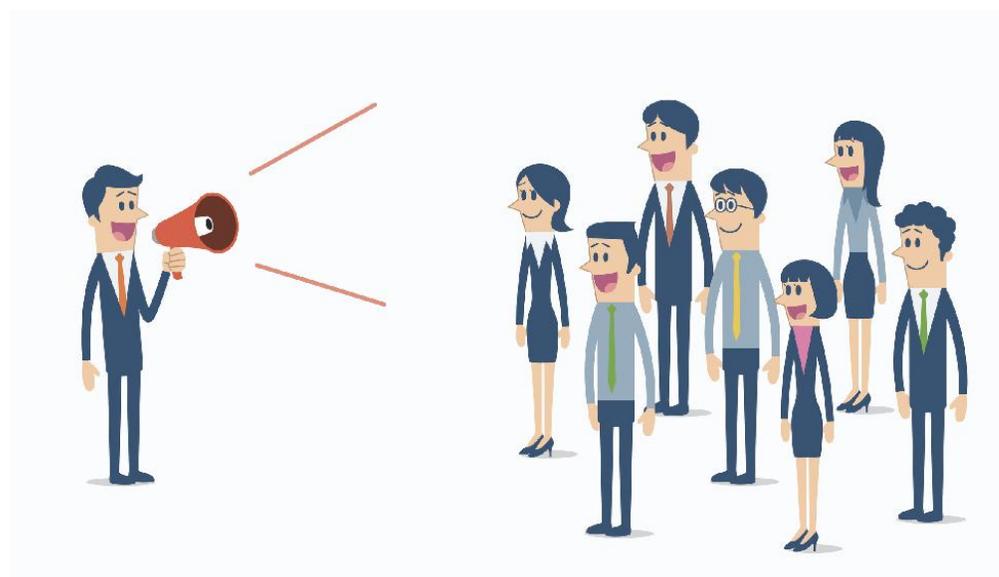


The importance of employer branding

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Cissy Pau



Credit: iStock

How to attract top talent by presenting your company as a desirable place to work

Companies often spend thousands, if not hundreds of thousands or even millions, of dollars to establish their marketing brand: defining their unique selling proposition, determining how to set their products or services apart from their competitors and identifying how to attract ideal customers or clients. They create brochures, develop a website, attend trade shows, use social



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media and engage in many other activities to relay a brand to the market.

What many companies often neglect to do, or maybe don't even think about doing, is putting in the same time and effort (and possibly money) to establish their employer brand. The essence of employer branding includes determining what sets a company apart as an employer and why someone would want to work with that company rather than somewhere else. Employees are ultimately responsible for delivering on the marketing brand. Determining what the needs, wants and motivations are of the ideal employees, and then positioning the company as an employer that can meet those desires, will enable a company to hire top talent to carry out the brand promise.

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Let's do a simple exercise. Take a look at your company's website. Imagine you are a prospective employee visiting your website for the first time. Will the prospect learn about your company's culture and what it's like to work there? Will they be able to see how they will fit in? Is there a compelling career page? Is there a description of what your work environment offers that is unique and engaging?

If the answer is yes, that's great—your company should have no problem attracting candidates. Interestingly, you're in the minority.

The majority of websites describe what a company does with little emphasis on why someone would want to work there. They describe the company's products and services. There may be pictures or samples of the company's work and testimonials from satisfied customers or clients. However, there is often very little about the company's culture or work environment. There may be a career page with a list of job openings. There may be a perfunctory statement about offering *"competitive salary and*

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benefits, a respectful work environment, great teamwork and opportunities for advancement.” But there is nothing included that is really unique, meaningful or even interesting, and little that sets the company apart.

Spending time and effort to determine the employer brand—the compelling offer that positions the company as a desirable place to work—and then communicating and upholding that brand consistently, both internally and externally, is critically important to attract ideal employees. The brand may be aspirational, but it needs to be representative of the existing employee experience. Components of the brand “story” may include descriptions of unique attributes of the workplace, employee testimonials, engaging employee videos, identifying brand ambassadors, describing how the company brings its values and vision to life, highlighting community involvement initiatives and using available methods to convey the essence of what it’s like to work for the company.

What do [Apple](#), [Under Armour](#), [Vancity](#) and [MEC](#) all have in common? All have created renowned company brands while, at the same time, positioned themselves as employers of choice in their respective industries.

Some lessons learned from these companies:

- Be clear on what’s important to your ideal employees and meet those needs;
- Share what it’s like to work at your company consistently through all marketing channels and through employee brand ambassadors; and
- Ensure the employer brand represents the genuine, true work environment so there is consistency between the “story” and reality.

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