



Aetna Powers Up their Content Marketing, Raises Brand Awareness & Empowers Employees with LinkedIn Elevate

“We have 50,000 employees. Having a central place like Elevate for employees to understand our goals and strategy is very beneficial for the employee experience.”

A 164-year-old Institution Shaping the Future of Healthcare

Healthcare giant Aetna was officially incorporated in 1853. The next year, the company hired its first full-time employee. It was a humble beginning for an organization that would evolve into a massive enterprise, with over 50,000 employees dedicated to making healthcare simpler, easier and more convenient for individuals, employers and providers.

Aetna knew that social media could be a powerful tool for communicating the brand’s values both internally and externally. The organization’s communications team saw an opportunity to boost employee brand ambassadorship, unite them around a common vision and empower them to speak on the brand’s behalf.

In the past, Aetna had experimented with employee advocacy, but needed a scalable platform that could help a program take root and grow throughout the organization. “Our executives knew we needed an employee advocacy platform,” says Daryl Drabinsky, Director of Digital Strategy & Innovation. “They left it to our team to do the comparison and come back with a recommendation.”

A Platform — And a Strategic Partner

For Drabinsky, the entire LinkedIn ecosystem put Elevate at the top of their list of potential platforms. “Working with LinkedIn allows Aetna to benefit from the data, product insights and consultative advice that builds on our existing relationship across the platform,” she says.



Daryl Drabinsky
Digital Innovation & Strategy Director



Kieran Fagan
VP Digital Communications & Content Strategy

Challenge

- Communicate brand values internally & externally
- Integrate employee advocacy into content marketing strategy
- Create more engaging, data-driven content

Solution

Use LinkedIn Elevate as an integral part of LinkedIn marketing activities with consultation from the LinkedIn team

Results

Employees are sharing **22x** more than before, influencing:

- Over **2%** engagement rate on employee-shared content
- **21x more** Company Page views
- **2x more** Company Page followers
- **11x** more views of employees’ LinkedIn profiles

“The team at LinkedIn have been great partners. It’s a very data-based organization. With their consultation, Elevate isn’t just a siloed strategy, it’s part of our entire content strategy.”

After seeing a demo of the platform, getting executive buy-in was the next step. Kieran Fagan, VP Digital Communications & Content Strategy, says, “Once we saw what the platform was capable of — sharing across Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn from one app, getting data on how shares perform — the team here started to get excited. The mobile app in particular got our attention. It allows people to share easily from anywhere. That kind of simplicity is critical as we scale from hundreds to thousands of employees.”

Aetna needed more than just the Elevate platform, however. They needed a strategic partner who could integrate employee advocacy into their larger communications and marketing strategy. The Elevate team and the LinkedIn Marketing Solutions team worked together with Aetna to guide their marketing efforts across LinkedIn and beyond.

“Platform aside, the consultative relationship we have with LinkedIn has been crucial to our success,” says Drabinsky. “They systemize training, implementation, and scaling so it’s not just on us. We look to these partnerships with LinkedIn to help us gauge what the outside world wants to hear from us.”

Curation Is the Key to Success.

Aetna rolled out a 1,000-user pilot program, using Elevate’s Smart Recruiter tool to identify those most likely to succeed in the initial rollout. Then they built on the pilot team’s success, steadily growing to over 3,000 employees, on track to have 10,000 active users by next year. “This has really tapped into our employees’ desire to be heard,” Drabinsky says. “They wanted to have this sort of outlet.” With Elevate providing the platform, employees are sharing 22x more than before.

Drabinsky and her team keep employees engaged with strategic content curation, ensuring there’s always fresh content for employees to read and share. “The key to adoption was the curators,” Drabinsky says. “You need to show value to the user, and the content is crucial to that. We got curators from across the business, subject matter experts that could bring in content aligned to our corporate narrative.”

Elevate suggests trending content by industry, so curators have a barometer for what types of content will resonate most with employees and their networks. This guidance helped the Aetna

team develop strong guidelines to help curators select content. Aetna also provides ongoing training for curators, including a virtual space for curators to communicate with each other. The Aetna team developed a strong set of guidelines to help curators select content, trained them extensively during the pilot, and set up an internal space where curators could communicate.

An Indispensable Internal Communication Tool

In addition to helping employees share socially, Aetna found Elevate could be a powerful resource for employee education. “Employees can go into Elevate, see the content we’re curating, and learn more about our business,” says Fagan. “By combining our internal content with the third-party content in Elevate, our employees get a much more well-rounded picture of the industry and Aetna’s position in it.”

Elevate has also become a resource for Aetna to communicate its brand values internally. “We have varied lines of business, and at times it can be difficult to unite everyone under a shared vision,” says Fagan. “Elevate provides a central place for employees to explore our goals and strategy.” Using Elevate as a content repository has helped Aetna facilitate cross-functional collaboration across their Communications, Marketing, Sales and Recruiting teams.

An Integrated Approach to Advocacy

With LinkedIn’s consultation, Drabinsky and her team have created a “flywheel effect” for great content, a virtuous cycle that guides creation, curation and amplification. “When we’re planning content, we keep Elevate in mind as a communication channel,” Drabinsky says. Once employees share content, Drabinsky’s team tracks engagement to refine the content mix and choose articles for Sponsored Content and LinkedIn Ad campaigns.

Aetna has achieved impressive results already, with employee sharing influencing 21x more views of Aetna’s Company Page than before. Elevate has become a crucial part of Aetna’s internal and external communications, a place where employees can explore the organization’s values and vision, then share that vision with the world.

Quick Employee Advocacy Tips from Aetna

- Get executive buy-in before you start rolling out a program
- Keep the program top-of-mind with employees through regular reminders
- Partner with a team that will help surface and strategize around engagement data

Visit business.linkedin.com/elevate to learn how others have successfully launched an employee advocacy program.