



Digital Communication at Dell

Every second two new blogs are created, seven PCs are sold, 2.2 million emails are sent, 520 links are clicked, 1,157 videos are viewed on YouTube, 31,000 text messages are sent. With the explosive growth of social media, society and corporations are embracing this phenomenon as much more than a passing trend. This case focuses on computer manufacturer Dell Inc.'s social media strategy and how it has successfully integrated digital communications into every aspect of its business model. Case readers are put in the shoes of Bob Pearson, VP of Dell's "Conversations & Communities" team, who is tasked with developing Dell's social media strategy. After a rocky start with social media—including an actively blogged service crisis termed "Dell Hell"—Pearson is challenged with not only creating a department and strategy from scratch, but with developing internal buy-in and skill sets needed to get Dell started with Web 2.0. Pearson faced important decisions including how to structure the internal team, what guidelines to set for blogging and social media participation, and how to measure success. The Dell case focuses on how new social media technology is changing not only corporate communication but also business functions such as product development, customer service, marketing, and customer engagement. It offers many valuable lessons for both students and business professionals as they continue to join the Internet age.

Case under revision. Update will be posted soon.

This case was written by Research Associate Jennifer M. Farrelly T'09 of the Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth. It was written as a basis for class discussion and not to illustrate effective or ineffective management practices. Version: August 31, 2009.

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