








# **Employer Brand Communications**

*Promoting Who You Are to  
Your Future Employees*



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# SECTION 1 OVERVIEW ■

For over 10 years, Slice Communications has supported companies with their marketing efforts. More specifically, we have executed their external communications strategies to promote their products, services, and brands to targeted customers and clients. This was done originally with public relations, but later incorporated social media marketing and email marketing, all of which embrace - and encourage - effective two-way communications.

For most of history, and in most companies today, marketing has been focused on creating growth through new customer acquisition and getting repeat business from existing customers. That is what drives top-line growth.

However, recent conversations with CEOs and leadership team members have shifted from the customer audience being the priority. Many recognize that the growth they want to achieve is only possible if they have the right employees. It is the single biggest thing holding them back. In many cases, they're turning away work from customers because they don't have the people they need to do it. This is particularly true in technology, manufacturing, and professional services.

As a result, they are shifting their focus to employees. They must, for the first time in many cases, focus on

creating a brand for their company as an employer - not just a product or service provider.

Creating an employer brand isn't enough, though. You can absolutely be the employer of choice in your industry or geography, but, if no one knows it, you will never achieve your goals. That is why this eBook was written. In it, you will learn:

- How to recognize the internal and external perception of your company as an employer
- How to communicate your culture externally
- How to ensure that marketing, HR, and employee champions work well together to communicate the brand
- How to know if you're successful
- When and how to get help

## Before You Continue

Before you continue reading, know this: building and promoting an external brand is not something that can be done alone. There may be some false starts and some barriers along the way. But there is a double benefit: people will want to work for you, and your customers will likely feel great about working with a company that cares about its people. It is time to make the investment and put yourself ahead of the competition for talent.

## SECTION 2 THE TRADITIONAL AUDIENCES FOR MARKETING

In traditional marketing, there are five audiences that businesses need to speak to. These five audiences often fall under the accountability of several team members.



The first audience - and often the most important - is **customers**. For B2C businesses, it is people who buy your product or service. For B2B businesses, it will be anyone who is a potential client. These targets are often approached by marketing communications teams through “traditional” routes, such as public relations, social media marketing, and digital advertising.



Secondarily, referral sources - also known as **centers of influence** and influencers - are essential for many businesses. They create word of mouth opportunities and have a role in decision-making. These targets are approached using influencer marketing tactics that include paid promotions, affiliate programs, channel takeovers, and others.



The third most important audience for many businesses is **potential partners**. Partners are determined based on how much each business can leverage the other - such as the relationship a marketing agency and design agency may share. While they go for similar audiences, they each fill different roles that boost the other. These targets are most approached by business development professionals.

## SECTION 2 THE TRADITIONAL AUDIENCES FOR MARKETING

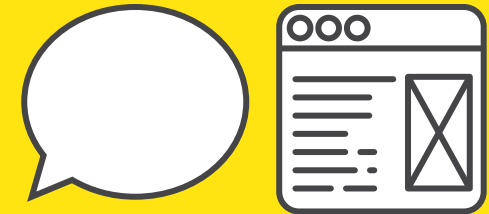


For some businesses, a fourth audience is **investors**. These are the people who give you the capital you need to grow and thrive. You need to talk with them regularly, but you also need to ensure they see all the positive news happening on an almost daily basis. The best investors also become the biggest advocates. They benefit from sharing good news with other investors, customers, and strategic partners, so be sure to make it easy for them.



The fifth audience that is the focus of this eBook is **employees**. Without the right employees, businesses are forced to stagnate and turn away new business. Traditionally, it is human resource's role to find these new employees and help acclimate them into the company; however, there is a clear divide between HR and marketing, and that silo is what needs to be destroyed in order to recruit to fill the talent gap.

### Fast Facts from LinkedIn Hiring



According to candidates, the most effective talent branding tools are **company websites** and **social media**



Companies can expand their talent pool by **10x** by recruiting through their employees' networks



The top channels people use to look for new jobs are **online job boards (60%)**, **social networks (56%)**, and **word of mouth (50%)**

Data provided by The Ultimate List of Hiring Statistics: For Hiring Managers, HR Professionals, and Recruiters by LinkedIn Talent Solutions

## SECTION 3 RECOGNIZING YOUR EMPLOYER BRAND

Congratulations! You've been recognized as one of the Best Places to Work. Or perhaps you haven't yet, but you know you could be. People love working with you. You have a ping pong table, free seltzer water, a college reimbursement program, parental leave, unlimited vacation, or other perks that employees value. Your employees like to work for your company, as shown through their longer tenure.

These are great parts of an office culture. But the challenge is that only your employees know this culture. Internally, very few people have any idea how the company is perceived as an employer, while your internal culture is not apparent to external potential employees.

### STOP.

Before you read any further, it must be understood that the work outlined on the following pages is not for companies that are struggling to turn around or create culture. Successful employer branding requires that a strong, positive culture is already in place. If you are struggling with culture, please contact an HR consultant who specializes in that work. Once a positive company culture is in place, come back to this eBook to learn to communicate the culture externally and attracting the right employees.

Most companies rely on their employee surveys alone to figure out if people think it is a good place to work. The good news is there has been a proliferation of tools that gather information from employees and measure feedback in real-time or on a monthly basis. The information collected can span teams, bosses or direct reports. They do it qualitatively and quantitatively. All of this information can be incredibly powerful, but it is not enough. There are other parts of the story contributing to how your company is perceived as an employer.

## SECTION 3 RECOGNIZING YOUR EMPLOYER BRAND

There are nine tools that can be used to determine how your brand is perceived:



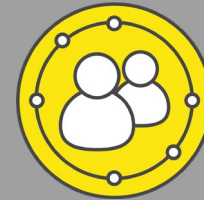
### *Employee Survey*

We all know what this is. Make sure whatever you're using includes questions about how they describe the culture and whether they think it is an employer of choice. Also ask for specific examples of experiences they've had that demonstrate the culture. This will let you know if they're honest and these stories can become great content in the future.



### *Applicant Survey*

This is one of the most overlooked sources of information. People apply for jobs because they want to improve their current situation. Chances are, you already have a database of them with their email addresses, the position(s) for which they applied, and their geography. Ask them a few questions either during the screening process or after about why they applied to work with you, what they think your culture is, and how they learned about the company. Sure, most of this will be complimentary since they want to work for you, but you will learn pretty quickly if there is a common perception that is not aligned with the image you want to convey.



### *Mission, Vision, Values Worksheet*

This is not about whether your company has a written mission, vision, and values. You should already have those in place. Instead, you need to be clear about HOW you're delivering on those statements. What are the stories? How do you live these things? Who are the people who are the best examples of them? How well are your words becoming actions?



## SECTION 3 RECOGNIZING YOUR EMPLOYER BRAND



### *Diversity and Inclusion Commitment*

If you care about having a diverse workforce (however you define it), you need to carefully evaluate how effectively you are delivering on this promise. Do you have internal or external programs to attract and welcome employees who are different than your current staff? Are these programs well-resourced and effective? Or are they just lip service and everyone knows it? Where are the opportunities to improve?



### *Online Reputation Audit*

Most people find open positions online. All people research companies online. So what does your online presence say about you as an employer? What copy, images, and videos are on your “About” and hiring website pages? What does your LinkedIn company page look like? What about the personal LinkedIn pages of your hiring and management team members? What about your other social channels? What about third-party websites? Have current or former employees written reviews on Glassdoor, Google, or Facebook that support or degrade your business? Has anyone else written about you as an employer? You need to know these answers to know how you are being perceived.



### *Awards and Recognition*

If you’ve won awards, what are they for and who gave them to you? More importantly, what other awards do you want to get in the future? Doing this work will help you realize how you want to be positioned in the market and who will give you credibility. Look at other companies who have received those awards to get some insight into who your competitors for talent are.



## SECTION 3 RECOGNIZING YOUR EMPLOYER BRAND



### *Champion Readiness Review*

Champions are your current employees who can become your ambassadors. We're going to talk about them more in the "Building the Team" section. But first thing's first - you need to identify them. Who are the people you want to showcase so you can attract more employees like them? Select a group of people diverse in age, background, and experience so you can showcase the variety of people who will work well in your company. Also spend a little time thinking and talking about how ready this group of people is. Is there a person who is already a great writer? Already really good on video? Already a LinkedIn rock star? Already referring people to work at the company? These will be important factors as you think about training and deploying them to external audiences.



### *Job Description Audit*

Most applicants will read a job description before applying. But most of the descriptions are bland and boring. Sure, they may list the company values and some of the benefits, but they rarely communicate anything about the feeling of working there. Take a look at your job descriptions. What is the process by which they are written? What words are used effectively? What words and phrases are missing? If a potential employee only read this, what would that person feel about the company?



### *Content Review*

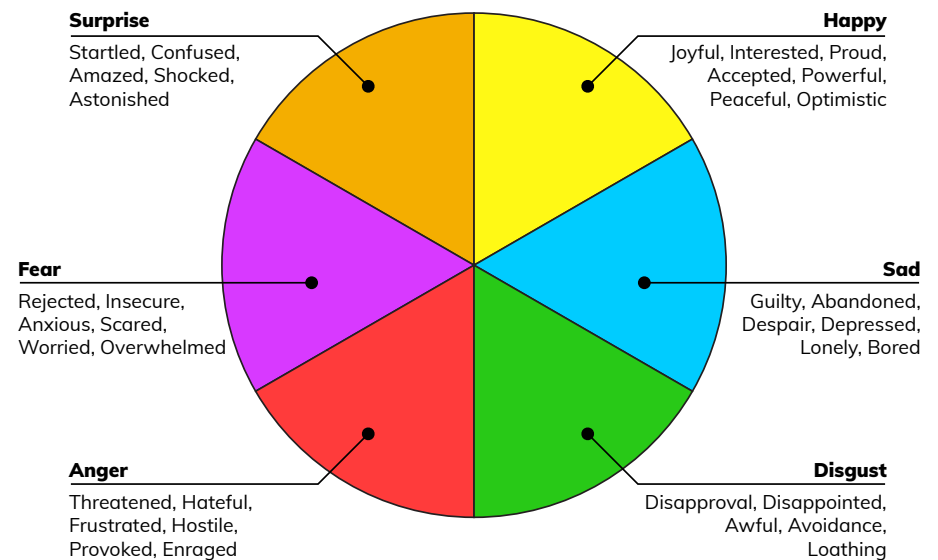
All companies today produce content. There are five types: written, visual, audio, video, and experiential. What does your content communicate? Is it aggressive? Generic? Warm? Exclusive? Technical? Does it help or hurt how you want to be perceived as an employer?

After you've done all this work, it's time to get the leadership, HR, and marketing teams together to review them. From there, there needs to be agreement on the types of employees you want to attract and how you're going to communicate externally to get their attention and leverage your company as the best place for them.

## SECTION 4 ARTICULATING YOUR EMPLOYER BRAND

Deciding where to work is an emotional decision. According to LinkedIn, the most important factors for accepting a new job are compensation (49%), professional development (33%), and work/life balance (29%). Each of these factors are emotional because they have a massive impact outside of the office. Compensation determines whether someone is able to send their child to college or go on vacation. Professional development determines how successful you can be and how far you can advance. Work/life balance is essential for mental health and burnout.

When articulating your brand as an employer, begin with the feelings you want your employees to have. Our chart highlights the most basic emotions, such as joy and anger, and then breaks them down further into more complex emotions. Debate the pros and cons of each one and how they fit into your business. At the end of the day, you should agree on three to five feelings you want to create. These become similar to values. The best companies will evaluate everything they do internally and externally based on whether they create these feelings. Every photo, every job description, and every social media post should help connect with potential employees emotionally. These become the “true north” for the employer brand.



## SECTION 4 ARTICULATING YOUR EMPLOYER BRAND

Once you have the feelings, it's time to create the messages that hopefully create the intended emotions. Messaging should have three parts:

- **Positioning Statement** - This is the one thing that makes you different than competitors as an employer. Remember that your competitors for talent may be very different than your competitors for customers.
- **Point-of-View** - This is what you believe as an employer. It might be about your industry, or society, or how people should develop professionally. People will almost always make the emotional choice and work with people who believe the same things they do. Unfortunately, companies almost never articulate this.
- **Supporting Messages** - These are the other things that your highest priority potential employees must know in order to want to learn more. There should be no more than five on the list. The simpler the messages are, the more effective you will be in communicating them with feeling.

Congratulations! You've done the basic work of creating the employer brand that will help your company grow. This will ensure that your company is aligned around your stated priorities, and everyone is aligned on how you will communicate.

## SECTION 5 BUILDING THE TEAM TO SUPPORT YOUR EMPLOYER BRAND

Most companies have never given their employer brand a single thought. There's certainly no one accountable for it. It tends to fall in the gap between HR and marketing. Sure, there are positions like Chief Culture Officer and Employee Communications Manager that are showing up at some businesses, and these are great as long as there is an external communication dimension to the position. Otherwise, someone else will have to be involved as well. As we've said previously, an employer brand is only as effective as the communication about it.

For most companies, an employer branding effort will be the first time HR and marketing work closely together. They have shared goals and objectives: make sure people know why we're an employer of choice, make sure they see our materials, and compel them to apply for a job or send a referral. The success for all objectives depends on cooperation between both parties.

In the beginning, we recommend one marketing and one HR person each be designated to co-lead the project. They should divide up the 9 Tools and work together to complete them. They should work on the emotions and messages together, and then complete the other tools with back-and-forth discussion.

The rest of the marketing and HR teams need to be involved as well, since they will all be responsible for executing parts of it, whether writing a job description or creating a new culture video. Every single person who touches the employer brand - from the receptionist to the recruiter - needs to know the emotions and messages.

The third part of the team is the Champions. These are the employees that are the best, living representations of your culture. They are the ones you want to showcase because they are great at what they do and people like that. It's really that simple.

The truth is that your best employees want to help you grow. They're already doing it everyday. Most great employees are happy to help represent the brand. Just ask them. But when you do, be ready for the answer to be, "Sure, but I don't know how."

Champions must be identified, resourced, and trained.

Let's start with identification. The HR and marketing teams probably have a pretty good sense of who some of these people are. Their initial interview was memorable, and they haven't disappointed. They get great reviews from their managers. They're

## SECTION 5 BUILDING THE TEAM TO SUPPORT YOUR EMPLOYER BRAND

promoted quickly or given marquee projects. They have meaningful, personal stories about why they love working at the company. You'll know if you have identified the right people if they give you the answer above. They want to help but don't know how. They'll have some ideas of stories they should share or ways they could promote the brand. They don't ask for more money or for some of their other responsibilities to be given to someone else.

From there, you can work with them on readiness. What do their individual LinkedIn profiles look like? What do they say? Have they given any speeches, or sat on any panels? Do they see any of those opportunities for themselves? Do they write- blogs, articles, anything else? Do they want to? Have they ever given an interview to a reporter? How did it go? Do they like to make videos? Do they know how? Are they comfortable or do they hate the sound of their voices?

From here, you can craft individual or group training workshops for them on these subjects, as necessary. If necessary, bring in outside consultants and instructors. Any time and energy you put into your Champions will come back tenfold.

In the beginning of this effort, it will likely make sense to bring in outside consultants or facilitators. They should be able to work with marketing, HR, and champions to oversee the execution of the employer brand. Initially, they should be accountable for the goals and objectives until they can be understood and consumed by an internal team member. They should remove barriers and resolve conflicts. Most of all, they should provide focus and guidance. This will go a long way in making sure the employer brand is communicated well.

## SECTION 6 PROMOTING YOUR EMPLOYER BRAND

As mentioned previously, promoting an employer brand should begin simply. This is the first time the company is communicating this way, so it needs to be straightforward and easy to execute.

As with any good marketing communications effort, everything should start with content. There are five types of content, and it's up to you to decide which ones make the most sense for your brand and targeted audiences.

### *Important!*

The goal of all content is to create the emotions you already selected.



### *Written*

Website text; job descriptions; social media posts; blogs; emails; testimonials



### *Visual*

Photos of people, the office, company events; memes; quote graphics; photos on your website; social media posts



### *Video*

Culture video; day-in-the-life videos; short social media videos; event recap videos; job-specific videos



### *Audio*

Podcasts; messages from the CEO; radio interviews

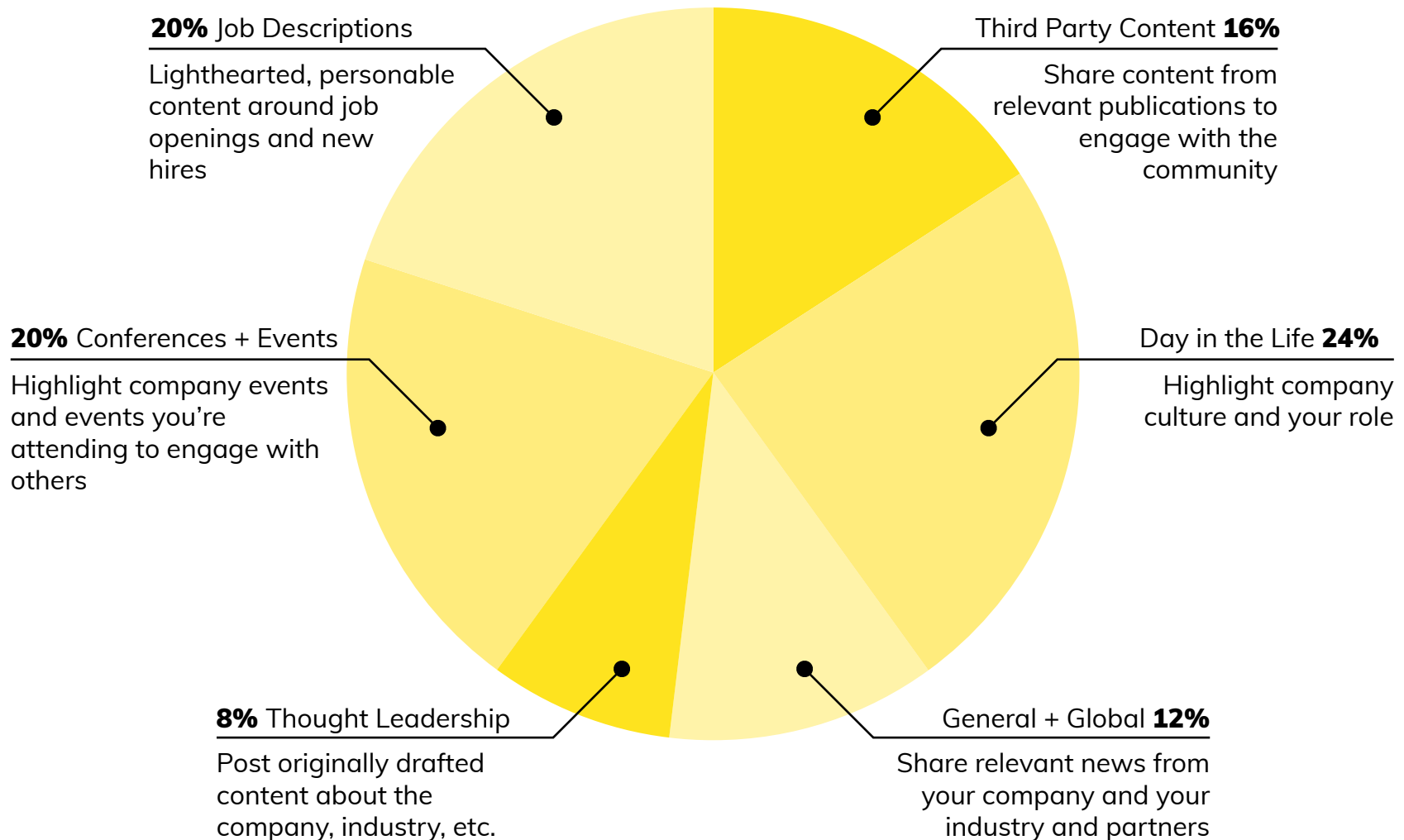


### *Experiential*

Job fairs & recruiting events; Promotional items and giveaways

## SECTION 6 PROMOTING YOUR EMPLOYER BRAND

Once you determine the types of content you want to produce, you need to decide what is realistic in terms of production. Once you have that, you can put together a content or posting mix that looks something like this:





## SECTION 6 PROMOTING YOUR EMPLOYER BRAND

Now it's time to get your employer content in front of the right people.



### *Social Media*

According to LinkedIn, social professional networks are the top source of quality hires, above job boards and employee referrals. Sure, this is coming from LinkedIn, so there is a not-so-hidden agenda, but the data is probably pretty good. Spend your time and money here. Promote your content to people with the right job titles and experience that aren't already connected with you. Work with your Champions to share content, connect with potential employees, and contribute to the conversation.



### *Public Relations*

It's time to get your Champions out there speaking and presenting. With these roles at industry conferences or hiring events, they will have the opportunity to meet and talk with a number of people who could be great employees. And, of course, they need to include a few slides about how much they love their company, colleagues, and job. Don't forget about awards. A steady flow of recognition will give credibility with many potential employees and referral sources.



### *Email Marketing*

People have applied to work for you. They're not the right fit now, but what about the future? Sending regular emails to this group of people will keep you connected with them in a way that is positive and full of future opportunity. Who knows? They may have friends who are perfect for another position, or they could even end up becoming your customer one day.

## SECTION 7 MEASURING EFFECTIVENESS

What gets measured gets managed. Employer branding is new, which means there will naturally be a question about the return on investment in the initiative. That's okay as long as everyone knows that building a brand as an employer of choice takes some time.

Just like any other marketing communications effort, there should be a scorecard that tracks the most important KPIs weekly. The scorecard should have two sections: results goals and activities goals. This will also ensure that the marketing, HR, and Champions teams are all working well together. Here is a sample of a scorecard that will likely work for any employer branding effort.

Goal	Accountability	Timeframe
<b>Results Goals</b>		
Brand Impressions with Potential Employees	AJ	Weekly
Traffic to Careers Webpage	LM	Weekly
New Applicants	LM	Monthly
Average Time to Fill a Position	GU	Quarterly
Awards Received	AL	Quarterly
Speaking Opportunities Secured	AL	Monthly
<b>Activities Goals</b>		
Hours of Champion Training	AJ	Quarterly
Content Produced	LM	Monthly
Champions with Active LinkedIn Accounts	GU	Weekly
Awards Submitted	AL	Monthly
Speaking Applications Submitted	AL	Monthly

One of the major challenges of this effort is ensuring that your company is perceived internally and externally as an employer of choice. For that reason, you should also survey your employees and applicants quarterly about the perception of the company. It can be a simple survey with just a few questions. Capturing benchmarks and showing progress over time will complement the weekly scorecard to prove return on investment.

# ABOUT THE AUTHOR ■



*Cass (Oryl) Bailey is the founder and CEO of Slice Communications.*

She believes that integrated public relations, social media, and email marketing efforts are critical for growing businesses looking to accomplish their business goals.

Cass brings a wide variety of experiences to the communications strategies she develops for the firm's clients. With a background in international politics, economics, and philosophy, communications has become her passion and she has been tapped by various industry associations and the media to share her insights and experiences in the field. She is also the host and emcee for Social Media Day in Philadelphia, one of the largest events of its type in the United States.

She is deeply involved with her community, serving as Marketing Communications Chair for both the Entrepreneurs Organization of Philadelphia and the Business Leadership Forum at The Union League of Philadelphia, Executive Committee Member of the Small Business Board at the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce, Chair Emerita of the Board for Tree House Books, and Secretary Emerita of the Board for Hopeworks 'N Camden. Cass graduated from The Catholic University of America with a degree in international politics, economics and philosophy.

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# ABOUT SLICE COMMUNICATIONS ■



*We exist to get people to pay attention to our clients.*



As a leading Philadelphia marketing and communications company, it is who we are as people, what gets us up in the morning, and what keeps us going. Since our founding, we have put our collective innate need for attention to work for our clients. We are proud that we have helped them achieve their business goals and grow strategically.

**Let's Chat!**

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