

# EMPLOYEES RISING:

## Seizing the Opportunity in Employee Activism

Today's corporate leaders are rightfully laser-focused on employee satisfaction and engagement. Employee engagement is central to company success and is the underlying foundation for high-performing companies.

Yet to prepare for the future workforce, employers will need to build upon engagement and acknowledge and embrace employee activism. Employee activists make their engagement visible, defend their employers from criticism and act as active advocates, online and off. Many employee activists already exist today. Employers can't afford to miss the open window of opportunity to lean in and capitalize on this movement.

In **Employees Rising: Seizing the Opportunity in Employee Activism**, Weber Shandwick explores the employee activist movement to help organizations understand what it takes to catch the rising tide of employee activism. Weber Shandwick, in partnership with KRC Research, conducted a global online survey of 2,300 employees covering 15 markets worldwide.

Please visit [www.webershandwick.com/uploads/news/files/employees-rising-seizing-the-opportunity-in-employee-activism.pdf](http://www.webershandwick.com/uploads/news/files/employees-rising-seizing-the-opportunity-in-employee-activism.pdf) to view the full report.

### UNREST IN THE WORKFORCE



84%

of employees have recently experienced an employer change event (e.g., leadership change, crisis, etc.)



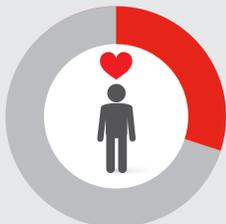
56%

of employees are on the defense — they've defended their employer from criticism



only 42%

of employees can describe to others what their employer does



only 30%

of employees are deeply engaged with their employer

### THE WORKFORCE ACTIVISM SPECTRUM®

Using segmentation modeling, all respondents were sorted by their reported actions toward their employers — both supporting and detracting. The model identified six distinct segments of employees.

#### InActives

Report little or no employer support or detraction behaviors. Almost as unengaged as Detractors. Are the least likely to put a great deal of effort into their jobs and few can explain to others what their employer does. Little motivates them to do a good job, even pay increases.



22%



#### ProActivists

The embodiment of employee activism. Conduct the most positive actions with nearly no negative actions. Have the highest level of employer engagement. Highly social.



#### Detractors

All take negative actions against their employer. Are the least engaged and are the most distrustful of leadership. Not social, so damage is contained offline.

13%



#### PreActivists

All take positive actions but not nearly as many positive actions as ProActivists. Engage in more negative actions than ProActivists. Actions are not as social as those of ProActivists. Have an average level of engagement.

26%



#### ReActivists

Mostly take positive actions but also have a high propensity for detraction. Have an average level of engagement. Are critical of workplace conditions. Highly social.

11%



#### HyperActives

The wildcard of employee activism. Have the most potential to both help and damage employer's reputation. Half of them have posted something online about their employer that they regret. Are the most engaged next to ProActivists. Two-thirds have a job that entails social media so are highly social.

7%

### THE EMPLOYEE ACTIVIST IS NOW AMONGST US

1 in 5 employees is a ProActivist.

In a workforce of 5,000 that's

1,000 employees enthusiastically showing they are behind their employer



= 100

### WHAT DRIVES EMPLOYEE ACTIVISM?

Leadership is most important for influencing employee activism, but not to the exclusion of internal communications, HR policies, employee development and corporate social responsibility.

#### Leadership



#### Internal Communications



#### HR Policies



#### Corporate Social Responsibility



### SOCIAL MEDIA IGNITES EMPLOYEE ACTIVISM

Of employees in our study...

39%

have shared praise or positive comments online about employer

50%

post messages, pictures or videos in social media about employer

16%

have shared criticism or negative comments online about employer

14%

have posted something about their employer in social media that they wish they hadn't

88%

use at least one social media site for personal use

### SOME EMPLOYERS HAVE JOINED THE MOVEMENT



33%

of employers encourage their employees to use social media to share news and information about their work or employer



+50%

increase in employees recommending products or services when employer encourages social sharing

### THE EMPLOYEE ACTIVISM TIP SHEET



#### ProActivists

Leverage and empower their activism



#### HyperActives

Handle with care: Upgrade to ProActivists



#### Detractors

Brace for and defuse



#### PreActivists

Ignite their activism: Upgrade to ProActivists



#### ReActivists

Attend to internal matters



#### InActives

Focus on engagement, not activism

For more information about **Employees Rising: Seizing the Opportunity in Employee Activism**, please contact:

**Micho Spring**  
Chair, Global Corporate Practice  
Weber Shandwick  
mspring@webershandwick.com

**Renee Austin**  
Co-Lead, Global Employee Engagement & Change Management  
Weber Shandwick  
raustin@webershandwick.com

**weber shandwick**  
engaging, always.

**KRC RESEARCH**  
OUR INSIGHT. YOUR BREAKTHROUGH.

**Leslie Gaines-Ross**  
Chief Reputation Strategist  
Weber Shandwick  
lgaines-ross@webershandwick.com

**Kate Bullinger**  
Co-Lead, Global Employee Engagement & Change Management  
Weber Shandwick  
kbullinger@webershandwick.com

