# The art of Retention, Leveraging Social Media for Generation Y retention

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## Abstract

*Millennials, Generation Y workforce as they are commonly referred are some of the most nimble workers in organisations. They are not only passionate about their work but are also not afraid of adopting change. They will be a key factor in "Make in India" initiative as more and more workforce will be needed for expansion and growth of various sectors in different types of industry in India.*

*The main Objectives of Make in India movement is to give the Indian economy global recognition and to create competitive industrial environment and generate employment This young workforce who will be involved in this revolutionary initiative believe in multi-tasking and are able to manage several new projects simultaneously and are able to easily switch from one given task to the other.  They are immensely creative and highly innovative. They choose their personal passion over salary when making choices about their career.  They are highly tech – savvy. Social media has been woven into the fabric of Generation Y (Gen Y), becoming an integral part of their daily routine. This is the fastest growing workforce population and its effective engagement has become a priority for most of the organizations. It is assumed that because this generation is so used to technology and instantaneous feedback, that they look for a experience which gives them instant gratification. The delay or sometimes absence of instant reward usually becomes a cause for frustration for them, and this frustration has a direct effect on both job performance and job satisfaction, leading, to poor retention in organisations.*

*Social media has the capability of contributing user-generated content. This technology-enabled approach is much needed by organisations to retain this future workforce*

*Organizations should become more receptive to generation Y characteristics and tailor strategies according to them.  In light of this, organizations should improve their social media footprints to better manage young generation employees.*

*The present research attempts to study the retention strategies used by organisations to retain Gen Y employees using social media platforms. The research presents a case for social media adoption by organisations to retain Generation Y employees. This will help the organizations; overcome the problem of retaining employees for long run and make Gen Y more comfortable, satisfied and Productive in the era of Make in India.*

**Keywords:** Generation Y, social media, retention, job-satisfaction

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### Make in India and Generation Y

The term 'Generation Y' was first used in 1993 as the last generation to be born exclusively in the twentieth century. These youngsters are born after 1980 & before 2000, this young workforce are also called as Echo Boomers, Millennial, Net Generation, Digital Generation. and Nexters,.

Millennials, who are better known as GenY are the ones who were born in early 80s till late 90s.they are strongly becoming leaders of tomorrow and this pool of talent are scaling new heights.

This generation of people will be extensively working for Make in India initiative undertaken by Government of India. The purpose of Make in India Campaign is. Job Creation, Economic Development and. Global Recognition .The main Mission of the initiative is to "Manufacture in India" and sell the products worldwide by using India's highly talented and skilled manpower and  to create world class zero defect products. The objective is to make India a renowned manufacturing hub for key sectors. Companies across the globe would be invited to make investment and set up factories and expand their facilities in India. For doing this a large workforce of millennials will be needed. The organisations will need a committed team who will accept the challenges and achieve the large scale objectives of the company. This generation of people are difficult to be retained by organisations and talent retention today, has become a far more complex proposition and a different challenge altogether. This creative and innovative Pool of people is very confident and impatient.

Gen Y are people who have a, developmental-orientation, they always have a desire to be recognised and want immediate feedback and have team-orientation. Social media tools are excessively used by Gen Y employees for internal communication, employer branding and career management.
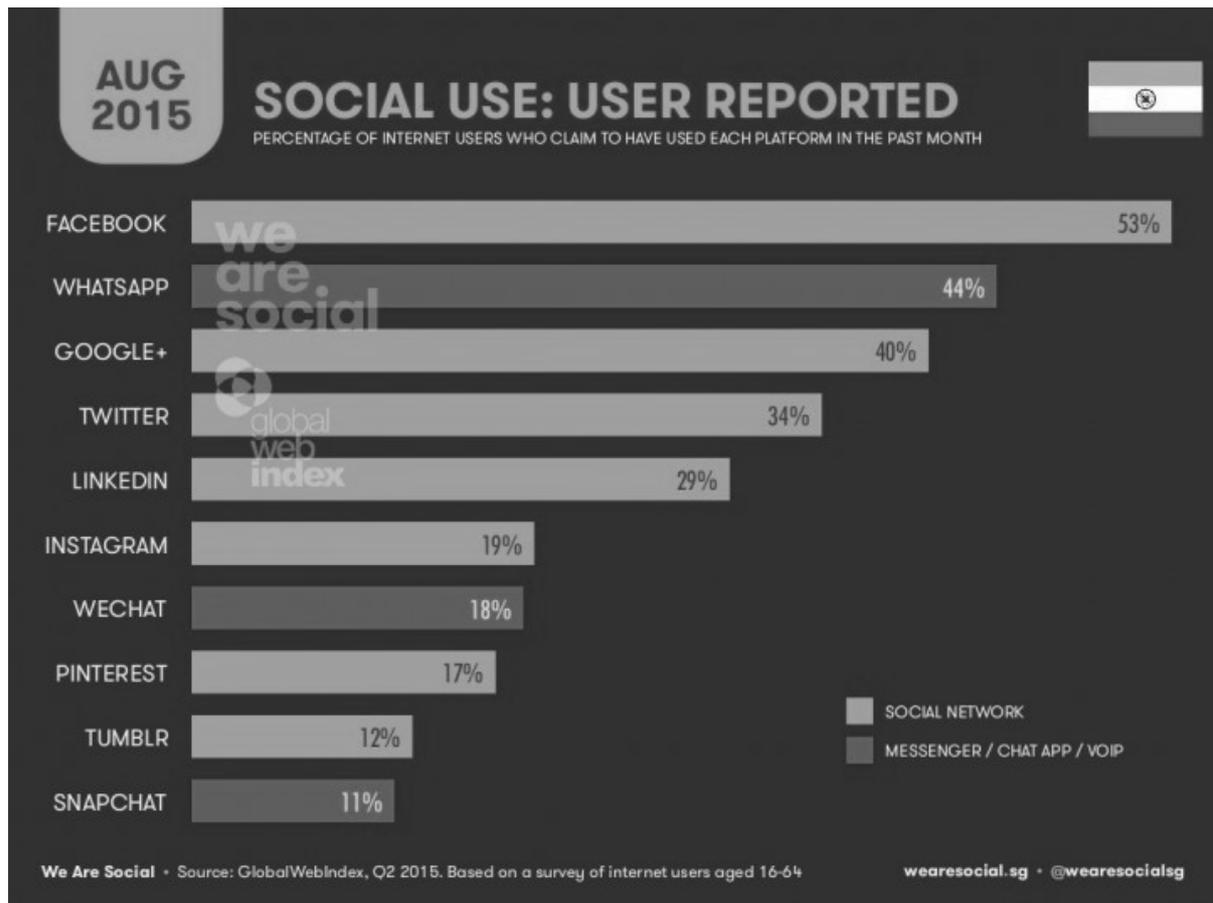
**% of Internet users that use social media by age group (Duggan, 2013)**

| Age of user | % of Internet users using social media |
| --- | --- |
| 18-29 | 83 |
| 30-49 | 77 |
| 50-64 | 52 |
| 65+ | 32 |

This younger generation has grown up with the Internet, social media, and gadgets along with huge exposure to all sorts of information, which has enabled them to form their own perception about the world. This is a generation which views organisation ladder very differently, they give respect not because of age or position but ability. So a superior, cannot command respect instead he has to earn it.. It's a generation that is able to deliver, but wants flexible work schedule. They are extremely committed to work and deadlines, but have an inherent disregard for regimental rigmarole.

It is becoming interestingly very difficult to manage talent of this young workforce and retain them for longer duration in the organization. All over, the world the talent retention figures are high on priority of a progressive organisation; in India, employee turnover is quite higher than the average globally and the figures are highest in Asia.

Organisations  are very well  trying to discover ways to control these high turnover ratios as it results into  many  dire consequences like  work environment instability to losses in the revenue  .

Recent studies  from Microsoft Corp, Evolv and Warck School of Business have all highlighted positive correlations between social media usage in the office, employee retention and productivity.

Talent retention strategies work when psyche of millennials is understood. This Generation Y has certainly thrown up new challenges when it comes to talent retention. The most important factor in talent retention today lies  in the fact as not to   "what an organisation can offer" but in understanding "what does Gen-Y want?" – Strategies used by organisations to retain

**Employee engagement using Social Media**
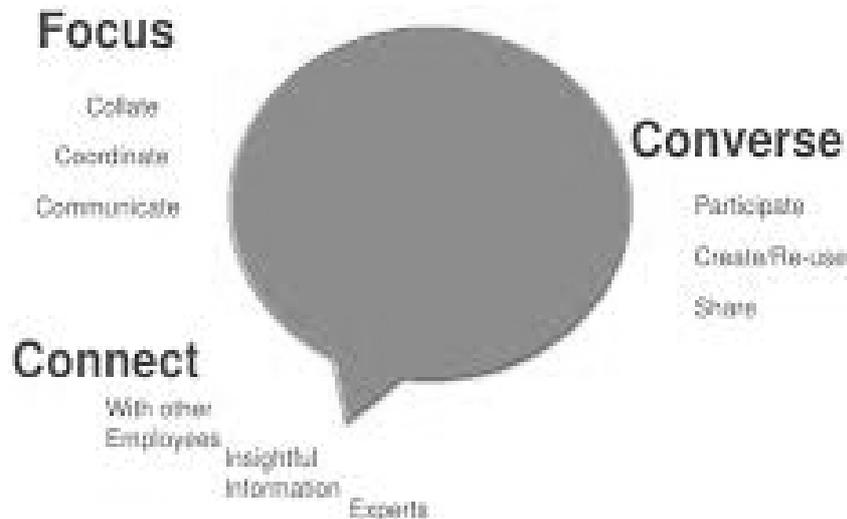
Social media is a online tool that allows individuals to create and share content, make connections with others, and form "groups" some . Examples of social media are        : Facebook  and LinkedIn • Blogs wordpress and Blogger,• Microblog Twitter Video and photo sharing YouTube and Flicker
 Online networking There are even niche social networking sites •Live casting like Ustream • News aggregation like Digg and Reddit
 Social media is not only ideal for finding new potential employees, but it can also lead to engaging and retaining the current work force. Businesses houses are realizing the power of social media and how it can keep its employees engaged In today's technology enabled fast-paced, multimedia workplace, engaging the workforce in organisations through traditional methods is no longer successful.
  According to Segal" A Facebook page can be used to tell employees of new programs or people who have recently joined the company. This method allows employees to react immediately and comment or ask questions,"
 Many multinational organisations are using  a corporate blog and video sharing to broadcast its semi-annual corporate meetings to employees around the world. Social media is  getting recognized as a tool that will  supports workplace flexibility because of its real-time ability to engage employees no matter in which part of the globe they  are working."
Social networking can only be very useful if employers understand and utilise the communications capabilities of these tools. The companies must provide company platforms for sharing ideas but should also closely monitor the activity to promote meaningful conversation
An organisation has to Establish Rules of Engagement for everyone to understand what is appropriate at the workplace, when and to what extent such tools can be used. some ground rules needs to be established. Employees should not be viewing  managers as the police who is closely monitoring and checking their behaviour. This will lead to sabotage of trust and stop employees from fully participating in different activities. There must be some flexibility for sharing ideas. Organisations like CISCO and Walmart have a clear internet policy in place.
Cisco's social networking postings policy applies to employees who use social networking sites, blogs, Wikipedia.
Essentially, the policy explains why employees should include a disclaimer noting their posts do not reflect the view of the company, when it is acceptable to use a Cisco logo on a blog or posting, when an employee should ask a manager for clearance before posting, and a clause that Cisco can remove inappropriate posts on Cisco blog sites.
Wal-Mart established guidelines for external discussion on Twitter. Wal-Mart says in its policy that the corporation answers Twitter's simple question ("What are you doing?"), "We are working every day to help people save money and live better." That's easy. But Wal-Mart knows it cannot control what its 2.2 million-plus associates may say. Wal-Mart encourages dialogue between its employees and stake holders.
**Utilizing Social Media in retaining Gen Y employees**
No longer Gen Y be retained by attractive pay packages and perks alone. They have  many career options, needs more flexible work environment, are lured by shorter job tenures, and believe in new rules of psychological contact that

replace loyalty and job security with multiskiling and mobility therefore they aspire more, have insatiable needs and require innovative ways to be retained. Organizations must adopt this change by giving opportunities to Generation Y to express their ideas and communicate and network using social media. This approach may lead to better retention of employees in the organisations. This approach can be leveraged to actively engage and thus retain them. Social media is catering to need for feedback and team-orientation of Gen Y by providing a platform to them for content sharing, communication and relationship building and also, employer branding and career management.

Organizations should try to incorporate    tools like blogs wikis, discussion boards help chats, videos, teaching communities, and intranets for employee engagement and training purpose. Some other social media tools LinkedIn can be effectively used to share expertise by senior members of the organisation. This tools can also be used by organisations to endorse skills of the employees .Facebook can be used to build a emotional bond by wishing them on their birthday or anniversary this will create a perception that management value and care for them and develop a sense of belongingness

## Employee motivation and engagement for retention

Organisations can recognise good performance of their employees through Social Networking Sites announcements. Employees can congratulate each other, building an environment of team work and encouraging peer-to-peer feedback. It is concluded from many researches that, the more engaged the  employees are in their workplace, the more likely they are to stay.

The use of social media in organisations can reduce attrition rate as well. Evolv a Big data firm, monitored employee performance and  social media use and found that digital connectivity increased retention. The study on 39,000 employees, focused on hourly workers in the U.S. concluded that, "The employees who used 1 to 4 social networking sites on a weekly basis stayed at their jobs longer than their counterparts." And more interesting, the "ultra-social" employees that used more than 5 social networks had higher sales than their peers.

## Literature Review

According to Erickson (2008), Generation Y's population is currently estimated between 70 and 90 million individuals, depending on the specified boundaries

 According to  Terjesen, Vinnicombe & Freeman,2007; Twenge, 2010,this generation has received considerable attention in recent industry publications and contemporary academic research this is arguably the  most educated and intelligent   generation to date, Generation Y pursues college and advanced degrees at a higher rate than previous generations (Blain 2008; Erickson 2008; NAS 2006).

 However, despite its popularity, there has been little academic work done to retain this generation. The themes of study on Gen Y include generation-based studies (Parry and Urwin, 2011), work value systems (Gursoy, Chi and Karadag, 2013, Gursoy, Maier and Chi, 2008; Terjesen, Vinnicombe and Freeman, 2007); attitudinal studies (Jansen, Sobel and Cook, 2010;), motivational profiles (Chen and Choi, 2008)and personality profiling (Twenge and Campbell, 2008

In general, Gen Y members have strong relationship ethic and are team and result-oriented individuals (Twenge, 2010). This might have been the result of working in teams, having been assigned team projects at school and college. However, prefer less formal interaction with managers and prefer (Ng, Schweitzer & Lyons 2010).They have strong career-orientation and take more chances with career choices and seek employment that offers opportunities for advancement and long-term career progression (Terjesen et al., 2007).

Brecht, Koroleva and Guenther (2011) have suggested social media policy about organisations they believe that it should be subjective to target audience, like if young generation is the target then Social Networking Sites should be used. This has many benefits as applicants can obtain information about company while company can also scan their profiles on these sites.

Sivertzen, Nilsen and Olafsen (2013) in their study examined the relationship between employer branding, social media and intentions to apply for a job. They found that social media and employer attributes are positively linked to employer reputation that attracts potential employees.

### Social Networking tools and their uses

| Social Media Tools | Uses and applications |
| --- | --- |
| Social Networking | Include tools such as Facebook LinkedIn, Twitter MySpace, and (enable users to find and link to other people. Once linked or connected, one can keep up to date with that person's contact information, interests, posts, etc), The distinguishing feature of a social networking site is the ability to upload a personal profile. This is the most popular category of social media |

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| Social content sharing | Include tools such as Pinterest, Snapfish, Flickr and YouTube (enable users to create, upload, and share videos or photos with others |
|---|---|
| Social news | Include tools such as Sphinn, Digg and Newsvine (enable users to read news topics, vote and comment |
| Lifestreaming / Microblogging | Include tools such as Plurk and Twitter often called 'presence apps' (enable users to post very short messages (kind of blogging) and keep abreast of others'updates) |
| Community -moderated content | Include tools such as Wikipedia (Multilingual, collaboratively-edited free Internet encyclopedia) Others Include tools such as Podcasts, RSS Feeds, Discussion Forums, Gamification and Virtual communities. |

LinkedIn has a second largest user base in India, US being the first.
Facebook now has 125 Million MAUs in India, out of which 114 Million are mobile Facebook users. The figure makes India a second largest country using Facebook, US being the first!

Pinterest has over 70 million users; 8.19 million users are from India.

India saw a 100% rise in social media users compared with last year according to IAMAI.
**Advantages of Social Media at Work**
Social media is a great avenue for managing, monitoring, and promoting brand; successfully recruiting and hiring strong candidates; targeting and executing sales; and conducting market research.

**Ease of Communication**
 Employees often complain that they do not get chance to express their views and ideas. An internal social media platform creates opportunity where the corporate hierarchy reduces. Employees directly interact with senior leadership easily. Social media thus encourages exchange of ideas and decreases communication gaps in the office settings.

**Increase in production**
 Motivated employees are more productive than the employees who are stressed out .one very effective way of motivating them is praising their work and efforts using social media channels. Recent studies have shown that social media interaction by employers and embracing social media usage by praising, strong employees actually helps to boost productivity and retention among them.

**Analyzing Data.**
With recent advancements in the analytics technology employers have the ability to analyze internal company trends, consolidate employee skill sets, and find potential leaders that may have been hidden behind the scenes. Having this additional information can help shape internal programs and individualize them to align with employee goals.
 **Intelligence**
Use of Social media  makes the employees smarter. Those who are actively communicating, and extending online networks are considered to be most involved, innovative, and progressive-minded people. They're engaging in thoughtful conversations and trending as experts in their industries.

**Disadvantages of Social Media at Work**
Despite the increasing usage of social media in the workplace, many employers are still not sure of as  how to monitor the use of networking sites by  employee and address questionable employee action of over usage.
Generation Y is looking forward to take their social interests to the organizational levels and this has engulfed the HR department to take up new initiatives to manage the working of Generation Y. 2 in 5 employees of this generation say that they cam compromise on a lower salary in exchange for more in social media access but still there are problems faced by organisations in allowing employees to use social media platforms.
**Cyber security.**
 Hackers can   create fraud, start spamming, and also create problems by sending companywide viruses through a social media platform. It has become very important for HR team to hire cyber security experts to protect company network using cyber security programs. ..
**Loss of Confidential Information**
Loss of Confidential Information Another major disadvantage of using social media in organizations is the potential loss of confidential information. Social media allows employees to gain access to large volumes of organization's

confidential information while sitting at their desk. Hence any malicious or even unintentional posting by an employee can result in leakage of this information. This can cause the company embarrassment, financial damage or even expose the organization to major security risks (Van Zyl, 2008).

## Objective and Methodology

The present research attempts to study the employee engagement strategies used by organisations for employee engagement and  retention strategies to retain Gen Y employees using social media platforms. The research presents a case for social media adoption by organisations to retain Generation Y employees. This will help the organizations; overcome the problem of retaining employees for long run and make Gen Y more comfortable, satisfied and Productive in the era of Make in India.

Many organizations were a part of the current  research , secondary data tools were used to collect information from various sources. . The  findings were based on collected information on the usage of social media tools and their relative advantages and constraints and usage  of social media tools for employee retention and employee engagement. The research also used the one-on-one discussions with the HR experts which provided valuable insight in the design and execution of present research.

## Findings

Based on the survey by Tata Consultancy Services a premier organisation , which has very recently reported an interesting survey on Generation Y  using social networking sites in India Here are some of the highlights of the report:

## Social Networking:

75.73% of the Gen Y respondents who were a part of the survey  reported  that they have a Facebook account. 21% of such  users post daily and 25% post thrice a week. Google+ is the  next most preferred social networking site of Gen Y  Indians as 17.6% have an account there.

Twitter, Pinterest and LinkedIn are other very popular social networking sites in India.  Connectivity wise  59% of all Facebook users in India have more than 120 friends on Facebook. 31% of Gen Y has Twitter account,

## Gadgets Usage:

86% of Gen Y have a mobile phone ; 77% of the population surveyed has a PC; 55% Gen Y own a laptop; 48% use a MP3 player; 35% has a gaming console and the fastest growth is in tablets as 32% own at least one.

## Information Access:

50% of Gen Y is spending 30-60 minutes on Internet, everyday; meanwhile 30% of them spend more than 60 minutes on the web, every day.

## Cases of social media usage by employees in organisations.

## Coco Cola Unbottled

**Coca Cola** is huge on encouraging open communication with their employees, they engage in frequent dialogue with their associates around the world so they can foster valuable information and ideas, increase awareness and promote business strategies, share successes and opportunities, and solicit employee opinions.

With this sort of mentality its no surprise that Coca Cola was one the of the first companies to realize the need for employee and customer involvement through social media. They have created a blog called Unbottled. It  is a platform for coca cola employees to talk about ideas, initiatives, events and the social good that coca cola is doing. It is also a place where employees can share their "insider perspective" on working at coca-cola and post pieces on healthy living, sustainability initiatives and just light hearted content to engage readers and customers.

## IBM Beehive

- IT giant IBM   uses  social  media technology as a strategic tool for employee engagement and retention.  IBM has networking tool called Beehive and several blogs for its employees which they use for  real-time information exchange and for  improving their  continuous communication. Employees are encouraged to inspire discourse and share ideas via blogging and social media.

## Lenovo  Social Champions campaign

Lenovo is a global Fortune 500 company and the world's largest personal computer manufacturer, and its employees scattered across the globe.

Lenovo currently has approximately 60,000 employees across 60 countries with it's 2 main headquarters in Beijing, China and Morrisville, North Carolina, USA.

The strategic program to deal with such a diverse workforce is done using digital employee engagement realm.

Lenovo's solute ion was to start an internal social network, Called  Lenovo Social Champions. where employees *share new ideas and innovation*

According to the Altimeter Group article, Strengthening Employee Relationships in the Digital Era , there are three types of digital employee engagement initiatives. Internal collaboration, digital /social empowerment and employee advocacy.



**FIGURE 7** THREE TYPES OF DIGITAL EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVES
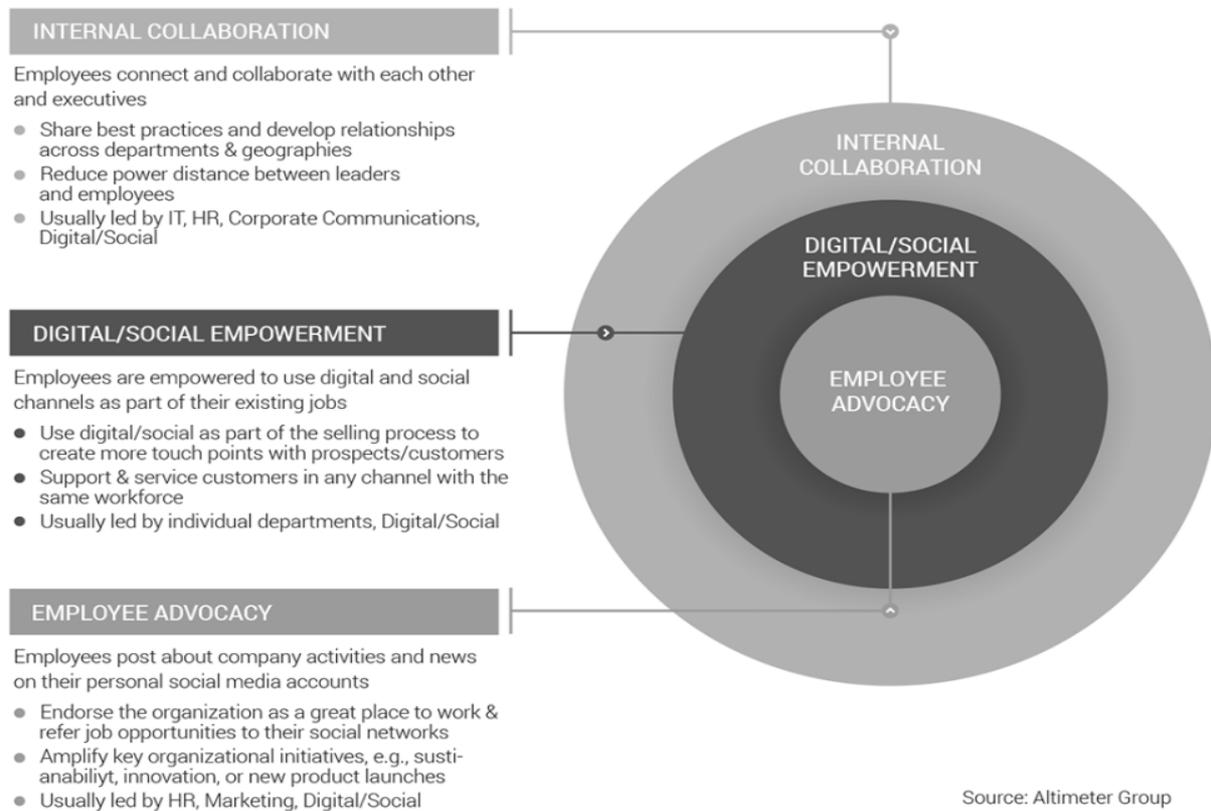
Lenovo clearly targeted Employee Advocacy. Employee Advocacy describes the publicity that employees can create for their employers by being engaged and promoting them through a variety of online tools.

Employee advocacy taps into the power of your employee resources that you have already invested in and are already invested in your success.

Studies show that people implicitly trust a company's employees over the company's brand message. If you can engage your employees to foster a culture of advocacy – it can be very beneficial to your brand.
"

**HP (Hewlett-Packard):**



HP is one of the biggest information technology corporations in the world. The company has an interesting take on blogging policies by enabling its employees to post content online via a blog embedded in their company website.

**Starbucks**

Starbucks: Another organization that has developed its own social media platform for communicating with their consumers and for innovation is Starbucks. Starbucks started a social media platform called "My Ideas" in collaboration with Salesforce.com (http://mystarbucksidea.force.com/). Starbucks uses the social media platform to build "...an online community dedicated to sharing and discussing ideas and allowing you (consumers) to see how Starbucks is putting top ideas into action." (http://mystarbucksidea.force.com/). Users first have to sign up to the social media platform and post ideas for new coffee, new experiences, community events, entertainment and so on. Other users can "like" the idea and post comments and opinions on those ideas. The most popular one is selected by a

specialized team, which forwards the idea to upper management and key decision makers. These ideas are then implemented and the progress of implementation is also shown on the website, making the consumers feel that they have a key role in the company. Having their own platform, they can control the content on their website by banning profanity and inappropriate content, and disallowing repeat offenders

## Discussion

Generation Y is a generation that knows what it wants, in terms of its space, comfort levels and communication channels. They are seeking to collaborate and rapidly exchange knowledge and information and networking for acceptance, thus challenging ways traditional organisations functioned.

In changing times those organisations that uses social media as a window into their system will reap the benefits in terms of employee satisfaction, productivity and employee retention. Employees will feel greater satisfaction if the organisations allow use of social media tools and in such work settings employees will feel that they have a voice. which is heard. They will believe that they have a say in the functioning of the organisation and will be more happier and feel more engaged.

If Employees start believing that their organisation 'understand their language', and acts on the same values system, they will likely to be highly engaged.

"Generation Y are very career driven, but they expect a lot in return, and if an employer does not provide it, they will move on to a different job,"

They perceive work place environment as an emotionally engaged place where they socialise, learn and collaborate. They generally like to work in such settings where they can openly collaborate, innovate and be creative. Organisations will have to recognise the priority millineals place on flexibility and fulfilling social needs at work, while at the same time setting realistic expectations of career paths and advancement opportunities.

However, no tool for employee retention and employee engagement is perfect and  social media tools are no different. There are a number of problems in using social media as a window in the organizational system. It  can be security  and information overload a time and, unwillingness to share information, however, in most cases the advantages of adopting social media outweigh the challenges. It is quite possible to overcome these challenges of social media use through a combination of organizational will and technology. Though it is clear that these new technologies are proving to be useful for decision-making, there is a long way to go before they reach their full potential. Large corporations are still very cautious about adopting social media. However, it would be a mistake for organizations to wait until the social media technology matures further, as these tools are here to stay.

Security threats of social media are another important  area where a lot of caution  needs to be taken . More and more hackers are exploiting the new security loopholes and new hacking scams are reported. Social media today contains a lot of personal data like facebook and Linkedin. A truly secure server with no loopholes is almost an impossible task. However, continuous work and research needs to be performed so that organizations don't feel threatened by using social media

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