NETWORKING TOOLS BRING ADVANTAGES AND CHALLENGES

U.S. companies have moved quickly to adopt social-networking tools in an effort to recruit new talent, improve internal and external communications, and open up new forms of direct marketing relationships with consumers, commenters tell a webinar audience. But with the advantages of social-networking tools has come new challenges including public relations risks raised by empowering a much wider range of employees to speak on behalf of the company, as well as a variety of thorny new legal problems that are still in the process of being analyzed by the courts. Even so, the experiences of companies like Intel Corps. and IBM Corp. show that the use of social-networking tools has become unavoidable in the current business environment, and risks associated with their use can be managed, analysts say.