

Former IBM senior execs launch “Brands Rising” to help clients empower, train employee brand ambassadors

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March 10, 2013 Susan Emerick, brand advocacy specialist and former IBM senior advisor, today announced the official opening of Brands Rising, LLC. The new consultancy was founded by Emerick in collaboration with partner Jeanne Murray, also a former IBM executive.

Emerick and Murray’s intent for Brands Rising is to help Fortune 100 companies create a more authentic (and impactful) brand experience through the development and implementation of employee advocacy programs. Specifically, “these are programs that are built on analytics, led by engaged employees and valued for measurable impact on the business,” notes Emerick. Both assert that employee advocacy programs are now essential to local/global brand success.

At its core, an employee advocacy program is about enabling an organization’s best brand ambassadors - its knowledgeable employees - to build trusted relationships with prospective and established customers through social media. Says Murray, the ultimate goal for any employee program should be satisfied customers, shared expertise and an enlightened network of people who learn from each other.

Already established marketing experts and thought leaders, both women became interested in social media, and social business, while working at technology giant IBM - where they first met. Emerick led the team responsible for the company’s social media strategy including social media listening and planning, influencer and brand engagement guidelines, social media governance and policy and measurement standards. (Emerick details lessons learned and best practices while at IBM in her recent book, [The Most Powerful Brand on Earth](#), published by Prentice Hall). Murray spent a significant portion of her career at IBM pioneering innovative internet projects, including first-of-a-kind audience engagement, social learning and social media measurement programs.

“Most important, Susan and Jeanne are *helping brands scale*,” says Greg Gerik, vice president of product marketing for Shoutlet. To truly scale a program, it isn’t enough to simply deploy technology. Effective programs must help employees build skills to engage and gain trust while managing risk, and use analytics to improve results - and to achieve this at scale is a constant challenge for even the most advanced companies.”

Says Emerick, we look forward to working with global brand leaders at all stages of the maturity curve. Brands Rising will offer the full range of services for clients interested in raising their brand’s impact, from strategy and planning, legal and compliance, education and training to performance measurement and quantifying ROI.

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