

Building a social media presence to reach your marketing goals isn't always easy, especially if it is new to you and/or your organization. Businesses who want to build social advocacy need to focus on a culture that not only embraces social media and technology, but also clearly communicates its expectations to everyone to contribute. In order to create a culture where everyone wants to contribute, you need to provide guidance and make it easy.

Encourage Social Advocacy within Your Organization

1. Don't assume that your employees, customers, and partners are already connected to your social media profiles. Make sure you invite them to like your social media pages. Discuss at a staff meeting the expectation and need for everyone's participation on social media.
2. Provide guidelines and basic training as needed.
3. Clearly define- Why is this important? What are you trying to accomplish? Share how it can benefit the company directly and everyone indirectly. Explain how a better marketing presence leads to more brand awareness, top of mind, community engagement, customer engagement, warm leads, and more opportunity for conversations.
4. Get people excited! Share success stories about how a similar approach has worked in the past or made an impact for other business. Model what you want others to do. (Leadership!)
5. Utilize incentives and friendly challenges. However, it usually just takes energy, clarity, permission, and persistence to keep social advocacy alive.
6. Remove obstacles. Is staff allowed to share on social media at work? Do you have a way for them to share stories? Is it clear who to send photos to? Do the right people have permission/administrative rights?
7. Consider designating someone lead everyone in social media endeavors who is passionate about one or more of the platforms, but don't rely solely on one person. It will take everyone's participation. Enlist the help of close friends, colleagues, spouses, co-workers, and social media savvy teenagers.
8. Communicate progress, obstacles, and successes at each meeting in regard to your social media presence and goals. Keep everyone in the loop.
9. You will need to ask and ask again; don't expect staff to know to send content or to bring it up. You will need to request information, photos, and follow-up. Help form habits, provide ideas, and examples of what you want from them. Recognize and identify: "Hey, thanks for sharing that story. That would be great on our Facebook page or blog". "Did anyone get a picture from the event on Saturday that we could post to Instagram?"
10. Keep the topic in continual conversation. It isn't all you talk about, but it should come up freely when appropriate.
11. Keep track of consistent sharers within your business and recognize the positive contribution they make to marketing and business growth.