



SOCXO

**9 Simple Yet Neglected Ways to Get
Employees to Buy into Your
Advocacy Program**



Employee advocacy is an incredibly powerful marketing tool. People are attracted to a brand when they see other people engaging with it. If they're happy and willing to talk to other people about it, it's a sign that the products/services being spoken about are worth investing in. Thus, having your personnel spread the word about how great your solution is has an immense impact on your organic reach, brand recognition, and overall corporate as well as brand image.

But employees are like any other people – how do you convince them to buy into your advocacy program and become authentic brand advocates? Below, we share NINE great strategies, from embracing transparent communication and providing a solid, convenient platform for easy sharing to creating happy memories that employees can't wait to talk about.



1. Lead by example

While it's true that company initiatives are far likelier to be successful when supported by the executive team, how many times have you seen leadership execute them? We're talking about not just getting leadership buy-in – we're talking about them serving as role models for social media advocacy. Because you know what? When employees see the executive team walking and talking the walk, they're more likely to enter the fray.

Once you have the buy-in, just as you should do with the rest of your employees, identify the right executive leaders to champion your program. Find out which of them already have a strong social media presence, and truly comprehend the value of social – from building awareness to engagement, loyalty, and advocacy. Finally, share company-curated, appropriate content with them – they'll then work their magic and share it further across their networks, paving the way for other employees to follow suit.

2. Encourage open communication

Fostering open, transparent communication with employees and being honest about corporate decisions and operations has a large, direct, and positive impact on employee morale and productivity. And guess what? When employees are happy and empowered, they're more likely to advocate for your brand – though you still have to ask (what good ever came to anyone who didn't ask for it? Windfalls like lotteries and inheritances notwithstanding of course).

Ask employees to share your content, but also let them know why. Let them in on the big picture – share objectives, plans, and reasons, and let them know where they stand in the overall scheme of things. They'll be a lot more receptive to contributing when you trust them enough to let them in on your plans – and don't insult their intelligence with limited exposure. Most importantly, allow them to share content in their own voice.



3. Show them what's in it for them

If you're going to ask your employees to do you the favor of promoting your brand on social media, it's only fair that you offer them something in return. Create an incentive system that's just right to string along your advocacy program without overpowering it. It should encourage your employees, yes, but it shouldn't be the only reason for them to participate. It should merely communicate that you appreciate their help, and that their efforts are recognized, acknowledged, and rewarded. This is the best way to value employees and create effective advocates.

Want proof? A 2017 American Psychological Association survey of over 1,500 employees found that 94% of employees who felt that they were valued by their employers, were motivated to put in their best at work. In contrast, merely 47% of employees who did not feel valued felt the same way. What's more, 89% of employees who felt valued mentioned that they would recommend their employer to others, as opposed to 16% of employees who didn't feel valued.

No matter what your employee advocacy goals, never forget to show workers how much you value their contributions – and they'll stick with you for the long haul.

A close-up photograph of a red dart with a gold-colored barrel hitting the bullseye of a dartboard. The dartboard has yellow and green segments. The background is dark and out of focus.

4. Get on the same page about your goals

About those goals.

Once you've formally defined the brand your employees are going to promote, the next critical step is to get them up to speed about the program's goals. Only if employees are aware of these goals can they take relevant action and achieve expected results.

For instance, if an employee publishes a LinkedIn post about how much he enjoys "Fun Friday," he could help you attract talent. But if the point of your program is to attract more leads, his post wouldn't pan out.

To be safe, make sure to explain not just the program goals, but also to clearly detail the impact each different action can have. This shows employees their importance in the overall program, while also encouraging increased engagement in the process.

5. Showcase your experts

You didn't go through recruitment hell for nothing – you did it to get the best talent you can. You have a whole bunch of experts at your company. Get. Their. Names. Out. There. Publish their thoughts and opinions. If they aren't so hot about writing, get them to answer questions on Quora, publish product updates on LinkedIn, or contribute a quote for any of your marketing content. The more you portray your company to be teeming with experts who love their work, the higher your chances of customers wanting to work with you.

Another great outcome of showcasing internal talent is that it brings to life your brand story in a way that no other kind of marketing content can. So get right down to it – hunt down every intern, manager, or leader who's made a difference to your company in the biggest or slightest of ways, and tell their stories. You can talk about their personal and professional journeys, how they solved an impossible challenge, or how they went above and beyond to support customers. Just look around. You can spin a story around just about any employee – after all, they're all there because they're doing something for you. Give them the opportunity to reveal their passion for their jobs and thus, your brand. Share their stories on your brand channels, website, and newsletters – and see how they take to the whole idea.





6. Guide them to success

No, you're not quite done yet. Your program won't run on autopilot once you've got employee buy-ins and stories. While you may have been at this a while, not all your employees might be abreast with the best practices of brand management on social media.

Don't leave them at sea. Help them drive results by regularly sharing tips, including:

- How to optimize their social media profiles
- Social media etiquette
- Best days and times to publish on various platforms
- How to increase the effectiveness of post titles
- The perfect mix of content topics and types



7. Train and arm your forces

When you take the decision to involve your employees in brand advocacy, know that you're asking quite a few of them to use skills that they don't necessarily have. Even seasoned social media users need not be familiar with using them for business purposes.

Therefore, you need to provide the necessary training and tools to pave the way for easy use and increased employee engagement. Have employees train one another based on their strengths – the marketing department can train peers on the importance of brand building, sales can put together a crash course on product features, and so on.

Send employees on conferences, panel discussions, and other networking events – they offer great opportunities for employees to widen as well as strengthen their social networks. Next, help them figure out how to align their advocacy goals with their participation in these events.

A good tool is also critical to ensure program cohesion and effectiveness. While social media channels themselves function as great platforms, they're decentralized, and can't by themselves be easily leveraged for tracking, reporting, or gamification. A centralized employee advocacy tool that facilitates easy sharing and also offers visibility into results goes a long way in this regard. The key is to, besides obviously being simple enough for everyone to use, remind everyone across teams, roles, and designations that they're on the same team when marketing your brand and telling its story.

When you empower your employees with the right training and tools, you make it easy for them to be your ambassadors under any circumstances.

8. Create memories that employees want to share

Enthusiasm is contagious, so make sure there's plenty of opportunity to foster it. One way is to have plenty of fun events such as Friday fun, lunch/ dinner outings, barbecues, even volunteering. Celebrate employees' as well as the brand's achievements and milestones with company-branded merchandise – it could be anything from T-shirts, hoodies, and sneakers to earphones and memory sticks. Make employee and company anniversaries super special. Pull out all the stops. Have great parties with awesome food, go on team trips, and capture all the happy moments. These fun memories will turn into stories that your employees will be more than happy to share and talk about.





9. Give employees a voice

Finally, make sure that the process is two-way. Give employees the opportunity to tell their stories about their relationships with your brand. Their voice is authentic and credible, and helps breathe life into your marketing and recruitment communication – transforming them from mere corporate statements into actual experiences. Publish these stories internally as well as externally, using attractive visuals and other media.

Employees should even be allowed to loop back and suggest any content that they feel will benefit your program. An extra advantage – publishing and promoting their stories significantly enhances their love for your brand.

Wrapping up

If you want to empower your employees to freely share content, remember to amend any company policies that discourage the use of social media at work. In fact, if this has been the culture at your company, you need to immediately show that you fully back employee participation by trusting that social media will be used responsibly. A simple yet effective social media policy can help to a large extent by setting the ground rules for consistent brand messaging as well as dispelling any initial hesitation.

As with any company initiative, no one gets an employee advocacy program right at the very first try. A few of the elements will just snap right into place, while others will come undone and need some fine-tuning to work.

Before you execute the program, think about the parameters you will use to evaluate success. You should also be able to incorporate learnings and employee feedback into your program and amend it as necessary to reach your desired outcomes.

Finally, share the impact. Even seasoned companies with crystal-clear and liberally promoted employee advocacy programs seldom remember to loop back to team members on how their contributions affected the bottom line. Employee advocacy helps amplify everything from brand awareness to corporate branding and social selling – so share the numbers and metrics to prove it ...company-wide.





We'd be happy to help you understand how
Socxo can maximize the results of your
Employee Engagement.

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