

culture CONVO

A beginner's guide to
employer branding & social media

Free Excerpt

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Culture Convo

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Culture Convo

*To my beautiful wife Michelle,
whose love and support
(and editing skills)
made this project a reality.*

*To my parents,
who encouraged my passion for writing,
and pushed me to do great things.*

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Introduction

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Employer Branding is really about having conversations.

Conversations with potential candidates, current employees and former employees. Conversations about what it's like to work at your organization. Conversations about your culture.

The goal of these conversations is to build a pool of great people who are excited to come work at your organization... before you've even posted a job opening!

It can make recruiting easier and more effective. It can help you find more candidates. It can help you find *better* candidates.

And, it can help people figure out if they'd be a good fit for your culture before they actually apply for a job.

Social Media is really just a collection of tools that help people have conversations online.

And having conversations online is a lot like having them in real life. The biggest difference is that online conversations are archived and searchable. That makes it really easy for people to find your conversations (*or vice versa*) and join in.

Social media and **employer branding** are a natural fit.

Culture Convo

Sodexo provides quality of life services (*that means things like food service and facilities management*). In 2007, they started using social media to help spread the word about their culture.

Because of their efforts, they've saved over \$300,000 on traditional recruiting marketing and decreased their reliance on job boards. They've also seen a 25-percent increase in the number of candidates applying for their positions.

(You can learn more about Sodexo's social media journey – as well as Zappos' and DAXKO's – in the special bonus interviews section that comes with this book.)

The Catch

There has to be a catch, right?

Here it is: This doesn't work if your culture sucks.

If your organization isn't a good place to work, employer branding won't make it one. Fix your culture first. Then come back and pick up this book.

Another quick word of warning: Like all things worth doing, you'll get out of this what you put into it.

Learning how to use social media tools isn't complicated. But it does take time and consistency. It also takes a willingness to experiment until you find out what works for you and the people you're trying to have conversations with.

In other words, results may vary.

How to Use This Book

Culture Convo is split into three sections.

First, you'll learn how to have a conversation about your culture online. I'll answer the question, “*What do I talk about?*” I'll also discuss how to be the human voice for your corporate brand, and show you how to incorporate photo and video into your conversations.

Next, you'll learn about some specific social media tools. This section covers six of the most popular ones: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Blogging, YouTube and Flickr. You'll learn what each tool is and how to use it. I'll also tell you about a few organizations that you can watch and learn from.

Finally, we'll discuss some of the details. Metrics. How to get your employees involved. Whether or not you need a social media policy. What to do when people say things you don't like.

Culture Convo also comes with a free bonus section featuring interviews with HR and marketing professionals from Zappos, Sodexo and DAXKO – three organizations who are leaders at employer branding with social media!

How to Have a Culture Convo

Culture Convo

One of the most common questions that people who are new to social media ask is, “*What do I talk about?*”

The things that make for good conversation online are the same things that make for good conversation in real life:

- Don’t just talk about yourself.
- Ask a lot of questions.
- Tell stories.
- Share interesting news and useful insights.

Think about the most interesting conversationalist you know. She probably asks a lot of questions. She’s funny and personable. She shares interesting information about lots of other people and things.

She doesn’t just talk about herself (*chances are, she rarely talks about herself*).

Here are some ideas to get you started.

Things to Talk About

- **Insights Into Your Culture.** What makes your culture unique? Are you a training and development leader? Are you a fun place to work? Let people know! (*Not sure how? Check out the callout box on the next page.*)
- **Industry News.** What's going on in your industry? The people that you want to work at your organization are interested in that sort of thing.
- **Community News.** What's going on in the community where your organization (*and labor pool*) is located?
- **How-To Information.** How to write a killer resume. How to nail an interview. How to become a better leader. Share information that will help people be more successful in your organization.
- **A-Day-in-the-Life.** What's it like to work at your organization? Give people an inside glimpse. Share interviews with your employees, tours of the building, and team profiles.
- **Ask Questions.** What's your best interview tip? How do you become a more effective leader? What's one thing you want to know about our organization?
- **Job Openings.** Don't forget that this is ultimately a recruiting tool. Have a job opening? Let people know about it.

What Is Culture?

Talking about culture isn't always easy. After all, culture can be a pretty abstract thing.

In my undergrad anthropology program, we defined culture as “shared, learned behavior.”

When you start thinking about culture in terms of behavior – the things your employees do – it becomes a lot easier to talk about.

Don't Tell People. Show People.

Funny people don't talk about how funny they are. They just say and do funny things.

Having a conversation about your culture works pretty much the same way.

If your organization is a training and development leader, you can use social media to talk about some of the cool development stuff you do. But you should spend a lot more time *showing people* what good training and development looks like.

Talk about how to build a great training program. Share insights on how to grow your career. Provide some free training and development resources that people can share and access online.

If you have a fun culture, you could talk about how fun you are. Or you could do fun things and let people watch.

That's what Zappos and DAXKO do. They have fun videos, photos, contests and more. They don't talk about fun. They *are* fun!

Their social media channels are like a sneak-peek into their culture. And that's the whole point.

(For more ideas on how to talk about your culture, check out the interviews with Sodexo, Zappos and DAXKO in the special bonus section that came with this book.)

Human Voice for a Corporate Brand

People don't want to have a conversation with your organization. They want to have a conversation with a person who works there.

You need to be the human voice for your corporate brand.

So how do you do that? Write like you speak. Don't say anything you wouldn't say in front of an executive, but don't talk like a press release either.

Let people know who they're interacting with. Show them the person behind the organization's name and logo.

(I'll show you some tips on how to do this for each specific social media tool in the next section.)

Photo & Video

Most online communication is still done through text. But photo and video can add texture and personality to your conversations.

Here's what you need to get started...

A Digital Camera

There are a lot of options out there, but I recommend the Canon Powershot SD 780 IS. It can take both still photos and high-definition video, it only costs about \$200, and it's crazy easy to use.

Do a search for this camera on Amazon. You can find some great deals on the camera, a 4 GB memory card and a spare battery.

A Travel Tripod

Travel tripods are really light, can expand up to four feet high, and fold up so small that you can fit them in your computer bag. More importantly, though, they keep your camera stable for great, clear shots.

My favorite is the Targus Travel Tripod from Radio Shack, which only costs about \$15.

Photo Editing Software

I love Picasa, the free, amazingly simple photo editing software from Google. In just a few clicks, you can adjust contrast and light levels, remove red-eye, and crop, resize and rotate images.

Picasa: <http://picasa.google.com>.

Video Editing Software

If you're on a budget, check out Windows Movie Maker. While it doesn't come installed on your computer, it is free to download for Windows users.

The only issue with Windows Movie Maker is that it slightly degrades the quality of your videos. If you have \$300 to spare, I recommend buying Camtasia instead.

Both pieces of software use a simple drag-and-drop interface.

Windows Movie Maker for XP: http://download.cnet.com/Windows-Movie-Maker-Windows-XP/3000-13631_4-10165075.html

Windows Movie Maker for Vista: http://download.cnet.com/Windows-Movie-Maker-Windows-Vista/3000-13631_4-10729231.html.

Camtasia: <http://www.techsmith.com/camtasia.asp>.

Fair Warning

Your first few videos will probably suck. That's ok. The more you make, the better you'll get.

Don't worry about fancy graphics and flashy transitions. When it comes to social media, the quality of the content in the videos – the conversation – matters a lot more than the production quality.

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a beginner's guide to employer branding and social media.

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