



In 2008, [Scott Beale](#) wanted to attend the Google party at [South by Southwest Interactive](#) (a 5-day conference featuring presentations and panels from rising stars and big names in the technology and entertainment fields); however, the line was way too long for his taste. Instead of wasting the night away standing outside, Scott and his group decided to throw their own party. The friends took to Twitter announcing they were hosting an “Alta Vista” party at a nearby bar. Within minutes, a crowd started gathering, and soon Scott and his buddies had their own line forming out the door. As Seth Godin points out in his book, [Tribes: What You Need to Lead Us](#),

*Twitter merely enabled the event; it didn't cause it to occur. Unless Scott had earned the respect and permission of the tribe that follows him, he would have been all alone at the bar. The party didn't take four minutes to organize; it took four years.*

Scott's party isn't some social media anomaly; it's one of the realities of being active on mediums such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Youtube, Reddit, and LinkedIn.

Social media enables individuals to connect into networks of people who can be mobilized for [learning](#), parties, projects, movements, fundraising, or even just to raise awareness. Because of the power that can be harnessed from these mediums, military professionals

should take the time to learn them, be active on social media sites, and find innovative ways to use them within their organizations. These platforms present an opportunity for military professionals to extend their span of influence beyond the chain of command, cut through multiple layers of bureaucracy, and potentially develop a personal form of “soft power.”

*Read the rest of this post over at [War on the Rocks](#) where it first appeared on August 20, 2015*

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