BRANDING for BETTER HIREs

Attract Top Talent with Your Unique Brand

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Recruitment marketing has emerged as a key theme in talent acquisition, yet many organizations are still becoming familiar with the concept. Just what is recruitment marketing? Simply put, recruitment marketing refers to the reality that companies must now market their attributes in order to attract the best job candidates and fill critical roles.

There are a couple of reasons.

### Candidates In Control

83% of recruiters say that power is no longer with employers, but with candidates. As a result, recruiters must increase their hiring speed to snatch up top candidates more quickly, and to do so, they need to excel in the ability to sell candidates on the merits of their organization.

### More Jobs Than Talent

In a number of industries throughout the U.S., there are more open positions than there are applicants for those positions. This is creating shortages of talent, and consequently, greater competition for highly-skilled professionals.

### The Disruptive Force of Technology

As a result of the disruptive force of technology, traditional recruiting strategies aren’t as effective as they used to be. Candidates have increased visibility into companies via platforms like social media, which means companies must be strategic about what they share.

Corporate leadership also recognizes that recruitment strategies of the past are no longer effective.

93% of CEOs say they must change their recruiting strategy if they hope to attract and retain talent.
THE ROLE OF EMPLOYER BRANDING IN MARKETING

Employer branding is a central component of recruitment marketing. An employer brand is the specific message or image about an organization conveyed to job candidates as part of recruitment marketing efforts. In other words, companies can pursue marketing strategies to reach more candidates, but it’s their employer brand that most directly helps captivate candidate interest.

Company Culture
What types of beliefs and behaviors characterize how your workforce carries out its responsibilities?

Work Environment
What is the atmosphere of your organization’s workspace? This includes things like manager-employee interactions and work-life integration policies.

Core Values
What does your organization stand for? This is about more than what it sells; it’s about the qualities it looks for in employees and the “why” behind them.

Communication
How you communicate with candidates throughout each stage of the recruitment process shapes your employer brand. Consistency, promptness, and tone all affect a candidate’s impression of your organization.

But don’t most companies already have a brand?

Yes—most companies already have a brand. However, consumer branding is largely defined by an organization’s product or service, whereas employer branding is typically defined by an organization’s:

**Consumer Brand**
Your consumer brand reflects the image your company wishes to project to customers, to drive sales of your product or service.

**Employer Brand**
Your employer brand reflects the image your company wishes to project to candidates, to demonstrate why your organization is a great place to work.

Companies are increasingly attempting to align their employer and consumer branding, according to research from Universum.

By 2020, half of all executives say the connection between these two brands will increase.

While consumer branding is largely defined by an organization’s product or service, employer branding is typically defined by an organization’s:

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Because employer branding sets the parameters for the all-important candidate experience, it’s no surprise research finds that candidates respond more favorably to a strong employer brand.

Consider, too, that 53% of job candidates have a relationship with a company before beginning the recruitment process; these relationships include as a family member of an employee, as a consumer of company content, or as a company advocate. The point? All of these relationships can be shaped by branding.

**Q:** What do 76% of candidates want to know when researching companies online?

**A:** Details on what makes the company an attractive place to work.

An employer brand can provide these details.

**Job Seeker Likelihood of Applying for Job**

- **94%** of job seekers are likely to apply for a job if the employer actively manages their employer brand.
- **83%** of recruiting leaders say an employer brand significantly impacts their ability to hire the best talent.

Recruiters agree.

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- Employer Actively Manages Employer Brand
- Employer DOES NOT Actively Manage Employer Brand
When organizations intentionally develop compelling employer brands, the result can be tangible returns on investment.

For example, better branding can equal:

**Lower Turnover**
Companies that market a strong employer brand have an employee turnover rate that’s 28 percent lower than those with brands that are weak, or non-existent. [8]

**Lower Cost**
Two-thirds of candidates will accept a lower salary if the employer provides a great candidate experience during the hiring process. [9]

**Lower Time-to-Fill**
Organizations with a strong employer brand attract at least 3.5 times more applicants per job, which enables organizations to identify the best talent sooner, lowering time-to-fill. [10]
One-third of all organizations planned to increase their spend on creating an employer brand over the course of 2015\textsuperscript{(11)} and 62% of organizations say employer branding is a top priority, a significant increase from the percentage of organizations who said the same in 2014. \textsuperscript{(12)}

That this renewed interest in employer branding comes at a time when 73% of CEOs are also concerned with the availability of key skills in their workforce suggests employer branding is viewed as a viable solution for acquiring these skills. \textsuperscript{(13)}

For What Reasons Do CEOs Want to Invest in Employer Branding Over the Next Five Years? \textsuperscript{(14)}
So, What Does Effective Employer Branding Look Like?
Employer brands should first and foremost be defined by an employee value proposition; this is the core reason top talent would want to work for your company. An employer value proposition can also be thought of as the “promise” you make to your employees.

Because today’s job seekers are more concerned with the intrinsic rewards careers can offer, an employee value proposition shouldn’t just focus on things like high salary or the ability to climb the corporate ladder.

41% of job seekers believe companies should have “positive social impacts”; given that millennials will comprise half of the workforce by 2020, it’s important that employee value propositions recognize this belief.

63% of millennials think companies should have a positive social impact.

Unfortunately, few companies at the mid-market level—where effective employer branding can be a key differentiator from competitors—have strong employee value propositions.

The following questions can be helpful when creating an employee value proposition:

- What makes your organization a great place to work?
- Why do your high performers enjoy working at your company?
- What are the benefits of your work environment?
- How does your company provide its employees with a sense of purpose at work?
- What is your company’s overall vision, or mission?
Your employer brand should reflect what’s special about your company—not your closest competitor or the most popular industry giant. Why? An employer brand must clearly identify its differentiating factors if it wishes to attract candidate interest, rather than be one of the crowd.

What does effective employer branding look like?

It’s **AUTHENTIC**

If an employer brand is authentic, your current employees should be able to connect with and stand behind its message.

To ensure this is the case, consider:

- **Involving current employees** in the process of creating your employer brand, through tactics such as small focus groups or employee surveys. Use these tactics to reevaluate your brand on a regular basis.

- **Soliciting buy-in from senior leadership**, as these will be the folks in charge of living and breathing your brand, both in internal and external-facing situations.

While your brand should always be authentic, you may be interested to know that studies find the most important employer “**personality**” traits to job seekers are: (1,8)

1. Honesty
2. Stability
3. Reliability

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1. Entrepreneur

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What does effective employer branding look like?

It’s TRANSPARENT

The Importance of Transparency

Your employer brand should be **less**

about crafting an ideal image,

and more about being transparent. Can you provide proof of the value proposition you put forth? For example, if your organization doesn’t typically allow employees to work remotely, don’t craft a brand narrative that highlights unrivaled flexibility just to align with a popular job seeker desire. **Maintaining candidate trust** matters more than claiming to offer everything.

Approximately

1/2 of all

JOB SEEKERS

surveyed said they used the employer review site Glassdoor before applying for a job.

Translation

Candidates will know if what you claim aligns with what you can deliver. Of course, if your reviews are mostly positive, direct candidates to these sites yourself.

To be optimally effective, an employer brand must also be clearly defined. This involves defining organizational responsibility for branding. Doing so aligns all branches of your organization, from marketing to HR to the Executive Suite. Without a concrete definition, communication about your employer brand may be off-base or inconsistent.

### Rating of How Well Defined Employer Brand is in the Organization

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Source: HRO Today

Companies with **top employer brands** understand the importance of defining roles.

Seventy-nine percent of top brands have a well-defined employer brand, as compared to just 26.5 percent of other brands. (22)

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**Does it matter who owns employer branding in an organization?**

*Top brand companies* are more likely to have the **CEO or president** as the most senior **sponsor of employer branding activity** (44.5%) as compared to other brand companies (25.1%) (23).

Yet, over 60% of talent acquisition and recruiting executives **believe that Human Resources departments are responsible** for employer branding. (24)

The good news is that there is room for both stakeholders, at the employer branding table. In fact, a unified approach branding in which various parties bring both internal and external considerations to light can result in a more well-rounded, relatable employer brand.
How to MARKET YOUR EMPLOYER BRAND
Social media is a great way to communicate your employer brand. Today’s talent not only participates on social media prolifically, but the majority of job seekers now use it to research employers and apply for jobs. The fact that 74% of all Internet users have at least one active social media account also underscores the fact that social media can promote an employer brand in a widespread, cost-effective manner.

Maximize your presence on social media with advanced tools like Social Distribution, which automatically post job openings to the social profiles of participating employees. This connects candidates to actual employees at your organization for more authentic branding.

Social media is the top channel for promoting an employer brand, according to senior executives surveyed by Universum. (27)

Which Channel is Most Important for Promoting an Employer Brand?

- Social Media: 40%
- Employer Website: 35%
- Brochures: 30%
- Career Fairs: 25%

- Be Visual
  Video posts per person on Facebook have grown 75% year over year (28) and tweets with images receive 18% more clicks than those without. (29) Take advantage of this preference by sharing posts with images from your latest company outing or a video message from the CEO.

- Let Your Employees Speak for You
  Whether by posting photos from employee events, sharing “day in the life” videos, or featuring employees as guest writers on your company blog, candidates are more likely to buy into your employer brand if they see employees embody it.

- Share Content That Speaks to Your Values
  Use social media as an opportunity to define and reinforce the values your organization stands behind. Retweet articles about topics that resonate with your core value of innovation, or share photos from your volunteer event on Instagram.
Create a career site that’s fully aligned with your employer brand. Why? Seventy-five percent of job applicants still prefer to apply through a career site; your career site is therefore the perfect place to hit a home run with your employer brand.

**Company Logo**
Your company logo reinforces overall brand recognition and should serve as the inspiration for your career site’s design.

**A Touch of Personality**
Much like core values, it’s also important for an organization to share aspects of its “personality”. Does your organization value humor? Wit? Sharp intelligence? Share that here, too.

**Genuine Representation**
Provide visitors a genuine representation of your company culture with photos or video. Because iCIMS emphasizes teamwork, we feature photos of actual employees. Whatever your culture embodies, provide an authentic view of it.

**Opportunities to Learn More**
Make it easy for visitors to learn more about your company’s employer brand with features like “Connect with Us” that link to your organization’s social media profiles. This can help candidates stay engaged, especially if they don’t intend to apply right away.

**Emphasize Core Values**
Highlight what it is your organization believes in, rather than leave candidates guessing.

**Specific Call to Action**
Even a call to action can embody your employer brand. At iCIMS, we’re team oriented (see above), which is why our call to action says, “Meet Our Teams”, rather than something more generic like, “View Jobs”. 
An employer brand can help your organization:

- Attract more candidates
- Fill positions more quickly
- Reduce turnover
- More effectively engage its current workforce

However, to create an employer brand that’s effective, branding must be rooted in authenticity and receive buy-in from members at all levels of your organization.

Additionally, though the best consumer brands are often associated with big enterprises and big budgets, this doesn’t have to be the case for employer branding. In fact, 91 percent of smaller companies found their pursuit of employer branding to be successful, even though they had lower budgets. Because talent shortages are widespread and anticipated to increase in severity in the coming years, businesses of all sizes can, and should, pursue strategies for effective employer branding.
iCIMS is the leading provider of talent acquisition solutions that help businesses win the war for top talent. iCIMS empowers companies to manage their entire hiring process within the industry’s most robust Platform-as-a-Service (PaaS). Built on the foundation of a best-to-market talent acquisition software suite, iCIMS’ PaaS framework, UNIFi, allows employers to expand the capabilities of their core talent acquisition technology by integrating with the largest partner ecosystem in talent acquisition to help them attract, find, screen, and manage candidates. Offering scalable, easy-to-use solutions that are backed by award-winning customer service, iCIMS supports more than 3,500 contracted customers and is one of the largest and fastest-growing talent acquisition solution providers.

Learn more about how iCIMS can help your organization today.

Visit www.icims.com, call us at (800) 889-4422, or view a free online demo of the iCIMS Talent Platform.