



# WIN THE WAR FOR TALENT

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## WIN THE WAR FOR TALENT **BY BECOMING AN EMPLOYER OF CHOICE**

Are you committed to being a different kind of employer? One that stands apart from the crowd and attracts the best and brightest talent in your industry?

The talent acquisition landscape is constantly changing, but one thing that remains constant is the need for successful companies to build a team of A-Players and create a culture that nurtures and supports their continued growth. The global labor market will become more competitive as more baby boomers reach retirement and the need to attract and retain top talent will continue to intensify.

And in this day and age where employees aren't afraid to assert themselves and potential applicants can leverage one job offer against another, the competition to land the most talented people is just that — a competition. That's why many companies are striving to become Employers of Choice — aiming to provide a fulfilling work environment so that people will choose to come work for them, even if they're currently working for an industry competitor.





*“Employers of Choice will enjoy a higher level of performance, greater workforce stability, and the level of continuity that assures preservation of the knowledge base, customer loyalty, employee satisfaction, and stronger profits.”*

## BECOMING AN EMPLOYER OF CHOICE

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Today’s employees want the companies they work for to possess a strong sense of social responsibility. They insist upon **ethical business practices, financial stability, community leadership, fair treatment, and a healthy working environment**. By becoming an Employer of Choice, your ability to encourage top workers to join and remain with your team will improve, and you will benefit greatly. Roger E. Herman and Joyce Gioia, authors of *How to Become an Employer of Choice*, state that “Employers of Choice will enjoy a higher level of performance, greater workforce stability, and the level of continuity that assures preservation of the knowledge base, customer loyalty, employee satisfaction, and stronger profits.”

Want to know how to become an Employer of Choice? Here are some of the techniques currently being used by many progressive companies:

### **OFFER TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES**

Providing training for existing workers is one of the most important commitments an employer can

make. By taking an active part in an employee’s development, you signify that you value your people. A successful training program can include a number of different components, such as:

- Tuition reimbursement for individuals pursuing relevant college degrees
- Job-related certification programs
- Mentoring programs for new employees
- Succession training so employees are eligible for promotion
- Cross-training

Remember, it’s not enough to pay lip service to training. And it’s not sufficient to merely supply the training tools. Employers of Choice make sure their training programs provide guidance, time, financial assistance, and follow-up support. In short, **Employers of Choice invest in their people**. Without complete commitment, employees become frustrated and training measures can often fail.



## PROVIDE COMPETITIVE COMPENSATION

Companies are implementing innovative pay practices and benefits programs to entice potential employees and retain current ones. Gain sharing, profit sharing, cafeteria-style benefits options, and even team pay are just some examples.

In addition, there are many low or no-cost benefits that you can offer. Casual dress day is a common example, but many companies offer more valuable perks like dry cleaning pick up and delivery, flexible working hours, credit union membership, and flu shots. It's a busy world, and the most cherished benefits are those that help employees save time and make their lives easier.

Most companies view benefits as an expense. However, you'll do better if you evaluate them as investments. Consider what you can offer that will deliver the greatest return.

## BECOME A COMMUNITY LEADER

Possessing a good image in the community is critical as it can be the strongest way of attracting talented people to your business. Conversely, a poor reputation—real or perceived—can seriously hinder your recruiting and retention efforts.

According to Terry F. Yosie, author of *The Chemical Industry's Journey to Corporate Social Responsibility*,

“The chemical industry is one of the world’s most global business enterprises. As a result of this global reach, the industry is uniquely positioned to provide products and services that improve the quality of life of citizens and communities worldwide.”

Whatever you do, take advantage of your position and don't be afraid to **showcase your company's unique efforts to help make the world a better place**. Community involvement and the publicity that surrounds it can serve as an excellent marketing tool for recruitment. Send press releases to local media describing your community improvement efforts. Highly visible events help you stand apart from the competition. Improving the company's reputation strengthens relationships with shareholders, customers, and more importantly, current and potential employees.

## ENCOURAGE A HEALTHY WORK-LIFE BALANCE

During the days when there were more workers than jobs, many employees worked long hours as a means of establishing job security. Today, most people are looking for a more equitable balance between work and personal time. Flexible hours, paid time off banks, and



telecommuting are just a few of the ways Employers of Choice have responded to this challenge.

As a busy decision maker, you can appreciate the desire for a work-life balance better than most. Ask yourself, “What programs would help me maintain my balance more effectively?” Chances are, your ideas will match those of your workers.

Employees are not the only ones to benefit from a good work-life balance, say Herman and Gioia, authors of *How to Become an Employer of Choice*. Because when people are more comfortable and happy - attendance, workflow, and turnover disruptions decrease and productivity increases.

### OFFER MEANINGFUL WORK

All employees, from the lead chemist, to the receptionist, to the CEO, should work in an environment where they feel their work is meaningful. This task is easier said than done. It may require reengineering work processes, reconfiguring job descriptions, and looking for

alternative solutions to get work done, such as shifting more mundane tasks to entry-level employees.

It may also require redefining candidate profiles so you have a better chance of hiring people who will find meaning in the work they perform. What employees do or the position they're in is not of greatest importance-what's critical is making sure they believe that each of their job functions has value.

It's also important that your managers foster a nurturing work environment where opinions are valued, creativity is fostered, and where employees are able to form quality relationships with their colleagues. Managers should challenge their employees to think. They should teach people to understand their role in the “big picture” and encourage them to improve upon current processes. When workers play a role in developing a better way to get the job done, it strengthens their commitment to the company. And a committed, contented staff is the major objective for all Employers of Choice.

## ARE YOU READY TO COMPETE?

However you decide to become an Employer of Choice, remember that word travels fast. A company with happy employees is like having your own PR firm working for you around the clock. **Whatever you do for your employees will come back to you in the form of better recruits, lower turnover, happier and more productive staff, and increased profitability. With those kinds of results, you'll be well on your way to winning the war for top talent.**



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