



Bank of Ireland



Bank of Ireland Builds Stronger Customer Relationships Through Employee Advocacy

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Anne Marie Boyhan

Social Media Marketing Manager
Bank of Ireland

Changing to a culture of social sharing

The Bank of Ireland, which provides commercial and banking services throughout Ireland and the United Kingdom, was not known for having a culture of social sharing. The Irish financial crisis of the late 2000s, combined with regulations governing communication by banks, created hesitancy in employees about engaging in social media. Yet there was pent-up demand for a platform for sharing content, especially among the bank's sales teams.

“We had a lot of experts in our company who were trying to tell their stories,” says Anne Marie Boyhan, Social Media Marketing Manager at Bank of Ireland. “But we had a history of not communicating messages outwards.” In a first step at changing this culture, Boyhan and her social media colleagues emailed content to employees and asked them to share it with their connections. But, there was no way to gauge the reach or engagement from such efforts.

Challenge

- Encourage sharing of thought leadership content
- Ability to measure reach and engagement of marketing content
- Enable warm introductions for sales teams

Solution

- A strategic and innovative employee advocacy programme, leveraging the organic reach of the employees' social networks

Results

- Employees are sharing **5x more frequently** than before, resulting in:
 - **15.6%** increase in employee Social Selling Index (SSI)
 - **2x faster** employee network growth
 - **2.5%** engagement rate on employee-shared content (vs 1.3% benchmark)
 - **€368k** in earned media value in just 7 months

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Sharing stories of employee advocacy success

Bank of Ireland’s leadership decided to include Elevate as part of a broader implementation of LinkedIn and Sales Navigator.

“Elevate gave salespeople an effective communications stream that helped create warm intros to prospects,” Boyhan says. In addition, the availability of approved content helped calm employee concerns about sharing information that hadn’t been vetted by leadership.

BOI appointed and trained curators throughout the bank and created a strong pipeline of relevant content for individuals and teams. To help sales teams and other employees increase their comfort level with social sharing, Boyhan started with basics, like how to build out a LinkedIn profile. She also asked early adopters of Elevate to speak at training sessions about their experiences with employee advocacy. “They had great success stories to inspire other employees, like how sharing content helped them get warm intros and accelerated their network growth,” Boyhan says. “And they’ve told people how their Social Selling Index improved when they used Elevate and Sales Navigator together.”

Providing a platform for sharing stories

Since Bank of Ireland began using Elevate, they have seen a significant change in the digital IQ of employees, who are sharing content 5x more often than they did before. This increased content sharing has yielded a 3x return on investment. It has also influenced 2x faster employee connection growth and an increase of 15.6% in their Social Selling Index (SSI).

“Employee advocacy is not just about putting our own marketing content out there. It’s about empowering our employees, from the ground up, to share their stories,” Boyhan says. “They tell their colleagues how amazing Elevate is, and that they have to start using it – and their excitement tells us that they’re embracing advocacy.”

Tips for launching a successful employee advocacy program

- Build the program around shared objectives. In the bank’s case, “we knew we wanted to harness the power of people in the company,” Boyhan says. “So we set that goal internally and then got everyone looking toward that same goal.”
- Advise curators on the value of curating high-level thought leadership and industry news, not just content that promotes the business. When training new curators, Boyhan suggests that for every piece of content about the bank, curators provide four pieces of content that are not specifically focused on Bank of Ireland.
- Continually engage with employees to keep them excited about employee advocacy. For example, recognize your most successful social sellers, and share their stories of success in terms of reaching prospects. At the beginning of the year, Boyhan sent Elevate users a list of social “New Year’s resolutions,” including taking time to build their personal brands through content sharing.

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