

Employee advocacy initiative is gaining traction – people trust people more than companies 1/47/24

The role of employer image in attracting and retaining talent is becoming more and more important. However, the dynamics of trust are changing, with people putting more stock in personal suggestions and recommendations, as clearly demonstrated by social media. The same message on a company's social media and an employee's private profile will have a different tone, reach and contribution. On average a personal post created by an employee can achieve a level of engagement twice or three times as much as a corporate post, thanks to personal contacts and more trust.

We have recently seen more companies launching employee advocacy programmes on social media. Employee advocacy is a structured initiative aimed at encouraging workers to tell about their company's brand and values, based on their individual experience and using their personal channels, particularly social media. The main idea is to grant them the status of ambassadors telling about their experience, thus increasing their own and the company's visibility.

Several companies have been able to carry out an employee advocacy programme successfully. For example, Salesforce, a leading innovation company, is building its employer image strategy around this initiative, urging workers to share their experience using the hashtag #SalesforceOhana. This campaign helps the company demonstrate its versatile and inclusive environment, as well as highlighting career development opportunities with each employee's authentic voice. It's also important that employees are using their private photos when creating their social media posts, which lends more authenticity to the message, emotionally resonating with the audience and building a stronger bond compared to corporate images. It's worth noting that posts with a personal image work much better on LinkedIn. This platform's algorithm tends to prioritise such messages, creating more engagement.

In the Baltic States, mobility company Bolt shares its experience of engaging colleagues in an employee advocacy programme. Using only a private Slack group, an Excel document and no external platforms, the company achieved impressive results: 40 ambassadors created 326 news items and got a total of 28,000 new followers on LinkedIn. If we were to estimate this activity in terms of advertising cost, its advertising value would be EUR 23,000–37,000. Not only do these results confirm the programme's effectiveness but they also provide a strong argument for the leadership team when it comes to the significance of this activity. However, the Bolt team ran into the problem of keeping the engagement levels consistent because the participants' motivation was different. Overall, the Bolt programme serves as a convincing example of the significance of a company's internal ambassadors, who go beyond traditional advertising efforts and achieve promising results.

Key takeaways

The trend of people trusting people more than companies is becoming widespread, so you may want to use it to better manage your employer branding strategy. Companies should be aware that authentic communication generates much higher credibility than well-written corporate news. Companies should encourage employees to share their experience, while providing a positive workplace environment that would naturally inspire them to become ambassadors.