

9 steps to work strategically with employer branding

A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE ON HOW TO BUILD YOUR EMPLOYER BRAND

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The talent market is rapidly evolving: Never has current and future talent been more important to business success than it is today. Today, organizations discuss having a “people advantage” and work with “talent optimization.” There are also new titles and positions like “Chief Talent Officer.” It is clear that attracting and retaining the right talent is becoming a key organizational capability: The industry is quickly moving away from a short-term recruitment focus to a long-term employer branding focus.

Companies will gain a competitive advantage by taking a long-term approach to investing in employer branding and developing their brands to align with long-term business needs.

Here are some concrete, step-by-step tips to help develop your own employer branding strategies:

1. Understand your business needs.

Employer branding activities may be misdirected if long-term business needs are not fully understood. It is crucial to understand what types of competences the organization needs in order to deliver on the business plan.

2. Define your main target groups.

Based on the business needs and critical competences, it is necessary to define the weight between current and future talent: How many resources should an organization spend on attracting new talent versus retaining and developing current talent? It is also necessary to define the main and secondary external target groups that need to be reached.

3. Understand the target groups.

After defining the main and secondary external and internal target groups, it is important to fully understand them.

Organizations should use research to understand what these groups find attractive: Employers should also know the target groups’ current perceptions of the organizations and know which stage of the decision process they are in. The deeper the understanding of the target groups, the more effective the communication will be.

4. Optimize the Employer Value Proposition.

An Employer Value Proposition should be the foundation for all external and internal communication with talent. Optimizing the EVP means ensuring that it includes attributes and communication themes that are attractive, credible, sustainable and that allow for differentiation in the long term.

5. Select KPIs and set objectives.

Once organizations know what is important to business, understand the target groups, and optimize the EVP, it is necessary to find ways to measure impact and to set objectives. By selecting the right KPIs that measure, for example, an organization's attractiveness and brand association, the company can set annual goals. When these goals are met, the employer will know that the brand is moving in a direction that is fully aligned with the business needs.

6. Define an optimal communication mix.

The research indicates which stage of the decision process the target groups are in, and this information will allow organizations to determine where the main focus should lie: on driving awareness, consideration or desire. This fundamental knowledge will allow companies to optimize the selection of

communication channels and will lead to the best possible ROI.

7. Create an annual plan.

Many of the components of an annual employer branding plan—the business needs, the target group's definition and insights, the EVP, the communication mix, the objectives, the main strategies and the KPIs—are now in place, so the plan starts to solidify. The only remaining component is the activities plan—which activities a company should implement and when.

8. Develop communication ideas.

Based on the EVP and the selected communication channels, organizations now need to develop communication ideas that will have the greatest possible impact on the target groups and set the company apart from the competition. Of course, these communication ideas and concepts should be tested with the target groups

before being fully executed.

9. Execute and follow-up.

With the plan and communication ideas in place, it is now time to execute and continuously follow up. By using the right KPIs and regularly updating them against the objectives, employers will be able to correct and optimize when needed, and ultimately to deliver on the company's business needs.



Your employer branding checklist



The 9 step model

1. Understand your business needs
2. Define your main target group
3. Understand your target group
4. Optimize your employer value proposition
5. Select KPIs and set objectives
6. Define your optimal communication mix
7. Create your annual plan
8. Develop communication ideas
9. Execute and follow-up

What's next?



Take a couple of minutes to think about what you're doing today and start creating your action plan based on this model.

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