

HOW TO TURN YOUR EMPLOYEES INTO SUCCESSFUL ADVOCACY ADVOCATES

The image shows a hand-drawn sketch of a digital clock and a punch card. The clock is at the bottom, displaying '10:30' in a digital font, with 'AM' to the right. Below the time, it shows 'JAN 30' and 'MONTH DATE'. Above the time, the days of the week are listed: 'SUN MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT'. A small triangle points to 'TUE'. Above the clock is a punch card with a grid. The first row is labeled 'Company Name'. The second row is labeled 'Name:'. The third row has columns for 'DATE', 'TIME (IN)', 'TIME (OUT)', 'TIME (IN)', 'TIME (OUT)', and 'TIME (IN)'. A pencil is shown writing on the punch card, specifically on the 'TIME (OUT)' column under the second 'TIME (IN)' header. A paper clip is attached to the punch card. A hand is visible at the bottom left, holding the sketch.





PRO-TIP: Self-interest is a big motivator. When an employer's interests are aligned with those of his/her employees, you have a ready-made volunteer force of activists. You just have to make it easy and ask them to get involved.

YOUR EMPLOYEES WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

- You know your employees best, so you ultimately have to decide on the best way to approach them.
- Surveys conducted by national business groups reveal that employees trust their employers when it comes to public policy that affects the company.
- Your employees are voters. Legislators listen when they hear from their constituents. It's a powerful one-two punch ... your CEO talks with a legislator and the legislator hears from his/her constituents about the same issue.

IT'S A PROCESS: AWARENESS, PERSUASION AND THEN ACTIVATION

- Grassroots advocacy efforts too often fail because there is a rush to activation with no education or explanation. Don't make that mistake.
- But, sometimes you are up against a deadline and have no choice but to shortcut an outreach effort.
- A company advocacy operation should not be an ad-hoc thought. You are always going to have issues. Set up an ongoing operation. Rarely do issues sneak up on you. Think down the road and plan accordingly.
- Develop and execute a plan that walks through the three phases — awareness (education), persuasion (explanation), activation (outreach) — to successfully move someone.

DIRECT VS. INDIRECT COMMUNICATIONS

- Utilize your existing and most effective methods of communicating with your employees.
- If that does not include social media, consider setting up those platforms, because they are effective tools for engagement and activation.
- If you are unable or don't want to use internal company communications methods, geofencing or geofarming your facilities can develop an indirect or third-party ability to message your employees.

PAID DIGITAL ADVERTISING AS PART OF YOUR COMMUNICATIONS

- Individuals respond differently to different communications methods.
- An internal newsletter, email or posting may not have the impact you desire.
- Know where your employees get their information flow ... and be sure to engage them through those platforms.
- Digital ads, especially those containing video, are a good supplement to your internal communications.
- Use mobile, desktop and video ads to drive your employees to social media for engagement and activation.

UTILIZE A USER-FRIENDLY ENGAGEMENT PLATFORM

- Don't skimp on the final step. Be sure the action you are asking your employees to take is easy for them to execute.
- Form postcards and form letters to legislators simply aren't effective.
- There are many good digital platforms available that can be linked to a website or Facebook page that provide a "click to email" feature.

KEEP YOUR EMPLOYEES INFORMED AND UPDATED

- Fresh content and updates are essential to keeping your employees engaged.
- Don't ask them to do something and then not tell them the results — good or bad.
- Constant engagement is especially critical for those employees who take an action. They are ready to engage on the next issue. Let them know you appreciate what they have done.
- Work to expand your “engagement force” when you don't have a pressing issue so they don't believe the only time you communicate is when you need something from them.

REMEMBER: Whether you have dozens of employees or thousands, they are the most effective amplifiers of your message. It takes work and honest communication about what is at stake. Bring them into the process and be amazed at what you can accomplish!

