

Social Media

About Booz Allen

Booz Allen Hamilton has been at the forefront of strategy and technology consulting for 95 years. Providing a broad range of services in strategy, operations, organization and change, information technology, systems engineering, and program management, Booz Allen is committed to delivering results that endure.

For more information contact

Maria Darby

Officer
703/902-4670
darby_maria@bah.com

Grant McLaughlin

Principal
703/917-2055
mclaughlin_grant@bah.com

Forrest Stieg

Principal
703/902-4027
stieg_forrest@bah.com

www.boozallen.com

Social Media, Web 2.0, new media, emerging technologies—although these buzzwords may change, the open, transparent, and collaborative culture that tools such as blogs and wikis enable will not. Your stakeholders, both internal and external, are already using these tools to communicate, collaborate, and share information in ways traditional communications strategies do not allow. What are the benefits, risks, challenges, and best practices of integrating social media into your organizational strategies? Perhaps even more importantly, what are the risks to not using social media?

Social media is an umbrella term that describes the integration of technology, social interaction, and content development and management. Social media refers not just to applications like blogs and wikis but to what those applications enable—virtual, social interactions. Whereas traditional media enables “one-to-many” communications, social media enables “many-to-many” communications. Technology like e-mail, websites, and search engines connect people to information; social media uses technology to connect people to other people.

Social media is about creating and maintaining relationships across traditional physical, administrative, and cultural boundaries. Commercial organizations and governments are embracing these strategies as a way to become more efficient and collaborative. Social media helps organizations communicate quickly internally and externally, collect immediate feedback, capture explicit and tacit knowledge, and build and manage stakeholder relationships. The connections and relationships that people create are what make organizations run. Social media facilitates these relationships on a much larger scale, without regard for time and place.

Based on four principles (Exhibit 1), social media can improve communication, collaboration, and knowledge management practices. However, successful implementation of social media requires more than IT development; it requires understanding the environment in which the tools will be used and empowering users to understand and adopt the tools.

Booz Allen can help you be ready for what's next

At Booz Allen Hamilton, a leading strategy and technology consulting firm, our clients rely on our social media experience to increase collaboration, improve knowledge management, and foster virtual communities through a variety of social media strategies and tools (see Exhibit 2). Booz Allen brings firsthand experience in integrating social media into existing strategies—from creating social networking profiles to developing and implementing enterprise-wide social media platforms. We have also leveraged these concepts internally through our own suite of social media tools.

Exhibit 1

Principles of social media*

- **Peering:** Flattening the traditional organizational hierarchy
- **Sharing:** Eliminating walled gardens of information
- **Acting Globally:** Removing physical, cultural, and political barriers to collaboration
- **Openness:** Creating porous boundaries where ideas and content can flow freely

*Wikinomics, Tapscott and Williams, 2006

Ready for what's next. www.boozallen.com

Booz | Allen | Hamilton

delivering results that endure

Exhibit 2

Social media tools and methods

- **Blog:** A user-generated website where entries are made in journal style and displayed in reverse chronological order
- **Wiki:** A collaboration tool that allows anyone to edit content
- **RSS:** The latest method of delivering content from the Internet for personal viewing
- **Social Networking:** A method in which users share text, audio, and visual content through people-to-people connections via web-based tools
- **Widget:** A graphical user interface that allows the user to pull in information and display data from other sources
- **Virtual World:** A computer-based simulated environment created for users to inhabit and interact with each other via avatars
- **Podcast/Vodcast:** An audio/video file made available for use on computers or portable media devices
- **Social Bookmarking:** A method where users are able to store, classify, share, and search each other's bookmarks via user-generated content tags

Booz Allen's lifecycle approach to social media

Booz Allen understands that an effective social media strategy does not stand on its own—it is integrated into the organization's existing strategy and tailored to the organization's unique culture, environment, and purpose. Implementing social media can be as simple as placing Really Simple Syndication (RSS) feeds onto an agency's website or as complex as implementing an enterprise-wide social media platform. Regardless of the scale, Booz Allen has the expertise to guide organizations through the full lifecycle of social media, from strategy through implementation.

Whether you're managing today's issues or looking beyond the horizon, count on us to help you be ready for what's next.

