



HERSHEY'S

Hershey builds its brand with employee advocacy

“It’s exciting to see how passionate people become about sharing content because of Elevate. They see that there’s value to themselves and to the company in what they’re doing.”



Sarah Dull
Corporate Reputation and Social Media Manager
The Hershey Company

Building support for a new corporate brand initiative

In 2014, The Hershey Company launched an awareness-building effort for its corporate brand, separate from the company’s dozens of other brands such as Hershey’s, Reese’s and Kit Kat candy bars. To highlight the Hershey brand, Dull and her colleagues created social channels to help share company news and showcase their employees, while leading employees to want to share that content. “We wanted to feature the company, and show our pride in working here,” explains Sarah Dull, Hershey’s Corporate Reputation and Social Media Manager. “We realized that getting employees involved on a more comprehensive level would help us achieve these goals, and that we needed a platform that could help us quickly get started.”

Challenge

- Drive awareness of the corporate brand
- Encourage employee advocacy on a company-wide level
- Enhance employee pride in working for The Hershey Company

Solution

- Increase adoption of employee advocacy and content sharing by using a familiar platform – LinkedIn Elevate

Results

- Employees share **13x more often** than before, resulting in:
 - **4x more** Company Page followers
 - **3x more** Company Page views
 - **Almost 2%** engagement rate on content

“The fact that Elevate comes from LinkedIn gave employees a level of comfort – it helps people who might be hesitant about social to explore it more, and discover what branding means to them.”

Starting with the right employees and strategic content curation ensure success

Instead of custom-building an engagement platform or an employee advocacy app, Dull and the team chose Elevate because they knew employees would embrace a well-known solution like LinkedIn. “You really want to be able to push adoption,” Dull says. “The fact that Elevate comes from LinkedIn gave employees a level of comfort – it helps people who might be hesitant about social to explore it more, and discover what branding means to them.”

With the help of LinkedIn platform data, Dull identified the 100 most socially active Hershey employees to become Elevate’s first users. “We chose the group through a global lens, making sure we had employees from several countries and different functions,” Dull says. She chose nine topic areas for employees to focus on when sharing content, including sustainability and brand building, and sought out subject-matter experts for each topic.

Finding content for each topic was made easy with Elevate’s curation capabilities, which made it not only easy to source content but also provided suggestions that would resonate with employees and their networks. “We know we can go right into the content feed instead of searching the Internet for hours,” Dull says. “Our curators and employees have a one-stop shop.”

Dull also uses Elevate’s analytics to track employees’ progress toward becoming more social – and to offer help when needed. “I can see the people who might need some encouragement – it helps that we can take action right away so employees stay enthusiastic,” she says. “We can also decide if our topic areas are performing or we need to alter them.”

Having an engaging platform drives adoption

With Elevate, Hershey employees are sharing far more content: 13X more than before using Elevate, and thus have influenced 4X more Company Page followers and received 3X more Company Page views.

“It’s exciting to see how passionate people become about sharing content because of Elevate,” Dull says. “They understand the value of professional branding, and they see that there’s value to themselves and to the company in what they’re doing.”

As employees become comfortable with the social culture, they’re spreading the word to others. “There’s a lot of word of mouth – people saying, ‘My friend told me about this platform, can I join?’ That’s pretty awesome,” Dull says.

Thanks to the positive word of mouth, Dull has grown the employee advocacy program beyond the first 100 users and is expanding Elevate to the Hershey’s sales team. “We’re also targeting people when we conduct new employee orientation – we’ve created a one-pager on personal branding,” Dull says. “Eventually we want to have everyone on Elevate.”

Tips for launching a successful employee advocacy program

- “Don’t be afraid to start small,” Dull advises. “You don’t need to have every single person involved. Once a few people are excited about the program, others won’t be afraid of it.”
- “Give curators the opportunity to mold their spaces,” she says. In fact, make a point of looking for experts in places where you don’t expect to find them: “Maybe you have a food scientist who’s passionate about sustainability.”
- Communicate how the program is going. “We do biweekly email updates to let employees know what’s working,” Dull says.

Visit business.linkedin.com/elevate to discover how LinkedIn Elevate can drive results for your business.