

# 'Employment Branding' Advertising & Promotion

**Y**our organization currently has an "employment brand" whether you realize it or not.

Your employment brand is felt and perceived by your employees and new hires from the moment they hear your organization's name until the day they leave or retire. It indicates your reputation both internally and externally. For those reasons, your employment brand should be conveyed consistently in company messaging and should be regularly reviewed to make sure it's being lived up to.

Your employment brand includes your organization's reputation, its company culture, good and bad press reports, word-of-mouth referrals and statements about the organization, expectations about the organization's future and the organization's competitive position as it compares to others vying for the same talent. An effective employment brand has the ability to inspire loyalty, commitment, productivity, pride and a sense of community not only for new hires, but for all employees.

If you are the hiring manager, you are in the trenches every day and know what skills and competencies are needed for



your area or department. By understanding employment branding, you can provide feedback and direction that could facilitate better candidate flow and ensure your overall pool of candidates meets the criteria for the kind of employee you want to hire.

## Build Your Brand

An employment brand is perceived through a candidate's subjective point of view regarding her experiences with your company. She'll consider your website's ease of use, whether or not she can apply for jobs online, what it's like interviewing with HR and the selection team, how the receptionist and others interact during site visits, her perceptions of your company's products, services or customer service and how your organization impacts the community.

Candidates will always compare your company's reputation and their perception of your employment brand to that of their current and past employers. If your company's reputation and employment brand aren't equal to or better than their current and past employers or if they feel they haven't received proper responses to their questions, often they won't take the recruiter's call or accept an interview.

You should look at all the competitors in your local area to see how they position themselves and assess the strengths and weaknesses of their positioning. Start by

reviewing their websites and specifically their career or job pages. Be sure your organization can at least match, if not exceed, their efforts with your own unique employment brand.

## Attract High Performers

To brand for talent is to market an organization as a great place to work. In other words, to be a magnet for talent that attracts, retains and engages the right people to do the right work at the right time with the right results. When done successfully, the result is an organization as famous for talent as it is for its products and services.

Remember, your brand needs to attract individuals with the personality and skills that best fit the position. To ensure your employment brand will speak to the right candidates, meet with the "A" employees you already have on staff and ask them what the company must do to get their attention if they were not already working for you. Listen closely. Ask them to help steer you in the right direction. Use this focused approach rather than trying to appeal en masse to the age group or personality type you want to attract with what you think is hip at the moment.

## Tie It Together

A career portal is a great place to launch recruiting communications efforts and accurately represent your employment brand. It brings together your organization's social networking links, job advertising and job promotion links, the researchers and recruiters you partner with as well as internal and external talent. A good career portal includes articles, resume writing tips, career coaching, and free tools and assessments for job seekers. It also provides a central location to collect results from resumes, forms and information requests. Special software is available for building these portals and can be customized to match the theme and design of your website.



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Patrick Ropella is Chairman & CEO of the Ropella Group an international Executive Search, Leadership Transformation, and Corporate Consulting firm. He authored the book and web-based training program, *The Right Hire – Mastering the Art of SMART Talent Management*, and has seen his content featured in many trade magazines, business publications, and industry journals. Patrick regularly speaks at webinars, career fairs, and conferences.

## Prepare a Welcome Kit

Most organizations provide a welcome packet after a new employee has showed up for work and often it is a pretty light packet of material, mostly consisting of forms and benefits information. The Prospect Welcome Kit can and should be given to candidate finalists, not just hired employees.

Here's a list of the kind of materials that should be included:

- A presentation folder;
- A welcome letter signed by the hiring manager or the president of the organization;
- Opportunity marketing piece;
- Hiring manager's business card; and
- Directions to the site of the first face-to-face interview.

This kit can pay huge dividends in differentiating your company from the competition.

## Brand Job Advertisements

In the same way that great music sounds best when the whole band plays at once, advertising works better when all of your marketing elements—career website, blogging and social networking, face-to-face networking, etc.—work together to form a successful employee search campaign. Just as taking the drummer or the bass guitarist out of a great song might make it less significant, remove one element of your employee search campaign and the others rarely produce the level of success the whole package could achieve.

Advertising can also be looked at as a way to grease the skids so that when you do reach out to prospects, they are likely to be interested because of the quality and consistency of the overall employment branding they're seeing, hearing and feeling about your organization. If you can add advertising to your overall employment branding concert, you are more likely to see the talent you're after sliding right into your selection process.

Your advertising and promotion efforts should be well targeted. Whether you place ads on Craigslist, Monster.com or Career Builder; in local or national newspapers; in trade association publications and newsletters; in university job listings; or alumni newsletters and websites, you must know where the talent you seek congregates. Talk to current employees and ask new hires how they first heard about your company's opening, where they saw other job postings that caught their eyes, what publications they read as part of their work, or where they go for career fairs, trade shows, symposiums or training, and re-certification.

Do your demographic homework, and you'll find advertising can help you keep a steady source of the types of candidates you want on your radar screen and your employment brand on your prospects' radar screen. Remember when advertising, eye-catching and enticing headlines and motivating copy go a long way.

Employment branding stands alone as the only way recruiting managers can guarantee an end to talent shortage problems. Review or develop the campaign message that represents your brand. Display it on your website and make your web career portal known to internal and external talent. Win the Talent War by getting the word out about what your current talent says is great about working at your company.