THE
SOCIAL WORKPLACE
TRUST STUDY

Perspectives on how organizations are using social media, and the impact that workplace trust, worker passion and social media use have on employee beliefs and activities.

HUMAN 1.0

IABC INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATORS

Society for New Communications Research

GREAT PLACE TO WORK®

INTRODUCTION

The workplace has always been a social place, where unofficial communications channels and social contracts have been as least as important to employees as their organizations' formal communications systems and official organizational structures. The recent explosion of ubiquitous, low-cost social technologies both within the workplace and outside of it have prompted many managers to examine how new social platforms like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn might affect their roles, the workings of their teams, and the manner in which their organizations engage with the external environment. In this whitepaper, Human 1.0,[1] the International Association of Business Communicators,[2] and the Society for New Communications Research[3] examine how organizations are using social media[4], and the impact that workplace trust, passion and social media use have on select employee activities and attitudes.

[1] Human 1.0 is a Cambridge, Massachusetts-based management consultancy and think tank that provides research-based advisory services to leading global organizations. w w w . H u m a n 1 . c o m

[2] The International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) is a global network of communication professionals committed to improving organizational effectiveness through strategic communication. Established in 1970, IABC serves more than 14,000 members in 70 countries and 100 chapters. w w w . i a b c . c o m

[3] The Society for New Communications Research is a global nonprofit research and education foundation and think tank founded in 2005 to focus on the advanced study of the latest developments in new media and communications, and their effect on traditional media and business models, communications, culture and society. w w w . S N C R . o r g

[4] The survey defined social media as "platforms and websites such as blogs, Facebook, MySpace, Google+, LinkedIn, Twitter, Yammer, Chatter, YouTube, etc."

The data provides a rich, nuanced view from the employees' perspective of how contemporary organizations are leveraging social media, and where there are potential opportunities for improved business operations related to social media use. As discussed below, these opportunities arise in areas as wide-ranging as cost efficiency, improved communications, improved talent management, and improved marketing. The data also indicate areas where organizations may want to direct additional attention and analysis, especially in terms of understanding the risks associated with participating in (or, in some cases, not participating in) social media interaction with their employees, customers and other stakeholders.
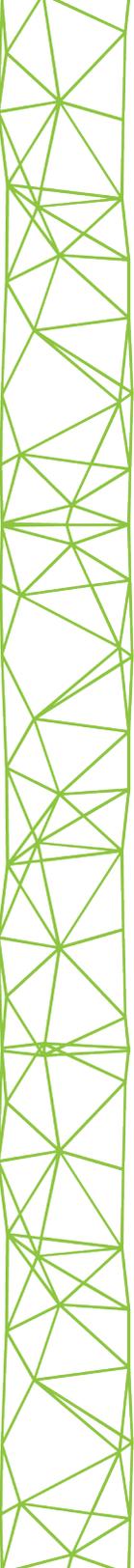
METHODOLOGY

The Social Workplace Trust Study is based on an online survey that the Society for New Communications Research administered in 2012. Great Place to Work Institute[5], Human 1.0, the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC), and the Society for New Communications Research (SNCR) collaborated to develop the survey, and the four participating organizations invited their members and other potentially interested parties to participate in the survey. The survey generated 483 completed questionnaires, with respondents self-selecting themselves to participate. Respondents identified their primary job responsibilities as communications (54%), marketing (14%), and human resources (12%), and all were located in North America. Over half of the respondents reported their organizations having a thousand or more employees, and the respondents' organizations participate in industries including banking and financial services, government/military, health care, manufacturing and production, advertising, information technology, and non-profits. Respondents represented a cross-section of employment positions in their respective companies, with 25% describing themselves as senior/executive leadership, 59% as middle management, and 16% as entry level/early career level.

[5]Great Place to Work® (GPTW) is a global consulting and management training firm specializing in workplace excellence and development of high-trust organizational cultures. Its proprietary research tool, the Trust Index© Employee Survey is taken by over 10 million employees in 45 countries annually. Leading companies worldwide apply the GPTW Model® to increase the levels of trust across their organizations and drive business results. In the United States, Great Place to Work® produces the annual FORTUNE 100 Best Companies to Work For® list and the Great Place to Work® Best Small and Medium Workplaces list. For information about the global operations of Great Place to Work®, visit www.greatplacetowork.net.

As discussed below, the findings we derived from the Social Workplace Trust Study data highlight significant opportunities for managers to improve their personal and organizational performance. Moreover, the data raise important implications about organizational culture, and how culture may be influenced by social media, employee trust, and employee passion.
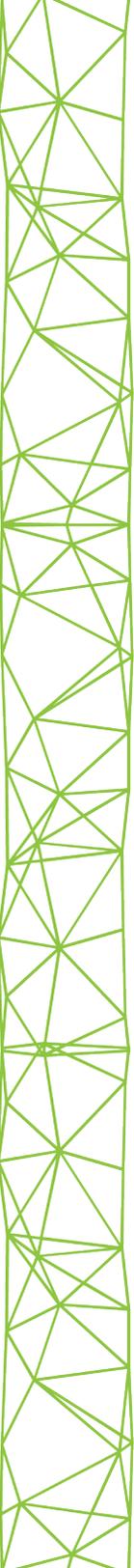
OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS

In this whitepaper, our examination of the survey data provides 11 key areas where managers are afforded clear views of how workers are using social media, and the impact that workplace trust, passion and social media use have on specific employee activities. The findings we will explore are:

Finding 1:
When employees are able to communicate openly with both internal and external stakeholders, and to engage with them in social networks, engage in decision making, and feel personally valued, employees evidence greater loyalty to and trust of their employers, have more pride in their work, and feel that they can make a difference at work. These outcomes can have a positive outcome on the bottom line. In addition, the data indicate that by simply "turning on" social media usage at an organization, managers will not experience as big an impact on positive employee behaviors as when turning on social media is combined with employees feeling that they get straight answers from management, that management includes them in decision making, and that management has a sincere interest in them.

Finding 2:
Different corporate functions (such as marketing, communications, management and human resources) have very different views of organizational aspects like trust in management, job satisfaction, loyalty to the company, the sense that employees can make a difference, feeling appreciated by management, and proudly talking about work.

Finding 3:
Use of social media in the workplace is not related to the level of the respondent in his or her company.

Finding 4:
Senior/executive leadership respondents believe that they have a more open, honest and inclusive workplace environment than their subordinates report having.

Finding 5:
Fifty-eight percent of respondents agree that social media is one of the best ways to get information on a company, and 40% of respondents believe what they read about a company on social media is more accurate than what they find on the company's own website.

Finding 6:
A shortage of trained and capable talent is a significant challenge when it comes to taking advantage of the benefits of social media.

Finding 7:
Over two-thirds of respondents report that their organizations use social media more externally than internally (i.e., among employees). This bias towards external use might forfeit important internal opportunities to use social media, and result in increased business risk.

Finding 8:
Since 46% of respondents report that they don't think their companies are doing a good job of using social media to interact with customers and others outside of the company, many organizations may be failing to enjoy the benefits they expected from external social media use.

Finding 9:
Companies are sending mixed messages about how they wish employees to engage in social media:

71% of respondents state that their company permits social media use during work hours (only 20% of companies do not permit social media use); yet 54% of respondents state that their company does not provide training on acceptable social media use; and 50% of respondents say they believe their company would prefer they not participate in social media.
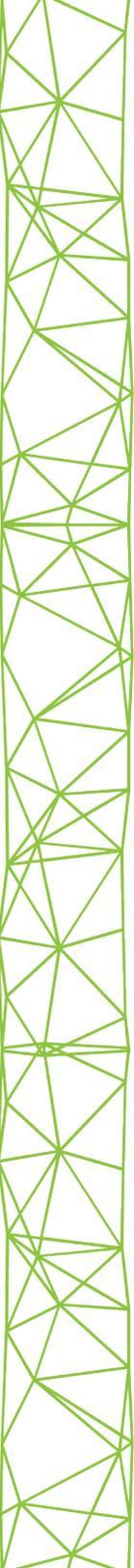
Finding 10:
A majority of respondents report that their organizations are not providing training about appropriate social media use: 54% report that their organization has not trained employees about acceptable use of social media, and 6% don't know if their organization has trained employees about acceptable use of social media.

Finding 11:
Social media use in the workplace does not hurt worker productivity.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

These findings are not ranked in any particular order, and the authors do not wish to suggest that these are the only interpretations that can be gleaned from the survey data; indeed, our perspective is influenced by our respective interests, roles and training, and other examiners would likely discern additional findings.

FINDING 1.

When employees are able to communicate openly with both internal and external stakeholders, and to engage with them in social networks, engage in decision making, and feel personally valued, the employees evidence greater loyalty to and trust of their employers, have more pride in their work, and feel that they can make a difference at work. These outcomes can have a positive outcome on the bottom line.

In addition, the data indicate that by simply "turning on" social media usage at an organization, managers will not experience as big an impact on positive employee behaviors as when turning on social media is combined with employees feeling that they get straight answers from management, that management includes them in decision making, and that management has a sincere interest in them.

To determine which employees considered themselves to be in situations where they are able to communicate openly with stakeholders, engage in decision making, and feel personally valued, we focused on the responses to five specific questions/statements in the survey. These questions/statements are:

1. I can ask management any reasonable question and get a straight answer.
2. Management involves people in decisions that affect their jobs or work environment.
3. Management shows a sincere interest in me as a person, not just an employee.
4. My organization prefers that I not use social media while at work.
5. Does your organization permit social media during work hours?

The questions/statements can be considered as two subsets: the first three focus on workers' interactions with management, and the fourth and fifth look at social media policies. When we consider those who agreed with the questions/statements, or answered positively, we find a strong positive correlation between positive responses to the five questions and positive attitudes among respondents.

TABLE 1

Compilation of those who agreed and disagreed with five key questions/statements, and their respective agreement with 5 positive beliefs

Positive Beliefs (Column 1)	% of respondents UNABLE to communicate openly with stakeholders, engage in decision making and who feel personally valued who agree (Column 2)	% of respondents ABLE to communicate openly with stakeholders, engage in decision making and who feel personally valued who agree (Column 3)	Improvement in positive beliefs between those in Column 2 and Column 3
Trust in management (fairness, transparency)	27%	90%	3.3X
Job satisfaction	51%	87%	1.7X
Loyalty to the company	34%	71%	2X
Motivation (I can make a difference)	47%	94%	2X
Appreciation from management	45%	94%	2X
Pride in talking about work	71%	95%	1.34X
Consider themselves as having larger social networks than average person	18%	27%	1.5X

As Table 1 above indicates, when companies provide employees with straight answers, provide involvement in decisions that affect their jobs, demonstrate interest in them as people and not just employees, and don't restrict their use of social media at work, their employees are much more likely to trust management, express job satisfaction, have loyalty to the company, feel motivated, speak proudly about the company, and consider themselves as having larger social networks.

Interestingly, the correlation between the first three questions and the positive behaviors is much higher than the correlation between the last two questions of the five (which deal with social media use). Therefore, the data indicate that by simply "turning on" social media usage at an organization, one will not experience as big an impact on positive behaviors as if all 5 "levers" were pulled simultaneously.

The five questions also seek to assess the aspect of trust within an organization's culture. Simply put, can workers trust management to be truthful and interested in the workers' views, and can management trust workers to use social media appropriately while at work? Since positive responses to the trust questions/statements are good predictors in this study of attitudes that are markedly positive, this study highlights the importance of healthy organizational cultural attributes (like trust) in fostering positive employee attitudes.

Moreover, as we see from Table 2, below, people who are satisfied with their jobs tend to express very different behaviors than those who are dissatisfied with their jobs. The data indicate that people who are dissatisfied with their jobs are much less likely to be passionate about their jobs, but that people who are satisfied with their jobs tend to converse more about their company in social media, to be proud to tell others that they work at their organization, and also tend to have larger social networks than those who are dissatisfied with their jobs.

TABLE 2

Comparison of those satisfied and dissatisfied with their jobs, and certain behaviors/beliefs

Behavior/Belief (Column 1)	% of respondents satisfied with job who agree (Column 2)	% of respondents dissatisfied with job who agree (Column 3)	Amplification factor (between Column 2 and 3)
I often participate in conversations about my company in social media	30%	9%	3.3X
I am proud to tell others that I work at my organization	90%	36%	2.5X
I have more friends on social media than does the average person who is using social media	26%	17%	1.5X
I agree that most other people in the organization are more passionate about their jobs than I am	4%	32%	12.5X
I strongly disagree that most other people in the organization are more passionate about their jobs than I am	41%	20%	2X

Accordingly, companies may enjoy increasing returns if their employees are satisfied with their jobs because the data show that people who are satisfied with their jobs are 3 times as likely to participate in social media conversations about their companies, are 2 times more likely to tell others that they're proud of their organization, and 1.5 times more likely to have larger social networks than average. This positive "buzz" dividend will arguably increase as more people (employees and non-employees alike) engage with social media in the future.

FINDING 2.

Different corporate functions (such as marketing, communications, management and human resources) have very different views of organizational aspects like trust in management, job satisfaction, loyalty to the company, the sense that employees can make a difference, feeling appreciated by management, and proudly talking about work.

Specifically, management-level respondents express the highest job satisfaction, loyalty to the company, appreciation from management, and pride in talking about work, but human resources respondents most agree with the sentiment that "I can make a difference." Interestingly, the lowest agreement with the statement "I can make a difference" is among management respondents, and that only 40% of marketing respondents agree that they are appreciated by management. Such a disparity between the corporate functions is an important sign for managers because it raises the likelihood of contradictory messages being sent to those outside of the organization as well. For instance, what if human resources is recruiting new hires with messaging that is only true for employees in the human resources function? What sort of experience will a new hire have when she enters the senior management ranks, where people have a much different view than human resources does?
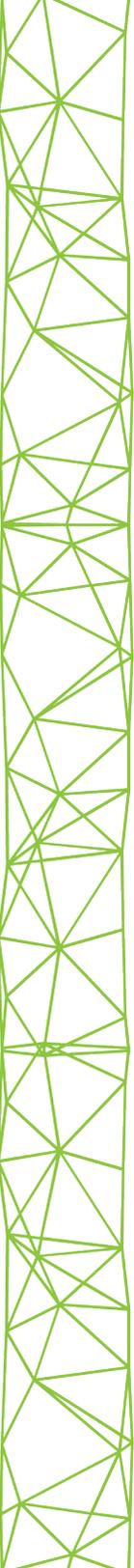
TABLE 3

How respondents in different departments agree with certain attitudes

	% of Marketing respondents who agree	% of Communications respondents who agree	% of Management respondents who agree	% of Human Resources respondents who agree
Trust in management (fairness, transparency)	43%	49%	55%	57%
Job satisfaction	81%	73%	92%	80%
Loyalty to the company	54%	61%	69%	63%
Motivation (I can make a difference)	81%	82%	80%	87%
Appreciation from management	40%	59%	69%	54%
Pride in talking about work	87%	91%	96%	89%

FINDING 3.

Use of social media in the workplace is not related to the level of the respondent in his or her company.

Although some might believe that social media use is still the province of junior people within organizations, the Social Workplace Trust Study data indicate that a majority of entry-level employees, middle management, and senior/executive leadership report using social media at work for work purposes (see Table 4). Entry-level respondents are more likely than senior/executive leadership respondents to use social media at work for personal reasons, however, and to consider themselves "heavy users" than their higher-level colleagues. The broad-based nature of social media usage in organizations today raises issues about training, resourcing, coordination and strategy. For instance, are all levels in the organization similarly trained about corporate policies, risks, and opportunities of using social media since there is no one group that uses social media exclusively? Are adequate resources being allocated to social media training and use, given its broad footprint across the organization? If different levels in the organization are using social media, has anyone considered what coordination (if any) is required to ensure efficiency and value creation? For instance, if people at different levels are communicating externally with stakeholders, how are these touch points aggregated, analyzed and used to create value for both the stakeholders and the organization? If a customer engages with the organization on LinkedIn one day, and then the next day engages on Twitter, is the organization able to recognize him, and remember its specific dealing with him and his concerns?

TABLE 4

Social media usage by respondents at different levels in their organizations

Activity/Attitude	Entry-level respondents who agree (frequently/occasionally)	Middle management respondents who agree (frequently/occasionally)	Senior/executive leadership respondents who agree (frequently/occasionally)
Use social media at work for work purposes	37%/29%	39%/36%	53%/39%
Use social media at work for personal reasons	29%/47%	17%/44%	22%/45%
Use social media at home for work purposes	11%/35%	15%/40%	25%/49%
Use social media at home for personal reasons	79%/16%	64%/32%	56%/34%
Consider themselves heavy users of social media at work	23%	22%	18%

FINDING 4.

Senior/executive leadership respondents believe that they have a more open, honest and inclusive workplace environment than lower-level respondents report having.

The study data indicate that entry-level and middle management respondents tend to agree much less with several statements directed at management's behavior than senior/executive management do. Indeed, the senior/executive management-level respondents agree much more than their less senior colleagues that management provides "straight answers," shows appreciation for good work, involves people in decision making, and matches its actions with its words. This clear disparity between the responses of senior/executive management and lower-level respondents highlights an important disconnect in perception between different organizational levels. Given the importance of trust that is highlighted in Finding 1, above, and considering that the lower-level respondents don't seem to trust management as much as more senior management trusts management, there's a clear opportunity to raise the trust levels of lower-level employees, and reap the rewards attendant to a high-trust culture. This finding also raises the question of whether the disparity in perceptions may be ameliorated by better or different communications tools and platforms being adopted.
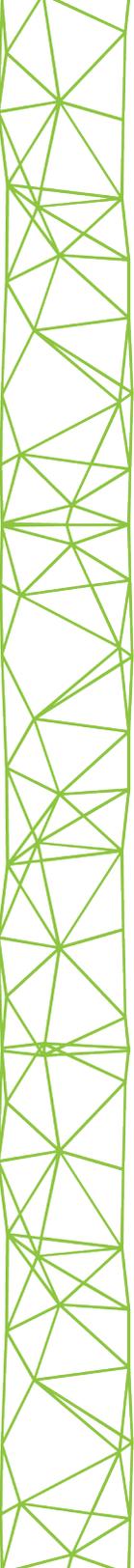
TABLE 5

Senior/executive management's views on key statements, compared to those of entry-level and middle management respondents

Statement	% of Entry-Level respondents who agree	% of Middle management respondents who agree	% of Senior/executive management respondents who agree
I get straight answers from management	54%	61%	71%
Management's actions matches its words	43%	44%	66%
Management shows appreciation for good work	59%	58%	65%
Management involves people in decision making	31%	31%	56%
Management shows interest in me as a person, not just an employee	41%	41%	65%

Increased internal use of social media may provide an improved way of management getting a better, real-time view of the sentiment of their colleagues, and a better way of accurately gauging key aspects of their organizational culture and sub-cultures. We know from this study that the majority of social media use among respondents' organizations is directed outside of the organization[6], and this perception gap between different levels within organizations may be another compelling reason for increasing the internal use of social media.

[6]See Finding 7, at page 25

FINDING 5.

Fifty-eight percent of respondents agree that social media is one of the best ways to get information on a company, and 40% of respondents believe what they read about a company on social media is more accurate than what they find on the company's own website.

That the majority of respondents agree that social media is one of the best ways to learn about a company (Figure 1) attests to the importance of social media to not only marketing and communications, but also to recruiting and sales (or to any other corporate activity where people seek to learn more about a company). While some readers might have previously considered social media a vast landscape of unverified opinion and conjecture, the majority of respondents in the Social Workplace Trust Study now view social media as a preferred and useful way of learning about companies. And when one considers that the majority of respondents are from the marketing and communications functions, their opinion of social media as a source of accurate information is particularly important because it raises social media to being on par with their own website marketing and communications efforts.

The fact that respondents view social media as one of the best places to learn about a company has significant implications for managers. For instance, are adequate organizational resources currently allocated to social media, given its clear importance in educating people about the

FIGURE 1

Respondents' views on whether social media is one of the best ways for a person to learn about a company.

"One of the best ways for a person to learn about a company is by using social media."
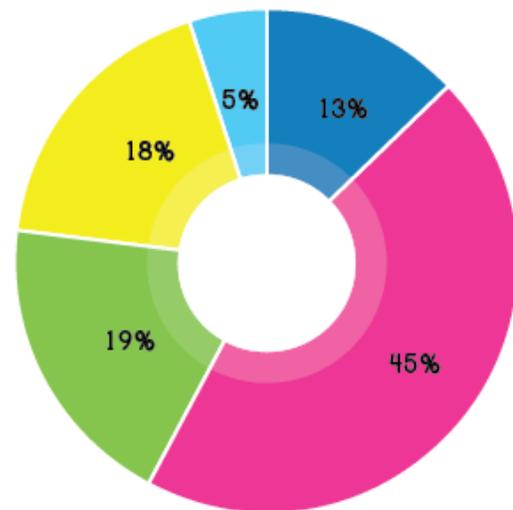
- Agree Strongly
- Agree Somewhat
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree Somewhat
- Disagree Strongly

organization? Are required governance processes being applied to social media channels, and is there a process in place to direct appropriate organizational information to social media, and to bring inputs back from external social media to the appropriate functions within the organization? Do information systems (including customer relationship management systems), tie appropriately to social media platforms so that the customer experience is optimized and coherent across all touch points? Is everyone in the organization clear on how they should interact with the external environment via social media platforms, and what information should and shouldn't be shared? Do decision makers in the organization now use information about competitors, partners and customers gleaned from social media, or are they still relying solely on legacy information sources?

These questions (as well as many others) are likely to become more important and pressing in the future, because respondents who consider themselves "heavy" social media users report even greater agreement with the sentiment that social media is one of the best places to learn about an organization (see Figure 2). If one believes that the incidence of those people who consider themselves heavy social media users is likely to increase as adoption of social platforms increase, then an increasing number of people will consider social media as one of the best places to learn about an organization.

FIGURE 2

"Heavy" social media users' response to the statement that "one of the best ways for a person to learn about a company is by using social media."

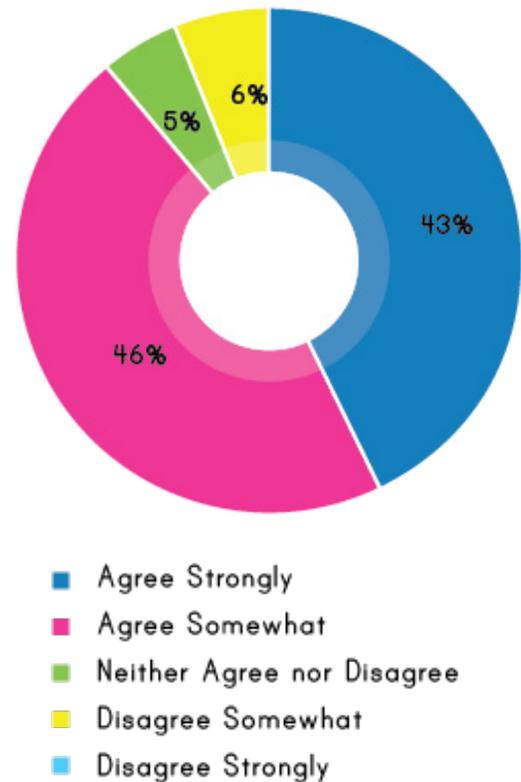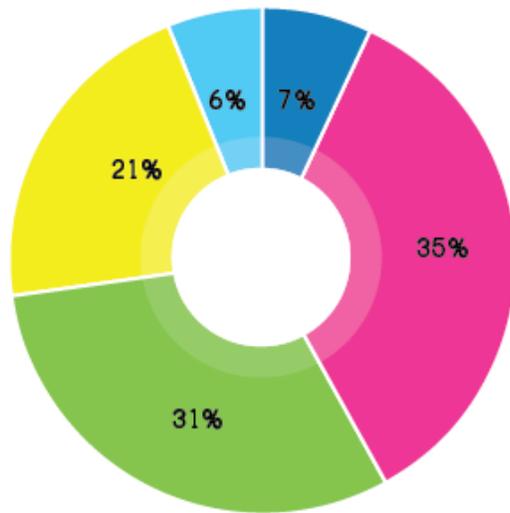"One of the best ways for a person to learn about a company is by using social media."

- ■ Agree Strongly
- ■ Agree Somewhat
- ■ Neither Agree nor Disagree
- ■ Disagree Somewhat
- ■ Disagree Strongly

FIGURE 3

42% of all respondents believe that what they read about a company on social media is more accurate than what they read about the company on its own website.

"What I read about a company on social media is more accurate than what I read about the company on its own website."


6% 7%

21%

35%

31%

- ■ Agree Strongly
- ■ Agree Somewhat
- ■ Neither Agree nor Disagree
- ■ Disagree Somewhat
- ■ Disagree Strongly

FIGURE 4

Heavy social media users agree even more that information about a company on social media is more accurate than what is on that company's own website.

"What I read about a company on social media is more accurate than what I read about the company on its own website."

Legend:
- Agree Strongly
- Agree Somewhat
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree Somewhat
- Disagree Strongly

Values: 20%, 36%, 34%, 10%
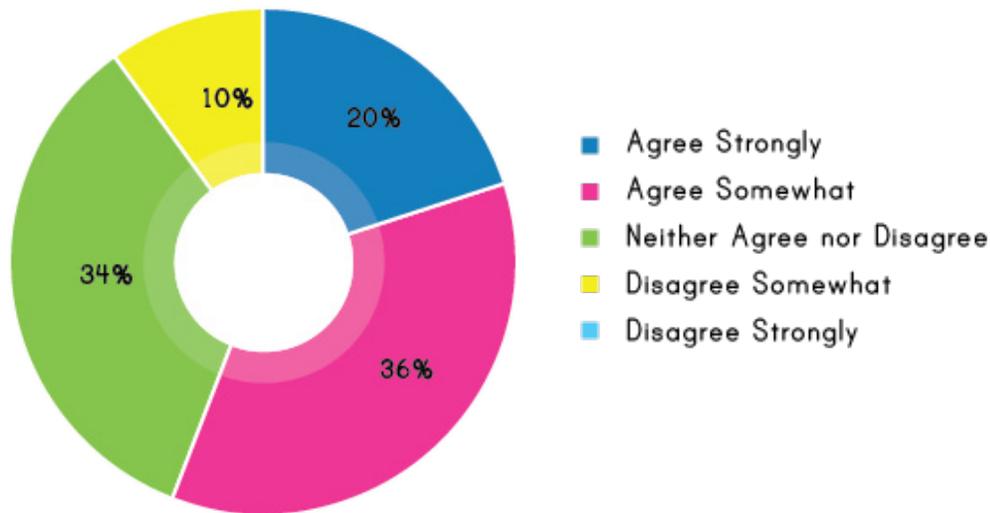
Not only do a majority of respondents believe that social media is one of the best places to learn about a company, but 42% of all respondents believe that what they read about a company on social media is more accurate than what they read about the company on its own website (see Figure 3).

Even if managers are aware of this perception among a large minority of the respondents, has management put in place the infrastructure (people, processes and technologies) to focus on social media interaction with their external stakeholders? And has management assessed whether the information on social media is indeed more accurate than what is on their website, and acted accordingly?

FINDING 6.

A shortage of trained and capable talent is a significant challenge when it comes to taking advantage of the benefits of social media.

Although a majority of respondents express confidence that their organizations believe they possess the necessary technologies to effectively use social media, a majority of respondents disagree that their companies have a sufficient number of employees trained or otherwise capable of using social media to interact with customers or others outside of the company. This points to some key issues managers should consider at this juncture: How are organizations going to identify these valuable individuals externally or internally, what will their job descriptions look like, how will their careers progress, and what are the expectations management will need to meet to attract and retain these workers? How will organizations compete with other organizations for these people, what are proper staffing levels, and on what topics will these people need to be trained for them to be most effective?[7]

[7]For further discussion of the talents organizations may need to develop among those employees who interact with others via social media, see Gossieaux & Moran, The Hyper-Social Organization (McGraw-Hill 2010) at 175-189.
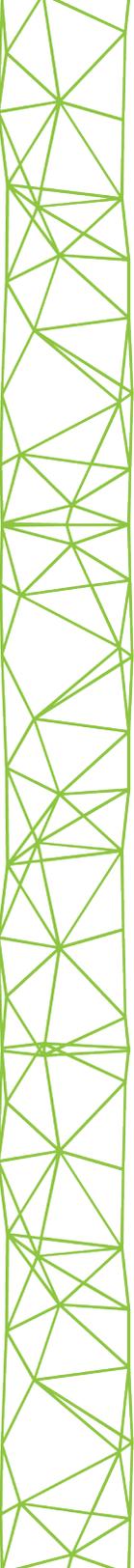
FIGURE 5

Majority of respondents don't think their companies have a sufficient number of employees trained or otherwise capable to use social media to interact with customers or others outside the company.

"My company has a sufficient number of employees trained (or otherwise capable) to use social media to interact with customers or other people outside the company"
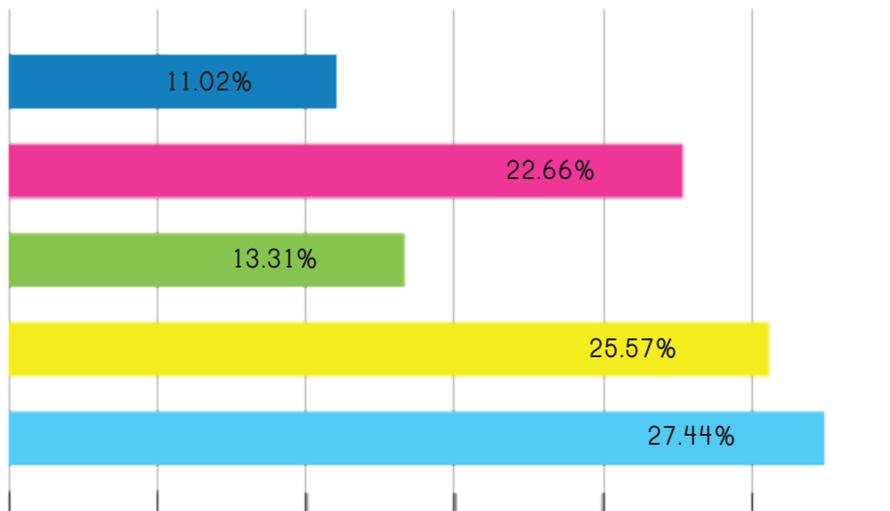
- ■ Agree Strongly
- ■ Agree Somewhat
- ■ Neither Agree nor Disagree
- ■ Disagree Somewhat
- ■ Disagree Strongly

FINDING 7.

Over two-thirds of respondents report that their organizations use social media more externally than internally (i.e., among employees). This bias towards external use might forfeit important internal opportunities to use social media, and result in increased business risk.

Given the explosive growth and increased visibility of large public social networks like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, perhaps it is not surprising that the majority of respondents report their organizations using social media more externally than internally. Indeed, it is difficult to ignore these platforms when large number of customers and potential customers are flocking to them, and competitors are staking their claims. Allocating more resources to external social media activities likely reduces the amount of funding and other resources otherwise available for investment in internal social media projects, however, managers should be aware of the potential tradeoffs involved in this allocation choice. Indeed, a recent report by the McKinsey Global Institute argues that internal social media use can generate significant benefits. McKinsey's analyses indicate

"that social technologies can raise the productivity of interaction workers in large organizations by 20 to 25 percent if they become fully networked enterprises...Today a huge amount of relevant enterprise knowledge is locked up in e-mail inboxes. As more ente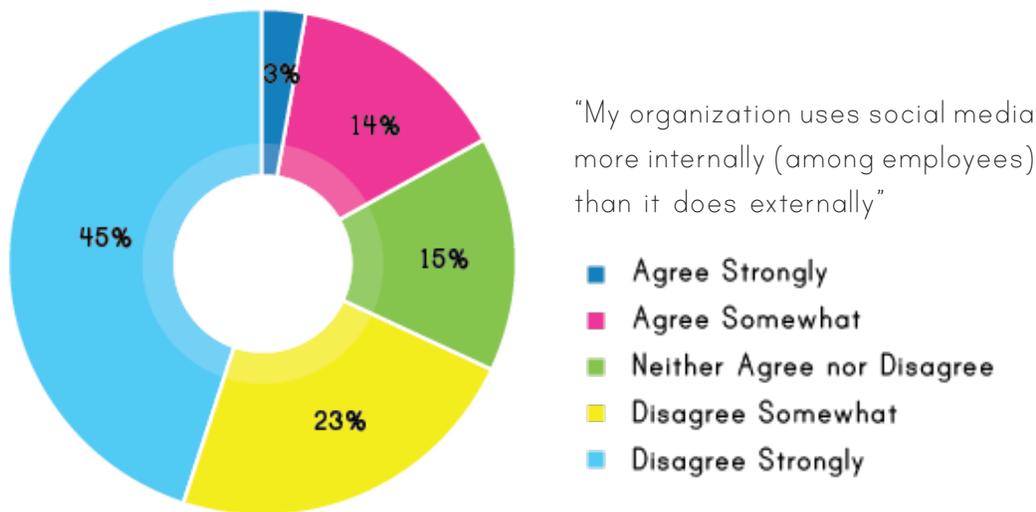rprise information becomes accessible and searchable, rather than locked up as 'dark matter' in inboxes, workers could save not only the amount of time they spend on writing, reading and answering e-mail, but also on the amount of time spent searching for content and expertise."[8]

Because social media use is predominantly externally facing, we would also expect that business risks generally will be higher than if social media use were instead focused internally. This is for the simple reason that external social media missteps with customers or regulators are likely to be more damaging (and publicized) than those that happen behind the organizational wall. This risk will likely be exacerbated by the fact that there doesn't seem to be an appropriate investment in the suitable number of people adept at using social media (see Finding 6, above). Similarly, there doesn't appear to be appropriate investment being made in training employees about what is (and isn't) proper workplace use of social media (see Finding 10, below).

[8]McKinsey Global Institute, "The social economy: Unlocking value and productivity through social technologies" at pp 22-23.

That the majority of organizations surveyed in the Social Workplace Trust Study have decided to allocate more of their social media efforts externally than internally does not, of course, mean that decision makers have not determined that the return would be larger from external projects. Managers would be wise to ask, however, whether these analyses actually took place, or whether the bias towards external use is driven more by the ascendance of large public social networks (such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter) and the corresponding attention they have generated. Managers should ask themselves if their bias towards using social media externally as opposed to internally is the result of careful analysis, or is driven instead by the organization's simple desire to secure Facebook "likes" or Twitter followers.

FIGURE 6
Respondents report greater use of social media externally than internally

"My organization uses social media more internally (among employees) than it does externally"

- Agree Strongly
- Agree Somewhat
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
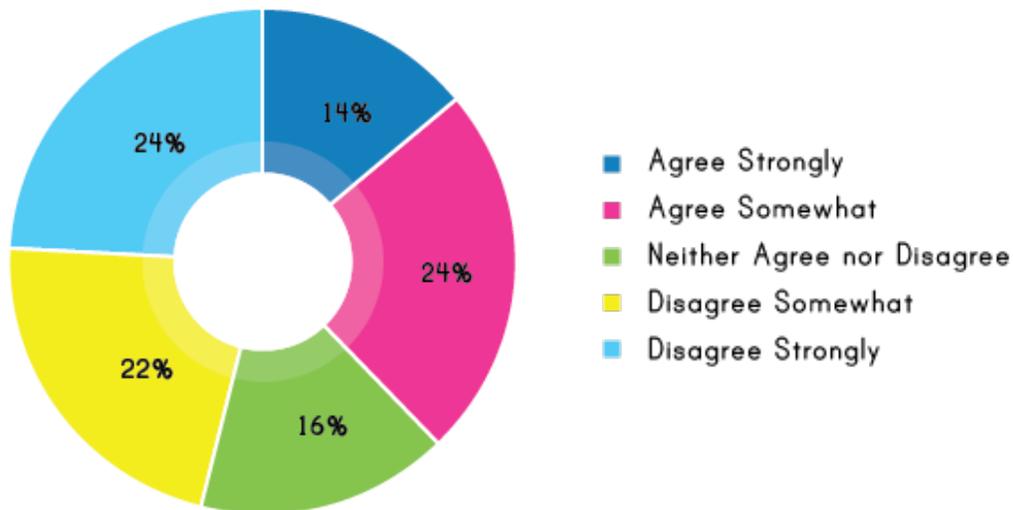- Disagree Somewhat
- Disagree Strongly

FINDING 8.

Since 46% of respondents report that they don't think their companies are doing a good job of using social media to interact with customers and others outside of the company, many organizations may be failing to enjoy the benefits they expected from external social media use.

FIGURE 7

Minority of respondents believe that their company is doing a good job of using social media to interact with those outside of the company

"My company is doing a good job of using social media to interact with customers and other people outside of the company"

- Agree Strongly
- Agree Somewhat
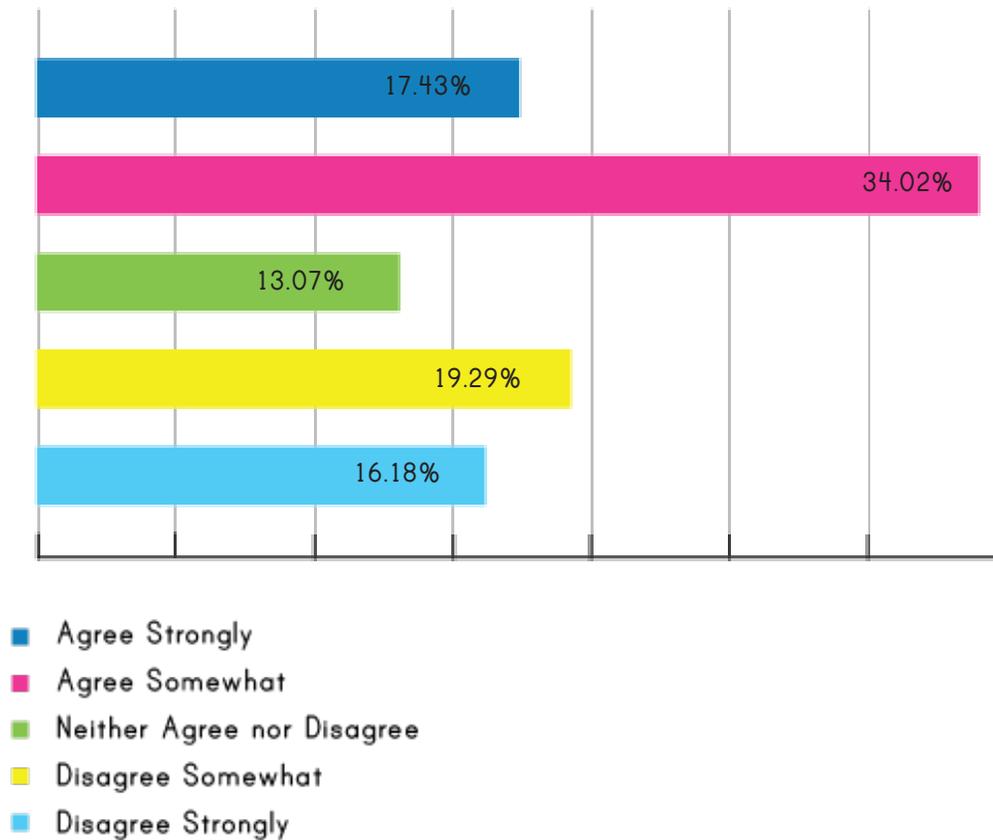- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree Somewhat
- Disagree Strongly

Moreover, a full third of respondents acknowledge that their companies don't fully understand the potential benefits of external social media use. Managers should consider using these data points as reasons for reassessing whether they have optimally allocated resources more to external social media use than internal social media use (especially when they consider the well-studied benefits of internal social media use discussed in Finding 7, above). Managers should also consider the higher risk issues attendant to external social media use, and whether they adequately understand and manage those risks through training and other means.

FIGURE 8

35% of respondents don't believe that their company fully understands the potential benefits of using social media outside of the organization

"My company fully understands the potential benefits of using social media to interact with customers or other people outside of the organization"
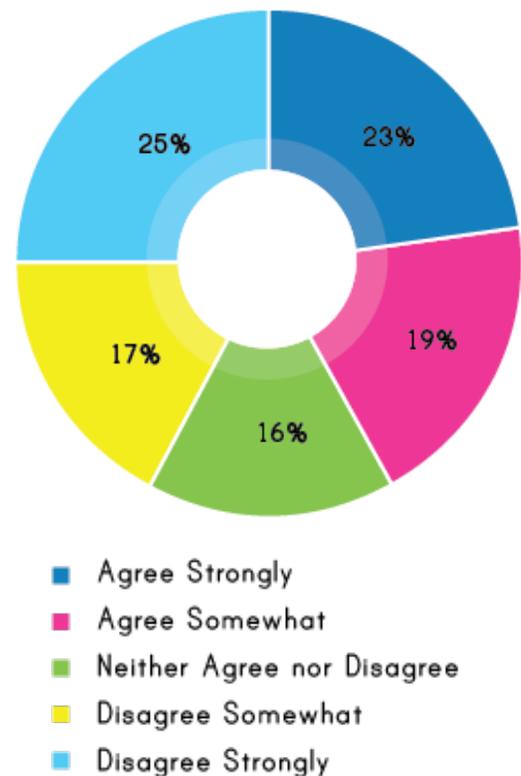

- ■ Agree Strongly
- ■ Agree Somewhat
- ■ Neither Agree nor Disagree
- ■ Disagree Somewhat
- ■ Disagree Strongly

FINDING 9.

Companies are sending mixed messages about how they wish employees to engage in social media: 71% of respondents state that their company permits social media use during work hours (only 20% of companies do not permit social media use); yet 54% of respondents state that their company does not provide training on acceptable social media use; and 50% of respondents say they believe their company would prefer they not participate in social media.

Managers should consider whether such conflicting messages about social media use are being sent by their company, and the reasons for the ambivalence. Does this disparity foster trust and clarity, or create doubt among workers about the true desires of management? As we know from Finding 1, above, trust in management can yield significant dividends. Does this ambivalence signal leadership's discomfort with potential risk issues, or worker productivity concerns? Does permitting users to engage in external social media use at work without providing them with corresponding training create potential regulatory and/or compliance issues? If we know (from Figure 1) that people who like their jobs are more likely to talk about their jobs, what are companies losing in terms of potential positive buzz (which helps with recruiting, marketing and sales) by not encouraging employee social media use?

FIGURE 9

42% of respondents believe that their organizations prefer they NOT use social media while at work.

"My organization prefers that I do not use social media while at work"

- Agree Strongly
- Agree Somewhat
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree Somewhat
- Disagree Strongly

Managers should ask themselves if this lack of training is a purposeful outcome, or is rather the result of suboptimal planning, analysis and collaboration with their colleagues. For instance, does it seem likely that legal departments, boards of directors and risk managers at 54% of companies agree that no social media training is a wise decision? Do managers know who makes the decision to train or not to train, and how this choice is evaluated? Examination of well-publicized organizational missteps[9] using social media in the recent past demonstrates that many fiascoes could have been avoided by better training. There is ample evidence that social media use is rife with risks, including reputational risk, leakage of intellectual property, and inadvertent violation of securities laws and other rules and regulations. And given the importance of social media as an information source, can organizations risk not having people trained and conversant with social media to at least scan the environment for information and issues associated with the organization, its products and its management?

FIGURE 10

The majority of respondents report that their organizations have not trained employees on acceptable social media use.

"Has your organization trained employees about the acceptable use of social media from the organization's perspective?"

- Yes: 40%
- No: 54%
- Don't know: 6%
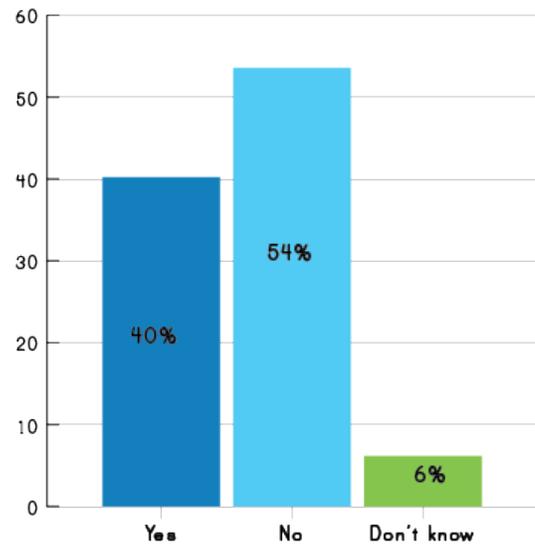
[9] www.moneytalksnews.com/2012/12/03/8-big-social-media-disasters-of-2012/; see also http://mashable.com/2012/11/25/social-media-business-disasters-2012/

FINDING 11.

Social media use in the workplace does not hurt worker productivity.

More respondents (43%) agree that social media use in the workplace does not hurt worker productivity, compared to those who believe that social media does not improve worker productivity (30%) (see Figure 12).
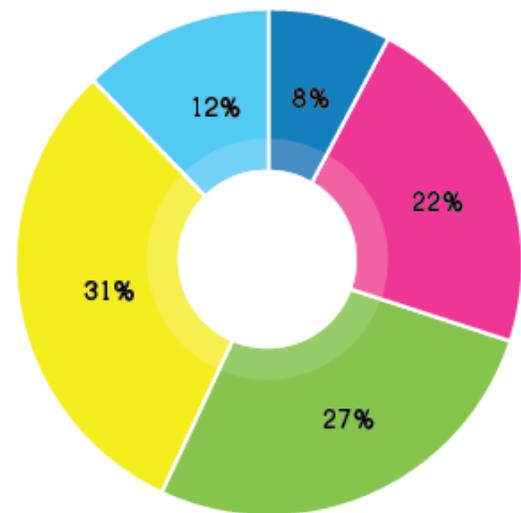
The gulf between the two camps grows wider when we look at only senior/executive management respondents. 28% of senior/executive leadership believes that social media use in the workplace does not improve worker productivity. 45% of senior/executive leadership disagree with the statement "social media use in the workplace does not improve worker productivity," implying that they believe that it improves productivity.

And we should point out that this is in a context where the majority of social media use is still external; if more organizations used social media internally, they might soon discover the benefits tilted even more clearly towards the productivity improvements McKinsey's research[10] outlines.

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[10]See note 8, above

FIGURE 11

Respondents who believe that social media usage does not improve worker productivity are in the minority (includes all respondents)

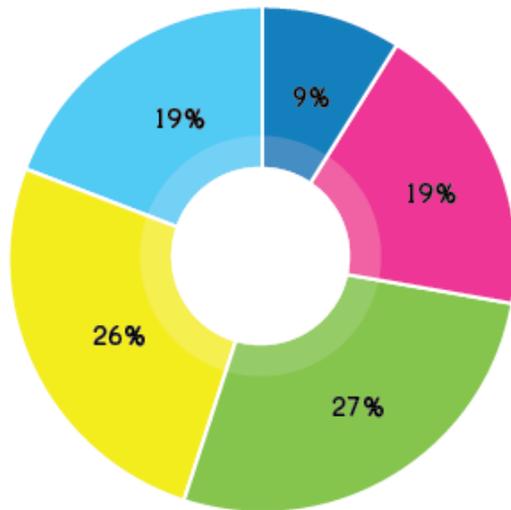"The use of social media in the workplace does not improve worker productivity"

- Agree Strongly
- Agree Somewhat
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree Somewhat
- Disagree Strongly

FIGURE 12

Respondents who believe that social media usage does not improve worker productivity are in the minority (includes only respondents who identified themselves as senior/executive leadership)
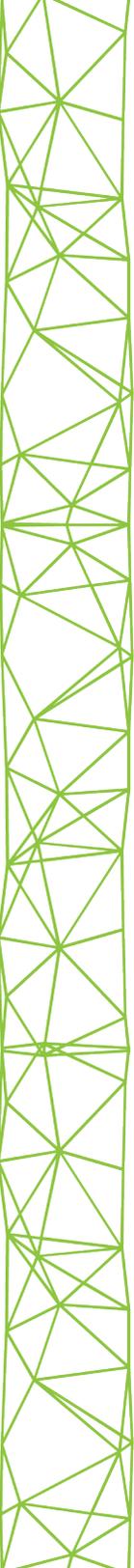
"The use of social media in the workplace does not improve worker productivity"

- ■ Agree Strongly
- ■ Agree Somewhat
- ■ Neither Agree nor Disagree
- ■ Disagree Somewhat
- ■ Disagree Strongly

CONCLUSION

The Social Workplace Trust Study offers perspectives into how workers and companies are using social media internally as well as externally, and the benefits that social media use may confer on both organizations and the individuals that work within them.   The study also highlights the positive impact a culture of trust can have on employee behaviors, and near-term actions management might take to reduce costs, improve communications, enhance talent management, bolster marketing efforts, and reduce risk.   Although the authors believe that the data highlight at least eleven key findings that are pertinent to management, there are likely to be many additional takeaways in the data that managers can adapt to their specific situations, and leverage in their daily activities.

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