

Putting the Spotlight on Your Employer Brand



We often tell our candidates that they need to have a strong personal brand in order to propel their career to where they want it to go. However, what about the other side of this? As illustrated in [our recent Sourced Report](#), candidates have been more and more vocal about the importance of working for an organisation that has a great culture and treats their employees well, in addition to more obvious motivators such as flexible working hours. In today's competitive market, this perception can give companies the edge, especially when it comes to snaring top talent. So how do you showcase your company in order to attract great people who are a perfect fit? The answer, showcase your workplace culture through employer branding.

What Exactly is Employer Branding?

There still seems to be a reasonable amount of confusion about what employer branding is, and who is responsible for it. [Recent surveys](#) have demonstrated a huge disparity in respondents' understanding of who "owns" employer branding, what its goals are, and even whether their company has one or not.

Your employer brand is an external representation of your internal brand. Sometimes this is driven by a company's set of values, but more often it manifests itself naturally through the way employees interact with and within the company. Traditionally this was communicated externally through word of mouth, advertising and your recruitment partners (such as Sourced), however, tools such as Glassdoor, LinkedIn and more recently Indeed, have changed the landscape.

Shaping your employer brand requires a long-term strategy that encompasses what you want to achieve; whether that's attracting talent or simply positioning yourself better in the marketplace. In order for your brand to be successful, you need to know who your target audience is, what your brand is, and how to make that brand appeal to your chosen audience.

Why Proactively Take Control of Your Brand?

With everybody using some kind of digital or social media, and information so readily accessible, employer branding is now more important than ever. Candidates, and competitors, can learn about your company within seconds, so it's essential to be aware of what can be found out about you publically and to control this content. It's also fundamental to attracting top talent. With **51% of New Zealand professionals** ranking a company's employment brand as the deciding factor when looking at a company to work for, the way you present yourself as an employer can be the difference between recruiting a high value candidate and not. Orion Health or SLI Systems are great examples of organisations that don't have highly visible consumer brands but are hugely popular when it comes to their employer brand.

However, branding doesn't just speak to candidates. Though establishing yourself as a great place to work is of course a great tool for candidate attraction, it also has knock on effects and sheds a better light on your brand for current employees and consumers. Research has shown that companies with a strong brand have a 28% lower turnover rate than companies who don't.

Discovering Your Brand

Before you can show off your brand and reap these rewards, you need to figure out what your brand actually is. Though you may feel you already have a good idea of what it's like to work for your company, it is highly likely that there will be many different opinions of what it should be throughout your company. This is not to say that people do not enjoy working at your company, but rather that how they view the employer brand, and what they see as the company's priorities, strengths and weaknesses will be different dependent on what they do. Although in a small company it is fairly easy to decide on a vision for the brand, this proves more difficult in larger organisations. For instance, a company's IT department may see the company in an entirely different light from their counterparts in Accounting.

So how do you solve this problem? The solution is not to come to a compromise on what the brand is, but rather to tailor multiple employer brands for each type of role you are recruiting or looking to appeal to. In specialist IT companies, this may not be such a significant problem, but it pays to keep this in mind when recruiting for a non-IT role. If you are recruiting for an accounting, sales, or marketing person, you may need to present your brand differently than you would to a web developer or programmer.

When developing your employer brand, ask yourself what the most attractive and compelling attributes of your organisation are to current and potential employees, what your company culture is, what roles are critical to your success, what your employees' perception is of working with your company, and how all of these elements align with your external brand. Another essential step is to build brand personas for your ideal audiences. Include the demographics, skills, experience and interests of the ideal people you want to attract, and keep this in mind when building your brand. You can also consult external stakeholders, like applicants to roles and your recruitment agency, to get an objective, unbiased take on your employer brand.

Most importantly however, you should make sure your employer brand has input from across the company. Holding focus groups where employees from across the board in terms of role and personal background are represented is a great way to get their view on how your employer brand stacks up. After taking these opinions on board, compare the ideal audience from the brand personas you built to the results from your employee focus groups, and see if those you want to attract are different from those you have attracted. If there is a disparity between these, then either adapt your employer brand to fit what your employees are saying, or change your day-to-day practices to reflect the employer brand you aspire to. Above all else, it's vital that your employer brand is genuine. If your company's brand doesn't reflect its relationship with employees then it will quickly be exposed by unhappy employees who are not working in the environment they expected.

Getting Your Brand Seen

Knowing what your employment brand is, however, is only half the battle. You also have to showcase your brand in the most effective way possible in order for it to be successful in drawing great candidates. The most important part of this is to get your



5 Employer Branding tips for
Tech Startups

Create a Video
Using rich media like video to promote your brand is
a great way to increase engagement.

employees involved. Your employees are your employer brand's biggest stakeholders, so they should also be its biggest advocates. Any attempt to showcase it to the world without their support is bound to fall flat on its face at some point.

The best way to do this is to celebrate your staff internally and externally and produce content that they will be happy to engage with. Many companies have internal award programmes, but often these are not publicised on external company channels. Celebrate employee achievements on your company website (with their permission of course), even for things that may fall outside of work, such as side projects or personal milestones. Query your employees on the kind of media they are consuming, or the kind of content they would like to see, and look into featuring this on your company's blog.

Social media is a fantastic tool for enhancing your brand. With so many different channels available, it can be quite overwhelming when you first dip your toes in. It's important to select the right channels for your brand, as although some brands may suit every social network out there, others may only find success on one or two channels. A combination of channels, each of which can be linked to each other in various ways, is usually the best option. For instance, using Facebook to share your employees' achievements, using LinkedIn to post industry related news, Instagram to show candid snapshots of your office and YouTube to host your recruitment videos.

It's also important to keep your competition in mind, especially in a hotly competitive field like IT. When you're competing with a menagerie of funky startups, maintaining your authenticity is even more significant. Candidates have heard more than enough from companies about table tennis and breakout zones, so if you're a large, mature corporate, don't act like you're anything else. On the other hand, if you are a young, agile new business, try to differentiate yourself. Understand that you are one of many companies trying to sell candidates the same environment, so think about what else you offer, or can offer, in order to make your company stand out.

However, one advantage of being in an industry such as IT is that there are plenty of opportunities to make your brand visible. With a wealth of conferences and events to attend, these can make for great platforms for your brand. Get some banners printed, kit out your team in branded t-shirts, and send them down to industry events as ambassadors for your company. This gets your employer brand seen and heard, and represented by the best possible sources: your employees. Another option is to sponsor (or start) local MeetUp groups. Engaging with the local tech community is a great way to get people engaging with your brand who perhaps would not have previously, and may also be a good source of talent.

Conclusion

Employer branding is now an essential part of talent attraction. What your brand is, the way you build it and how you show it to the world can be the difference between attracting top talent and falling behind your competitors. If you're looking for an objective appraisal of your employer brand, or you're looking to engage those top level candidates, feel free to get in touch with us here at Sourced.



Attend Conferences
Market your brand at conferences by kitting out your employees in branded t-shirts.

LinkedIn Company Page
Use your LinkedIn Company Page to highlight goings-on in your organisation.

Sponsor MeetUps
Sponsoring MeetUps, or even hosting them at your organisation, showcases your brand.

Feature Your Employees
Celebrating your employees' achievements improves team morale and is relatable for external audiences.

Sourced
We get people.