

# Team blog for substantive exchange

## How to deepen the contact between members of a professional association with social media

### WHAT IS IT

Stimulating online interaction within a professional association social network

### WHY THIS CASE

Choice of platforms, what can work within an association

### TOOLS

Ning, LinkedIn, Twitter and Wordpress weblog

### NUMBER OF MEMBERS

About 300

### ROLE OF THE CASE-OWNERS

Designer and facilitator

### CASE BY

Sibrenne Wagenaar

### WHO WERE INVOLVED

Employees, director of NVO2, Workgroup 'social media and learning', Active and involved members of the association

## How we started

How can we use social media to increase communication and interaction amongst association members That was the question asked by NVO2 in 2010. A team started experimenting with this question right away, which resulted in a more explicit focus on social media within the association. Approximately fifteen percent of members were, in one way or another, actively using social media within the association. A start had been made. Since 2010 NVO2 has been active online with seminars, conferences, workshops and networking events.

The NVO2 was convinced of the value of online cooperation, in addition to scheduled face-to-face activities. They needed an a virtual place where members could meet, share knowledge and collaborate. About forty members had already connected with each other in a LinkedIn group. NVO2 thought it would valuable to have their own online community environment. An environment:

- recognizable for all HRD professionals as the place to meet and exchange;
- where members can introduce themselves, link with each other and can join online conversations;
- where members can share valuable articles, links, methods to be used in their HRD profession;
- where different working groups can collaborate online and be more visible.

Based on these requirements and the experience of some members in the design of online platforms, Ning was chosen, and the online environment was launched fairly quickly.

## Our approach

We advertised the platform in the monthly magazine for members of the NVO2. We made a clear link between the platform and the website. We started a weekly e-newsletter that was strongly connected to the platform. Soon there were about two hundred community members. But then what? Getting members on the platform was not that difficult, but creating some interaction and exchange, letting something happen, was another challenge. The design team provided technical support, welcomed new members,

## 5 belemmerende mindsets voor Strategisch HRD....

9 JANUARI 2012

by Ger Driessen | HRDtrendcatcher

tags:hrd professionals, strategisch HRD

(.....en hoe er mee om te gaan)



**Mindset: Wie ben ik om met de directie te praten / samen te werken?**

Helaas is professionele bescheidenheid een mindset die veelvuldig voorkomt bij hrd professionals (natuurlijk bedoel ik niet bij jou). Het antwoord op de vraag: 'Wie ben ik om met de directie te praten / samen te werken?' is heel simpel. Als jij een verantwoordelijkheid hebt rondom hrd in jouw organisatie dan ben jij de hrd expert die met de directie praat en samenwerkt rondom vraagstukken van ontwikkeling van de organisatie en haar mensen. Punt. Wie anders? Wil je het aan de hoogste in rang HRM-er overlaten? Kom op zeg, die hebben toch geen verstand van HRD? Wil je het aan de OR overlaten? Kom op zeg, die vertegenwoordigen alleen het belang van de medewerker, prima om mee samen te werken zolang jij de regie voert. Als jij verantwoordelijk bent voor HRD wat denk je dan dat de verwachting is van directieleden met wie zij kunnen samenwerken rondom ontwikkelvraagstukken? Juist ja! Van wie verwachten zij dan initiatief op dat gebied? Juist ja! Wat voor effect heeft het op jouw professionele reputatie wanneer jij blijft hangen in deze eerste belemmerende mindset? Juist ja! Dus

### EMAIL NIEUWSBRIEF

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### DE BLOGGERS



provided everyone with interesting articles and links to websites, and stimulated discussions on themes members reported as valuable. But there was little activity online.

We started more initiatives, with a specific focus on the connecting online and face-to-face activities. We felt this would show clear value. We had to lower the barrier for members to become active online. Here are a few examples of activities we started:

- a blogpost on the community site, before and after a scheduled face-to-face event;
- blogging at a major international conference;
- an online discussion around a timely and important topic (e.g. changes in VAT remittance by independent trainers).

With these online activities we hoped to get members to interact. This did happen, but the problem remained that online interactions were minimal. Why was this? Comments from members were: "I am still looking for the added value", "I really don't know what to post", "I prefer to follow for a while before getting active myself" and

"For me, it's the first time online, I do not think anyone else is interested in my contribution". For most members, this platform was their first concrete introduction to social media. They appeared to be very interested in passively hearing about opportunities of using social media for learning and change, as shown by the interest in thematic meetings and the rapidly growing face-to-face working group 'Social Media and Learning'. Responding, exchanging and collaborating online was one bridge too far, though.

## Start with LinkedIn, Twitter and a team blog

We had a strong feeling that more time was needed as members had to get used to the new ways of networking and professional development. The NVO2 needed time to adjust its approach to working online. The members of the NVO2 had recently begun to develop some enthusiasm for social media. This made us think about more and other possibilities for online activity for NVO2.



NVO2

Nederlandse vereniging van HRD-professionals  
in ontwikkelen en opleiden

Home Mijn pagina Leden Groepen Berichten Forum Blog Inspiratie Evenementen Q&A

TvOO nieuws



Vanaf maart 2011 ontvangen NVO2 leden het e-publiekintiemieuwe "Tijdschrift voor Ontwikkeling in Organisaties".

Communicatietrainingen voor grote groepen; werkt dat? column van Reinoud van Rooij, TvOO nr. 3

Lees verder

Fotowedstrijd

Stuur je mooiste foto in, rondom het thema "Lef". De mooiste inzending wordt geplaatst in het tijdschrift (nr. 01-2012)

Lees verder

Graag laten wij u kennismaken met het dit nieuwe HRD-vakblad. Wilt u een gratis proefnummer ontvangen, ga dan naar [www.tvoo.nl](http://www.tvoo.nl) en vraag het aan!

NVO2 twitternieuws



Blogteksten

Generaties in gesprek

Op een dinsdag in september organiseerde NVO2 een ontmoeting tussen young professionals en ervaren beslissers. Het doel van de bijeenkomst was het verbinden van de twee groepen aan de hand van thema's die zelf ingebracht konden worden. Het bleek het begin van een leerzame ontmoeting tussen drie mensen van verschillende organisaties. Een van deze mensen is Gerard, een ervaren beslissers van een HR-afdeling bij een uitgever. De andere twee zijn Joris en Tom, young professionals van ...

Doorgaan

Door Joris Rietman geplaatst op 10 Januari 2012 om 12:00

Leren of presteren? Een sprong in het diepe?

Twee keer zoveel verkopen als anderen. Welke werkgever wil dat nou niet? De sleutel volgens de Amerikaanse psycholoog Don Vandewalle is de leerdoeloriëntatie. In een schitterend onderzoek heeft hij bij een grote groep verlegenwoordigers gekeken wat hun doeloriëntatie was; waren ze meer prestatie- of legergericht? Na 90 dagen heeft hij hun verkoopcijfers bekeken. Het bleek dat verlegenwoordigers die hoog op de leerdoeloriëntatie scoorden, tweemaal zoveel verkocht hadden als de ...

Doorgaan

Door Arjan van Dam geplaatst op 19 December 2011 om 15:47

De cobra en het meisje

Column TvOO4 Leiderschap: De cobra en het meisje

Column%20de%20Cobra%20en%20het%20meisje pdf

Door Janneke Schenning geplaatst op 13 December 2011 om 13:32

Communicatietrainingen voor grote groepen; werkt dat?

Communicatietrainingen voor grote groepen; werkt dat? Als trainer sta ik vaak voor grote groepen. Ik geef ze trainingen op allerlei gebieden van communicatie. Feedback geven bijvoorbeeld, presenteren of leidinggeven. Vaak wordt mij voor zo'n training gevraagd: 'Is dat nou wel effectief, trainen met zo'n grote groep?'

Welkom bij NVO2 HRD-Community

Inschrijven of Meld je aan

De NVO2 HRD-Community is een platform om vakkennis en ervaringen te delen. Voor alle HR-professionals. Werkgroepen alleen voor NVO2-leden.

Nieuw: weblog Opleidingskunde HAN



Lees mee op de weblog van HAN Opleidingskunde [www.opleidingskundegeworden.nl](http://www.opleidingskundegeworden.nl)

We zijn een weblog gestart over Ontwikkelen en Opleiden. HRD professionals schrijven over thema's als diversiteit, breinieren, herinvormen, innovatie, trends in HRD. Lees mee en reageer!

Welkom!



- We looked at where NVO2 members were already active on social media. LinkedIn and Twitter were the most used. The NVO2-LinkedIn group often had hosted valuable discussions. We also started with Twitter, but lightly. We designed an experiment to use Twitter: short messages on valuable events, distributing interesting content articles and forwarding tweets from NVO2 members. In the beginning there were only a few active members, but this number increased rather quickly. With these activities we also broadened the network of (HRD) professionals to people who were not members of NVO2 but interested in the topics of our tweets.
- In addition, we searched for ways for members to get acquainted with the power of social media for knowledge sharing and collaborative learning. We asked what would be more accessible for NVO2 members? Perhaps we could entice members interact more online though more valuable content, such as stories, experi-

ences, methods, or book reviews provided by HRD professionals. From this, the idea of a team blog was born! We started by inviting 25 HRD professionals to join this experiment by writing one blog post a month. All bloggers were invited on the basis of their specific expertise (eg leadership, stimulating work and mindfulness) .

Several threads were brought together: readers of the paper journal indicated a need for a channel where current developments in the HRD field could be shared quickly and easily. There was a need for substantive exchanges, but someone had to start somewhere. The blog was also a good platform for making events more visible. Now that we have the blog, we frequently start blogging in the run-up to an event. Through the team blog, online interactions within the association are now definitely smoother and more inspiring than before. These are what we see as the working elements:

- **Good bloggers.** Professionals with writing experience and a strong personal view on a specific topic in the field;
- **Frequency:** With a concrete planning we had a new blog post twice a week. A team of twenty bloggers makes this feasible.
- **Channels:** Nurture and spread newly published blog posts via Twitter, an electronic newsletter, the magazine and the personal channels of bloggers;
- **Variety:** Provide different arrangements for each blogger: some continuous, some around a face-to-face activity, or even invite guest bloggers.

This initiative required significant attention to get online interaction really going. From the beginning, we had high quality blog posts, and ‘the numbers behind the screen’ showed us that the blogposts were being read. Still, there were few comments from. In a meeting with the bloggers, we discussed this ‘problem’ and came up with several approaches for encouraging readers to comment. We agreed that commenting should be part of this team blog, because that type of interaction would support knowledge exchange between HRD professionals. We decided try these initiatives

- Writing a provocative blogpost and inviting people from your network via e-mail to respond: ‘I know you have a lot of expertise in this area, and I very much would like to hear your opinion towards... Please read my blogpost and respond by adding a comment.’
- Inviting known professionals to blog in the run-up to an event they facilitate. This initiative becomes even stronger when the blogpost is connected to the event, for example by asking the participants to the event to respond to the blogpost before attending.
- Getting bloggers to respond to other bloggers.
- Attaching the blog to one’s online email signature.
- Getting the word out frequently with Twitter, to twitter it around.

After a year of blogging we are very satisfied with our progress. The blog is visited by about 150 people per day. Over 100 blog posts have been posted, with some blog posts receiving up to twenty responses.

## What tools have been used?

Our primary tools are Ning, Twitter and a WordPress blog. We started with Ning as the online community platform. A LinkedIn group already existed. Later we added a Twitter account (@nvo2) and a twitter hashtag (#nvo2). The team blog ‘Over Leren en Ontwikkelen’ plays a very important role in the community.

## What have we achieved?

For the past year the NVO2 has had a stimulating online knowledge network. During this time, interest in this online knowledge-sharing among the members has visibly increased. More members are becoming active on Twitter. There is a lot of interest in the working group ‘Social media and learning’. More and more members know how to find their way around the online community. Blog posts are read by many and the number of posted comments is increasing. The bloggers group grows because members like to participate. The online elements are becoming increasingly intertwined with the face-to-face activities of the association. An example is a series of blog posts written by a trainer in preparation for a face-to-face meeting. Interesting ideas continue to arise for 2012, ranging from inviting guest bloggers to video interviews and blog carnivals. These ideas have been received with much enthusiasm!

## Critical moments in the proces

The most critical moment so far was the initial three months after the announcement of the HRD community. The online interaction started slowly: members came online, made a profile, looked around, and that was it. Here is what we did:

- We made the community open for non-members as well, in order to increase the network size and make knowledge from outside the organization accessible as well.
- We started with discussions in the forum around topics that were really relevant to members, based on current offline discussions that were already happening. This worked quite well and included a good discussion around a new VAT regime for self-employed people in 2010.

- We participated in the conference of the American Society for Training and Development in Chicago, and we used our online platforms to stay connected and share our knowledge with those members who could not attend in person.

## Reflection and tips for team blogs

We feel there is a lot of potential in the team blogs. For the NVO2 it is a powerful and rather easy way to support exchanges between members. Here are some of the working elements to our approach:

- **Planning:** Each blogger knows when it is his or her blogging week, and we support this by sending bloggers an email when the time has come.
- **Facilitation:** One of the bloggers facilitates the blogging process, motivates bloggers, provides technical, organises meetings to professionalize blogging, and monitors the quality of blogposts.
- **Passion:** Bloggers are specifically invited to write about a subject that really matters, or a field they work in, causes them to reflect, learn about, or share their knowledge.
- **Monitoring:** In the blog steam we pay attention to the quality of online interaction, connections between blogposts, and themes that may be missing.
- **Collaboration:** We work with a core team of bloggers, and regularly add new bloggers. At the end of the year we ask bloggers about their desire to continue for another year. We also work with guest bloggers, people who would like to blog in the run-up to an event, and invite people to blog on a specific seasonal theme.

What are our ideas for the future? We would very much like to broaden our blogging repertoire. We have many questions to think about: How can we better connect bloggers? How can we foster deeper and more valuable online dialogue? What do we as bloggers learn from blogging? How can we make the blog an even more integral part of the community and association?