

2022 STATE OF EMPLOYEE ADVOCACY REPORT



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Introduction

It's been an eventful year. While many regions reopened from their pandemic restrictions, new issues started emerging. These included debates about whether to return to the office full-time, or go hybrid or fully remote. We also saw industries cope with the “great resignation” at one end, yet swing all the way to dealing with the “great termination” at the other.

Thus far, 2022 hasn't been any less eventful. Be it major geo-political and climate issues to tight supply chains to a potential economic recession, everyone agrees that we're in uncertain times.

However, when the market gets murky, marketers know full well that their work is going to get more difficult. Budgets could decline. Teams might have to remain as they are – or shrink. Yet, the pressure to drive brand reach, generate leads, and support profitability will remain.

That's why more marketing teams are looking to employee

advocacy. With the right strategy, it can amplify brand reach and drive revenue, but through earned media instead of paid ads. The cost of the ads are going up, and with tighter budgets, marketers can't rely on only ads.

This year, we set out to see how much employee advocacy can help marketing teams reach their goals while respecting their tighter budgets and lighter teams.

We got Forrester to carry out its **Total Economic Impact™ (TEI) report** using a PostBeyond customer to see how long it would take to reach profitability after adopting our platform. Forrester found that it would take 6 months to recoup costs and to drive profit. [See the full report here.](#)

We also dug into our own data to see how much support employee advocacy is providing to marketing teams in dozens of companies across 15+ industries.

In the report, we sought to find out:

- ➔ What industries are driving the most reach on social media using employee advocacy?
- ➔ How much of an impact does each employee have on social media?
- ➔ What types of companies and industries drive the most ROI from employee advocacy?
- ➔ Which content types drive the most impact?



1. Why Employee Advocacy?

From potential customers to talent prospects, your target audience is looking to social media for guidance about their next step.

That next step could be a purchasing decision, finalizing a job offer, or something else. But, in any case, they're consulting their peers on LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, and other platforms.

[LinkedIn](#) reported a 55% year-over-year (YoY) increase in conversations between connections or members, and a 60% YoY increase in member-based content creation.

However, audiences are not looking for ads or slick branded videos. Rather, they're engaging their peers, mentors, and other people they trust. Trust is the currency that matters.

Nielsen's [2021 Trust in Advertising Study](#) found that **88%** of audiences trust recommendations from the people they know. According to the [2021 Edelman Trust Barometer](#), **88%** of audiences say their trust in a brand matters more than their love for that brand.



Why Employee Advocacy?

“Employee advocacy is our **#1 biggest driver of revenue on social media** and for building visibility and engagement across all of our company content.

If you set up your program to measure the success of your people first (and brand second), your people will be able to **take your brand to places you’ll never reach, and at a scale you’ll never catch up to.**”



Danielle Guzman

Global Head of Social Media
Mercer

Source: [2022 State of Employee Advocacy Webinar](#)

Your employees can (and should) play a role in connecting audiences to your brand. To their networks, your employees are credible and authentic, and with the right strategy, you can elevate them into impactful voices that amplify your brand.

Moreover, employees can also extend your brand’s reach through their networks. In fact, brand posts shared by employees generate **over 5X more reach** compared to official accounts sharing the same posts. Companies that limit their engagement on social media to only official pages or accounts are leaving considerable potential on the table.

This report will show you how much reach, engagement, and ROI companies from a wide range of industries are driving through employee advocacy. Not only will you see how much additional value employee advocacy can bring to your marketing efforts, but our data will uncover specific insights that will help you build an effective strategy for the upcoming year.

2. State of Employee Advocacy Report

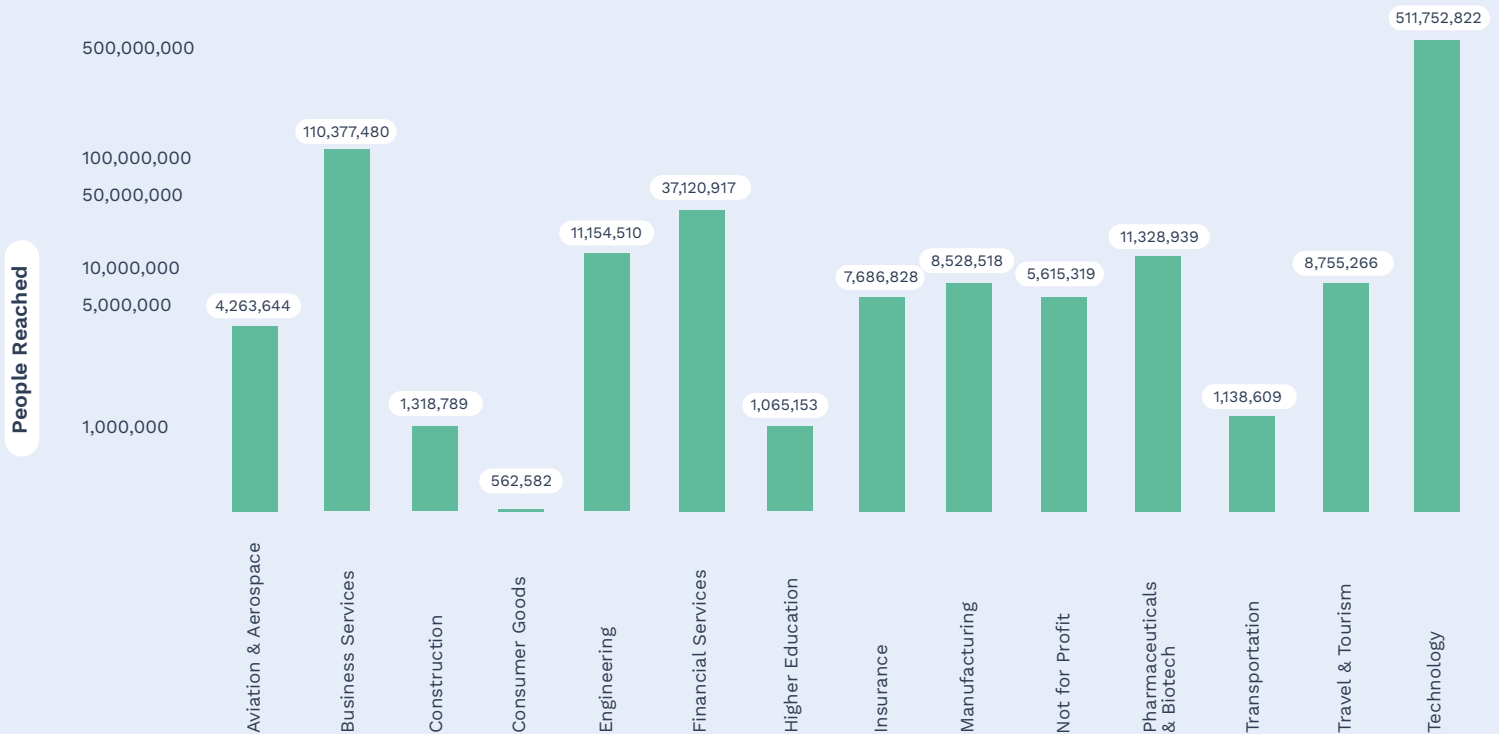
We examined **11,405** posts from dozens of PostBeyond customers in the following industries:

| | |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Aviation & Aerospace | Business Services |
| Engineering | Financial Services |
| Insurance | Manufacturing |
| Travel & Tourism | Technology |
| Construction | Consumer Goods |
| Higher Education | Pharmaceuticals & Biotechnology |
| Not-for-Profit | Transportation |

Our data showed that the technology sector (e.g., IT, IT services, and software) drove the most reach on social at over 510M people. It was followed by the business services industry at over 110M, financial services industry at over 37M, pharmaceuticals and biotech at 11.3M, and engineering at over 11.1M.



People Reached on Social Media Through Employee Advocacy



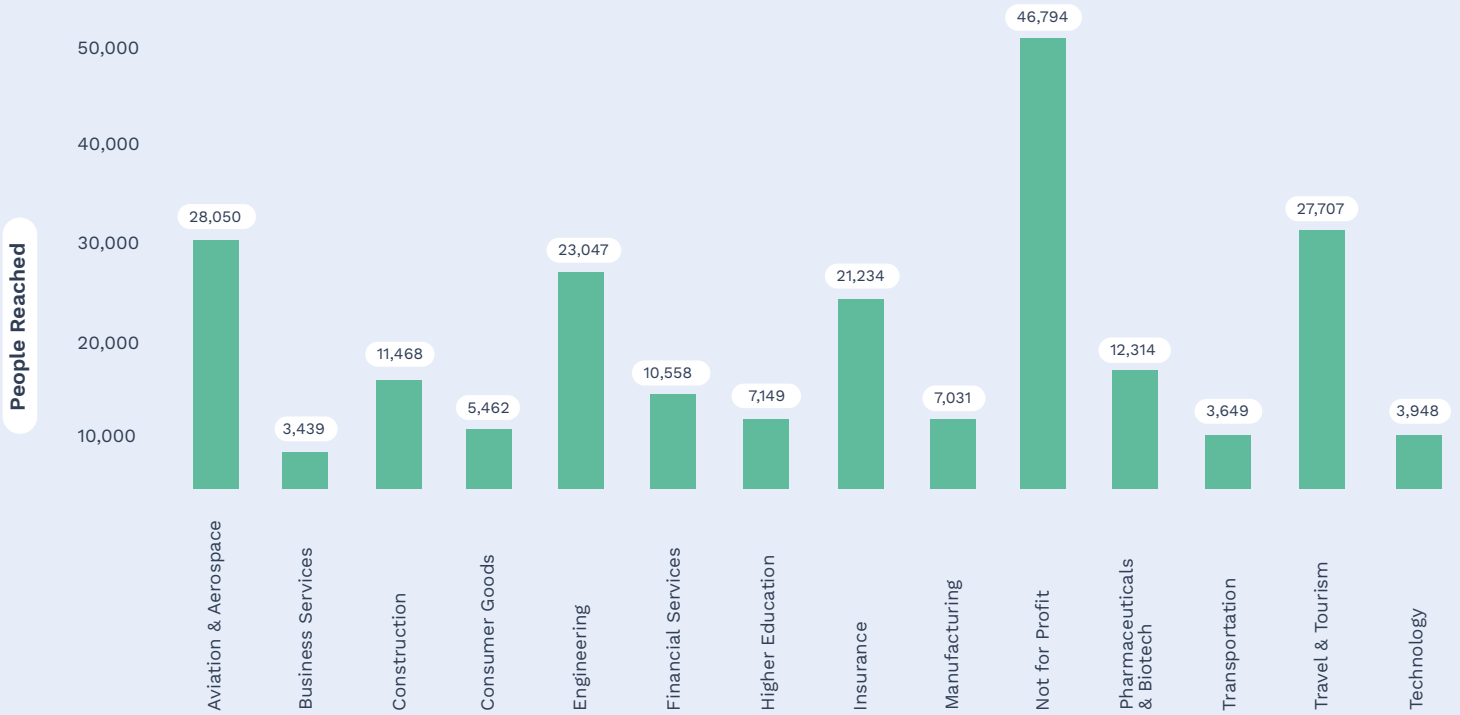
Overall, most industries stand to reach at least 1M people through employee advocacy. In most cases, we see industries exceed that by many times, easily in excess of 4M.

So, while there is a significant difference between the top performing industries and the others, there's lots of potential for every industry to drive reach on social media.

Basically, employees are impactful voices on social media.

However, in some industries, they seem to carry more influence. In the chart below, you can see the average reach of employees across industries. Interestingly, the top performers in overall reach aren't the top performers in terms of average individual employee reach.

Average Reach Per Employee Advocate



In terms of average reach per employee, the top performers are the not-for-profit, aerospace and aviation, and travel and tourism industries.

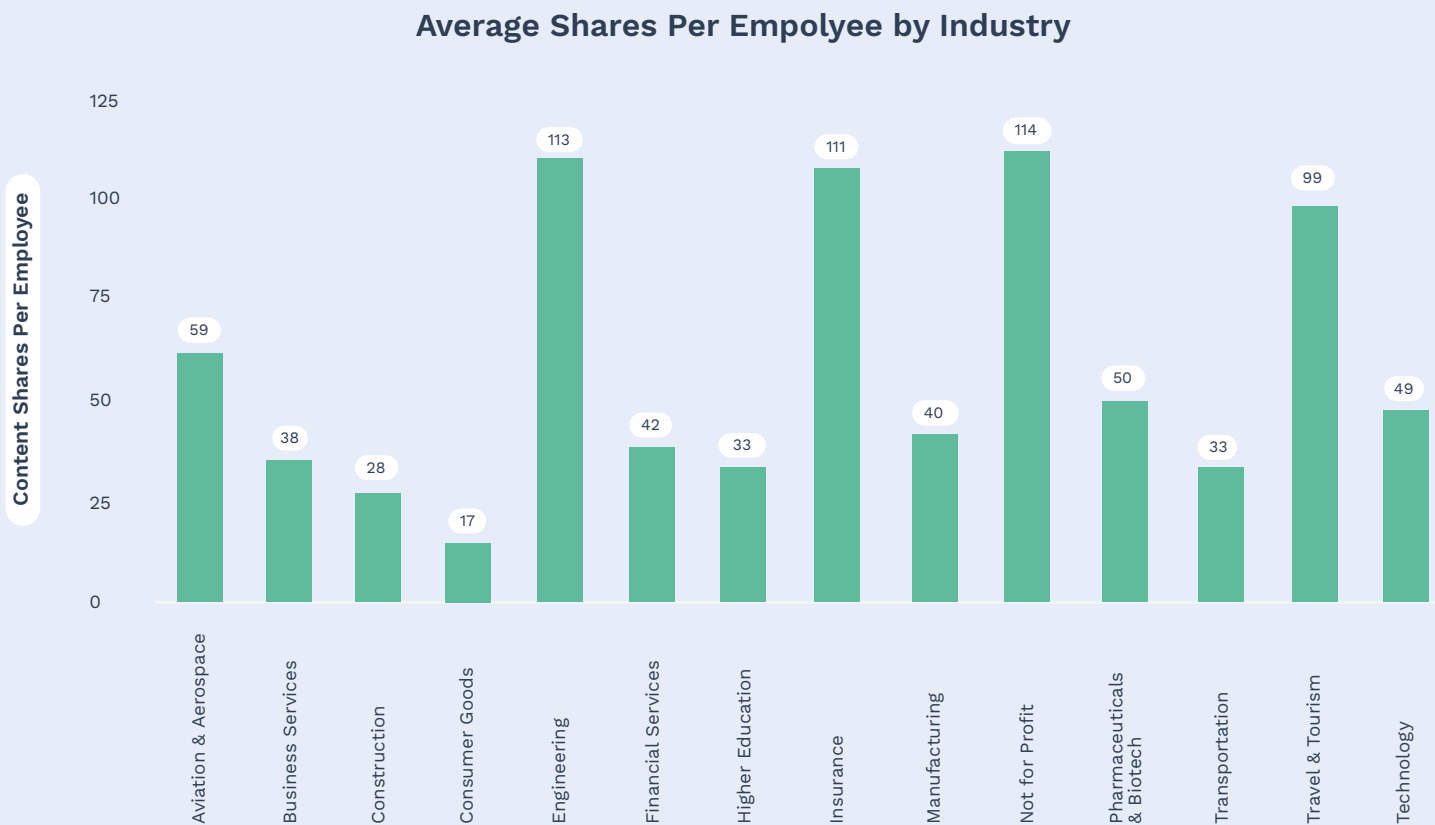
There could be several explanations for this difference.

For example, the audiences of these industries may value thought leadership, peer-networking, and expertise from people more. In some cases, the information provided by employees could be viewed as particularly trustworthy, actionable, or useful. In other cases, executives/leaders might be more active and engaged on social than in others, so their individual clout is enhancing the reach of the companies in those particular industries.

In any case, the data shows that **not all industries are the same**. In some industries, the voice of the employee carries farther than in others. Those designing employee advocacy programs will want to dig into the audience dynamics of their industries.

For example, you'll need to see what types of people audiences trust and, in turn, integrate the employees who match those profiles into your employee advocacy program.

Likewise, the data also shows that elevating employees into thought leaders has value for both your company and your employees. In the chart below, you'll see the industries with individual employees who, on average, share the most content.



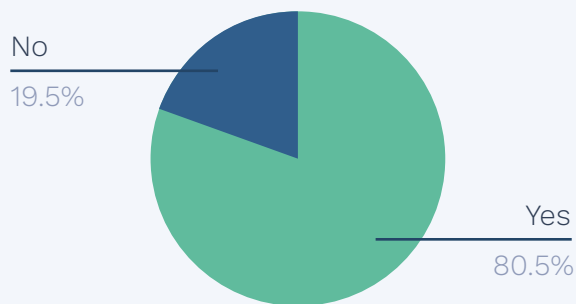
It's interesting to see how the industries with the most impactful employees in terms of reach also have employees who share the most content. There seems to be a link between sharing more content and driving more individual reach.

3. How to Get Employee Buy-In

Program admins can show employees that if they share more content, they'll potentially drive more reach and, in turn, grow their networks and build their personal brands.

These are great incentives for employees as they tie into the benefits of professional growth and career development. We asked attendees to our State of Employee Advocacy webinar if they themselves felt posting on social helped grow their careers: **80% of them said, “yes.”**

Has Posting More on LinkedIn Helped With Your Professional & Career Development?

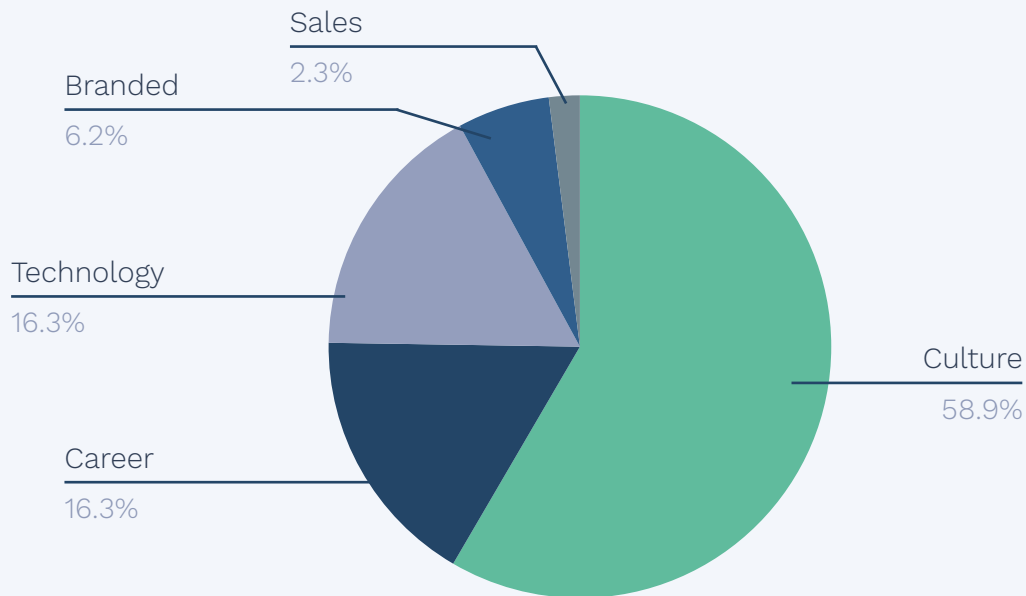


Source: [2022 State of Employee Advocacy Webinar](#)

Following personal buy-in, the next piece to get right is content. You want to give your employee advocates content that they can speak to and personally get behind. If they can't resonate with your content, then they can't be authentic with their audiences.


One good starting point is to get a handle of the content your advocates' audiences like. In fact, we asked our webinar attendees what content best resonated with their networks:

What Type of Content Best Resonates With Your Audience?



Source: [2022 State of Employee Advocacy Webinar](#)

Nearly 60% of their audiences loved content about company culture. In other words, people like reading posts or watching clips about what it's like to work in certain industries, workplaces, and environments. Likewise, people want to discuss issues relating to workplace culture (e.g., hybrid work vs. in-person offices).



Jessica Williams, MIPH, HRP, SHRM, CMH... • 2nd + Follow ...
SVP of People @ Refine Labs | Empowering Career Coac...
1w • 6

Let's stop the "good vibes only" craziness; no one is buying it! 😊

This false belief that employees should maintain a positive demeanor ALL THE TIME, regardless of circumstances or situations.

Let's harness the capacity to be continuously honest rather than always positive!

What's been your experience with toxic positivity in the workplace?

#toxicpositivity #worldofwork #peopleoperations

👍❤️ 496 74 comments • 12 shares

👤 Like 💬 Comment ➦ Share ✈️ Send

Generally, it's about finding topics that people can personally relate to and, as importantly, share their thoughts on. This is what helps drive engagement and, in turn, further reach on social.

From [Jessica Williams](#) at Refine Labs



Although not as popular as culture, some networks value technology and careers.

From [Arthur Castillo](#) at Chili Piper

This tells us that audiences want content that delivers tangible benefit. It could be knowledge relevant to the people in your network, how-to instructions, a list of helpful tools and more.

4. How to Drive More Engagement on Social

Engagement plays a critical role in driving social media reach. This isn't surprising as comments or clicks can drive more visibility towards posts on LinkedIn and other platforms.

Engagement by Industry - Clicks of Posts



It would be a good idea for program admins to add team-coordinated likes or comments to their employee advocacy best practices. So, for example, when an employee shares a post, others from the company could give it a like/reaction or add a comment.

Engagement by Industry - Comments



Overall, the contrast in the ‘aggregate impact’ and ‘individual impact’ industries indicate that audiences resonate with content and brands differently.

Some audiences follow influencers or personalities (e.g., employees with significant reach), while others engage with peers, but not follow them regularly. In either case, audiences still value what other people have to say – it just occurs differently across industries.

Engagement by Industry - Likes



Basically, we can't ignore how audiences prefer recommendations from people. It's a fact. The key at this point is understanding how that dynamic manifests. In other words, program admins have to tune their employee advocacy strategies to the realities of their industries.

5. What's the ROI of Employee Advocacy?

To calculate the ROI of employee advocacy, we used the earned media values (EMV) of our customers' programs. EMV is the dollar value a company would've had to pay for ads for the reach they had generated using employee advocacy.

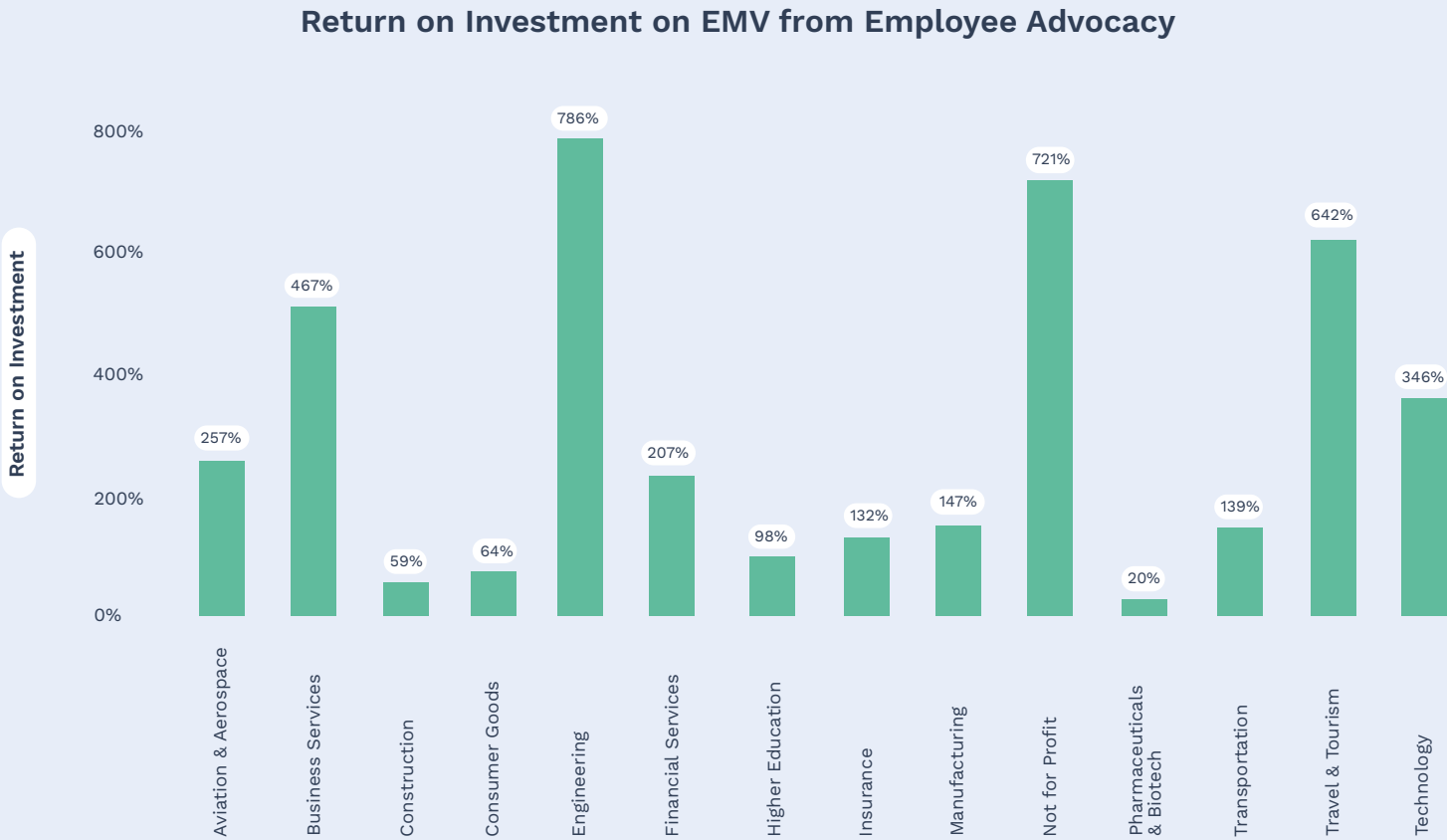
Not surprisingly, the industries that generated the most reach also generated the most EMV.

Earned Media Value (EMV) by Industry



The differences in EMV could be a result of many factors, notably the cost of ads in each of these industries. There is higher competition in some industries, which results in higher cost of ads on LinkedIn and other platforms. In other industries, there is not as much competition (for now), hence ad prices are generally lower.

However, at the same time, marketing budgets also vary across industries. While the ad costs of one industry might be lower, the savings could still matter for the companies in those areas. You can see this point clearly in the chart below, which shows the ROI based on EMV.



Every industry generated a positive ROI from employee advocacy. The stand-out industries in terms of ROI were the engineering, not-for-profit, and travel and tourism industries. Interestingly, these three industries didn't generate the most EMV, yet they got the highest returns.

Basically, even if you're in an industry with low ad costs, having an employee advocacy program can still unlock significant revenue and profitability potential. But at the same time, even if you're in a competitive space, employee advocacy can still carve meaningful gains. In either scenario, you won't lose out from implementing an employee advocacy program.



6. Do Companies of All Sizes Benefit from Employee Advocacy?

Yes. Our data shows that small, mid-sized, and enterprise organizations can all drive significant ROI (based on EMV) from employee advocacy programs.

You can see how employee advocacy drives reach, EMV, and engagement across each type of organization in terms of size in the infographics below.



It's pleasing to see that companies of all sizes can drive significant ROI from EMV. There's no inherent barrier to leveraging employee advocacy, even for small companies.

In fact, we found that small companies drove nearly 3X ROI from their programs, despite having fewer resources compared to mid-sized and enterprise companies. This is a critical point as we enter rougher economic waters. Marketing budgets will get tighter, so employee advocacy could significantly extend your reach (and reduce the strain on your paid ads budget). Moreover, those in industries with higher ad prices and ad competition will greatly benefit from the reach they can get through earned media. This could explain the high ROI small companies are seeing.

How's Employee Advocacy Supporting Mid-Size Companies?



101-999 Employees

Mid-Size Companies



1.61M

Avg. Reach



52.8K

Avg. Reach Per Employee



\$40.6K

Avg. Earned Media Value (EMV)



191%

ROI Based on EMV



15.9K

Avg. Clicks



9.9K

Avg. Likes



263

Avg. Comments



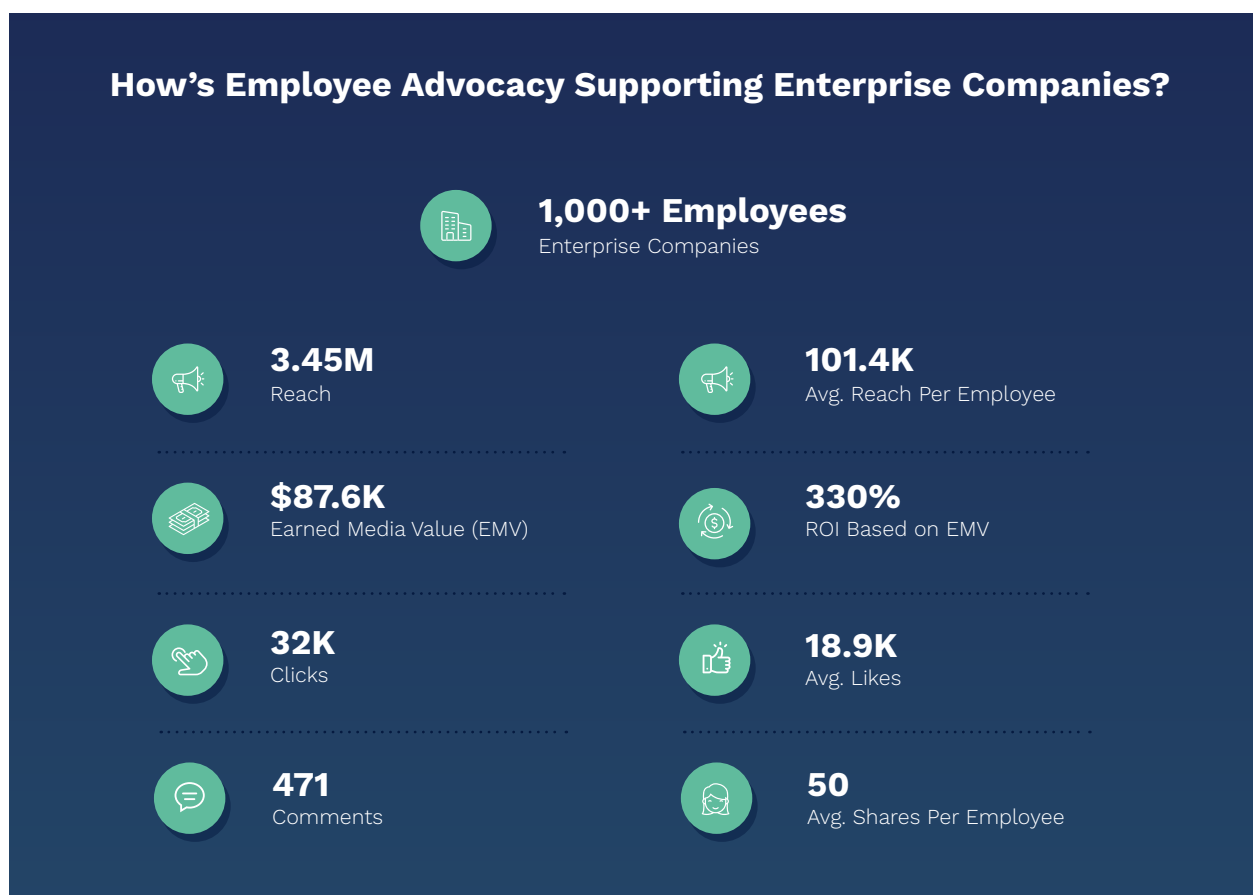
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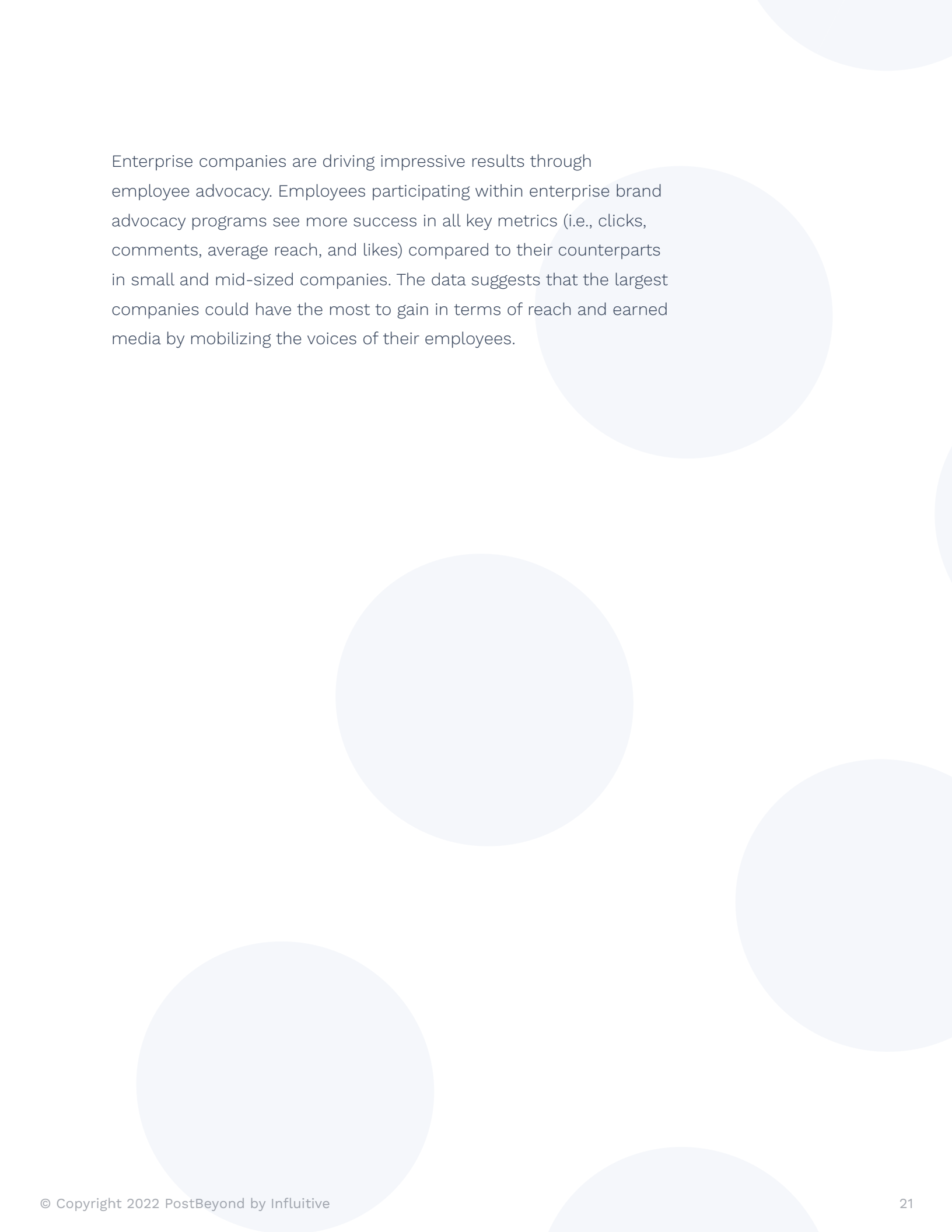
Avg. Shares Per Employee

On average, mid-sized companies drive nearly 2X ROI from employee advocacy. While there's a relatively small increase in the overall average reach, the average advocate in the mid-sized company generates around 5X more reach than their counterpart in a small company.

It seems that the main driving force for this difference is the fact that employees in mid-sized companies also generate more comments and likes.

This is an important point for program managers as it could mean there's value in creating content that gets your advocates' networks to comment (i.e., 'discussion-worthy' content). It could mean using more native videos, encouraging employees to write their own posts, and even leaving more content within the social media post rather than linking out to a blog.





Enterprise companies are driving impressive results through employee advocacy. Employees participating within enterprise brand advocacy programs see more success in all key metrics (i.e., clicks, comments, average reach, and likes) compared to their counterparts in small and mid-sized companies. The data suggests that the largest companies could have the most to gain in terms of reach and earned media by mobilizing the voices of their employees.

7. What's the Top Use Case for Employee Advocacy?

We looked at how our customers were using employee advocacy.

Here's what we learned:

In terms of earned media value (EMV), thought leadership had driven the most at around \$4.6M, followed by social selling at \$3.2M and employer branding at \$1M.



Employer branding is content that showcases or promotes the company's culture, values and other attributes tied to recruiting.

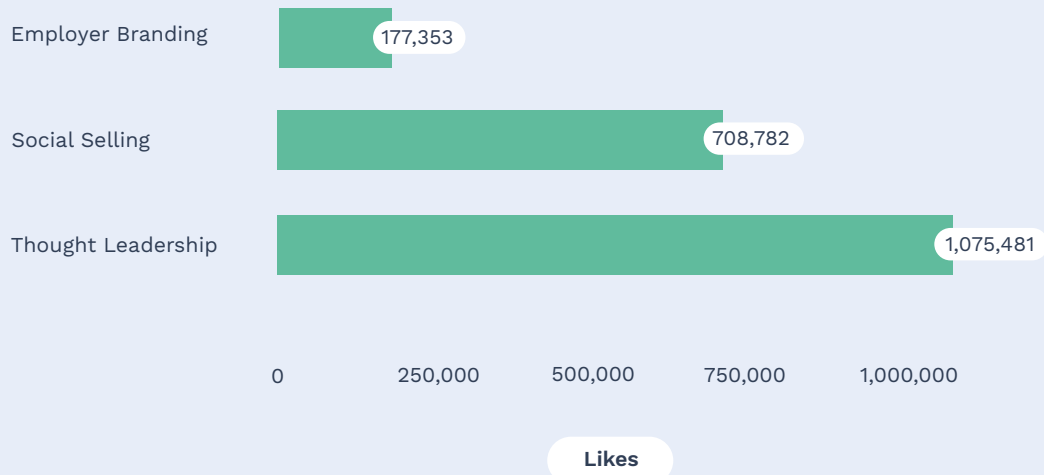
Thought leadership seeks to establish the brand's authority on a subject relevant to its industry. Social selling positions sales people as experts and problem solvers to potential prospects.

The higher EMVs of thought leadership and social selling posts indicate that audiences prefer content that builds knowledge, solves a relevant problem, and/or provides some type of tangible benefit to their work.

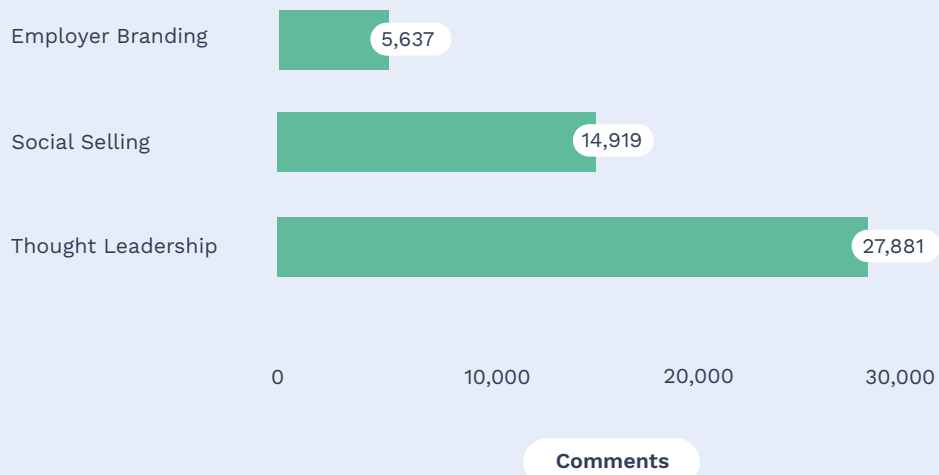
In the following charts you'll see that thought leadership and social selling posts generated the most engagement (i.e., clicks, likes and comments) and reach compared to employer branding.

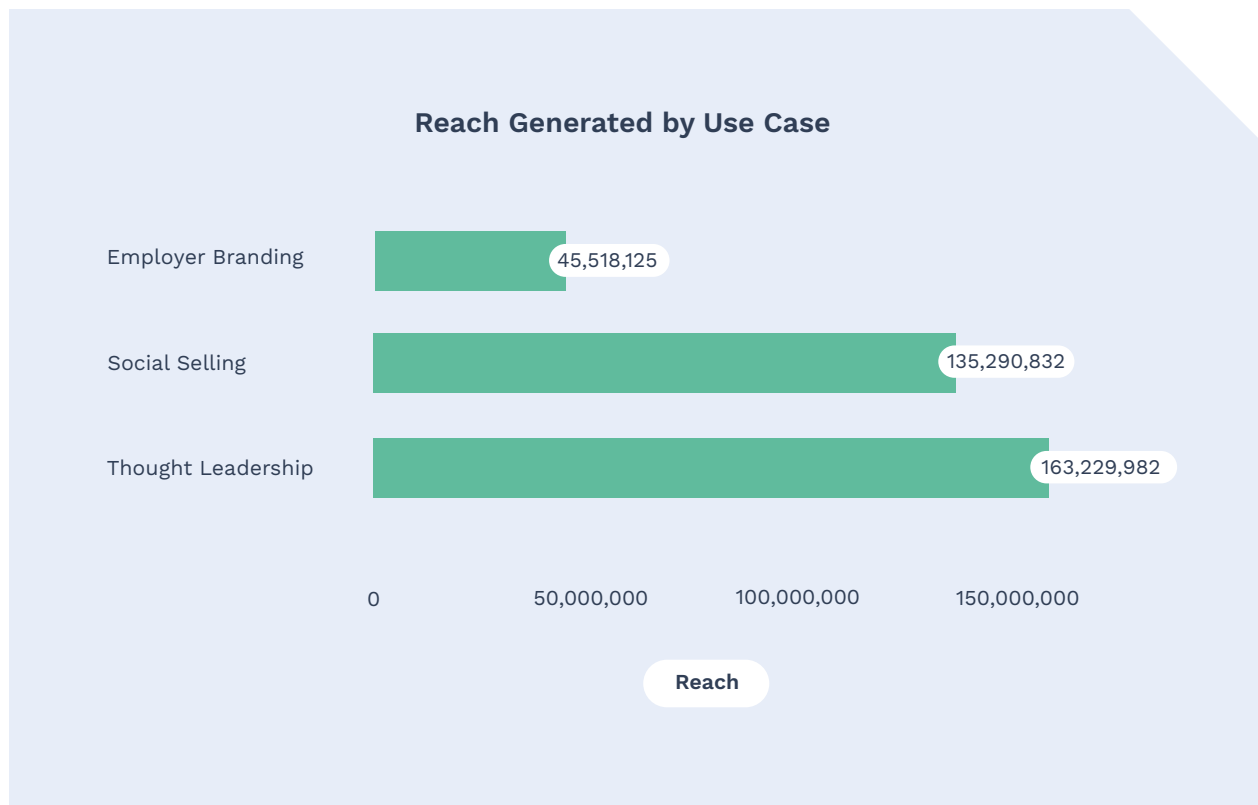


Likes Generated by Use Case



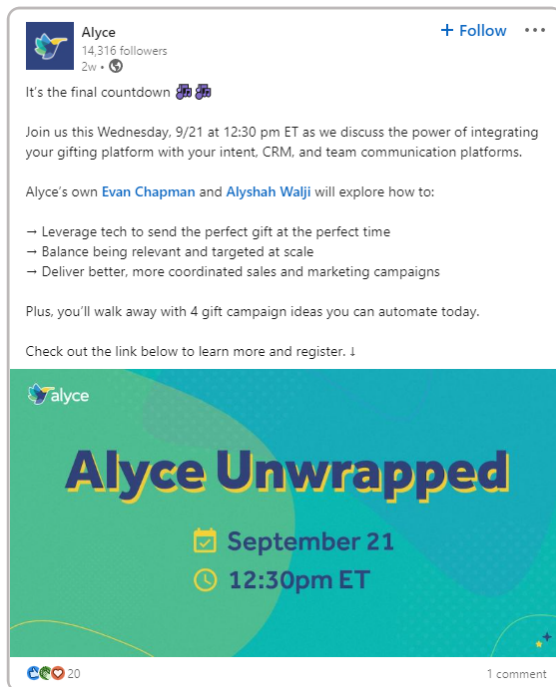
Comments Generated by Use Case





Thus, it's important to think about positioning your employee advocates as experts. The more they establish that type of credibility, the more reach and engagement they'll get.

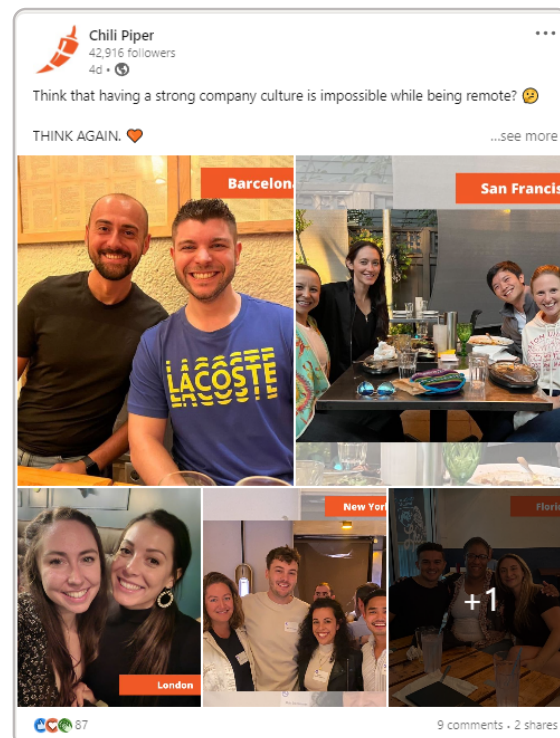
To help build that credibility, you can **feature your employees in more of your content** (e.g., through quotes, interviews, webinars, podcasts, event speaking opportunities, etc).



From [Alyce](#)

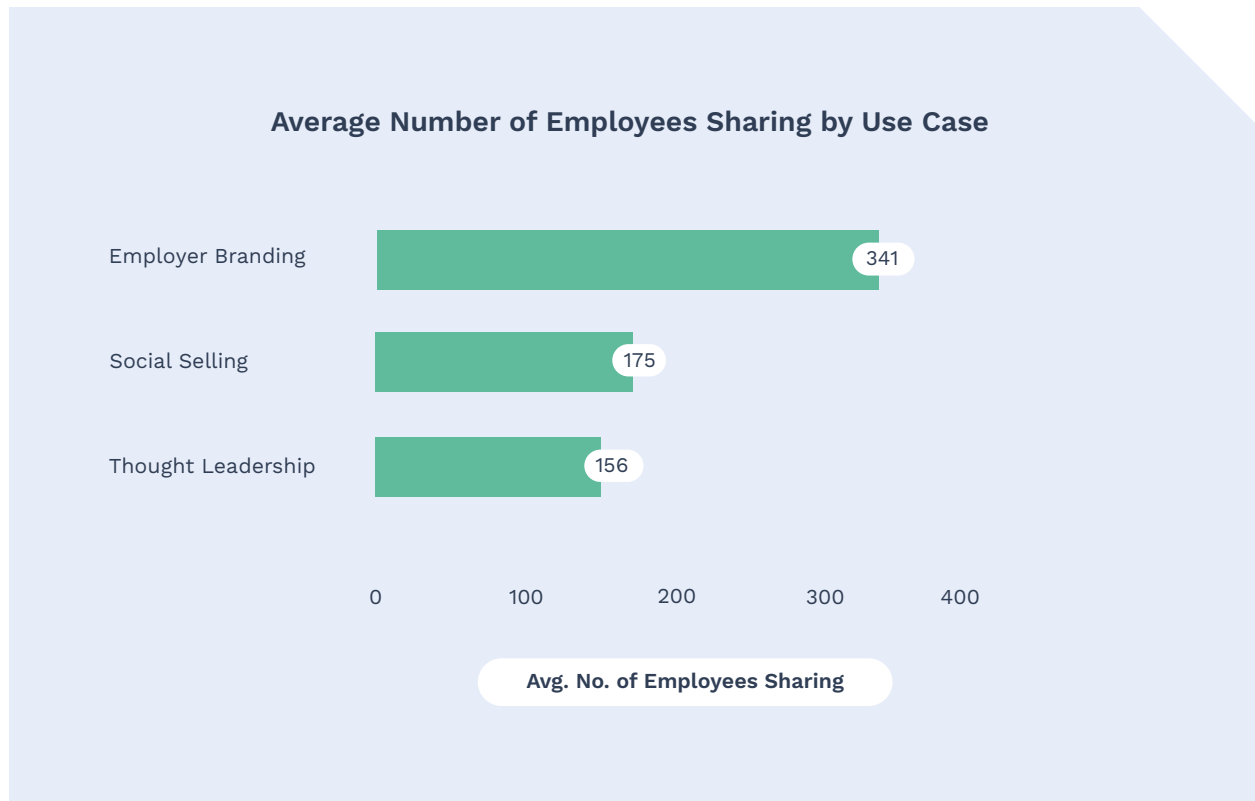
You can encourage your employees to create their own content as well.

This way, they can drive both credibility and authenticity with their audiences.



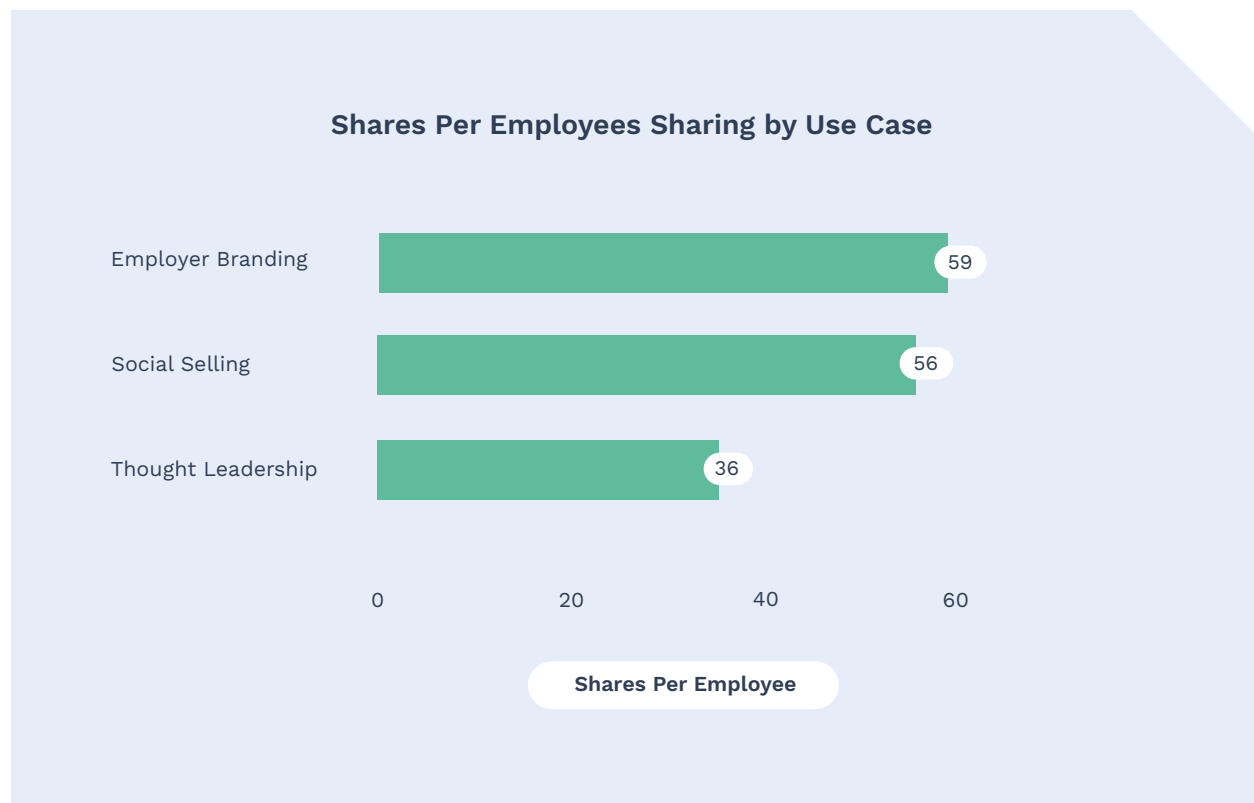
From [Chili Piper](#)

- The charts below show the types of content employee advocates prefer sharing.

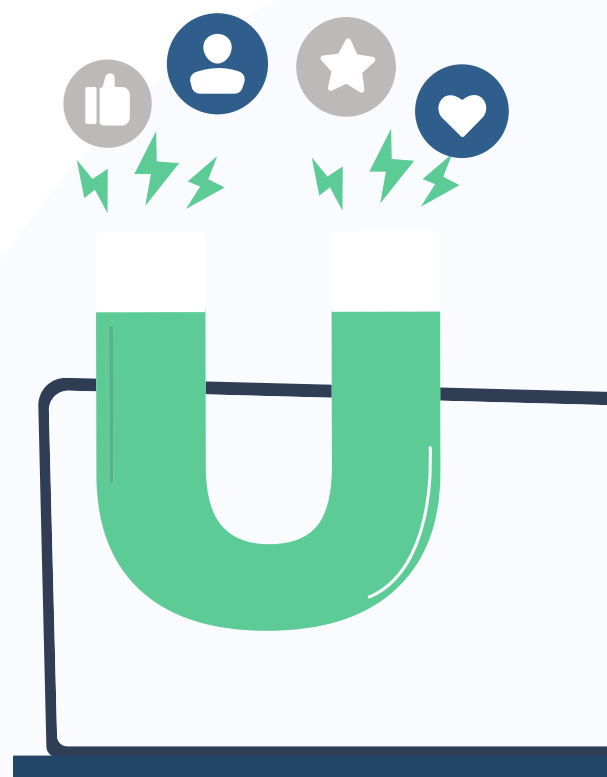


In overall terms, **more employees share employer branding content.**

This is interesting because most of the reach is generated through thought leadership and social selling. However, in terms of average shares per employee, the distribution is fairly close (but thought leadership features a little less frequently than employer branding and social selling).

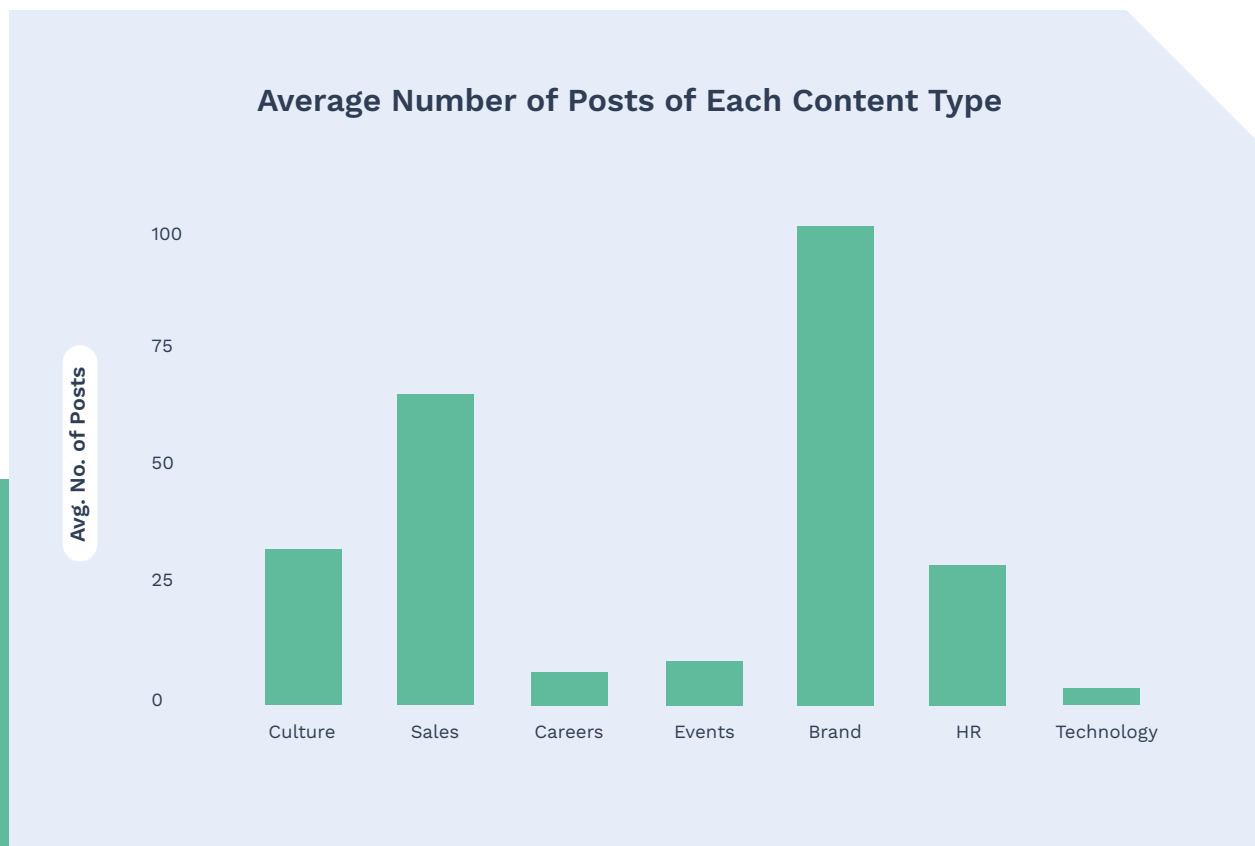


This split could be a result of **different types of employee advocates**. So, for example, you may see more advocates mobilize to share a post about a team outing or some other event (i.e., an employer branding post). However, not all of those employee advocates are regularly active. In other words, they don't post as frequently. But your regularly active employee advocates may post more social selling and thought leadership content.



8. What Content is Generating the Most Reach & Engagement?

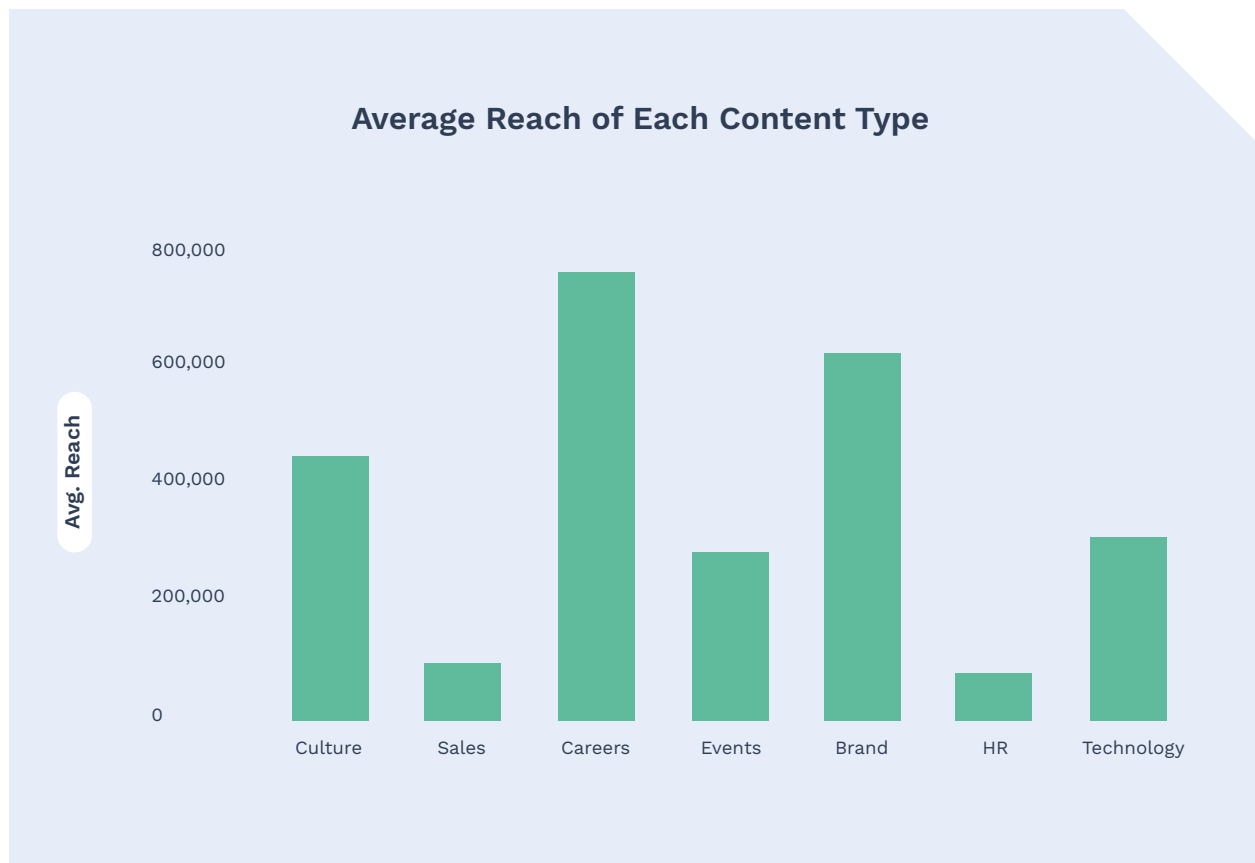
Over the previous year, PostBeyond customers published mostly career, branding, and product or technology-related posts for their employee advocates to share.



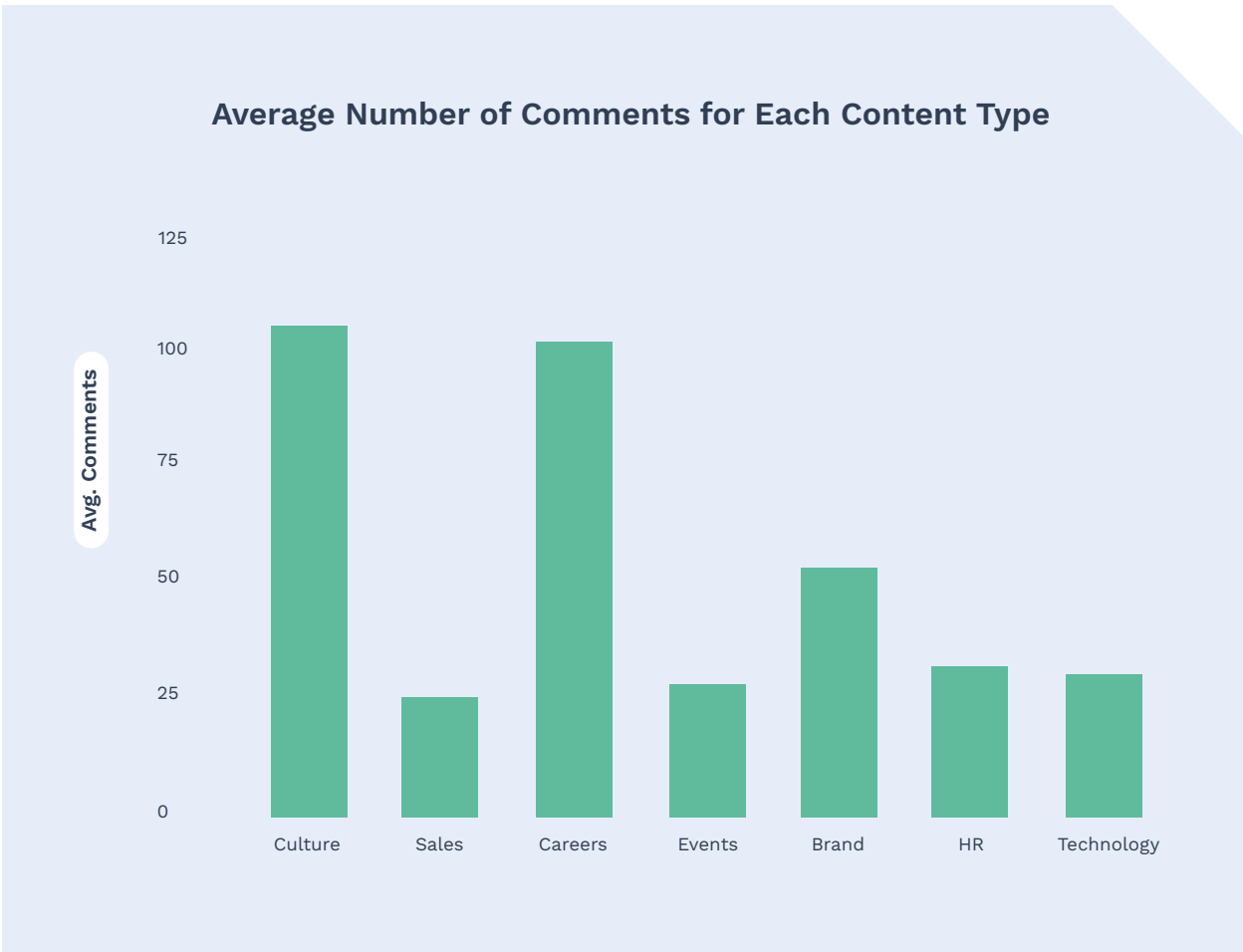
| Note | |
|------------|---|
| Culture | Posts that promote the company's culture, values, mission, etc. |
| Sales | Posts designed to drive the company's social selling goals. |
| Careers | Posts for promoting open or new job postings. |
| Events | Posts that announce, promote, or recap in-person and/or virtual events. |
| Brand | Employer branding posts. |
| HR | Posts from the company's people operations or human resources team. |
| Technology | Posts about relevant tools, skills and other assets relevant to employees and their jobs. |

This aligns with how the “great resignation” started catching on towards the middle and end of 2021. For many companies, retaining and attracting talent was becoming a challenge. Thus, it's possible that a bulk of the content was focused on talent acquisition/retention.

Content about careers was driving the most reach, followed by content about the brand and culture. This could make sense in that because many employees were moving companies at this point, content that gave an inside look at potential employers caught the most traction.



It also could also be that posts that addressed issues relating to culture and careers caught on the most with the networks or audiences of advocates. This would also make sense as in mid-to-late 2021, many people were exploring new job opportunities.



This trend continues in terms of comments, i.e., culture and career posts generated the most responses from advocate networks.

Conclusion

With a recession potentially on the horizon, marketing leaders and teams will be under pressure to support profitability, but with fewer resources. Moreover, with the cost of ads going up across many industries, your ability to rely on traditional lead gen strategies is under more pressure.

However, employee advocacy has proven to be an effective strategy to amplify brand reach in social media, close more sales, and drive more revenue within tighter budgets and via smaller teams. In fact, a Forrester TEI™ study found that a potential PostBeyond user can recoup its costs [within just six months of adopting this platform](#). Finally, companies in every industry can generate a positive ROI through employee advocacy.

No matter your industry or your company's size, it's time to recession proof your marketing by mobilizing your employees. Doing so will unlock your brand's potential to reach new audiences, connect with potential customers and talent, and take the lead over your competitors.

Start today by seeing a demo of PostBeyond in action.





PostBeyond helps companies reach their widest possible network with intelligent content & insightful analytics. Our solution enables employees to become brand advocates and connect with customers in a genuine way.



To learn more about PostBeyond or request a demo visit:

www.postbeyond.com

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