

Third of businesses missing out on employee brand advocates, research finds

Submitted by: Squirrels and Bears

Wednesday, 20 November 2019

Third of businesses missing out on employee brand advocates, research finds

Over a third of UK employees feel disconnected from their company's brand and lack skills and resources to be brand advocates, according to a survey conducted by marketing consultancy Squirrels&Bears.

The missing link between brands and employees

Employees are the face of a company and know more about the business than anyone else. Their inside knowledge and connection to the business makes them a powerful brand advocate, however, businesses often focus their marketing resources primarily on their external communication and missing out on their closest brand advocates – their own people.

According to the survey, over one third of employees don't feel they are regularly updated about their organisation's products and services and lack the right tools and skills to act as brand advocates on behalf of their employer. On the other hand, 87 percent of respondents stated that they talk regularly about their employer's brand outside of work.

These informal conversations could lead to greater brand awareness and new business opportunities, if businesses encourage and equip their employees with the right knowledge and resources. Employee brand advocates can organically increase brand visibility and demonstrate the value of products and services; however, they need to feel confident when talking about their organisation. The lack of alignment between employees and the brand can create inconsistency which can lead to missed opportunities and in some cases reputational damage.

Untapped social media networks

According to the survey, 22 percent of employees don't follow or share their employer's social media updates and 28 percent only do so occasionally. Employees collectively have social networks of ten times larger than a single corporate brand and content shared by employees also sees a click-through rate double that of their company, because they are seen as more authentic and people are more likely to trust recommendations they see from their own networks.

Although 96 percent of employers stated that they see great value in their employees' individual networks, they are not addressing the gap on a business-wide level and missing out on 400 plus connections their individual employees would have on average. By providing relevant social media training and connecting employees to the brand, companies can bridge the gap between personal and business branding and tap into employees' social media networks, opening up new business opportunities and increasing employee engagement.

Whilst social media has the ability to create a positive brand image and reach new audiences, it can also have a negative impact on the brand, if not managed properly. According to the survey findings, large

businesses are more risk aware, however over two thirds of SMEs don't have a social media policy in place. A lack of social media policy can lead to data breach if confidential business or client information is shared publicly, as well as reputational damage resulting in financial losses, and therefore should be an essential part of company policy, even for businesses who are not actively using social media.

Branding is not an isolated aspect of sales and marketing. It is part of the overall business strategy and essential for business success. Organisations who empower and equip their people with the right skills and knowledge to be brand advocates can create a competitive advantage, drive growth and create a culture where everyone can contribute to the company's success.

About Squirrels & Bears

Squirrels & Bears is a London based marketing consultancy helping businesses to turn their story into a competitive advantage through consulting, outsourcing and training services. The research was conducted for over 2 months between August and September 2019 and focused on UK businesses – both SMEs and large businesses. The survey results are based on 165 completed surveys analysed internally.

Contact: Petra Smith, Managing Director

Email: petra@squirrelsandbears.com

Phone: 07857150594

Website: www.squirrelsandbears.com