The Social Organization: How to Use Social Media to Tap the Collective Genius of Your Customers and Employees
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SYNOPSIS
The Social Organization differs from many other books on leveraging social media in business. Instead of focusing on technology experimentation and implementation, the authors approach social media as a leadership challenge, describing it as an important tool for leaders to elicit energy, knowledge and innovation from employees and customers. According to the book, a social organization is one that addresses business challenges and opportunities through social media to create mass collaboration. The book identifies a set of core disciplines that leaders and managers need to master to make this possible:

- **Vision**: Defining a compelling vision of progress toward becoming a collaborative organization
- **Strategy**: Taking community collaboration from risky and random success to measureable business value
- **Purpose**: Rallying people around a clear purpose, not just providing them with social media technology
- **Launch**: Creating a collaborative environment and persuading customers and employees to embrace it
- **Guide**: Participating and in influencing communities as they pursue their purpose, without stifling collaboration
- **Adapt**: Responding creatively to change by modifying the organization to better support community collaboration

Using the above disciplines as a framework, The Social Organization mixes theory and practical steps to help the reader create a game plan for achieving mass collaboration that results in tangible value. The book includes a variety of case studies and is a valuable resource for leaders who have a basic understanding of social media and are now interested in strategically employing it to achieve business results.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
The authors conducted a two-year study of more than 400 social media initiatives, focusing on how organizations use social media to deliver business results and what common practices distinguish successes from failures. The study included organizations from around the world and across all major industries, with a focus on how “traditional” (non-Web-based) companies are using social media to foster collaboration. While the study was broad, it also looked deeply at select organizations that apply social media more strategically with greater impact on achieving goals. The authors worked directly with many organizations featured in the book to gather and analyze the data to determine best practices.

SAMPLE LEARNINGS
The book helps readers understand social technologies not as a vast array of options and products, but first as tools with common characteristics. This will help you choose the right tools and know what to look for when monitoring their success. For example, the book outlines the following four basic actions that must take place for any successful collaborative community:

- **Contributions**: These are the “raw material” for collaboration—the initial thoughts, ideas, opinions, suggestions, questions or problems.
- **Feedback**: Once there are contributions, others rate, comment on and otherwise express their take on the value of the contribution, thus enhancing it within the collective opinion of the community.
- **Judgment**: Feedback aggregates to form judgment and the most valuable contributions rise to the surface. Organizations often leave this piece out, but without a transparent mechanism for judgment, they often complain of having nothing more than a giant, unmanageable suggestion box.
- **Change**: Feedback and evaluation nudge participation in desirable directions as members see what contributions are considered valuable. The new behaviors influence contributions and the cycle repeats.