

# Building an Effective Employer Brand

**Are You Conveying the Best Employee Value Proposition?**



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Companies need a compelling employee value proposition — broadly defined as the positive experience an employer offers in exchange for the skills and performance an employee provides — to attract and retain today's top candidates.

Promoting that value proposition, however, is just as key. Evidence has shown ongoing recruiting efforts, including establishing and promoting a distinct employer brand, can help organizations avoid lingering vacancies and the resulting productivity issues that can occur as a result.

This white paper will examine ways to determine if your value proposition is competitive, and what to do if isn't; the elements strong employer brand identities typically include; best practices to promote your brand — and the significant payoff your overall efforts can ultimately provide.

## BRAND MANAGEMENT GOES TO WORK

- PAGE 3 -

Product-based branding endeavors generally involve several components, ranging from a logo to packaging, designed to promote the item in an engaging, enticing way.

In the consumer market, product branding rapidly evolved in the early 1990s, according to the Atlantic.

Around the same time, a new format intended to help companies with recruitment and retention — employer branding — also began gaining popularity.

Employer branding, first introduced in 1990, according to the [Society of Human Resource Management](#), by a business consultancy chairman and London Business School senior fellow, refers to efforts to define and promote an organization's reputation as a favorable place to work.

By leveraging a positive employer brand, companies should, in theory, be able to attract and keep qualified, sought-after workers.

In recent years, the competition for top talent has heated up; and the current hiring climate shows little sign of easing anytime soon. Nearly all respondents in the most recent Jobvite [survey](#) said they expected recruiting to be as or more challenging in 2017.

As a result, some employers have begun to acknowledge building an employee brand can be a savvy way to move to the forefront of the talent marketplace.

Sixty-two percent of organizations viewed employer brand efforts as a top priority last year, according to LinkedIn's Global Recruiting Trends [study](#); 59 percent said they had a proactive employer brand strategy in place.

## BRAND BENEFITS – AND DANGERS

- PAGE 4 -

In essence, companies that build an employer brand are developing a way to promote their employee value proposition — to woo new hires and encourage pre-existing employees to stay by emphasizing the organization’s phenomenal benefits, programs and other aspects.

With a strong employment brand, a CareerBuilder [survey](#) found companies attract at least 3.5 times more applicants per job posting than other companies in the same industry.

Conversely, having a negative employment brand can be expensive. Companies with a poor reputation may need to pay 10 percent more to attract candidates, according to the [Harvard Business Review](#) — costing organizations with 10,000 employees up to \$7.6 million, or more than \$4,700 per hire.

Word can also spread about a company’s negative employment brand, causing further damage. Seventy-two percent of job seekers who felt discouraged by the applicant process have shared their frustrations, either to a colleague or friend or on an employer review or social networking site.



## IDENTIFYING YOUR ASSETS

- PAGE 5 -

The first step in establishing an employer brand is to ensure the employee value proposition you plan to publicize is worthwhile.

Promoting a company culture, amenity or other element candidates don't want won't help you attract quality hires — even with widespread promotion.

Before you start brainstorming employer brand taglines or designing a new website, review the major components that determine the strength of your value proposition, including:

### COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

The pay and perks you offer can vastly influence — or dissuade — candidates from accepting a position. Sixty-eight percent of companies have been offering higher salary offers to attract candidates, according to Jobvite's annual recruitment [survey](#). Some organizations provide additional incentives to attract candidates. Forty-four percent, for example, provide flexible work hours or a casual dress code, according to Jobvite. Sixty-four percent award monetary bonuses to incentivize referrals.

***To strengthen your value proposition:*** Begin by assessing other options in the marketplace and how your offerings compare to determine if you are providing competitive compensation and benefits. Is your pay equal to or higher than your competitors'? If it is, do you offer similar benefits? If your pay level is less, do you offer more significant time off and other amenities?

Start with exit interview records, to see how many employees cited pay or benefits issues as a reason for leaving. Due to the considerable amount of time the research will require, you may want to consider obtaining external help to survey employees in the field. Your results may inspire you to potentially revisit and redesign your current package.

### MARKET PERCEPTION

Do you know how candidates view your organization — and why? Your company's reputation alone may not be enough to interest candidates. LinkedIn [research](#), based on more than 7,200 of its worldwide members, showed a company's employer brand was twice as likely to drive job consideration as its overall company brand.

***To strengthen your value proposition:*** Examine online ratings, and begin asking contacted candidates to describe how they found your organization and what they've previously heard about it. Similarly, it's important to ascertain why qualified candidates turned you down.

Review interview notes that might indicate whether it was a benefits/compensation issue, workplace culture or other concern. Consider contacting candidates who accepted positions at other companies to ask about their interviewing experience and impression of your organization, if internal records prove insufficient.



# IDENTIFYING YOUR ASSETS

- PAGE 6 -

## CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Recent research indicates employees want professional development training. In the U.K., for example, job satisfaction has dropped to its lowest level in almost two years—due, in part, to more than a quarter of employees' displeasure with the skill development opportunities their organization provides, according to [data](#) from the not-for-profit Chartered Institute for Personal Development and Halogen Software.

Employers in the U.S. have begun to fund more professional development opportunities. The Society for Human Resource Management's [report](#) on the past 20 years of employee benefits showed 88 percent of companies now pay for professional association memberships, compared to 65 percent in 1996; 16 percent also pay for executive coaching.

***To strengthen your value proposition:*** Conduct an enterprise-wide survey to assess employee sentiment about the opportunities you offer; what people might like to see and how they feel you measure up in the marketplace, in regard to career development.

Also review retention rates. Assess how long it is taking employees, on average to be promoted; how long employees at each level are staying — and if there are any patterns regarding when or why they are leaving.

To determine which elements may need to be improved — and which are your strongest selling points — research is critical.

More companies are using predictive analytics to assess hiring and recruitment, according to a recent Gallup [report](#), which recommends big data techniques be used early in the recruitment process for increased effectiveness.

Culling analytics from the interviewing stage to employees' last day at the company can help you identify trends and insufficient areas.

Once you know what practices are working — and which aren't — you can tweak your offerings to build the strongest possible employee brand.



## CREATING COMPELLING CONTENT

- PAGE 7 -

Consumers have little patience for posts, e-newsletters, printed material and other items that constantly plug what a company is selling. Similarly, industry professionals likely won't engage with your organization if all employer brand-related messages sound like ads.

Although some persuasive wording is necessary, it's important to strike a balance — email distribution service [Constant Contact](#) recommends limiting promotional content to roughly 20 percent of your weekly online posts.

When you share information about working for your company, focus on the positive aspects. For instance, 73 percent of organizations highlight their company culture to attract talent, according to Jobvite's [survey](#) on social recruiting. More organizations are actually using company culture, according to the survey, rather than benefits, flex hours or compensation as a selling point.

Accuracy is also crucial. Although it can be tempting to load job postings with abundant promises and praise for your company, overselling what you can offer may result in disappointed hires who become disengaged workers.

Due to increased sick days, missed deadlines and other productivity issues, disengaged employees can cost an organization \$2,246 a year, according to [Business 2 Community](#) — or the employee may leave soon after being hired, resulting in wasted training time and additional recruitment expenses to find a replacement.

A 2014 Glassdoor [survey](#) found 67 percent of employers believe retention rates would be higher if candidates had a clearer picture of what to expect before accepting a position.



## SPREADING THE WORD

- PAGE 8 -

To effectively convey an employment brand message, companies need to enact an ongoing campaign.

In many instances, the responsibility for managing employment brand execution falls at least partially under HR's duties.

Employer Brand International [research](#), involving more than 1,100 organizations from 19 countries and regions, found that increasingly, teams comprised of HR, marketing and communication professionals are managing employer branding efforts; at more than a third of companies, however, the HR department is driving the strategy.

If you've been tasked with creating or strengthening an employer brand, once you ensure you have the most compelling employee value proposition possible, examine how competitors are promoting their value proposition in the marketplace.

Note their messaging frequency; what specific phrases and keywords they're using on a consistent basis and what channels they're utilizing to reach candidates.

A few other employer brand campaign aspects to consider:

### USING SOCIAL MEDIA TO SHARE YOUR EMPLOYER BRAND

The number of companies that used social media to increase their branding and recognition grew by 25 percent from 2008 to 2011, according to [SHRM](#).

Posting items on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn — the social media sites experts often target as the most effective brand exposure outlets, according to [The Week](#) — can help drive potential candidates to your website to obtain more information.

To specifically encourage recruitment, adding a section to your company website or a separate site with information about working at your company, and linking to that content from your social media pages, can help advertise your employer brand.

Jobvite's annual recruitment [survey](#) found nearly three-fourths of recruiters (74 percent) have used social networks to make their company brand more visible, and 63 percent have utilized company career websites.

### ADOPTING A MULTIPLE CHANNEL APPROACH

Like product-based brand promotion, employer brand campaigns often feature a mix of communication methods. Slogans used in marketing materials and company websites may stress employee satisfaction. Logos included with social media page posts can subtly reinforce an employer's identity.



## SPREADING THE WORD

- PAGE 9 -

If you've established a presence on social media sites, but aren't engaging with potential candidates via email, company blogs, newsletters and other channels, work on building a robust contact list by offering opt-in capabilities on your website to receive regular communication pieces.

Sharing a steady stream of news items through blog posts, newsletters and other tools can show you know what issues exist in your industry. However, if time allows, strive to create and share original, thought-provoking content whenever possible, which will present your organization as a thought leader in the marketplace.

Employee quotes, client testimonials and other narrative content can help strengthen your employment brand and influence potential hires by offering an insider's view of your operations.

Photos, videos and other image-centric items can also help you build an audience. Visual content is the most popular choice among marketers trying to promote a businesses' overall image, according to a 2016 Social Media Examiner [report](#).

## ENCOURAGING WORD-OF-MOUTH EMPLOYER BRAND MARKETING

To increase the number of referrals — which a Future Workplace and Beyond [survey](#) found nearly three-fourths of HR professionals feel is the best way to find candidates — inspire current employees to take on a brand ambassador role.

By posting positive experiences and information about open positions on their personal Facebook, Twitter and other social media accounts, employees can help you reach a wider audience, with less of a chance the posts will appear to be purely promotional.

Employees may significantly influence certain groups of potential candidates. Millennials, for example — who are predicted to comprise as much as three-quarters of the workforce by 2025 — do significant research to form an opinion about a prospective employers' brand and work environment, according to Gallup [research](#). Seventy-five percent seek suggestions from family or friends or get referrals from current employees to find out about an organization.

## CREATING A SCHEDULE FOR YOUR CAMPAIGN

You are, in essence, building a conversation with potential candidates, using social media and other venues; and the discussion needs to be continuous.

To ensure busy HR and marketing teams don't lose sight of the project when other work picks up, your employer brand promotion program has to be carefully planned.



## SPREADING THE WORD

- PAGE 10 -

Build an annual calendar of content creation, approval, posting, printing and other deadlines to ensure you stay on track.

Assign ownership of different areas to specific individuals or departments so various elements won't fall through the cracks. Accountability can help ensure advancements are made; provide tangible goals and check-in dates to assess progress and the program's impact.

## TRACKING YOUR RESULTS

Just 41 percent of marketers say they're able to measure their social media ROI, according to Social Media Examiner's 2016 [report](#).

Your organization doesn't have to fall into that category, however, because social media provides some very obvious clues.

If your budget won't support purchasing a tech solution to help automate metrics assessment, some tools are available, such as [Google Analytics](#), that offer free assistance — ranging from viewing whether users came to your website from a search engine, social media or other site, to the type of device they used to get there.

HR departments can also manually track which social media items are liked, shared, retweeted and/or otherwise commented on, which indicates they're resonating with potential hires and other users. Monitor the number of followers you have each month to see if the time you're investing in updates is paying off by amplifying your audience.

Compare the number of applicants who are contacting your organization for positions you've shared on social media, a company website or other outlets to results for positions shared in different ways in the past to see if your branding efforts are prompting an increased interest.



## DISTINGUISHING YOURSELF IN THE MARKET

- PAGE 11 -

In today's competitive talent marketplace, to find qualified, experienced candidates to fill key roles, companies need to focus on identifying and engaging with professionals long before there is an immediate need to hire them.

Studies have shown a number of workers are potentially interested in finding a new job. A third of the U.S. and U.K. workforce, for example, hoped to change positions this year, according to a [survey](#) from WorkplaceTrends.com and software provider Saba.

Creating an employer brand, and a carefully prepared brand campaign, is one of the most effective ways to show professionals you offer a highly attractive value proposition — and remain in potential candidates' sightline.

Establishing and promoting an employer brand, however, can involve considerable work. Social media updates alone take six or more hours a week for 63 percent of companies; nearly 19 percent spend more than 20 hours a week on posts, according to Social Media Examiner [research](#).

For an HR department that is expected to handle numerous other duties and initiatives, the responsibility can seem overwhelming. Seventy percent of employees [say](#) obtaining an adequate budget is their number one challenge in managing an employer brand.

Nearly a quarter of mid-sized companies lack the budget for advertising. Writing effective job descriptions, maintaining consistent messaging across all recruitment levels and accurately representing their employer brand are three of the top recruitment challenges mid-sized businesses face, according to a recent [survey](#) from technology marketing company Red Branch Media and career network Beyond.

As a result, some organizations turn to external service providers that are able to provide skilled support, expertise and valuable guidance throughout the employer brand creation and execution process.

To aid companies that need assistance assessing and enhancing their employer brand, Talent Intelligence recently launched a new Employer Brand Intelligence program.

By conducting a thorough assessment, Talent Intelligence's program can help organizations accurately identify how they are perceived in the marketplace.

An independently conducted assessment will also reveal how the organization's compensation and benefits packet compares to its competitors'; career development and advancement opportunities the company may lack — and any areas for improvement within its hiring process that are causing the organization to lose out on top talent.

For more information on the Employer Brand Intelligence program — and how it can help you improve recruitment, retention and profitability — contact Talent Intelligence today.



## FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Simon Ferns  
Talent Intelligence Senior Vice President  
400 North State St., Level 2, Chicago, IL 60654  
+1 312-284-2964  
simon.ferns@talentintelligence.com

Brett Moffatt  
Talent Intelligence Managing Director, EMEA  
Level 6, 6 Kean Street, London, WC2B 4AS  
+44 (0)7734 202 730  
brett.moffatt@talentintelligence.com

Myles Ball  
Talent Intelligence Business Development Director  
400 North State St., Level 2, Chicago, IL 60654  
+1 (312) 889-8139  
myles.ball@talentintelligence.com

Mike Hallahan  
Talent Intelligence Account Manager  
250 North Bridge Rd, #16-03, Singapore 179101  
+65 6805 2189  
mikeh@talentintelligence.com

### About Talent Intelligence

Talent Intelligence is a global leadership risk management company that solves its clients' critical talent challenges by integrating external talent intelligence in four key areas: succession planning, talent pipelining, diversity intelligence and human capital competitive intelligence. All intelligence is securely stored so clients can access it on demand and integrate it into their existing workforce planning process. Our Intelligence Delivery Teams flag high-potential candidates, bringing them directly to our clients' attention — so when the time is right, we can facilitate a networking engagement between you and any candidate of interest.

