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INTELLIGENT NOTIFICATION

WEBINAR SERIES

Social Media and the BC/DR Professional

Part 3

Social Media as a Tool for Business Continuity

How to use social media to benefit your organization

In our first two webinars and briefs of the series, we discussed the risks to business continuity that social media presents and explored what sites to be aware of, all from the perspective of the business continuity professional. We also shared tips on how to monitor when your company is mentioned and discussed tools you can use to help do this. We'll wrap up in this third and final piece by expanding on those concepts, while digging a bit deeper into how social media can be used as an instrument for understanding and communication by organizations like yours.

It seems that everyone is agreement about social media and its impact, at a high-level, on business continuity programs. There is both risk and reward that professionals in business continuity must address.

Monitoring helps to manage risk

When it comes to monitoring social media, what are you actually looking for? The answer to that is, by its nature, broad. You want to track what people are saying *to* your company and *about* your company, as well as what people within your organization are communicating outwards. Monitor everything you can and sort it by relevance, watching for trends as the information rolls in.

Developing Threats/Risks

Social Media from the view of BC

Communications and Outreach

Gathering Situational Awareness

Regulations are quickly developing that will influence how we address social media. The research group, Forrester, published a report in July 2013 (*The Social Media Legal and Regulatory Landscape*) that identified five legal and regulatory issues around social media that should be addressed:

- Data protection and privacy
- Employee rights
- Disclosure and third-party endorsement
- Governance and oversight
- Information archiving and retention

How do you measure the risk?

Start with the basics: Does your company have an existing policy, and if so, do the employees know and understand it? Are there measures to take in case of violations, as well as a way to enforce those measures?

When it comes to the monitoring process, make sure you have one in place that alerts you

to developing chatter that concerns your business, including information about your company, your competition and even your geographic area.

Finally, your program should be integrated into your enterprise risk management plan, with a responsible person assigned for auditing it. That person should have a clear understanding of an escalation path to measure the criticality of captured data and should be able to articulate the impacts of misuse by employees. Also, be sure you have a formal risk profile and that you include any necessary regulatory components.

Monitoring is a MUST

This cannot be emphasized enough. You must monitor risks, people, locations, events, issues, key vendors and social media streams.

As part of your social media management plan, determine how often to monitor, what and whom to monitor, and where to monitor. Although many of these tasks are not the responsibility of the BC professional, it's wise to know who manages them, who gets monitoring reports and who is authorized to take action in the event there is an issue.

Who has the authority and responsibility?

Authority and responsibility for managing social media use can reside in one or more places within an organization.

- Board
- Business continuity
- C-level executives
- Compliance
- Corporate communications
- General counsel/legal
- Human resources
- Risk management

The most important thing to ascertain is that the responsible area is identified and communicated across the organization.

Recommendations

We recommend the following steps for managing social media risk in any business:

- Implement a program for social media risk management
- Establish ownership of the social media program
- Develop a policy
- Develop a monitoring approach
- Define oversight for monitoring
- Define an escalation process

Where can social media add value in BC/DR?

Social media can offer value in two primary ways as part of a BC/DR program:

1. Gathering information through monitoring and awareness of information being posted to social media sites

2. Outbound messaging for key communications to the community at large, your customers and your employees

Social media is a great tool for time-sensitive messaging and communication, and can help with gathering information and providing situational awareness. During a crisis, it offers a real-time information flow with an abundance of information, like damage assessments and other on-the-spot reports from multiple sources. The challenge in cases like this, however, is filtering the information and finding the reliable content. It's also great for dynamically sharing one-way or two-way information, and can be good for both targeted or broad communication outreach.

What can you learn from monitoring?

Monitoring can help in many ways:

- Identify emerging issues or threats
- Track brand and company trends
- Understand employee use and misuse
- View the main influencers of your brand
- Analize trends over days, weeks, months and years

How do you set triggers?

Start by establishing a baseline of activity and normal content and then set reasonable levels of activity. To guide you, set escalating tiers of activity and content as well as escalating tiers of relevancy and context to act as triggers.

How to communicate over social media

You may want to reach out to the community, your customers, staff and even vendors, but take care to always tailor your message to the audience. Remember, you have the ability to segregate content and access. Establish message maps before communication begins so that it remains consistent and so that you do more editing and less creating.

Consider your audience and the scenario that is unfolding, start with pre-built, pre-approved messages, and observe your organization's approval process for posting messages to social sites.

One key thing to always remember, anything you put on the Internet can (and will) be discovered and used by any one or every one.

Summary

By now you should have a clear understanding of the many risks and rewards of social media. This puts you in a position to evaluate it as a risk for your organization and put plans in place to mitigate that risk. It also shows you how you can use social media wisely to actually enhance your company's business continuity.

Learn more about social media and the business continuity professional by watching the full webinar series at at www.mir3.com/social-media-webinars.

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