

# Employee Advocacy

*on Social Media*

THE MISSING PIECE OF YOUR MARKETING PUZZLE

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The missing piece of your marketing puzzle

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# Introduction

*Anyone who thinks new technology isn't going to keep changing the world has got their head in the sand. – Sir Richard Branson<sup>1</sup>*

Before we look into the employee advocacy, let's go back to what our mothers told us long ago, disregard for the past will never do us any good, without it we cannot predict the future. That's why we will go over a quick marketing history lesson, to discover challenges faced marketers starting with the time before the internet until the social era.

Before the internet, marketing was focused on building brand awareness, “Spray and Pray” communication strategy, if you did enough broadcasting of message to enough people, you would eventually find success. Buyers had limited information about the vendor, and to find out more information, they had to interact with the company through sales and service staff.

In the internet era and with the arrival of Google in 1998, the role of buyers began to change. Potential customers could search and find information about vendors. They began to take more control of their buying journey, and in turn, sales began to have less influence in buyers' decisions.

Social networking sites also started in 1998 with sixdegrees.com, LinkedIn (May 5, 2003), Facebook (February 4, 2004), and Twitter (July 1, 2006) that's when social media began to pop up.

Today more than 90% of the worldwide internet users are on social media<sup>2</sup>, and marketers saw an opportunity to engage with their communities through relevant and compelling conversation, so they started talking with,



not at, them to get idea.

Similar to what “Bankmed<sup>3</sup>” Lebanon did, after interviewing its marketing & communication department they had declared that: “They joined a plethora of social media platforms in order to draw closer to its clients and engage with them in a modern and friendly way. Even though our presence on social media platforms is recent, yet it has proven to be a very interactive and dynamic one especially that we had managed to engage a high number of participants within a short period of time.” <sup>4</sup>

Social media went from being a “nice-to-have” to a “must-have” especially for B2B marketers, since 100% of companies’ decision makers use social media for professional purposes, 1 of 3 professionals on planet are on LinkedIn.<sup>5</sup>



According to Zenith Optimedia’s new Advertising Expenditure Forecasts, in 2017 the internet will be the biggest advertising medium in 12 key markets, which together represent 28% of global ad spend. In four of these markets internet advertising will attract more than half of total ad spend. Globally the internet will remain in second place, behind television, though the gap between the market shares of the two media will shrink from 11 percentage points this year to just four in 2017.<sup>6</sup>

The internet was already the dominant medium in seven markets last year – Australia, Canada, Denmark, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the UK – and by 2017 will dominate another five – China, Finland, Germany, Ireland and New Zealand. The internet’s market share had exceeded 50% in the UK in 2015, and will exceed with the same percentage in Denmark and Sweden this year, and in China in 2017.<sup>7</sup>

But there are challenges facing digital marketing today, most important is that buyers have a higher expectations than ever before. Gone are the days of cold calls and email blast, gone are the days when simply having a presence on social media was enough.

92% of buyers say they delete e-mails or voicemail messages that come from someone that they do not know.<sup>8</sup>

Unnecessary to say, potential customers do not want to hear one blanket message. They want a message tailored specifically for them, and they want to hear it from someone they can trust.

But how can you craft individually personalized messages at scale? How can you build trust with both potential and current customers? How do you make them engage with your content?

That's where the employee marketer comes in. More and more companies are empowering their employees to act as marketers on social media: To share marketing messages, to increase engagement, and to drive sales. Typically, this type of marketing is called "employee advocacy" marketing.

Based on interviews made by Altimeter Group<sup>9</sup> in 2015 surveying 113 strategists (social, digital and/or heads of social) at companies with more than 250 employees, they found that companies' two top priorities are programs that are employee-focused, mainly employee engagement and employee advocacy as well as 60% of responding organizations had employee advocacy program in the planning stage or in their first year of use. In comparison with the same survey made in 2013, the interest in employee advocacy has grown 191%.<sup>10</sup> (see figure 1.0)