

The Ultimate Guide to Brand Ambassadors: Master Ambassador Marketing

Join millions of brands in unlocking your full potential with ambassador marketing. This beginner-friendly guide will get you set up in a few steps.

How Brand Ambassadors Can Change the Game for Brands:

Your manual to reach more people, promote your content, and grow your business with brand ambassadors.

The Problem with Advertising: Do People Still Respond to Advertising?

Generally, it's getting increasingly challenging to stand out online and acquire customers through conventional channels, such as print media, paid social ads, and organic reach.

The cost per acquisition of a customer, or CPA, is increasing. The DTC industry has grown 44% year over year since 2018, with an increasing number of brands and e-commerce players in all niches. Especially in a post-COVID world, even reaching customers offline using authentic marketing tactics has become increasingly difficult, if not financially unfeasible.

Of course, with the space's density, consumers have run into their fair share of bad players, which has only resulted in souring trust in brands and advertising that can penetrate through. It is estimated that 84% of Millennials do NOT like advertising (McCarthy Group 2014), and are 115% more influenced by word-of-mouth than traditional advertising (Talk Triggers – Chatter Matters).

In other words, consumers are so overwhelmed with advertising that they feel they cannot trust it and turn to real people to help them decide what to buy. According to a Nielsen study, 83% of consumers now say that they either completely or somewhat trust recommendations from family, colleagues, and friends about products and services – making these recommendations the highest ranked source for trustworthiness. [Nielsen] With bids for paid ads increasing, and organic reach decreasing every day, brands that fail to adapt can be caught in a potentially fatal marketing trap if they do not adjust. In order for your brand to stand out then, your approach to marketing must be different. It must be authentic and feel real.

Turn Your Existing Customers Into Your Growth Engine with CrewFire 2.0.



Increase Brand **Engagement & Sharing** on Social Media.



Drive **User-Generated Content** on Social Media.

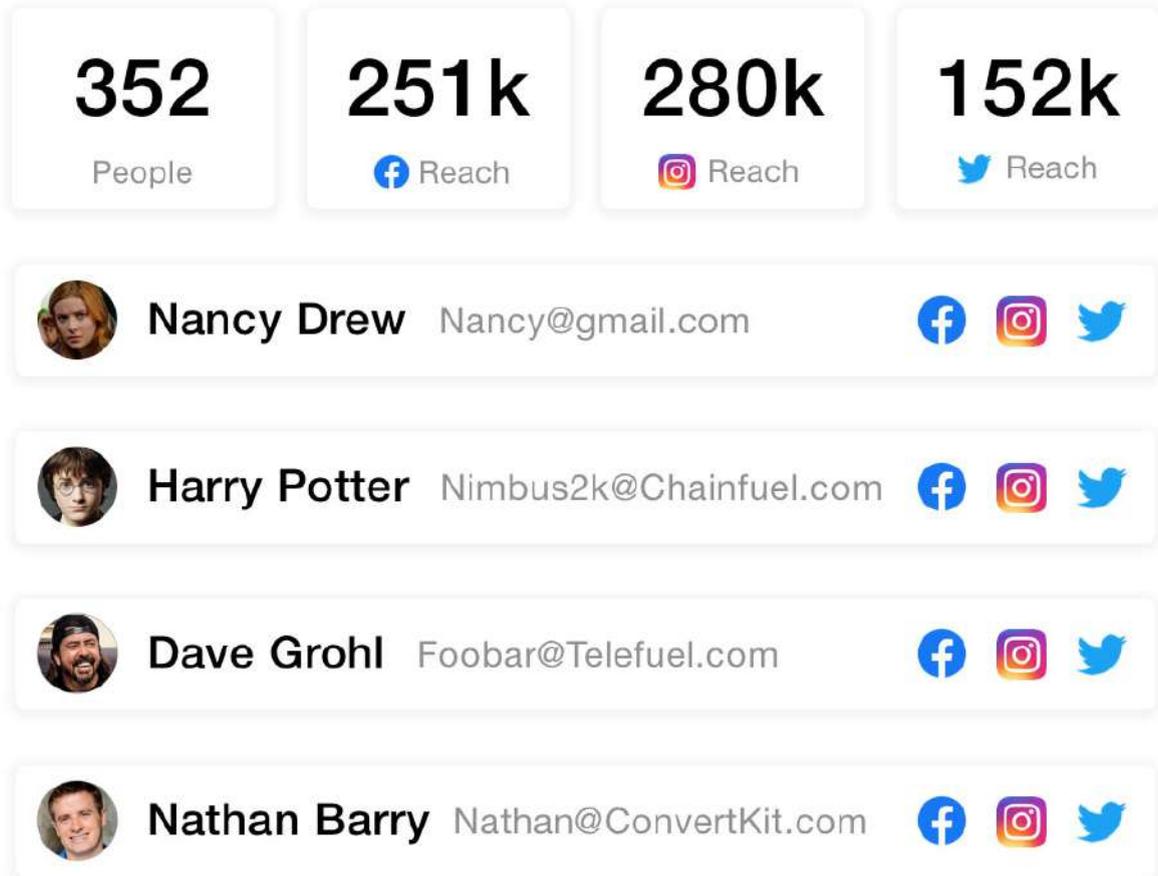


Drive **Referrals & Word-of-Mouth** on Social (and Beyond).

What is Working?

So, if ads on their own won't work, what will? As a brand, you may be wondering where the opportunity lies in order to stand out from a saturated market and reach your target audience. The answer to this question can be found in what today's consumers consider important when purchasing.

The answer is social media. Social media has given rise to three main factors that have become paramount to the average consumer's purchase decision, which offers a world of opportunities for DTC brands.



Social Engagement

The first factor regarding social media is the importance of social engagement and shares. Consumers want to know that your company is real and legit. They want to know that you have not bought your followers, that other people are buying this product, and that your customers support and enjoy your product or service.

Social media platforms try to gauge social engagement by thoroughly analyzing your social media presence across multiple platforms and the types of engagements other people have with your brand. This is where likes, comments, and how your company responds to those comments matter, as consumers are 71% more likely to make a purchase based on social media referrals.

Buying products and services from companies with high levels of positive social engagement has become critical within the DTC space.



71%



Of consumers are more likely to make purchase based on social media referrals

User-Generated Content

Today's consumers also consider user-generated content an important factor when deciding whether or not to patron a brand. User-generated content (UGC) is just a technical word that refers to the photos, images, videos, and other media everyday people create about the products and services they support.

Without giving away too much of what we'll cover later in this guide, user-generated content can include pictures of how the product looked when it arrived or videos of people raving about their favorite product. In a nutshell, UGC can be compared to a review on steroids, as it provides consumers with an immeasurable amount of intangible data about your product.

UGC has become increasingly important to consumers because it enables them to actually see your brand in action, without buying any of your products or using your services, to determine how impactful that product will or will not be for them.

Additionally, the ironic beauty of user-generated content is that it (typically) comes from everyday people who don't have expansive advertising budgets, marketing teams, or equipment. This generates a higher level of trust among consumers and is an extremely effective strategy that any brand can employ.

A recent study found that user-generated content is 50% more trusted by internet users than traditional media and advertising, and as a further example, 81% of U.S. consumers trust advice and information from blogs as opposed to high-dollar advertisements.



Of U.S. consumers trust advice from blogs over high dollar advertisements.

Word-of-Mouth

Lastly, today's consumers are prioritizing word-of-mouth and referrals more heavier than they ever have before.

According to Nieslen, 90% of consumers trust peer recommendations, and their internal studies found that 92% of the participants trusted personal recommendations.

What may sound even more surprising is that 84% of people purchase a product based on a referral, irrelevant to their personal relationship with the person. In other words, the majority of consumers would rather rely on the opinion or recommendation of a complete stranger, as opposed to relying directly on a company to tell them how good a product or service can be for them.

Referrals work so powerfully that even the Harvard Business Review found that companies can expect a 16% increase in profit from referral customers should they put the proper systems in place (i.e. referral programs).

The Opportunity

Hopefully, you haven't thrown your hands up in the air and given up entirely yet. We are just getting started!

The three factors listed above are things consumers find extremely valuable and can provide huge opportunities for brands to stand out in an authentic way.

The question you might be wondering now is *how*? How do you incorporate these factors into your marketing strategy to ensure your ads, social media, and

content are distributed and seen by the right people? What business asset or tool can you use to leverage these?

The short answer: brand ambassadors.

What are brand ambassadors?

Before digging into the mechanics of setting up a brand ambassador program, I'll quickly lay the foundation of what a brand ambassador is.

A Brand Ambassador By Any Other Name

By now, you might be wondering, *“are there different types of brand ambassadors?”*

Brand Ambassadors go by many different names: influencers, customer advocates, brand advocates, micro-influencers, referrals, the list can really go on.

However, for our purposes, we'll define a brand ambassador as an individual within your existing customer base who acts as your brand's authentic voice. They know your product. They buy it consistently, use it, talk it up to their friends and family, and are generally passionate about your brand and support your company.

Different Types of Brand Ambassadors

There are various types and levels of brand ambassadors that you can utilize when you launch your program. They will work collectively to help you achieve your goal of starting an ambassador program.

There are so many content creators out there that represent different niches. This is good news for your brand, especially if you are a DTC brand with a product that is popular with the masses. You can leverage ambassador and influencer marketing to help you raise awareness of your brand, reach new audiences, and increase revenue.

Here are a few examples of different types of brand ambassadors your brand could work with:

- Clothing ambassadors
- Fitness brand ambassadors
- Beauty brand ambassadors
- Makeup ambassadors
- Food brand ambassadors
- Liquor brand ambassadors
- Energy drink ambassadors
- Travel brand ambassadors

Here's an example: A university wants to attract more potential student to the school, so they start a campus ambassador program and hire ambassadors from their current student body. The university benefits from the increased promotion and buzz being generated about the school, and the college students can earn money on the side by working with the school.

As you build out your program, you will also find that some community members thrive in one specific section of your program.

For example, some of your brand ambassadors might also double as influencers, meaning they will make content for the masses and generate a lot of buzz and excitement around your brand.

Some of your other ambassadors might be affiliate experts. Affiliate ambassadors will know how to generate more sales and drive more traffic to your website than ever before. They can do this by creating content that features your brand and by knowing exactly when to post to generate more views and, as a result, more sales.

Lastly, you will have your customer ambassadors. These people know your products and can speak with authority and passion about your brand. They know your brand, have been a dedicated customer for a long time, and are excited to help more people discover you.

You want a healthy mix of all different types of ambassadors in your program since each will bring their unique approach to your program, collectively helping you achieve your growth goals and building a community of like-minded individuals!.

What Does a Brand Ambassador Do?

Ambassadors can help grow your brand through a wide variety of activities, from liking and commenting on your social media posts to driving sales through referral codes to answering customer service questions, all the way up to creating unique user-generated content all for your brand.

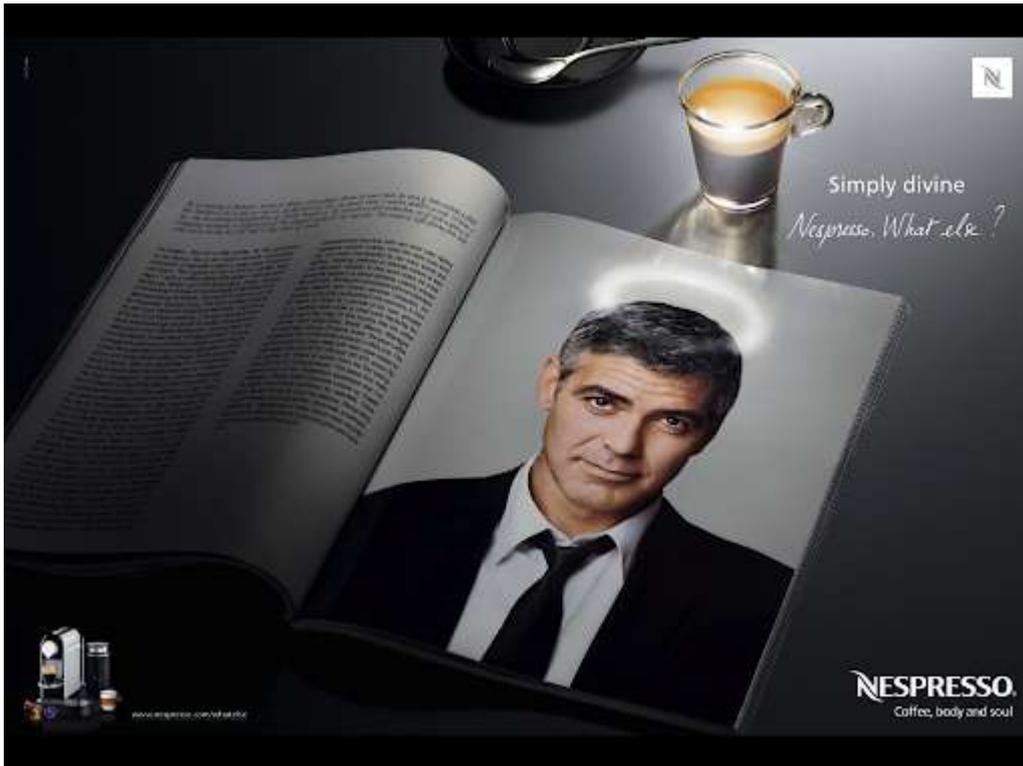
Referring back to the three main determinants of a consumer's purchase decision, brand ambassadors:

- Drive engagement & shares
- Drive user-generated content that you can use in your marketing
- Build trust and brand loyalty
- Drive referral purchases by promoting their exclusive discount code online
- Help increase your word-of-mouth marketing
- Improve your brand representation both online and offline
- Sell your product/service organically and authentically
- Represent your company online, on social media, and anywhere else people can find your brand

Brand Ambassadors vs. Influencers

While the two terms are not necessarily mutually exclusive, they are also not exactly the same, and it's important to keep a few key differences in mind as you begin the process of setting up your program. Unlike your average consumer or fan, the first difference is that influencers tend to be individuals with higher recognition.

This 'recognition' can range anywhere from Instagram models with millions of followers to international celebrities of likes Drew Brees for Untuckit, the Kardashian/Jenner family for Yeezy, or even George Clooney for Nespresso.



While they can surely have some level of recognition, by our standards, unlike influencers, brand ambassadors have an established relationship with your brand, which is the desired outcome when starting an ambassador program.

Going back to trust, today's consumers are smart and naturally know that celebrities and influencers are being paid to advertise a product or service. Because there is (a lot) money involved at that level, consumers have difficulty deciphering how much the celebrity likes the product versus how much they like getting paid.

This, in turn, can create a point of friction when deciding to make a purchase for some consumers. Conversely, when you activate normal, everyday people who enjoy and interact with your products or services regularly and recruit them to be a team members, your company experiences more benefits.

It has been estimated that 30% of consumers are more likely to buy a product recommended by a non-celebrity blogger.

Instead of renting an influencer for 24 hours in a very transactional way, you can leverage brand ambassadors who already have a deep connection with your

brand to make the entire relationship and subsequent promotions and marketing come across more meaningful and authentic.

How Do You Find Micro-Influencers?

Starting an ambassador program is the first step, but when it comes time to scale, one of the MOST frequent questions brands that are new to ambassador marketing ask is how do I find brand ambassadors?

If you are looking for micro-influencers to join your team, you should first consider looking at your customer base. Typically, the best, most loyal, and passionate brand ambassadors will be customers first.

Additionally, check your social channels to see who consistently interacts and creates content for your brand. These are the people you want to join your program since they are already creating content without being prompted and speaking with authority and gusto about your brand.

How Do You Hire Brand Ambassadors?

Now that we know what kind of people to look for, we need to figure out how to hire brand ambassadors. The hiring process might seem daunting, but it doesn't have to be.

Every great ambassador program starts with a landing page on a brand's website. On this landing page, you can give a complete overview of your program, what it entails, how the ambassadors will be rewarded, how much time they will need to dedicate to the program, the all of the perks of working with your brand.

Once your landing page is in place, you can dive into promoting and recruiting. Promote it where your ideal ambassadors live; send program announcement emails to your email list, reach out to popular influencers, micro-influencers, and content creators in your niche, and promote your program on social media.



If you are looking for brand ambassadors to join your team, you must define a smart recruitment strategy. Many brands that we have worked with have dedicated program recruiters. Their recruiters will search various social media accounts to find their ideal candidates and recruit them to the program.

This is how we have seen brands go from 500 ambassadors to 5,000 ambassadors. They use smart marketing and recruitment techniques to recruit potential ambassadors and convert them to their team by offering a program that is fun, dynamic, and rewards well. Plus, the added benefit is that the recruits can join a team of passionate people who share similar interests, which can offer them the chance to grow and connect in a great community.

Best Platforms and Tools for Managing Ambassadors

We will get to this later in the book, but ambassador and influencer programs involve a lot of work, and you don't want to take on this new project without the proper tools.

You should look for an ambassador and micro-influencer platform that can offer you:

- An easy way to communicate with your ambassadors
- Capabilities to track affiliate revenue
- A streamlined way to collect UGC
- A place where you can grow your community

Instead of doing everything manually and operating out of tons of spreadsheets, look for a platform that offers you an all-in-one solution to help you manage and scale your program.

Visit ambassador portal Taylor Green

Ambassadors Add Ambassadors

11 of 500 Ambassadors

Actions Search... Search Export team data

NAME	EMAIL	FB	TW	IG	POINTS	MONEY	JOINED
Alan VanBassador	alan@tefefuel.com	...	...	...	10234	0.00	2020-08-06
Alan VanToai	alan@crewfire.com	...	...	...	3059	0.00	2015-08-17
Alan VanToai	alan@vantoai.com	...	...	...	10920	0.00	2015-10-13
Frederic Tulsidin	frederic@tulsidin.ca	...	...	...	315	9.24	2018-11-28
Michael Beaton	michael@crewfire.com				0	0.00	2020-10-19
Ngan Nguyen nh...	nhatkieuangnguyen@g...	...	...	...	10462	0.00	2017-03-22

Why Are Brand Ambassadors Effective?

You have probably heard the success stories from other DTC brands that have seen mega growth thanks to their brand ambassador program, but can they generate brand loyalty, brand awareness, and social proof off the backs of their most passionate customers?

Brand ambassadors enable you to unlock a dormant yet wildly effective asset within your existing business: your customers. You can catapult your company's marketing campaigns to unforeseen levels by transforming your customers into brand ambassadors.

It is important to note upfront, though, that this strategy will work best not as a replacement marketing channel but rather as a marketing channel that can enhance and optimize every other marketing channel that your company is currently investing in – whether that is paid ads, social media advertising, or content marketing.

By leveraging brand ambassadors, you can unlock an entire suite of additional growth and revenue, which include:

- Greater click-through rates. When ads are shared or engaged by brand ambassadors, they achieve increased percentages of click-through rates.
- Greater conversion rates. One study found that conversion increased between 3-10X when a brand shared its content through influencers in their industry.

- Increased return on ad spend. Using brand ambassadors can increase the efficiency of your advertising dollars, as they will reach greater levels of penetration and conversion.
- Increased visibility of content. Naturally, through brand ambassadors, you can get the word out much more quickly and efficiently and achieve greater visibility of your online content.
- Increased visibility of social media posts. Likewise, social media platforms and their algorithms are geared toward boosting the visibility of content that reach high levels of engagement within the first few minutes of posting. Brand ambassadors have been shown to drive that engagement and increase your brand's overall visibility.
- Increased Social Proof. By utilizing brand ambassadors as the face of your company, your brand gains greater loyalty and can pass the 'social proof test,' so to speak, that many of today's consumers have.

Essentially, everything you have, whether a blog post or an ad for a newly released product, will help your brand stand out even more as a result of your brand ambassadors because it will be perceived as more authentic and trustworthy to your audience.



Greater click through rates



Greater conversion rates



Increased return on ad spend



Increased visibility of content



Increased visibility of social media posts



Increased social proof

Not to mention, using brand ambassadors has the added benefit of reducing content production costs and helping you produce more sharable content that can save you the hundreds of thousands of dollars you'd have to spend to reach the same number of people.

Overall, they are effective because they enable a brand's content to cut through the noise of traditional advertising practices and reach the right people. Brand ambassador programs achieve this because they use real people who promote your product to your target audience better than an already happy customer.

Brand ambassadors will be your social proof champions, helping you to showcase your products in the hands of real people. This will help consumers visualize using your product and decrease first-time buyer hesitation.

Brand ambassadors are the VIP that can get you into the club without having to stand for hours in line!

What Makes a Good Brand Ambassador Program?

Now that you fully understand what ambassadors are, what they do, and how they can benefit your company, you might be anxious to kick off your ambassador program. However, before doing so, it's also important to touch on several things your brand will need to run a successful program.

The first and most important factor is having a customer base or audience that is genuinely passionate about your brand, story, values, products, and social mission. Your brand needs to have a message that resonates in some way with your audience on an emotional level and is one that people are deeply passionate about.

In other words, if your company doesn't have a cult-like following, has an unclear message, or is centered around a product or service that is mundane or otherwise not emotionally charged, it will be quite difficult to gain traction with a brand ambassador program.

Another good indication that your brand is ready for a brand ambassador program is by assessing its current traction. From our experience, companies with

at least \$500,000 thousand in annual revenue or a customer list or audience of at least 10,000 people are the most poised to excel with a brand ambassador program.

This is not to say you can't start a brand ambassador program. However, it will be much more difficult to make it successful and require a lot more resources, capital, and hands-on dedication from a team to accomplish your goals.

Therefore, brand ambassadors tend to work best for brands that are already in motion. These are some brand ambassador requirements; see if your brand has the following:

- A product or service with proven traction (ideally at least \$500,000 in annual revenue)
- An existing audience from whom you can recruit and build your program, or at least 10,000 email subscribers or 30,000 Instagram followers
- A dedicated marketing manager
- Bandwidth to dedicate 1-2 hours a day to program management

BRAND AMBASSADOR PROGRAM READINESS

CHECKLIST:



- Min. \$500,000 in annual revenue
- Min. 10,000 email subscribers
- Min. 35,000 Instagram followers
- A dedicated marketing manager
- Min. 1-2 hours of bandwidth to dedicate to managing the program
- A resonating brand, product, service, mission, or social mission

If your company does not fall into the brand ambassador program outline, it may be too early to consider establishing a brand ambassador program. Ambassador marketing can be costly. We recommend walking before you run and focusing your already limited resources on gaining initial customers and building a loveable product through traditional marketing strategies.

That way, once you have a brand with passionate customers who love your products, creating a brand ambassador program can unlock even more tremendous growth for your company and make it much more seamless.

If you aren't sure if your brand is ready to start a program, check out our Brand Ambassador Program Checklist to see if you're ready!

How Do I Pay Brand Ambassadors?

How to compensate your community will depend on how your brand chooses to structure your program, but there are a few tried and true methods for rewarding ambassadors that keep engagement high, motivates your ambassadors, and keeps them coming back for more.

How much do brand ambassadors get paid?

This question is asked frequently by brands new to ambassador marketing, but the short answer is that it depends. It really depends on how you want to structure your ambassador program and what kinds of rewards and payments incentivize your community to show up and participate in the program each week.

While this may look different for each brand, the best way to compensate your community is by providing your ambassadors with an exclusive discount code and giving them commissions for each sale they make, offer free products, exclusive discounts, and access to products or experiences, such as attending an event with members of your team and the community.

What to offer brand ambassadors will depend on what makes your community excited. If you find that your ambassadors want to create user-generated content in exchange for their favorite products, focus on that. If you find that your ambassadors want cash payments in exchange for completing activities, lean into that. After some trial and error, you will find the perfect reward roster that works well for your brand and brand ambassadors.

Plenty of apps help you compensate your brand ambassadors and make it easy for you to provide a large catalog of rewards that your ambassadors can choose from. We always recommend providing ambassadors with a large selection of options (between 10-30) so that each team member will find a reward that excites them most.

Creating A Brand Ambassador Program

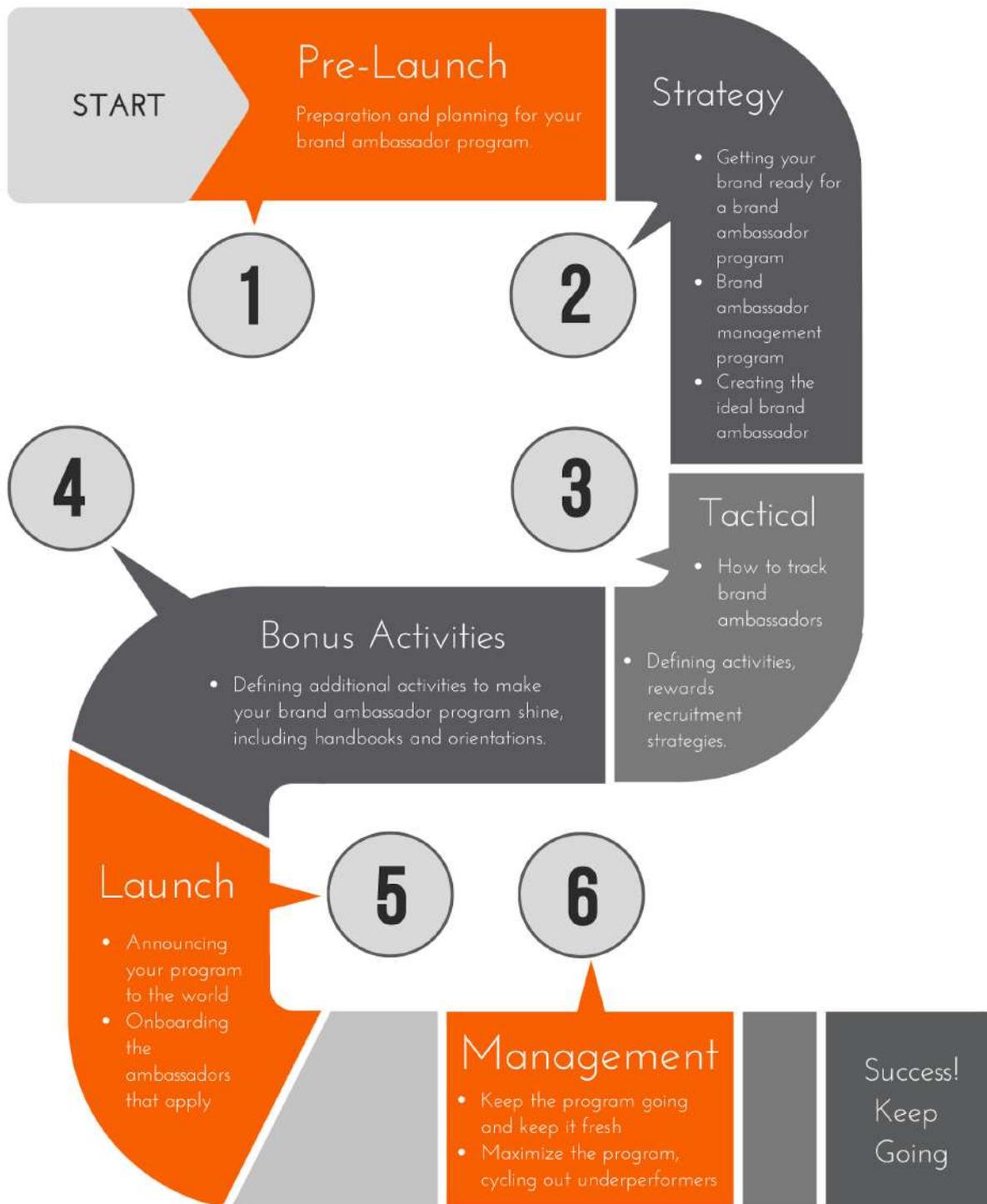
Now we'll get into creating a brand ambassador program and discuss how to manage your team.

Program and ambassador management is essential. The rest of this guide will be outlined as follows:

Pre-launch (preparation & planning)

- Strategy
 - What is the ideal brand ambassador?
 - Is my brand ready for brand ambassadors?
 - Who should manage our program?
 - What are our goals for our program?
- Tactical
 - How do you track brand ambassadors?
 - What do brand ambassadors do?
 - How much do brand ambassadors cost?
 - How do brand ambassadors get paid?
 - How to recruit brand ambassadors?
- Bonus
 - What additional activities can I do to make the program succeed?
- Launch
 - How do we get the word out?
 - How to onboard ambassadors?
- Management
 - What do I need to run a successful program?
 - How do I keep the program fresh?
 - How can I maximize the program?
 - How do I cycle out inactive ambassadors?

By the end of this guide, you'll be armed with everything you need to know about managing brand ambassadors, including building, managing, and growing a thriving community and running a successful program.



Pre-Launch

Before launching your brand ambassador program, it is important to prepare and create a plan for your program. You want to adopt the mindset you would have if onboarding a team of salespeople or full-time employees.

The more intentional you are about training and preparing them, the better your program will be. This preparation can be further broken into three main segments:

1. Strategy

The first stage in the pre-launch of your program is laying out a strategy that will best benefit your company. This stage involves looking strategically at what you plan to accomplish and how you plan to do so. This will help provide clarity before diving into setting up the mechanics.

Assess Your Brand's Readiness

Assuming you have met the \$1 million revenue mark, additional considerations should be considered before launching a brand ambassador program. In this planning section, you may ask yourself, "are brand ambassadors right for my business?" Brands are typically brand-ambassador-ready when they have active and highly engaging social media platforms, a product or service that people truly love, and a strong customer base to recruit from. If your customers have nothing but positive things to say about your brand, you are more likely to have highly motivated brand ambassadors!

Most likely, these will be easy checkboxes for you to check off. However, if there is even any hesitation to any of these, it is important to address them head-on and assess your situation before deciding to invest time and money into an ambassador marketing strategy.

Designate a Program Leader

At this stage, knowing who will take ownership of the entire program is critical. Appoint a designated in-house or outsourced liaison to manage the brand ambassador program. In your selection process, prioritize someone who will be responsive and maintain constant and consistent communication with your brand ambassadors.

While some companies use existing employees, others have leveraged student interns or third-party professionals to manage their programs. No matter who it is, the most important thing is to have someone who will be empowered to dedicate the time and energy required to run a strong program.

Define Your Program Goals

Next, you will want to define your goals for the brand ambassador program. Are you looking to increase revenues by a certain amount, drive additional traffic, or increase the level of social engagement and sense of community around your company? Maybe your company has adopted a new social mission, and you want all your existing and future customers to know. Perhaps you want to drive revenue for a new product soon to be released. Whatever your goals may be, it is paramount that they are established and then communicated to the program leader, who can bake the expectations to achieve each program goal you set.

Profile Your Dream Ambassador

Lastly, once you have an idea of your brand's readiness and desired outcome of a brand ambassador program, it is important to envision who will 'fit the role.' Specifically, you will want to envision what your ideal brand ambassador does, what they wear, where they shop, how they use your product, etc. so that when the applications begin to roll in, you'll know immediately who would or would not make a good fit. Ideally, you'll want the profile of your dream brand ambassador to align very closely with your target demographic.

Additionally, certain brands also emphasize working with content creators who possess certain core marketing or other desired skills that can be leveraged in the program, such as video editing or photography skills, among other things.

Furthermore, as you begin to outline what types of people your brand ambassador program would like to attract, decide whether you want the program to be exclusive, in the traditional sense of an invite-only scenario, or a more open scenario with lower barriers of entry to attract a wider range of ambassadors. Each strategy will have its own benefits depending on the brand, so having this conversation up front will give your brand a clear vision for recruiting ambassadors.

2. Tactical

Once you've outlined the broader framework of your program, the next important piece to consider is the tactical measures you will take to continue shaping its structure.

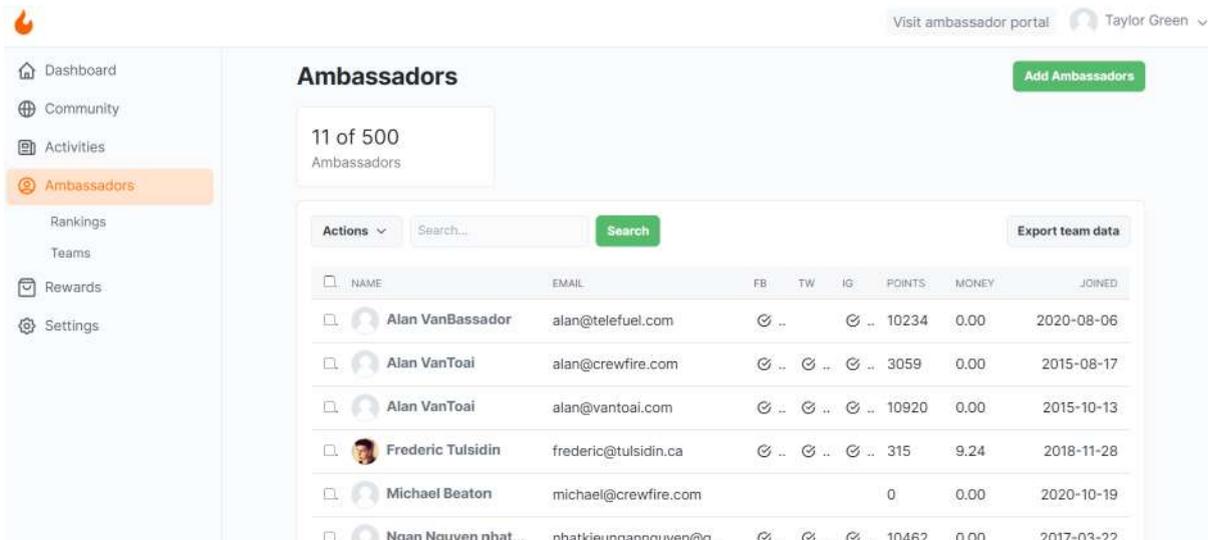
Define Program Tooling

First, you'll want to invest the time upfront in selecting the software or suite of tools that you will use to track everything within your program, from monitoring all the work that brand ambassadors submit, to processing payments or redemptions, to managing all the content that is generated in an open and transparent manner.

When considering what tooling to use, of course, there are many DIY (do it yourself) techniques that you can employ. What we like to call "FrankenFire," a brand ambassador program, can be run through a collection of Google Forms, Spreadsheets, Facebook Groups or GroupMe/WhatsApp Groups, Email Lists, SMS messaging tools, and Trello boards. All these tools, in some combination, will enable your team at the bare minimum to do all it needs to meet the demands of running a brand ambassador program.

However, there are also all-inclusive portals like [CrewFire.com](https://crewfire.com) that combine all these tools so that you and your program leader are not forced to jump from one app to the next and lose that feeling of continuity.

CrewFire handles all the processes that a DIY solution can but has many other benefits built into the platform, including Instagram engagement campaigns, affiliate & referral tracking, user-generated content campaigns, email and SMS blasts for company announcements, and the hosting of your brand ambassador community online.



The screenshot shows the CrewFire.com Ambassador portal dashboard. The top right corner has a link to "Visit ambassador portal" and a user profile for "Taylor Green". The left sidebar contains navigation options: Dashboard, Community, Activities, Ambassadors (highlighted), Rankings, Teams, Rewards, and Settings. The main content area is titled "Ambassadors" and shows "11 of 500 Ambassadors". Below this is a search bar and an "Add Ambassadors" button. A table lists the following ambassadors:

NAME	EMAIL	FB	TW	IG	POINTS	MONEY	JOINED
Alan VanBassador	alan@telefuel.com	👤 ..		👤 ..	10234	0.00	2020-08-06
Alan VanToai	alan@crewfire.com	👤 ..	👤 ..	👤 ..	3059	0.00	2015-08-17
Alan VanToai	alan@vantoai.com	👤 ..	👤 ..	👤 ..	10920	0.00	2015-10-13
Frederic Tulsidin	frederic@tulsidin.ca	👤 ..	👤 ..	👤 ..	315	9.24	2018-11-28
Michael Beaton	michael@crewfire.com				0	0.00	2020-10-19
Ngan Nguyen nh...	nhatkieungannnguyen@g...	👤 ..	👤 ..	👤 ..	10462	0.00	2017-03-22

Outline Your Program Activities

At this point, you will want to decide what specific activities your community will do to achieve your previously established goals.

This step is important because there's no shortage of digital water coolers in this day and age. Your target audience is hanging out, talking with friends, and scrolling on socials. In order for your brand ambassadors to come in and introduce you in a seamless way, planning out the activities they will do becomes very critical.

In general, you'll want your brand ambassador activities to be such that they subtly infiltrate – and not bombard (like an advertisement would) as if they came from a real person (because they are!).

More specifically, brand ambassadors can work to:

- Drive Sales
- Share your content online
- Engage with your content
- Create user-generated content
- Grow your brand's influence
- Market your brand online
- Run your brand ambassador program

These activities will largely fall into either online, offline, or a mix of both.

Online

If you happen to be running short on ideas, below is a small sampling of the online activities your team can do:

- Invite their friends to your Facebook events or to like your business/fan page.
- Share your links and other content with your friends and family on social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.
- Review your business on Yelp or TripAdvisor.
- Like, comment, and share your social media posts on LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, or other social media sites.
- Record a video and post it to their social media accounts, tagging your brand.

- Using your campaign hashtags across multiple platforms.
- Write a blog about your company, product, or service.
- Provide a written or video testimonial.
- Provide a reference.
- Review products online or directly with your team.
- Answer customer questions directly.
- Share your company product surveys.
- Create and share User Generated Content (UGC).
- Distribute their referral codes or links.

Offline

Not everything ambassador activity has to take place online. To give you an idea, below are some offline activities that a brand ambassador can do as well to help supplement your ambassador campaigns:

- Attend a live event or conference.
- Speak at a live event or conference.
- Pass out flyers or printed materials.
- Sticker-bomb a certain geographic area.
- Conduct surveys.
- Operate a sales booth.

In general, there are really an infinite number of things that your brand ambassadors can do to help elevate your brand.

Don't believe us? Check out our guide on [the top 55 activities your brand ambassador team](#) can do to mobilize even more buzz around your products and services.

Overall, we typically recommend that brands match these activities to upcoming product releases, company events, and marketing campaigns on other platforms to help amplify their effect.

Eventually, you want to reach the point where your brand ambassadors begin to self-generate a healthy percentage of the activities. However, to hit the ground running initially, it's important to plan the ideal activities as they align with your specific goals.

Define Rewards & Incentives

This section will address the common question of “How much do brand ambassadors cost?”

The short answer is that it will largely depend on what works best for your company and what you decide during the pre-launch stage. Before launching, however, what we first recommended, when designing a program’s incentives, is to establish an “exchange rate” to quantify the rewards system that you choose.

Regardless of whether the incentives you choose are monetary or not, it is important to have an internally assigned dollar value for each unit of rewards you choose.

For example, within the CrewFire platform, we enable our clients to use points as a reward system. For each post or tweet, ambassadors automatically earn a certain level of points, and brands typically establish a value of \$1 or \$0.01 for each point.

By establishing an exchange first, you will be able to determine how to assign rewards for each level of activity planned. It becomes easier to quantify how many points your company is willing to give away in exchange for a tweet, an Instagram post, or any activity outlined above. Like an arcade, each completed activity earns ambassadors a certain level of points that they can redeem as they wish.

Furthermore, in our experience, the best programs outline a system of incentives that reward the behavior they’d like to see. For example, lower levels of rewards are often given for low engagement tasks, such as tweets and likes, and higher levels of rewards are given for higher levels of engagement. Establishing an exchange rate enables smoother management from start to finish as well.

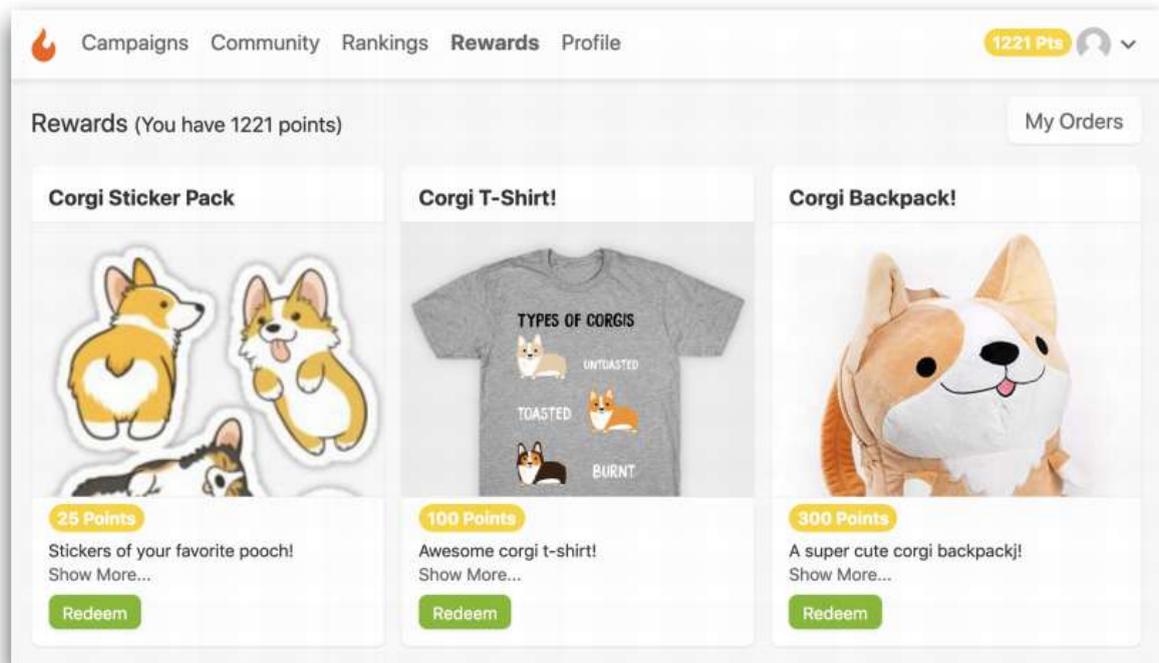
One major caveat: make sure to keep this ‘rate’ internal. You do not, and I repeat, do NOT want to publicize the actual dollar amount of each point or unit of rewards to your brand ambassadors, as this will only cheapen the program and motivate them to focus on the numbers instead of the activity. Remember, your brand ambassadors are there for you, not the money. The money is a benefit, but the magic in the program is being able to work behind the scenes with the company

they love. Therefore, if you were to publish the actual dollar value of each reward, it would only dilute the allure of being in the program in the first place.

Incentives for brand ambassadors typically fall into two distinct categories – monetary incentives and non-monetary incentives, and at this stage, it is also important to decide whether you will use one over the other or a mix of both.

Non-monetary incentives include:

- Free Products: These are the most popular non-monetary incentives among brand ambassador programs and can be very cost-effective depending on the impact of your program. At the end of the day, customers are drawn to the idea of potentially being first in line to receive free swag.
- Discounts: Discounts can also be an effective non-monetary incentive that will work to keep your most faithful customers buying again and again. To be most attractive, though, we typically recommend that these discounts provide at least 30% off the retail price to be taken seriously. Offering a 5% discount will barely cover the tax and may not act as a sufficient enough incentive. Within the CrewFire platform, assigning exclusive discount codes to brand ambassadors is possible.
- Shout-outs: Lastly, providing brand ambassadors recognition for what they are doing for your company can serve as a highly motivating non-monetary incentive. If you can think back to school at the thrill of receiving awards in front of your peers, shoutouts give brand ambassadors a badge of honor to share with their family, friends, and even work colleagues.



The other side of the coin is, of course, monetary incentives. Depending on your brand and business model, you have a few options here. Just like with the non-monetary incentives, this is not a one-size-fits-all solution, but hopefully, I can get you moving in the right direction.

Monetary incentives can include:

- **Commissions:** This is probably the most efficient way to incentivize people since they only get paid for referring a new customer. This way, you are paying for leads (or even customers) instead of impressions. But, for this to work, keep in mind you must have a way to track the conversions back to the referring team member. Within the CrewFire app, you can monitor these in real-time.
- **Hourly Pay:** Let me say that this is my least favorite since it usually only motivates people to be physically present for a certain amount of time. But, depending on the nature of the work, this may suffice. One word to the wise – If you're not going to be there, make sure that you have a system in place to track time and hold people accountable for their work.
- **Results-Based:** The second option is to pay on a per-unit basis. In other words, you provide X dollars for each unit of Y completed. A good example would be the bandit sign street teams that post things like "we buy houses" or political campaign signs. These guys could be paid per sign distributed.

You may still be wondering, though, how do brand ambassadors get paid? If your incentives are non-monetary, like free t-shirts, then brand ambassadors will get paid through the process defined by your program leader or by your company's own internal processes. Conversely, if you're using an app like CrewFire, and are providing monetary incentives to your ambassadors, then payments will be made directly through the platform, requiring little heavy lifting.

Outline Your Recruitment Strategy

Lastly, you will want to solidify your recruiting strategically. Specifically, your team will need to decide how to find brand ambassadors and define your recruitment strategy.

Typically, brands can choose from two recruitment strategies: cohorts vs. ongoing. You can think of cohorts like a grade in a school. There is a finite beginning and end, and once the cohort is graduated, you can easily pause the contract, review how the program went, and make any necessary changes before recruiting the next 'class,' so to speak, of brand ambassadors.

The main benefits of recruiting in cohorts are that you can graduate out lower-performing recruits seamlessly, invite high-performing brand ambassadors back, and even leverage them as managers of the program or orient the new cohorts or freshman (still continuing the eSchool analogy here).

On the other hand, if you have the resources to manage a brand ambassador program continually, you may consider an ongoing recruitment strategy. That means you'll always be accepting and reviewing new applications for brand ambassadors and will have more orientation events throughout the year as opposed to just one. The main benefit of an ongoing program is you can keep the momentum going. There is no starting and stopping; it's just a snowball that can continue to build and grow and push your brand to further heights. Additionally, it allows your relationship with your brand ambassadors to solidify over a long period of time.

Unfortunately, however, the word is out, and many more DTC brands are trying to recruit people to act as ambassadors. The most common recruitment tactics for brand ambassadors take place either online or offline.

Online recruitment can take the form of:

- Embedding a link to your landing page on all social media profiles.
- Sending invite links to repeat customers.
- Embedding a link to your landing page on your website footer.
- Searching your own social media followers.
- Running paid Instagram, LinkedIn, and Facebook ads.
- Embedding a link to your landing page on the 'Thank You' page at check out.
- Posting on job boards.
- Leveraging technology like [Discovery](#) to see an individual's social media profiles based solely on an email.

On the other hand, offline recruitment can also be an effective strategy depending on your brand and can take place as:

- Including invitation flyers in your packaging inserts.
- Hosting recruitment events.
- Passing out business cards.
- Posting flyers in a specific area (popular among college-oriented brands).

Some brands have even had great success recruiting internally or looking for brand ambassadors among their existing employees. The greatest example is [Diana Hunter, who acted as the face of Honey Bunches of Oats](#) for over 30 years. Proceed with caution in this tactic, though.

Diana's success as a brand ambassador worked so well because she truly loved the company and its product and dedicated 40 years of her life to the brand. If an employee's motivation is misplaced or not centered on their love for the brand, any content they generate may come off as another job requirement to consumers and potentially have the opposite desired result.

Additionally, there are sites available that serve as databases for people anxious to be brand ambassadors that can offer an excellent resource when trying to look. These include:

- [Trend](#) - Trend has curated an invite-only network of influencers and potential brand ambassadors. The benefit of using Trend is that

participants are pre-vetted before they can apply for your personal brand and are available across multiple industries, including Beauty, Food, Fashion, Fitness, Technology, and more.

- [Buzzsumo](#) - Buzzsumo enables brands to search and identify creators with engaged audiences and authority on Instagram, Twitter, and the web using various filters, extending beyond simple 'vanity' metrics like number of followers.
- [Klear](#) - Klear provides a database of brand ambassadors and influencers with more advanced search capabilities, including discovery by region, language, industry, hashtags, niche topics, past collaborations, influence level, and more.
- [pfluence](#) - Upfluence boasts a database of over 3 million potential brand ambassadors and influencers that can be searched across a wider range of platforms, including Twitch, Pinterest, Tiktok, and blogs. Companies can search for potential ambassadors based on community sizes, engagement rates, languages, and audience demographics.

There are truly an infinite number of ways to recruit your potential brand ambassadors that you will want to consider. If you're still looking for inspiration, check out our [guide outlining 36 tactics](#) you can use to attract potential brand ambassadors.

Bonus

Create Program Assets

Lastly, as a bonus step to this guide, we recommend that in the pre-launch stage of your brand ambassador program, you also take the time early on to develop all the program materials and assets needed.

Program Landing Page

Use your landing page to reiterate your company's mission, emphasize the program's benefits, and outline the expectations of ambassadors. Incorporate tantalizing visuals and inspirational copy to get visitors, customers, and brand loyalists excited about the potential of being a brand ambassador.

Recruitment Form

Next, you'll want to format your recruitment form. Within your form, you will want to gather basic yet essential information, including full name, social media handles, and email address.

Additionally, feel free to ask questions to gauge how passionate the individual is about your product or service, how knowledgeable they are of your company and its values, and their level of commitment to the program.

Avoid piling on too many details, legal minutia, "nots" "don'ts" and "unacceptable." While you want to be as transparent as possible, introducing these too early on will only work to scare off your next potential brand ambassador. It's best that these be incorporated somewhere else on the landing page where they can be read separately.

Speaking Points

While your brand ambassadors may act as the face of your company, you still want some control over how they represent your brand. One way to ensure everyone is on the same page and that the same message is being disseminated across all your ambassadors is by preparing specific speaking points about your company, its story, its products, and its unique selling proposition.

Include within these what you expect the brand ambassadors to say about your brand and what you do not want them or specifically prohibit them from doing while within the program.

Ambassador Handbook

It is also highly recommended that you create some sort of a new team member orientation packet. Depending on your brand and the type of hire, this packet will differ in size and content. However, in general, this book should act as a guide for any potential questions that a brand ambassador may have. It should include information on what they can expect to earn and how to be successful in the program.

It may even go so far as to directly include a welcome cover letter from the brand owner or program leader. These letters can allow your brand's personality to

shine, as well as thank them for joining your cause, welcome them to the team, and explain the company's history and the brand's direction.

Promotional Assets

This may sound obvious, but you'll also want to prepare and assemble all the right tools that your brand ambassadors will need to succeed. These can be indoctrination videos, behind-the-scenes photos, or other company-prepared assets.

Will they need a media pass to get into the event? Will they need to know who to contact about the guest list? Will they need digital copies of your flyers or photos from the event? What about login credentials for their new email account?

Ensure that you are setting your ambassadors up for success with whatever materials they need to complete the planned activities. Don't leave them wondering what's next or where to find materials, as this will leave low engagement for your activities. Assemble this upfront to set ambassadors up to truly hit the ground running.

Legal Documentation

To begin, work with your legal team to establish the legal framework for your brand ambassador program. There are certain considerations you will need to take into consideration in terms of licensing, who owns what, who has a right to use what, and the content release forms that you will most likely want to incorporate into the program so that you can use the user-generated content in any future marketing campaign.

Additionally, you'll want to limit any potential liability to your brand via the actions of your brand ambassadors by outlining the full terms and conditions. Within these, consider incorporating age limitations and full disclosures on the FCC advertising regulations and requirements depending on your company's needs.

While preparing all these materials initially may sound cumbersome, having them ready enables your brand ambassadors to start on the right foot with a clear path to success. I promise it's worth it. Everyone will be happier, less stressed out, and more effective because of it.

Going Live

Announce Your Program

Never assume that once you build, they will come. Even the most well-designed programs will not work if they sit stale on the shelf, noticed by no one. It is important to go live and get loud about the program at this stage. Get the word out in any way possible, leaning on your recruitment strategy, so that you can get those initial applications coming in. Set all your outward-facing recruiting assets to live, and make sure to communicate the goals, benefits, and requirements for participation in your program within any medium you use to advertise the program.



Welcome New Ambassadors

You've launched your program, promoted it, and your team has landed on an initial group of brand ambassadors with whom you want to work. Now what? While it may be tempting to get your team working right away (I mean especially considering all the efforts you've put into the program so far), a common misstep brands make with their brand ambassador programs is to not host some sort of welcome or orientation event for their new ambassadors.

An orientation event is my favorite as it works to build the community you want to create and continue to foster around your brand. How you do it, of course, will depend on your brand, the environment, and the nature of the work to be done by your team. It can be as simple as a virtual zoom meetup or as extravagant as a catered welcome party and can go a long way toward solidifying the community you're trying to build.

Through a company-hosted event, take the time to properly introduce each new member to the internal team and new ambassadors. These events provide a great venue to provide and go over all promotional assets, reinforce the program's expectations, and get to know one another. Above all else, a welcome event sets the tone that you care about this brand ambassador community and that they should care about you.



Announce Your Program

Never assume that once you build, they will come. Even the most well-designed programs will not work if they sit stale on the shelf, noticed by no one. It is important to go live and get loud about the program at this stage. Get the word out in any way possible, leaning on your recruitment strategy, so that you can get those initial applications coming in. Set all your outward-facing recruiting assets to live, and make sure to communicate the goals, benefits, and requirements for participation in your program within any medium you use to advertise the program.

Ongoing Management

Unfortunately, setting up a brand ambassador program is not a one-and-done situation but a continual process for optimum success. As such, we take you through the key steps in managing yours.

Daily Tasks

In the ongoing management of your program, there are certain activities or chores you will need to do to maintain its success.

The first is rotating in fresh activities to keep up with the latest social media and other trends. You've brought on brand ambassadors to remain relevant and in touch with your audience. With social media, what keeps the interest of your audience piqued changes over time, and you will want to ensure that your activities also reflect that.

Secondly, you will have to begin fulfilling reward orders for your ambassadors. I can not stress enough how important it will be to be responsive in sending out the materials your team has earned. Doing so quickly will keep your brand ambassadors motivated and dedicated to the program. Keeping your brand ambassadors waiting for merchandise or payment will send them running to the hills, telling all their social media networks about it, and destroying the program you have worked diligently to create. This is also why selecting the right tool early on becomes critically important. The better your tool, the more manageable your program becomes.

Thirdly, you most likely will continue to receive new applications from interested people, no matter if you have chosen a cohort or ongoing program. So long as the program is publicized, make sure to continue to process these applications and either approve, reject, or add applicants to a waitlist.

Maximize Your Program

Now that your program is set up, you will want to leverage your brand ambassadors to the max. The more successful a program you host, the more likely you find an inbox full of new ambassadors waiting to work alongside your brand.

Let's look at how you can consistently maximize your program.

Continue Recruiting

It may sound contradictory, but at the highest level, continuing to recruit new ambassadors will enable you to maximize your program. It will add momentum to

the snowball effect that your brand ambassador acts as and can create that viral phenomenon for your brand. It is also vital as it ensures the brand stays fresh and creative and you hear new perspectives about the program.

Consistent Communication

You can additionally maximize your program by establishing and maintaining regular and constant lines of communication with your team. Continue to provide them ongoing access to digital assets to use (i.e. images, BTS videos, etc.), as well as exclusive company updates. Consider developing a frequently asked questions forum within your tool or online platform of choice that will enable them to search for questions without engaging the program leader or that can potentially be answered by fellow ambassadors.

Above all else, ensure to disseminate official company announcements and communications consistently and in one place. Certain brands prefer to use Facebook Groups, as they can dually serve as a digital hangout space to connect, share information, articles, links, gifs, etc. Others choose to use email, which may be lost amongst younger brand ambassadors while effective one-on-one communication. And even others use SMS notifications which provide very to the point and a great response rate but don't exactly foster that community vibe.

CrewFire enables you to communicate with your brand ambassadors through all of these and provides a general space to act as the announcement board for your company.

Your program leader will also need to balance providing too little communication, which can result in losing interest among ambassadors or providing too much communication, which can also cause overload and burnout amongst your participants. We've found that a nice sweet spot is planning out larger campaigns on a monthly cycle.

Foster a Sense of Community

Finally, prioritize keeping your community engaged to maximize your brand ambassador program to its fullest capacity. Encourage your ambassadors to spark conversations with one another, and reward them for following each other on social media platforms. Invite ambassadors to come up with campaign ideas.

Provide brand ambassadors recognition and highlight the content that some of your star players are putting out there. Provide educational content such as free tools or resources that provide brand-relevant career or lifestyle advice. Lastly, test new products and services with your brand ambassador team, and document these interactions where possible. Your brand ambassadors will feel honored.

Creating a sense of community (offline, online, or both) around your team is so critical because it makes the program more effective and fun. What happens when you hit the gym with a partner? Or cram for a final with a study group? You stay longer, work harder, learn from each other, and most importantly – have more fun! It's no different when it comes to Brand Ambassadors. It encourages and breeds loyalty among your brand ambassador program.

Feedback

An awesome benefit of building a community for your company is the feedback you can solicit. As the owner or brand manager, you'll have your finger on the pulse of your team simply by participating in your own community. You'll be able to get a really clear picture of what's working and what's not. This is an extremely important component of any business practice, not just Brand Ambassadors – always get feedback from the people taking part.

Along the same lines, providing and soliciting feedback is also critical in leveraging your brand ambassador program. At the end of the day, your brand ambassadors love your company and want to know how they're doing, if what they're doing is working, and they'll also want to tell you how you're doing as well.

Cycle Out Inactive Ambassadors

While we hope all brand ambassador relationships can last a lifetime, it's also important to plan and know how to end one when the time comes.

You may be wondering why you need to let go of a brand ambassador; they're committed to your brand, right? They even say so by completing all of your activities. Well, as with anything else, time changes things. You may want to consider letting go of an ambassador if the content becomes spammy or lacks meaning and is very clearly made only to game the rewards system you have set

up. You may also want to let go of ambassadors that are not engaging. The whole goal of the program is for your team's content to generate sales, traffic, or engagement, and if it's not doing that, then it does not serve anyone to retain them in the program.

The program's initial design will likely determine how you cycle out inactive ambassadors. If you have chosen to recruit cohorts, once the cohort period is over, there will be a natural point for you to let people know that they will not be invited back into the next cohort. If you have an ongoing recruitment strategy, make sure to bring up an issue and provide the ambassador an opportunity to make a correction. If there is still no improvement, it will be time to cycle them out. To actually end the relationship, make sure there is open communication as to why. I mean, at the end of the day, these ambassadors are still your customers, and you want to keep them that way. If it happens to be the case where a brand ambassador is not achieving results, understand why, and if you feel it is appropriate to terminate the relationship, consider conducting an exit interview. If it happens to be the case where you as a brand have decided to go in a different direction, I would equally emphasize explaining the reasons why providing talking points for your brand ambassadors to convey and keeping all communications as amicable as possible.

Summary (Conclusion)

Awesome work! You've made it through the most extensive guide on brand ambassadors, the benefits they can provide to your company, and the steps you can take to plan, launch, and manage your brand ambassador program.

As you apply what you've learned, remember that no brand ambassador program is the same. What may work for your competitors or a similar company in your niche may not work for you. For guidance on tailoring a program specific to your company, feel free to contact us directly. We not only specialize in creating a platform to manage your entire brand ambassador program but also work directly with companies to create unique campaigns.

About CrewFire

Here's a little about us. CrewFire is a brand ambassador management software and marketing platform.

CrewFire is a brand ambassador marketing platform that helps consumer brands drive more engagement, shares, user-generated content, and referrals by turning their customers into their army of brand ambassadors and micro-influencers on social media (and beyond!).

Brand Ambassadors FAQ

While this book is long, you probably have some follow-up questions. So we compiled a list of common questions we hear from brands considering starting a brand ambassador program.

How Many Brand Ambassadors Should a Company Have?

This really depends on your overall goals as a team. We have seen thriving communities of just 100 ambassadors and big programs with over 7,000 ambassadors.

Sometimes brands think that the only way to have a successful program is if you have thousands of ambassadors working for you. But it's important to remember that numbers aren't everything.

You want to assess how much buzz each ambassador can generate for your brand, how dedicated they are to the program, and if they will continuously show up for you.

If you have 200 ambassadors that all have a decent size audience and are passionate about working for your brand, this will be way more effective than 5,000 ambassadors, where the majority are inactive.

In your first few months, try to get 200-300 solid ambassadors, then continue to scale up!

What Companies Have Brand Ambassadors?

More companies than you think. Hundreds of thousands of brands have created brand ambassador programs and seen great success.

Brand ambassadors are popular in the following industries:

- Fashion and apparel
- Beauty, skincare, makeup, and hair care
- Supplement brands
- Fitness
- Crypto and finance
- Food, beverage, and alcohol
- Fine jewelry

Essentially, any brand with a customer base that raves about its products or services can benefit from an ambassador program.

Where Can I Find Companies Looking for Brand Ambassadors?

One of the best methods for finding if a brand is looking for brand ambassadors is to Google the brand's name + ambassador program and search for the top results!

Many brands have a dedicated page on their website that details their ambassador program, so search their website or use Google. Additionally, you can always search the brand on social media and see if they have announced their program.

Try searching the brand's tagged photos on Instagram to see if the photos mention brand ambassadors or if the UGC includes branded hashtags.

Who Are Some Famous Brand Ambassadors?

There have been lots of famous brand ambassadors/influencers out there. Some of the most prominent include:

- Karlie Kloss for L'Oreal
- Rihanna for Vita Coco
- Kevin Hart for Fabletics
- George Clooney for Nespresso
- Natacha Océane for GymShark
- Beyonce for Pepsi
- Tiger Woods for Nike

Do Brand Ambassadors Get Free Stuff?

This depends on how you would like to structure your program. Some brands will give free products to ambassadors in exchange for UGC, while others will give points for UGC that they can then put towards rewards.

Overall, you will want to define how you plan to reward your brand ambassadors and decide if giving free products is a good option for your brand.

Can You Get Free Brand Ambassadors?

You can get people to sign up for your program for free, but brand ambassador programs will cost you something.

You will have to reward your ambassadors for participating in the program through free products, exclusive experiences, or points they can exchange for rewards or payments; virtually no ambassador will work for free.

If you try to look for ambassadors that work for free, you run the risk of having the ambassadors lack motivation with the program or produce low-quality content.

Brand ambassadors will be an extension of your marketing plan and help you hit your growth goals, but you need to give them something in return for their effort! If you can't financially afford to reward your ambassadors for their hard work, then you might want to reconsider an ambassador program.

The bottom line is that content creation takes time, and you want to find people that are dedicated to your program. So it's important to remember that anyone you bring onto your team will want to earn money, products, or experiences in exchange for their time.

Can I Use Employees as Brand Ambassadors?

Yes, absolutely! Many brands have encouraged their team to join their ambassador programs. Employees can offer a nuanced and more personal touch when creating content for the brand since they work directly with the brand!

They will be able to speak authentically about their employer and rave about their brand!

If your employees have nothing but good things to say about your brand, then consider adding employees to your ambassador program.