Bringing Social to the Enterprise
What is it?

You’re probably already familiar with the concept of applying social networking tools to the business environment. After all, the majority of employees are already proficient with platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and instant messaging, so it seems only logical to leverage these skills in the workplace. Why not encourage people to apply the same style of communication to their daily work?

Just like popular consumer social tools, Oracle Social Network enables people to have online conversations, share documents, start one-on-one chats for quick private exchanges, and build out rich user profiles to find the right people to connect with.

But what’s the use of introducing a new social tool if people are reluctant to use it? How do you get people to embrace a new way of working and move away from old ways of communicating—like email—to develop more efficient habits?

Here’s the simple truth: When the social network is tightly woven into the fabric of employees’ daily lives, people find it easier to understand and embrace its adoption.

Oracle Social Network isn’t a separate, standalone application that people have to learn in a vacuum. Rather, it’s integrated directly into the applications they use every day—such as Oracle Sales Cloud, Oracle Human Capital Management Cloud (Oracle HCM Cloud), Oracle Enterprise Resource Planning Cloud (Oracle ERP Cloud), and Oracle Service Cloud—and is perceived as a logical extension to those applications.

In other words, Oracle Social Network is easy for people to get used to, because it flows naturally from the business applications they’re already familiar with.

Let’s take a closer look.
Collaboration is fundamental to today’s corporate world, whether it’s preparing materials to present to a potential client or working to resolve a customer’s service incident. Today these collaborations often take place outside of where the work is actually happening—in email, chats, phone calls, or disconnected social networks—and typically aren’t recorded completely, let alone in a single location.

Perhaps most frustrating, there’s no association between these collaborative activities and the underlying business systems that track the work—the opportunities in the customer relationship management (CRM) application, the issues in the support system, or the quarterly results in the ERP application.

Why is this a problem? Consider this:

• New stakeholders joining an already existing work effort have to piece things together to come up to speed, reading lengthy email chains that someone else has to forward to them, talking to other team members to catch up on what’s already happened, and so on—a lengthy, error-prone process for all involved.

• Past experience is usually poorly documented and not centrally available, so decision makers have no record of how exceptions were resolved, potentially causing them to repeat past mistakes or to apply rules inconsistently across the organization.

Current collaboration solutions require users to choose the communication medium (and therefore its membership) in advance—picking up a phone, sending an email, micro-blogging—before determining if that’s the appropriate mechanism or set of participants. Often the same discussion is scheduled again and again until the right combination of context, history, tools, and people is found.
Oracle Social Network addresses the collaboration gap by providing tools for people to collaborate, network, drive decisions, and update data—all woven directly into the systems they use every day: Oracle Applications Cloud.

All communication, collaboration, documents, project status—everything related to the opportunity—is created in context, so nothing gets lost and no one is left out of the loop.

The collaboration gap is closed!

Within those services, users can take business objects—like sales opportunities, talent profiles, and incident reports—and transform them into Social Objects in Oracle Social Network. Then they can discuss and collaborate on those objects with everyone who needs to be involved.

When a new opportunity comes along for a Sales group, for example, the salesperson simply clicks a button in the Oracle Sales Cloud application to share the opportunity’s name, location, and other particulars with people who can help close the deal. Conversations are easily started in the opportunity itself, not in a separate social networking application.
Why is collaboration so important?

A collaborative culture gets people involved, which in turn creates a more engaged workforce. Many organizations struggle with dangerously high levels of employee disengagement—and that has serious financial impact.

How does Oracle Social Network foster a collaborative culture? Consider this:

- New stakeholders can easily come up to speed, simply by reading the history that’s been captured in the relevant Conversations. Just add newcomers as members of those Conversations and they’re off!
- Conversations keep a running record of what transpired on a given subject, so you can go back and revisit the reasons why past decisions were made and apply that logic to decisions currently on the table.
- Better communication leads to greater innovation; that is, the old “two heads are better than one” adage is true. More often than not, innovation is born when multiple points of view build off each other to create something new and exciting. And that’s exactly the dynamic that Conversations were built to support.

“Oracle Social Network has reduced unnecessary emails within the company by 60% and reduced the time taken for internal meetings on project and customer reviews by up to 50%. Staff members are more engaged and collectively responding to resolve issues and to progress Opportunities.”

~Jonathan Eastwood, Director–Operations, CRMnow

Let’s find out more about Conversations and what they offer.
Let’s have a chat.

At the heart of Oracle Social Network collaboration is the **Conversation**, a real-time, online chat with all the folks who can help you get the job done. Need to talk about an upcoming sales presentation? Start a Conversation tied to that particular opportunity in Oracle Sales Cloud so that other participants can see details about the deal. Invite the people who can help you close the deal—even people at your company who don’t have access to Oracle Sales Cloud itself. Or go one step further and securely invite people outside your company, people that you’ve given special permission to collaborate in your Oracle Social Network instance. Whomever you invite, Conversations enable discussions on any subject in real time, while storing a full history of the collaboration for later use.

What else do Conversations offer? Here’s just a sample:

- **Privacy options.** Create a closed, secure, private Conversation, or open it up to the whole community and let individuals decide whether to join. Concerned about a sensitive business object, like a performance review? You can limit the set of users that can be added to any given Social Object to ensure absolute privacy.

- **Collections.** Need to organize your Conversations about an upcoming product release? Create a collection called “Product Launch” and associate those Conversations with the collection so that they’re easy for you and others to find.

- **Real-time presence indicators.** See who’s online and which Conversation they’re currently in. If you see that someone’s active, you can quickly shoot them an instant message, which is added to your private one-on-one Conversation—so you always have a record of what transpired.

- **Get someone’s attention.** Set an Urgent flag to get someone’s immediate attention, a Please Reply flag if you can wait, or an FYI flag just to let them know you’ve posted something of interest.

- **Shhh.** Use the mute feature to hide posts you don’t really care about, so you can cut down on the number of Conversations you need to actively monitor. And of course, it’s easy to unmute a Conversation or wall if you change your mind.

- **Digests.** Set things up to get an email digest at the end of the day with information on topics you haven’t kept up with, so you can read the digest at your leisure.
The right tools for the job.

With Oracle Social Network, all channels of communication are integrated into the same framework. Bring in whatever communication tool you need, when you need it:

- Need to talk face-to-face? Launch a conference using WebEx or Avaya right from a Conversation, which all participants can then choose to join.

- Need to stay active while on a plane? Download your Conversations into an offline briefcase provided by the Oracle Social Network’s Desktop application, and then interact with the social network just as you would in the office. When you’re back online, everything’s uploaded right where it needs to be.

- Tied to Microsoft Outlook all day? Use our add-in to display Oracle Social Network in the Outlook app, and share your emails into the network with the click of a button.

- On the run? The Oracle Social Network iOS and Android apps make it easy to stay connected wherever you are. Don’t waste time while standing in line at the cafeteria—keep up with your posts on your phone while you wait or contribute your own posts.

With Oracle Social Network mobile apps, you have full access to all documents, discussions, and images that you can access on your laptop or desktop. The entire network and all the people it contains are right there at your fingertips, making you optimally effective while at a customer’s site, at home—anywhere you happen to be.
Collaborate on content.

Any knowledge-based enterprise relies on producing, reviewing, and publishing content in a never-ending stream. Whether responding to requests for proposals, searching for the best presentation, designing marketing campaigns, addressing customer problems, or writing policies and contracts, most businesses depend on people’s ability to work with content collaboratively.

Oracle Social Network provides tools to facilitate sharing, gather feedback, and promote the reuse of content, documents, images, and other rich media. These tools let you:

- Upload any type of document to a Conversation from your file system or a cloud-based repository, such as Google Drive or Oracle Documents Cloud.
- Allow others to annotate the document with questions and comments—while seeing who else is annotating at the same time. You can respond to their comments directly inline, so repetition is all but eliminated.
- Store multiple versions of a document and retain a history of who did what (opened, downloaded, or edited) and when.
- Use folders to help you organize documents, while still keeping them in the context of your primary business application.
- Use search to locate any content that you have access to across the whole network—quickly.
Oracle Social Network provides a secure place for people to collaborate and share useful information across the organization. But how do you find the people with the skills and knowledge that can complement your own areas of expertise? With Oracle Social Network Social Profile pages, each person in your company can establish his or her professional identity in the workplace—making it easy to find the people who can help make an introduction, supply information, or put you in touch with the right group of people to help you be most effective.

Everybody in your company gets a wall on which to share their professional details. Others can choose to follow and contribute to an individual’s wall.

For example, sales leaders who use Oracle Social Network with Oracle Sales Cloud typically communicate key wins and kudos, partner events, upcoming product training, and selling tips on their walls. Sales reps then follow these leaders, both those in their direct management chain as well as individuals of interest across the company, regardless of organization or geography.

This type of communication can increase overall organizational knowledge and build strong ties between people in distributed organizations.

Oracle Social Network also lets you create groups, so that you can reach many people with a common interest by using just a single name. Group members can share knowledge and engage in group discussions on the group’s wall.
Get started.

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