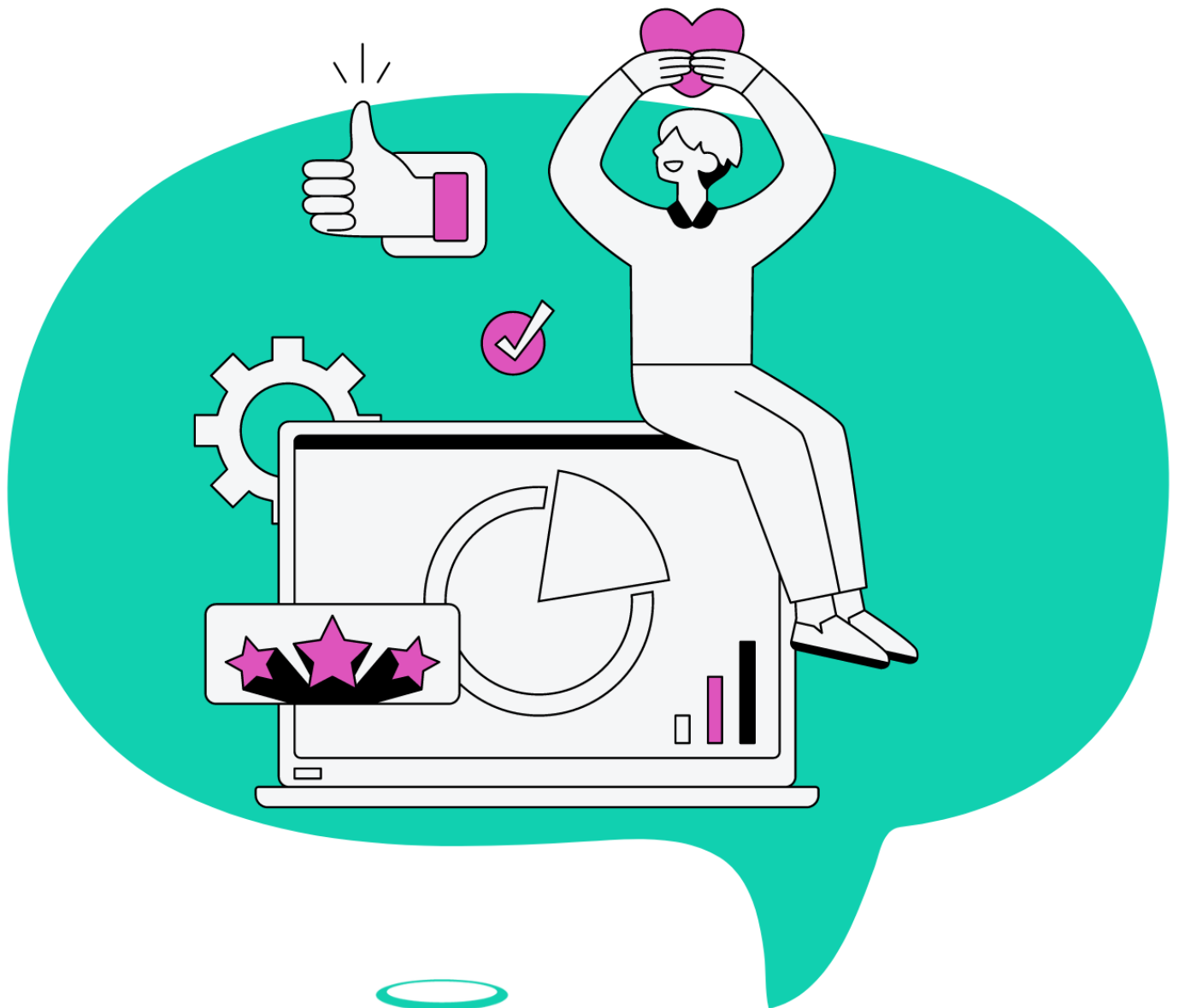


# The Ultimate Guide to Employer Branding



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Having a strong employer brand is the difference between standing out or blending in.

However, many companies treat employer branding as an afterthought, passively letting external perceptions shape their narrative. This is a missed opportunity in an era where candidates are not just evaluating roles but the very heart of your organization.

To attract top talent, you need to become the author of your employer brand story. This article serves as your employer branding guide, providing insights on how to authentically craft, communicate and uphold your reputation as an employer of choice. It lays the strategic foundation to actively engage talent by conveying why your company is not just a great place to work but a place to grow, thrive and make an impact.

## What is Branding?

Branding is the process of shaping a unique identity and narrative for your product, service or organization. It's not just about logos or names; it encompasses the entire experience and perception consumers have with your company.

Through various elements—from visual designs to company culture—branding differentiates a business in the marketplace, establishing trust and loyalty. While products might be tangible, brands are emotional constructs that reside in the minds of consumers, guiding their perceptions and connections to your company.

## Understanding Employer Branding

If branding is the experience and perception consumers have with a company, then employer branding is how current, past and potential employees view a company. Employer branding is the company's ethos as an employer. It's the culmination of your company's culture, values and mission.

Employer branding refers to your company's reputation as an employer and its value proposition to its employees. It's not just about the tangible benefits offered, but also the emotional and intellectual perceptions of potential and current employees. This understanding sets the foundation for all employer branding efforts and strategies.

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## Why Employer Branding Matters

A compelling employer brand is not just an HR vanity metric but a strategic imperative that provides a competitive edge. It impacts various aspects of your business, from recruitment costs and employee retention to public perception and business performance. That is why in today's hiring landscape, actively managing your brand as an employer has become mission-critical.

Without an intentional strategy, your reputation will depend on how others perceive your company. However, a strong narrative can attract top talent organically, boost engagement and productivity, enhance trust in the marketplace, and ultimately drive growth. With multifaceted benefits, employer branding elevates beyond just PR – it's a core business strategy.

Here's a closer look at why employer branding matters:

- **Attracting Top Talent:** A strong employer brand acts like a magnet for high-quality talent, reducing your recruitment costs. When candidates organically find you, you don't have to pay as much to find them.
- **Employee Retention:** Compelling brands are built on strong cultures that engage employees. This leads to higher job satisfaction and lower turnover.
- **Business Performance:** Satisfied employees are productive employees. By increasing engagement and satisfaction, your brand elevates business performance.
- **Public Perception:** Your reputation as an employer shapes how customers, investors and the public view your company. A positive brand builds trust in the marketplace.

## The Modern Employer Brand

The landscape of employer branding is dynamic, shaped by technological advancements, societal shifts and changing workforce expectations. Companies that are already leveraging technology, data analytics and innovative strategies to enhance their employer brand will have a leg up. A focus on diversity, equity and inclusion has become increasingly central to employer branding efforts, reflecting the broader societal push towards these values.

Employer branding is a dynamic and ongoing process that requires attention, effort and authenticity. In an era where information is at everyone's fingertips, you can't afford to be passive about your brand. It will be whatever the public perceives it to be if you don't actively manage and shape it.

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Investing in employer branding is not just strategic but essential for companies aiming to be employers of choice. As we wrap up this article, the underlying message is clear:

In the world of employer branding, authenticity reigns supreme.

## Employer Brand vs. EVP

One of the ongoing hot topics in recruitment marketing and talent acquisition is employee value propositions (EVP) and employer branding. A strong EVP and employer brand can reap numerous benefits, both internally and externally. From passive talent attraction to employee engagement and longevity, a successful recruitment marketing strategy cannot function properly without these two elements at its core.

But what exactly are the differences, if any, between an EVP and employer brand? The terms are oftentimes used interchangeably, but there is a distinct difference between the two.

### What is an EVP?

The EVP, or employee value proposition, serves as the defining statement of how a company identifies as an employer. It communicates the mutual offers made by both employer and employee. This includes the value employees can expect to receive from the organization and the value they are expected to contribute.

### What is an Employer Brand?

Employer brand relates to the external reputation and image of the company as an employer specifically. Through messaging, marketing and advertising, the employer brand establishes the positioning of the company not only to existing employees but publicly to active and passive candidates, as well as other key stakeholders within talent attraction.

### Difference Between EVP and Employer Brand

The EVP and employer brand intrinsically connect to each other while remaining separate entities. Think of it as the difference between your company's mission statement and corporate brand.

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Your mission statement speaks to who you are as a company, the core tenets and principles your company aims to embody, and your pledge to live up to those self-instilled values. It is aspirational, but always attainable, and provides a guiding point for your company through growth and evolution.

By contrast, your corporate brand refers to the public perception and identity of your company, via messaging and advertising. With a successful corporate brand, it provides that link in consumers' minds to your company and its reputation with a unique or positive value. A strong corporate brand should always speak to the company's mission statement, taking those values and principles outlined and turning them into an external-facing message.

## Similarities Between EVP and Employer Brand

The relationship between EVP and employer brands operates similarly. The EVP should lead the employer brand by communicating the benefits, opportunities and rewards that your company offers. The EVP should communicate this in an employee-centered approach.

In return, the employer brand takes that statement and builds it into the overall reputation and messaging of the company as an employer. This is typically done through marketing and advertising efforts.

Your EVP speaks to who you are as an employer through your employees.

Your employer brand translates that message out to your external talent market.

This alignment between EVP and employer brand is essential to the delivery of your employment promises, providing a through-line between values, messaging, behavior and action. In short, how you bring your EVP to life via your employer brand, and how you then turn your employer brand reputation into an authentic employee experience.

## How to Cultivate Your EVP

According to a [survey from Glassdoor](#), just under half (49%) of American employees would recommend their company to a friend. If this makes you nervous, it may be time to consider the importance of your employer brand.

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Your brand is your identity and is key to managing your public reputation, in addition to playing a vital role in your employee value proposition (EVP). Together, your employer brand and EVP will empower you to attract and retain top talent.

This guide will introduce you to several strategies designed to help you cultivate your employer brand and create a thriving workplace culture.

Even before The Great Resignation of 2021, employees had been leaving their positions at increasing rates.

In an effort to combat this, many companies have redesigned their entire employee experience and benefits packages in order to keep employees engaged. For instance, with burnout being such an issue, some employers are adding mental health benefits and programs to help their employees cope with stress.

But, what if your company doesn't have the funds to offer an increase in paid vacation time or generous retirement options? Actually, not all employees are looking for monetary benefits. Here are six ways you can evolve your EVP without breaking the bank.

## 1. Flexible Work Hours

During the 2020 pandemic, the American workforce got a taste for telecommuting, and there's no going back. You can improve employee morale by giving your workers the option of working from home for at least a portion of the week. This may be especially helpful when hiring busy parents who might have to juggle their day job and childcare.

## 2. Wellness Programs

In addition to your usual health insurance options, you can introduce various wellness programs at little to no cost. For example, you might sponsor a fitness challenge for your team or a "bike-to-work" initiative during the warmer seasons.

Again, this doesn't have to be an official, paid program, but it can simply be a means of promoting health and wellness among your team members.

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## 3. Meaningful Mentorship

It's almost becoming cliché to say that younger workers want mentors and not just managers. This isn't just about creating programs for career advancement; it's about creating meaningful professional relationships.

Be intentional. Start a mentorship program by pairing your senior staff members with one or two new hires. They can be free to answer questions and share advice with a new group of rising stars.

## 4. Incentivized Volunteering

Allow your employees to volunteer in the community on company time. For instance, if there's a Habitat for Humanity project in your area, don't require your employees to use vacation time to volunteer. As a side benefit, this can also help you solidify your brand in the broader community.

## 5. Gratitude

Sometimes, employees simply want to feel appreciated. Publicly acknowledging the contributions of your team members can help them feel valued and know they're truly part of a team.

For instance, you might mention them on your social media pages and highlight their recent contributions that have enhanced your company's performance.

## 6. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

According to a [recent report](#), 89% of the survey participants stated that DE&I in the workplace is important to them, and 56% shared that they would be more likely to work for a company that makes DE&I a priority.

## Know Your Audience

Different audiences will respond to your brand and EVP in different ways. This is especially true if your company operates in various geographic regions or in the international market.

If you want to communicate to prospective employees, you should learn more about their unique culture before you can show how your company's values align with theirs.

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This can also apply to individuals who already occupy multiple vocations. Parents, for example, might find a flexible workplace culture desirable, while single adults might appreciate a company that emphasizes community involvement or sound social policy.

The goal remains the same in every instance: to show how your company's values align with those of your customers and workforce, as well as to illustrate how your company culture is organized around those values. Master this goal and you'll streamline everything about your recruitment process.

## Employer Branding in the Age of Digital Natives

With the war for talent heating up in today's competitive job market, building a compelling employer branding is more crucial than ever for attracting and retaining top employees.

It's not just about attracting candidates; it's about attracting the right candidates—those who resonate with your company's culture, values and mission. In this world dominated by screens, your employer branding has to work twice as hard to stand out amongst the generation of “digital natives.” But it doesn't have to be impossible—read on to learn how to have the advantage.

## The Evolution of Employer Branding

The employer brand first emerged within the shifting workforce dynamics of the past. It gained momentum during the industrial age when companies realized the importance of their image as employers.

Employer branding has come a long way since then, and its evolution mirrors the changing times. With the advent of technology, the new workforce is one that is fully tech-savvy, and their job search trends have proven this to be true. The age of the “digital native” is upon us, ushering in the newest era of digital employer branding. The digital age brought new strategies and tools to the table, making online platforms like LinkedIn, Glassdoor and Twitter crucial arenas for employer branding.

The shift to digital employer branding brought about a paradigm shift in how companies approach their employer brand. Technology became the linchpin, transforming branding strategies and enhancing engagement with prospective employees.



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## The Rise of Digital Natives

According to [Forbes](#), the concept of “digital natives” made its way into modern corporate vocabulary a few years ago, primarily linked to future workforce trends. However, the individuals born around the turn of the century have grown up, transitioning from a distant prospect to becoming a significant part of the current workforce. Recent estimates from the World Economic Forum predict that by 2025, this generation will account for a substantial 27% of the labor market.

## The Importance of Employer Branding for Digital Natives

Digital Natives have reshaped the workforce with their unique traits and values. They value social consciousness, sustainability and ethical practices. They seek meaningful work, personal growth, flexibility and diverse and inclusive workplaces.

Digital Natives are not just job seekers; they are values seekers. They want their employers to align with their ideals, and they're not afraid to use digital platforms to scrutinize companies' reputations.

So how do you ensure you're aligning with this audience? Here are some ideas.

- **Authenticity and Transparency:** Digital natives seek truth and honesty from their employers, making transparency the currency of trust in the age of information. Companies need to be authentic in their portrayal and transparent about their culture and values.
- **Consistency Across Online Channels:** Maintaining a consistent message across all digital channels is crucial to avoid leading job seekers astray. The online experience should reflect the same values and culture as the offline workplace.
- **Employee Advocacy and Storytelling:** Employees become brand ambassadors, and their narratives create an emotional connection with potential recruits. Their stories provide an authentic glimpse into the company culture and work environment.

In a world where virtual connectivity and meaningful engagement are paramount, the journey to building a resonant employer brand holds the key to unlocking a thriving remote workforce for the digital age.

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## How to Attract Digital Natives

Once you've got the digital native audience interested in your brand by being authentic, transparent and consistent, how can you continue to deepen their investment?

### Share Company Culture and Values

Your company's culture and values are at the core of your employer brand. Technology can help you build an engaging company culture through digital platforms. Internal social networks, communication tools, and collaboration software enable employees to connect, share experiences, and reinforce cultural values. Creating a vibrant digital culture ensures that your employees remain connected and engaged, even in remote or hybrid work environments.

### Use Technology to Showcase Employee Experience

The employee experience is a critical factor in employer branding. AI-driven tools can provide valuable insights into employee sentiment, helping you identify areas for improvement. For example, sentiment analysis tools can analyze employee feedback from surveys, social media, and internal communication channels to gauge overall morale and identify potential issues. Armed with this data, you can take proactive steps to enhance the employee experience.

### Cultivate a Positive Reputation

Managing your company's reputation is an ongoing process. Technology plays a significant role in monitoring your online presence and addressing potential reputation challenges. Online reputation management tools can track mentions of your company on social media, review sites, and news outlets. With real-time monitoring, you can quickly respond to negative comments or address concerns, showing that you take your employer brand seriously.

In the age of digital natives, crafting a captivating digital narrative for your employer brand isn't just an option—it's vital to the growth of your organization. You need to engage and captivate your audience, making them feel your employer brand on a personal level. Your secret weapon? Storytelling. Employer branding is not just about data and strategies; it's about emotions and connections. It's about crafting a story that truly resonates with digital natives.

## How to Use Employee Surveys to Generate Authentic Content

The success of your recruitment marketing depends on creating content that reflects the culture of your workplace. What's the best way to assess your company culture? Simple: ask the people who make up your current workforce. Employee surveys can provide you with honest feedback that helps you cultivate your employer brand. Surveys might also pinpoint areas of friction that should be addressed before onboarding a new team member.

Here are some of today's best practices for designing and implementing employee surveys.

### 1. Make It a Habit

Conducting surveys at regular intervals will provide consistent data to work from, and it can also enable you to track trends over time. Make employee surveys a regular part of your company culture. The frequency is up to you. Stick to a schedule to ensure greater accountability and full participation.

Try using Office Vibe Pulse Surveys to check in with your employees. You can send surveys on a weekly or bi-weekly basis, and they are designed to be quick, simple and integrated into the natural workflow. Pulse Surveys also provide you with clear reports to help you analyze employee engagement and make informed decisions.

### 2. Set Clear Goals

Start by identifying your goals for sending out an employee survey. Having a clear objective in mind can help you zero in on a short set of questions that you can ask your employees rather than simply designing a survey for the sake of completing an administrative task.

Defining your objective will also help you evaluate your data. Starting with a clear question (e.g., "Do employees prefer working from home?") can ensure that your survey results answer your initial question and help you make decisions accordingly.

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## 3. Pursue Anonymous Feedback

You'll get the most honest feedback by keeping your surveys anonymous. Employees will feel freer to share their experiences and voice their concerns when they don't have to worry about how their employer might react.

Don't let anonymous surveys make you nervous. Employees generally won't use this opportunity to vent. On the contrary, many employee surveys end up soliciting positive feedback that can help you refine your recruitment marketing efforts or employer branding strategy.

## 4. Shorter Is Better

Employees will be more willing to complete employer surveys when they fit more comfortably into the overall workflow. Shorter surveys, therefore, are preferable to longer ones. This is another reason why it's wise to refine your objective before you design the survey, so you can focus on the areas that really matter. It also means you won't have to worry about sifting through less relevant questions, and you can stay focused on your core areas of interest.

Here's a helpful rule of thumb: the more frequently you send out surveys, the shorter they should be. Weekly questionnaires might best be capped at five questions, while you can save longer surveys for quarterly or annual evaluations.

## 5. Communicate Your Objectives to Your Employees

If you're just beginning to implement surveys in your workplace, it helps to tell your employees what to expect. This might mean sharing your larger goal or explaining what employees might expect from the survey. When using the survey method for branding and recruitment, your employees may feel valued that you're taking their feedback into consideration.

At the same time, make sure to respond to your employees' feedback. This might mean verbally acknowledging a common trend from survey responses and taking steps to address this feedback. If nothing changes, employees may find themselves feeling unheard and less willing to engage in future surveys.

## 6. Seek Permission to Use Employee Feedback

While anonymous surveys provide unparalleled honesty, there's something to be said for designing surveys that solicit positive employee feedback. After all, some of the best ways to sell your company to potential recruits are with the positive testimony of your current employees. You can use positive employee feedback in your recruitment materials, website or other marketing content to engage applicants better.

Just make sure to ask permission from that employee before publishing their remarks publicly. Naturally, this is impossible with an anonymous survey, so you may want to periodically ask for surveys to attach their name to their feedback or at least give employees the option of identifying themselves when they submit a survey.

## 7. Leverage the Data Wisely

Don't just listen to your executives to craft your employer value proposition. Your employer brand should directly reflect the input from those with boots on the ground, so to speak, which is why your survey data can be invaluable in communicating your company culture.

This means looking at data from individual surveys, as well as monitoring workplace trends over time. The data you receive can help you refine your EVP and showcase your strengths, and it can also highlight weak points you may want to address to keep your current employees fully engaged even while you pursue further recruiting opportunities.

Your company's culture is constantly flowing, continually changing and progressively evolving. Integrating employee surveys can help you step into the flow of your company culture and gather the most relevant information to hone your recruitment marketing strategy and present the most authentic employer brand.

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