



## How Social Media is Used to Build the Employer Brand

*HRO Today* Flash Reports are a series of ongoing research initiatives that address today's topics of interest in the HR community. *HRO Today* Flash Reports are focused briefs that can be used to support business decisions and further discussion among industry practitioners and thought leaders. This report addresses the North American market.

This report examines the ways organizations are using social media to build their employer brands. The importance and perceptions of the effectiveness of social media in building the brand is examined, along with outlining the tools used to promote the brand.

This study was sponsored by **Allegis Global Solutions**.

## Methodology

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On April 16th, 2019, an email invitation was sent to subscribers of *HRO Today* Magazine and *HRO Today* newsletters to take part in an online study. Study respondents were manager level or above within their Human Resource departments. The total number of usable surveys was 70, and respondents were primarily from North America. The study closed on May 13, 2019.

Because of the size and diversity of the region, and small sample size, these results should be viewed as directional.

Respondents were screened as to their familiarity and involvement with their company's employer brand, and they were not aware of Allegis Global Solutions' sponsorship of this study.

## Conclusions

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An employer brand represents who an organization is and what they stand for. It sets the stage for interactions and expectations that current and future employees will have with the organization regarding what it's like to work there. It provides a look into a company's culture and values, and reinforces those ideals with current employees. For many companies, social media is a key element in building the employer brand.

The belief in the importance of social media in employer brand strategy is nearly universal, with 96 percent of study respondents indicating they felt it was important. But despite the overwhelming belief that social media is a vital element of employer branding strategy, there are doubts as to its effectiveness. Barely over one-half (54 percent) indicated it was effective. Many things can impact the effectiveness of an organization's social media recruitment effort. Staff expertise, time devoted to it, budget and corporate reputation can all impact social media effectiveness in building an employer brand. But satisfaction with the effectiveness of social media in employer brand could also have been negatively impacted by not knowing how to measure it. One way to measure it is to monitor mentions and interactions on social media channels.

Study participants were asked to indicate their goals for social media as it pertained to building their employer brand. Nearly every respondent (92 percent) indicated that expanding the company's reputation as a place to work was a goal of their organization. A key component of reputation is company culture, and promoting it was a goal of 83 percent of respondents.

Eight-in-ten (80 percent) use current employees when promoting their employer brand via social media. Pictures and videos of employees bring credibility to the employer brand. Rewards and recognition for current employees are also frequently used. Social media is a way to share who

won those awards and what was accomplished. Further, it gives employees being showcased something to discuss when being featured in communications.

Despite the value social media can bring to promoting an employer brand, most companies are not using it optimally, leaving most of its potential untapped. Less than one-quarter (24 percent) are very much engaged in active listening around their employer brand, while just over one-quarter (28 percent) use it to maintain two-way conversations. The lack of two-way communications impairs a company's ability to engage the audience, and deepen the layer of trust and credibility that social media has over conventional advertising.





# Importance of Social Media in Employer Branding Strategy

## *How important is social media to your company's employer branding strategy?*

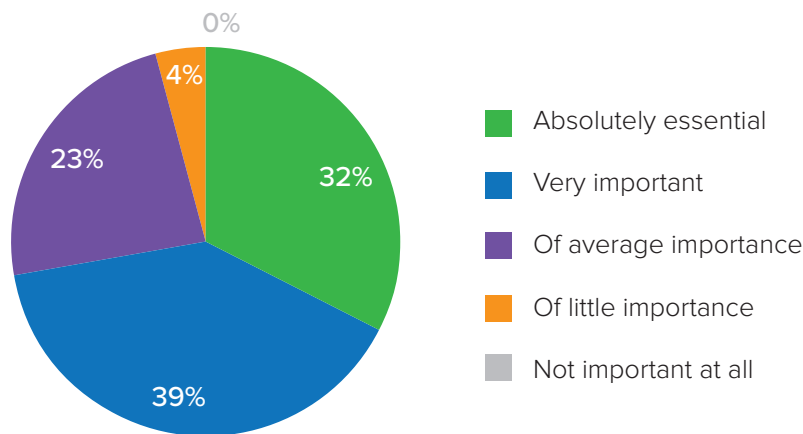
Study participants were asked how important social media was to them in their employer brand strategy.

The belief in the importance of social media on employer brand strategy is nearly universal, with 96 percent of study respondents indicating they felt it was important. Even more, nearly three-quarters (71 percent) of all respondents indicated it was an essential or very important part of their company's employer brand strategy, resulting in an average score of 4.0 on a 5-point scale.

Social media plays an essential role in employer branding because it paints an authentic and compelling picture of life inside a company.

But beyond that role, employer branding through social media helps companies increase the number of quality applicants they receive, reduce cost per recruitment, and differentiate themselves from competitors. As social media keeps growing in importance, with the new generation workforce using it for all kinds of communication, social media is becoming the number one tool to attract, recruit and retain talent.<sup>1</sup>

## Importance of Social Media on Employer Branding Strategy



## Effectiveness of Use of Social Media for Building Employer Brand

### *How effective is your use of social media for building your employer brand?*

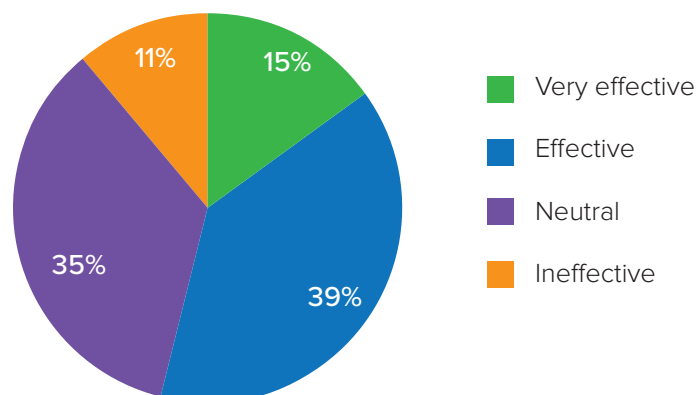
Respondents were asked to rate the effectiveness of social media for building their employer brand. Just over one-half (54 percent) indicated it was either effective or very effective, resulting in a mediocre average score of 3.6 out of 5.0.

Despite the overwhelming belief that social media is a vital element of employer branding strategy, conviction as to its effectiveness is lacking.

Many things can impact the effectiveness of an organization's social media recruitment effort. Staff expertise, time devoted to it, budget and corporate reputation are all internal factors.

Another reason why many do not rate the effectiveness of social media for building their employer brand higher is because they don't know how to measure it. One effective way to measure employer brand awareness is to monitor mentions and interactions through social media channels. There are many social media listening tools that can be used to accomplish that. This not only helps gauge brand awareness, but uses sentiment analysis to understand how people feel about an employee. These tools can help track and manage online conversations relevant to a brand, so the information comes to them, rather than forcing an employer to seek it out.<sup>2</sup>

### Effectiveness of Use of Social Media for Building Employer Brand





## Goals in Using Social Media to Build Employer Brand

*What are your goals in using social media to build your employer brand? Please select all that apply.*

Study participants were asked to indicate their goals for social media as it pertains to building their employer brand. Nearly every respondent (92 percent) indicated that expanding the company’s reputation as a place to work was a goal of their organization.

Closely related to expanding a company’s reputation is promoting the company culture, cited by 83 percent. A company culture is the character and personality of an organization. It’s the environment for employees. This is another broad-based objective that addresses the way organizations promote how they want to position their work environment to potential candidates.

The next two most used goals are more tactical in nature. Promoting job openings to active candidates was selected by 79 percent while recruiting passive candidates closely followed at 75 percent. The objective of both of these goals is directly attracting new candidates to the organization.

The interest in passive candidates is understandable given how the US unemployment has remained below 4 percent since March of 2018. A passive candidate is one that is employed, but not actively looking for a new opportunity, and about 70 percent of candidates meet this criterion.<sup>3</sup>

Goals Using Social Media to Build Employer Brand	Total %
Expand company’s reputation as a place to work	92%
Promote company culture	83%
Promote job openings to active candidates	79%
Recruit passive candidates	75%
Build your companies talent pool	62%
Share great content	60%
Build trust and credibility	54%
Encourage employee referrals	50%
Reduce cost of recruiting efforts	46%
Increase workforce engagement	40%
Reduce employee turnover	23%



## Using Social Media to Showcase the Employer Brand

*Which of the following do you use social media to showcase when promoting your employer brand?*

Study participants were asked to indicate what they used to showcase their employer brand when promoting on social media.

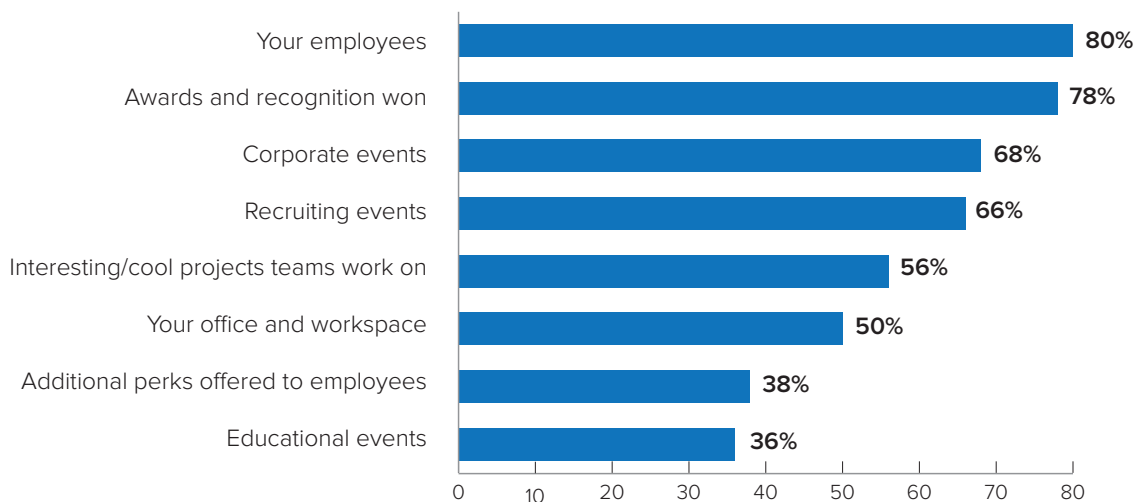
Eight-in-ten (80 percent) use current employees when promoting their employer brand via social media. A recent article in Forbes supports this finding. Social media isn't just another job listing platform. Enlisting one's staff means not just sharing the social media post, but more importantly, featuring and sharing the experiences of the advocates of the organization. People want to work someplace that other people love. Testimonials become a calling card instead of basic job listings.<sup>4</sup>

One of the ways an organization can credibly show how much it appreciates its employees is through awards and recognition. Social media is a way to share who won those awards and what was accomplished. Further, they give employees being showcased an area to focus upon.

Corporate events, such as seminars, conferences, retreats, company milestones and employee appreciation are important to communicate when showcasing company culture, and over two-thirds (68 percent) use social media to promote these events.

Two-thirds (66 percent) use social media to promote recruiting events. These events are a long-standing key recruiting tactic. Getting candidates, particularly in colleges and universities, coming to recruiting events can lead to a greater selection of qualified candidates.

### Using Social Media to Showcase the Employer Brand



# Tools Used to Promote Employer Brand through Social Media

## *Which tools do you use to promote your employer brand through social media?*

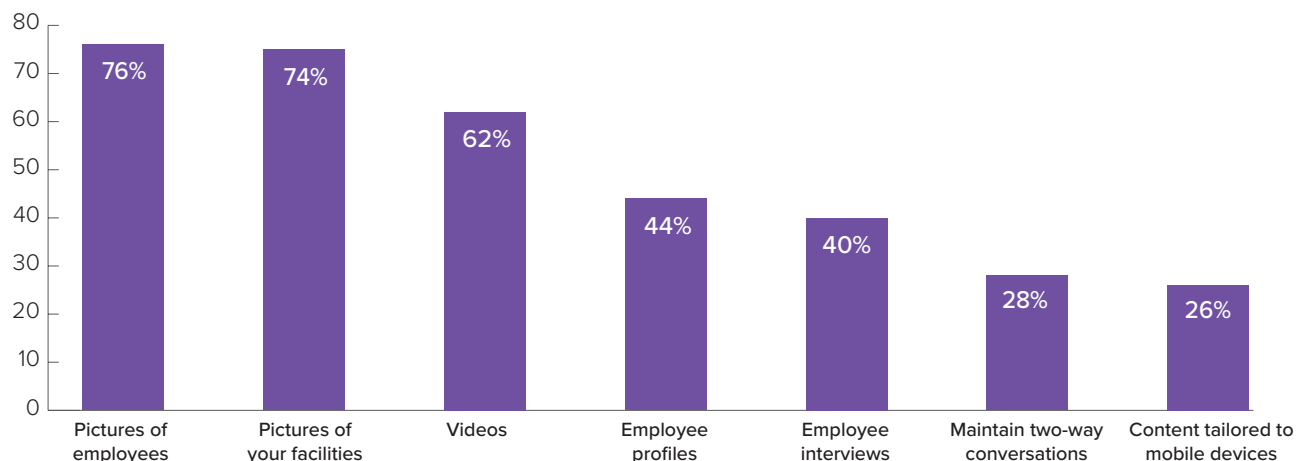
Respondents selected the tools they used to promote their employer brand through social media. Over three-quarters (76 percent) use pictures of employees. Using one’s employees as brand ambassadors for the company is widely done, and as previously indicated, the most commonly used way to showcase an employer brand. The best way to showcase employees is putting a face to the words and adding another layer of believability and personal connection through the use of employee pictures. Pictures can add integrity to employee branding claims and support diversity objectives.

Nearly as common a tool to use as images of employees is pictures of the business facilities. Seeing the immediate and surrounding working environment speaks to the commitment management makes to its employees. The office and its location are part of the image of the organization. The physical surroundings can convey professionalism, success, and potentially corporate responsibility practices.

Nearly two-thirds use videos as a tool to promote the employer brand. While pictures of employees and facilities are more commonly used, a video can bring the claims being made to life, and can be easily seen on desktop and mobile devices. They bring another dimension to the brand, injecting more life and being more memorable than static content can do alone.

One overlooked tool to promote the employer brand is maintaining two-way conversations with prospects. In fact, only about one-quarter (28 percent) take advantage of this social media capability. Too often, social media is used as a way to advertise without truly engaging the user. Answering questions, reacting promptly to posts, and exchanging information is what communicating through social media is all about.

## Tools Used to Promote Employer Brand through Social Media





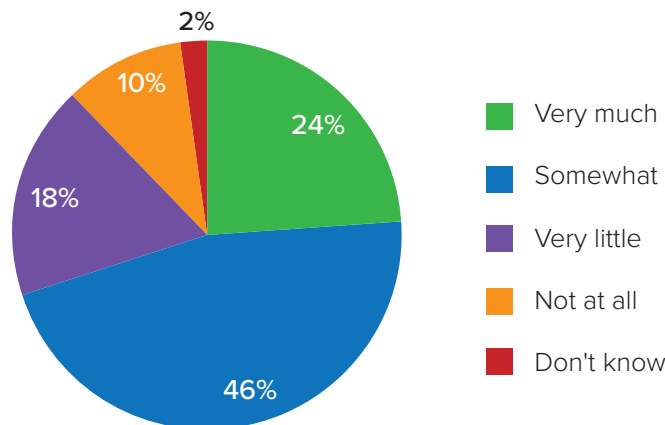
## Extent of Active Listening to Social Chatter around the Employer Brand

*Lastly, how much do you actively listen to the social chatter around the employer brand in order to understand and track what’s being said?*

Respondents were asked if they actively listened to the social chatter around the employer brand in order to understand and track what’s being said. Active listening is the first step towards establishing two-way communication, and less than one-quarter (24 percent) indicated they do this very much. Too often social media is only used as a soapbox rather than promoting two-way communication.

And to quote an only slightly dated pop culture reference “If you don’t like what’s being said, change the conversation.” Only by active listening can one decide if you like what’s being said, and redirect the conversation to something that supports the employer brand position your organization is hoping to establish. Further, while few were actively engaged in listening to social chatter, it’s likely that far fewer actually track what’s being said in any meaningful matter. Tracking is a key component of audience research, leading to valuable insights about candidates and employees.

### Extent of Active Listening to Social Chatter around the Employer Brand



## Final Thoughts

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Social Media's use in building the employer brand is nearly universal. It acts as a brand's digital "first impression." It's a two-way communication platform that allows for more authentic and engaging experiences.<sup>5</sup> But despite its acceptance in the communications mix, its effectiveness is still questioned by many. Only by devoting internal and external resources and establishing metrics to accurately gauge its impact can its effectiveness be ascertained. Further, actively listening and fully embracing the two-way communication capabilities of social media is the only way to take advantage of all the media can do to build an employer brand.

## SOURCES

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## About HRO Today

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## About Allegis Group

Our passion for talent is the driving force behind everything we do. We live to match exceptional organizations with outstanding people. By creating a culture devoted to great talent, we deliver client-focused solutions that make a difference for your business.

We deliver scalable, flexible and customized solutions, shaped around your unique business requirements and culture. We draw upon decades of industry expertise and market insight to design strategies that work and develop innovative tools, products and processes that deliver the results you seek.

Our IGNITE Marketing & Brand team focuses on developing candidate-aligned recruitment marketing solutions that enhance your employer brand. We offer a flexible combination of recruitment marketing services to fit your exact needs and work with your corporate marketing and brand teams as needed to ensure brand compliance and seamless integration.