



Employees Rising:

Seizing the Opportunity
in Employee Activism



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01

INTRODUCTION

Social activists. Environmental activists. Consumer activists. Activist shareholders. Today, there is no shortage of activists affecting business operations in some way. These stand-up-for-what-is-right campaigners may either be an employer's best advocates or its worst opponents. In either case, they are change agents.

What about employee activists? Are employee activists the next wave that leaders need to be ready for? Who is asking this question?

Management, human resources and communications departments of Fortune 500 companies are rightfully laser-focused on employee satisfaction and engagement. In fact, global research conducted by Weber Shandwick and Spencer Stuart among chief communications officers found that employee satisfaction as a critical metric of communications effectiveness rose dramatically during a five-year span (from 61% in 2007 to 79% in 2012).

Weber Shandwick strongly believes that employee engagement is central to company success and is the underlying foundation for high-performing companies. Yet we also believe that to prepare for the future workforce, employers will need to build upon engagement and acknowledge and embrace employee activism. Employee activists are different — they make their engagement visible, defend their employers from criticism and act as active advocates, online and off. Many employee activists already exist today. Sometimes their activism is stimulated by the employer, but, more often than not, it rises organically out of self-motivation and determination. Employers can't afford to miss the open window of opportunity to lean in and capitalize on this movement that will only increase in the years ahead.

In **Employees Rising: Seizing the Opportunity in Employee Activism**, Weber Shandwick explores the employee activist movement to help our clients and other organizations understand what it takes to catch the rising tide of employee activism.

"In today's environment where there is an alarming lack of trust in all institutions, employees are increasingly the key prism for brand credibility and trust. Engaging them can provide companies the best way to humanize and unify their enterprise voice — a strategic imperative in today's environment."

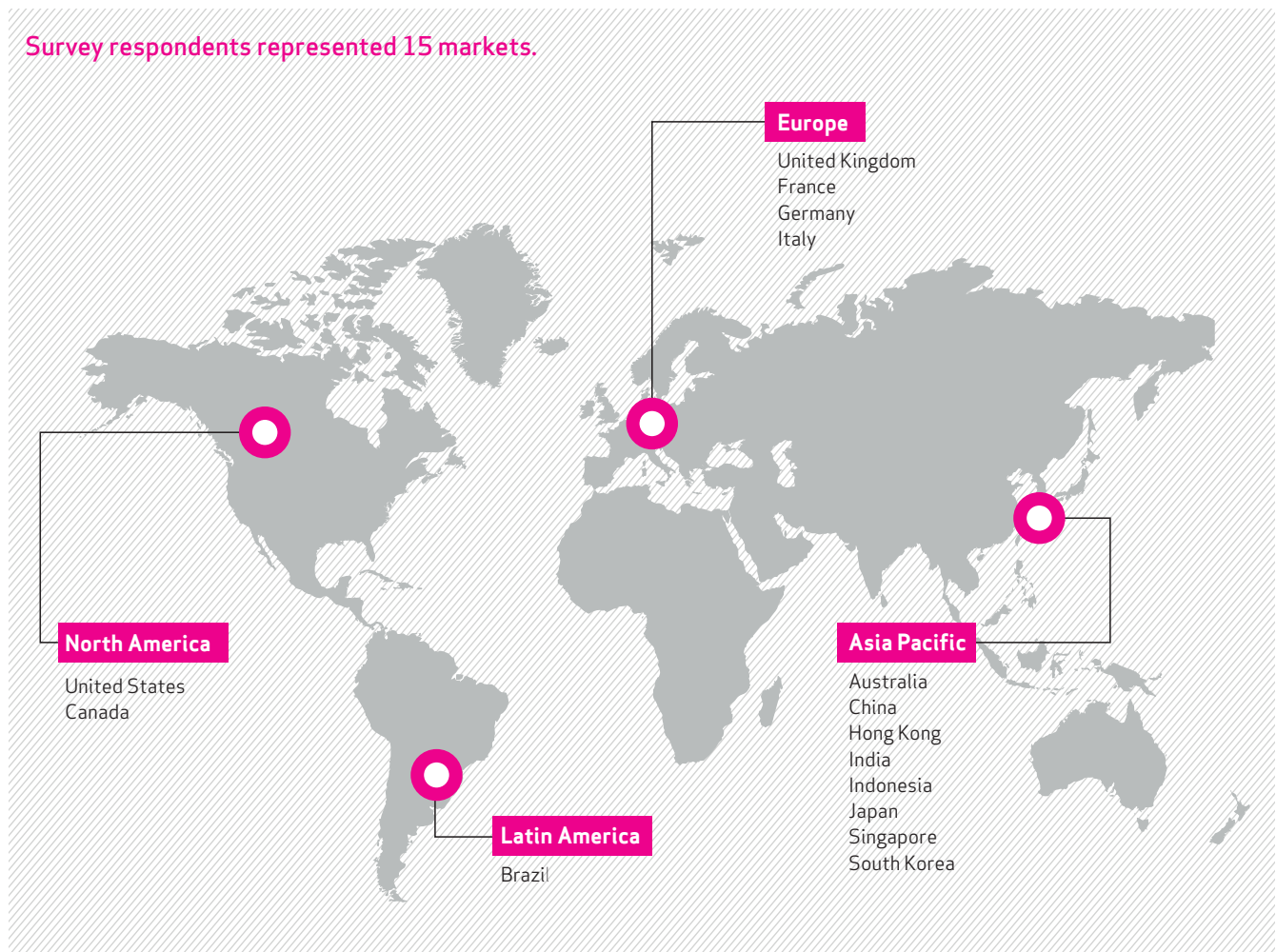
Micho Spring
Chair, Global Corporate Practice
Weber Shandwick



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HOW WE DID THE RESEARCH

Weber Shandwick, in partnership with KRC Research, conducted a global online survey of 2,300 employees. Respondents were between the ages of 18 and 65, worked 30 hours per week or more and were employed by an organization with over 500 employees.



Our survey included a mix of attitudinal and behavioral questions. Employee attitudes were measured on 5-point scales. Conclusions are based on the top scale point of “5” to capture the highest level of intensity of feelings toward and perceptions about employers. Activism was measured

by presenting lists of behaviors that respondents selected, and segmentation modeling identified distinct groups of employees based on these self-reported actions. The specific actions and process of classifying employees is discussed in greater detail later in this report.

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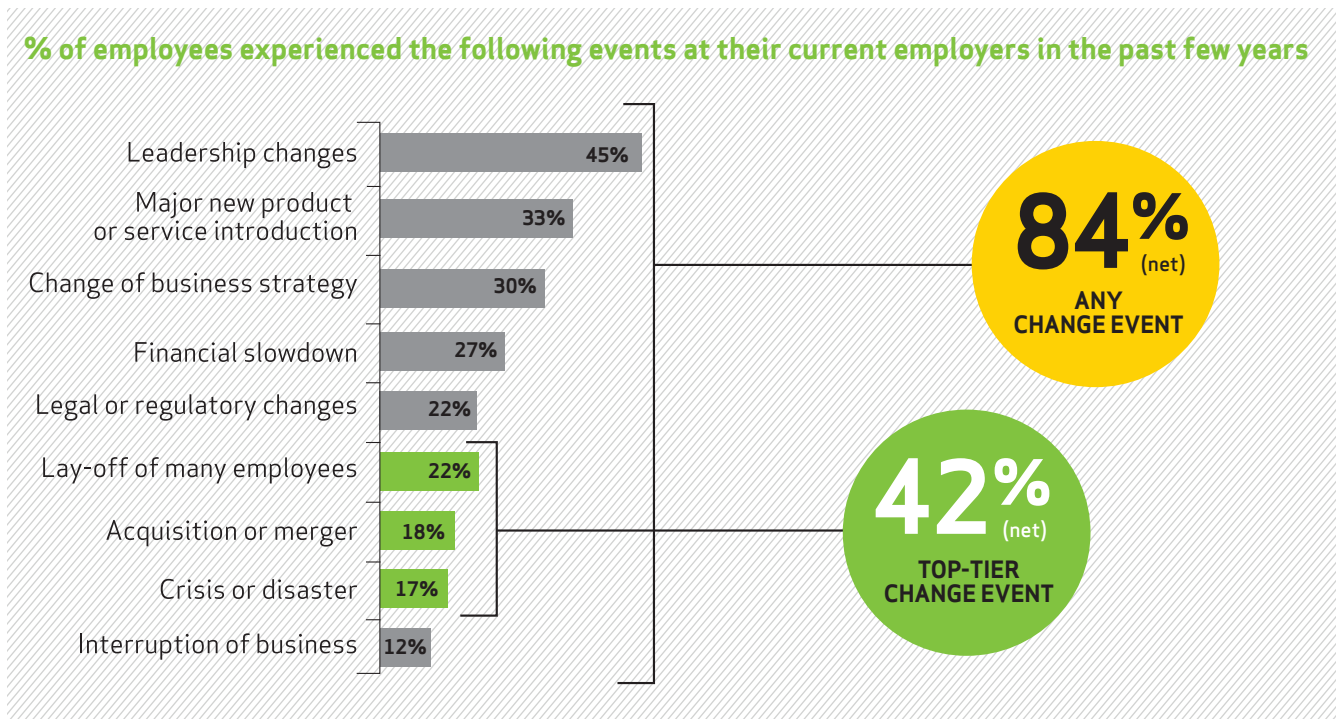
UNREST IN THE WORKFORCE

Before we delve into the new wave of employee activism, it is important to understand the challenges facing employees today.

Employees are in a state of upheaval.

More than eight in 10 (84%) have experienced some kind of employer change in the past few years — most typically a leadership change (45%). More than four in 10 (42%) report

undergoing a major event at work, such as a mass lay-off, merger or acquisition and/or crisis. That is a lot of flux for the workforce to handle.



Employees are on the defense.

Employers probably don't know it, but many employees are out there now defending the reputations of their organizations. Nearly six in 10 (56%) respondents surveyed have either defended their employer to family and friends or in a more public venue — such as on a website, blog, or in a

newspaper. These “first responders” are even more prevalent in organizations that experienced a top-tier change event (59%), indicating that employees are rising up to support organizations in time of need. It may also indicate that employees are strongly identifying with their employers.

Employees of a Fortune 500 agribusiness started their own blog in reaction to criticism about their company. They debuted the blog by saying, “If anyone should speak to [our company's] vision of the world, it's those of us who come to work here every day and collectively make this company what it is...We're hoping this blog will offer a more personal view of our company.”



03 UNREST IN THE WORKFORCE

Employers are not effectively communicating to employees.

The research revealed that only four in 10 employees can confidently describe to others what their employer does or what its goals are (42% and 37%, respectively). Fewer than three in 10 report that they are being communicated with, listened to and kept in the loop. Fewer than one in five (17%) highly rate communications from senior management. As expected, immediate supervisors are rated as better communicators than senior leadership but still not as highly as might be assumed.

“Listening and responding are leadership skills critical to driving employee engagement. Ultimately, companies that work hard at communicating and listening — from the mailroom to the boardroom — are the ones that win in the workplace and marketplace.”

Andy Polansky
CEO, Weber Shandwick

Employers are not effectively communicating to employees

% employees completely agree with the following statements

	Total % (rated 5 on 5-point scale)
I know enough to explain to others what my employer does	42
I understand my employer's goals	37
My manager / supervisor frequently communicates with me	29
My employer listens and responds well to customers	28
My manager / supervisor listens and responds well to me	26
My employer surveys employees every 1-2 years on how well it communicates with employees	26
My employer does a good job of keeping me informed	25
My employer communicates frequently with employees	24

% employees highly rate communications from...

Top leader	17
Senior leadership just below top leader	17
Department head	25
Immediate manager/ supervisor	31

These weak ratings are not a byproduct of too few communications — employees report that they receive, on average, 4.4 different types of communications from their employers. The general lack of effective employer-to-employee communications is surprising considering how technology has accelerated the proliferation of collaboration and communications tools available to most workforces.

“An engaged employee is a worker who cares about the future and success of his company and therefore is actively involved in what is going on, making a positive contribution.”

— Italian employee



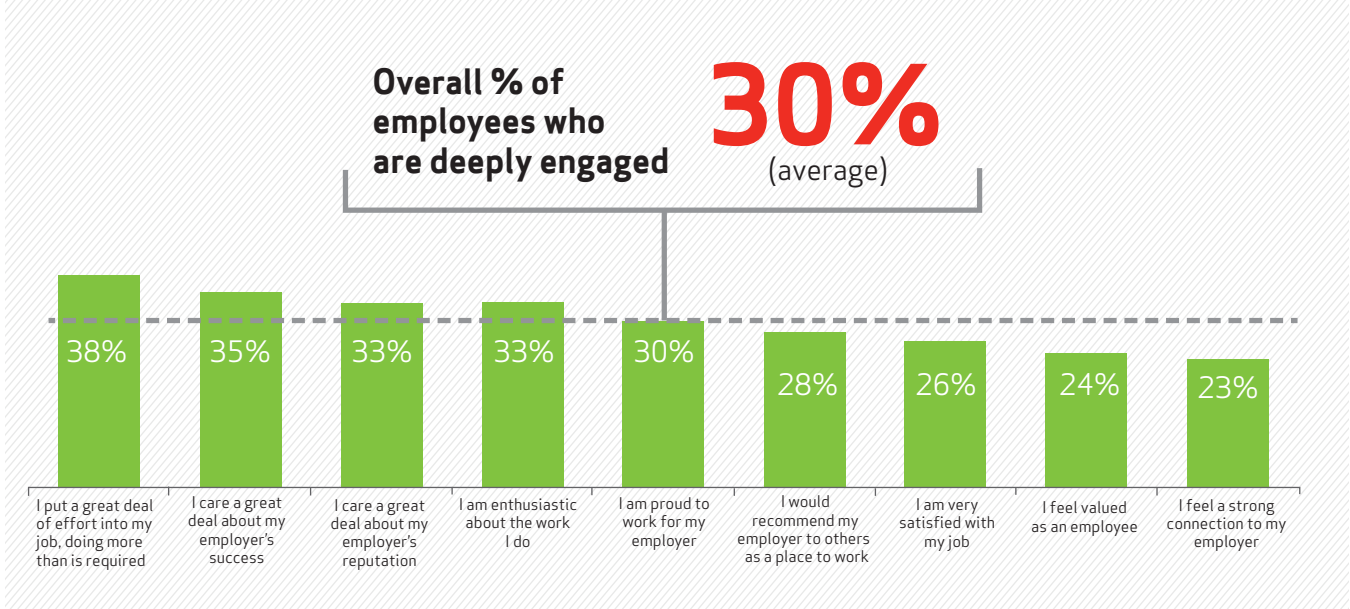
03 UNREST IN THE WORKFORCE

Only three in 10 employees are deeply engaged with their employers.

How could employers reasonably expect more engagement when the workforce is in upheaval and employees do not feel informed or listened to? This 3-in-10 engagement level the survey uncovered is comprised of nine factors, the highest rated of which is “I put a great deal of effort into my job, doing more than is required” (38%) on down to “I feel a strong connection to my employer” (23%).

Our analysis identified approximately one in five employees (21%) who feel strongly that they are putting more effort than is required into their job yet do not feel strongly that they are being valued by their employer. This perceptual gap between giving and receiving on the job is a recipe for resentment that impairs engagement.

Employee engagement benchmarks (% employees rated 5 on 5-point agreement scale)



While deep engagement — on the whole — is weak, the results show that the workforce is in fact multi-dimensional. As will be seen later in this report, some employee segments are highly engaged and go to great lengths to show it. Some are engaged and need assistance to show it. And some are

highly disengaged and, sadly, show it. That is why we believe that employers should take these findings seriously and look more deeply into their workforce to identify and cultivate groups of employees that can serve as activists for their brands and reputations.

“Someone who is fully involved in and enthusiastic about their work, and will act in a way that furthers their organization’s interest is what engagement means to me.”

— Canadian employee



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THE BIG BANG: SOCIAL MEDIA'S IGNITION OF EMPLOYEE ACTIVISM

As business leaders know, the impact of social media on an employer's reputation is now an everyday reality.

What some employers don't realize is how critical social media is to employee engagement and how it fuels employee activism. Employees have multiple social platforms on which they can air their likes and dislikes of their jobs, bosses and organizations. While many employers are fearful that their employees will destroy their reputations with one easy click of a social media "share" button, the fact is that we now live in an always-connected-online world that is not going to reverse course.

How leaders are using digital communications and modeling that use internally is the next frontier for organizational change.

According to LinkedIn research, 61% of LinkedIn members who follow your organization are willing to be your brand ambassadors and share your Employee Value Proposition with their networks.

Here are some eye-opening statistics from our research about employees:

- 88%** use at least one social media site for personal use
- 50%** post messages, pictures or videos in social media about employer often or from time-to-time
- 39%** have shared praise or positive comments online about employer
- 33%** post messages, pictures or videos about employer in social media often or from time-to-time **without any encouragement from employer**
- 16%** have shared criticism or negative comments online about employer
- 14%** have posted something about employer in social media **that they wish they hadn't**



Employees are sharing socially. For many, the divide between work and personal lives barely exists. For employers, the opportunity and challenge is to embrace this new reality and understand what drives employees to be positive activists. While it is not feasible for every company or every sector

to embrace social media as an employee activist enabler, all employers need to be prepared to rally their employee activists and strive to have their supporters outnumber their detractors.

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THE EMPLOYEE ACTIVIST IS NOW AMONGST US

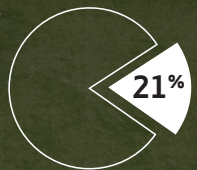
Using segmentation modeling, all respondents were sorted by their reported actions toward their employers — both supporting and detracting actions — to develop deeper, more descriptive and more targetable profiles of the workforce.

Employees were asked if they had ever done any of the following:

1. Worn clothing or other accessories outside of work with employer's name or symbol
2. Done volunteer work for a cause employer supports
3. Recommended employer to others as a place to work
4. Encouraged others to buy company's products or services
5. Voted for employer in a poll or contest
6. Made positive comments about employer where others could see or read them
7. Made positive comments about employer to friends or family
8. Defended employer to family and friends
9. Defended employer where others could see or read it
10. Discouraged others from considering employer as a place to work
11. Discouraged others from buying company's products or services
12. Made negative comments about employer where others could see or read them
13. Made negative comments about employer to friends or family



This analysis uncovered a sizeable segment of employees — **21%, employee activists** — who are all taking positive actions (#1-#9 above) and nearly no negative actions. For a workforce of 5,000, this means that approximately 1,000 employees are enthusiastically letting others know they stand behind their employer.



“As employee activists gain numbers and strength, organizations need to be prepared to facilitate the activism of these employees. Internal communications needs to move beyond being company news briefs and alerts to being more content-rich. Company storytelling is not just for external media anymore, it’s a way of ensuring that employees are informed and have something meaningful to say about their employers.”

Kate Bullinger

Co-Lead, Global Employee Engagement & Change Management
Weber Shandwick

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WHAT DRIVES EMPLOYEE ACTIVISM?

Our survey also asked respondents to rate their employers on a series of nearly 30 attitudinal statements covering a wide range of organizational qualities from leadership to internal communications to HR (Human Resources) to CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility). Regression analysis determined how much each statement was correlated with the propensity for engagement and activism.

Significantly, we learned that leadership is most important for influencing employee activism, but not to the exclusion of other organizational activities and characteristics. What this means is that leadership plays a critical role in driving employee support, from making the company an employer of choice to building a reputation of trustworthiness and demonstrating that it listens and responds to employees.

By modeling responsiveness, leaders show employees that they value their ideas and intangibles such as reputation and culture. Internal communications, fair treatment of all employees regardless of race, gender, age, sexual orientation or cultural differences, and community responsibility are also not to be overlooked in terms of deepening employee activism.

Employee Activism Driver	Top Components of Activism Score* (individual score in parentheses)	Activism Impact Score
 Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer values employee ideas and opinions (82) • Leadership makes it a good place to work (80) • Employer has a very good reputation (78) • Leadership is trustworthy (78) • Leadership listens and responds well to employees (76) 	75
 Internal Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer does a good job of keeping employees informed (81) • Employer communicates frequently with employees (77) 	70
 HR/Employee Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees have many opportunities to grow and learn (83) • Employer provides training and resources needed to do the job well (77) 	70
 Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees are treated fairly regardless of their differences (69) • Employer plays an active role in the community (68) • Employer works to protect and improve the environment (68) 	67

*These are the top drivers of activism out of 29 items presented to respondents. The Activism Impact Score is the average of all the components in a set of multiple statements about each driver. Only the components that scored above the driver's average are listed in this table. For each driver, there are many other components, with lower scores, that comprise the average score.

In comparing employee perceptions about each of these drivers in our survey, we find that employers severely underperform. That means that employers have a lot of work to do to improve perceptions if they are to develop additional

activists and fully maximize the activism of current activists. We address these issues later in the report as we identify triggers of employee activism based on targeted employee activist segments.

06 WHAT DRIVES EMPLOYEE ACTIVISM

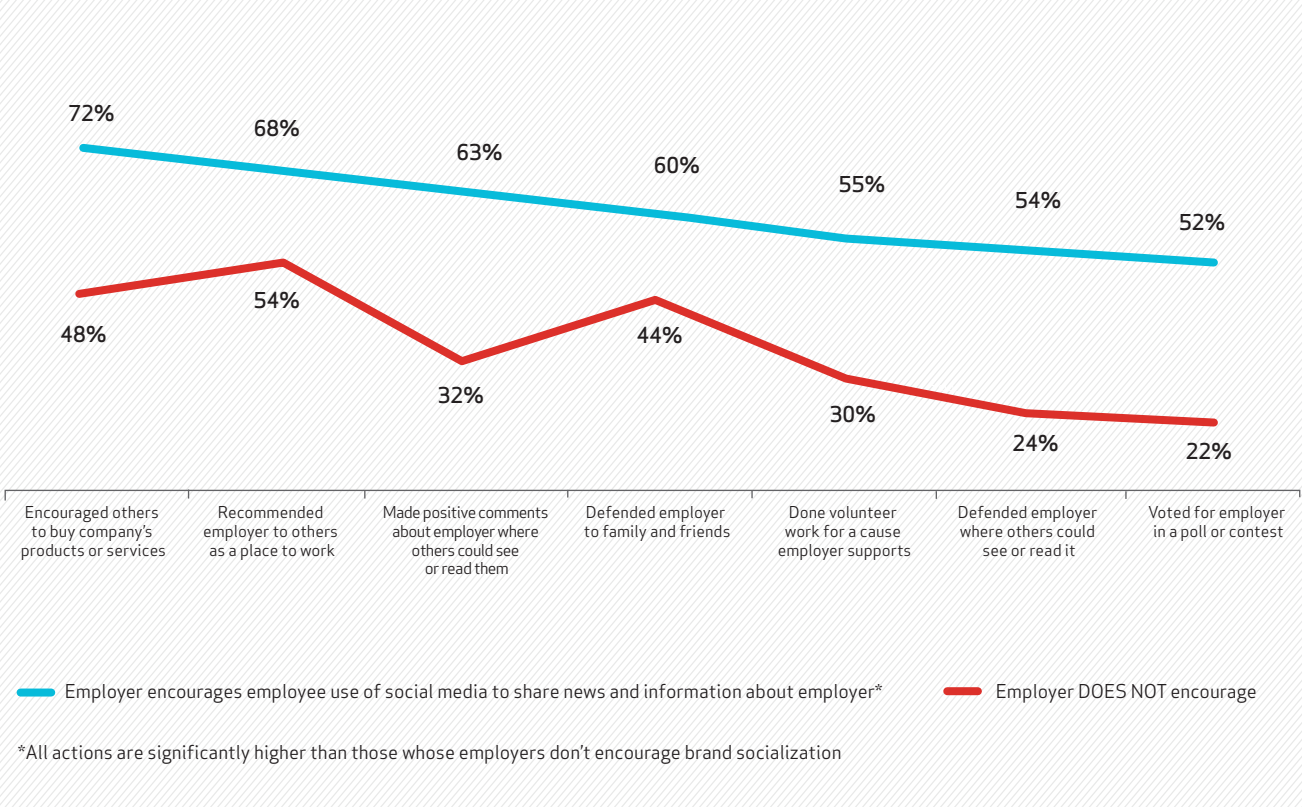
Although social media is not included in the driver analysis, its force can't be ignored. Our survey found that one-third of employers — 33% — encourage their employees to use social media to share news and information about the organization. This sounds risky, but this social encouragement has an outsized impact on employer advocacy among employees. For example, employees with socially-encouraging employers are significantly more likely to help boost sales than employees whose employers aren't socially encouraging (72% vs. 48%, respectively).

“An engaged employee is an active member of the workforce that is part of the team. Knows the business and the values and spreads a positive message. On the look-out for new and innovative ways to do business.”

— Australian employee



Actions employees have ever taken for current employer (% employees who have taken these actions)



“Our research proves that leadership has a catalytic impact on employee engagement and willingness to be an ardent employer supporter. In the absence of trust in leadership, and credible and relevant communications from leadership, organizations run the risk of having more detractors than activists.”

Renee Austin
Co-Lead, Global Employee Engagement & Change Management
Weber Shandwick

06 WHAT DRIVES EMPLOYEE ACTIVISM

How do these employers encourage their employees to be social stewards?

At a very basic level, they provide the tools and content to enable sharing, but a wide variety of tactics requiring modest investment are also used.



How does your employer encourage employees to use social media to share news and information about your work or your employer?

Provide readily accessible tools for employees to use in social media (55%)

Provide messages about the employer for employees to use in social media (50%)

Provide easy-to-understand guidelines to employees for using social media (42%)

Ask employees to stay alert to social media postings about the employer (39%)

Provide training for how to use social media properly (37%)

Provide access to social media at work (35%)

Provide updates about changes in social media so that employees can stay current on the latest tools and uses (35%)

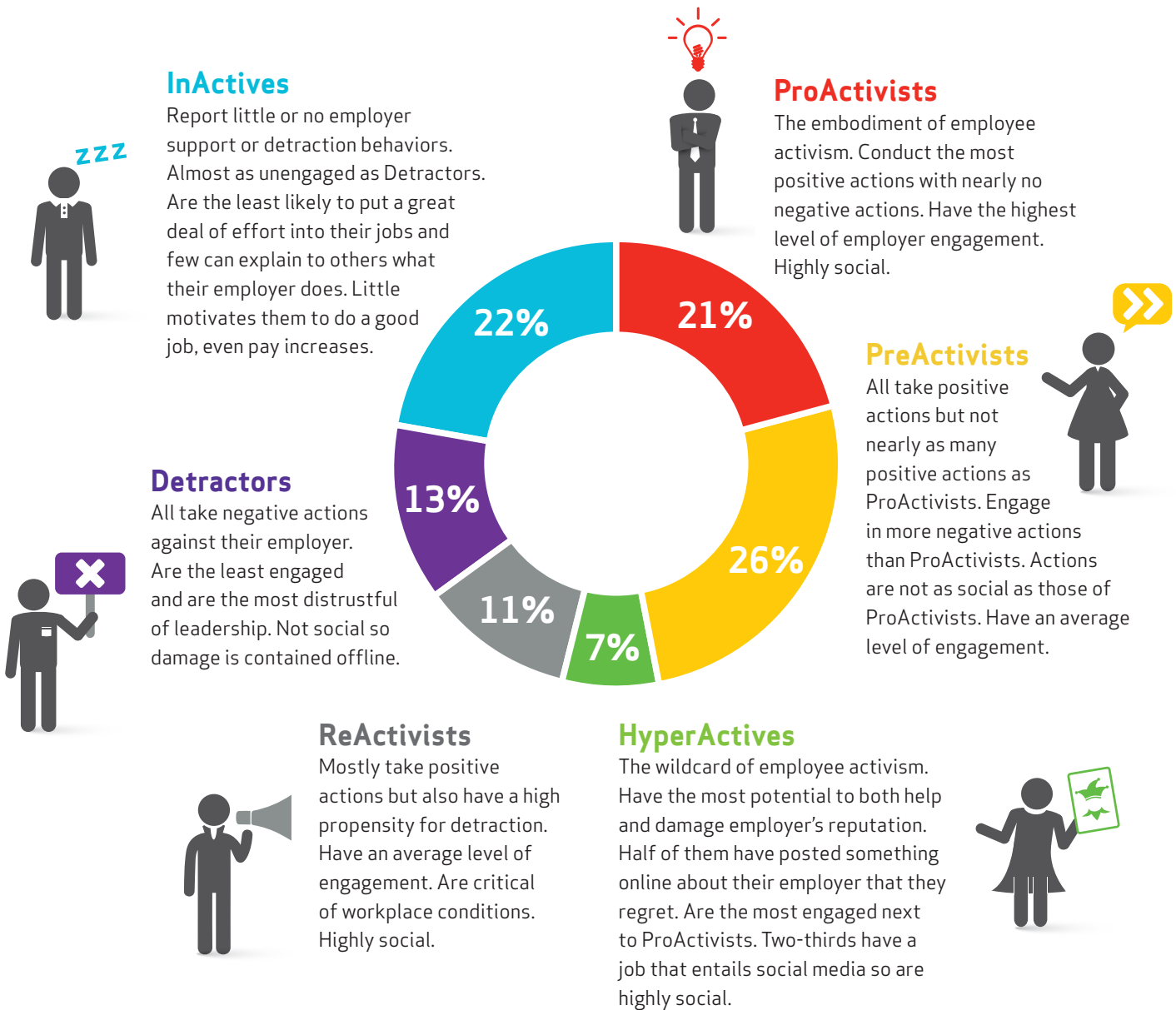
Provide employees with one or more social media accounts to use (13%)

VoiceStorm by Dynamic Signal is a social advocacy platform that gives employees access to sharable messages and content in a convenient and brand-safe environment through a social media hub. Employees are encouraged to engage with this platform by earning points that they can redeem for rewards and employers are reassured that the content meets corporate compliancy guidelines.

Zappos encourages employees to include company information and opinions on their Facebook, Twitter and personal blogs in addition to their LinkedIn profile. The company even has a Twitter aggregate of all employee twitter feeds. This serves as an excellent word-of-mouth platform for marketing as well as recruitment.

THE WORKFORCE ACTIVISM SPECTRUM

Our segmentation model identified six distinct segments of employees, including the 21% segment noted earlier who we call ProActivists because of their high engagement and activist profile.



07 THE WORKFORCE ACTIVISM SPECTRUM

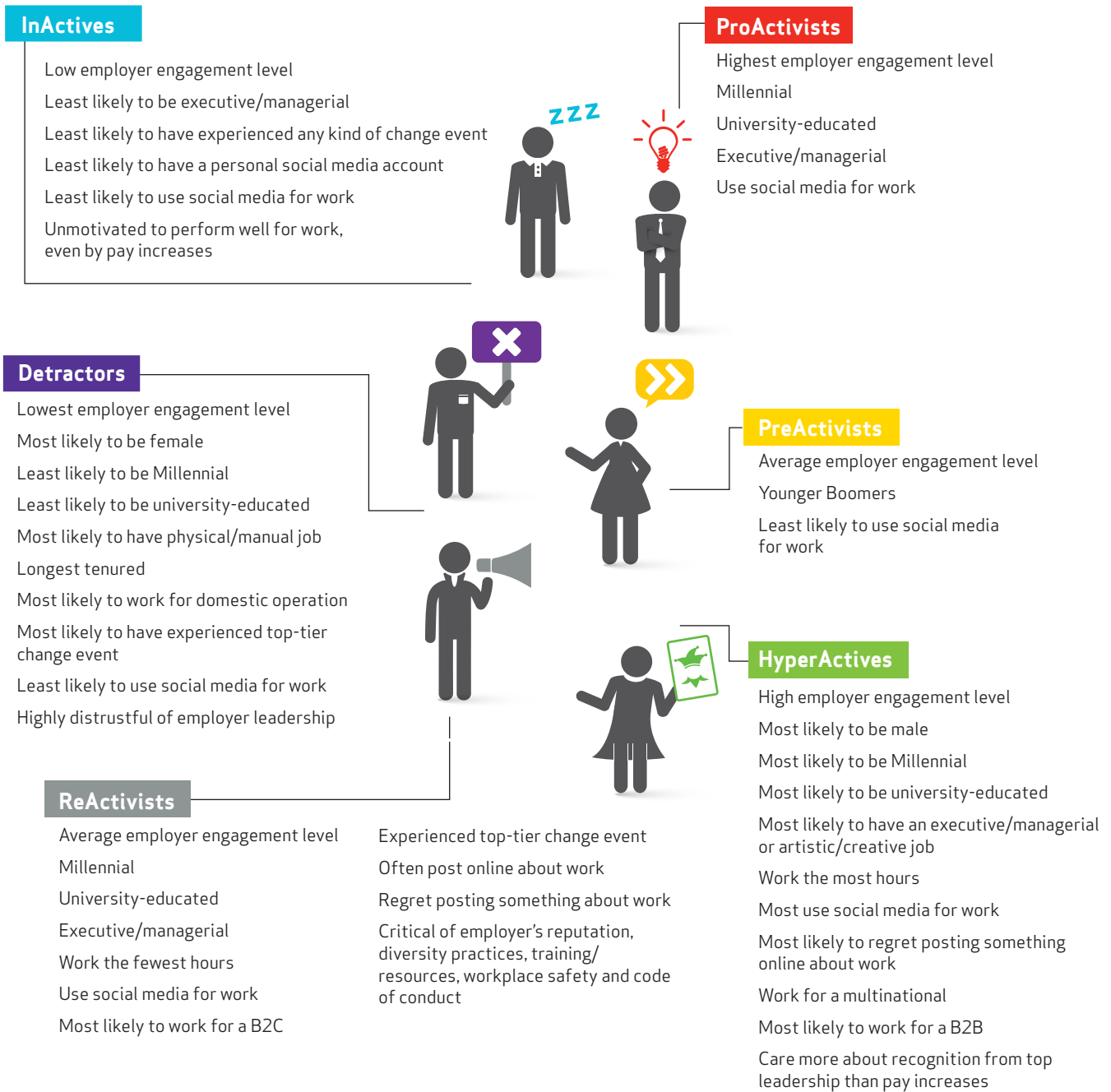
With the exception of Japan, each of the 15 markets in our study has each of these segments (Japan has no HyperActives and few ProActivists). However, some segments are concentrated more heavily in certain markets.



GET TO KNOW THY SEGMENTS

The six employee segments show considerable variation in demographics, employer engagement, job description, employer profile and social media confidence.

The chart below points out each segment's distinctive traits relative to the average employee in our study. It is worth noting that no segment is "all of anything." These traits are directional skews, not absolutes.



08 GET TO KNOW THY SEGMENTS



ProActivists are the employees every leader or manager wants on his or her team because their actions are entirely positive and influential. They are an organization's brand and reputation champions. They are the most highly engaged segment, with 49% reporting deep engagement, compared to the average 30% for employees overall.

Compared to the average employee in our study, ProActivists are more likely to be Millennials (18-36 years old) and university-educated. However, this is not to suggest they are strictly highly educated Millennials — 22% do not have a university degree and 39% are GenX or older. They are the most likely of any group to be executives or managers, but not all are (43% vs. global average of 30%). They are the most likely segment to have multiple social media accounts for personal use and are more likely than employees overall to use social media as part of their jobs (these are not, however, all digital or IT jobs; they may be using social media for competitive intelligence, marketing, etc.). Nearly half (46%) report that they often post about work or their employer on social media.

After a major automobile manufacturer's reputation for quality took a serious hit because of widespread recalls, the company launched an ad campaign featuring its employees discussing how they personally ensure every vehicle is built to the highest caliber. In describing the campaign, one executive said, "[Our employees'] incredible passion, commitment to quality, safety for our customers is what has built our reputation. We want to show this human face. The real, authentic [company]."



PreActivists have high potential to become ProActivists; impeding their activism is a relatively low level of social media usage, but they are engaged (34%) and predominately positive action-takers offline. As the largest segment representing more than one-quarter of employees (26%), they are worth investing resources in.

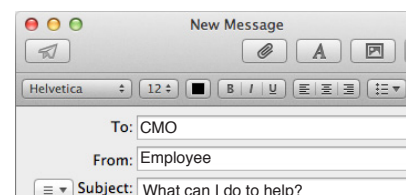
Compared to the average employee in our study, PreActivists are slightly more likely to be Younger Boomers (49-58 years old) and are less likely to have a university degree. While they are just as likely to have a personal social media account as employees overall, they are less likely to use social media for their job, which is probably one reason their activism is kept to a close circle of friends and family.

"Millennials work more closely together, leverage right- and left-brain skills, ask the right questions, learn faster and take risks previous generations resisted. They truly want to change the world and use technology to do so."

Mike Marasco

Leader of Northwestern University's NUvention program, *The New York Times*, November 9, 2013

A Global Fortune 500 bank experienced reputational damage because of a sensitive employee lay-off in which the CEO was criticized in the media. Coming to the bank's defense: employees who wanted to know how they could help.



08 GET TO KNOW THY SEGMENTS



HyperActives are taking positive actions but their adverse actions are likely negating their positives. Because their negative behaviors don't reflect their high engagement level (44%), they can alternatively be thought of as "wildcards."

HyperActives are the most likely of the segments to be men, Millennials and university graduates and to have an executive/managerial or artistic/creative job. They put in the most hours at work of any segment. They are very social media savvy, as 63% of them use social media as part of their jobs. Interestingly, they are more motivated than any other segment by top leadership recognition. Because leadership recognition is slightly more inspiring to them than pay increases, they may be the "ladder climbers" of the employee universe.

LinkedIn research shows that engaged "employer promoters" have 40% MORE internal company connections than extreme detractors.



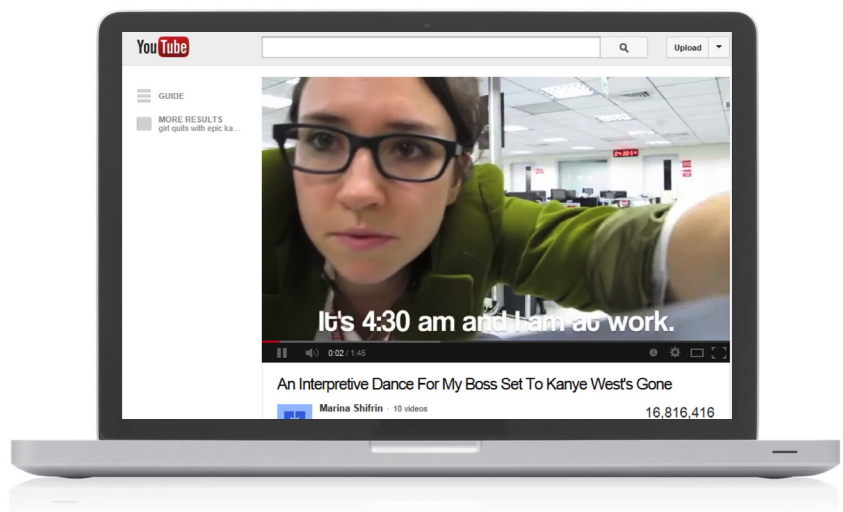
ReActivists are also behaving both positively and negatively, but can be very critical of internal actions by their employers and voice those criticisms publicly. ReActivists' engagement level falls slightly below average (26%).

smaller companies (between 500 and 1,000 employees). They are more likely than average to work for an employer that has recently endured a top-tier change event, such as extensive lay-offs, a merger/acquisition or a crisis/disaster. They are also more likely than average to have a job that entails using social media, although not to the same extent as HyperActives, and half of them often post about work or their employer on social media.

Compared to the average employee, ReActivists are more likely to be Millennials. Of all our segments, they work the fewest hours per week and are employed by relatively

In October 2013, a woman named Marina Shifrin posted a video of herself on YouTube explaining why she was quitting her job while dancing around her Taiwanese office during the middle of the night. Within weeks of its release, the video had more than 16 million views and she appeared on major entertainment broadcast shows.

Marina is an example of a ReActivist.



08 GET TO KNOW THY SEGMENTS



Detractors' engagement level seems almost beyond repair (12%). They are not candidates to be employee activists, so employers need to defuse their criticism and lessen their potential reputational harm.

Compared to the average employee, Detractors skew female, older than 36 and not university-educated. They are the most likely group to have a physical/manual job, are the longest tenured and are less likely than the average employee to work at headquarters. They are also the most likely to work for an employer that has recently undergone a major change event, likely contributing to an exceptionally high lack of leadership trust. While they are just as likely as the average employee to use social media in their personal lives, they are less likely to have multiple accounts or to use social media as part of their job.



InActives, a large segment of more than one in five (22%) employees, exhibit minimal positive or negative behaviors. They are highly unengaged, with an average engagement level of just 16%, and little motivates them

to do a good job — pay increases top their list but that is cited by only 43% of them. We do not recommend that employers invest in an employee activism program for this segment. The focus for InActives should be on building engagement instead.

Compared to the average employee, InActives are more likely to be over 36 years of age and are the least likely to be executive/managerial. They are also the least likely to report that their employer recently experienced a change event and to be on social media.

“A worker who is engaged is a person who truly cares about the organization for which he/she works, a person who does more than ‘show up’ for work, a person who gives his/her ‘all’ on the job.”

— U.S. employee



09

THE PLAYBOOK FOR ACTIVATING EMPLOYEES

In addition to the diverse profiles just discussed, the segments also differ in their perceptions of the activism drivers. This requires employers to “flip different switches” on various aspects of leadership, internal communications, human resources and corporate social responsibility in order to effectively drive activism or reduce detraction. Here are four strategies for activating employees:

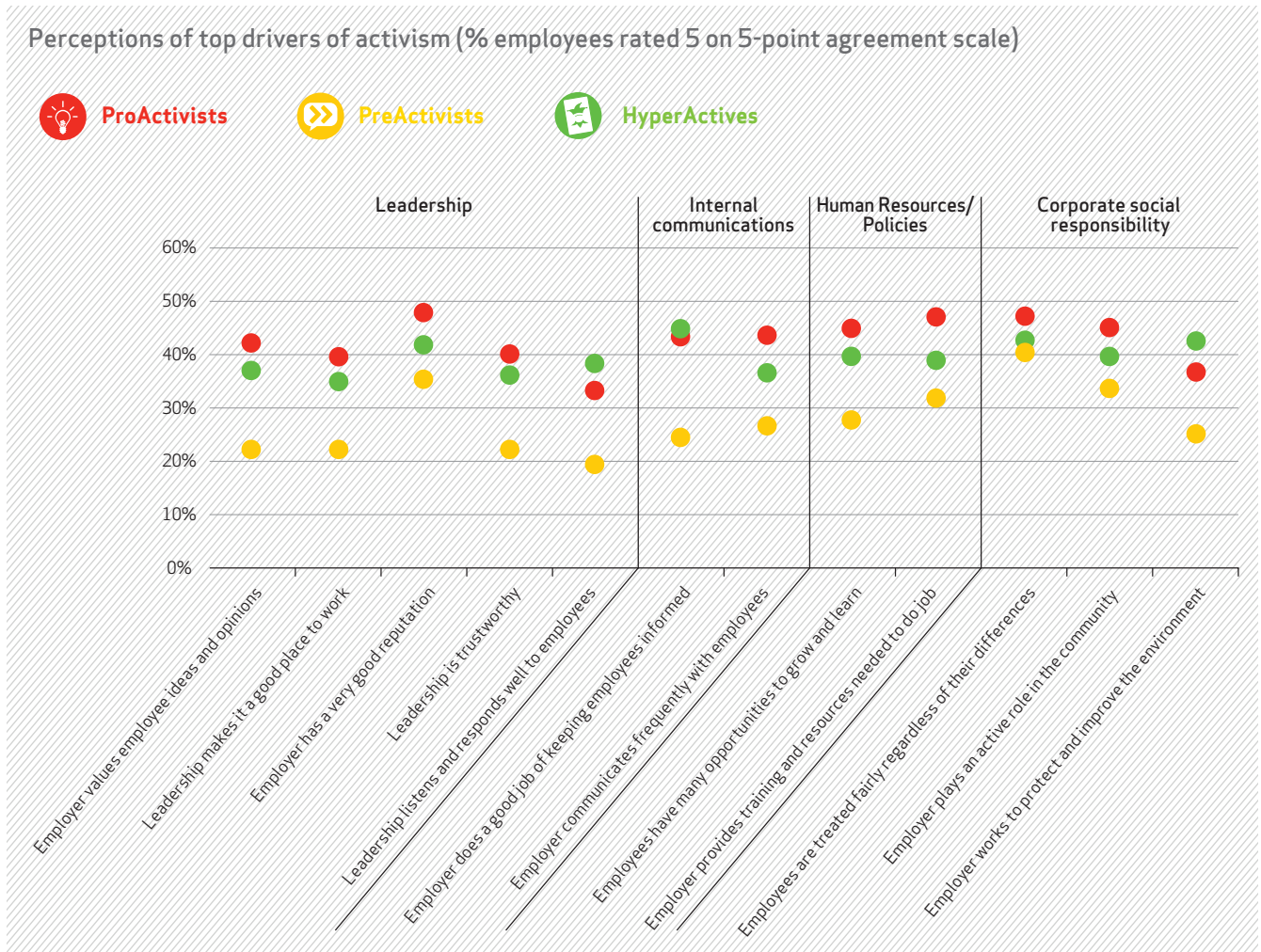
1. Accelerate the activism of ProActivists. Ignite the activism of PreActivists and HyperActives
2. Negate the negatives for ReActivists and Detractors
3. Communicate in ways that matter
4. Customize strategies and tactics for each segment

“An engaged employee is one who is very much devoted to his work and other aspects of the company, be it events, volunteer work or promotion of certain sales.”

— Singapore employee



1. Accelerate the activism of ProActivists. Ignite the activism of PreActivists and HyperActives

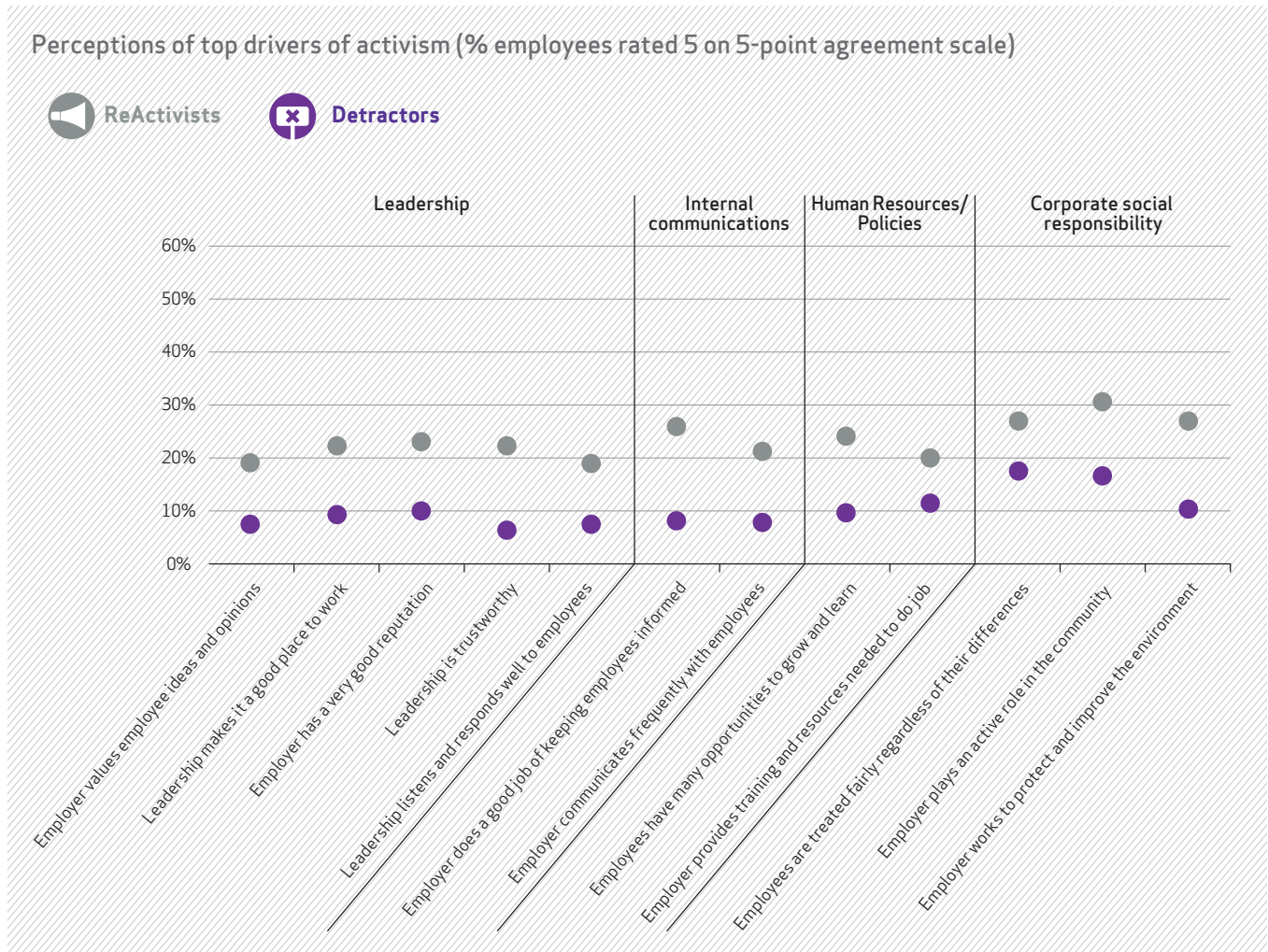


Every one of the top drivers of activism is rated highly by ProActivists (hence, their activism!). To sustain their ProActivist status, this segment needs continual reinforcement of what they perceive as their employers’ best traits, leading with their employer’s reputation (48%) and fair treatment of all employees regardless of race, gender, age, sexual orientation or cultural differences (48%). PreActivists need more convincing to spur their activism but fair treatment of all employees is most meaningful to them (43%). HyperActives also rate the top drivers highly but they need additional reinforcement of these perceptions so that their positive actions overcome their negative inclinations. They rate their employers most

highly on keeping employees informed (45%), so internal communications is a must-have for turning their activism on.

PreActivists are less social media savvy, and therefore presumably less social media confident, than ProActivists and HyperActives. More than one-third of them say they would be more inclined to use social media to share news and information about their work or employer if they were given easy-to-understand guidelines (34%), access to social media at work (32%) or the right tools (31%). Employers should take note — these provisions are fairly basic and would help turn many PreActivists into ProActivists.

2. Negate the negatives for ReActivists and Detractors



ReActivists are more critical than the average employee of their employers’ reputations, provision of training and resources, and climate of diversity and inclusion. These perceptions need to be improved to mobilize their activism or at least take the edge off of their negativity. Although not a driver of activism, ReActivists also rate their employer more harshly on safe working conditions than the average employee (27% vs. 34%). Perhaps employers should try competing for some of the Best Places to Work lists and improving their workplace benefits to counter their negative workplace perceptions. With more than one-quarter (27%) of ReActivists often posting something negative online about their employer, their criticisms need to be addressed. Not surprisingly, every one of the top drivers of activism is

rated very poorly by Detractors. Their weakest perception is trust in leadership — only 6% of them rate leadership as trustworthy — but taken altogether, none of the drivers are perceived positively. Employers should focus first on leadership issues since leadership is the most important driver of activism to begin building trust and reputation.

“A professional who is dedicated, interested and always looking to give their best for the company is engaged with their employer.”

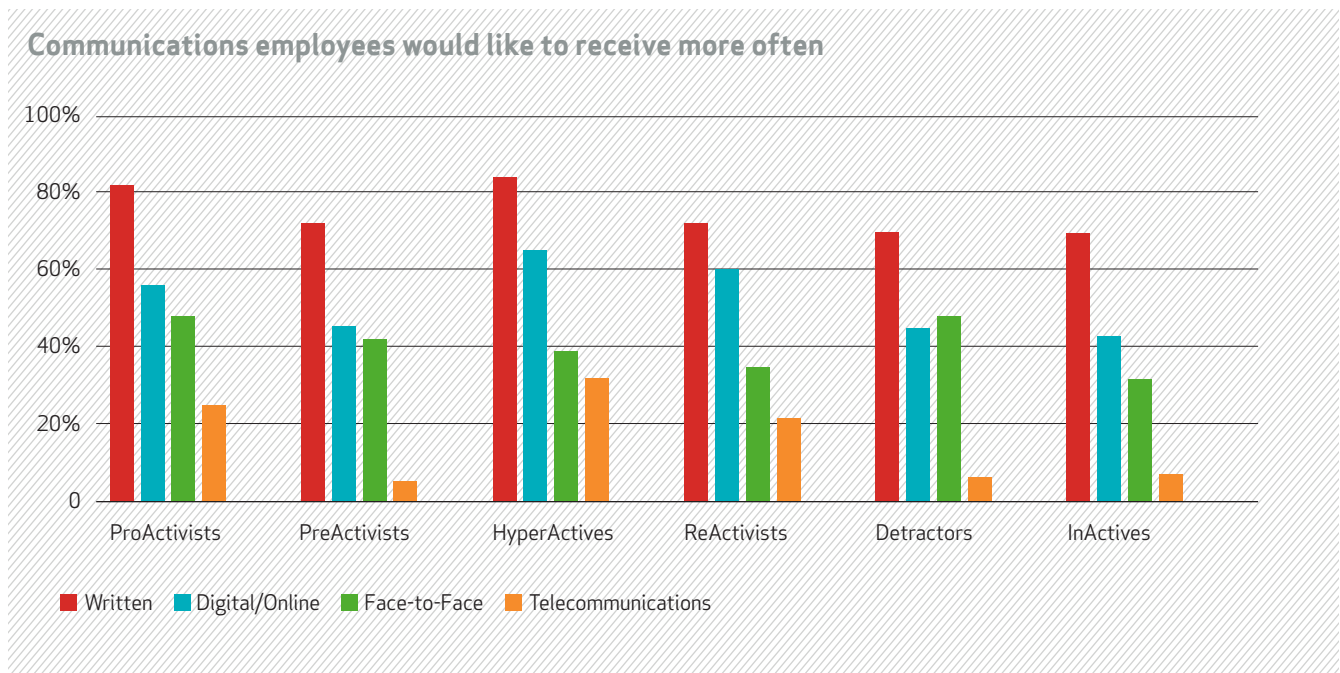
— Brazilian employee



3. Communicate in ways that matter

Employees, regardless of their segment, would like their employers to communicate with them more frequently through written means (73%). Work email is the driving force behind written communications (48%). It is surprising in this high-tech digital world that email is the default

communications method, but perhaps employees like the control that comes with deciding when to open and respond to email, or perhaps it is what they know best and can't imagine anything being easier or more efficient.



“There’s no doubt organizations have begun to realize significant value from largely external uses of social. Yet internal applications have barely begun to tap their full potential, even though about two-thirds of social’s estimated economic value stems from improved collaboration and communication within enterprises. Although more than 80 percent of executives say their companies deploy social technologies, few have figured out how to use them in ways that could have a large-scale, replicable, and measurable impact at an enterprise level.”

“Building the Social Enterprise,” *McKinsey Quarterly*, November 2013

Beyond email, segments diverge on other forms of employer communications they would like more often. Digital/Online, driven by intranets and social media, is in greater demand by the most social media savvy — ProActivists, HyperActives and ReActivists. In-person meetings are more important

to ProActivists, PreActivists and Detractors than to other segments. Surprisingly, InActives are no less amenable to any form of communications than other segments. This may be a sign that there is some hope of engaging this very passive group.







09 THE PLAYBOOK FOR ACTIVATING EMPLOYEES

4. Customize strategies and tactics for each segment

Given the diverse nature of the workforce segments, it is clear that mobilizing employee activists cannot be a “one-size-fits-all” approach. Based on our survey analysis, here are our recommendations, by segment, for an employer

considering launching an employee activist program to transform their organization, accelerate change or drive performance:

The employee activism tip sheet

Segment	Strategy	Tactics
 ProActivists	Leverage and empower their activism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain their high engagement level • Continually reinforce their perceptions of top activism drivers • Provide socially sharable content that showcases the drivers they rate highest • Improve leadership drivers, especially responsiveness to employees
 PreActivists	Ignite their activism: Upgrade to ProActivists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continually reinforce their perceptions of top activism drivers • Improve leadership drivers, especially responsiveness to employees • Provide a social activism platform: social media guidelines, training and access
 HyperActives	Handle with care: Upgrade to ProActivists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feed their need to share with positive messages and make those messages socially sharable • Make handy and reinforce social media guidelines • Continually reinforce their perceptions of top activism drivers • Communicate with them frequently • Have senior management acknowledge their contributions
 ReActivists	Attend to internal matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve perceptions of all top drivers • Do a better job disseminating information about employer values and goals • Focus internal communications messages on internal issues, such as employee training and diversity • Provide social media tools, guidelines, work access and sharable messages
 Detractors	Brace for and defuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fix negative leadership trust perceptions • Implement a change management program even if it is after the fact • Ensure social media guidelines are in place and well-understood. Even though this segment is not highly social, most have a personal social media account • Ensure online monitoring tools are in place to flag behavior that is in violation of organization's social policies
 InActives	Focus on engagement, not activism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a localized engagement program with direct supervisors identifying InActives and enacting an engagement plan • Review Weber Shandwick UK's Science of Engagement study which provides guidance on building engagement

“An engaged employee is one who is involved in his work, satisfied with what he is doing and contributes positively in the organization.”

— Indian employee



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IN CLOSING

Weber Shandwick's **Employees Rising: Seizing the Opportunity in Employee Activism** was designed to help organizations recognize and understand that employee activism is a movement coming their way.

It needs to be accepted and proactively managed. Just focusing on employee ambassadors or champions is not enough anymore in an always-on and super-enabled environment. Employers will increasingly need a band of employees who can take action by spreading the right messages for them, helping them recruit the best of the best or defending their position when they are under scrutiny. Organizations need to move quickly since employees are already taking matters into their own hands and, left unattended for too long, will define their employers' brands and reputations on their own. Social media enhances this risk, but also the opportunities.

To ensure they define brand and reputation in the most authentic light and win support during the tough times as well as the easier ones, employers need to provide a culture of trust that is rooted at the leadership level. Employers need to communicate with employees in ways that are relevant to them, with messages tailored for a variety of worker segments.

Employees will continue to rise to new heights of influence. This influence needs to be tapped into so that employers can maximize the opportunity of this exciting and transformative movement.

"Weber Shandwick's new study demonstrates how organizations need to think ahead as to what is next. Our research uncovered an emerging trend of vital importance for employers looking to mobilize support as they exit difficult times and transform their organizations to be successful in a fast-approaching future."



Leslie Gaines-Ross
Chief Reputation Strategist
Weber Shandwick

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