"Power is shifting from executive C-suites to employee cubicles."

THROWING SHEEP IN THE BOARDROOM

BY MATTHEW FRASER AND SOUMITRA DUTTA

This book is more than just about the power of online networks it is about how they, through "Web 2.0", are transforming our lives.

"As The Economist put it 'Society is in the early phases of what appears to be a media revolution on the scale of that launched by Gutenberg in 1448'. The Renaissance revolution, which brought the printed word to the masses, empowered collective action that triggered the Reformation and helped shape the conditions that led to the emergence of capitalism and modern nations."

Web 2.0 threatens "to sweep away old business models, management methods and bureaucratic cultures." This book describes these new dynamics under the headings of Markets 2.0, Enterprise 2.0 and Democracy 2.0.

Markets 2.0 – Customers can dis-intermediate market gatekeepers and transact directly with suppliers.

Enterprise 2.0 in the workplace promises to revitalise organisations by harnessing collective intelligence. "Power is shifting from executive C–suites to employee cubicles." The potential upside is enhanced collective knowledge, increased productivity, greater innovation and ultimately improved profits.

Democracy 2.0 – Both John McCain and Barrack Obama were collecting "friends" on their Facebook profiles during the campaign in 2008. They understood that power is moving away from political organisations, to the people.

But the positive spin on Web 2 .0 overlooks a powerful human instinct: the fear factor. In highly structured organisations, social media threaten to destabilise entrenched hierarchies, challenge existing arrangements and shake things up.

Many governments, motivated by like minded conservatism, have banned access to MySpace and Facebook. Not only to their employees but to their entire populations. China's state censors routinely monitor and block access to the Internet.

Web 2.0 tools have not benefited from widespread buy-in from most corporations. "Knowledge sharing is a nifty management concept ...in the real world people behave according to their basic survival instincts. And most senior managers know if you share knowledge you surrender power, which is why bold talk of Web 2.0 implementation often hits familiar roadblocks."

The good news is that some forward looking CEOs are already tuning out the paranoia and focusing on the business case around strategies that leverage social media. They will want to know the return on investment but the truth is that corporations have no choice.

The book is divided into three parts. *Identity, Status and Power* (ISP). The authors argue that "Identity is being disaggregated, Status is becoming democratised and Power is becoming diffuse."

The book examines how power is shifting inside the organisation from vertical top–down hierarchies to horizontal networks. The Enterprise Web 2.0 model is based on de-centralised collaboration and open innovation.

"It's time for CEOs to give meaning to the buzzword 'business transformation'."

"The power of social media is turning old models on their heads. In the Web 2.0 world.... customers become producers, employees become bosses and Davids become Goliaths." They are transforming your life, your work and your world. You can NOT look back.

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