



Strengthening Your Employer Brand

By Jennifer Anderson

Your employer brand is defined by how your current and past employees think of you. If they love you, then your brand can do well in the market; if they do not love you, then you have got some work to do. This article shares four key points about strengthening your employer brand.

- 1) Information
- 2) Leadership Understanding
- 3) Gap Identification and Solutions
- 4) Communication

It is understandable that you have a lot going on in your firm. Clients, project updates, accounting, benefits open enrollment, risk management, ongoing training and education, company holiday party planning; the list goes on and on. What happens if your people leave? Who will take care of your clients? Who will do the work? If your employer brand is weak and your employees are not enjoying working at your firm, you are not only going to be challenged to keep the right employees, but you will also have a hard time recruiting the right people to join your team. Do not take the idea of your employer brand lightly.

Start with Information

To strengthen your employer brand, start first by knowing where your brand stands today. The easiest way to uncover your current reputation is through surveys. Survey current employees to understand how they feel about the company. Focus on understanding their perspective about what is vital to them today; do not ask questions about the past – the past cannot be changed. Also, survey past employees, if possible, to get feedback about what they think of the company today. Again, focus on their current perspective – most, if not all, have an opinion about your firm even if they are not working there today. Finally, survey applicants to find out about their perspective of your firm. Gathering feedback from people inside and outside the company will give you a nice snapshot of what your employer brand truly is in the current marketplace.

Leadership Understanding

Business leaders need to be in sync with employees on what the employer brand is today. Business owners, principals, key leaders,

and the HR team are highly encouraged to meet and review the employer brand survey findings. Be ready to come to terms with what your brand is today and then determine what you want your employer brand to be going forward. If you are not realistic about any shortcomings, you will continue to lose ground with your people. Once you have decided on what you want your brand to be going forward, share this with your current employees and get their feedback. The leadership team may need to meet a few times before nailing down the exact employer brand.

Respect the Gaps

Using the survey information, identify one thing that needs to be improved with your employer brand. Do not attempt to take on all of the problems identified in the survey; instead, pay attention to the really big gaps identified from your research and focus on one first. While you are focusing on solving that first gap, make sure to include the perspective of current employees about what should be done. Choose wisely which employees you will include in this “employer brand task force” and include both those who are new to your firm and those have been around for a while. Getting multiple points of view will help you to close the gap between the perceptions of both the employees and the leaders. Once you have a solid task force pulled together, give them one job – to strengthen the employer brand and get it completed by a reasonable date. Then get out of their way. Expect regular updates but let them do the work of solving the gaps – employees have loads of answers, so empower them to come up with a solution that will help everyone. Your firm is their employer too, so they want it to improve as much as you want it to. If they do not care, they probably will not accept the task force assignment in the first place. Respect the gaps and respect their abilities. Through this process of strengthening your employer brand,



do not be surprised if they become your best employer brand ambassadors.

Communicate, Communicate, Communicate

Once the “employer brand task force” has been assembled, use that moment to communicate with the rest of the company about how that team is working to make improvements. When other employees know that there is an effort in place to improve the employer brand, it will help to elevate the task force team’s reputation amongst their peers and likely assist them with gathering more information in their efforts. As the task force identifies the most critical gap to close, communicate it to the whole company as well. Finally, as they develop solutions, communicate again. Your employees will appreciate that you are trying to include them in the process, which in turn will help to elevate your employer brand.

Ultimately, the employer brand is something that ties the whole company together as well as connects the company to the marketplace. To strengthen your employer brand, start with gathering information, then the leadership team will know where to focus on building a stronger brand and what to communicate to the company and community. If you want to grow as a company, focus on strengthening your employer brand.▪

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