

## What's Your Social Communication Strategy?

Irwin Lazar of Collaboration Loop believes that companies should embrace social networking sites as part of their customer service strategy. He writes:

"On the external side, organizations should adopt two approaches. First, they should create a presence for themselves in popular social sites such as Orkut, Facebook, and MySpace, creating groups or pages for customers and interested parties to congregate, exchange tips and information, and enjoy a direct link back to the organization. Presence on social networking sites should be actively promoted and offers the opportunity to reduce support costs by enabling users to organize among themselves to solve problems.

Secondly, larger enterprises should consider creating their own on-line communities to enable customers to support each other... community forums where buyers and owners could ask questions and receive immediate answers from other owners, as well as company representatives. "

The ability to create interactive customer service communities already exists in many well established mediums, such as discussion boards, forums and blogging. This suggests that creating a successful interactive customer community requires more than a mandate and the latest technology.

Irwin also suggests that as part of their external strategy, companies should:

...actively participate in social communities that are directly related to their products and services. ...By participating in these types of forums, enterprises can directly reach their customers, leverage support opportunities, and demonstrate a willingness to have free and open communications with the outside world. Be warned that entering these sites with a sales-centric viewpoint is likely a bad business move. Instead, strive to make your organization an integral contributor to the community at large.