



# Digital Alchemy

How Employee Advocacy turns your Content into Gold



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## Is content marketing dead?

That's a question many marketers are asking as they look at the increasing costs and diminishing returns of their "tried and true" strategies of the past.

A few years back, there was a content marketing boom, not unlike the California Gold Rush of the mid-19th century. The evolution of this particular brand of marketing parallels the actual gold rush closely - the only difference being in this case, the gold is your audience.

During the gold rush in California, some of the early participants recovered gold lying around where it could be reached with very little effort on the surface, or found it easily by panning. As these things go, eventually all the easy gold was found. Prospectors had to commence building bigger operations, purchase and use more complicated tools, and plan more complex systems to get the same results.

The world of content marketing encountered a comparable cycle a few years ago, following the same trend of easy pickings, expansion, dwindling traffic and competition for audience in a changing landscape.

Early digital marketers had a relatively simple and prosperous time of things. If you had a blog with reasonable SEO, you would have all the traffic you desired. Once blogging became more popular and the internet became saturated with online journaling, the boost from this tactic was reduced, and early social media adopters held greater advantage. If a company had secured a substantial Facebook following it might have done wonders for traffic initially but then the rules changed on Facebook, and a hard-built audience was worth substantially less. According to a [Social@Ogilvy analysis](#), organic traffic to Facebook pages is now below 2%, because Facebook posts from company pages are rarely shown in the newsfeed of users.

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**Despite a shifting digital climate, content marketing is far from dead; the tools and techniques have changed, but not everyone has kept up.**

Currently, notwithstanding the increasing number of people using social media, there are more companies than ever fighting for their attention. Marketers need to work harder to achieve results.

Despite a shifting digital climate, content marketing is far from dead; the tools and techniques have changed, but not everyone has kept up.

Let's take a look at how people can find an audience now that the easy days of the content marketing gold rush are gone.

## It all starts with a content distribution plan

In the ever-changing world of content marketing, having good content is not the end of the process, it is just the beginning. Even the greatest content will still fail to draw traffic if people can't find it. You not only need to write clear, comprehensible, and compelling content, you need to distribute it where people can access it.

[Spray and pray](#) is no longer a valid content distribution strategy - if it ever really was, and the distribution plan for any material you create must be calculated and organized.

According to GE Australia's vice-president of branding and communications, [Emma Rugge-Price](#) "Distribution shouldn't be an afterthought. A strong distribution strategy will go a long way in ensuring your content reaches your audience and is impactful beyond the short-term."



Your content distribution strategy is composed of [owned media](#), [earned media](#), and [paid media](#). Handling any of these three areas individually can be a challenge. Coordinating them into a comprehensive distribution strategy requires skill and knowledge.

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Most marketers are comfortable in the area of **owned media**, which is their own web properties, blogs, and other channels over which they have direct control. Too many companies have tried to balance their entire distribution strategy using owned media alone, and they have felt the sting of changing search algorithms from Google, changing Facebook organic feed rules, and the other demands of higher competition in the digital world.

**Earned media** is most easily thought of as online word-of-mouth, and it is one of the most challenging parts of digital marketing. You can't force earned media to happen, but



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Just like in the early days of gold mining, the advantage goes to the early adopters. Glenn Gaudet, President and Founder of GaggleAmp Inc. says,

*“It doesn’t take a lot of employees to have a tremendous impact in amplifying your content.”*

## Who are these influencers?

### Employees.

Developing an employee advocacy program that encourages your staff to use social media is a remarkable and underused tool in the

marketing toolbox. A [2013 study by Proskauer](#) found that 36% of employers block social media access for employees while at work.

You might not even think about it, but your employees show their support for your company over the competition every day that they show up at work.

Don’t think your employees are willing to participate in a social sharing program? In general, as many as [50% of employees are already talking about the company...](#) would you rather have a trained or untrained employee?

Let’s take a look at the impact that your employees can have when you engage them in your content distribution plan.

The average person is a [member of five social networking sites](#). Their activity can vary, but let’s see how many connections a typical user has:

- The average number of Twitter followers is [208](#).
- The average number of Facebook friends is [338](#), with the median being 200. [58% of the entire adult US population](#) now has a Facebook account.
- Nearly half of LinkedIn users have 500 connections or more.

These stats don’t even take into account the dozens of other social networks that your employees might use. Consider, part of your team might be active pinners on Pinterest; have a substantial following on



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YouTube; post on Instagram or Snapchat; be active users on Quora; even be reviewing your company without you knowing it on Glassdoor.

This gives you an idea of the amazing impact employee social advocacy can have.

Looking back to the digital marketing trifecta, engaging your employees and encouraging them to post on social media can positively impact all three of the media spheres.

**Owned media:** while you don't own your employee's social media accounts, engaging your employees can help you to spread the messages you want, linking to pages you want, and sharing social initiatives that you desire. This can add some incredible amplification to your owned media channels.

**Earned media:** employee advocacy falls squarely in the category of earned media. You can't force your employees to use their social presence to talk about the company online, but if you engage and empower them, they can choose to do so for themselves. You earn the participation of employees by the quality of the advocacy program you construct, so do your research when you're bringing in and implementing a software solution.

**Paid media:** a 2014 [study from Converto and AOL Platforms](#) found that both social media and display ads had a significant impact in the middle of your conversion funnel. They both helped people moving between the awareness stage and the conversion stage of the buying process. Used together, they can

*A [2013 research number](#) says that the average business Twitter account has 14,709 followers. If your business is in line with that average, and you have more than 71 employees, the total audience of your employee's Twitter accounts would exceed that of the official business account.*

have fantastic results.

Employee advocacy can also address one of the greatest challenges of paid media – budget. Finding the budget to support paid media initiatives can be a challenge. This is where the real treasure of an advocacy program shows.

Let's look at a scenario specifically for Facebook. You pay an average of \$1 per click on a Facebook ad, and have a 5% click-through rate. If your employees were to share that same message to their networks and have the same click-through rate, here's how your cost savings could break down (assuming average followers and 58% of employees having accounts):

Depending on the size of your company, you could be getting thousands of dollars (or tens of thousands) more in value from each piece of content that you share. Multiply that by your entire content distribution plan and the results are astonishing.

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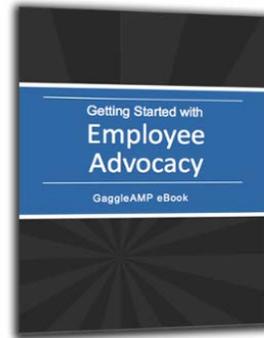
Building an employee advocacy strategy that encourages your staff to talk about your company on social media can massively amplify your content message while delivering great value. The benefits don't stop there though:

- Social advocacy positively impacts the SEO of your owned media by building links back to your sites and providing social signals to search engines that can boost your organic traffic.
- Encouraging your employees to leave reviews on Glassdoor can lower your recruitment costs and help you build a better reputation as an employer.
- A [Gallup study](#) found “companies with high employee engagement levels have 3.9 times the earnings per share when compared to those in the same industry with lower engagement levels.”

Setting up an employee advocacy program doesn't have to be a difficult undertaking. A

well-built solution like [GaggleAMP](#) lets you jump right in with engaging your employees and seeing results.

Are you ready to start mining the gold that's right in front of you? Check out this ebook about [Getting Started with Employee Advocacy](#).



Check out this ebook about [Developing a Social Strategy with your Employees](#).

