



A LAW FIRMS GUIDE TO EMPLOYER BRANDING TO ATTRACT THE LEGAL TALENT YOU WANT



WHERE LAW FIRMS COME
TO RECRUIT LEGAL TALENT

The concept of an Employer Brand has seen a rapid evolution in recent years.

At a time when law firms are competing fiercely for the top talent available on the market, its role in attracting and retaining such has not only been accelerated by but has grown significantly since the pandemic.

The subsequent dominoes the historic event had set off recruitment-wise created the drivers we see today for the increased awareness among law firms of the importance of Employer Branding to a business's cohesion, and corporate success. As a result, it has become something of a buzzword in the recruitment space and now more than ever before, how a business talks the talk and walks the walk when it comes to its professed ideals and values, is key to how well they fare in their search for talent and is regarded as crucial to its efforts to differentiate itself from its competitors.

Considering the age we live in and the ease at which word of mouth can spread about a place, person, business or event, it only makes sense. And, as the general preferences of legal professionals continue to evolve, it is especially important for law firms to not only get involved in the conversation but influence it in order to give themselves a competitive edge.

What is Employer Branding?

A strong employer brand showcases and demonstrates the values, strategies, and company culture present in your organisation - all essential for building stronger relationships with the people in your teams. The better your employer brand, the easier it will be to do so. As many as [69% of surveyed employees](#) believe it's critical for their employer to have a brand that they are proud to support.

While there are many different definitions for "employer branding" depending on whom you ask, the underpinning message common to all is the way that 'potential new recruits in the legal and digital space as well as your current employees perceive you, and your opportunity to showcase what makes you unique.

Otherwise known as an "Employer Value Proposition", it helps a business attract the best talent available while ensuring that its current team remains comprised of individuals who share the same values and ideals. When defining your identity as a business through the lens of an employer brand, the following things should be considered:

- People: What kind of talent do you want in your organisation?
- Company culture: What's the ethos that drives your business?
- Employer value proposition: What benefits can you offer employees?
- Experience: How do you improve the recruiting and onboarding process?

Why Is Employer Branding Important?

Building an employer brand that allows your firm to attract the right people gives you access to a myriad of ways to supercharge your business growth. When you have a reputation that precedes client experience, you can compete beyond things like remuneration and job titles and instead offer people "opportunities" that fit in with their personal and professional goals. While the benefits of this strategy are numerous, here are just some of the advantages it can provide when it is cultivated.

1. You Stop Competing on Salary

When your reputation is enough to convince individuals that they want to work with you, there's less need to pull out all the stops with inflated salaries that aren't in line with the current market or salary benchmarks. While remuneration remains high on the list of the demands of today's candidates, it's not the only deciding factor that turns a "maybe" to a "yes" when presented with a job offer. A [study from Gartner](#) last year found that 82% of employees deem the value their organisation places on them as a person highly important to their overall sense of satisfaction.

2. Attract and Retain the Right Talent

It's common knowledge now that candidates active on the job market will be looking at a firm's reputation alongside (and even before) the salary on the job description. Having an employer brand that speaks for your business recruits online and offline makes it far easier for potential recruits to single you out from the crowd. Not only will you be getting the attention of those who are well-suited for your culture, but you yourself will be well-equipped to give them a satisfying employee experience too.

3. Higher Quality Applicants

Employers with a robust brand have reported faster and more effective hiring processes and recruitment efforts. With the right brand, you waste less time sifting through unqualified candidates and spend more time onboarding people who fit your criteria.

4. Reduced Employee Turnover

Finally, when people are passionate about their role from day one and fit in like a glove in the team they work with, they'll reciprocate this commitment to the employee experience and less likely to search for opportunities elsewhere. The benefits of minimal turnover mean that you spend less on recruiting, training, and advertising for new staff, thus ensuring that more of your budget can go into investment in new opportunities for your business.

What Are the Most Important Attributes Employees Look For?

While specific attributes that employees seek in an employer may vary, several recurring themes emerge regardless of where you look.

[A survey conducted by Bankrate](#) last year revealed that although over 30% of workers place the greatest importance on pay, another 30% say that some type of benefit is the next most important aspect of their job going forward, with flexible working (13%) and remote work (12%) the two most cited perks, respectively.

According to the same survey, an overwhelming 37% of employees cited recognition as the most important method of support from their managers or companies. Additionally, 84% of highly engaged employees were recognised the last time they went above and beyond at work, highlighting the correlation between recognition and employee engagement.

The general benefits package can not be overlooked however, and our most recent Salary Survey indicates that most firms fail to offer anything truly revolutionary or to stand out in the market.

Benefits packages were, by and large, constructed of the same key elements that we have seen in previous years - although interestingly, homeworking dropped by 5% YOY. And, whilst financial bonuses remained static (albeit only seen as a benefit by a relatively small percentage) there were notable rises in staff being offered hybrid working (up 13%) and additional holidays (up 8%).

Of some concern perhaps was the 8% of respondents who stated that they did not attribute value to the benefits they receive, or worse, even class them as benefits in the first place.

Private medical cover, wellbeing support, and other health-related benefits also increased by a few percentage points compared to last year. Good thing too as almost 10% of respondents said that this was the kind of benefit they valued the most.

A recent report in the FT said that 1 in 5 businesses were looking into offering private medical insurance in the coming year - not to bolster their wider benefits package per se, but to tackle the very real issue around long NHS waiting times, and impact on sickness absence as a direct result.

How to Build a Strong and Successful Employer Brand

The statistics on company reputation speak for themselves. According to the [State of Employer Brand 2023](#), 76% of jobseekers took the time to research a company's employer brand, a 52% increase compared to 2022.

96% of employees admitted they would be more likely to apply to a company with a good employer brand, a 39% increase from previous years while 87% said negative reviews would deter them from applying. This perspective continues to be shared among an increasing number of professionals, with only 58% expressing the same opinion in previous times.

1. Listen to Your Staff

Making the effort to build/rebuild your reputation starts with gaining insight into the perceptions held of your firm by your staff. To this end, a confidential survey presents a fantastic opportunity to understand how your workforce views your company. Encourage them to share what they love about working with you and what sets your organisation apart from industry competitors. Creating a welcoming environment for constructive feedback and further suggestions will not only pinpoint areas for improvement in your hiring or onboarding process and image but also foster a culture of open communication and growth.



2. Define Your “Employer Value Proposition”

Top talent today look for more than just a paycheck, they want a career that gives them the full breadth of the employee experience, meaning it’s crucial you are able to offer something others cannot. The goal here is to articulate the key strengths of your compensation. For instance, you might provide employee training opportunities, opportunities to work remotely, and access to cutting-edge industry technology. When choosing your EVP, remember the benefits most valued by job-seekers are:

- More flexible hours
- More holidays
- Work-from-home options
- Learning and development opportunities

3. Articulate Your Mission

Highlighting the advantages of joining your company is undoubtedly important, but there’s more to shaping your Employer Value Proposition than just that – it must fit cohesively with your mission as an ever-evolving entity.

Think about what you stand for as an organisation, and what you hope to achieve in the future and potentially the legacy it will leave behind in years to come. The Millennial and Gen Z demographics – soon to make up the largest % of workers in the UK - care more than ever about the ethical stance of the businesses they work with.

Whether through charitable initiatives or a conscientious approach to business practices, demonstrating your dedication to making a positive impact will resonate with and attract the passionate and socially conscious talent you aspire to have on board.

4. Get Your Leaders on Board

Any strong employer brand hinges on a robust leadership. Attracting and retaining top-tier talent means getting executives involved and bought into the branding strategy and convincing them to become ambassadors that champion the brand you want to showcase to the world. According to one survey by [Employer Branding International](#), leadership is one of the most critical factors in shaping a strong brand. However, only 8% of CEOs are involved with reputation-based changes.

5. Get Social

Today's job-seekers automatically expect organisations to be present and active online. That means a robust website that communicates the value proposition clearly, but also a full suite of social media channels.

In today's job market, candidates naturally anticipate organisations to maintain a vibrant and engaging online presence across platforms like LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, YouTube and Instagram. They look for informative content that offers valuable insights to potential hires on a regular basis. With so many options at your disposal to broadcast your identity on social media, it is easier than ever to promote your employer brand.

Finally, make sure that the information people can find out about you online is accurate, up-to-date and positive whenever possible.

6. Personalise Candidate and Employee Experience

Today's top professionals want to know that they're more than just another number in your workforce. Working alongside your [recruitment agency](#) to improve the onboarding experience can help to generate a more beneficial reputation for your brand. For instance, you can:

- Create development roadmaps: When introducing a new hire to the team, create a documented process that will help that individual to advance through the company and achieve their unique goals.
 - Recognise employees: Recognition improves morale for staff and individuals alike. Sometimes, acknowledging your team can be as simple as telling them that you appreciate their hard work.
 - Nurturing relationships: [58% of recruits](#) say that relations with immediate managers and supervisors are crucial to their happiness. Going the extra mile to encourage communication and collaboration can be a great way to improve engagement.
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7. Identify Metrics for Tracking Success

Finally, remember to consider the return on investment for your branding strategy. Perhaps one of the most straightforward metrics to track is the number interested applicants your specialist recruiter receives on your behalf. In addition, you can look at things like employee satisfaction scores, and turnover rates. Determining how you're going to measure the performance of your campaign will help you to ensure that your reputation management strategies are having the right impact on your future hires, and people in your existing team too.

Current Trends in Employer Branding

Enrolling new talent into your team has evolved significantly over the years, transitioning from traditional newspaper ads and manual processes to a digital, smartphone-accessible recruitment landscape. The impact of employer branding and culture fit is reshaping the world of recruitment, bringing forth new considerations for employers today.

Candidate-Centric Approach:

In the modern era, businesses are quickly recognising the importance of treating candidates less like a commodity and more like a valued customer. A rich candidate experience throughout the recruitment and [onboarding](#) journey not only increases the likelihood of securing top talent but also encourages them to advocate for the company brand within their network.

Building a Talent Pipeline:

Maintaining and nurturing a talent pipeline goes beyond just communicating with candidates during the hiring phase- it also involves making the effort to engage with unsuccessful applicants who might end up being suitable for future roles. By fostering the relationship between hirer and candidate post-recruitment, a firm can enhance its reputation as an employer significantly, even if a candidate goes on to pursue opportunities elsewhere.

Social Media Revolution:

Social media has a profound impact on the employer branding experience, changing the way people look for jobs, assess new employers and communicate with their colleagues. Social platforms give prospective and current hires the opportunity to voice their views about business and research the organisations they want to be part of. Knowing where your talent pool spends most of their time online and taking steps to proactively manage your reputation in these places can help candidates to better assess your offering while improving your brand.

In a recent survey by Gallup, it was found that 51% of employees expressed a willingness to switch roles for a position offering more flexible hours. With an increasing number of job seekers looking for employers that empathise with their demanding lifestyles, showcasing your brand to be one that prioritises flexibility can give your organisation a competitive edge. Embracing an adaptable branding strategy that aligns with the evolving demands of the legal professionals is crucial to staying an attractive prospect career-wise. As the recruitment landscape continues to shift, it's important to maintain agility in order to ensure you deliver a "cutting-edge" recruitment experience.

The Danger of Ignoring Your Employer Brand

Of course, the challenge isn't just finding the right people, but also making sure that you have the resources in place to keep those individuals in your network. As the current talent drought continues to be a serious issue for law firms across the industry, and job-hopping more prevalent than ever, employer branding is increasingly critical to mitigating turnover and addressing skill gap problems. It goes without saying then, that any business that fails to acknowledge its importance puts its reputation at a big risk.

1. Losing the War for Talent:

Unfortunately, it's not enough to only ask your candidates to prove that they're right for your role anymore. Instead, it's the responsibility of companies to convince new hires that they want to work for them. A lack of employer branding means that applicants don't know what to think about your company. This pushes them to take a much more significant risk accepting an offer from you than they would if they looked for a role with a well-respected brand instead.

2. Attracting the Wrong People:

The law of attraction dictates that "like" attracts "like". In other words, if you build a brand that showcases values like hard work, dedication, and innovation, you'll draw people to your business that share those characteristics. On the other hand, if you have a vague or uncertain reputation in the marketplace, then you're more likely to capture the attention of people who aren't sure what they're looking for, and your recruiting partner has a more challenging time 'selling' your brand to candidates.

3. Fewer Employee Advocates:

If your employees love working in your team, then they're more likely to share their approval of your organisation with everyone they speak to. About 50% of your staff are already sharing messages about you on social media. It makes sense to use this online presence to your advantage when it comes to attracting new professionals and improving consumer perception around your business. Advocates make it easier for you to find new people for your team who are more likely to fit with your company culture, and they also help to market you to customers too!

4. Inconsistency

For your recruits to perform at their best, they need to know what's expected of them. Communicating your vision, goals and values with consistency and certainty is an essential element of employer branding. The more you can share what matters to your business with the people in your team, the more they can reflect your mission in everything they do. Without the EVP you establish in your branding efforts, it can be difficult to give your employees a direction for how they should be acting in the workplace.

5. Poor Brand Authenticity

Finally, today's consumers and professionals alike both want to work with companies that they feel they can trust. In the war for talent, candidates will quickly develop stronger relationships with businesses who demonstrate values that are important to them. On the other hand, a lack of branding can make an organisation appear more like a corporate machine without any redeeming, human elements.

Key Points to Remember:

Employer branding aims to resonate with both future hires and current employees, making the business more appealing and convincing top talent that the opportunities it offers are compelling. While branding may seem complex, it ultimately revolves around understanding what sets the company apart. Answering key questions and conducting a comprehensive audit can lay the foundation for a robust Employer Value Proposition (EVP) and a stronger brand.

Key Questions for Brand Development:

1. Why would top-tier talent in your industry want to work for you?
2. What percentage of your leadership is involved in your employer branding experience?
3. How visible is your company online and offline?
4. What is the existing perception of your employer brand among candidates and staff members?
5. What percentage of your team would recommend you as a great employer to work for?

By addressing these questions and conducting a thorough audit, companies can identify gaps in their reputation development and management strategy, paving the way for a stronger employer brand.

In today's digital age, the power of technology and social media has transformed the way companies showcase themselves. Simply advertising in local newspapers is no longer sufficient. Job seekers now seek complete transparency from prospective employers before considering a job opportunity. Your online presence serves as a window into your organisation, offering potential hires a glimpse into your company culture before they even step into an interview room.

Assessing your online reputation involves several key considerations:

- How engaging are your job descriptions? Have you worked with a legal recruitment agency to ensure that you're attracting the right people with keywords, action terms, and useful information about your brand? Would you benefit from adding case studies into the mix that demonstrate how your staff feels about you as an employer?
- What is the recruitment experience like? How simple or complicated is it for potential recruits to communicate with you and learn more about your available positions?
- Are you optimised for the digital world? As more experts continue to search for opportunities online through social media and forums, are you adequately equipped to advertise yourself in the right spaces? If you are, can you ensure that your digital media shows up correctly on mobile devices too?

Step 2: Know What You're Searching For

The more you know about the kind of talent you want to attract to your organisation, the more you can adjust your brand to appeal to the right type of person. For instance, if you're a technology business that wants to recruit experts who have a passion for all things new in the digital space, then you'll need to demonstrate to your candidates that you have plenty of opportunities for them to play with updated technology.

On the other hand, if you're searching for Millennial employees who can help you to take your financial company into the modern world, you might want to consider things like flexible working and corporate social responsibility programs designed to attract people who are more interested in the experience they get from a job, than the salary offered. A great place to start may be by writing up a list of critical characteristics you want for your company. Then, compare that list with your mission statement and business vision, and think about how you can incorporate specific features into your brand to captivate key talent.

Step 3: Learn How to Listen

Finally, there's no easier way to determine how you need to improve your current employment branding efforts than by evaluating what's already being said in the industry. From social media listening tools that allow you to pick up on what outsiders think about you, to internal surveys that give businesses the ability to generate authentic responses from people in their staff, there are countless ways to expand your knowledge. When gathering insights from your existing employees remember to give them the opportunity to remain anonymous. This can sometimes improve the chance that you'll get realistic responses from experts who would otherwise fear negative repercussions when saying something wrong about your company. You can even speak to the applicants in your hiring pool who reject your job offers to find out what turned them off about your brand.



What's Next?

Successful employer branding is crucial in a world where reputation rules. As Millennials (and soon Gen Z) take over the workforce, and your brand experience becomes more important to the average candidate than remuneration or benefits, the easiest way to get ahead in the market, is to prove that you're an employer worth working for.

The steps above will help you to understand which elements you need to highlight, your brand character, and where you need to make a change to your existing strategy. Once you've outlined the key points of your audit, you can conduct a SWOT analysis of your organisation, and determine the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that come with making actual changes to the way you're perceived. Here are just some of the points to keep in mind as you go through the process:

Online Presence:

- Business interactive website
- Recruitment forums
- Online reviews
- Social media presence

Recruitment & Hiring:

- Recruiting channels
 - Specialist recruiting partner
 - Recruitment advertising
 - Job descriptions
 - Job boards
 - Social recruiting efforts
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Current Employee Experience:

- Entry and exit interviews
- Role development plans
- Ongoing education and training
- Employee satisfaction surveys
- Employee advocacy

Finally, it would be remiss of us not to advocate using the services of a trusted [legal recruitment specialist](#) in helping to best represent your firm (and indeed, your value proposition) to their talent pools. Recruitment agencies that have a good reputation in the market themselves will already have an engaged database of legal professionals and have a deep understanding of their preferences, non-negotiables, and nice-to-haves when it comes to their next employer.

What's more, recruitment specialists will also have a holistic view on the marketplace – salary benchmarks across the regions and practice areas, the make-up of benefits packages, and sound knowledge around culture, environment and what it's like working at that firm. So as a consultant (in the real sense of the word) should help to educate those responsible for hiring about what kind of things they need to consider to stand out (or at least remain in the running) when it comes to talent attraction.

CLAYTON LEGAL

We understand that while talent is your greatest asset -it can also be your scarcest resource -which is why you need a recruitment partner with the market expertise, insight and network to deliver the right people at the right time.

Clayton Legal has been partnering with law firms across the country since 1999 and during that time has built up an enviable reputation for trust and reliability.

We provide an experienced and credible voice in the market by being able to demonstrate a detailed knowledge of the legal sector's talent agenda. Talent is all about people and just like you, our consultants are true experts in their field with a real drive for excellence that informs everything they do.

From Partners and Associates through to Solicitors, junior fee-earning positions and support staff, Clayton Legal is the only name you'll ever need -and what's more -we are nice people to do business with!

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