

INWARD'S BRAND AMBASSADOR 2013 SURVEY FINDINGS

By Steve Mamarchev, Vice President / Inward Strategic Consulting

Involvement with Brand Ambassador Programs is on the Rise!

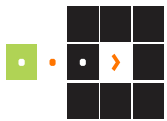
Organizational participation in Brand Ambassador Programs has returned to pre-recession levels and is steadily climbing. Organizations are now more likely to fully-embrace Brand Ambassador Programs as shown by an increase of 12% since 2010. We also noticed a *greater* emphasis that organizations are placing on the Brand Ambassador versus the prior three years with an increase of 25%.

Brand Ambassador Programs' Effectiveness Improves!

Presently, Brand Ambassador Programs are thought as consistently more effective by over 7 in 10 of our research panel (71%). Currently, 20% of those interviewed believe that the Brand Ambassador programs are *very effective*, rising from 10% in 2010. Those stating that organizations' Brand Ambassador Programs are *somewhat effective* jumped from 41% in 2010 to 51% in 2013. Good news!

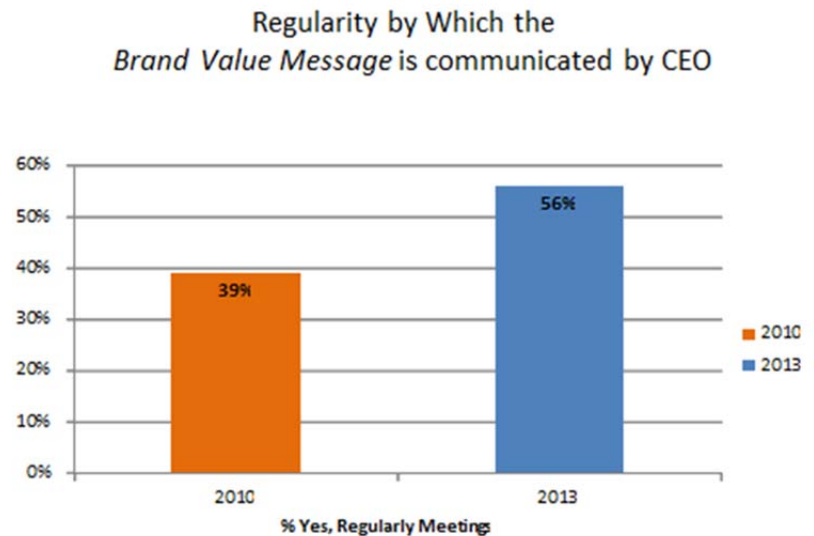
**Brand Ambassador
Programs Regaining
Their Momentum in 2013!**





Many CEOs now Regularly Communicating the Brand Value Message

It is encouraging that our research reveals that many CEOs are now regularly communicating the *Brand Value Message* at 56% this year, up significantly from 39% in 2010!

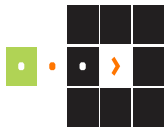


Perceived Usefulness of Brand Ambassador Initiatives and Activities on the Rise!

In concert, Brand Ambassador Initiatives and activities are finding significantly greater acceptance in organizations versus three years ago. In particular of inter are **Emails and Newsletter** at 60% (up 31% since 2010), **Intranet (branded)** to explain Brand Standards 51% (up 18% since 2010), and **Employee Recognition and Reward programs** at 44% (up 24% since 2010). These significant and rapid gains reflect the recent phenomenon of *Social Enterprise Networking* - be it facilitated through mobile or Internet-directed channels. Make sure that your organization has a strategy in place to deal with this phenomenon!

Ideas to Improve Brand Ambassador Programs are Noteworthy

Aligning Brand Behavior with Annual Appraisals and Reviews has drawn the attention of over half the respondents, with 59% now claiming that this initiative will improve Brand Ambassador Programs versus only 31% back in 2010. Nearly half of research participants (49%) feel that the Identification of Brand Ambassador Leader and Program Manager will also improve the efficacy of Brand Ambassadorships. Be sure to identify and execute specific initiatives pertaining to *Internal Alignment* and *Annual Appraisals* that will accelerate acceptance of your organization's Brand Ambassador Program.



Gamification in Infancy Stage! Where does your company stand with Gamification?

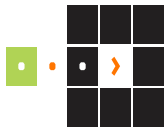
Gamification, the process by which organizations can educate and train employees through online games, finally appeared on the radar on 2012. According to *USA Today*, business spending on Gamification, estimated to be \$250 million last year will explode to nearly \$3 billion by 2016. Other recent estimates have been even more generous.

It was no surprise that Gamification was hardly acknowledged in the 2013 Brand Ambassador study- with only 5% of participants claiming its use with employees.

However, organizations looking to enhance their Brand Ambassador program are beginning to recognize the importance of Gamification – with over one in four (26%) stating that Gamification amongst employees is an activity that will *improve* their Brand Ambassador program.

As you examine the performance of your own Brand Ambassador program, be sure to consider the extent to which Gamification is being used currently, and where it can be employed in the near future to facilitate your Brand Ambassador program.





Management Support and Communications Deemed the Most Effective Tactics to Convey the Importance of the Brand!

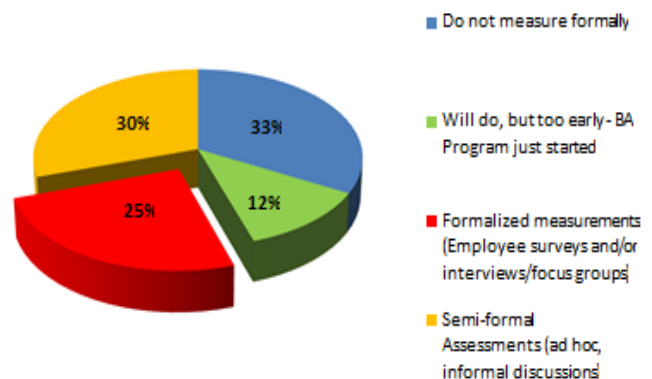
The results of our research reveal the Top 10 Initiatives to be incorporated as part of the Brand Ambassador program. Leading this list are these essential components. As you look at the list below, we suggest that you reflect on which of the following apply to your organization:

- ***Sr. Management Support*** and the ***CEO Mentioning the Brand when communicating now*** rate as the most effective tactics by 55% of participants, up from 47% in 2010
- ***Frequent Communications about the Brand*** and ***Integrated Internal Communications*** are now rated as effective tactics by 53% versus 45% in 2010
- ***Active Communications on the Brand*** along with ***Alignment between Senior Management and Employees*** also came in at 53% for this year, up from 47% in 2010

Few Organizations have Formalized Assessments of their Brand Ambassador Programs

While most organizations in our research (82%) claim to have elements of Brand Ambassador Programs, Only 1 in 4 *formally measure or assess* their Brand Ambassador programs. This indicates a great opportunity for many organizations to conduct *benchmarking research* to assess where they are can improve their Brand Ambassador programs.

How Brand Ambassador Effectiveness Is Measured



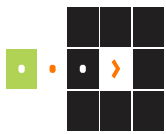


A Roadmap for Brand Ambassador Program Success!

In closing, our comprehensive research highlights the burgeoning usage and enthusiasm for Brand Ambassador Programs that help deliver effective communications, both internally and externally. Here are 10 Steps you might wish to consider as you launch or re-visit your organization's Brand Ambassador Program.

10 Steps towards Building Effective Brand Ambassador Programs

1. Articulate a clear statement of desired behavior regarding your organization's *Vision, Mission* and *Values*. This is your *Template for Success*.
2. Benchmark the current level of *Brand Knowledge* and *Understanding* through Employee Engagement research. Be sure to socialize the results internally.
3. Create an integrated Brand Ambassador program that is process-driven and supported by a budget sufficient to handle the task. Don't undercapitalize this endeavor!
4. Designate a task force to take responsibility and be accountable for driving the program throughout your organization. Include milestones for key activities.
5. Engage and formalize a group of employees to serve as a Standing Committee of Brand Ambassadors. Be certain they are assigned with specific tasks and deliverables.
6. Realign your HR processes and performance appraisal systems to support the Brand Ambassador Program components. Communicate these changes internally.
7. Ensure senior management plays an active role in the Brand Ambassador Program rollout – they, too, are key Brand Ambassadors.
8. Encourage the CEO and members of the C Suite to engage employees with full transparency about all aspect of the program. They must become recognized champions of the program!
9. Develop a marketing plan that has consistent tonality, messaging and program content. Vet it internally prior to execution.
10. Select tactics that will have the greatest impact and positive ROI – including, but not limited to, training, social media, the latest Web-based technologies and rewards and recognition initiatives. Be sure to consider Gamification as one of your tactics!



But Your Job is not complete! It will soon be Time to Assess Your Progress!

In 12–18 months, conduct another wave of Employee Engagement research to gauge:

- Where you have made improvements since commencement of program activities
- Where you need to place greater emphasis with corrective measures



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About the 2013 Brand Ambassador Study

The survey was conducted online between March and May 2013 with professionals residing in marketing, human resources, operations and the C-Suite. Results, while valid, should be used directionally.

About the Author

Steve Mamarchev serves as Vice President of Market Research at Inward. A recognized leader in the areas of marketing research, human



resources, communications and strategic planning, Steve offers clients the latest techniques in primary qualitative and quantitative marketing research.

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