



Great jobs for bright people



How to Create a Powerful Employer Brand

Essential best practice and top tips for recruiters

1 Introduction

As one of the industry's longest-established jobs boards, jobs.ac.uk has helped thousands of employers worldwide to recruit the brightest talent for over 16 years.

We believe that by advertising your jobs online, you can access the widest and most targeted pool of talented jobseekers – at less cost!

But do your job postings really reflect and sell your organisation? Do they form part of a wider employer brand? And how can you make sure your employer brand connects with and promotes the right messages to the right people?

To help you create, develop and maximise the impact of your employer brand, we've put together some handy tips and techniques for you.

Our ebook covers:

- [What is an employer brand?](#)
- [Why is an employer brand important for recruitment?](#)
- [Why should you invest in your employer brand?](#)
- [Key challenges](#)
- [5 key steps to building a powerful employer brand](#)
- [Top tips for communicating your employer brand](#)
- [Measuring the effectiveness of your employer brand](#)

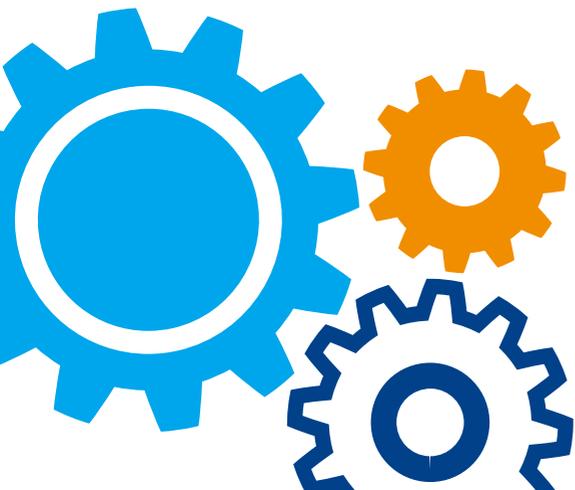
2 What is an employer brand?

An employer brand is an organisation's personality and proposition. Put simply, it's how you're seen as an employer and a great place to work by current and potential employees.

Your employer brand is your voice, your values, your ethos and offer. It's the messages you give out across every media channel at every touch point in the employee lifecycle. And every organisation has an employer brand - whether they like it or not.

What do we mean? Just think about the organisations you admire as an employer. Think about how they sell themselves and their roles. And then think about the 'look' and 'tone of voice' they've developed.

Much has been written about employer brands and the Employee Value Proposition (also known as EVP). And different organisations have different ways of creating and implementing employer brands. But it isn't a mystical art. It needn't cost a fortune. And many people follow a similar process that you can use to promote your organisation and become an employer of choice.



3 Why is an employer brand important for recruitment?

The most important and valuable asset of any organisation – is its people. So, every organisation wants to attract the best talent and be seen as an employer of choice.

Now this doesn't happen overnight. But by starting to take control of your employer brand and by putting out the right messages, you can set yourself apart from your competitors and attract talent with exactly the right skills, attitudes and behaviours you're looking for.

If things are disjointed at the moment with different people doing different things, it can cause confusion with your audience, lead to missed opportunities and tie up resources. Not only can a strong employer brand provide a consistent and powerful identity – it can help your people to work smarter and save you valuable time and money.

Templates, tools and resources with approved imagery and copy styles can be shared. So, your teams don't have to reinvent the wheel every time they communicate internally or externally. Instead they can focus their energies on quickly creating engaging messages that sell your individual roles and connect with your audience in the best way possible.

4 Why should you invest in your employer brand?

a Attract future talent

Improving the way you're seen externally will help you to improve the quality and quantity of candidates for your many different roles. People may not be impelled to join overnight, but they will start to change the way they see you and may well join your team when the time is right.

b Cost savings

You'll need to invest time and money to do your research and transform your identity, website, materials and recruitment advertising campaigns.

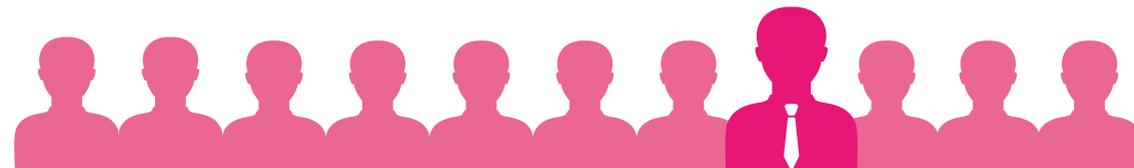
However, creating a strong employer brand can save you time and money in the long term and improve your ROI, as you speed up processes, reduce time to hire, increase internal recommendations and build up your talent bank. And if you attract or retain a key individual who makes a major breakthrough or a massive impact on the future of your organisation – your new employer brand could be priceless.

c Improve employee retention

A revitalised employer brand can make a big impact on your existing people too. It can help to improve motivation, productivity and retention, as well as galvanise everyone to work towards shared organisational goals.

d Standing out

In many different sectors, there's still a talent war for highly skilled roles such as Professors or other senior academic staff. Making sure you stand out in a highly competitive market and connect with your audience with the right message can make all the difference.



5 Key challenges

Transforming your employer brand across all areas of your organisation won't be a walk in the park. But it will be very worthwhile. Here, are just some of the challenges you'll face and some of the things you need to consider before you start your journey:

a Communication is key

You should get the buy in of people at every level, across all areas of your organisation, so high level management and those on the frontline will get behind you and know what you're doing and why.

b Synergy

You'll confuse your audience if you're out of sync with your 'consumer brand'. So make sure your marketing and HR teams link up and work closely together on the messaging and look and feel.

c Authenticity

You can't pretend to be something you're not. If the candidate journey or employee experience you offer doesn't live up to your promise – you may well lose talent to your competitors.

d Staying in control

In today's world everyone has a voice. Social media will provide your organisation with many. So, you'll need to create a team to champion and act as ambassadors of your employer brand. They will provide advice, ensure consistency, listen to the chatter, challenge where needed and bring thousands of voices together as one.

e Culture change

There's much more to an employer brand than a new strapline or typeface. Your people need to live and breathe your culture and personality. And every employee touch point from job postings and initial induction to further training and exit interviews – should reflect your employer brand. So, there's a lot of work to do internally as well.

f Beyond the day-to-day

It's not easy to create an employer brand in your spare time. So, be prepared to put in a lot of time, effort and resources from the very beginning.



6 5 Key steps to building a powerful employer brand

There are many different agencies, organisations and specialists out there helping to build employer brands. And they all seem to have a unique formula and a different way of doing things. But here are some of the key steps you should go through.

a Buy in

Talk to senior managers and people across the business, so they know what you're doing, why you're doing it and you can get the time, budget and resources you need to deliver your vision. If possible, create a steering committee of employer brand champions from different parts of your organisation who can provide input, help to drive the project forward and communicate progress to their teams.



b Insight

How do your people and potential employees see you as an employer? How are your main competitors positioning themselves? And how do you measure up to them? It pays to do your research and gain valuable insight through answering these questions and doing some of the following:

- Assessing your current recruitment materials and candidate and employment experience - identifying how you can improve things for candidates, colleagues and your hiring managers
- Understanding your organisation's current characteristics, behaviours and personality
- Establishing what characteristics, behaviours and personality you want to display in the future
- Aligning your employer brand strategy with your organisation's overall strategy, direction and future needs
- Understanding who you want to attract (particularly for your most important roles) and their expectations
- Carrying out staff surveys asking why they joined, why they still like being part of the team and more
- Conducting external perception surveys
- Analysing your competitors and their employer brand experience
- Involving your marketing team from the outset, so you can achieve synergy and make sure you're aware of any future developments.

c Distilling

This is all about assimilating the insight and distilling your values, benefits and offer to understand your organisation's personality and create a clearly defined employer proposition. At this stage many organisations create an Employee Value Proposition (EVP). This can be a simple statement or a massive dossier that brings together your most compelling attributes and identifies what makes you different and the messages you need to promote externally.

EVP

You should start by asking such questions as:

- What do you offer your employees your competitors don't?
- What is unique about you?
- What are your strengths?
- What is your organisation's culture and personality?
- What values do your people live and breathe every day?

Checklist:

- ✓ Get different viewpoints to understand the reasons why people like working for you.
- ✓ Talk to your new starters to find out why they joined and whether their opinion of you has changed during their journey.
- ✓ Ask people to be totally honest, as you need to understand the good and the bad to gain a real insight into the emotional connection people have with your organisation.
- ✓ Your EVP is the experience you promise your employees. So, make sure it's authentic and a true reflection.
- ✓ If possible sense-check it with people you trust inside and outside of your organisation.

d Implementation

Often this stage involves putting a brief together for a creative team (either internally or externally) based on the research and your budget and objectives. And they will bring your proposition and employer brand to life with words and imagery across all of the different channels. You can sense check their thinking through your insight and even test groups to make sure the approach connects with your audience, tells them why they should work for you and positions you as an attractive employer of choice.

However, before you launch your brand externally across lots of different channels, you should communicate the changes and deliver communications and workshops internally, so people understand the changes. After all, social media means that every single one of your people is a brand ambassador – whatever their role.

You should also embed cultural change to help your people 'live' your employer brand. And make sure your user-friendly recruitment process delivers your employer brand ethos at every touch point from seeing an advert or job posting to joining the team and beyond.

e Monitoring, measurement & more

Once you've set the wheels in motion, your employer brand will keep on evolving to meet future needs. Ultimately, your employer brand is everyone's responsibility. But ideally you'll also have a team of people who will champion, manage and develop your employer brand, sharing best practice, keeping things consistent and maximising its effectiveness.

From the outset, you should also set objectives and measures for success – but more about that later.

7 Top tips for communicating your employer brand**a Brand toolkit**

Create a toolkit or brand guidelines for people to refer to, so everyone understands the different elements and knows how to consistently implement the brand across all of the different channels.

b Keep it real

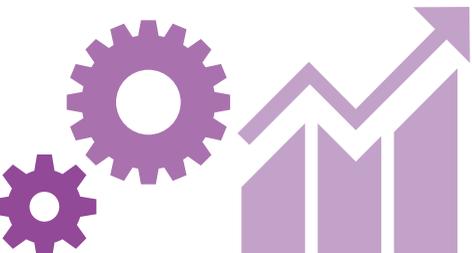
You should always be authentic and proud of who you are and the organisation you aspire to be. If you try to tell people you're something you're not – you'll soon get found out on social media, which could leave your reputation in tatters. There's a big difference between 'we are' and 'we are aiming to be'.

c Live & breathe it

Your employer brand needs to be 'genuine' and part of your culture. After all, the attitude of your people and the way they act is a key element of your employer brand. Just in the way employees in stores talk to you shapes the way you think about their organisation as an employer.

d Actions speak louder than words

There's no point in saying something if you can't back it up. If you say you're friendly and people focused, make sure your recruitment processes are user friendly and your employment experience is human (even if it's heavily automated). You can also speed things up and improve the candidate experience through telephone screening and by letting people self-select through online tests.



e Sell, sell, sell

Make sure you sell your organisation and your roles. Your communications shouldn't sound like a public announcement. They should promote your values, roles, rewards, aspirations and brand personality in a way that impels people to join your team. You need to think about your identity, reputation and how you position yourself with every communication you make.

f Be a storyteller

Take every opportunity to tell your stories and the stories of your people. This will make sure your messages are believable and enable your audience to build an emotional connection.

g Bring your employer brand to life

Particularly on your website with video stories and people profiles, so people understand your personality, rewards, culture and what it's really like to work there. Also remember to keep on refreshing your website with engaging content, so people keep on coming back.

h Bring it to life in your recruitment advertising

There's no point launching a shiny new employee brand if you're going to keep on doing the same old thing. Make sure the way you write your job postings captures your personality and reflects your brand. And use fresh video and imagery to capture the vibrancy of your workplace, culture and people. Also make a big splash to get your brand noticed, using fully branded job adverts, web buttons and recruitment microsites to start to change people's perceptions.

i Be consistent, but don't restrain

Make sure your employer brand has the flexibility to connect with a diverse range of people and tell them what they want to know. Different roles have different drivers, so you need to be able to segment your messages to attract everyone from cleaners to senior execs.

j Don't forget to listen

The candidate journey is a two-way process, so you must be prepared to listen, adapt and take feedback on-board.

k Get your people on-board

Your people are your best ambassadors. After all, word of mouth is still very powerful. So, inspire your people, look after them, get them involved and help them to help you by rewarding them for recommending other talented people.

Top tip

Employee referral schemes can be a very effective way to motivate your team, reduce cost per hire and help you attract great talent. You can also encourage your people to play their part in raising your profile as an employer of choice by asking them to post positive comments, tell their stories and get involved with the conversation on social media.

Find out how you can promote your employer brand on jobs.ac.uk using enhanced advertising at www.jobs.ac.uk/recruiters



8 Measuring the effectiveness of your employer brand

There are a number of different ways you can monitor and measure the success and ROI of your employer brand through dashboards, KPIs and qualitative and quantitative data. These can include:

- Feedback from new starters, hiring managers and recruitment teams
- The number and calibre of applicants
- Job acceptance rates
- Speed and cost of hire
- Performance ratings
- Amount and quality of internal referrals
- Employee surveys, workshops, retention and engagement
- Rates of absenteeism
- Exit interviews
- Mystery shopper exercises
- External perception surveys of brand attractiveness and association
- Spend on recruitment agencies and temporary staff

Beyond recruitment and individual performance, you can also link your goals to your organisation's commercial and corporate goals and highlight the impact your employer brand makes on profitability and student numbers. At the highest level – this will be the biggest measure of success.

Whatever measures you choose, remember that your employer brand may take time to bed in and make a difference. But ultimately it should deliver results in the long term.

We hope that you've enjoyed our quick guide to employer branding and that it will help you to improve your recruitment and employment activities in the future.

Employer brand checklist

- ✓ Involve your people at every stage
- ✓ Develop an EVP
- ✓ Create a guide so people know how to use your employer brand
- ✓ Bring your employer brand to life with all of your communications
- ✓ Measure the effectiveness





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