

Employer Brand

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One of the keys to great recruiting is learning how to judge talent. I have learned in my experience that there are grades of talent, and the highest is given to the job seeker that will almost undoubtedly receive an offer if given the chance to interview. In the same way that talent can be graded, organizations can, too. Unfortunately many organizations have employment brands that negatively impact their ability to attract and recruit top talent. Organizations with strong employment brands are more successful at attracting top talent, the core to an organization's lasting success.

"With human capital ever more essential to sustaining growth and creating shareholder value, company leaders must create an employment brand that helps attract top talent, just as they create a consumer brand that builds customer loyalty." There are, what I believe, five key aspects to establishing a strong employer brand.

First, a company must have a radical commitment to their vision, mission, values, strategy and the vital few objectives critical to the organization's success. Employees and top talent want to work for a company that is exactly who it claims to be and where complex business problems can be solved by evaluating the problem against the vision, mission, and values. This is the identity of the business and gives confidence that there is real purpose to the work beyond corporate profits, increased market share, or increasing revenue.

The second attribute involves creating an environment that encourages innovation. Unbridling the best and brightest in their ability to solve problems, achieve, shift paradigms, and to do so in an environment with low bureaucracy is critical to an employment brand. Clearing the clutter and focusing on the vital few objectives pertinent to the company's success can limit bureaucracy, as well as clearing any apparent hurdles by evaluating them against the vision, mission, values, and strategy.

The third step in establishing an alluring corporate brand and maintaining a talent culture is providing work that enables their employees to cultivate their capabilities. A consistent trait amongst top talent is their tendency to get bored easily if they are not challenged and continuously improving their abilities. Organizations that offer a culture that aids in the augmentation of skills is one that will surely have a strong employer brand. I have found that organizations with an understanding of core competencies for each role and strong in organizational development are best at evaluating performance and identifying new stretch opportunities for top talent. With less bureaucracy, top performers can spend more time solving problems, strengthening their skills and achieving their personal best, thereby keeping them engaged and their job satisfaction high.

I have learned that successful organizations effectively align people, processes and technologies, but that doing so is near impossible without top talent. That said, the fourth key to building a strong employer brand and a talent culture is related to how effectively organizations align business processes and technologies in support of their vision, mission, values, and strategy. This is common sense but not as easy as it sounds, because business is fluid so paradigms shift regularly, thereby making processes and technologies that were once effective obsolete. The key is to build a scalable architecture that helps businesses achieve not only today, but well into the future. A strong commitment to vision, mission, and values, an effective internal communication model, and commitment to a balanced scorecard are keys to successfully aligning people, processes and technologies. In addition, organizations must establish measurable performance targets so that individuals and groups can evaluate their performance on the fly. However, setting targets is the easy part, where most companies fail is in their accountability to their targets. It's been said many times and is still true today, "what gets measured gets done."

The fifth and final step in establishing a strong employment brand and talent culture is to develop reward programs that align

and reward performance in the activities related to achieving your vision, mission, and values. While I'm not a specialist in compensation plan design, common sense tells me that a rewards program aligned solely to either individual performance or company profits may not be the best. Therefore, I would suggest a program heavily weighted to corporate profits, but that also ties to individual performance. Ignoring individual performance can inhibit the very activity you are trying to encourage. Likewise, paying bonuses when the bottom line is not achieved sends the wrong message, too.

Following these five basic steps can ensure an organization's lasting success through the development of an employer brand rooted in talent.

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