



Ambassify

**THE ULTIMATE
GUIDE
TO EMPLOYEE
ADVOCACY**





Welcome to  **Ambassify**
The Ultimate Guide to Employee Advocacy

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What is Employee Advocacy?

The definition of employee advocacy is pretty straightforward: it's the promotion of the company's messages by the people who work for the company.

Employee advocacy is nothing new - if we could dig that far back, we would probably find records of employee advocates back in the 17th century, working for those first Dutch companies. They would be the guys telling everyone on the docks: "Hey, you need to check out our tulips! We have this special way of cutting them that allows them to stay fresh longer."

Or something along those lines.

However, employee advocacy was never an orchestrated effort - employees talked about their companies occasionally and without direction. Or they did not.

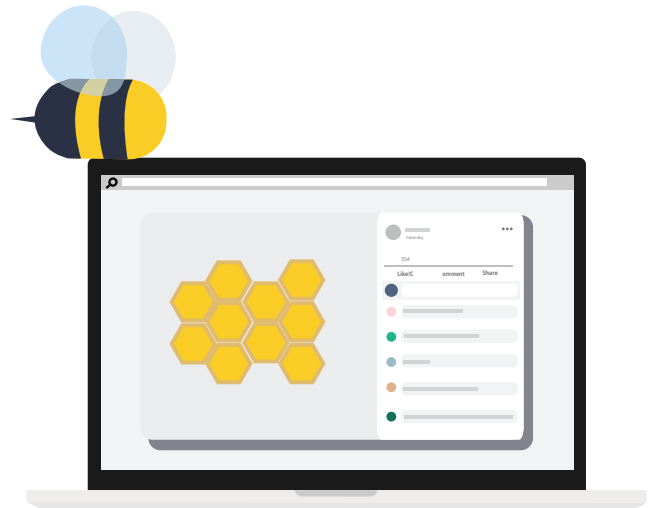


These days, a growing number of organizations are spending big money on employee advocacy programs and ambassadorship efforts.

This is down to three reasons:

- **Consumers have a lot more choices** - when purchases are made online, no brand is irreplaceable. The fact that you're the closest seller to a consumer is no longer important, and businesses around the globe are starting to acknowledge that.
- **People trust people, they don't trust companies** - advertising is seen as disingenuous and misleading. Consumers prefer to learn about brands by doing online research (reviews), talking to other customers, and having frank conversations with employees.
- **People are very interconnected** - social media platforms provide employees with the means to reach everyone in their personal and professional networks almost instantly.

This interconnectedness - as well as the level of trust we all feel when dealing with people we see as peers - means that employee advocacy can have an impact on more people than ever.



A simple Facebook post that reads: “**Just had an amazing workout at the head office - thanks [employer]**” can reach hundreds of people in a flash.

Posts like these - as well as reviews, social media shares, and other content bits from employees - change consumer perception of a brand. They humanize it and transform it from a giant faceless corporation into a trustworthy partner that’s made up of people who are just like them.

In this new form, employee advocacy is an exercise in amplification and inclusivity. Employee advocates are the ambassadors that can reach more people than the brand itself can, and their interactions have a measurable impact on the brand’s bottom line.



Stephanie Lemeza @StephLemeza17 · 12 Oct 2016

No better way to start the day than with some burpees!! Happy

#WorldBurpeeDay @ReebokWomen @ReebokCanada #FitAssCompany #FitFam



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3



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Why is Employee Advocacy Important?

The most obvious reason why you should strive for a corporate culture that encourages and nurtures employee advocacy is pretty straight-forward:

Almost every consumer is a 'social consumer', meaning that they use social media platforms to research brands, products, and services at one point during their customer journey process.

Smart companies respond to this paradigm shift by using 'social employees' - advocates who champion the company's message on social media platforms, build relationships, and educate people in their own networks while remaining credible and trustworthy.



The goal here is three-fold:

Create new business opportunities - a community of employees who are active on social media can draw a lot of fresh eyeballs on your brand and its products, services, and projects. These online interactions boost brand awareness and result in more customers, more easily closed deals, and higher customer lifetime value.

Attract new talent - existing employees have access to pools of talent that could potentially be a good fit for your company. Referred employees are quicker to hire, stay longer, perform better. ([Global Recruiting Trends Survey](#))

Reduce the cost of doing business - a robust employee advocacy program can contribute to higher productivity, leading to better work outcomes, lower employee turnover, and generally happier employees.



For a more in-depth look into how to attract the best talent to your company, take a look at our Ultimate Guide to Employer Branding.



[Download the Employer Branding Guide PDF!](#)

There are other things that employee advocacy accomplishes that contribute to one or all of the goals we mentioned above:

- **Increased social media reach** - [90% of people who learn about your company through employee advocacy](#) would not learn about it from any other source. Some studies go as far as to suggest that having 135 active employee advocates is better for social media reach (and brand awareness) than having 1,000,000 Facebook fans.




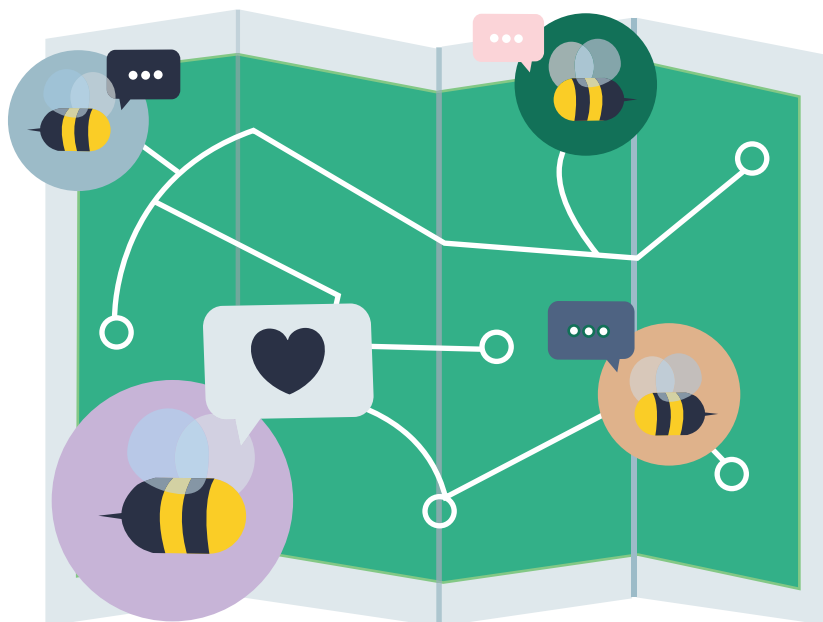


- **Boost in credibility and authenticity** - we already mentioned that people don't trust brand messages. However, they do trust other people - [close to 91% of millennials trust online recommendations](#) as much as they trust recommendations from family members and friends.
- **Increased employee engagement** - companies that invest in structured advocacy programs foster a sense of camaraderie and friendship within the organization. Employees work towards a shared goal and interact with each other more when they're participating in advocacy activities. As a result, they are 20% more likely to stay in the company, 27% more likely to feel optimistic about the future, and 20% more likely to feel inspired. ([Prophet, Relationships Economics](#))
- **Lower cost per lead** - thanks to higher organic reach, you will spend less money on social media ads and Google Adwords. That money alone can be used to cover the costs associated with running an employee advocacy program.

- **Lower cost for social media and content** - creating content is a real budget drain. So is paid promotion on social media sites. Employee advocates can be mobilized to create and share content for a fraction of the money it would cost you to outsource those activities.

Employee advocacy is beneficial on so many levels that it's impossible to list them all in this guide without it turning into a 50-pager. That's why we published this blog post on 20 Inspirational Employee Advocacy Statistics. Give it a quick read and get ready to be inspired!

 [Read 20 Inspirational Employee Advocacy Statistics](#)



Employee Advocacy - Leadership and Employee Buy-in

When starting a structured employee advocacy program, you're going to need two very different groups to buy into your idea if you want to see it take off:

- **Senior leadership buy-in, and**
- **Rank and file employee buy-in**

Believe it or not, getting executive buy-in can be easy if you approach it the right way. Top management cares about the numbers and the bottom line, and we've already provided you with enough statistics to back up the claim that employee advocacy creates new business opportunities **and** cuts costs in the long run.

To expedite the process of executive buy-in, create an advocacy plan, do preliminary research on software solutions, and find a champion in the leadership team. If you're a part of that team, you can assume that sponsorship position. If not, then executives in charge of HR, internal comms, and finance could prove to be valuable allies.





PRO TIP: If you can get the top brass excited about employee advocacy, you stand a much better chance of seeing your initiative soar. Employees take cues from their bosses, and they will be much more willing to participate in online advocacy activities if they know their CEO is on board. Tony Hsieh, CEO of Zappos, has a very active Facebook page that he and his team manage, often publishing stories that highlight Zappos initiatives and projects or shine a spotlight on their unique company culture.



Tony Hsieh

March 14, 2015 · 🌐

Just another day at Zappos to launch our Flux Capacitor



👍 1K

34 Comments 31 Shares

Getting your employees to buy into your advocacy program can prove a bit trickier.

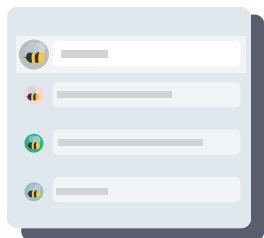
Remember, what you don't want to do is mandate participation - it's not only unfair but it can also lead to resentment and lower overall engagement, as well as backfire spectacularly on you.

(Just imagine the word getting out that you **require** employees to push only positive company content on social media. Something like that quickly turns into a PR nightmare.)

There will always be employees that easily fall into the role of an advocate. For them, you only have to make sure that you create clear posting guidelines, as well as a content bank that they can draw from.

For the employees that ask 'what's in it for me', you need to have a clear answer ready. Indeed, there are benefits for employees participating in an employee advocacy program.

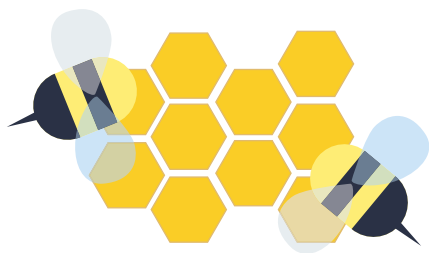
Here are just a few examples of those benefits:



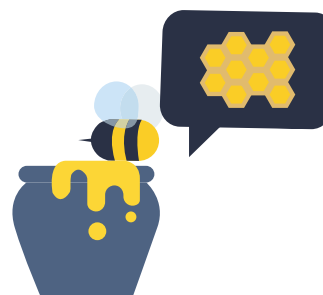
- **Build industry connections** - when an employee shares company-centric news, they usually attract the attention of people in the industry (even those outside their personal networks). Discussions in the comment section of a post on LinkedIn can result in professional friendships and new business opportunities



- **Grow your personal brand** - after a while, employees who take advocacy to heart will start seeing an impact on their brand. They might find themselves invited to attend (or even speak at) industry conferences.



- **Stronger employee-company connection** advocacy activities give employees a glimpse into the overall workings of the brand. This strengthens their connection to the company, and can even be a factor should they ever consider leaving their job.



- **Improved performance** - thanks to their better understanding of company vision and offers, employee advocates tend to perform better at their job. This is especially true for people in sales departments because advocacy can help them create new revenue streams.

6 Must-have Features of Employee Advocacy Solutions

By working with our current and past customers, we were able to identify 6 key features of good advocacy platforms. Our goal going forward is to focus on improving those features in every one of our updates so that we're always at the forefront of the employee advocacy SaaS ecosystem.



- **Accessibility** - access to the platform is easy with the use of browser extensions and mobile app solutions.



- **Ease of use** - users can choose to see content categories they're interested in. Sharing on various social media platforms is done with the click of the button.



- **Gamification** - a points-based system allows users to earn rewards for their advocacy efforts. Employees can also team up with colleagues against other departments.



- **Integration with other enterprise tools** - if you're using other marketing tools, you want your advocacy platform to connect seamlessly with them. Check for easy integration with HubSpot, Zapier, Salesforce, and others.



- **Focus on important metrics** - who shared what, when, and where. Did those shares result in extra reach, sales calls, or sales? You want a full analytical suit but you want your dashboard to show you the most important metrics at a glance.



- **More than just advocacy** - since employee advocacy is a direct result of good internal communication and engagement, you need a solution that facilitates both. With Ambassify, advocacy is the end goal but the platform helps you at every stage of that journey.

Connect with one of Ambassify's employee engagement and advocacy specialists to learn more about what Ambassify can do for you.



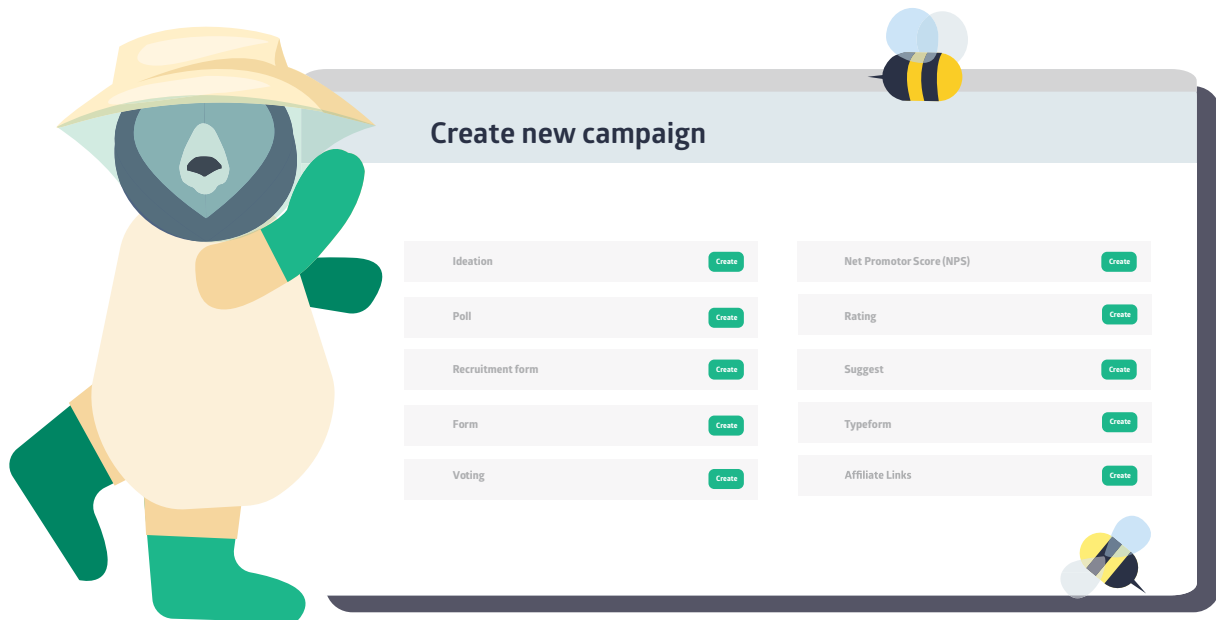
[Book a Personal Demo!](#)



5 Employee Advocacy Campaign Types (Ambassify Examples)

Talking about employee advocacy in broad terms can be a bit confusing, especially when it comes to various campaigns that you could be doing.

So instead of talking, we'll show you a couple of campaign examples from Ambassify's own advocacy group. Keep in mind that this is just a fraction of campaign types available with Ambassify - you can see the complete list below (and it's always growing).



1. Social media shares and comments

This is a basic type of advocacy campaign that lets you grow your social media reach, drive visitors to your website, and build brand awareness by tapping into your employees' networks. It requires a minimum amount of effort on the part of the advocates (a click on the social media platform icon of choice next to the post) so you're likely to get the most use out of it.



Blog post: 15 Eye-Opening Internal Communications Stats

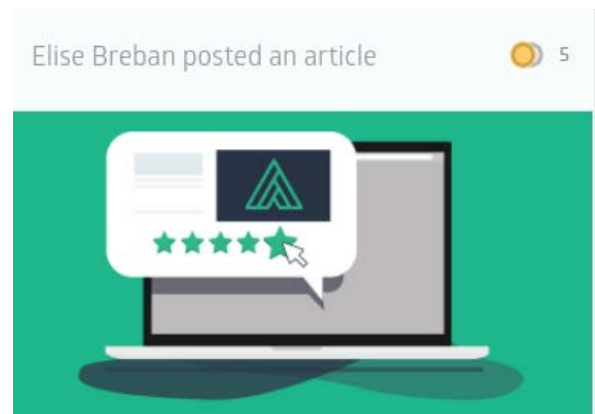
Help us share our latest blog post containing stats which every manager



Share news

2. Reviews on relevant review sites

While this type of campaign requires a bit more effort, most employees will gladly write a short Facebook or Glassdoor review for your company. You just need to make sure to reward their extra effort with an appropriate number of points.



Campaign In the picture: Review us on Glassdoor

Discover how Cudit increased their Glassdoor campaigns with 15 new



Rate content

3. Content creation campaigns

Examples include blog posts written by your employees or 'a day in the life of' types of posts written about them. Either way, these campaigns require a fair bit of involvement and time so make sure to reward participation accordingly. That said, don't avoid these campaigns because they seem like a lot of work - they contribute to higher overall engagement and are great for your employer branding efforts.

Senne Hoekman posted an article  10



Senne Hoekman | Employee testimonial

Discover how Senne became a brand ambassador of his favorite company!



Vote now

4. Ideation challenges

From new projects that employees would like to work on to ideas for new rewards in the advocacy program, these challenges can take any shape and form that you want. They are geared more towards the engagement side of things but you can later publish a post that shines the spotlight on those employees whose ideas were voted on and made the cut.

Rob Van Steenberg posted an artic...  30



What would be your ideal reward as an ambassador?


What reward would you as an ambassador greatly appreciate? The sky is the limit, just




Leave a suggestion

5. Open position referrals


Occasionally, your HR department will need to fill in an open position. Don't forget to ask your employees for recommendations. As we already mentioned, referred employees are quicker (and cheaper) to hire, tend to stay longer, and are usually a better fit for the company.

Senne Hoekman posted an article  10



Help us find a new champion!

Do you know somebody who could be a valuable addition to the team?
Help us find the perfect candidate

 [Vote now](#)

How to Reward Employee Advocacy (The Right Way)

When designing an employee advocacy program, it's important to realize that incentivizing desirable actions will only get you so far.

Your employees need to be motivated and engaged enough to participate without you dangling a carrot in front of them. You get to that place by working on a tight-knit company culture, and by securing employee buy-in before the launch of the program.

That said, a promise of rewards can definitely boost the overall employee participation in a structured advocacy program.

Here are 4 broad categories of rewards that are at your disposal. You should go for a mix when creating your rewards pool because different employees are motivated by different things.





Monetary rewards

Monetary rewards are acceptable, as long as you don't go overboard with them. However, never offer actual money as a reward (a bonus is taxable in most countries). Instead, think in terms of freebies such as branded sweaters, mugs, pins, or similar.

Access

Granting advocates access to the inner sanctum of your company will definitely empower them and encourage them to press on with their advocacy efforts. One reward can be mentorship from an executive of their choice; another one can be a chance to sit in at top-level meetings.

Recognition

Find a way to publicly recognize your best employee advocates. Feature them in a social media post, for example. Or publish something that they've written on your company blog.

Involvement

Involvement is a strong motivator. When your employee advocates see that they have a purpose that goes beyond simply completing monthly campaigns, they will become more invested. Involve the most ardent employees in policy-making - create a group of 'senior' advocates and occasionally ask for their opinion on new products/services, new HR policies, and similar.

We published a detailed blog about this topic: [25 Employee Recognition & Rewards Ideas](#). Read it today to draw inspiration for your own rewards program (we won't mind if you swipe an idea or two)!



[Read: 25 Employee Recognition & Rewards Ideas](#)

Employee Advocacy Metrics & KPIs to Focus On



When setting up goals and KPIs for your employee advocacy program, ask yourself one question: **What do we want to accomplish?**

It's important that advocacy goals are aligned with the goals of specific departments it aims to help.

Get specific and quantify every goal. Once you assign a number to something, it makes it that much easier to achieve. Some examples of goals would be:

- **Increase registration for an event by 30%**
- **Double website traffic by a set date**
- **Amplify a post on Facebook by 50%**
- **Answer 100 Quora questions relating to your industry**
- **Address 10 negative Facebook comments about your brand**
- **Interview 20% fewer people when hiring for a specific department**

The metrics that you end up choosing will depend on the specificity of the campaign types that you're using and your industry, but they will generally fall into 3 broad categories:

Marketing KPIs - you can lump a lot into this category but we recommend not going overboard and focusing on social, website, and content-specific metrics. Some examples are: most shared/clicked content (by type and category), website traffic from advocacy campaigns (UTM tracking), percentage bounce rate (advocacy-driven traffic versus other channels), reach on social media, estimated earned media value, and similar.

Sales KPIs - it pays off to have your tool stack connected and UTM tracking switched on. It gives you an opportunity to create an advocacy-influenced model to track the bottom-line value of your employee advocacy efforts. Look at metrics such as sales generated by advocacy, SSI score/advocacy activity correlation, the value of advocacy-generated customers, closure rate of the advocacy pipeline, and others.

Human resources KPIs - finally, when using employee advocacy to power up your recruitment efforts, take a look at metrics such as quality of referrals, total new hires from referrals, cost of hire, first-year attrition of referred hires, and candidate job satisfaction.

Tap Into Employee Advocacy to Increase Brand Awareness, Leads & Sales

Just a handful of active employee advocates can help you transform the way you do business.

135 advocates = 1,000,000 active Facebook fans



And, if you stack things right, getting to those 135 employee advocates is way easier than finding a million people who have a vague interest in your brand.

Plus, those advocates are way more valuable to you than fans.

Employee advocates can:



- **Inspire others to take action**

- **Become more motivated and perform better**

- **Help you hire and retain top talent**

- **Help you grow your revenue and reduce your costs**



All it takes for you to tap into this is a little bit of effort, a bit of vision and determination, and the right employee advocacy platform. If you bring the first two things with you, we at Ambassify will take care of the tools and the logistics. Contact one of our advocacy experts today, set up your personal tour, and get started on a journey that will benefit your company, your brand, and ultimately, your employees.



Book Your Ambassify Demo Today!





www.ambassify.com