you using social media in your project management practices? What impact has it created on you, your team members, or your organization?

About the Author



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Jerry Ihejirika is a Project Management Blogger and Digital Marketing Specialist. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Project Management Technology from the Federal University of Technology Owerri (FUTO), Nigeria, and has gained experience promoting businesses on social media since 2008.

Jerry is passionate about promoting project management globally and as a recent graduate, he is also looking forward to obtaining some project management certifications.

Jerry has written several articles on project management and social media, and has also created project management groups across various social media networks where he shares news, ideas, knowledge, tips and opinions on project management.

You can connect with Jerry via his blog at <http://jerryihejirika.com> or send an email to info@jerryihejirika.com.