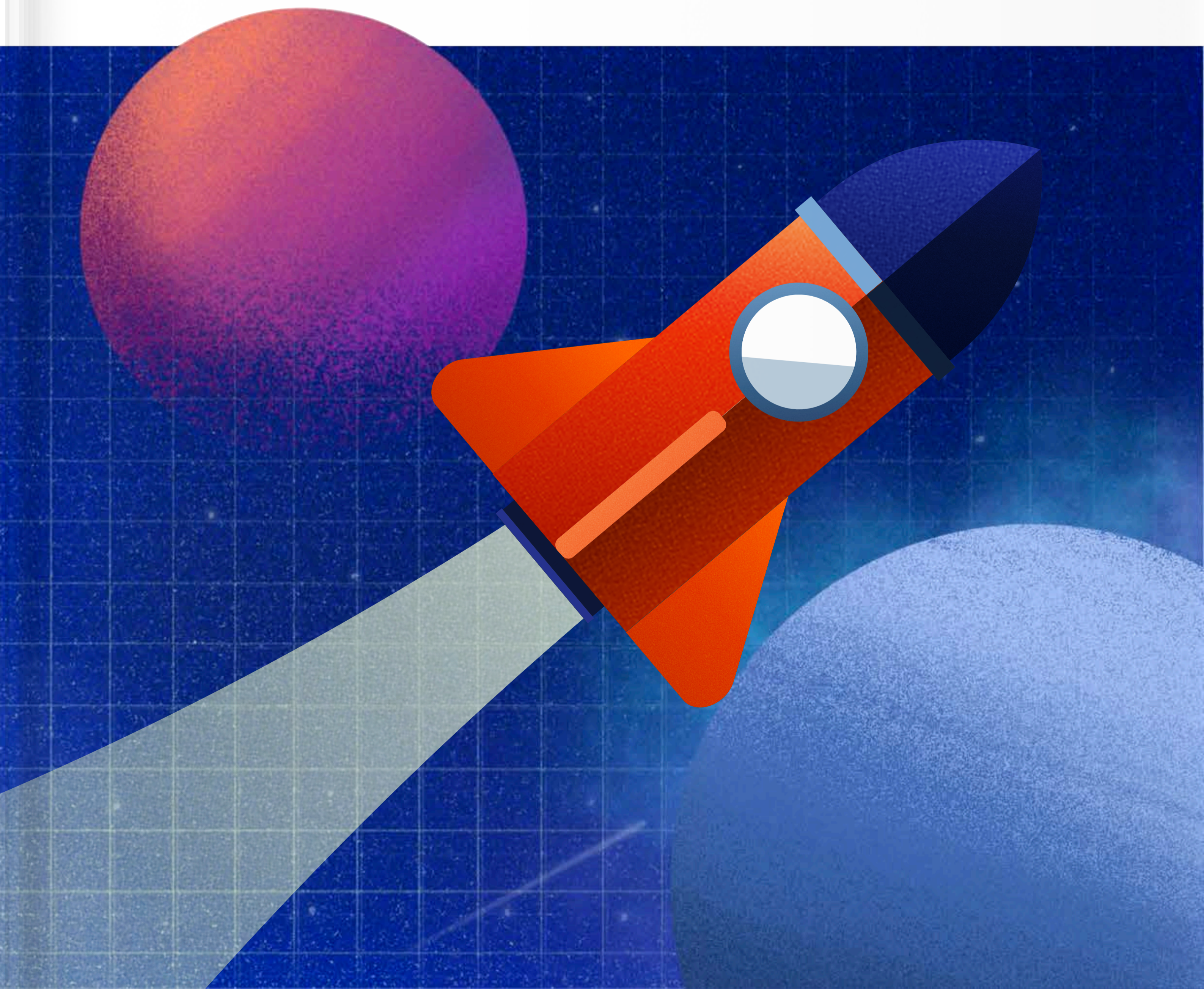




Getting Started with Employee Advocacy



Contents

Getting Started with Employee Advocacy	01
What is Employee Advocacy?	02
How Employee Advocacy Works	03
Case Study:	
WGroup Builds a \$2 Million Sales Pipeline With GaggleAMP	04
Why It Works	05
Recruitment: It Takes a Team to Make it Work	06
Onboarding Your C-Suite	07
Onboarding Your Employees	08
What Type of Content is Most Shareable?	09
Getting Started Checklist	11
What to Expect: Roadblocks, Re-engagement, and Remedies	12
Case Study:	
The Predictive Index Turns Arounds Social Media KPIs with GaggleAMP	13
Employee Advocacy: An Essential Piece to the Digital Marketing Puzzle	14



Getting Started with Employee Advocacy

For many brands, the full potential of their advocates has yet to be reached, and for others, their advocacy program has yet to come to fruition. Future years will further be defined by social media and content marketing, and without your advocates, your brand's efforts can suffer in engagement and reach.

Before you begin to craft an **employee advocacy** program, it's important to have a fully defined concept of what an employee advocate actually is, what they do, and their potential as marketers. These answers will in turn help you answer the question, 'Why do you need them?'

Your employee advocates are essential pieces to the marketing puzzle, and they should also be at the center of your brand's marketing strategy.

What is Employee Advocacy?

Employee advocacy refers to employees who actively promote your brand, company, or organization. It's the phenomenon by which an employee, stakeholder, or other brand champion advocates on behalf of your company -- and in today's modern world of content marketing, much of that impact can be felt in social media.

Through the utilization of their own personal networks, your advocates are able to reach users that may otherwise not have been connected to your company. Over the years, users on social media have become attuned to big brand marketing tactics, pushing these users to seek more authentic relationships with the brands they invest in. Thus, the popularity of employee advocacy has risen, as they are viewed as more trustworthy than the companies themselves.

Your employee advocates have a lot to bring to the table, and their ability to impact your engagements on social media and beyond cannot be understated. *By getting your employees to share your content, you unlock the full power of their collective network. The more advocates you have sharing across their networks, the higher the potential to connect your brand with relevant prospects.*

Your advocates are able to reach users that may otherwise not have been connected to your company.



How Employee Advocacy Works



We've all heard the benefits of advocacy touted by big brands and small businesses alike, but how does advocacy work for your company? Your employee advocates can achieve much more than your company could do on its own in regards to social media and digital marketing. In fact, employee advocacy pivots on the idea that employees carry with them a new network of users who they can reach on a more personable level.

Your company may boast a network of followers that far surpasses any given employee's network in terms of quantity, but your employees have the ability to extend your brand awareness beyond your immediate social reach, touching users who may have been attainable only through said employees.

CASE STUDY

WGroup Builds a \$2 Million Sales Pipeline With GaggleAMP

WGroup, a CIO advisory firm of roughly 100 employees, uses GaggleAMP to build up the digital presence and personal brand of its many IT consultants.

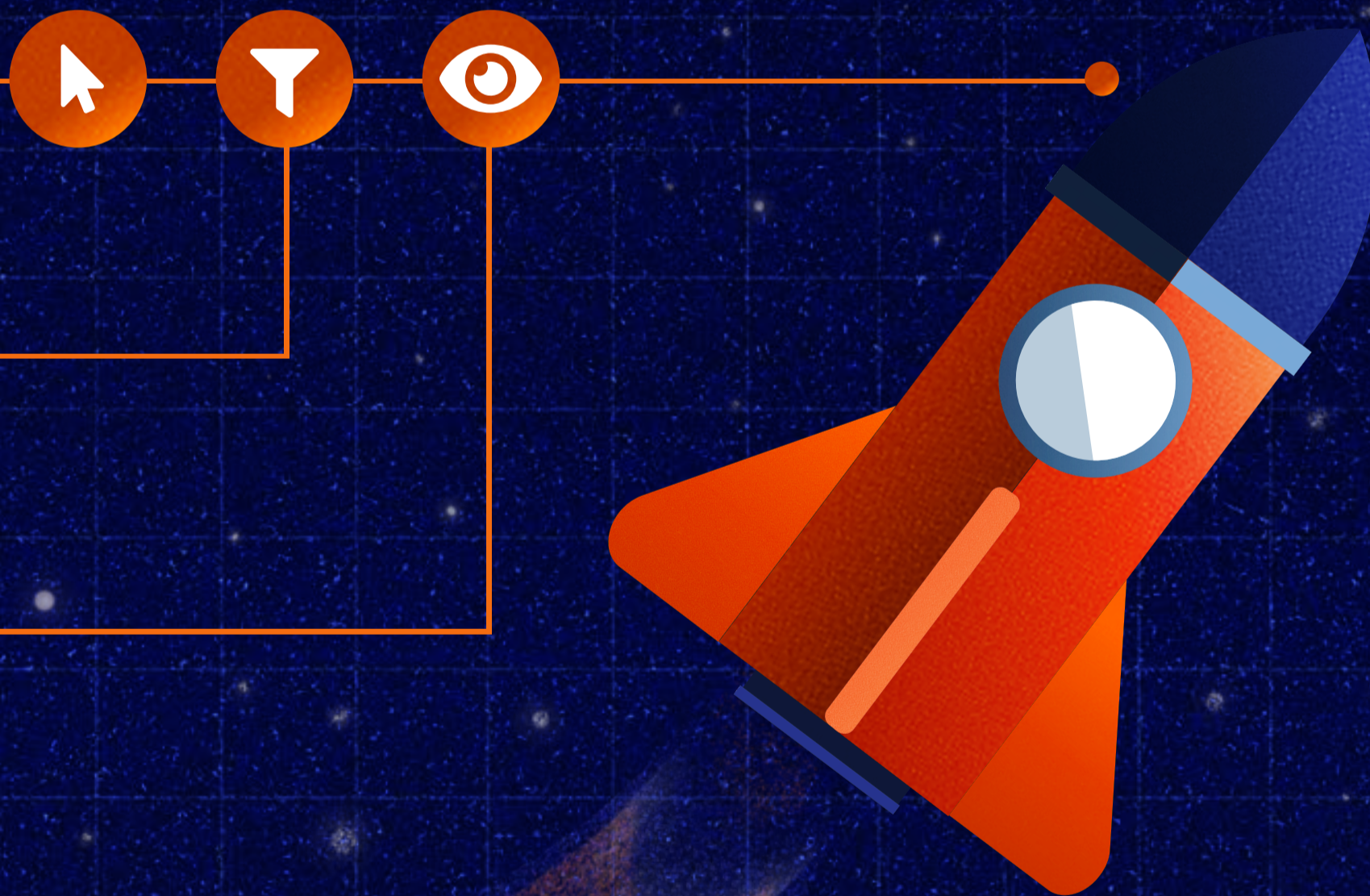
Before getting started with GaggleAMP, the company struggled to get employees to take part in the program. They wouldn't share messages or content the marketing team suggested, and the social media presence of the consultants didn't grow. In order to help drive new business through social media, WGroup adopted GaggleAMP, and its results completely turned around.

Since it started the program, WGroup drove over 7.8 million impressions, 7,300 clicks on content it promoted through GaggleAMP, and drove over \$2 million in sales pipeline through the employee advocacy program. The firm's marketing team is able to directly attribute these numbers to its employee advocacy program by attaching a unique tracking code to all the links it promotes through GaggleAMP.

Clicks
7,300

Sales Pipeline
\$2 Million

Impressions
7.8 Million



"There are thousands of marketing technology products out there that will do a lot of really good things, but the amount of effort and brainpower that you need to spend to get value out of those tools is significant. In GaggleAMP's case, it's a very low barrier to entry and a very quick path to impact."

- Domenic Colasante, CMO of WGroup

[GO TO CASE STUDY](#)

Why It Works:

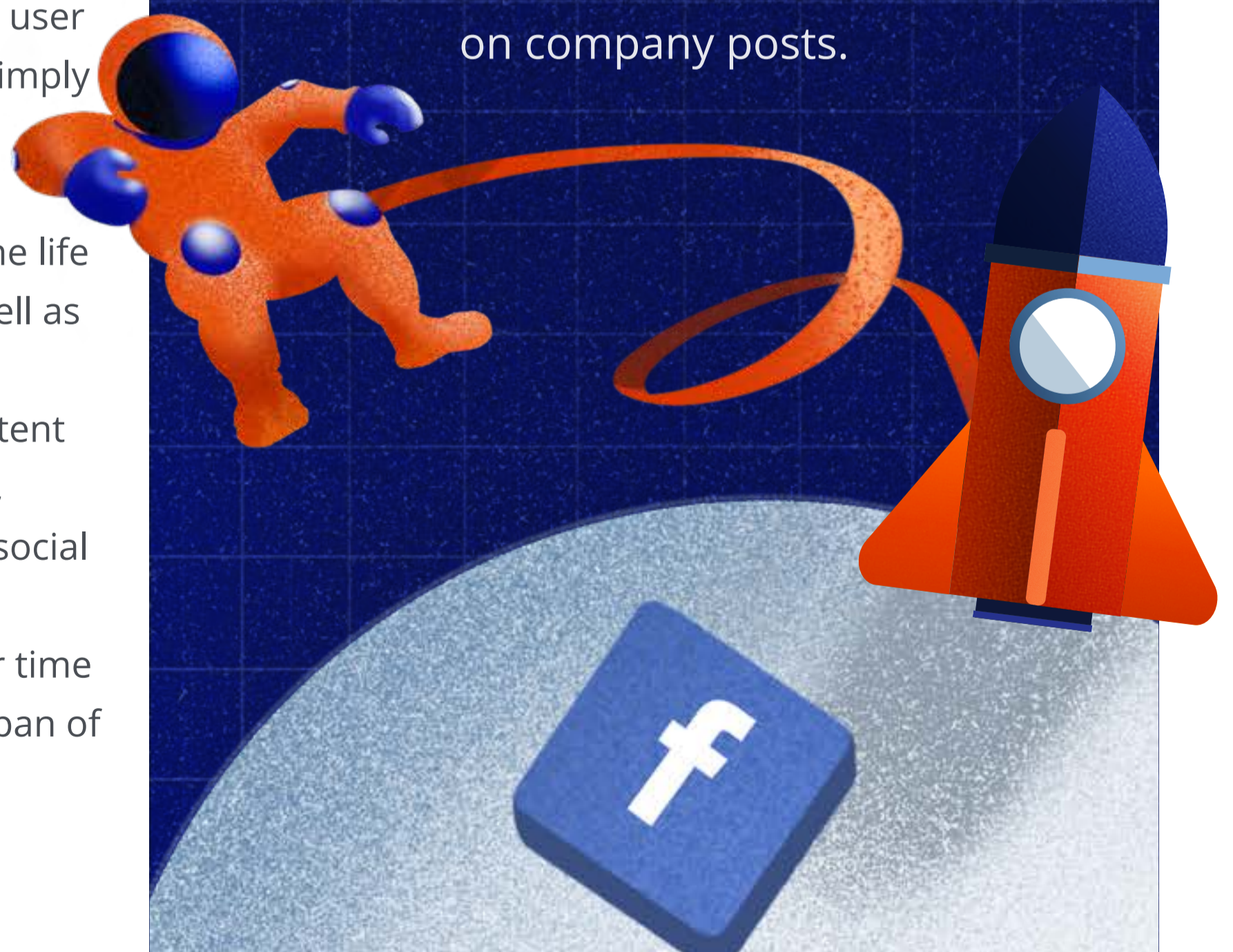
When employee advocates share your content, they're putting your brand in front of their immediate network of users; that's brand awareness.

The best part about employee advocacy and brand awareness is that if your content is *engaging*, it's going to compound its potential for showing up on more user's timelines and homepages because more people are clicking on your content. This can quickly snowball into an exponential increase in how many users get to see your content and, thus, how much brand awareness you're getting through your employee advocates.

In fact, the increase in content and the resulting increase in filtering now limits the reach of company posts. While you may show up in some feeds, other users might never even get the opportunity to see your post in the first place. Employees have personal profiles and thus tend to show up more often on feeds, tapping into the feeds of users that may be unreachable for your company. This means that not only are you gaining brand awareness through the utilization of your employee's social networks, but you're also more likely to garner user engagement with your content in addition to simply increasing awareness.

Employee advocacy also works by extending the life of your post. They have anti-aging effects as well as the ability to resurrect dead posts simply by engaging their networks and utilizing your content as a springboard for their stories. For instance, 73.8% of potential engagements on any given social media posts happen within the first hour. Employees can take that post and share it over time and in a multitude of ways, extending the lifespan of that post and therefore resurrecting that post multiple times. These Leveraged posts see an average lifespan increase of 4,200%.

Users are more likely to engage with content pushed through an advocate than content presented directly through the company. It's not always because the content itself is engaging but rather because the mode of transportation for that content is perceived as a more trustworthy source. The sheer fact that you are a company may place you in a mental category of 'unimportant.' This is also why Facebook's algorithm places a premium on individual users and less on company posts.



Recruitment:

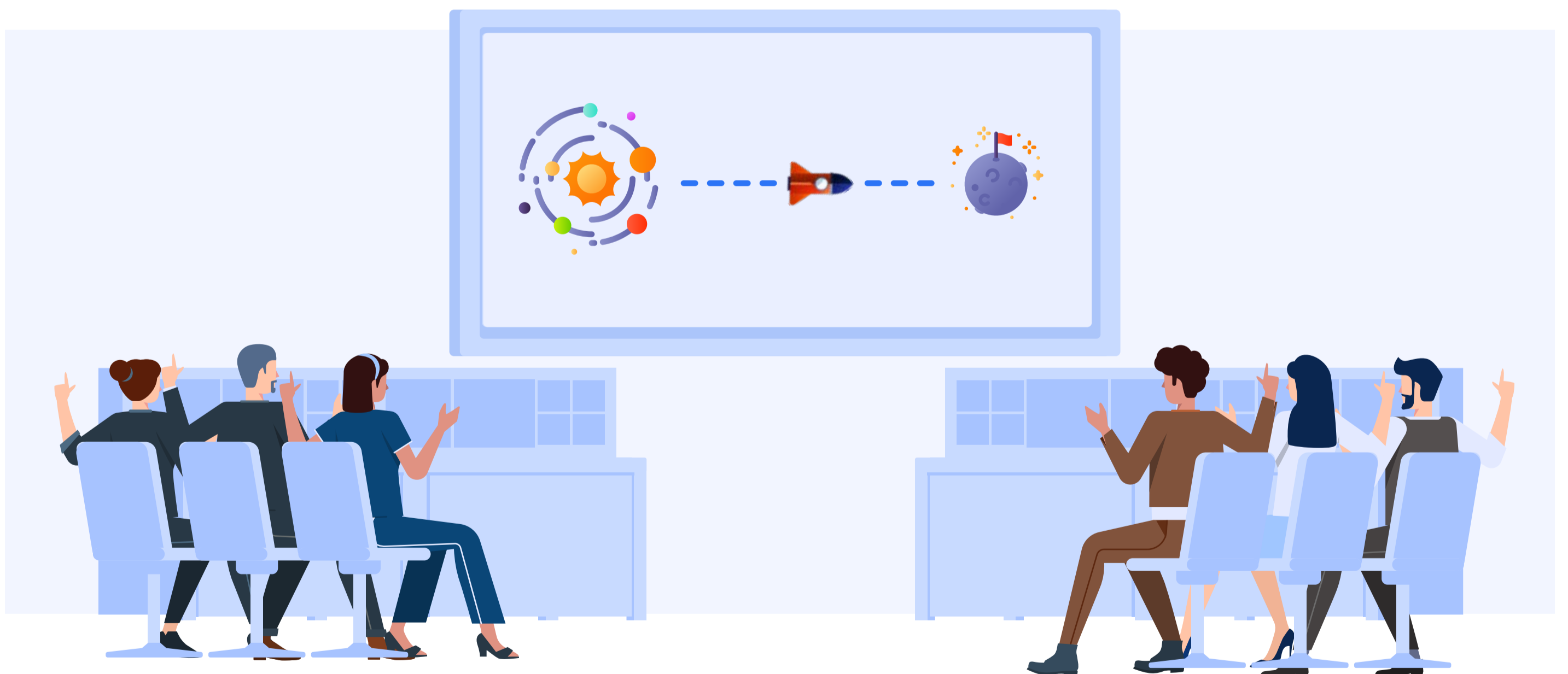
It Takes a Team to Make it Work

Jumping on the employee advocacy bandwagon might sound like an easy sell, but your company's culture can affect the efficacy of your efforts. The environment that hosts any growing or changing population can either hinder or enhance the results of said growth. The same goes for employee advocacy programs and the company culture they reside within.

The most direct approach is to ask your managers. They likely know their colleagues well enough to identify who is already sharing about the company on social media. A great place to start with this approach is the sales department. Go-getters in sales are already posting to LinkedIn about your company to create new sales referrals.

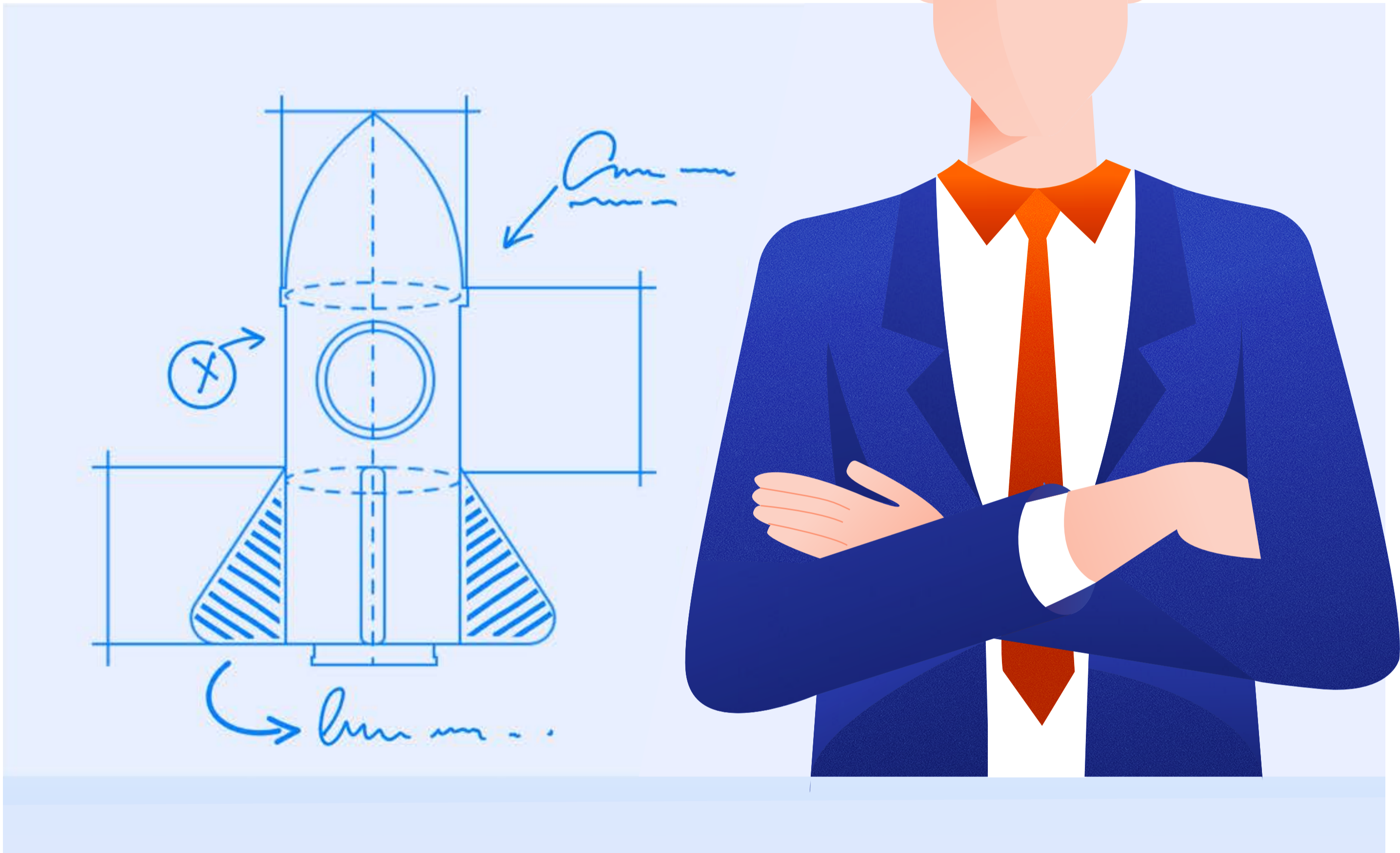
Once you've found your current supporters, you can leverage them to recruit other ambassadors. These existing ambassadors are influencers. They have taken the initiative and are your early adopters. Their leadership and passion can help recruit advocates in a more organic way.

Beyond recruiting new internal advocates, your early ambassadors can help guide your engagement strategy moving forward. Bring them together and see how they have been sharing without being part of a formal program. See what content they share and take notice of the voice they use. This can cut out a lot of guesswork in the beginning and help your messages hit their target more effectively.



You have current social advocates within your company whether you know it or not. Identifying them and leveraging them to recruit and guide your engagement strategy will help your program get off the ground more quickly.

Onboarding Your C-Suite



In order to ensure that company culture is conducive to employee engagement, ensure that leaders within the company are on board with the program before you start. It's of the utmost importance to first get C-level employees, leaders, and managers on board with social media because they can drastically affect the conduciveness of your efforts to acquire employee advocates. Even more so, their support can boost the employee advocacy program as a whole.

In order to get your C-level employees on board with employee engagement, you'll need to explain advocacy in terms that are pertinent to their position. For instance, CEOs aren't necessarily concerned with the finer details of engagement; rather, be concise in your explanation, and focus on the results. CEOs are focused on the results, and they entrust their management teams whom they've hired to get those results.

CEOs have the unique ability to turn the tides without directly participating in many company ongoings, and their perceptions can filter through the ranks and impact employees down the line as well.

Onboarding Your Employees



Defining engagement to your employees can be simply ineffective if your goal is to get employees engaged. It's important to relate to your employees exactly how they could be impacted by participating in your program. Show them the individual benefits they will experience. Thought leadership status and personal brand enhancement are just a few. It's important to also present how the company as a whole will benefit from their contributions. Share with them the marketing, sales, HR and other gains the company will experience from their participation.

In order to onboard your employees, you need to foster the growth of your company's view on employee participation in other areas. Allow self expression (within boundaries, of course), provide meaningful work, show your appreciation, include them in your marketing efforts, and provide consistent feedback. Building a highly-engaged workforce takes consistent effort and delegated time.

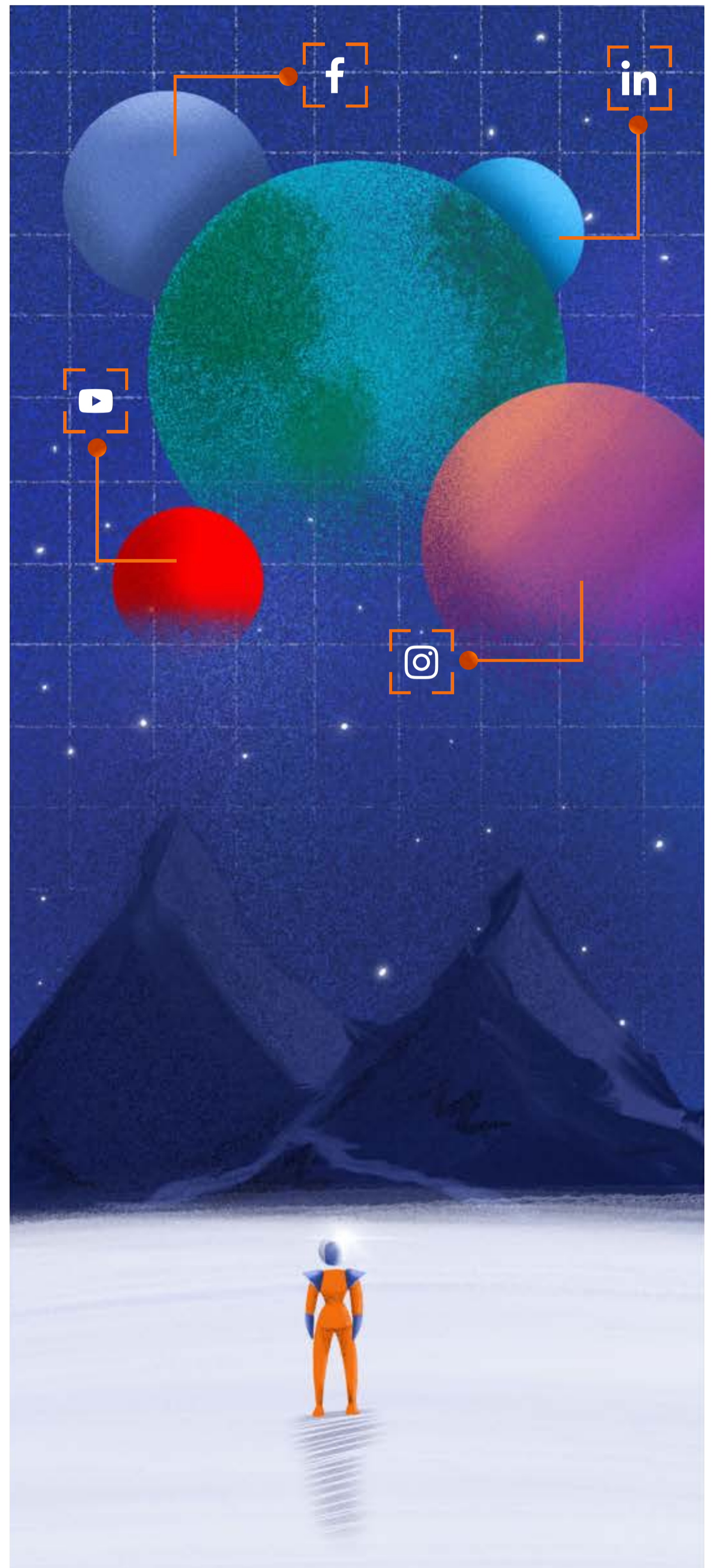
Motivate your employees to use Gaggles by fostering the development of advocates from engagements.

What Type of Content is Most Shareable?

An engaged workforce is more likely to share your content, but the efficacy of these efforts will pivot on your ability to create shareable content in the first place. Many times, employees value the networks they've created on social media and can find it difficult to share sales posts on a constant basis, knowing that they'll likely lose their hard-earned following. Make it easy for your employees to share posts by making your posts more shareable.

Utilize photos, post infographics, and choose from a wide variety of topic sources in order to make your employees actually want to share your posts. Company content is important but variety is even more important. Too many company and product oriented posts will drive away your advocates and their respective networks.

The most shareable content is content that is highly engaging.



Part of understanding shareable content is also understanding what content provides value on the given social network. For example, the charity work your company does would be great for Facebook. Specifications on a new product are more suited for LinkedIn or even Twitter. Be conscious of the types of connections your advocates have on the respective networks and craft your posts accordingly. On top of

that, be conscious of the different groups you have within your advocates. Employees in one business unit may not want the same content as employees in another. Segmenting your content among your different internal groups will further ensure that the right advocates and get the most relevant content to them and their networks. This, in turn, will lead to higher participation and longer engagement.

An example formation to test:

Lead Generation - Driving Traffic to Gated Assets

Have your employees share content that includes a link to a gated asset as if they wrote the post themselves.

Select key social media posts to have your employees engage with.

Have your employees engage with your paid efforts that include the gated asset.



AMPlify Virtual

SAVE MY SEAT

For other formation ideas to help grow your employee advocacy efforts, check out **AMPlify** Virtual, a training workshop dedicated to creating, scaling, and growing an employee advocacy program.

Getting Started Checklist

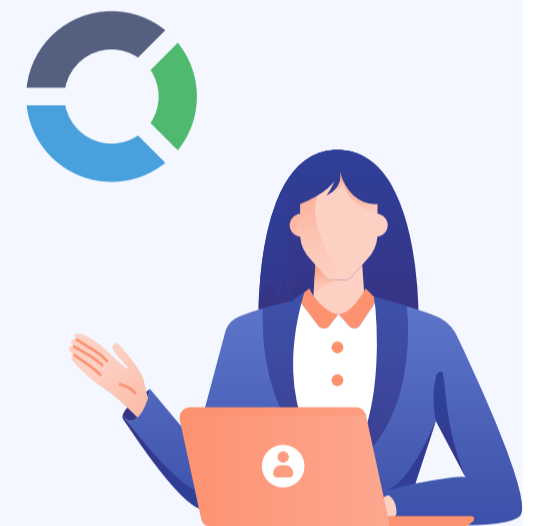
Getting your employee advocacy program started on the right track is important for early success. Many of your employees want to help your organization, but don't know how. Some are willing, but are worried they might say the wrong thing, while others already are mentioning your brand on social media. Properly

training your employees and strategically sharing content are incredibly important to your program's success.

Follow this checklist in order to craft an effective employee advocacy campaign:

✓ **Develop goals and key performance indicators (KPIs).**

Breakdown your goals for the program as well as KPIs, as these are what will help focus your efforts and drive your successes. They'll also be useful when analyzing and tracking your advocates and their interactions on social media.



✓ **Train your advocates.**

Hold a training session to ensure that everyone is aware of your social media policies, the 'do's and don'ts', and the goals of your employee advocacy program. But most importantly, you need to help employees optimize their social media accounts while training them on how to be part of your program. Make sure they understand how to use LinkedIn, how to optimize their profile, how to connect with the right people and why it's important, etc. You want to foster a sense of freedom on social media (while operating within company policy), as this helps your advocates come across as more personable and authentic.



✓ **Segment content across your program.**

You shouldn't expect everyone in your organization to share the same content. For example, people who work in human resources are more likely to post about job openings, job safety, development, and other trends relevant to their area of expertise. This is why you should segment your content to people who are most likely to share that content and messaging. Your employee advocates are more likely to share content relevant to them, and they'll stay interested in your program.

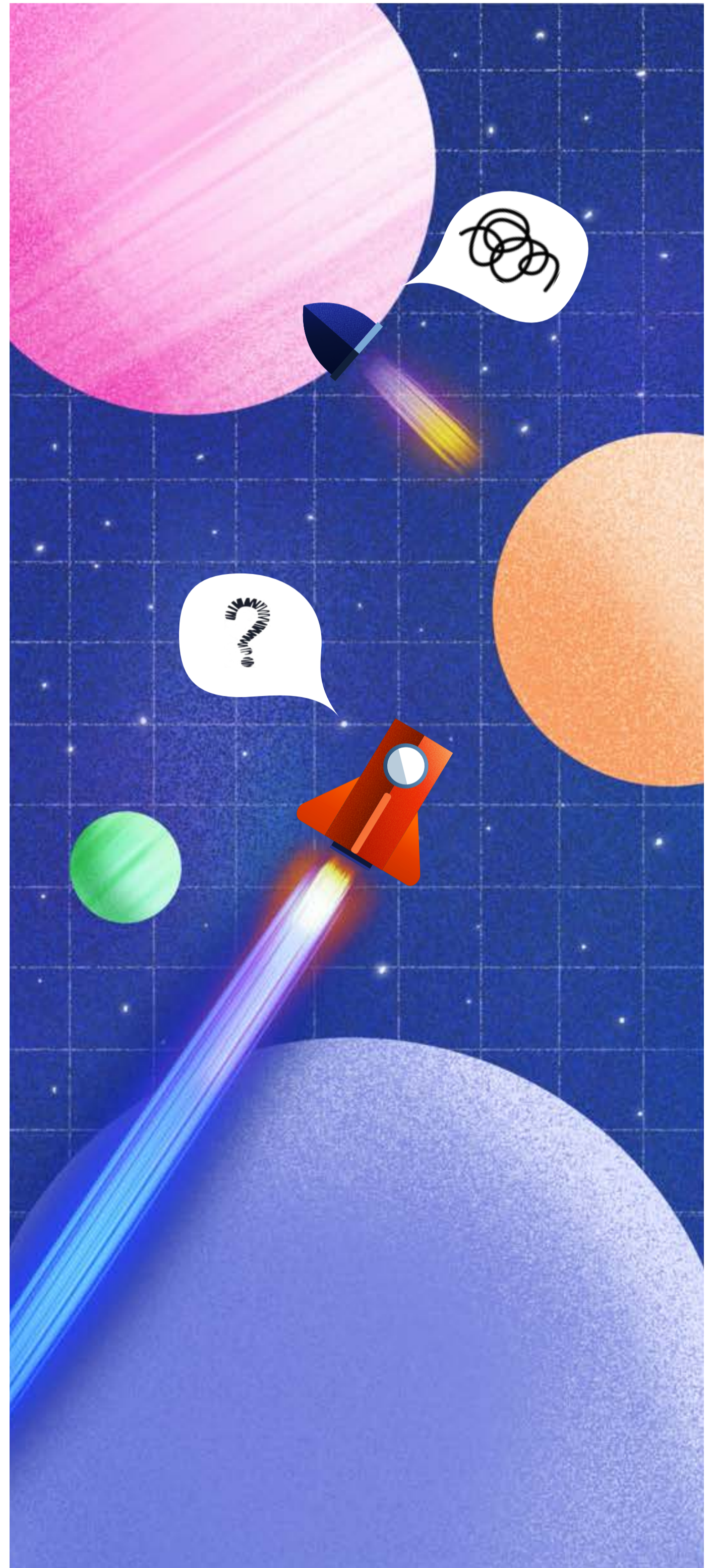


What to Expect: Roadblocks, Re-engagement, and Remedies

As with anything, there's likely to be some stumbles along the route to success. One of the biggest roadblocks to advocacy and engagement is the fact that, over time, employees are likely to disengage, especially if the company isn't overly involved with the process after the initial setup.

As a proactive measure, hold ongoing classes for your advocates to answer questions and keep them up-to-date on company policies as well as information pertinent to social media. This ensures that they're constantly supported by the company during their time as an advocate.

If you're finding that employees are beginning to disengage from the process, then you'll need to take action immediately to address and remedy the situation. Refresher courses are a great time to review advocacy goals for each employee, but it's also a time where the company can re-establish the relationship with said employee. Because advocacy is fueled by engagement, you'll want to address the core motivators at hand. Review what it takes to onboard your employees, and try to pinpoint where the disconnect may be forming. In this manner, your company can address the wedge and remove it from the process.



CASE STUDY

The Predictive Index Turns Arounds Social Media KPIs with GaggleAMP

Talent optimization platform, The Predictive Index, faced the challenge of getting employees to share content on social media, but launching into a new marketing category, they knew they needed to set the wheels in motion, and fast.

The Predictive Index is a tech company of 160 employees focused on human resources and talent optimization. The company struggled to get employees

involved in its social media and content marketing initiatives, until it utilized GaggleAMP to suggest to employees what to promote and how to promote it.

Increased Reach
3 Million

Increased Interactions
7X

Employee Participation
55% in just 10 months



Learn more about how employee buy-in aided in the success at The Predictive Index.

[GO TO CASE STUDY](#)



Employee Advocacy: An Essential Piece to the Digital Marketing Puzzle



Our customers at GaggleAMP typically come to us with a multitude of problems, but they all usually boil down to one thing, engagement. They are looking to more deeply engage their workforce and part of this includes getting them to participate in the marketing activities of the company. The solution is to onboard your CEOs

and employees, show them the value and promote engagement in the ranks. Developed in conjunction with an employee advocacy program, your company can reap the rewards of an effective digital marketing engagement strategy.

Your employee advocates are pivotal in the success of your content marketing strategy, and their success can greatly impact the success of your company as a whole.



AMPLify Virtual

Register today for **AMPLify** Virtual Training to deep dive how to align your organization's goals and objectives to your employee advocacy program.

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