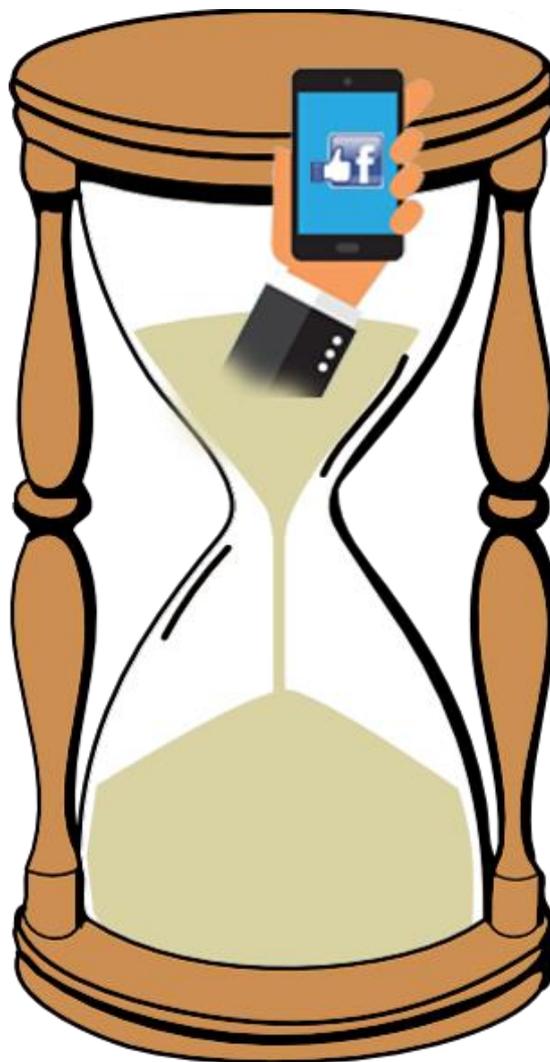




TeamLeaseTM
Putting India to Work

WORLD OF WORK SERIES

INSIGHTS INTO THE EVOLVING WORLD OF WORK



Volume 5, September 19, 2016

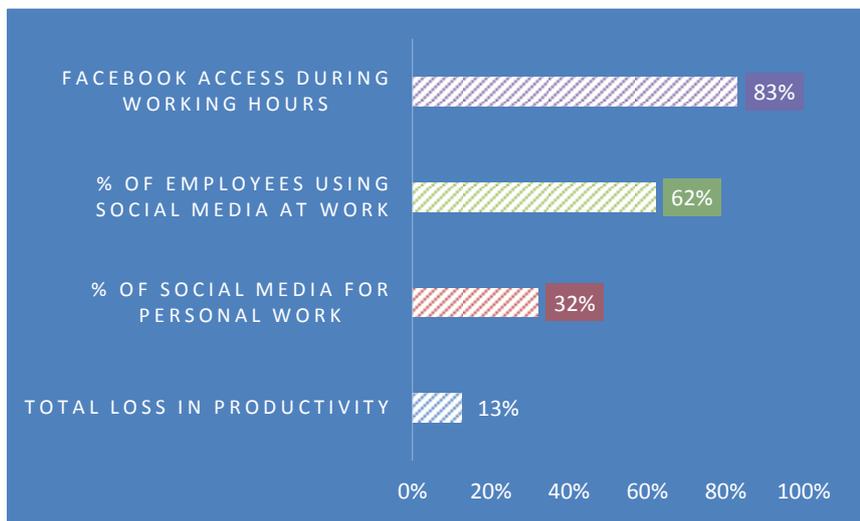
Social Media & Slacking: It is a time sink indeed



Social Media & Slacking: It is a time sink indeed

With mobile internet penetration surging, and having crossed 35% this year, potentially every educated adult – and also many an illiterate – has a bevy of social networks at ones fingertips. The use of social media at the workplace, and the resultant slacking (neglecting work), is more rampant today than ever. While many employers have policies in place, and some employers are actually innovating and leveraging social media to their benefit, most are clueless about how the menace could be handled. As the show goes on Pokemon-Go briefly took over from SnapChat and WhatsApp to play Pied Piper to a crazed generation.

Of the many fallouts of social media use at work slacking, or the neglect of work, is the most subtle and,



potentially, at least as damaging as the others – abuse and harassment, loss of confidential information, defamation and misinformation and employee solicitation. Policies and measures

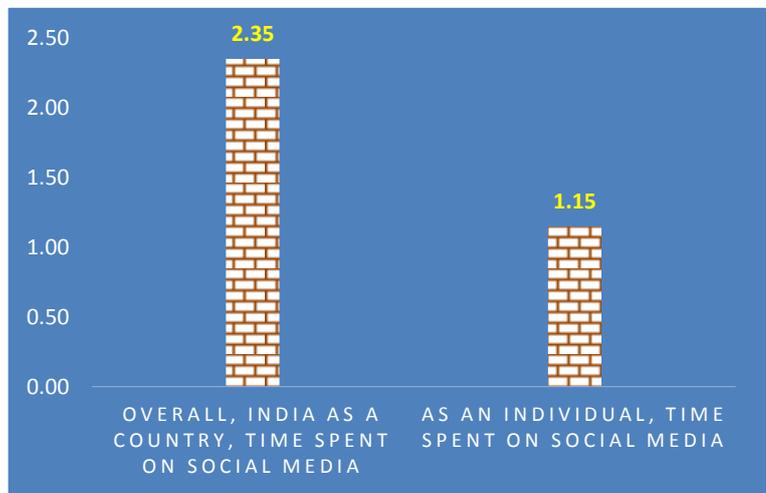
Poor quality of content and interactions don't make for stimulating conversations that could feed back into creative work.

to contain the loss of efficiency and productivity certainly help. Turning the tide around and making productive use of social media is even better. But there is no denying that there are many more organizations grappling with the loss of productivity than those benefiting from the medium.



An Employee Engagement Manager at a mid-sized advertising firm says, *"At first, we thought that creative minds need to be set free and not restrained by curbs on social media usage. However, two years down the road we have had to clearly lay out a code to govern the use of social at work."* His refrain includes the poor quality of content and interactions that just don't make for stimulating conversations that could feed back into creative work. Contrast this with what a General Manager in a contract manufacturing firm producing precision aircraft components has to say – *"Mere use of social media, and not even indulgence, is detrimental to the nature of the task we are involved in. The distraction could prove disastrous, we cannot entertain such pastimes. The WhatsApp menace is more than just fun, rumour-mongering and mobile-abuse have a new dimension now."*

A senior manager representing a technology startup differs, and for good reason. *"By virtue of being a startup, with its high-pressure work environment, we leave it to our people to mix fun and work. Social media is a handy outlet for them to relieve stress."* His organization also engages employees on the company's Facebook group and LinkedIn page while they are at it – 'some collateral benefit', he quips. He is certainly mindful of the other ills that social media is associated with, particularly – dissemination of confidential information, and says systems are in place to discourage such occurrences.



While the perceived idiocy of the medium and the associated distractions are causes

for adequate measures by some employers, some others are wary of indulgent, negative, behaviour online which spills over at the water cooler. The Vice President – QA, at a Biomedical firm seems to have first-hand experience of having to diffuse a rather belligerent argument a bunch of her teammates got engrossed in. *"Tempers flew when this young coworker made a perfectly innocent, but irreverent, comment aimed at a hugely popular political leader, on a WhatsApp group, and all hell broke loose with the hero-worshippers retaliating! In a matter of minutes they accosted him in the pantry and, luckily, I was around and could intervene to bring the noisy situation in control."*



Organizations that actively use social networks as an element of their product or service also opine that there needs to be some control over their use, *"We have had bad examples of how our data scrapers have often gone off their brief of acquiring Facebook data and spent hours on their own personal accounts posting pictures and chatting up with friends"*, says an analyst at a boutique social data text mining outfit. *"We have a catch-22 – damned if we get them on Facebook, damned if we didn't."* she laughs.

It is clear, therefore, that there are multiple dimensions of slacking associated with the use of social media. Respondents believed that they lose between 15% to as much as 45% in productivity due to social media indulgence. *"It is a time sink"*, says the CEO of a Learning and Development services company spread across Asia and Africa. *"People get in during say, after-lunch hours and then lose themselves on social media. We estimate to be losing about 20% productivity because of this juvenile behaviour. With Pokemon-Go turning into a rage never seen before we wonder where this will all stop."*

What might be effective counterbalance to this loss to business? How would employers recoup valuable time and focus lost to the many virtual watering holes much of their talent hangs out at? *"While there*

Devise challenging roles, reward innovation, in general, create a culture of pride and happiness doing work.

have to be policies that moderate the use of social networks at work, you have to also make work exciting for people to not stray from. Devise challenging roles, reward innovation, in general, create a culture of pride and happiness doing work", the Head of Corporate Communications in an MNC engineering design firm says.

His recipe seems to be a pragmatic solution to the problem that has been gnawing at the heels of businesses the world over. Besides instituting rules, organizations could do well to get to the root cause of the indulgence – pastimes getting more interesting to talent to indulge in than work. Making work itself – and the work culture – more aspirational just might wean the slackers away from the pied pipers.



TeamLease Services Limited



www.teamlease.com



“let’s tweet together”
@TeamLease



like us on Facebook
/teamleaseservices



Create professional buzz
/company/teamlease



Get inspired!,
subscribe to TeamLease Channel



Stories worth share
with +TeamLease



TeamLease Apps
Teamlease Connect - Customer information at fingertips
Teamlease Jobs - Find a Dream Career

TeamLease Services Limited

Bangalore | Ahmedabad | Chennai | Delhi | Hyderabad | Kolkata | Mumbai | Pune