

GUIDE

How to get employees to (willingly) share your social media content

An employee advocacy guide
by Hootsuite



How to get employees to (willingly) share your social media content

More and more organizations are discovering that employee advocates offer a simple way to increase their social reach—but what do employees gain from sharing their employer's content?

To increase social reach, organizations often turn to their employees to amplify important brand content with their personal Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter accounts.

As we've shown in our previous resource, [The Power of Employee Advocacy](#), the combined value of employee networks is significant. For example, an organization might have a maximum social reach of 1,000,000 from their official corporate social channels.

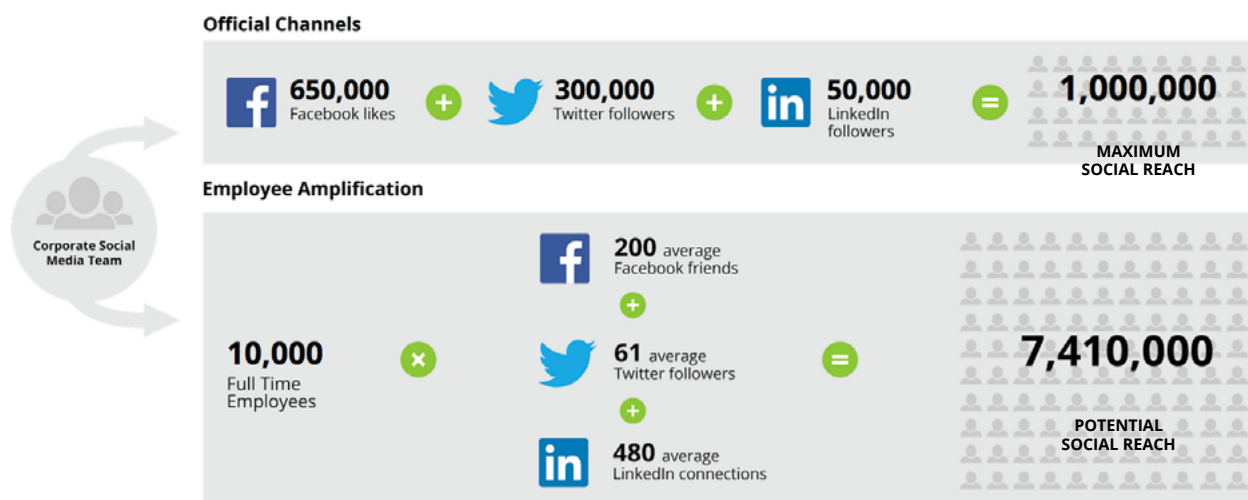
If your organization has 10,000 employees and each employee has an average of 200 Facebook friends, 61 Twitter followers, and 480 LinkedIn connections, your potential social reach with employee advocacy would be 7,410,000. In this example, the organization would gain a 741% increase in reach, compared to only using your official corporate channels.

This isn't only about counting impressions. Social messages from peers, friends, and family are more trustworthy than social media blasts from corporate accounts.

According to global data from the Edelman Trust Barometer, employees are trusted by the public on social media channels more than CEOs, well-known online personalities, elected officials, and celebrities.¹

The benefit to your organization is apparent—greater reach, informed employees, and an army of passionate employee advocates. But what do employees gain from amplification strategies? What drives them to willingly share your corporate content?

Our research and analysis point to three things: [career](#), [culture](#), and [connection](#).



The key elements of a successful employee advocacy strategy



Career

How does sharing your corporate content help the employee achieve professional visibility within and outside of the organization?



Culture

How does your advocacy program help the employee feel ownership of your organization's narrative?



Connection

How does this bring together passionate employees and connect different parts of the organization?

Companion Resource:

In our resource, [The Power of Employee Advocates](#), you'll discover compelling statistics about the value of employee amplification.

The resource includes data from Gallup, LinkedIn and the Altimeter Group, Social@Ogilvy, Edelman, and Weber Shandwick.

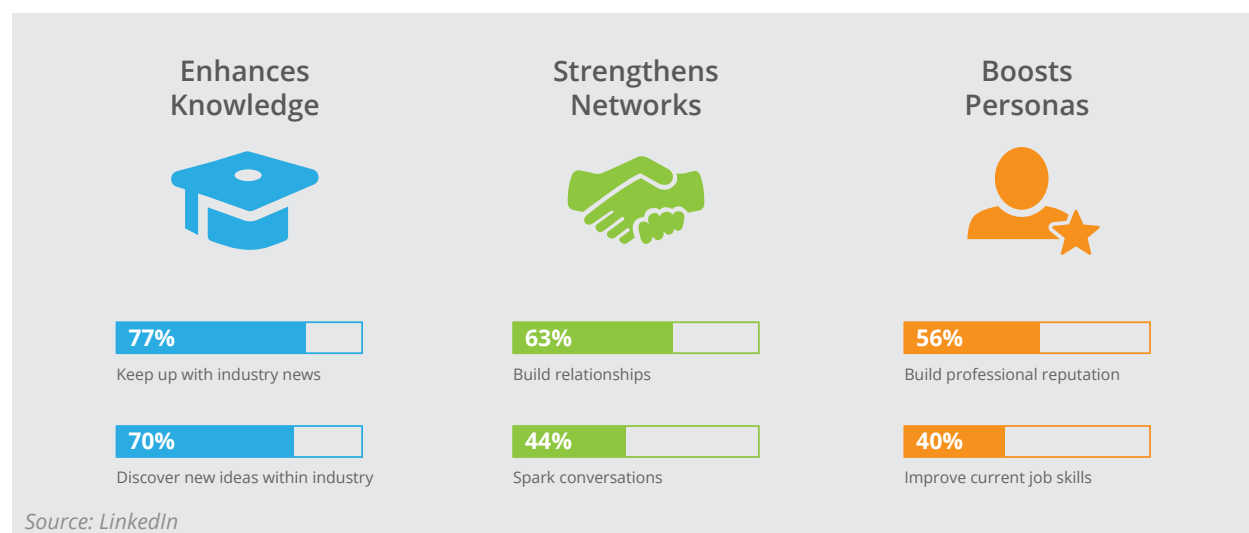
[Read the Resource Now](#)

Career: how does this build your employee's career?

From products updates to humble brags about a new office, your mother will like everything you post about your job on social media. As for peers and friends—they silently judge us.

When building your employee advocacy program, it's helpful to consider how the content you ask employees to share will impact their professional and personal brands.

A study by LinkedIn found three reasons why employees share professional content:²



Every request shouldn't be to amplify a product release or to seed a new brand campaign. Your content calendar also needs to help employees enhance their industry knowledge, spark conversations (with thought leadership pieces), and help them share their passion with peers (both within and outside the organization).

Include a mix of content that employees can share

A **20-30-50** division of content is a useful rule of thumb.

20%—Product-level messaging

Content that promotes product launches, updates, feature and benefit campaigns.

30%—Culture-level messaging

Messages that demonstrate what your organization believes in: your new four-day workweek, how your teams stay passionate, and your company philosophy (such as a remote work culture).

50%—Market-level messaging

Interesting data about your industry, thought leadership, and PR about where the market is headed.

Culture: how does this give employees ownership of the brand narrative?

"Anyone can write a post that ends up being wildly shared," Chip Cutter, Senior Editor at LinkedIn, told Hootsuite. One example he gave was of an emergency physician in Indianapolis, who wrote a beautiful piece on what really concerns him in the health care system. The post attracted 400,000 views.⁴

It's a trend he sees on the rise. "We're constantly seeing new writing stars emerge. These are people sharing their expertise on the issues they're facing in their jobs. This not only helps the employee build their professional brand and establish themselves as a thought leader, but adds a human element to a company, introducing other voices to the company's story."

With an employee advocacy strategy and solution, these employee-sourced stories can be amplified by other employees. This both builds initial traction and creates brand loyalty from within your ranks.

"Internal communications needs to **move beyond being company news briefs** and alerts to being more content-rich.

Company storytelling is not just for external media anymore, it's a way of ensuring that employees are informed and have something **meaningful to say about their employers.**"

*Kate Bullinger Co-Lead, Global Employee Engagement & Change Management Weber Shandwick*³

Inside Zappos' Holacracy of Happiness

We wanted to know how Zappos (the world's largest online shoe retailer) engages their employees. At Zappos, they follow the management model of holacracy instead of bureaucracy, which is a new system for distributing power and leadership throughout the organization.

We spoke to Kelly Wolske, a trainer at Zappos.

If you were building an engagement strategy from scratch, where would you start?

Education is the most important step. That and leading by example. You can't expect an employee to enroll in a leadership course and then say that you are too busy to attend it.

How do you get employees to willingly share your culture?

Employees need to see that they have the power to effect real change in the organization. This is much more important than parties or fun activities.

When they see that their work actually matters—that is where engagement happens.

What's the secret of creating a culture that motivates employees?

It's about autonomy. When you give people autonomy, they gain a sense of being connected to something bigger than themselves. We give employees the authority to solve the problems we give them.

Connection: how does your advocacy strategy bring together passionate employees?

Employee advocates are trusted by the public because it's assumed they willingly praise and share content about their employer. For that reason, it's important to make sure that employees know their participation is completely voluntary.

As Zappos' Kelly Wolske told us, "the messaging should always be 'this is something here for you to participate with, but it's not mandatory.' Employees need to be able to choose and retain their autonomy."

One in five employees (21%) felt strongly that they are putting more effort than is required into their job **yet do not feel strongly that they are being valued by their employer.**

Source: Weber Shandwick and KRC Research ⁵

At the same time, you need to encourage employees who have chosen to stand up and freely represent your brand and culture.

This isn't about prizes or leaderboards. Instead, it's about recognizing the value that a connected employee brings to the organization. This can be as simple as encouragement from a manager during a performance review or public acknowledgment from executives.

Recommended actions:

- **Invest in a mix of content.** Feature different perspectives from the organization. Include content about internal events, employee-sourced stories, and culture initiatives in your editorial calendar.
- **Reward with visibility.** Identify which employees share the most content from your organization. Reward these passionate advocates for their participation.
- **Build confidence with education.** Give employees training and new digital skills, helping them understand what professional use of social media entails. For example, [Hootsuite offers online courses and certifications](#). This makes it simple to train thousands of employees and align individual activities to your larger business strategy.
- **Connect different sides of the organization.** Provide a simple way for employees to share your content. Use a mobile-centric solution such as [Hootsuite Amplify](#), which lets thousands of employees easily share important company messages with their networks.

What we've covered

1. The benefits of employee advocacy are significant, but you need to give employees good reasons to share your organization's content.
2. Employees will share and participate if they too gain visibility and are rewarded for being participants. Employees want to have their voices heard, feel valued for their advocacy, and gain professional visibility within and outside the organization.
3. Content needs to deliver value not only to the organization but also to the employee's audience.

How Hootsuite Amplify Helps

With [Hootsuite Amplify](#), it's simple for thousands of employees to share your organization's content, stay connected to your mission, and increase your brand's social reach.

- **Increase your social reach**—a mobile-centric solution makes it easy for employees to see and share your organization's content.
- **Connect employees to your mission**—employees benefit from having one central solution that connects them to the content resonating across the organization.
- **Discover what employees love to share**—you can see top shared content, identify your most engaged employees, and track the best types of content that provide both value to the organization and employee.

[Book your demo today](#)

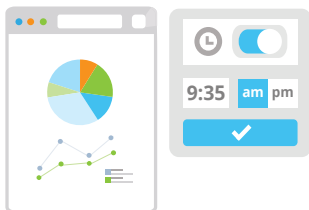
Endnotes

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2. LinkedIn. "2014 Professional Content Consumption Report." 2014. <https://business.linkedin.com/marketing-solutions/c/14/6/linkedin-professional-content-consumption-report>
3. Weber Shandwick and KRC Research. "Employees Rising: Seizing the Opportunity in Employee Activism." 2014. <http://www.webershandwick.com/news/article/employee-activism-the-next-frontier-of-employee-engagement>
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About Hootsuite Enterprise

Partner with Hootsuite to accelerate your social transformation

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Employee Advocacy



Social HR



Hootsuite is the most widely used platform for managing social media, loved by over 10 million people around the globe and trusted by more than 800 of the Fortune 1000. Hootsuite Enterprise empowers organizations to execute business strategies for the social media era and scale social media activities across multiple teams, departments, and regions. Our versatile platform supports a thriving ecosystem of social networks complemented by 200+ business applications and integrations, allowing organizations to extend social media into existing systems and programs.

Along with our channel and agency partners, we help organizations build deeper relationships with customers, stay connected to the needs of the market, grow revenue, and draw meaningful insights from social media data. Innovating since day one, we continue to help organizations pioneer the social media landscape and accelerate their success through product training, group training and tailored organizational training, as well as security and compliance services.

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