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Elevate your brand through employee advocacy

The latest Digital Transformation & Innovation Forum session highlighted the importance of the role employees play in maintaining a company's online reputation and image

In a world where everyone and everything is connected, brands need to adapt their strategy to their consumers' new expectations, providing them with a customised and authentic experience built on trust. 'Employee advocacy' is one way to address this shift and one which uses a company's most valuable asset: its people.

Amanda Tran, Managing Director, JIN Digital Influence, and **Clara Mathurin**, Senior Communications Officer, Bouygues Construction, presented their expertise and experience on the topic. The session was chaired by **Fabrice Bernhard**, CTO and Co-Founder, Theodo.

What is employee advocacy?

Amanda Tran explains that employee advocacy (EA) is the practice of encouraging employees to share engaging content related to the company, industry and expertise to their own social network. Building a

dedicated EA programme organises the process to ensure employees are sharing a consistent message and story to the audience, while tracking its success to continually improve.

EA Programme benefits

There are benefits to brands and to the employees involved. For brands, EA improves the brand image and reinforces its e-reputation by humanising the brand through authentic communication in a more cost-effective way than many other forms of marketing. Content shared by employees receives eight times more engagement than content shared by brand channels, according to trend watcher Social Media Today.

By sharing positive affirmations about the company they work for, employees can also attract new talent to the business. Companies will also find retention rates and motivation increases when employees are empowered to

talk about the brand and be part of the business growth in a tangible way.

For employees, being part of an advocacy programme optimises and strengthens their personal branding, while offering them useful digital training. Their visibility on professional channels like LinkedIn will increase as an expert in their field, actively sharing not only branded content but also articles about their personal skills, strengths and interests.

Mistakes to avoid

It is important not to make the programme mandatory and, while incentivising ambassadors can be successful, don't put too much emphasis on it. EA is a two-value proposition based on volunteering and should be motivational, not competitive. Don't stifle creativity in the process. EA is all about trust, so allow employees to write their own content. ■

How to implement an EA programme – 8-step guide

1. Define goals and KPIs: what are you trying to achieve and how do you measure success?
2. Select the EA ownership team
3. Audit internal resources: choose ambassadors and check current activity and knowledge of social media?
4. Build an editorial strategy: branded and curated content
5. Implement a tool to centralise content and measure success
6. Train ambassadors
7. Animate the community with regular meetups, conference calls and IRL meetings (lunch & learn, breakfast, incentives program)
8. Measure the impact, learn, improve