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Drew West • May. 12, 2014

Late nights of tax filings and days dispensing client advice are easily worth your fees. But how about valueless hours spent tracking down documents, exchanging e-mails, or educating staff? Compounded across *all* your clients, engagements, and staff, imagine how it adds up. Is this what's (literally) keeping you up at night?

Abundant Time Wasters

Numerous studies reveal shocking facts about unproductive time. First, you face up to 7 interruptions every hour (56 a day!) yet 80% of these you consider trivial. Some of these interruptions could be the 112 e-mails you send or receive each day. So why not meet instead? We spend more than 1 hour *every day* in meetings (62 meetings a month!) Half of these we claim are unproductive. But they're still costly: recurring team meetings cost \$10,000 annually (with no solace for executives, whose recurring meetings cost \$30,000!) This kind of busy work isn't getting anyone home earlier.

Could a new approach help? What if by fusing *engagement management* with *social interaction*, we could revolutionize how we manage engagements? Could that reduce those unnecessary interruptions, cumbersome emails and costly unproductive meetings?

It's All Social Now

Social interaction is everywhere. A cousin living across the country that I haven't seen in years just got a new hairstyle. And from her Facebook post, I can attest she looks great. I also saw everyone else's comments, read what she herself thought, and even got to see before-and-after pictures. Social media involved me in a community,

communicated my thoughts, and gave me the complete context of the entire

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Think of an *audit*. You probably have project-management tools that help you through the audit process, but do those tools manage conversations across your team— and also include the client? How about all those documents that must change hands? And all the questions to answer? Don't forget the new participants to bring up to speed! That's a lot of communication! Instead of laboring through phone calls, tripping over e-mails, or scheduling countless meetings, see how the purposeful *community*, meaningful *communication*, and helpful *context* of social collaboration could reduce all that “busy work.”

- **Community.** Everyone, including your clients, must come together— on their own terms of how and when. Having such a large cluster of participants means you'll need to limit access to only relevant discussions or documents. E-mail threads fail, by totally excluding or completely including everyone (anyone in the “CC” sees *everything*.) Conference calls or virtual meetings give you control over discussion topics and participants, but require live participation at a specific time— and often fail to capture the discussion. But *social collaboration* establishes a virtual community which people join from anywhere, and participate whenever it's most convenient. Access to shared documents, tasks and related discussions is easily limited to relevant participants. Imagine your next audit managed not with fragmented e-mail threads or cumbersome conference calls, but through a purposeful community created by social collaboration.
- **Communication.** Project communication is a constant flow of questions, answers, instructions and opinions. But not everyone's participating from the start, so people need an easy way to intermittently contribute. Long e-mail threads rarely maintain a consistent topic, so it's hard to “jump in”— or keep the discussion relevant to 20+ people copied on the thread. And exclusionary 1:1 chat details are immediately lost to history. Smart social collaboration gives every discussion a purpose— categorizing each one by subject, and limiting participation only to

relevant stakeholders (yet adding or removing whenever necessary.) Documents,

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Eliminating such essential, routine, consuming meetings is impossible without the surrounding discussion lost to e-mail threads, phone calls and instant messages— who could possibly understand everything? But a social collaboration workspace makes all the relevant documents not only easily retrievable, but also quickly understood. Imagine an auditor entering the engagement, who can easily see every client question, each answer and every clarification for each item in the PBC binder— all because every conversation is captured in context with each document. How much shorter would that onboarding meeting need to be?

Think of how you work today— and why you might have to work so late. Look to social collaboration as not just a new buzzword, but as a new approach for bringing community, communication, and context to the way you work. Then you can transform that “busy work” into valuable time you can spend on clients... or on yourself.

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