

Tech-Clarity

making the value of technology clear

Tech-Clarity Insight: Going Social with Product Development

*Improving Product Development
Performance with Social Computing*



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Executive Overview

Manufacturers must continue to raise the bar on product development. While the last decade has certainly seen major advancements in processes and tools, most manufacturers are still looking for ways to improve their product development performance. Why are executives still placing such high emphasis on improving product innovation and engineering? There are two primary factors:

- Today's product development environment has become much more complex, making the development of profitable products more difficult.
- Competitive adoption of engineering and product development software has increased performance and raised the standards for product development.

Social computing and “Web 2.0” technologies show significant promise to raise the bar on product innovation, product development, and engineering performance.

Faced with the complexities of today's product development environment, manufacturers are searching for new options to gain an upper hand over their competition. One area that manufacturers are turning towards is the application of social computing techniques. New social computing and “Web 2.0” technologies are being applied in a growing number of business applications, and show significant promise to raise the bar on product innovation, product development, and engineering performance. Specifically, social computing is enabling product developers to:

- Enhance product development team execution and collaboration
- More naturally capture and share product knowledge and expertise
- Enable the discovery of new IP and product value

The intersection of product development software and social computing disciplines, or “Social Product Development,” offers an important opportunity to improve efficiency and effectiveness of new product development (NPD) teams. Social product development is well positioned to further the gains that engineering software has offered to enhance both individual contributions and manage corporate engineering assets. Integrating blogs, wikis, messaging, communities, and other social computing capabilities with product and project data allows manufacturers to extend the benefits of product development systems by tapping into the collective knowledge of extended engineering and product development networks. While social networking by itself can provide value, companies that develop a strategy to leverage the concepts behind social computing in a product development business context will likely gain greater advantages in product profitability than others.

About the Author

Jim Brown is the President and founder of Tech-Clarity, an independent research and consulting firm that specializes in exposing the true business value of software technology and services. Jim has over 20 years of experience in application software for the manufacturing industries, with a broad background including roles in industry, management consulting, the software industry and research spanning enterprise applications such as PLM, ERP, SCM and others. He is passionate about improving product innovation, product development, and engineering performance through the use of social computing techniques.

Jim is an experienced researcher, author and public speaker and enjoys the opportunity to speak at conferences or anywhere that he can engage with people that are passionate about improving business performance through software technology. He is also an avid social networker.

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