

able by end users in a way that could violate policies for protecting sensitive data at financial firms, Gaetano says. That automatically limited the potential user pool for the tool, undermining the purpose of social networking software: connecting as many people as possible.

Plus, he says, Lotus Connections wasn't easy to learn, resulting in slow uptake by employees. "We struggled to get people to adopt those tools."

Nationwide then tried Yammer's corporate social networking package, which includes chat, status updates, personal profiles and other features familiar to users of Facebook. Yammer offers more integration points to traditional enterprise applications than does Lotus Connections, and the simple-to-use tool took off quickly among insurance agents and corporate employees, says Chris Plescia, leader of marketing and collaboration technologies at Nationwide.

Companies eager to improve productivity by connecting employees to each other and to corporate information sometimes come on too strong, says Diane Piktialis, a program leader at research firm The Conference Board. Forced sociability rarely works.

Don't expect to immediately see thousands of people catapulting to unseen productivity levels while they get to know each other's professional skills and interests on internal social networks. "You cannot mandate the use of these tools. It goes against the concept," Piktialis says.

Instead, IT and business leaders should train staff well. Don't assume that all employees know how to use social media or can pick it up with no training, Piktialis says, especially workers beyond their twenties, for whom social networking may be new. Send trainers who are similar in age and work style to teach them how to use the tools, she advises.

Involvement by a high-profile manager can also help. Not only is enthusiasm infectious, but so is demonstrating how people benefit from being in on new conversations and streams of information, she says.

Nationwide President Mark Pizzi was one of Yammer's first users. He quickly got thousands of followers—about 7,600—from around the country, Gaetano says. And soon, agents started to ask associates and each other questions to quickly find answers for customers.

About 15,000 people now use Yammer at Nationwide. Having so many employees able to talk to one another easily and contribute to conversations knowledgeably "drives an environment of continuous learning and sharing," Plescia says. "There's a sense of belonging to something greater."

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Things You Need to Know

APPLE LION

1 INTEGRATION COULD POSE CHALLENGES. Possibly the biggest issue with Lion has been how it gets along with existing applications—especially Adobe's—because it doesn't support Flash. Both sides say they are working on this, but for now this limitation restricts the use of Adobe applications. Bryson Payne, CIO of North Georgia College and State University, says, "if these [Adobe] issues aren't 100 percent resolved, we'll halt the rollout of Lion completely." Tom Catalini, VP of IT at William Gallagher Associates, also noted that the download and upgrade process was anything but quick: "It was confusing at points because the install process did not report a lot of progress."

2 IT HAS AN IPAD FEEL. Lion has an iPad-like feel that makes personal computing easier and more intuitive without trying to re-create the tablet experience. As Tim Bajarin, president of consultancy Creative Strategies, explains it, gestures on the trackpad create the feeling of a touch screen. But he doesn't believe users want to do everything the iPad way. "If I'm using the Mac, I'm producing content; if I'm using my iPad, I'm consuming it," he says. "If they were going to carry over iOS to Macs, they would have created Macs with touch screens." Another new feature that channels iPads is Launchpad, which allows you to clear all applications in one swipe and thumb through multiple desktops.

3 NEW FEATURES PROTECT WORK. The new auto-save feature saves all the changes you make to your work—either when you pause, or every five minutes—not in files, but by versions. And a new feature called "resume" brings crashed applications back to life exactly as you left them. Meanwhile, iCloud, which is scheduled to launch this fall and is free for the basic service, will allow you to back up your work in the cloud so it can be accessed from an iPhone, iPad or home device, making it easier to switch between a computer and mobile devices or to work at home.

4 IT'S AVAILABLE IN THE APP STORE. Lion is downloaded through the App Store and can be transferred to as many licensed computers as you'd like via a single corporate redemption code. Bajarin says Apple users are used to downloading software this way and competitors need to catch up. "Microsoft and cronies have to figure out a way to do this," he says. Payne agrees it's convenient. "People are used to buying apps the iPad way."

5 IT'S EASY AND CHEAP. The price is low enough to tempt a closer look. It's cheaper than Windows 7 (businesses can purchase 20 licenses for \$29.99 each). Bajarin expects quick adoption because "cost of entry is so nominal and Apple has showed everyone that the learning curve is small."

—Lauren Brousell