A Best Practices Report

Social Media Employee Advocacy:

Tapping into the power of an engaged social workforce

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Includes input from 26 ecosystem contributors

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The use of employees to advocate on behalf of their brand is nothing new, but a combination of market forces and growing comfort with social business has created a tipping point for the growth of formalized Employee Advocacy programs. In this report, we surveyed brands to understand their motivations for investing in them; employees to understand what motivates them to share information about work; and finally, consumers, to learn how shared content resonates with them and how it effects their actions and impressions.

Brand leaders are looking at their workforce as an underutilized asset at a time when consumers rely on their social network of trusted friends for information and brand preference. The growth of these programs represents a significant shift in mind-set from thinking of social as a department-level tool to one that engages the entire workforce in achieving business objectives. Reaching this level of scale introduces new challenges: building employee comfort and skills in social media; managing the risk inherent in scale; the availability of content as fuel; metrics that prove value; and seeking ongoing alignment between brand goals, employees and consumers.

Based on our research findings, this report offers recommendations for brands that seek to adopt formalized employee advocacy programs.

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KEY FINDINGS

- **Planning and adoption of employee advocacy is quickly growing.** 90% of brands surveyed are already pursuing or have plans to pursue some form of employee advocacy.

- **Consumer response to employee advocacy content is encouraging**. 31% of consumers say reading work-related posts helps them "better understand the company" their connection works for, which helps "drive increased understanding and brand health" —a top priority for 47% of brands. Consumer response to employee posts often out-performs traditional digital advertising results.

- **Employee advocacy amounts to native advertising in social**. Employee advocacy programs today show great promise, with higher reach, click-through, and share rates than official brand pages or social ads. For example, 21% of consumers report "liking" employee posts—a far higher engagement rate than the average social ad.

- **But, employee posts can backfire.** There is a price to pay for those brands that ask employees to share content that doesn't align to their friends' interests: 20% of consumers report they have cut connections based on such posts.

- **Employee advocacy drives employee engagement.** When employees are asked how they felt after sharing work-related content, the leading response was "I feel more connected and enthusiastic about the company I work for."

- **Employee advocacy supports employment branding.** When asked which employee-shared content consumers found most relevant, recruiting rose to the top: 30% of consumers find job postings useful.

- **Europeans lag North America in adoption.** European consumers are less likely to be interested in a connection's posts about work and European employees are less likely to share work-related content. Europeans have a stronger preference for keeping work and home life separate: 44% of Europeans cited this a reason for not sharing work-related content, compared to only 23% of North Americans.

AN INTRODUCTION TO EMPLOYEE ADVOCACY

THE ROOTS OF EMPLOYEE ADVOCACY

Throughout the history of branding, employee advocacy has been a part of business. In an interview, Kevin Hunt, Social Media Manager at General Mills, connected the dots between yesterday and today. "When we first launched our [employee advocacy] pilot, I found an old essay that the President of General Mills had written in the 1940s that said: 'PR is everybody's job,' said Hunt. "That's especially true today; we all have a role to play in promoting the company and this is just the 2015 version of that."

Brands today are learning to leverage the largely untapped power of their employee base by first understanding what it means to be a brand in social: through social marketing campaigns, customer service, recruiting and other department-level activities. With over 10 years of experience at this level, many are ready to spread messages further, taking the leap from using brand pages alone to asking employees to amplify the brand through their personal pages. The early use of "Brand Ambassador" programs—where highly trained employees advocate, often in PR or thought leadership positions—has also set the stage for advocacy at scale.

> "I bristle at the notion that employee advocacy is a new thing. In many ways, it's something we've been trying to do for a long time, and only recently have the stars aligned between culture, technology, and product to be able to roll it out at scale."
>
> –Matt Switzer, Hootsuite

That said, brands have exercised caution in social media—for good reason.[1] In social, where posts by an employee can spread quickly and globally, many brands have historically put on the brakes through their internal employee social media policies. Most of those policies say, "leave representing our company to the professionals", but that is starting to change. Our 2015 State of Social Business research report found Employee Advocacy to be the highest growth social business program.[2]

DRIVERS OF EMPLOYEE ADVOCACY

There are a number of dynamics that are driving the adoption of employee advocacy programs:

1. **EMPLOYEES ARE THE BRAND** Employees are the most important assets most companies have, and yet they remain largely untapped on a platform where a vast majority of consumers communicate—social networks.

2. **SOCIAL'S SHIFT TO A PAID PLATFORM** Social media's shift from organic to a paid model (social ads) has had an impact, as only 3% of a brand's messages today reach consumers without the support of paid advertising on Facebook.[3] A range of research shows that employees have far greater reach in aggregate than official brand pages in social. For example, one study by MSLGroup found that brand messages reached 561% further when shared by employees vs. branded channels.[4]

3. **EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT** Employee engagement levels are largely stagnant[5], which impacts business in many ways, but especially retention and productivity.[6] Many brands are investing in Enterprise Social Networks (ESNs) internally to connect employees to reach each other and company leaders to increase engagement. We found a correlation between using social tools internally and getting employees comfortable with advocacy.

4. **AVAILABILITY OF EMPLOYEE ADVOCACY TOOLS** To overcome questions of what is and is not appropriate to post, today's advocacy tools provide employees a stream of approved content that both informs them about the brand's business and gives them confidence to post to external social networks.

THE STATE OF EMPLOYEE ADVOCACY TODAY

Employee advocacy involves brands keen to drive brand relevancy through engaged employees. But it also involves the social networks of consumers who are the ultimate recipients of advocacy content. We wanted to explore what these *consumers* felt and how they acted when they saw their friends posting about work. In this section, we highlight key findings from our surveys of the three key parties involved in the practice of employee advocacy: brands, employees and consumers.

While most organizations (54%, see Figure 1) view employee advocacy as a way to increase the reach of messages that shape their brand, the employee and consumer view is naturally more complicated. Figure 2 provides a starting point for the sections that follow, where we look at alignment between brand goals, employee motivation to advocate, and consumer response to advocacy posts.

FIGURE 1 THE TOP BUSINESS DRIVERS FOR EMPLOYEE ADVOCACY PROGRAMS

Rank the business drivers for investing in
an Employee Advocacy program

Increase reach of our messages in social networks (awareness)	54%
Drive increased understanding and brand health of our organization	47%
Engage employees more deeply in our company mission and their work	43%
Provide our customers better experience with our brand	43%
Increase likes and comments	38%
Increase direct revenue/sales	38%
Humanize our brand	37%
Improve ability to attract top employee candidates (recruiting)	35%
Reduce the cost of paid social advertising	32%
Drive recommendations for our brand	30%
It was happening organically anyway- we wanted to expand and manage it	29%
To create new branded content using employees	28%
Provide customers with support, have employees answer questions	27%

Source: Altimeter, Brand Survey, Q1 2016, n=164 for companies with > 250 employees

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CONSUMER INSIGHTS

Now that we understand the drivers and motivations of brands, let's take a look at the impact of these programs, specifically on the consumers who are in employee's social networks. To do this, we took the intent of brands and lined them up against consumer reactions to posts by their friends about work (see Figure 2). We found mixed, but promising results. While 54% of brands seek to increase the reach of their messages, only 8% of consumers report sharing them. So while a brand can reach an employee's connections directly through employee posts, consumers are unlikely to re-share and amplify the content further. That said, 8% of consumers sharing a post is substantial when compared to click-through rates for social ads, which range from 1.5-4% depending on the ad type and platform.[7] And marketers would be thrilled to see a 21% "like" engagement rate, as consumers reported with this content. Several brands in our interviews indicated that the level of engagement via employee content is at times overtaking corporate brand pages in social networks.
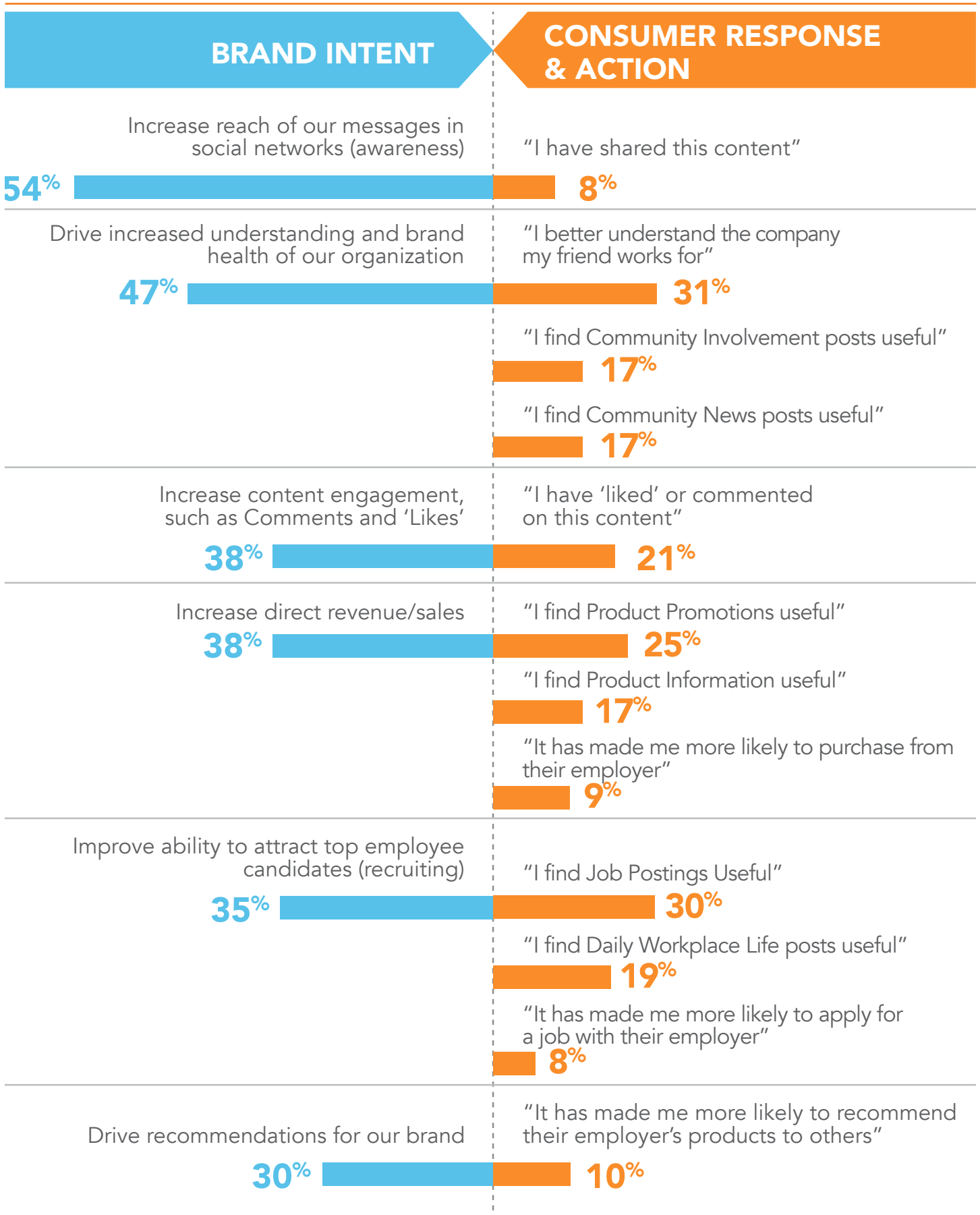
Consumers' top positive response to employee shared posts was "I better understand the company my friend works for" (31%). That's good news from an overall brand health standpoint. This benefit was confirmed by Nolan Carleton, Associate Director of Communications and Social Engagement at AT&T. "We really are happy to see that most of the time, the stories that do the best are human interest," Carleton said. "To see the viral reaction that we have internally translate externally, and show friends and family 'this is what it's like to work at AT&T' is really great."

Another strong area of alignment is recruiting. 35% of brands report this to be their intention and 30% of consumers find job postings useful; in fact, it was the second most useful content type reported by consumers. The use of employees to boost the employment brand (and with that, the consumer brand) has been a focus at Adobe. Natalie Kessler, Head of Talent Branding at Adobe told us "We are trying to encourage employees to present a holistic view of their experience at Adobe, from a career perspective, benefits perspective, and also from a community perspective."

The final area of alignment we analyzed is increased sales, but here, it's a mixed bag: 38% of brands report this as a top goal, and 25% of consumers found product promotions useful. The bad news is only 8% said they were more likely to purchase.

Interestingly, we did find one key regional difference here: North American consumers are almost twice as likely to favor community involvement content over consumers in EU countries (24% NA vs. 13% EU). This could be the result of Europeans viewing community service as less a role for corporations, and more for individuals and government institutions.[8]

| BRAND INTENT	CONSUMER RESPONSE & ACTION
Increase reach of our messages in social networks (awareness)	"I have shared this content"
54%	**8%**
Drive increased understanding and brand health of our organization	"I better understand the company my friend works for"
47%	**31%**
	"I find Community Involvement posts useful"
	17%
	"I find Community News posts useful"
	17%
Increase content engagement, such as Comments and 'Likes'	"I have 'liked' or commented on this content"
38%	**21%**
Increase direct revenue/sales	"I find Product Promotions useful"
38%	**25%**
	"I find Product Information useful"
	17%
	"It has made me more likely to purchase from their employer"
	9%
Improve ability to attract top employee candidates (recruiting)	"I find Job Postings Useful"
35%	**30%**
	"I find Daily Workplace Life posts useful"
	19%
	"It has made me more likely to apply for a job with their employer"
	8%
Drive recommendations for our brand	"It has made me more likely to recommend their employer's products to others"
30%	**10%**

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CONSUMER REACTIONS TO EMPLOYEE POSTS

Our data points to employee posts as an especially effective native advertising tool in social media. While only 15% of consumers report recognizing posts about work in their social news feed, 54% of employees are actually posting such content (see Figure 3, below). We believe this indicates friends' posts about work are largely seen as a natural part of their life, and not brand messages. This is certainly the case of Adobe's #AdobeLife employee advocacy program, which encourages employees to post about what it's like to work at Adobe. These programs allow brands to communicate (piecemeal, in subtle ways) brand values to consumers (and potential employees) over long periods of time.

FIGURE 3 EMPLOYEE POSTS ABOUT WORK LARGELY SEEN AS ORGANIC

ONLY 15% OF CONSUMERS RECOGNIZE POSTS ABOUT WORK

"Has anyone you're connected to via social sites posted content about work?"
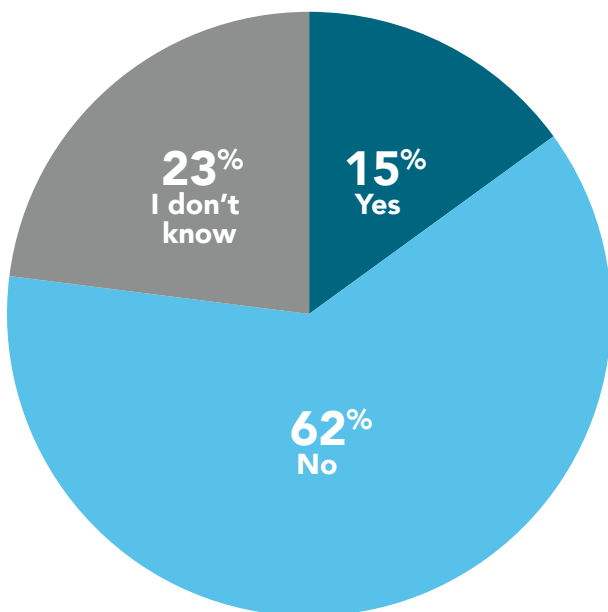
EVEN THOUGH 55% OF EMPLOYEES REPORT POSTING ABOUT WORK

"Have you posted information about work either on your own or as part of a company endorsed program?"

23% I don't know
15% Yes
62% No

46% I don't share information about work on my personal social media accounts
25% On my own
9% Company program
21% Both
55% Do share information about work
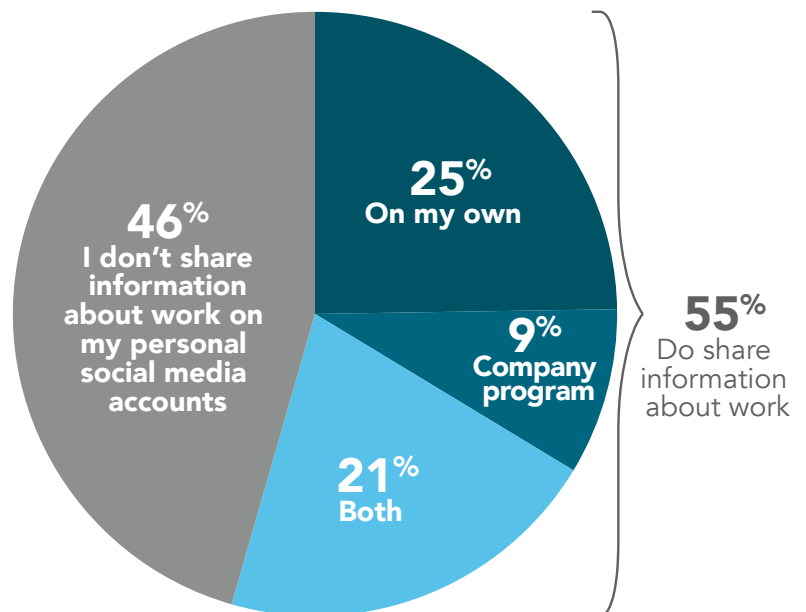
Source left: Altimeter, Consumer Survey, Q1 2016, n=24,991, Global
Source right: Altimeter, Employee Survey, Q1 2016, n=350, Global

Only 9% of employees report posting as part of a company-endorsed program (30% if you include both formal programs and organic advocacy), so at this stage in the evolution, most posts are organic and therefore likely not tracked by brand managers as contributing to business outcomes.

We did find that US consumers are more ambivalent about work content than their European counterparts: 40% of US consumers responded "No opinion" when asked how they felt about work-related content, compared to 30% of Europeans. Since Europe lags North America in employee advocacy adoption, it may be that they have not yet grown immune to these posts and so, pay more attention. This could also potentially be a signal of diminishing returns of employee advocacy posts: as consumers see more, they'll start to tune them out, resulting in them having less impact.

EMPLOYEE ADVOCACY CAN CREATE CONSUMER BACKLASH

There are costs brands incur if they misalign their content strategy with consumer interests. In addition to wasting money on content that may have little impact, the employee faces the loss of influence in social networks. 20% of consumers report that they've blocked or unfollowed a friend because of their posts about work (see Figure 4), reducing both their potential future business impact in social as well as their personal relationships. This is consistent with blocking rates we've seen in related research.[9]

FIGURE 4 POSTS ABOUT WORK CAN CREATE BACKLASH FOR THE EMPLOYEE

"Have you ever blocked/unfollowed/unfriended someone because of their posts about work?"
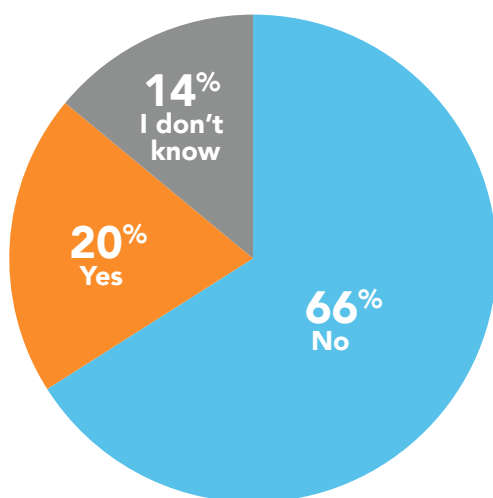
Brands can avoid declines in their employee's social network reach and influence by creating a content plan that aligns with consumer interests, and continuously monitoring that feedback loop between employee posting activity and consumer action, including defriending/blocking rates.

14% I don't know

20% Yes

66% No

Source: Altimeter, Consumer Survey, Global Average Q1 2016, n=2285

BRAND INSIGHTS

Brands are in the early days of employee advocacy. As Cameron Brain of EveryoneSocial put it, "We're not even out of the first inning in this." As reported in our 2015 State of Social Business report, many brands (42%) are making employee advocacy a priority this year, although few (16%) report having mature programs with strategic impact.[6]

However, interest in this area has increased 191% between 2013-2015[10], which tells us it could be the new "bright shiny object" of social media. In other words, there are high expectations for results, but little understanding of what it takes. In this latest research, 90% of brands now report they are pursuing employee advocacy in some way (see Figure 5).

EUROPEANS HALF AS LIKELY AS NORTH AMERICAN EMPLOYEES TO USE ADVOCACY TOOLS PROVIDED BY THEIR EMPLOYER

"I share content through a platform that my employer provides to me"

Europe — 7%
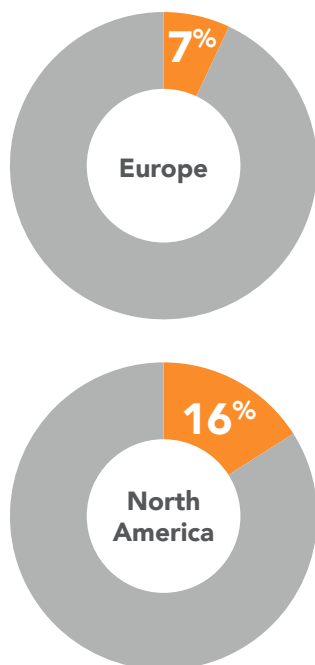
North America — 16%

Source: Altimeter, Employee Survey, Q1 2016, Base: North America = 117, Europe = 68

FIGURE 5 90% OF BRANDS REPORT PLANS TO IMPLEMENT AN EMPLOYEE ADVOCACY PROGRAM

"What best represents the state of Employee Advocacy at your company?"

Early pilots, testing — 38%

Leadership support for broad-based employee advocacy — 26%

Employee advocacy is strategic, with strategic impact — 16%

Elite, trained employees used to advocate in just a few departments — 11%

No plans — 7%

Employees not allowed to advocate for our organization — 3%

Source: Altimeter, Brand Survey, Q1 2016, n=223

HOW BRANDS MEASURE SUCCESS

For the minority of brands that have decided against employee advocacy programs (10%), the top reason was "Don't see the value, difficult to measure", so it's clear this is an area that needs to mature—not just in terms of tools/technology, but comparative industry benchmarks that define the range of possible outcomes. We need to answer the question: "What does success look like?" For those brands that do embrace employee advocacy, we found they expect to deliver increased customer engagement (45%); increased employee engagement (40%); and a smaller number—at this early stage of maturity—expect a financial return (15%) (see Figure 7).

For each of these three drivers, we'll dive deeper into the metrics that matter to brands.

1. ENGAGE CUSTOMERS

The top three customer engagement measures reported as priorities by brands are: 1) Engagement, such as likes, comments, shares (67%); 2) Reach of posts (59%); and 3) website referral traffic (55%) (see Figure 7 below). Of course, measuring engagement is the first test as to whether consumers are paying attention. One brand we interviewed did a simple test, asking 25 employees to tweet the content posted on their main Twitter handle. They found that just those 25 employees equaled 50% of the impact of their branded Twitter account (which had more than 50,000 followers).

2. ENGAGE EMPLOYEES

Based on their reported measurement priorities below (Figure 7), brands are more concerned about volume metrics like the number of employees who post (59%) than they are with the impact these programs have on employee retention and engagement (25%). That's a missed opportunity and perhaps a reflection of the fact that HR often isn't at the table when these programs are designed. The most advanced brands we spoke with stressed the need for building a socially engaged workforce in-house first before asking employees to amplify messages to their followers. Only 18% of brands measure "hiring new employees," another missed opportunity given the positive response consumers have to job postings (30%) and posts about daily workplace life (19%).
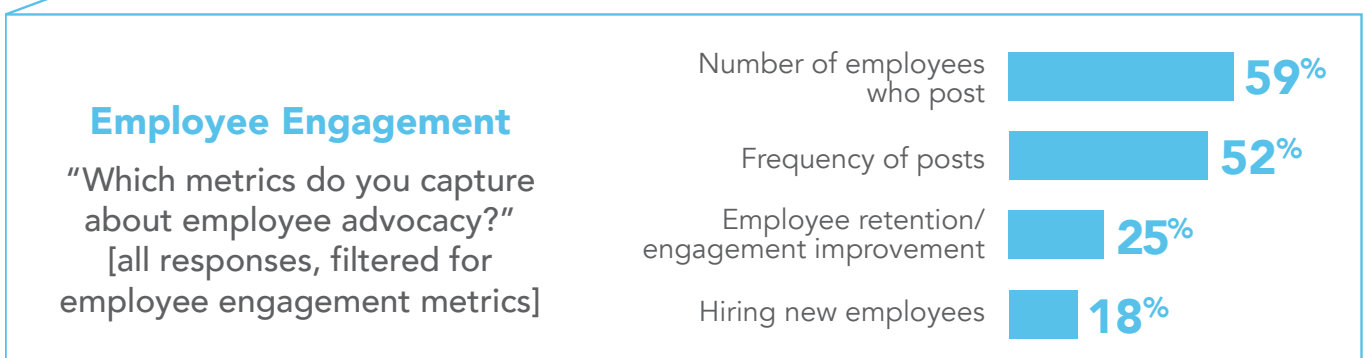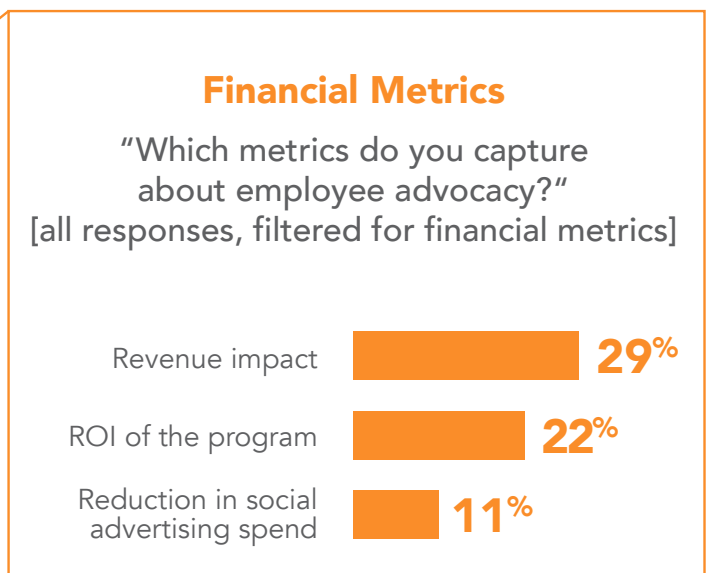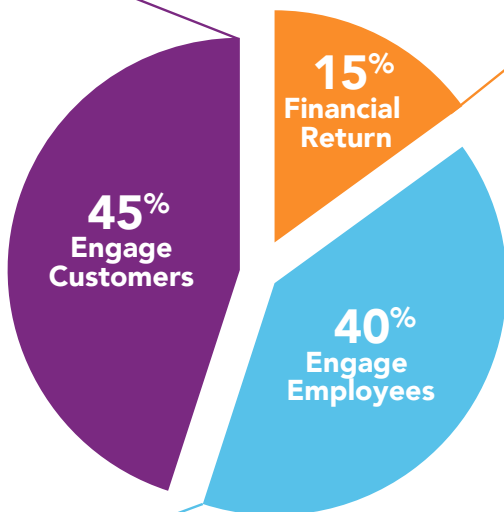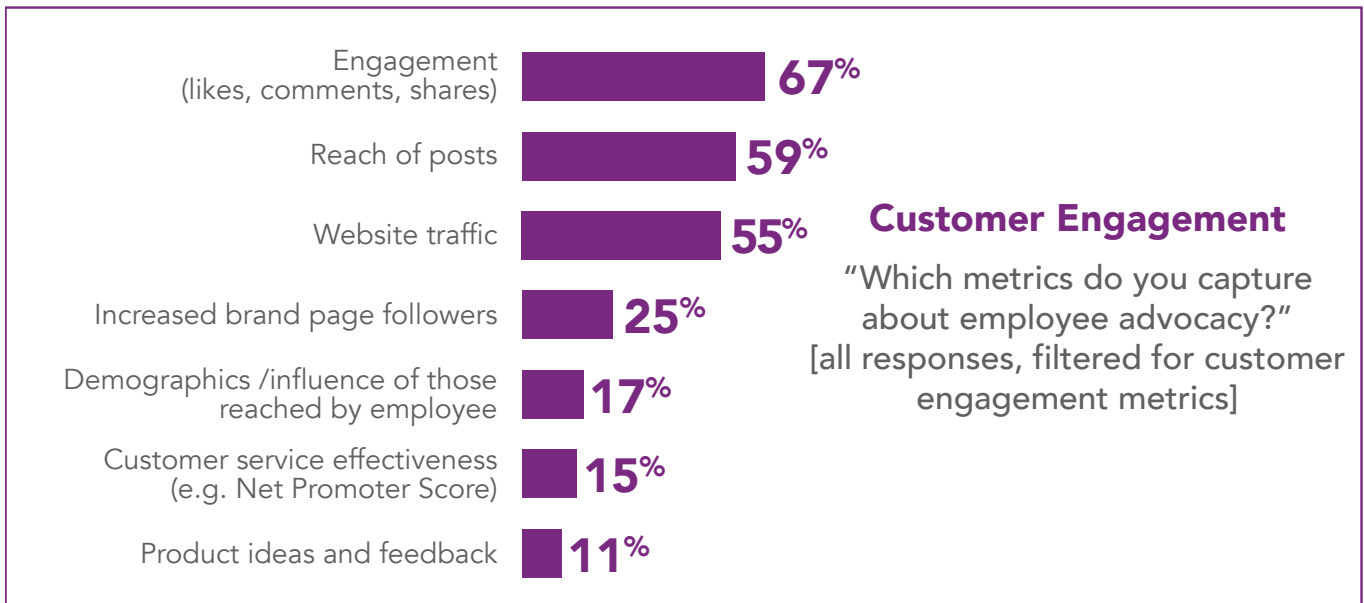
3. FINANCIAL RETURN

At this stage of maturity, it's not surprising that a minority of brands focus on financial return as their primary objective. This is likely tied to the perceived difficulty of connecting investment in employee advocacy to business outcomes. However, since 14% of consumers report clicking on employee posted links (among other actions that outperform traditional advertising by a landslide), there is in fact an opportunity to trace the journey between employee posts and financial impact.

Case in point: only 11% of brands report "Reduction in social advertising spend" as a metric they capture (see Figure 7). Given the reach—and more importantly the consumer actions that result from employee posts—brands should consider organic employee reach as native advertising, and balance that against paid social ads.

As this practice matures, we expect brands will view success of employee advocacy programs more holistically and take into account the financial value of a more engaged employee, as well as specialized programs—like social sales—that scale external value with financial outcomes that are measurable.

"If you were asked to pick, what would you say is the primary driver for your employee advocacy program?"

Engagement (likes, comments, shares) **67%**
Reach of posts **59%**
Website traffic **55%**
Increased brand page followers **25%**
Demographics /influence of those reached by employee **17%**
Customer service effectiveness (e.g. Net Promoter Score) **15%**
Product ideas and feedback **11%**

Customer Engagement

"Which metrics do you capture about employee advocacy?" [all responses, filtered for customer engagement metrics]

15% Financial Return

45% Engage Customers

40% Engage Employees

Financial Metrics

"Which metrics do you capture about employee advocacy?" [all responses, filtered for financial metrics]

Revenue impact **29%**
ROI of the program **22%**
Reduction in social advertising spend **11%**

Employee Engagement

"Which metrics do you capture about employee advocacy?" [all responses, filtered for employee engagement metrics]

Number of employees who post **59%**
Frequency of posts **52%**
Employee retention/ engagement improvement **25%**
Hiring new employees **18%**

Source: Altimeter, Brand Survey, Q1 2016, n=150

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EMPLOYEE INSIGHTS

Asking employees to share brand information on their personal social pages requires thoughtful consideration for what motivates the employee and designing a program with employees at the center. There is no employee advocacy without employee participation, and in most jurisdictions, it is illegal to compel employees to use their personal social accounts for employer gain.[11]

Several of the brands we interviewed began their journey as a way to engage their workforce first. Nicole Alvino, Co-Founder of Social Chorus told us "The idea is that, before we ask employees to share stories externally, they first have to be aligned with the mission and understand what's going on [within the company.] It's all about connecting employees first, informing them with content, and then allowing them to become advocates."

We heard a similar perspective from Nolan Carleton at AT&T. Carleton told us how AT&T's "Social Circle" program started in marketing, but really started to grow when the company shifted it to employee communications, and focused it more on the idea of building an internal social culture of sharing and changing behaviors to be more social as an organization. This also aligns with our finding that 80% of employee advocates report using social tools *internally* to collaborate and communicate with fellow employees. The success formula seems to be: 1) Engage employees in the mission of your brand by keeping them informed (use tools to share company news); 2) Build an internal culture of sharing and social collaboration (ESNs); and then 3) Leverage 1 and 2 externally for consumer success (through employee advocacy tools or ESN tools with external "share" features).

We did find some regional differences worth pointing out: compared to Europeans, North American employees are more motivated to share on social as a means of helping their friends and family understand their job (49% vs. 29%), and North Americans see social media activity as a way to connect to their colleagues more so than Europeans (45% NA vs. 32% EU). By nearly all measures, European employees feel less supported by their employers, particularly in terms of the tools they are provided. (21% EU vs. 41% NA employees say tools provided make it easy to share).
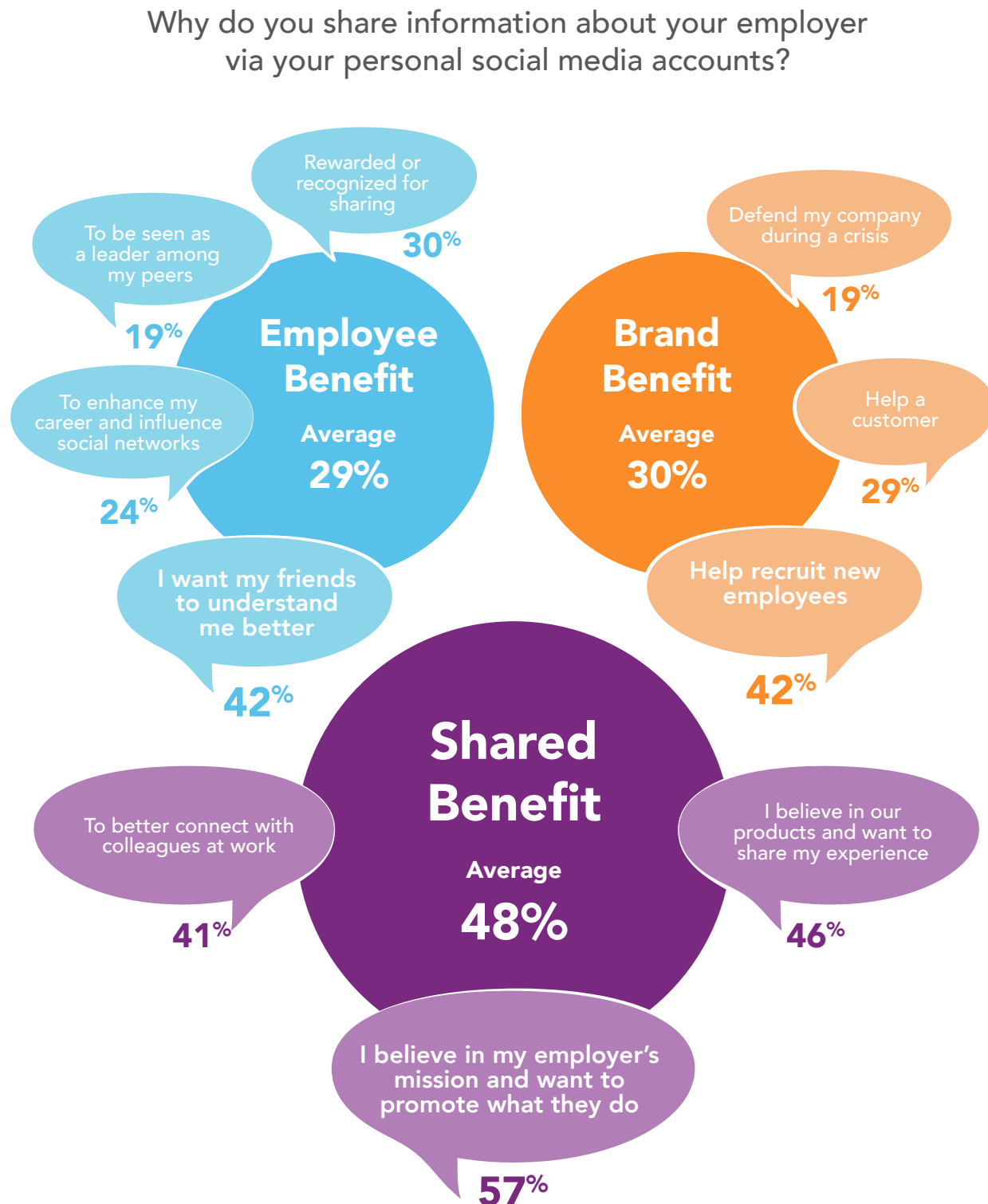
FIGURE 8 MOTIVATIONS AND SUPPORT FOR EMPLOYEES SHARING CONTENT DIFFER ACROSS REGIONS

Europe   **North America**

"I want my friends to understand me better by understanding what I do"

29%   49%

"To better connect with colleagues at work"

32%   45%

"Tools provided makes it easy to share"

21%   41%

Source: Altimeter, Employee Survey, Q1 2016,
Base: North America = 117, Europe = 68

When asking employees what motivates them to share, we measured three categories of benefit: 1) Employee Benefit (e.g., their career, being seen as a leader, etc.); 2) Brand Benefit (e.g., reach, brand health, recruiting, crisis management etc.); and 3) Shared Benefit for *both* the employee and the brand (see Figure 9).
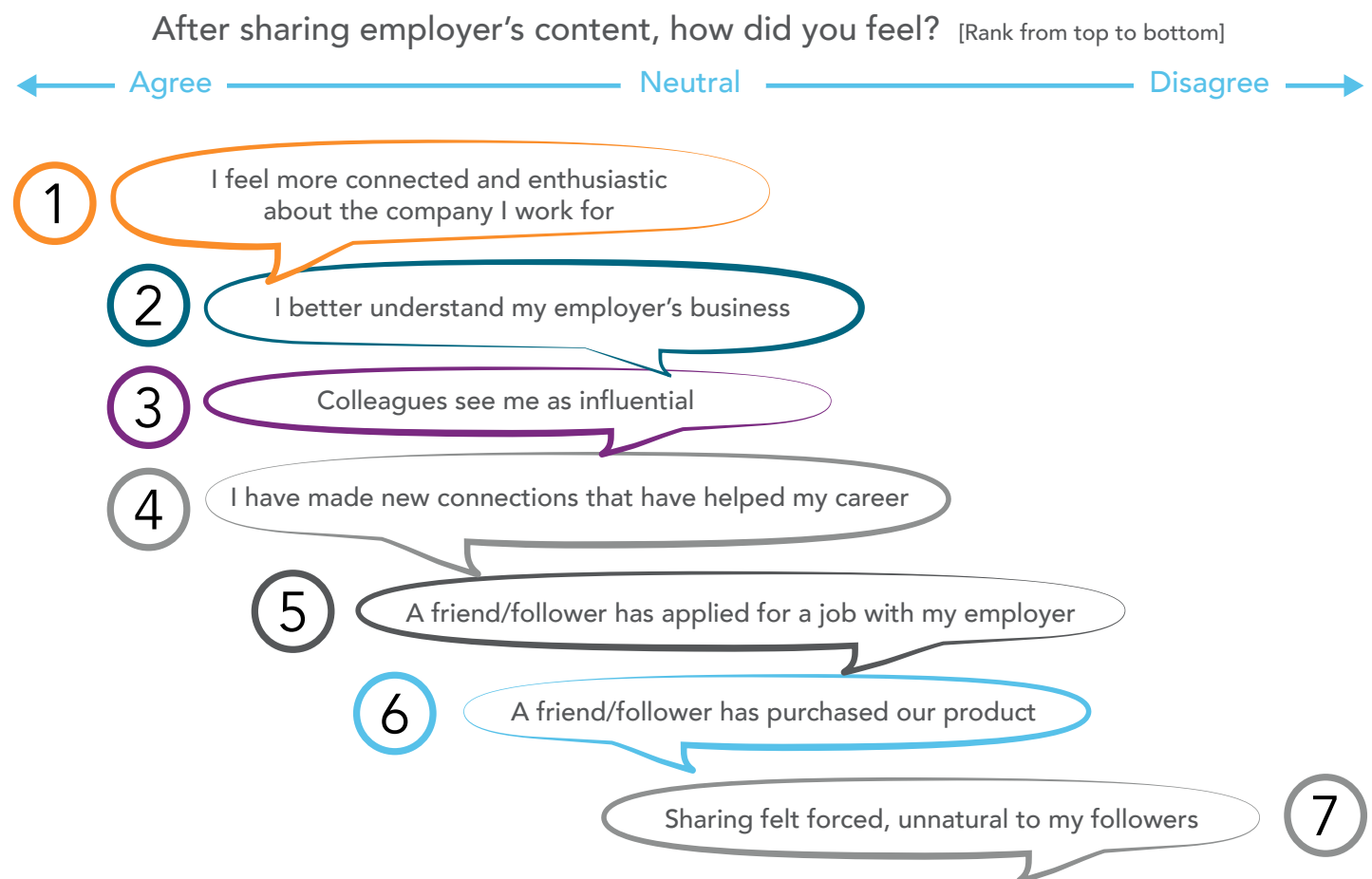
FIGURE 9 EMPLOYEES ARE MOTIVATED BY SHARED BENEFITS BETWEEN THEMSELVES AND THEIR EMPLOYERS

Why do you share information about your employer via your personal social media accounts?

Rewarded or recognized for sharing **30%**

To be seen as a leader among my peers **19%**

Employee Benefit
Average
29%

To enhance my career and influence social networks **24%**

I want my friends to understand me better **42%**

Defend my company during a crisis **19%**

Brand Benefit
Average
30%

Help a customer **29%**

Help recruit new employees **42%**

To better connect with colleagues at work **41%**

Shared Benefit
Average
48%

I believe in our products and want to share my experience **46%**

I believe in my employer's mission and want to promote what they do **57%**

Motivators with "shared brand and employee benefit" were the most important to employees (48%), compared to "employee benefit" (29%) or "brand benefit" (30%) alone. Reinforcing our belief that successful programs start with engaged employees, the top employee motivator (at 57%) was "I believe in my employer's mission and want to promote what they do." Note that "To be seen as a leader among my peers" ranked at the bottom (19%), telling us employees are less concerned about career goals than they are about shared goals.

We also asked employees how they felt after sharing (Figure 10). The top two ("I feel more connected and enthusiastic about the company I work for" and "I better understand my employer's business") support employee engagement objectives. It's also important to note that ranking last was "Sharing felt forced, unnatural to my followers." While employees are unlikely to share content that would not be considered a natural part of their lives, the data implies that employee advocates generally find sharing with their networks to be a mostly natural interaction. For many brands we spoke to, reaching employee engagement goals was a primary driver that clearly aligns with employee advocacy motivation.

FIGURE 10 EMPLOYEES ARE MOTIVATED BY SHARED BENEFITS BETWEEN THEMSELVES AND THEIR EMPLOYERS

After sharing employer's content, how did you feel? [Rank from top to bottom]

Agree — Neutral — Disagree

1. I feel more connected and enthusiastic about the company I work for
2. I better understand my employer's business
3. Colleagues see me as influential
4. I have made new connections that have helped my career
5. A friend/follower has applied for a job with my employer
6. A friend/follower has purchased our product
7. Sharing felt forced, unnatural to my followers

Source: Altimeter, Employee Survey, Global Average, Q1 2016, n=185 for companies with > 250 employees

PROFILE OF AN EMPLOYEE ADVOCATE

WHERE DO EMPLOYEES SHARE?

As the leading social network[12], it's no surprise that Facebook ranks high among employees' social tools of choice. Even though they're sharing work-related content, employees don't feel limited to "professional" networks like LinkedIn. Facebook's popularity as a medium for employee advocacy indicates that these early adopters are comfortable mixing personal and professional experiences (Figure 11A).

FIGURE 11A EMPLOYEES WHO SHARE ARE MORE LIKELY TO USE FACEBOOK INSTEAD OF OTHER PLATFORMS

"Which Social tools have you used to share content provided by your employer within the past 6 months?"

Platform	%
facebook	86%
twitter	52%
LinkedIn	43%
Instagram	34%
YouTube	28%
Google+	26%
My blog	23%
Pinterest	16%
Other	4%
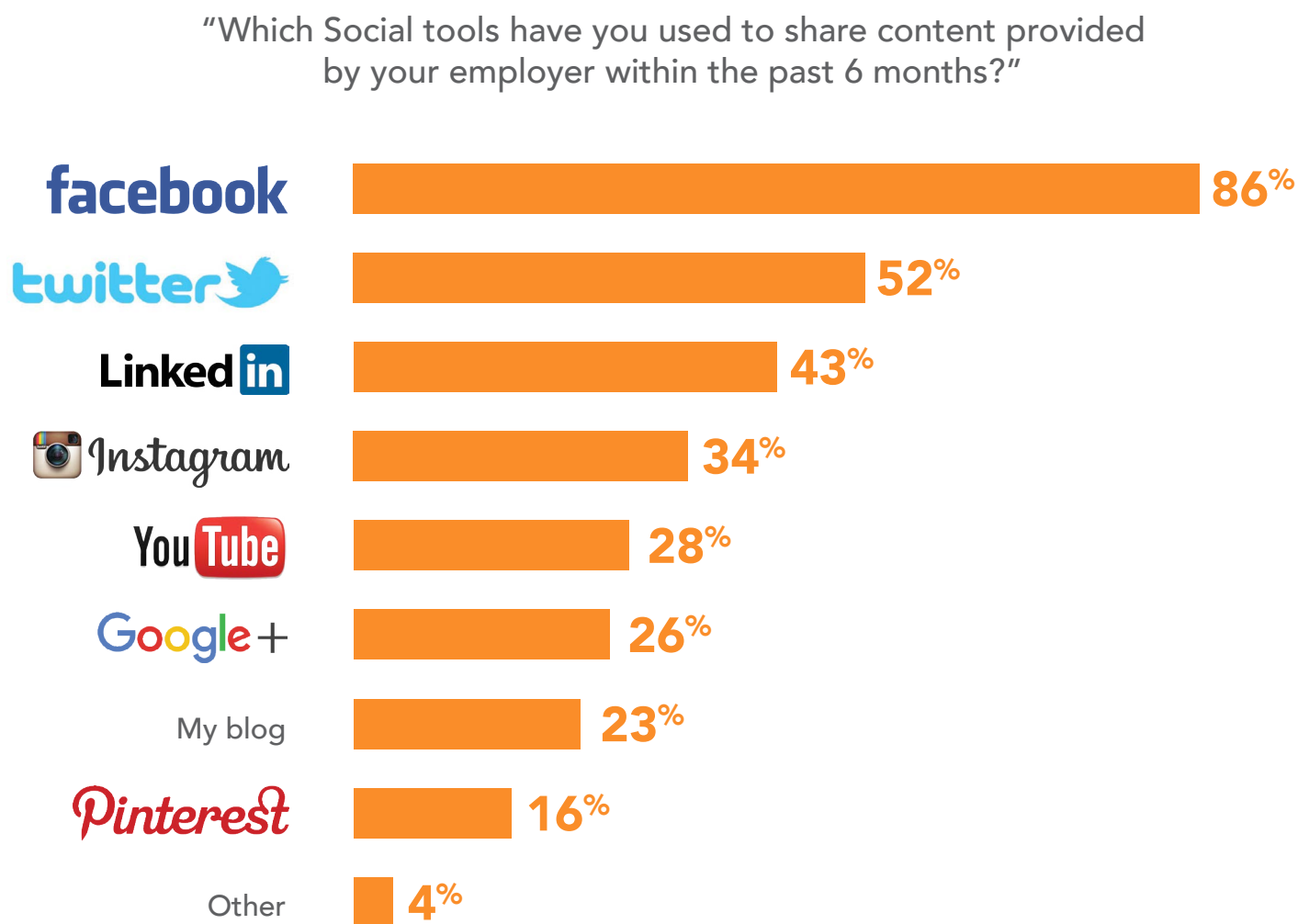
Source: Altimeter, Employee Survey, Global Average, Q1 2016, n=185

WHAT DO EMPLOYEES SHARE?

Employees share a wide range of content to their social circles. Product promotions are one area of disconnect; while 25% of consumers find them useful, only 9% of employees indicate sharing them (Figure 11B). It's easy for a consumer to say they find promotions useful, but another matter is to align the right promotion with the appropriate person. Employees may also be reluctant to share promotions to avoid being seen as a shill for sales, and brands may hesitate to share product offers based on regulatory concerns.

FIGURE 11B THE MOST COMMON TYPES OF POSTS SHARED BY EMPLOYEES

"What kind of content have you shared about your work life through social channels?" [check each that apply]

Product promotions, discounts or deals — 9%

Product information — 15%

Community involvement — 17%

Company accomplishments/news — 19%

Daily workplace life (e.g. office pics) — 20%

Job postings — 20%
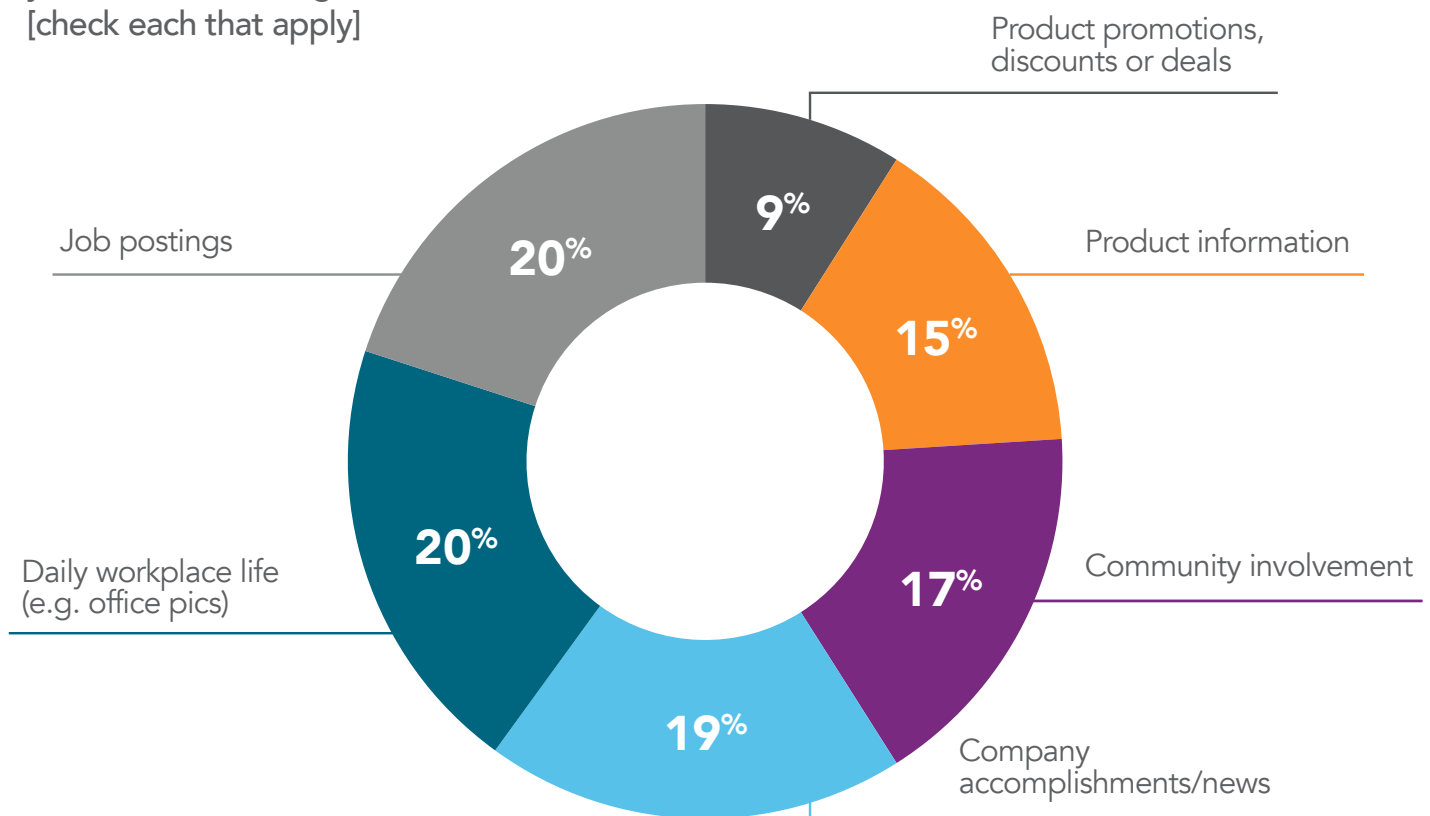
Source: Altimeter, Employee Survey, Global Average, Q1 2016, n=185

WHICH ROLES SHARE MOST?

In the organizational hierarchy, managers and above are much more likely to advocate (Figure 11C). We'd expected the management layer to be more likely to share since in general they are statistically found to be more engaged[13], but given managers only account for 22% of the workforce in general[14], the fact that 78% advocate vs. 23% of individual contributors—a much larger group—is surprising. On the positive side, it's good news that managers are leading advocacy because they can lead individual contributors by example, which we found to be important to employees (see Figure 19).
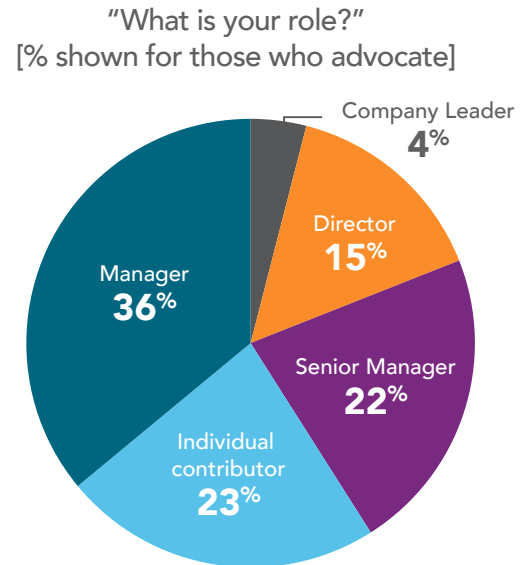
EMPLOYEE ADVOCACY ADOPTION CORRELATES WITH INTERNAL SHARING

One factor stood out from our research: 80% of employees who advocate also have available to them internal social networking tools to share and connect with their colleagues (Figure 11D). This is the case even though only 29% of brands have made building internal social networks (or ESNs, "Enterprise Social Networks") a priority.[15] Such networks help create a social culture inside the organization which builds confidence in employees to share externally.

"What is your role?"
[% shown for those who advocate]

- Company Leader 4%
- Director 15%
- Senior Manager 22%
- Individual contributor 23%
- Manager 36%

Source: Altimeter, Employee Survey, Q1 2016, n=150

FIGURE 11D 80% OF EMPLOYEE ADVOCATES USE SOCIAL NETWORKING TOOLS AT WORK

"At work, I use social networking tools internally to share and connect"

- Disagree 5%
- Strongly Disagree 3%
- Neutral 12%
- Strongly Agree 28%
- Agree 52%
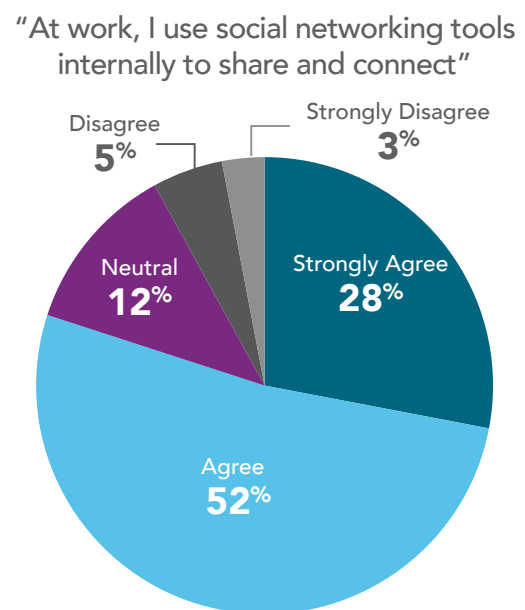
Source: Altimeter, Employee Survey, Global Average, Q1 2016, n=165

HOW BRANDS SUPPORT EMPLOYEE ADVOCACY

Lastly, we asked employees what resources were in place to help them succeed (Figure 12). Few brands provide employees with written guidelines (39%) or have training programs in place (37%). 48% of employees see their leadership participation as validation for their own advocacy, and 39% receive feedback on their posts from their employer—reinforcing the need for managers to play an active role in the program. While 80% of those who share work-related content say that internal sharing/collaboration tools are available to them at work, only 17% consider sharing content internally as a support mechanism for sharing externally. This tells us that employee advocates will find ways to collaborate socially at work, and by not providing formal tools for sharing, employers miss the opportunity to engage them in a strategic way.

FIGURE 12 INVOLVED LEADERSHIP IS A KEY DRIVER OF EMPLOYEE ADVOCACY PARTICIPATION

How does your employer support the sharing of work-related information to your personal social network? [check each that apply]

Leaders share, setting a good example	48%
Employer has given me feedback about my posts	39%
Written guidelines	39%
Employer-provided training program	37%
Instructions via email or internal intranet page	35%
Tools provided make it easy to share	34%
Employer tracks and recognizes my contributions	27%
Content library to share from	22%
A colleague showed me how	22%
I share content on our internal social network	17%
I share content through a platform that my employer provides to me	13%
Other	3%

Source: Altimeter, Employee Survey, Q1 2016, n=185

BEST PRACTICES FOR PLANNING ACTION

Where to start? Our research findings drove the development of a maturity model, (Figure 13) identifying the characteristics for five levels of employee advocacy maturity. Examine where you are today in this model and use that as inspiration for advancing to the next level of maturity. Combine these with our insights above on alignment between brand, employee and consumer response, and you should have enough information to start to shape a plan that's right for your brand.

Why do **brands** invest in employee advocacy programs?

How do **consumers** react to employee advocacy posts?

What motivates **employees** to advocate?

FIGURE 13 FIVE STAGES OF EMPLOYEE ADVOCACY MATURITY

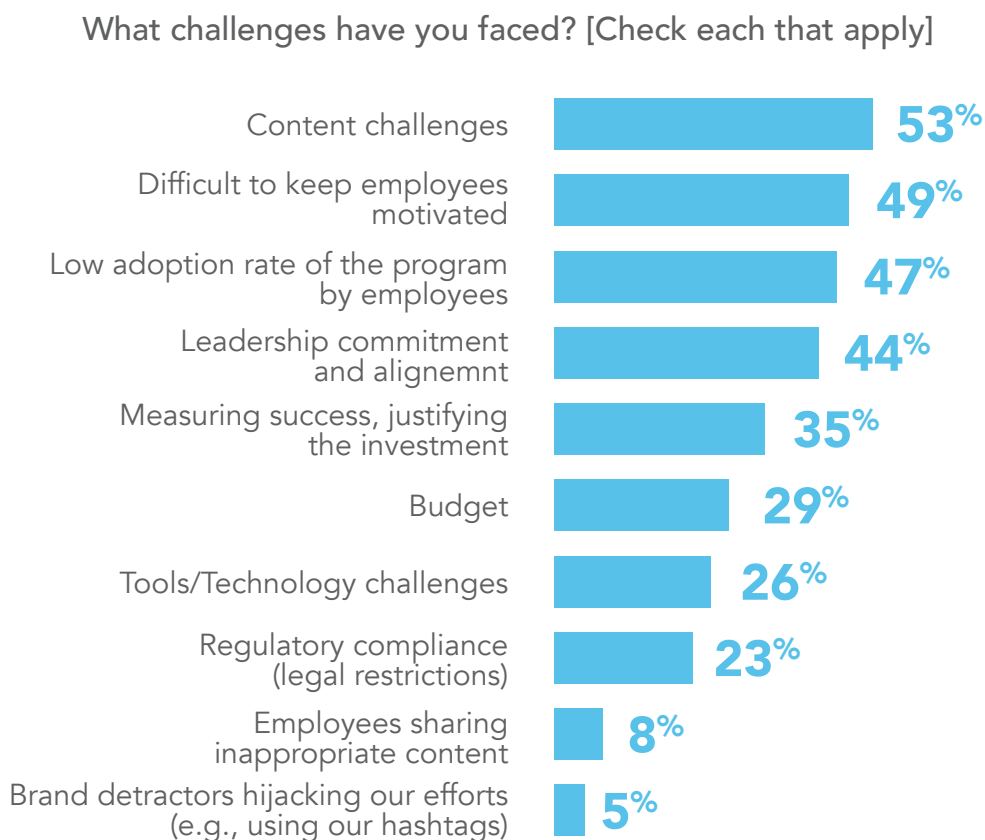|	Lock Down	Ad Hoc	Special Forces	Formalized to Scale	Strategic
Description	No employees are allowed to advocate on behalf of the brand. All marketing and communications are conducted through formal, traditional channels	Early champions drive low-cost, low-tech pilots, often under the radar of leadership	An elite group is identified, trained, and sparingly deployed	An executive sponsor drives the development of employee advocacy to drive business results via scaled engagement, primarily at the department level	Employee advocacy operates at a strategic level, with investments that drive impact against strategic goals and outcomes across the organization
Governance	IT / Information Security (firewalls); HR (Employee Social Media Policy)	Awareness by Digital / Social team, who set boundaries for pilot work (that could include certification training)	Oversight by Digital / Social, with cooperation from Marketing/ Communications. Formalized policies, processes emerge	Oversight by specific departments, executive level sponsor. Core groups like HR, Digital, Social, Communications and Marketing either participate or are informed	Oversight by a C-Suite executive sponsor. Formal and tested processes, tools and training in place
Education &Training	Employee social media policy	Informal best practices in the form of draft guidelines and training	Specialized workshops and guidelines that align with pilot groups	Formalized guidelines and training at the department level	Best practices shared and optimized throughout the organization
Employee Experience	Penalties for participation	Battle for the right to advocate among highly engaged employees, particularly those with a strong internal Enterprise Social Network (ESN)	One-for-all sense of mission to make a difference among employees connected by role or department. Minimal support from the organization, but a nod from top brass to soften the ground	Resources and recognition to drive participation. Multiple platforms to ease user experience, especially mobile	Platform agnostic engagement (beyond social). Leaders among employees emerge that set an example— particularly senior leadership
Technology	Network firewalls, Social Media Listening tools for discovering violations and employee activity	Email to distribute links to share, or early pilots of employee advocacy mobile apps	Pilot employee advocacy software to test content approaches, metrics and employee adoption rate	Integration with key marketing/ communications infrastructure, especially employee communications (e.g., Intranets, ESNs, etc.)	Employee advocacy connects to key internal data sources, especially CRM and BI.
Data & Analytics	If done at all, monitoring is conducted to identify and stop activities that could harm the brand	Tracks a few key "vanity" metrics on a snapshot basis (e.g., employee shares, employee adoption, etc.)	Able to associate some specific employee advocacy actions with specific business outcomes, but often manually done	Analytics available at a department level, but not yet automatically tied into dashboards	Full integration into business operations and dashboards, associated with strategic outcomes
Content Strategy	No content is shared	Content is shared inconsistently, with little coordination. Much of the content likely created by employees themselves, or there may be a shared library of approved content, particularly CSR.	Content informally created and shared amongst participants, usually in a narrow subject area	Content created and approved centrally, employees can contribute limited content to a shared library	Full bi-directional content creation between organization and employees, resulting in authentic conversations

DRIVING ADOPTION

It's healthy to start with the mindset that you won't get 100% participation, nor should you try. Ed Brill, VP Social Business Cloud, Deployment and Adoption at IBM put it this way: "One of the biggest challenges is creating personalities that feel like they can be part of the value of our voice in the market. Not everybody can or should have the bandwidth to carry our messages. [We decided to] focus on authenticity and unique voice, because those are what matter on social. Trying to get everybody to say the same thing isn't helpful."

HOW BRANDS ADDRESS COMMON CHALLENGES

Providing the right content to share (53%) and keeping employees engaged in the program (49%) lead the list of challenges brands face (see Figure 14). We'll address a few of these key challenges in the following sections.

FIGURE 14 TOP CHALLENGES FACED BY BRANDS IN DRIVING EMPLOYEE ADVOCACY PROGRAMS

What challenges have you faced? [Check each that apply]

Challenge	%
Content challenges	53%
Difficult to keep employees motivated	49%
Low adoption rate of the program by employees	47%
Leadership commitment and alignemnt	44%
Measuring success, justifying the investment	35%
Budget	29%
Tools/Technology challenges	26%
Regulatory compliance (legal restrictions)	23%
Employees sharing inappropriate content	8%
Brand detractors hijacking our efforts (e.g., using our hashtags)	5%

Source: Altimeter, Brand Survey, Q1 2016, n=158 for companies with > 250 employees

CONTENT CHALLENGES

While many brands rely on content curators (usually in Marketing/Communications), some brands create what Scott Jaworski, Director of Global Social Media at Intel referred to as a self-fueling system: "We really just tried to curate what we deemed to be the best of the best content for folks to go out and share at their leisure, we also gave them an opportunity to feed content into our pipeline," said Jaworski. "Not only do we have to go out and create our own content, but the content is actually being garnered and created, syndicated, by our employees. It became a self-fueling system internally, which is great."

Curating the right mix of third-party content and original brand content is key, as we heard from Danielle Burke, Elevate Group Product Marketing Manager at LinkedIn, "Employee activation isn't simply about employees amplifying marketing collateral across their social networks. Companies that view their employees as just another marketing channel are missing out on the real opportunity," said Burke. "The companies having the greatest success are able to empower employees across the enterprise to share quality content regularly by suggesting a mix of third party and branded content. Doing so helps employees strengthen their professional reputation and also helps the company achieve its goals around hiring, marketing, and sales."

Of course, having the right analytics in place is key to validating and evolving content strategy. Use Figure 2 to identify global consumer response to get started, but over time, find what your target customers respond to through your own measures.

HOW TO ADDRESS COMMON EMPLOYEE CONCERNS

Employees are understandably cautious about mixing personal and professional posts among their social circles. Globally, 62% of employees report that their employer has not asked them to share information about work (which reflects the early phase we're in), but for those employers that have, the primary barrier is the employee's desire to keep professional and personal life separate (33%).

Glenn Gaudet, President and Founder of GaggleAMP told us, "It's the employee's *voice* and the employee's *choice*. When you're talking about things like social media, that Twitter profile is theirs - it's not the company's."

We've identified the most common employee concerns and offer methods to address each barrier (see Figure 15). A significant barrier is building comfort among your employees. Nolan Carleton at AT&T told us, "People are so fearful of getting out there in social media, but once they do it, and they get comfortable, it's amazing the pivot they make. Make sure whatever materials you have about your program are fun and engaging. Don't make your program any scarier than it needs to be." AT&T has backed this up with a fun, short video on YouTube for their employees to build comfort with their employee advocacy program.[16]

We also found that employees in Europe are more reticent to share:

- 54% of those surveyed say they have not shared work-related content on social in any form, compared to only 40% of North Americans.

- Europeans have a stronger preference for keeping work and home life separate: 44% cited this a reason for not sharing work-related content, compared to only 23% of North Americans.

- European employees don't see the value of sharing work-related content: they are four times less likely to say they understand the value of posting work-related social content (6% North America vs. 27% Europe)

FIGURE 15 KEEPING PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL LIVES SEPARATE IS THE MAIN BARRIER FOR PARTICIPATION IN EMPLOYEE ADVOCACY

If you have been asked to share your employer's content in social networks, but decided not to, why not?

Issue	Frequency	Addressing Employee Adoption Barriers
I prefer to keep professional and personal life separate.	33%	Focus on LinkedIn (or other professional networks in your region) where the purpose of sharing is career and professional development.
I rarely use social networks.	18%	If you need a social workforce to succeed in your industry, use this skills gap to train employees on key platforms for business, like LinkedIn, or internal enterprise social networks (ESNs).
I don't understand the value.	16%	Clearly articulate the value to the employee: career growth, better understanding the organization, etc. Employee advocacy is experiential, so you need to find ways to get them to at least try it.
I don't believe there's any benefit for me in doing so	15%	In training and internal promotions for employee advocacy, focus on the employee benefits of sharing, such as career and skills building and helping friends/family understand your professional life.
I don't believe there's any benefit for my company in doing so	15%	Have managers and leaders talk about what employee advocacy means to the organization's success. Ensure executives and managers lead by example and talk about their own experience sharing.
It doesn't positively affect my career.	8%	Depending on role, sharing can lift an employee's career by connecting to colleagues, industry leaders and others. Provide opportunities for employees to share success stories.
I don't have the time.	8%	In training programs, focus on how little time it takes to share. Sharing should be a natural, easy extension for how they get news about the company.
I get conflicting advice about sharing work activity from my employer.	7%	Ensure strong training programs support policy. Make it clear who is and isn't allowed to post about work and what content is appropriate. Having an employee advocacy tool with pre-populated, approved content will help solve this as well.
It may turn off my friends/followers to post about work (looks like SPAM).	5%	While a legitimate concern, provide case studies or data that prove business and employee value, and steer away from mandates. Share the fact that consumers find posts about work relevant (to better understand and connect with them).
I don't agree with the content I'm asked to share.	4%	The organization isn't providing employees content that resonates with them. Focus on better alignment between employer, customer and employee goals.

Source: Altimeter, Employee Survey, Global Average, Q1 2016, n=165

LEADERSHIP INVOLVEMENT AND ALIGNMENT

Our research found that for the minority of brands that had no formal employee advocacy program, one of the biggest barriers was that there was no obvious owner or leader. The lack of an obvious owner is telling. The initial owner is usually a department that is comfortable with disruption. The CMO often takes on this role, and IT frequently builds external sharing mechanisms into advanced intranets or ESN deployments. While HR is a key stakeholder in managing the overall employee relationship, few people we spoke to engage with them as part of early pilots. HR can be risk-averse. Longer term however, we found that strong employee advocacy programs are a result of close collaboration between Marketing and HR.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT TECHNOLOGY

The landscape of tools enabling advocacy is rapidly expanding, with more vendors pivoting and iterating into the space. The range of tool providers includes full-featured point solutions (e.g. Dynamic Signal, SocialChorus, Trapit, EveryoneSocial, GaggleAMP), social media management suites extending into advocacy (e.g., Hootsuite, Sprinklr, Falcon Social), social selling (e.g., PeopleLinx, LinkedIn Sales Navigator) and the social platforms themselves (e.g., LinkedIn Elevate). Though your needs may vary based on your primary use case for employee advocacy, look for a platform that can:

> There are a wide range of tools dedicated to employee advocacy, but plenty of legacy platforms can be tapped as well, such as email, as shared by Scott Jaworski at Intel "Any digital or communications vehicle [is fair game for advocacy]. Right now, the messaging communications platforms are growing fiercely. SMS is not dead, for sharing of content."

- ✓ Integrate easily with social platforms specific to the geography of your team

- ✓ Make it easy to share content from any device—especially mobile

- ✓ Report on basic adoption and marketing metrics

- ✓ Encourage employees to submit content of their own

- ✓ Allow expert curators to select, suggest, and highlight relevant content in a way that can be customized for employees on different teams and at differing levels of seniority across the organization.

- ✓ Include an engine to discover content (outside the brands' walls) to share

- ✓ Help both employees and leaders understand engagement (e.g. gamification, although don't count on this feature to support long-term adoption[17])

CONTENT DISCOVERY AND MANAGEMENT

As the primary functionality of employee advocacy platforms is the dissemination of content, it is surprising to note that functionality around content discovery, aggregation, curation, and personalization is not widely developed. Managing a content pipeline can be a resource-intensive process. In fact, 53% of brands we surveyed said content was their biggest challenge, a recurrent theme throughout our interviews as well.

Employees do not want to feel like they are parroting corporate messages: they want to feel like they are providing useful information to their networks. The most successful brands blend content from a variety of sources: employees themselves, third-party industry sources, corporate marketing, and more.

ANTICIPATED FUTURE STATE

All signs point to the employee advocacy tools landscape shifting. While starting as a siloed point solution, over time broader adoption and results will be achieved through integration with existing related systems and additional channels beyond social, such as email and messaging platforms. One example (among others) is Trapit, which is the result of merging an employee advocacy platform with a content marketing / content discovery engine.[18] Over time, employee advocacy tools as a stand-alone category will likely fade in favor of integrating sharing features with platforms employees use, where existing data and functionality add more value.

EMPLOYEE ADVOCACY PROGRAM CHECKLIST

Consider the following steps and associated best practices you can take to start your own program:

1. **Define Scope and Business Objectives**

- ✔ **Set Expectations.** As with any new disruptive technology, setting realistic expectations is important. GaggleAMP's Glenn Gaudet told us, "The biggest barrier is a psychological barrier in expectation." Avoid setting unrealistic goals for adoption in the early phases and keep your initial pilots as focused as possible to manageable groups.

- ✔ **Work Inside-Out.** Use the metrics brands reported in this report to work-through your options, although we've found starting with employee engagement goals leads to consumer-based outcomes. As Nicole Alvino of Social Chorus told us, "No C-level executive has asked me 'How many times have my employees shared to Twitter?' They say: 'I want them aligned with our vision and mission so they can tell our stories to family, friends and customers in a way that is authentic and meaningful to them.' Alignment is the key to unlock advocacy at the scale required to drive true business impact."

- ✔ **Engage Leaders.** Seek an executive sponsor to: stand behind your business objectives; help the program cross silos (among C-level peers); participate directly; and clear the way for resources. Employees view leadership posts as setting an example for them to follow. Seek leadership commitment to allow for initial missteps. As Sarah Mortensen of Cisco EMEA told us, "We have a really open culture - we are allowed to 'try and fail'." That's the attitude you need to find your way.

2. **Research and Baseline**

- ✔ **Understand Organic.** Understand organic advocacy—what works, what doesn't? Talk to those employees who are advocating on their own to better understand what motivates them and analyze the results of their organic efforts.

- ✔ **Mine your ESN.** If you use internal Enterprise Social Networking tools (ESNs), you're much more likely to have built the social culture needed for sharing. Who are the "stars" in your current internal ESN? Many brands use ESNs to build a social culture and then identify employees who rise to the top as potential brand ambassadors or advocates in social externally.

3. Departmental Alignment

- ✓ **Employee Communications.** Engage Employee Communications to ensure you have the right long-term partners to scale. They'll know the best avenues to raise awareness around your program and likely have employee engagement metrics you can start with as a baseline.

- ✓ **Human Resources.** HR will help set policy to ensure your program is compliant with local laws and other related policies in the company. You can also help them "connect the dots" between employee engagement and tools like ESNs that help drive adoption.

- ✓ **Legal.** Include Legal if you ask hourly US-based employees to advocate as you risk violating NLRB overtime pay rules. You'll also need their assistance in navigating FTC rules around disclosure. AT&T has set up hashtags like #attemployee, #LifeatATT, and Adobe uses #AdobeLife to disclose the employment relationship. Additionally, employee and privacy rights vary substantially by region. In Europe and much of Asia, the program must be opt-in, and if it's not, brands also risk violating the Terms of Service (TOS) of leading social networks.

- ✓ **Sales.** Although social sales is currently less mature than employee advocacy, at least inform the sales team (in particular, B2B sales) to ensure any approaches they're considering remain aligned with an overall employee engagement and advocacy strategy.

- ✓ **IT.** Whether it's adding social features to an existing intranet, selectively opening up internal security firewalls, or deploying technology, IT is an important ally—especially if they take a leading role in transforming file/email/web-based intranets into ESNs.

- ✓ **Marketing / Social Team.** Ensure the design of your program has a place in your long-term social/marketing plan and that definition of metrics aligns with KPIs marketing cares about.

4. Pilot: "Test and Learn"

- ✓ **Start Low-Tech.** To gain comfort and experience, don't shy away from low-tech pilots. As Nolan Carleton at AT&T told us "Our program is really quite an old one. It got started in 2009 with our pilot, and we began in a very low tech way. We started it as an email, with anywhere from five to ten pre-written, legally-approved tweets for people to copy-and-paste into Twitter." That said, as we heard from Lorrie Sole at Kelly Services, that approach doesn't scale, "Each month, we had to develop Word documents telling employees: 'Here's what to share, here's the top new content that just came out,' and it became very cumbersome to manage those communications on a monthly basis." The typical brand we interviewed started pilots with as few as 25-75 employees (and these are brands with 50,000+ employees).

✔ **Training**. Employee training is key, and not so much focused on the technology, but more so on how it benefits the employee and your brand. Some brands we spoke to, such as Adobe, have certification programs in place that employees must pass before engaging on behalf of their brand. AT&T has produced a great short video for their employees to understand the guardrails of sharing[16].

5.   **Scale**

✔ **Benchmarking.** What does good scale look like? The most advanced brands we spoke to reported a typical range of 10-40% employee adoption, but that will vary by industry.

✔ **ROI.** While metrics and industry benchmarks are still emerging, to scale you'll need budget, and for that, you'll need some proof metrics. Start to look for connections between employee engagement and consumer response to posts. Remember to show your employees a return as well: give proof that their social capital rises with advocacy (e.g., they successfully grow their professional network to enhance their career).

✔ **Retirees.** As you think about scaling impact, don't forget about retirees or former employees—which for many brands outnumber existing employees. A long-tenured retired employee may have a social graph of senior leaders that can have significant impact.

✔ **Content.** Scaling typically means increased focus on content strategy: it's critical that tools used provide content to employees that align with their interests, to make sharing natural. This is also the time to consider the right mix of employee-generated content vs. curated content (which includes brand and 3rd party content). Over time, we've seen brands seek a 50/50 balance, but it depends on your industry (e.g., some regulated industries will insist on only pre-approved content and not empower individual employees without some approval process in place). One brand we spoke to told us of their plans to create a "Hub & Spoke" model for content creation, to allow geographies and teams of various types to write and share specialized content with some local autonomy. Adobe was an interesting case study: they are seeking to have 100% of their employment brand content created by employees through #AdobeLife.

✔ **Governance.** This is also the right point in time to think about broader governance. Ensure your policies and guidelines are built to both enable and protect your brand from the risks of employee advocacy at scale. Have real-time monitoring programs in place to catch issues early and, on the other hand, to recognize employees that do it right.

HOW TO WORK WITH US

No matter where you are in your employee advocacy efforts, we provide options to engage with us, ranging from engaging individual analysts to our global consulting team via our parent, Prophet Brand Strategy. Offerings related to employee advocacy, include:

- **Speaking** – Presenting within your organization or at an event to make the case with leaders or key brand stakeholders. Connect the dots between business objectives, key brand, communication and digital initiatives and where employee advocacy can help.

- **Advisory** – You may purchase blocks of retainer hours with our industry analysts to provide advice as needed on approach.

- **Custom Projects** – Custom project work may include: assessing readiness for employee advocacy; connecting it to broader social business strategy; defining opportunities among your consumer segments and key moves that can build organic employee advocacy activity; or building roadmaps to execute.

- **Brand Strategy** – Building and expanding upon your brand employee activation activities to include employee advocacy and the organic amplification of your brand and identity.

METHODOLOGY

Altimeter conducted both qualitative and quantitative research for this report, using brand interviews, vendor briefings and 3 global surveys: Consumers (their perception of posts about work by others); Brands (their goals, challenges and current state); and Employees (to understand what motivates them to engage in employee advocacy programs). This research includes North America and Europe. Research began with interviews in Q4 2015 and ended with surveys for each of the three key stakeholder groups in Q1 2016. In our Consumers and Employees research, North America includes the United States and Canada, and for Europe, Germany, France and the United Kingdom are included.

ECOSYSTEM INPUT

This report includes input from market influencers, vendors, and brands who were interviewed by or briefed Altimeter for the purposes of this research. Input into this document does not represent a complete endorsement of the report by the individuals or the companies listed below.

BRANDS
Kelly Services, David Fennech, VP Digital Marketing & Creative Services; Lorrie Sole, Social Media and Email Strategist
AT&T, Nolan Carleton, Associate Director – Communications: Social Engagement
IBM, Ed Brill, VP, Social Business Cloud: Deployment and Adoption
Adobe, Natalie Kessler, Head of Talent Branding; Cory Edwards, Social Media Center of Excellence Lead
Intel, Scott Jaworski, Director of Global Social Media | Digital Marketing Media
Deloitte Australia, Michael de Graaf, National Talent Brand, Technology and Insights Lead | People & Performance
General Mills, Kevin Hunt, Social Media Manager – Global Communications
Aetna, Tara Autrey, Sr. Project Manager, Social Media and Community Management Team
Cisco, Sarah Mortensen, Social Business Manager Europe – Employee Advocacy Lead
VMware, Jeff Spicer, VP Digital Marketing

TECHNOLOGY VENDORS
Dynamic Signal, Russ Fradin, CEO; James Nickerson, Director of Communications & PR
Trapit, Henry Nothhaft, Jr., CEO; Mark Bajus, PhD, Director of Inbound Marketing
EveryoneSocial, Cameron Brain, CEO & Co-Founder
Hootsuite, Matt Switzer, VP Corporate Development & Hootsuite Labs
GaggleAMP, Glenn Gaudet, President & Founder
SocialChorus, Nicole Alvino, Co-Founder & Chief Strategy Officer; Dave Hawley, VP Marketing
PeopleLinx, Kevin O'Nell, CEO; Euney Kim, Digital Marketing Manager
LinkedIn, Joseph Roualdes, Sr. Manager II, Corporate Communications; Will Sun, Sr. Product Manager, LinkedIn Elevate; Danielle Burke, Elevate Group Product Marketing Manager
Falcon Social, Ulrik Bo Larsen, Founder & CEO; Jillian Sayuri Falconi, VP Demand Generation; Tània Vié, PR & Marketing Consultant; David Carratt, Director of the Board

ENDNOTES

[1] Heidi. Thompson "6 Examples of Social Media Crises: What Can We Learn? | Our Social Times - Social Media Agency, Social Media Training." February 28, 2013. http://oursocialtimes.com/6-examples-of-social-media-crises-what-can-we-learn/.

[2] Ed Terpening, Charlene Li, and Omar Akhtar. "The 2015 State of Social Business: Priorities Shift from Scaling to Integrating." Altimeter Group. July 28, 2015. http://go.pardot.com/l/69102/2015-07-16/sgj4w.

[3] Marko Saric, "Facebook Analysis For March - Videos And Photos Rule Engagement Totally!" Locowise Blog. April 21, 2015. http://locowise.com/blog/facebook-analysis-march-videos-and-photos-rule-engagement-totally.

[4] MSLGROUP. "Infographic: Social Employee Advocacy." Scribd. December 11, 2014. http://www.scribd.com/doc/249863818/Infographic-Social-Employee-Advocacy.

[5] According to Gallup, employee engagement is up slightly from 28% of US workforce in 2011 to around 32% in January 2016 (but mostly stagnant since 2015).

Source: "Gallup Daily: U.S. Employee Engagement." Gallup.com. Accessed January 30, 2016. http://www.gallup.com/poll/180404/gallup-daily-employee-engagement.aspx.

[6] "Median differences between top quartile and bottom-quartile units were 10% in customer ratings, 22% in profitability, 21% in productivity, 25% in turnover (high-turnover organizations), 65% in turnover (low-turnover organizations), 48% in safety incidents, 28% in shrinkage, 37% in absenteeism, 41% in patient safety incidents, and 41% in quality (defects)."

Source: Harter, James K., Ph.D., Frank L. Schmidt, Ph.D., Sangeeta Agrawal, M.S., and Stephanie K. Plowman, M.A. "Gallup Q12® Meta-Analysis: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ENGAGEMENT AT WORK AND ORGANIZATIONAL OUTCOMES." Gallup.com. September 22, 2014. http://www.gallup.com/services/177047/q12-meta-analysis.aspx.

[7] Vivek Krishnan. "What Is the Average CTR of Facebook Ads." Cult of Digital. March 09, 2015. http://cultofdigital.com/what-is-the-average-ctr-of-facebook-ads/.

[8] Manuel E. Contreras, and Hitoshi Suzuki. *Corporate Social Responsibility in the Promotion of Social Development: Experiences from Asia and Latin America*. Washington, DC: Inter-American Development Bank, 2004. http://www.iadb.org/wmsfiles/products/publications/documents/2220311.pdf.

Hitoshi Suzuki contributes Chapter 6 of the work, a section entitled "Corporate Citizenship as an essential element of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR): A case study of NEC's Corporate Citizenship Activities". Suzuki writes: "In general...[people] in the USA, Canada, Australia...understood the significance of the companies' community involvement as good corporate citizens and employee volunteerism. However...employees in Northern Europe felt that their government should provide this kind of community service...[or] they perceived this program merely as part of corporate publicity activities to enhance the company's image."

[9] For example, Nicholas John of The Hebrew University of Jerusalem found that 16.1% of Jewish-Israeli Facebook users had unfriended or unfollowed someone during the Gaza conflict due to posts about the war. The strength of the connection was key (e.g., family members are less likely to block/un-follow than connections that are weaker, such as acquaintances). Also, in a Pew 2012 survey, 75% of social network users said their friends post at least some content related to politics. The survey found that 18% of social network users have blocked, unfriended, or hidden someone based on political posts.

Source: Nicholas A. John, and Shira Dvir-Gvirsman. ""I Don't Like You Any More": Facebook Unfriending by Israelis During the Israel-Gaza Conflict of 2014." J Commun Journal of Communication 65, no. 6 (2015): 953-74.

[10]When asked "In 2015, what are your top three external social strategy objectives?", we found 16% selected Employee Advocacy in 2013 vs. 45% in 2015.

Source: Ed Terpening, Charlene Li, and Omar Akhtar. "The 2015 State of Social Business: Priorities Shift from Scaling to Integrating." Altimeter Group. July 28, 2015. http://go.pardot.com/l/69102/2015-07-16/sgj4w.

[11]Numerous US states have passed laws expressly prohibiting employers from forcibly accessing employees' social accounts. The National Conference of State Legislatures has a running list of passed and pending legislation by state, going back to 2012. In California, for example, the law says that employers cannot compel employees to provide access to their social media accounts in any way, nor can they terminate (or threaten to terminate) employees for failure to do so. The law varies across the EU just as it does by state. Similar to California law, German law prohibits employers from requiring employees to disclose their personal social media account details. Provisions and exceptions are generally made for law enforcement and other judicial investigations

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About Altimeter, a Prophet Company

Altimeter, a Prophet company, is a research and strategy consulting firm that helps companies understand and take advantage of digital disruption. In 2015, Prophet acquired Altimeter Group to bring forward-thinking digital research and strategy consulting together under one umbrella, and to help clients unlock the power of digital transformation. Altimeter, founded in 2008 by best-selling author Charlene Li, focuses on research in digital transformation, social business and governance, customer experience, big data, and content strategy.