



Leading Transformation and Captivating Communities

Brian Solis

Social media has started a revolution in how people connect, learn and communicate, and its effects cannot be undone.

Most notably, social media is helping to facilitate real world revolutions by bringing together passionate people around social platforms to organize efforts and achieve desired outcomes. And through each, the world learns the importance of Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and other emerging networks in our society. As the old saying goes, “we ain’t seen nothing yet.” Change is in the air and the ties that bind are formed through the relationships between people who share online connections, experiences, and real world aspirations.

What you’re about to read is a manifesto for change, to bring about evolution or revolution for what it is you believe in, for what it is you wish to change in your world. This was written to spark your rallying cry. My intention was to help you unlock what it is you already possess, a vision to see things differently, the way they should be, and heart to inspire those around you to bring your vision to life. With the power of social media at your fingertips, you can organize and lead transformation far more efficiently than ever before. But to embrace this opportunity, we must realize your role and the place and capabilities of social media in your quest.

Remember, social networks are powerful channels that reach hundreds of millions of people around the world. It is what you do with these networks that counts. It is what you do in real life that brings about the change you envision.

A Change in Seasons: From the Arab Spring to Occupy Fall.

In 2011, the world was introduced a powerful uprising in the Middle East that would later become known as the “Arab Spring.” Facebook, Twitter and YouTube served as the nervous system of shared repression and fed the rise against tyranny. Through organization, commitment, and growing support, everyday citizens overthrew unwanted government dictatorships to force change in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya. The hardships and sacrifices of those who could no longer stomach life under oppression took a stand and never backed down.

As you well know, revolutions aren’t merely limited to citizens rebelling against governments. And as we’re all learning, social networks can do more than simply play a role in just connecting friends, family and co-workers for meaningless banter or pleasant distractions.

A few short months following the Arab Spring, the Occupy movement emerged to rally consumer discontent to protest against big businesses, corrupt financial industries, and rising unemployment. In less than 60 days, the “99%” took to Wall Street and eventually inspired movements in over

95 cities across 82 countries and in over 600 communities in the United States. Initiated by the Canadian Activist group Adbusters, the Occupy movement was inspired partly by the Arab Spring and was organized to express a clear and resounding message that everyday people, the 99%, had had enough and it was time to say something. It was this single word, enough, that expressed so much and so little at the same time. But after further discourse, it was clear. Protesters wanted an increase in the availability of more and better jobs, equal distribution of income, bank reform, and a reduction of the influence of “big money” on politics.

Believe me when I say that it’s just a matter of time until the Arab Spring and the Occupy movements trigger uprisings and protests against specific businesses, governments, and educational facilities that operate under a regime of business as usual.

Customers feel unsupported.

Citizens question their representative’s motives.

Consumers are fed up with corporate greed and golden bailouts.

People want to be heard and they’re willing to fight for change, equality, and democracy.

The question is, who is listening? And, who is willing to respond in a way that doesn't just satisfy a protest, but leads a new regime of relevance to stay in touch, to learn from, and to inspire those who support them.

The era of command and control is over.

The world needs you now more than ever.

Can You Spare Some Change? The Human Network Sets the Foundation for Rapid Organization.

With every status update, Tweet, online video, and text message, the world empathizes with those who see an opportunity to improve the state of society and those who struggle for change. Through Twitter, Facebook and text messaging, the digital effects of network density are effectively organizing, optimizing and galvanizing insurrection.

140 characters is more than enough to convey the struggles of humanity and consumerism.

With every Tweet and status update, empathy spreads and support strengthens. Until suddenly, we look up to see that the world is watching, compassionate, and reaching out to help.

While history books will pay credit to social networks for their role in aligning restlessness with revolt throughout the Arab Spring and Occupy movements, what's important to not overlook or underestimate is the shared experiences and sentiment of people. It is people, not networks, who bring about transformation. It is you who must lead, not because of social networks, but because of what you see. You must demonstrate why your vision is important, and articulate how you will lead us toward something more substantial than we know today.

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See, social media is not the catalyst for change, but merely one of its agents. We must remember that Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and the like are the networks that facilitate an uprising. However, it is repression, angst, injustice, inequality, vision, aspiration and hope that serve as the true stimulus for insurrection and progress. Technology plays a part in transformation and it is up to you to learn how social, mobile, real-time, and all other emerging trends are affecting your industries, communities, or markets.

What we learn as a result, however, is that these new tools can bring people together and unite them under a common front or concerted mission. At the center of any revolution is the burning desire to bring about change. But it always comes down to people, shared experiences, and a common ambition. And it is people who need one another for leadership, support, and inspiration. What's missing from the equation is your vision and leadership.

Tell us what you see.

Share with us your vision for a better future.

Inspire us to follow you.

Keep us next to you along the way.

We need your guidance, your inspiration, your trust to extend the reach of our mission, and we need your help to develop a working infrastructure, process, and milestones to help us work together.

Standing at the Intersection of Social Media and Change.

Social media is obviously important—you already get this. Social media, though, is only part of the equation. You may or may not already realize this, but you are standing squarely at a crossroads between social media and transformation because of social media and the gap that exists between you and your stakeholders. At this moment, you're presented with a choice and your decision requires focus and perseverance.

Do you wish to lead the transformation of your stakeholder engagement program through social media or do you wish to lead the transformation of your entire organization?

If you think about the spotlight social networks earn in every new protest or revolution, it's easy to assume that creating a social media program within your organization will help you earn relevance and, by default, cause change and force the evolution of the prevailing philosophy, processes, and overall mission. While important, social media in of itself does not magically force existing leadership to mature or learn. Social networks are not the catalysts for revolution or change.

This is the end of business as usual. And furthermore, this is the end of anything “as usual.” We are witnessing a leveling of the playing field as everyday people become connected and equally influential online and offline. Any organization that discounts the role people play

in the interworking of society and commerce will miss an opportunity for collaboration, co-creation and eventually relevance.

Your role is to make things matter, to make people align with your mission, and to share values and experiences that marry ideas, desires, and quests to bring people together as one. Without you, what will change? How will you force the progress of progress in a meaningful direction?

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Everything begins with recognizing where you or your organization stands as compared to the needs, shared experiences, and aspirations of your consumers or stakeholders. Right now, your stakeholders are sharing their experiences and sentiment. As they do, they are influencing the decisions of others. Shared experiences contribute to a collective reality that differs from how you see and sell your brand or story today. At some point, collective sentiment, if consistently negative, will capsize and spill back into communities and ultimately spark insurrection.

The gap that exists between becomes the manifesto for engagement and overall transformation to bridge the gap and develop more meaningful experiences and relationships. You are reading this because you are the one who will study and empathize with the experiences that define the gap. It is you who will take the initiative and responsibility to bridge the gap and lead the change necessary to earn support and relevance.

Your charter, of course, varies whether your mission is connecting with people in emerging networks to answer questions, solve problems, gather support, or learn from their interactions and adapt processes and products to proactively design meaningful and shareable experiences.

Go Your Own Way: We Will Follow.

Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz has had enough. In an interview with CNNMoney, he took a stand as a human being and demonstrated that he is willing to step outside of his role of CEO to bring about change, “We have a crisis of confidence in this country. Washington is not producing the leadership we need and I think it is time that corporations and business leaders realize that we too have to do something. We can’t wait for Washington.”

In October 2011, Schultz introduced a program to help create jobs in small businesses across the country. By using the reach of 6,800 Starbucks locations, tens of millions of customers will have

the opportunity to donate to the Create Jobs for USA program, www.CreateJobsforUSA.org, with all proceeds benefitting the Opportunity Finance Network. Patrons who donate \$5 will receive a red, white, and blue wristband that reads “Indivisible.” It’s not the wristband that matters—the word indivisible reflects both a mantra and a working objective.

It’s in Schulz’s words that we take inspiration for leading the efforts to bring about the change we envision, “This is not about marketing. This is not about Starbucks. This is about us saying to ourselves, we can’t sit by and be a bystander any longer.”

To become indivisible requires vision, unity, and shared passion to bring about transformation.

As you know, change agents are not necessarily new to innovation, but may be new to the process of introducing and managing change. The name “change management” seems ominous and arduous. But understanding what it is will help us in our quest toward relevance. Change management is the processes, tools, and techniques for managing the people side of change. The process is designed to reduce friction and resistance and promote opportunity.

We are no longer bystanders. It’s time to take a stand. You are an activist for transformation. You are the change agent your organization or cause so desperately needs. By following these important steps, we become invincible and indivisible.

The 10 Tenets of Transformation.

Identify the channels your stakeholders use to communicate, learn and share.

1. **Study the true sentiment and experiences of those who represent threats and opportunities.**
2. **Document themes, trends, gather the necessary data, and open yourself to input and empathy.**
3. **Evaluate the best practices in how other similar organizations are successfully embracing change.**
 - a. Also study those who are failing to recognize opportunities.
4. **Conduct an internal and external audit to assess needs, readiness for change and surface the nuances necessary to create an action plan.**
5. **Write your change manifesto to define the change you wish to see and demonstrate the upside of transformation to make the case to skeptics or the uninformed.**
 - a. Ensure that your manifesto becomes a working strategy and plan...make it actionable.
6. **Seek an influential, executive-level sponsor who will champion your mission among decision makers.**

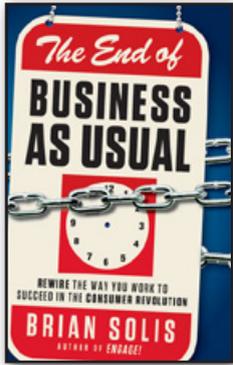
7. **Organize a taskforce of authoritative or connected stakeholders to create a centralized organization to take responsibility for leading the transformation.**
 - a. This taskforce includes representatives from all functions, affected divisions, and notable stakeholders
 - b. Assign responsibilities and milestones to your change management team... make everyone accountable for delivering against the plan
8. **Define messages and the communication plan.**
 - a. Shape the messages for each stakeholder group
 - b. Set expectations
 - c. Reduce fears and concerns
 - d. Inspire your stakeholders to make change scale and optimize transformation
9. **Activate all social channels that reach stakeholders to impart and earn relevance.**
 - a. Communicate the vision, mission, and purpose
 - b. Convey empathy
 - c. Build awareness and demonstrate progress
 - d. Convert detractors
 - e. Recruit new stakeholders to extend reach

Your mission is to lead transformation and plant the seeds that lay a foundation for a more adaptive organization or cause. And, the greatest assets of an adaptive organization are its stakeholders. It comes down to people regardless of the medium they use to connect, discover, and share. To succeed, stakeholders must stay motivated and aligned with the new or renewed vision and mission. Change isn't an overnight venture. It is the journey toward change that instills hope, renews vigor, and opens the doors to relevance and new opportunities.

Look in the mirror and you will see change staring back at you. And as they say, objects in the mirror are closer than they appear.

This is your time. 📍

Info



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR | Brian Solis is principal at Altimeter Group, a research-based advisory firm. Solis is globally recognized as one of the most prominent thought leaders and published authors in new media. A digital analyst, sociologist, and futurist, Solis has studied and influenced the effects of emerging media on business, marketing, publishing, and culture. At Altimeter, Brian works with businesses on new media strategies and frameworks to build bridges between companies and customers, employees, and other important stakeholders. Additionally, he specializes in change management to help businesses introduce new media resources, systems and processes to effectively embrace and excel around the connected customer.

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