



Make Your Brand POP!

Attract the Best Talent with Strong Branding



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INTRODUCTION

Is your key talent walking out the door? Do you feel helpless to stop it?

The world has changed, and the best talent knows they can work for a great company. Is your company considered a great place to work? If your company doesn't have a great reputation, it's time to reconsider your branding.

Creating a strong marketing strategy and brand is essential. Apple is known worldwide for their customer's product allegiance. Apple is also considered a top tier employer and actively manages that brand.

What is a brand?

According to Entrepreneur.com a brand is:

The marketing practice of creating a name, symbol or design that identifies and differentiates a product from other products.

A top brand shapes a company's employees perception of the company, actively manages their customer's needs, and courts potential employees.

Companies create and maintain their brand in order to communicate the value of their products and their company to their customers, employees, and the general public. A brand comes from what the company is, what and who the company wants to be and who they serve. Typically, companies have a branding strategy.

Part of a branding strategy is an employer brand. An employer brand is an extension of the overall branding and marketing of a company.

Why is it important for attracting talent?

In the most competitive fields, such as technology and health care, branding plays a large role in the decision to pursue a job. A solid brand communicates your values, personality, and culture to prospective employees. A company with a reputation as a great place to work attracts higher quality applicants and retains great talent longer.

A defined company culture and employer brand that is promoted and established attracts talent that supports that culture. Google has a reputation for being a great place to be a technology developer. Google receives approximately 3 million job applications per year, hiring approximately 7,000 or about 0.2%.¹ Can your company attract numerous quality applicants through reputation alone?



THE PROBLEM

Companies are currently in a hiring crisis. As the economy continues to grow, employees are more willing to look elsewhere. Voluntary quit rates continue to hold steady at about 2% of employed persons as of June 2016.ⁱⁱ More individuals are willing to leave their jobs in search of new opportunities. The most marketable individuals can be the most susceptible to recruiting and companies need to be aware of why their top employees may be attracted to other organizations.

As the workforce ages, some of the more experienced workers are leaving, taking with them institutional knowledge that is difficult to capture. How are jobs changing to accommodate senior people retiring and new talent taking over? Is management reviewing it's mission, values, and culture to incorporate new ways of doing business that attracts younger workers?

In December of 2015, The Bureau of Labor Statistics stated:

The labor force is projected to grow over the next 10 years at an average annual rate of 0.5 percent, a slower rate than in recent decades. Demographic factors—including slower population growth and the aging of the U.S. population—in addition to the declining labor force participation rate will be responsible for the projected growth of the labor force.ⁱⁱⁱ

How can your company compete in a labor market with fewer workers?

One way to compete with other companies in your space is through a strong employer brand. Our solutions can help your build a stronger brand, attract and retain your top talent, and in the process help your business to flourish.



SOLUTIONS

How do I create an employer brand that attracts top talent?

In a 2015 survey, 73% of CEOs^{iv} reported being concerned about the availability of key skills. Employer Branding stood out as a powerful tool to assist with ***talent acquisition***. When asked whether building a brand in the marketplace led to top talent acquisition, 57 percent of respondents said that was the case. A strong brand was identified as one of the **top three factors** in acquiring the right people for the job, along with a strong compensation package and “industry appeal.”^v

There are four areas to review when creating and maintain an employer brand that attracts top talent: Communicate your business, have a unique advantage, have a consistent message, establish an emotional connection,

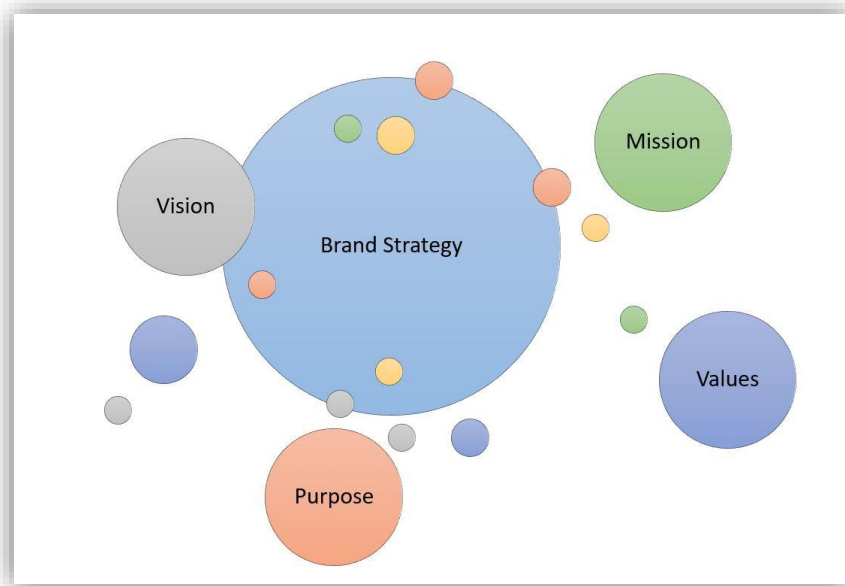
Communicate your business

Can you articulate why you are in business? How are you now communicating that “why?” Customers don’t buy what you do, they buy why you do it. What is your strategy for getting your “why” out in the marketplace?

The first step to communicating your “why” is your “purpose” statement. According to Graham Kenny, columnist for the Harvard Business Review and the managing director of Strategic Factors, a Sydney, Australia-based consultancy,

If you’re crafting a purpose statement, my advice is this: To inspire your staff to do good work for you, find a way to express the organization’s impact on the lives of customers, clients, students, patients — whomever you’re trying to serve. Make them feel it.^{vi}

A savvy company incorporates the “purpose” statement in its branding strategy. If you company is trying to attract top talent, a purpose statement that speaks to your best applicants is critical.



You may not be able to see yourself through the eyes of your potential employees or customers– that’s why bringing in expertise to assist in this area can be highly beneficial.

Personalization

When you *differentiate* and *personalize* your brand from the competition, you create a unique advantage in the mind of your target consumers that quickly helps them to see and appreciate the greater value of your brand over your competitors

According to the Branding Strategy Insider:

Instead of showing your customers all the options in your product range, the trick is to show them just the three options you think will interest them the most. At Amazon, 35 percent of all sales result from personalized recommendations; at Netflix, the percentage is as high as 75 percent.^{vii}

An employer brand is no different. As an organization, your recruiting efforts should be personalized toward your likely candidates. Most people are open to receiving the right message at the right time. Top talent is no exception.

Branding your organization as the one desired by the most qualified individuals is the first step in differentiating your jobs from your competitors. According to CareerArc.com,



“A weak employer brand can cost you job applicants: About 11 percent of job seekers said they would decline a job offer from an employer with a bad reputation—even if they were unemployed.”^{viii}

Your brand makes a difference. CareerArc.com goes on to say that a strong employer reputation can woo passive candidates: 84 percent of survey participants would consider leaving their current company if another company with an excellent reputation offered them a job. ^{ix}

In the top 10 of Fortune’s 2016 Best Places to Work list is Wegmans Food Markets. They are a family-owned, employee-first food company with stores in New York, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts. At Wegmans, 94% of the workforce is proud to “tell others that I work here.”^x Your employees should be telling their friends they are proud to work at your company.

How much better could your talent pool be if your company had a great reputation?

When was the last time you spent time thinking about how your company is perceived by customers or candidates? Have you ever considered personalizing your interactions with your customers or candidates? We can help.

Consistent messaging

It is imperative your team communicate your **consistent** message from the inside out. You must be clear, concise and benefits oriented to quickly educate your customer in understand **how** you can help them, and **why** you are the **only** choice.

An employer brand is similar. It takes time and repetition to get your message out and be memorable. Reputations are made over time and can be destroyed in an instant. Social media has become a big part of the messaging equation.

Is your brand messaging consistent between all your channels?

According to the Society for Human Resources Management, recruiting via social media continues to grow, with 84% of organizations currently using some form of social media to find candidates, and 9% planning to use it in 2016. ^{xi} Here are the details:

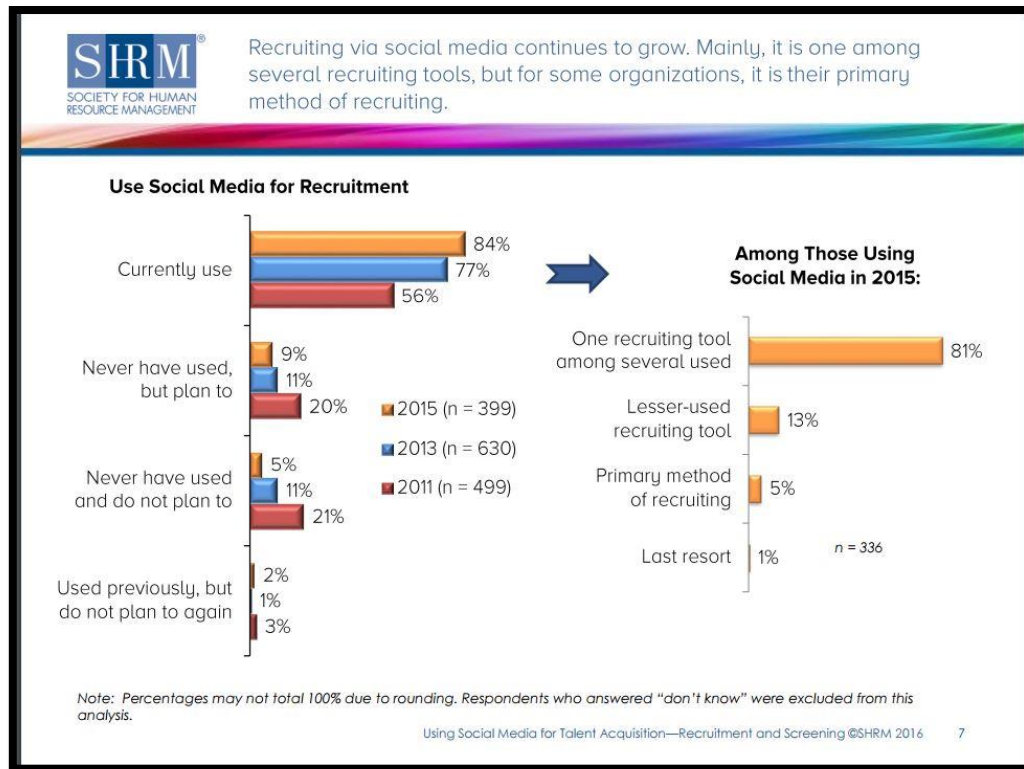


Figure 1 <https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/trends-and-forecasting/research-and-surveys/Documents/SHRM-Social-Media-Recruiting-Screening-2015.pdf>

Chances are, your potential applicants are on social media. What are they hearing about your company? Your branding strategy plan should contain the messaging for your employer brand as well as your company brand, and all the communication should be coordinated and consistent for the best results.

Create more transparent dialogue and feedback to keep your brand in continuous innovation mode and stay in front of the people who matter most – your customers and your candidates. That, in turn, earns trust and loyalty.

Through analysis and review, you can determine if your message is consistent and reaching the right people.

Emotional connections

With a strong brand, your consumer develops certain expectations and emotional connections with the brand, which cause them to choose that branded product or service over others. People remember how you make them feel – and this is a critical component of a strong brand.



When developing your employer brand, emotional connections are just as important. Brands make emotional connections in many different ways: through advertising, customer contact, consumer membership organizations and even through company-sponsored customer events. Creating that connection with your potential candidates through your contact with them is also critical.

What kind of emotional connection are you creating through your job descriptions? When they contact your company about a posted position, do they return from that encounter feeling upbeat and positive about your organization?

At Pro Food Systems, the parent company of Champs Chicken and Cooper's Express, 92% of the employees say that their workplace is great. Pro Food Systems is one of the Fortune 100's 2016 Best Places to Work.^{xii} If your business is in Missouri, Pro Foods competes with you for workers. If your company is a great place to work, testimonials from your employees help prove that to potential hires.

In order to attract top talent, it's important to provide information on why your organization stands out from the rest. Engage the brains of your candidates, make them feel that your organization is different – better and more interesting than your competitors. Do your job descriptions and ads engage and arouse curiosity in top talent – or are those descriptions cookie cutter lists of bullet points that any company could have dredged up from the internet?

75% of job seekers consider an employer's brand before even applying for a job (CareerArc).^{xiii} What does your brand say about your company?

We can review and suggest how to make better emotional connections with your top talent pool.



CONCLUSION

An effective employer brand combines effective communication, consistent messaging, an emotional connection and personalization to attract and keep top talent.

Being open about your company's purpose and "why" gives customers a reason to continue their relationship with your organization. Communicating your company's purpose also gives talent a motive to look closer at your company as an employer.

Personalizing your message to your customers and potential hires make your company seem caring and customer-oriented. When recruiting new employees, focus on what those employees want from a job and an employer. Both customers and potential employees want to think your company is targeted toward their needs.

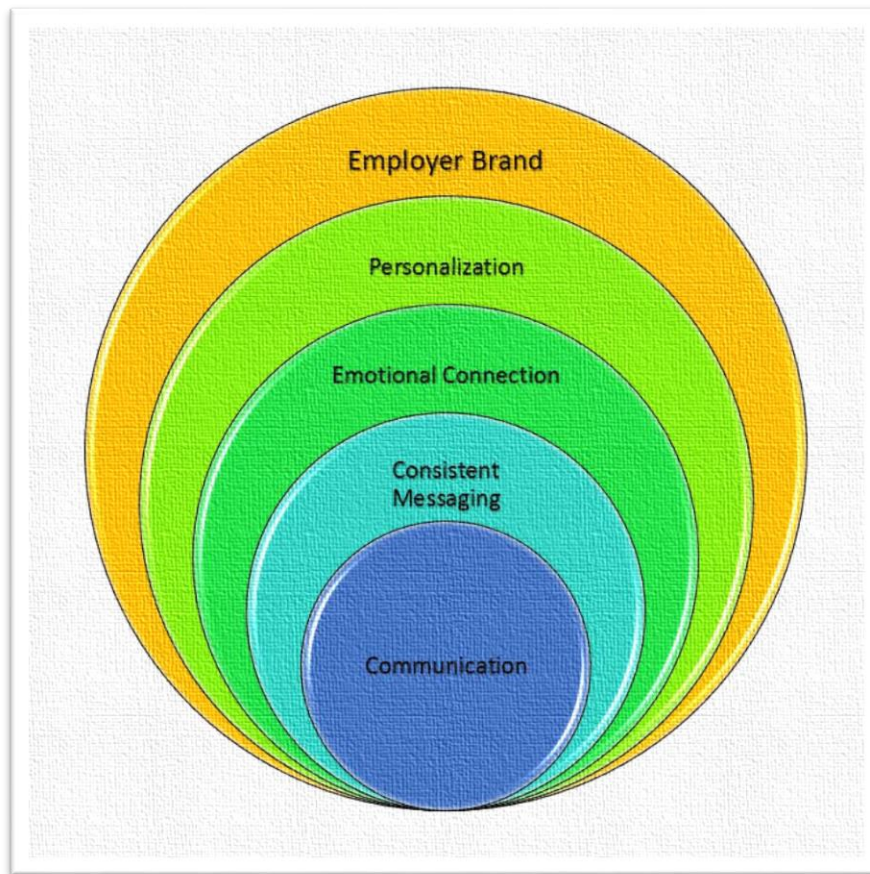
Ensuring your messaging is consistent between all your marketing channels is also very important. Customers, as well as potential employees, notice when different messages are delivered, and may question the organization's trustworthiness or integrity. A brand strategy plan that includes all methods of communication, including social media, helps keep your organization on message.

Making an emotional connection to your customers and potential hires is also an important part of your company's brand strategy. Customers want to feel connected to the organizations they support. Potential hires want to feel they've made a good decision to apply for and talk with your organization about employment. Companies with less than stellar reputations find it much harder to attract, and keep top talent.

Is your company's purpose clear? Is your messaging consistent and personalized for your audience? Is your organization making emotional connections with your customers and potential hires?



PUT IT TOGETHER



Work with us

If your organization needs help with these areas, the Sample Firm can help. We provide services that strengthen your brand so you can attract the customers and talent you need to grow your business.

We spend time with you and your staff, getting to know your people and your business. We'll evaluate your current marketing strategy and plan, including your logo and messaging, and complete a quick scorecard of your strengths and weaknesses.

We want to identify those areas where your competition could be moving ahead.

We can also evaluation your social media strategy and review your marketing analytics.

Then we'll create an action plan you can implement in order to help your business flourish.



First things first

Your business can attract the customers and talent it needs, and a strong brand and strategy is key. Contact Sample Marketing today to set a time to talk about getting your business on the fast track to profitability.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information, please contact us.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- ⁱ <http://www.businessinsider.com/meet-googles-hiring-gatekeepers-2015-7>
- ⁱⁱ http://www.bls.gov/news.release/jolts.t04.htm#jolts_table4.f.p
- ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2015/article/labor-force-projections-to-2024-1.htm>
- ^{iv} <http://www.pwc.com/gx/en/services/people-organisation/publications/people-strategy.html>
- ^v <http://www.benefitspro.com/2014/07/25/what-job-seekers-want>
- ^{vi} <https://hbr.org/2014/09/your-companys-purpose-is-not-its-vision-mission-or-values>
- ^{vii} <http://www.brandingstrategyinsider.com/2016/05/how-brands-win-with-big-personalization.html#.V7NEIpgrJhE>
- ^{viii} <http://www.careerarc.com/blog/2016/01/13-recruiting-stats-hr-pro-must-know-2016/>
- ^{ix} <http://www.careerarc.com/blog/2016/01/13-recruiting-stats-hr-pro-must-know-2016/>
- ^x <http://reviews.greatplacetowork.com/wegmans-food-markets>
- ^{xi} <https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/trends-and-forecasting/research-and-surveys/Documents/SHRM-Social-Media-Recruiting-Screening-2015.pdf>
- ^{xii} <http://reviews.greatplacetowork.com/pro-food-systems-inc>
- ^{xiii} <http://www.careerarc.com/blog/2015/09/15-employer-branding-stats-every-hr-pro-must-know/>