



MCQUAIG PRESENTS

THE QUICK GUIDE TO EMPLOYER BRANDING





The quick guide to employer branding

Imagine you always hire the absolute best talent for your company and even better, that talent comes looking for you instead of the other way around. It's a nice dream, isn't it? Reality is not quite so simple. Today's job market is highly competitive with companies vying for quality hires so how can you make your organization stand out in a crowded recruiting landscape? The answer can be found in growing your employer brand.

Definition: An employer brand communicates a company's reputation, vision, and values

What is an employer brand?

Let's start off with a definition. What exactly is an employer brand? Most people understand branding in terms of consumer marketing. We all have brands we recognize and trust when it comes to making a purchase. The same idea holds true for an employer or corporate brand but instead of buying something, you are using what you know about a company's brand to decide if you want to work for them. Usually, an employer brand encompasses the company's reputation as a workplace, their vision or mission, attitudes towards employees and corporate culture, and even unique benefits or perks of working there.



Is employer branding the same thing as recruitment marketing?

Employer branding and recruitment marketing are often used interchangeably these days but it's important to realize they are two different things. Recruitment marketing refers to a growing trend of using marketing tactics in the recruitment industry to drive talent acquisition.¹

The goal of recruitment marketing is to communicate the employer brand and a company's value proposition to job seekers.

This usually involves strategies and tactics to build that brand and then push it out to

the masses the way you would a marketing message. Employer branding, therefore, is a crucial piece of recruitment marketing but it's not the whole story.





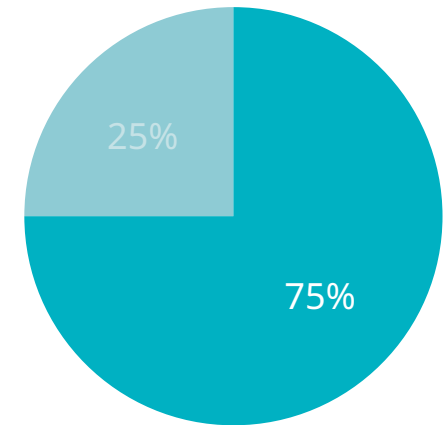
Why is employer branding important?

There is no way to avoid having an employer brand, even if you put no effort into it. **Just by nature of being open, your company is developing a reputation.** Without a positive employer brand in a competitive job market, hiring and retaining talent becomes exponentially more difficult.² But by taking an active role in shaping the perception of your brand, you can control to some extent what potential future employees think about your company and, hopefully, convince them they want to be a part of it.

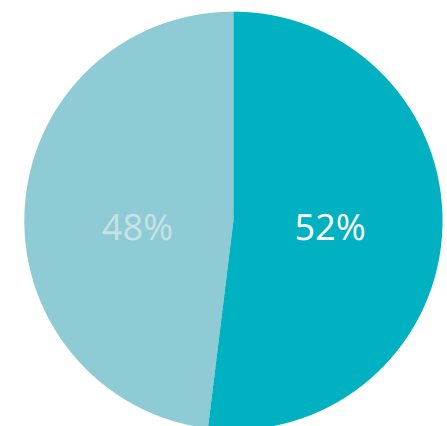
These days, job candidates are getting savvy about doing their research before applying to a job or accepting an interview. LinkedIn reports as many as 75% of candidates take the employer brand into consideration before applying and 52% use the

company's website and social channels to investigate potential employers before hitting send on their resumes.³

What this boils down to is job searchers are looking for places to work that can give them what they need, and the employer brand is where they turn in order to find that information. If they know your company is open and transparent about providing the qualities they're looking for, they'll come to you on their own which can drastically reduce your time to hire and recruitment costs. In fact, when prospective employees start reaching out to you, **recruiting costs can drop by as much as 43%.**⁴ With all that on the line, isn't it worth investing in your brand?



75% of candidates consider employer branding before applying to a job



52% of candidates research a company's online presence



The two side of employer branding

Remember, when thinking about employer branding, it's not all about future hires. There are two side to the story, one external and one internal. The external brand is what you show candidates to hopefully attract them to you. The internal brand is what your employees see. Often, it's easy to forget about the internal brand because so much focus is placed on hiring and recruitment. But current employees are savvy too and they want to work somewhere with a strong reputation and culture as well.

In fact, communicating the benefits of your brand internally can help increase employee morale and decrease turnover rates. And really, it's not that hard to do. Be transparent within the company about decisions and goals, show your employees you appreciate them, and implement some way of measuring employee engagement and job satisfaction to keep on top of your internal brand perception.

Did you know your employer brand matters as much to your current employees as well as to your future ones?



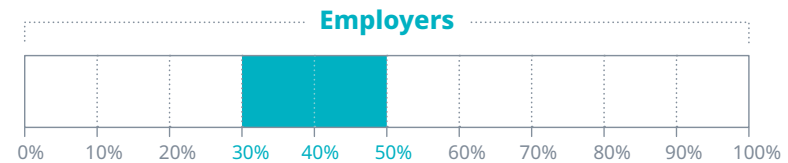


Are your competitors worrying about this?

Yes. And if they aren't, they should be. But there's some good news if you're trying to get a leg up over a rival. A survey of over 11,000 employers by Deloitte's 2018 Human Capital Report suggests **only 30-50% of employers are ready to meet the most important workplace expectations of their workers.**⁵ So while employer thinking is changing, the shift is slow enough to provide an opportunity for any company wanting to work a little faster.

As our world becomes increasingly more interconnected, everyone will need to actively think about their employer brand. After all, it

takes candidates seconds to pull out a smart phone and research your company. With technology at everyone's fingertips, it's harder to stay out of the spotlight so you might as well embrace the new visibility and use this opportunity to get ahead of the curve while you can.



Only **30-50%** of employers are ready to meet the most important workplace expectations of their workers.



How does employer branding relate to content generation?

It's not uncommon for associations to agree employer branding is needed and then scratch their heads when you bring up the question of content marketing. Another aspect of recruitment marketing is choosing the right channels with the right content message to push out to your target audience. Think about some big consumer brands. You likely recognize their logos and can pick out their ads, commercials, and brand messages. The same holds true for employer branding.

You need content to support your brand that your target candidates can find and consume. Sometimes that includes online ads running on platforms like LinkedIn, which, incidentally, added a programmatic marketing feature to their website to help assist with efforts just like

this.⁶ Or candidates might follow a talent blog that gives them useful information about job searching.

And don't forget, job searchers will likely check out an employer's social media channels to get a sense of what the organization is saying to the public.

When you start creating marketing materials for your employer brand, make sure you pick content that interests the sort of candidate you're trying to appeal to, choose topics they're looking for, and pick channels that will put it in their path.



How does employer branding relate to social media?

By now the marketing parallels between employer and consumer branding should be getting clearer. **And any good marketer knows the power of social media.** Brush off those tweeting fingers and prepare a strategy to guide your social presence as you grow your reputation as an employer of choice.

There are a few ways to tackle social media from an employer brand perspective. The easiest is to use your company's existing social channels, likely being run by your marketing team, and intersperse employment information into the usual post schedule. The downside

of this is that your employer voice might be drowned out by the other content posting to these channels. Some companies create unique channels for hiring run by human resources instead.⁷

Keep in mind that while you should have a consistent presence on all the key social networks, LinkedIn is, unsurprisingly, the channel of choice for many employer brand activities.





Ok so employer branding is important but where do you actually start?

While every company needs to understand their own employer brand, it can be a challenge to decide where to start when you want to improve your reputation. What do you do first? Who do you ask for information? How do you implement a brand adjustment? Below you'll find a series of tips and tricks to help you build the employer brand of your dreams.



1. Know what you're talking about

This might seem basic but you can't talk about what you don't know. Spend some time familiarizing yourself with your company and consumer brand. What's the mission? What are the goals? What makes your organization unique? Make sure you do a thorough audit of your brand messaging, marketing collateral, past campaigns, and current reputation perceptions. Once you understand what your company is all about and what sort of talent it needs to hire in order to achieve its objectives, you can start communicating the right message to potential candidates.



2. Know what employees are talking about

Employer branding should always involve your employees. Surveying your staff can be incredibly helpful to get a sense of where your employer brand is right now and where it needs to evolve to.⁸ If you think you have a stellar employer brand and your employees are spending their nights dusting off their resumes, then a pretty major disconnect is happening.

In order to promote a brand to the public, you first need to understand your internal pros and cons.

Keep in mind, depending on how much work your employer brand needs, employees might be hesitant to speak openly.

In order to get a sense of the workplace, you can turn to anonymous surveys, company-wide mobile polling, lunch and learns, focus groups, or using a trusted intermediary such as your HR department to collect information on your behalf.



3. Be clear

Once you know what to say, be clear in how you say it. Define a strong and authentic message to use with your future candidates and then craft a plan of how to communicate it.⁹ Think about the various communications channels you could be using – social media, the career section of your website, job boards, in-person recruitment fairs.

Then do your best to ensure continuity across all your channels so if a candidate follows you on LinkedIn and then does some research on your website, they are treated to a consistent brand experience.

Pro-tip: Be consistent with your brand message on all communications channels.

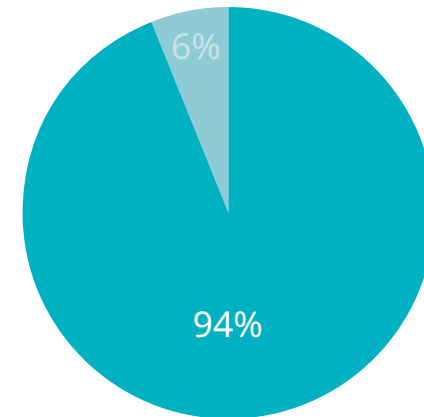


4. Culture matters

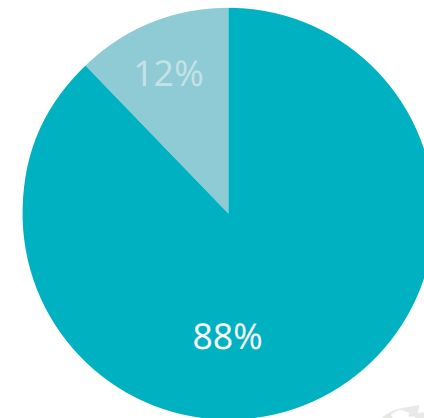
By now you know what to say and how but remember to keep some of the more important points of employer branding in mind. Company culture is becoming an important factor when candidates are deciding where they want to work. **A positive culture and the ability to have a good work-life balance are two elements of the workplace that employees¹⁰ value highly.**

And if you think potential candidates aren't going to go out there and read everything they can find about the company and its culture, think again. Thanks to review sites like Glassdoor, now employees can get a sense of what it's like to work at a company before they even get there.¹¹ Make sure when you start pushing your employer brand that culture is part of the conversation.

Who believes company culture is important to company success?



94% of executives



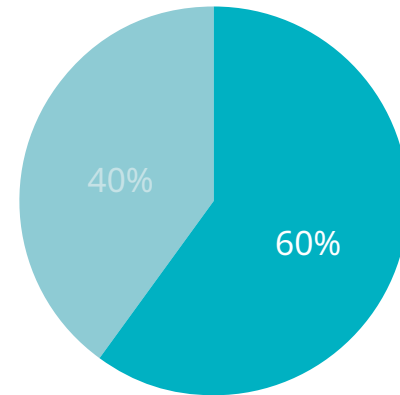
88% of employees



5. Think about the candidate experience

Part of having a strong employer brand is not just about communicating what the company brings to the table. When candidates come in to interview for a role, it might be the first time they are engaging with your brand directly. Do your best to make a good first impression.

Many companies don't spend a lot of time worrying about the candidate experience beyond being on time and maybe giving the candidate a tour of the office. But the candidate experience is about more than just a tour and the **companies that go out of their way to provide a good experience are more likely to benefit from positive word-of-mouth**. In fact, a recent study suggests that **60%** of candidates share their experience with others and 38% are more likely to accept a job if the company has put in the effort to provide a positive experience.¹² With numbers like that, you can't afford to forget about the candidate experience and the impact it has on your employer brand.



60% of candidates share their interview experiences with others



6. Don't forget the employee experience either

Remember when we talked about the internal employer brand? Well, the employee experience is just as important to manage as the candidate one.¹³ These days it's incredibly easy for candidates or new hires to share their experiences with others. Just imagine how much more a long-term employee would have to add to that conversation.

If the employer brand isn't an honest representation of the company an employee joins, odds are good that employee won't stay long and will have a lot to say when they leave. And what about if you're touting a positive,

transparent brand while an employee may be working for a manager who doesn't promote the same environment? **Take the time to look at the employee experience your company is providing and ensure it's an accurate reflection of what you're saying with your employer brand.** If it's not, start at home and fix your culture first before pushing the most positive brand message to the public.





7. Have a moral compass

Did you know that an average of 9 out of 10 people are willing to earn a smaller salary in exchange for more meaningful work?¹⁴ Keep that in mind when you're building your brand.

*Employees want to work for a company where they feel like their making an impact. This is becoming even more true when hiring in the younger generations like Millennials or Gen Zs.*¹⁵

They want to be a part of a company that has some sort of code or moral compass it follows and aren't afraid to walk away if those values clash with their own. From social responsibility initiatives to paid volunteer days, modern companies can't afford to ignore the growing need for engaging in work that matters.

8. It's not a one-way street

Once your employer brand is up and running, you want candidates to join the conversation. Much like marketing, you want to focus your effort in inbound communication, i.e. you're not just sending your branding message out into space never to be mentioned again. You want to engage with your audience either on social media, in person, or via emails or texts. Make sure your content is tailored with your audience in mind.¹⁶ **Also make sure to post your content where your audience is most likely to see and consume it.** At the end of the day, it's a numbers game. The more people who want to talk about your brand, the further it will reach.





9. Now that you have a brand, monitor it

Your employer brand might be all grown up but don't forget to keep an eye on it anyways. It's important to have a strategy in place related to employer brand management. Much like monitoring social media sentiment, you want to make sure if the tide turns against your brand, you notice it and react accordingly.

Don't forget, monitoring should happen within the company as well. Keep tabs on employee engagement and satisfaction as those are two

elements that will directly impact the employer brand. Outside the company, watch review sites like Glassdoor and stay on top of social chatter about your brand. Since you've invested the time and effort into creating an employer brand, you want to make sure you keep it strong and healthy.

Pro-tip: Stay on top of your employer brand so you can react quickly to any changes in public opinion.





10. Walk your talk

At the end of the day, employer branding comes down to consistency. Candidates and employees talk.

In order to make those conversations positive, make sure that your brand is aligned to the work and culture that's actually happening, not to a more aspirational version of daily life.

You want talent to come to you because they believe in your message and trust your ethics.

And you want them to stay because they love your employer brand and want to be a part of the mission you're working towards. It's no easy feat to engender that level of engagement both externally and internally but if you can, you'll have a robust brand at your back to help your company achieve its goals.





At the end of the day...

Creating an employer brand isn't going to be easy or simple. It takes hard work, employee input, and on-going monitoring at a minimum, but the long-term gains can have a real impact when it comes to talent acquisition and employee retention.

If you're going to try your hand at updating your current brand or developing one from scratch, there are a few factors you'll need to account for. Most importantly, make sure you involve your current employees in the brand building process to get an accurate view of company life and come up with a plan of how to communicate that message effectively in the job market. And once you have articulated

your brand, make sure it reflects the important factors candidates want to know about:

- corporate culture
- unique company attributes
- employee engagement
- benefits and perks
- values and missions

A strong employer brand should help you stand out amongst other companies vying for talent and attract candidates to you without needing to spend exorbitant dollars on recruitment. In a world where the war for talent is heating up, no company can afford to ignore their employer brand any longer.



Notes

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