Build your employer brand: A strategic approach to recruitment and retention
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Why is employer branding so important for today’s businesses?

It has become apparent that the often talked about labour shortage is not a myth – it is a reality for today’s business world. In 2021, nearly one in five workers (employed or available for employment) will be 55 or older compared to about one in seven in 2005*. With the ageing population, baby boomers retiring in massive numbers, and fewer graduates with the right skills entering the workforce, companies will struggle to find the right fit for hard-to-fill positions. And let’s not forget that baby boomers and Gen Y workers don’t necessarily share the same values and expectations when it comes to the workplace... This means a complete shift in the way employers approach their hiring methods is in order.

In fact, the days of organic growth and what the industry calls “Post and Pray”, (posting a job, and waiting for candidates to apply), are over. These days, companies must become an employer of choice in order to source, recruit and retain today’s top candidates. That’s where employer branding comes in. Employer branding is about delivering an authentic and compelling experience, to candidates and employees alike, and living and breathing the corporate values you put forward in your organization on a daily basis. Just talking the talk is not going to cut it with the next generation of employees. If your company wants to hire and retain the very best employees, you need to thoroughly evaluate your organization from the top down, take a hard look in the mirror and start walking the walk too.

At Randstad Canada we work with our clients to help them better understand the shifts in employee recruitment and retention. This brochure will provide you with relevant insight on how to position your company in a distinctive and compelling way in order to attract, retain and engage the right employees for your organization.


Our clients’ point of view

We recently surveyed our clients to get a pulse on their recruitment challenges. The results directly mirror the labour market trends.

- Close to 50% of the 3000 hiring managers and HR professionals surveyed said attracting good candidates was their biggest challenge, followed by retention and mobilization.
- A majority of respondents also believe their image and reputation plays an important role in attracting talent.
- 42% of our HR clients said they were planning initiatives to enhance their image as an employer.
What is an employer brand?

What it is:

- A comprehensive recruiting strategy that positions your company in an attractive way and makes it top of mind for potential candidates.

- A focused corporate message that speaks to current and potential employees that conveys the company’s culture and identity in a truthful and compelling manner.

- A long-term vision that encompasses the values, systems, policies and behaviours which define what employers expect of their employees and what employees expect of their employers.

What it’s not:

- An advertising campaign – your employer brand is not just about developing a catchy tagline!

- A wish list of how the company would like to be perceived, i.e. promoting work-life balance as a key benefit to attract candidates is a good idea, but if your organization doesn’t have programs in place, the message won’t be credible.

- A quick fix – it may be tempting to create an employer brand campaign to quickly generate a rush of new applicants, but if you are not delivering on your promises, retention will then become another challenge! Your organizational culture must be nurtured over time.
Important questions to ask yourself before you begin

Before undertaking the task of developing your employer brand, you will need to do some concrete company research and “soul searching”.

**What is the main challenge you are facing?** Do you struggle to attract candidates with the right skill sets? Do you have trouble holding on to quality employees? Are you experiencing high turnover rates? Identify what you wish to accomplish and set baseline metrics. This will help you measure your success.

**Who do you want to attract?** Make sure you know who you need to target. What are their values and expectations? What tools are they using to search for jobs and potential employers? What are they looking for in a future employer?

**What do candidates go through when trying to apply to your company?** Explore the application process through a candidate's eyes. Is the website engaging? Does their resume go into a “black hole”? Take these factors into consideration when building the overall brand and candidate experience.

**Why would someone want to work for your company?** Explore the reasons why people would love to work for your company through focus groups and workshops. Be objective: the process is about discovering what your culture is about, not what you wish it would be. Be prepared to compare the outcomes of sessions involving senior management (perceived reality), against the findings from the employee sessions (actual reality). Address the internal problems first before attempting to launch a branding campaign.

**Do you have the “buy-in” of top management?** Your company culture must be a clear set of values that are communicated and believed in from the top-down. It is important to follow through on promises made during the onset of an employee's working relationship with the company.
How to create a strong and compelling employer brand

**Research**

1. **Internal:**
   - Focus groups
   - Interviews with executives
   - Needs analysis
   - Complete employee profiles, workforce distribution (Gen Y, baby boomers, etc.)

2. **External:**
   - Who are you looking to attract?
   - What do they want?
   - What are your competitors doing?

**Develop**

Based on your research, develop your Employer Value Proposition (EVP).

Your EVP is the promise you make to your current and future employees.

Craft your statement using no more than a dozen words, as it needs to be concise and clear: “At XYZ company, growth is what drives us. We constantly invest in the improvement of our products, and the development of our people.”

Ensure you have clear and factual proof points supporting your message.

Make sure it is in line with your overall corporate brand.
Communicate

3

Internal:
- Employee orientation program
- Training materials
- Intranet

External:
- Recruitment advertising
- Web site
- Events & job fairs

Measure

4

Evaluate your success:
- Turnover/Retention rates
- Employee satisfaction surveys
- Brand awareness and attractiveness
- Loyalty and engagement
- Flow of applications
- Cost per hire
Key ways to make your employer brand credible and authentic

**Know your target market**
What’s important to one group of core talent, might not be important to another group. Make sure the message fits the audience, and be prepared to have different messaging if you wish to appeal to diverse groups.

**Create synergy with your corporate brand**
Excellent employer brands do not stand alone. They are in sync with the overall company brand. The employer brand, should in some way, possess key elements of the company’s values as a whole.

**Deliver your brand experience**
Your brand message should be seen, felt and heard by all – even when a candidate is interviewing. The culture of your company should be felt the minute anyone walks through the front door.

**Walk the walk and talk the talk**
Even if it’s not the most attractive truth – you must always present the absolute truth. If your company is a fairly straight-laced organization, that’s ok – don’t try to make it something it’s not. Just focus on the things that make your organization attractive.
Developing your employer brand: Common mistakes and pitfalls

**Jumping in too fast:** Take the time to do the research. You need to know what people want, what you’re doing right and what needs changing.

**Talking to the converted:** Talking to happy employees is great, but they won’t help you figure out what you’re doing wrong. Make sure you have everyone’s input, especially those who may have negative opinions.

**Not being true to yourself:** The employer brand needs to be an accurate depiction of the company. No one wants to start a new job and quickly learn this is not what they signed up for.

**Thinking you’re done when you have your tagline:** So you have a great tagline… it won’t matter if employees don’t see real changes.

**Neglecting some key touch points:** Make sure you provide a positive candidate experience. For example, ensure your website is free from technical glitches that may prevent candidates from applying. You should also have a proper follow-up process in place, with timely and well-crafted communications.
How Randstad Canada can help you

We understand the importance of delivering a consistent employer brand experience in order to attract and retain today’s top talent. We dedicate ourselves to getting to know your company, its needs and its message, and communicating that to job seekers in a precise and compelling way. We will support you in your efforts to enhance and promote your brand, finding the talent that fits not only the required skills, but also your company’s culture and values.

Randstad Canada will provide you with a partner that can truly assist you in all your talent management initiatives, through our unique full-range of capabilities, from professional staffing in various industries such as engineering and IT, HR end-to-end programs such as recruitment and payroll process outsourcing, to vendor management solutions. Our recruitment experts are specialized in a wide range of industries, giving us in-depth knowledge of each clients’ business environment.
Randstad Canada is the Canadian leader for staffing, recruitment and HR Services. As the only fully integrated staffing company in the country, we understand the recruitment needs and demands of employers and job seekers across all levels and industries. Through our insightful knowledge of local markets, employment trends and global network of recruitment experts, we are shaping the Canadian world of work.

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