

WHITE
PAPER



THE SOCIAL EMPLOYEE

How engaging employees in social campaign management can massively improve the visibility of products, sales, events, and news.

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THE SOCIAL EMPLOYEE: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There's no doubt that social media as a marketing tool has had widespread, democratising effect across markets and sectors. Global reach - once dominated by the superbrands and propped up by large budgets - can now be enjoyed by companies large and small. Social media has created a marketing 'level playing field'.

But while the superbrands no doubt enjoy the largest followings on social media, this White Paper will demonstrate that even the big players could do more. They have yet to tap into a key pool of potential advocates for their products and services – their own employees.

In B2C environments especially, social media plays a key role in what content is consumed but also in how much it's trusted.

As social media marketing matures and the consumer grows ever more sophisticated in its use, reaching key audiences remains a challenge. This is exacerbated by the reality of bidding-driven paid advertising in network feeds.

Furthermore, the consumer is now aware of when they're consuming paid content and are less likely to trust it. The lesson is clear: consumers are more likely to trust content created or shared by people they know, so employees can play a pivotal role in assisting brands to extend their reach into the lives of those who'll listen.

Creating advocates out of employees rarely happens unaided, but research conducted by DSMN8 shows that including employees in a social media strategy creates powerful ambassador programmes that have the potential to drive value for employers and employees alike.

In this White Paper, we examine the attitudes and opportunities that help make the ‘social employee’ a commercial reality for B2C organisations. Our research found that less than one in three employees feel their employer is “very effective” at sharing company information quickly. So, by developing a social media strategy that involves employees at the core, businesses and brands can foster a more engaged and effective sales force across an entire organisation.

DSMN8 partnered with online research specialist Oi Research to survey over 500 employees at a range of companies in the UK and US. The aim was to understand their attitudes towards social media, engaging with work-related content and the effectiveness of communication at work.



EMPLOYEES – AN UNTAPPED RESOURCE?

**AMONG UK SUPERBRANDS, ACTIVE
EMPLOYEE NETWORKS WERE OVER 50%
BIGGER THAN BRAND NETWORKS.**

Brands have always sought to acquire an ever-growing fanbase, so do employees as advocates offer opportunities to increase brand awareness and reach? Indeed they do. Among the 2019 Consumer Superbrands (a list of the twenty strongest consumer brands, including European and US names) the projected active employee networks were over 50% bigger than the brand networks.



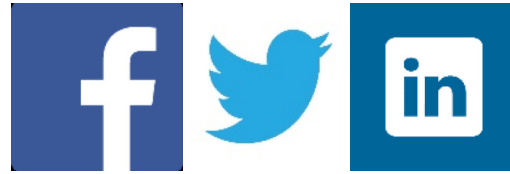
John Lewis



Modern marketing demands that Relationship Marketing extends not only to customers but also to company employees, often seen as the first line of defense to the outside world and the ultimate brand protectors. Employees are now regarded as a key stakeholder alongside customers and external partners in the ongoing success of an organisation.

That said, it would be short-sighted to simply look at the headlines for the whole story – there's much more to consider.

SUPERBRANDS:



HOW BIG IS THE POTENTIAL FOR EMPLOYEE SOCIAL ADVOCACY?

According to analysis by WeRSM, there is little overlap between employee social networks and brand networks – just 8%. This demonstrates a huge opportunity for brands to tap into a vast audience that would otherwise be costly to access via more traditional direct marketing means.








PEOPLE ENGAGE WITH CONTENT FROM PEOPLE THEY TRUST.

Another key issue to consider is trust.

Trust is an asset that jobs review site Glassdoor have been utilising for a while. More than just a job board, they invite reviews and anonymous salary declarations from current and past staff, their pros, and cons of working for the company, and whether they'd recommend it to a friend or approve of the CEO. In fact, research has found that 52% of consumers trust an "average" employee more than the CEO - Edelman Trust Barometer.

FROM A COMPANY WHEN THEY HEAR ABOUT IT FROM SOMEONE THEY TRUST. - NIELSON

	Frontend Engineer 4.5★ busuu London, England	♡ 2 d
	Information Security Consultant 3.5★ PA Consulting London, England	♡ 8 d
	Sales Account Manager 3.9★ LOLA Staffing London, England Apply on Glassdoor	♡ 6 d
	Graduate Management Trainee 3.4★ Enterprise Rent-A-Car London, England	♡ 5 d
	University Recruiting, Full-Cycle Recruiter 4.5★ Facebook London, England	♡ 9 d

Facebook Reviews

See All >

4.5 ★★★★★ Rating Trends

91% Recommend to a friend

98% Approve of CEO

Mark Zuckerberg
1,331 Ratings

11 Nov 2016 Helpful (1)

"Facebook"

★★★★★ Current Employee - Software Engineer in London, England

■ Recommends ■ Positive Outlook ■ Approves of CEO

I have been working at Facebook full-time (More than a year)

Pros
Very nice to work at, awesome people around, interesting projects in lots of areas, you can have huge impact, good salary and benefits.

Cons
Move fast and break things may not be the best motto; it's a big company, hard to coordinate across different offices.

TO SHARE OR NOT TO SHARE?

It was also found that 70% of employees shared something about their place of work on social media. Almost half have shared content about their workplace from an external source (such as news articles) with over 40% sharing internal company news.

However, despite half of the respondents using social media to find out about products and services, less than half (40%) have posted marketing information about their own company. Employees appear to be comfortable with social media as a buying tool but clearly, lack the material or impetus to use that understanding for selling.

UNWILLING OR JUST UNSURE?

When it comes to social sharing, more than 60% of employees said they'd "probably" or "definitely" be more likely to create or share company content if employers made it easier.

This could be done by increasing clarity on social media policy, preparing better quality content, or investing in dedicated social media tools to make employees more confident and comfortable.

COMPANIES WOULD DO WELL TO REASSURE EMPLOYEES OF THE TYPES OF CONTENT THAT ARE SHARABLE WITHOUT ANY NEGATIVE REPERCUSSIONS.

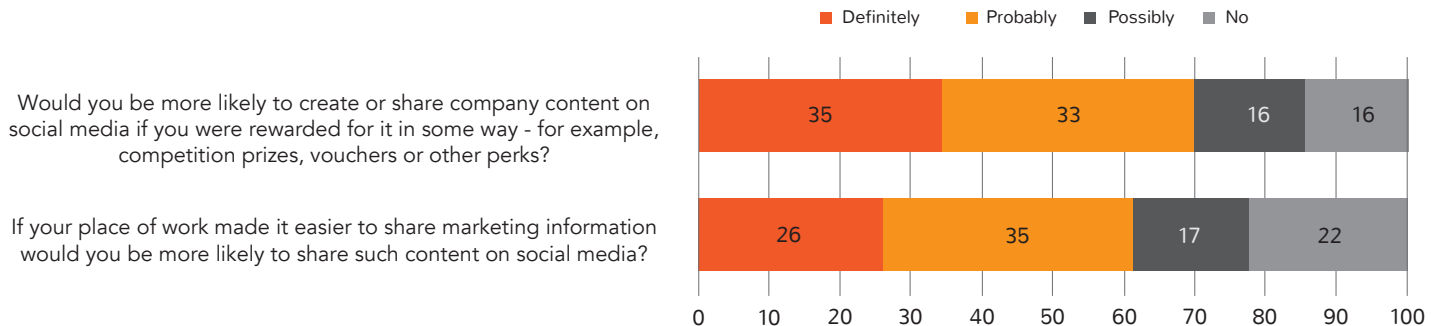
THE SOCIAL EMPLOYEE DANGLING THE CARROT

We asked respondents whether they'd be more likely to create or share company content if they were rewarded with perks and benefits. 68% said it "probably or "definitely" would, and a further 16% said "possibly."

Furthermore, a huge majority (76%) said they would happily share marketing information as content on social media if the company would make it easier.

89% of those asked believe that a social media presence enhances the relevance of company products and services in the eyes of the consumer. Smoothing the path for employees to use social media holds great potential.

THE IMPACT OF PROCESS AND REWARD ON SHARING SOCIAL CONTENT FOR WORK



INTERNAL MARKETING: PLUGGING THE GAPS

But social media isn't just outward-looking – it can provide a rich source of information to internally as well, especially for those outside the most commercial roles who may not be as aware of sales and marketing activities.

ONLY 31% OF EMPLOYEES CONSIDER THEIR COMPANY “VERY EFFECTIVE” AT SHARING INTERNAL INFORMATION QUICKLY.

Our research found that only 31% of staff consider their employers “very effective” at sharing internal information quickly. Clearly, not all information makes it to the public domain, but this lack of confidence in company transparency is telling. On the upside, given that 73% of respondents thought sharing information made a contribution to commercial success internally and externally, opportunities are there for the taking.

We also looked across organisations at different levels of seniority, from non-management roles to Director/VP level and business owners.

In terms of sharing information about products and services, 60% of non-management employees thought there was some benefit to the company, rising with seniority to 86% for VPs/Directors.

FELT COMFORTABLE POSTING CONTENT ABOUT THEIR WORKPLACE VS. 86% OF VPS/DIRECTORS.

There is a notable contrast between the 45% of non-management staff who felt comfortable posting content about their place of work and the 70% of middle-management staff and 86% of VPs/Directors who felt the same.

Business leaders who are keen to see a positive promotion of their companies on social media should be asking what can be done to develop confidence throughout the company.

Why the disparity between the perceptions of those at the top of the organisation and those lower down? One key reason is the type of information available to employees. While VPs and CEOs enjoy intimate access to company information, it's unusual for those lower down to share that privilege.

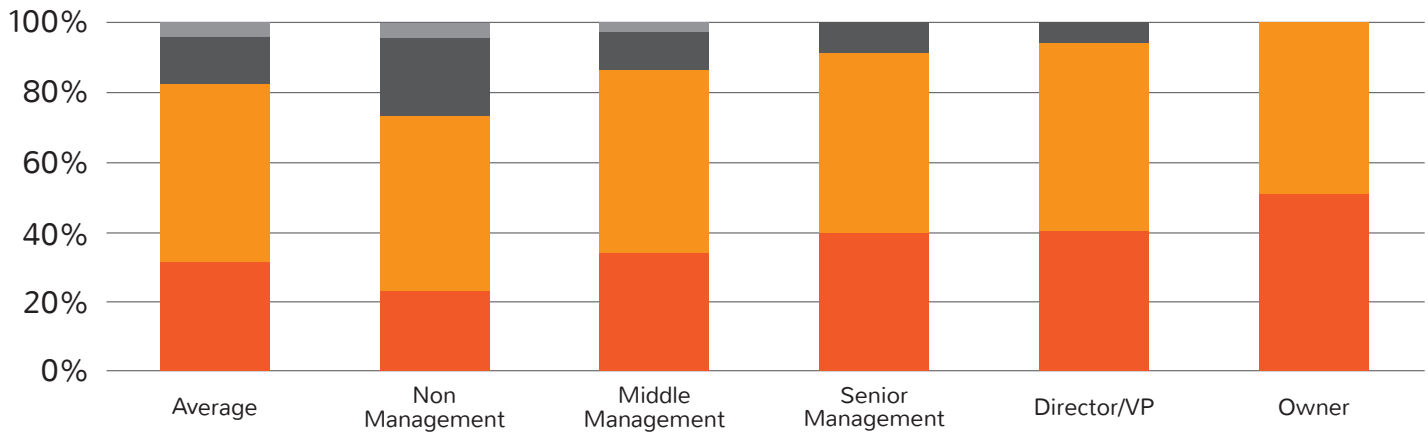
Again, this trend is reflected in the data: just 7% of VPs/Directors said their company didn't do a good job communicating regularly with staff about their products and services, while almost a third (29%) of non-managers thought their company was pretty poor at staying in touch – over four times as many. Businesses need processes that get information quickly to those who need it – and currently, many don't.

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Similarly, when we asked how effective companies were at sharing internal news, the same pattern emerges: 27% of non-managers said their company was either “not very effective” or “very ineffective” versus only 5% for VPs/Directors.

HOW EFFECTIVE IS THE WAY YOUR EMPLOYER SHARES INTERNAL NEWS IN TERMS OF FINDING OUT COMPANY RELEVANT INFORMATION QUICKLY?

Very Effective Usually Effective Not Very Effective Very Ineffective



Half the battle is VPs/Directors realising a problem exists, that company-wide communications may, in fact, be their Achilles' heel. The good news is this can change.

WITH TRANSPARENCY COMES OPPORTUNITY

What becomes evident from the data is that in order to allow staff throughout an organisation to comfortably and confidently engage with social media and help sell products and services, the employees need to see it as more than a tool for the privileged few.

As the bulk of the lower levels are made up of “digital natives”, they’re more inclined to see the benefits of social media and will engage given the support to do so effectively and safely. They make the biggest positive impact on brand reach.

One of the most positive signs for employers is that a majority of staff are already convinced of the benefits of an active approach to social media can bring. Being socially active is linked by employees to relevance to customers, and being included in social strategy makes staff feel that they contribute to commercial success.

“CORPORATE EFFORTS ENHANCED BY SOCIAL EMPLOYEE NETWORK PROGRAMMES”

No two organisations are alike, and each faces a range of challenges and opportunities to exploit social media. But the following key points are true for companies big and small:

- The reach potential of employee networks is up to 50x greater than corporate accounts.
- Less than 10% of employee networks overlap with corporate/brand networks.
- Engagement rates of employee networks are two to eight times higher than brand channels.
- Trust is higher among consumers for content shared by “average” employees vs. CEOs.

A WELL MANAGED SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY THAT INVOLVES EMPLOYEES WILL DELIVER FAR BETTER RESULTS THAN ONE THAT LOOKS ONLY AT BRAND CHANNELS.

EMPLOYEE NETWORKS ARE BIGGER, REACH NEW POTENTIAL CUSTOMERS, ARE MORE TRUSTED AND ENJOY HIGHER RATES OF ENGAGEMENT.

So what should employers do to 'switch on' their employees to using their networks:

- Simplify the process of sharing.
- Reward staff for creating and sharing content.
- Reassure and protect staff with a clear social media policy.

Having the right platform to enable employees to find, curate and create good quality content for their social networks not only helps achieve corporate goals but also engages employees. It makes them feel like they are part of your commercial success story, and therefore more invested in it.

Where we found that some organisations have a social media policy which emphasises what staff shouldn't do, the opportunity to systematically empower employees, and to develop good social media practices and execution was overlooked.

"Staff are our greatest asset" is the business leaders' cliché, but, when it comes to social media, the power truly lies with the people.

DSMN8 is committed to providing the world's most advanced social advocacy platform. This includes native smartphone applications (iOS and Android), a web-based desktop application and a purpose-built analytics package. Our product is designed to encourage staff, partners, and customers to become social media brand ambassadors.

