

Employer Branding:

attracting and retaining the right people

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Employer branding: attracting and retaining the right people

Employer branding is one of a company's most important recruitment tools – if done correctly.

Branding your company is just like branding your product – the difference is the emotional effect it has on your employees and the impression it gives your potential employees. Sell your employees and potential employees on opportunity. What does your company have to offer?

Things to consider when employer branding are: offering benefits such as health, vision and dental; paid holidays and vacation time; and bonuses – include whatever your company does that makes it stand out as a good place to work. A company's employer brand should be made known immediately to jobseekers and must be enforced in all areas of the company, including management and ownership.

Oftentimes, potential employees will have heard of your company's products or services before they begin job hunting. This will help your cause if your product/services' brand matches that of your company's. When a jobseeker wants to work for a company because of the company's brand rather than the job description itself, an employer has reached branding success.

For example, Disney is so sought-after that jobseekers will accept almost any job available just so they can then navigate the internal promotion process. And if Las Vegas would become to entertainers what Hollywood has been to actors and actresses, every budding entertainer in the country would come to Las Vegas and be satisfied accepting a position as a porter, bell hop or dishwasher in hopes of one day working their way to the stage.

Employers with recognized brands are often employers of choice, which makes recruiting easier. However, employee branding does not come solely from product/services branding or a company's reputation. In fact, with the ease and efficiency of the Internet at an all-time high, an increasing number of employees are discovering a company first and the product second. But remember: simply attracting numerous potential employees is not where the recruitment process ends.

Use your human resources department as a screening vehicle rather than a recruitment agency. Make sure the look, goals and priorities of jobseekers align with those of your company so you are hiring the appropriate people to be "the face" of your company. Hiring the right people is imperative.

So now, how to brand your company and retain your ideal employees? Create a mission statement and give a copy to all of your employees and stakeholders so they know what is expected of them and what you are promising in return. Your mission statement should even be given to applicants and included when advertising jobs on recruitment Web sites.

The next step is developing your internal marketing. Internal marketing is key. The people who work for you can be your best cheerleaders or your worst reviewers – and they are the people representing your company on and off the clock.

If you're not sure how to start marketing internally, here are a few tips:

- Communicate. If employees aren't informed, they will make decisions for themselves, which may not be the decisions you want made.
- Be sure employees know their opinions are heard and valued. And don't just listen to employees when they come to you; have a feedback system where they are asked for their opinions and suggestions.
- Make your employees feel as though they are hand-picked and not a dime a dozen. If employees feel valued, they are less likely to look for work elsewhere.
- Make yourself available if your employees have questions.
- Host a company event or periodically give small gifts – even as small as a gift card for coffee – to thank employees for their hard work and dedication.
- Acknowledge employees' birthdays.
- Quickly address any gossip or negativity in the company so no one feels uncomfortable.
- Communicate company successes to everyone in the company. If a particular person has done a job well, single them out for praise.

These are just a few ways employers can attract and retain valuable employees. Some tactics may work better for different organizations depending on the clientele. And no matter what, remember that communication internally and externally is key.

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