



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



WHERE LAW FIRMS COME  
**TO RECRUIT LEGAL TALENT**

# **If you've never heard of an employer brand before, now's the time to expand your education.**

According to the CIPD, a brand is the way organisations differentiate themselves from competitors in the labour market. With the right reputation, you can recruit, retain, and engage the perfect professionals for your team.

Now that the world is more "connected" than ever, with social media, review websites and online forums leading the way for digital communication, people have endless ways to talk about your company. With the right branding strategy, you can get involved in the conversation and begin to influence it in a positive way.

With the help of the right recruitment and staffing organisation, you can differentiate yourself from other businesses, improve staff satisfaction and give yourself the edge over an increasingly competitive marketplace.

Remember, today's employees don't choose a job for its salary and title -they're looking for a community and an organisation they 'buy' into that will pave the way to their future success.

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# What is Employer Branding?

Whether you're in the financial sector, technology industry, or you're focused on manufacturing and engineering; it's becoming increasingly difficult to attract and retain the right kind of talent.

Of course, having the right people on your team is pivotal to successful growth. Now that the average candidate is more empowered than ever, with countless opportunities for employment on the horizon, it's up to you to convince applicants to stay.

A strong employer brand showcases values, strategies, and company culture in your organisation—all essential for building stronger relationships with the people in your teams. In fact, more than 59% of managers say that branding is one of the critical components of their HR strategy.

While there are many different definitions for "employer branding" depending on whom you ask, they all mostly say the same thing. Your brand is the way that 'potential new recruits' in the business world perceive you, and your opportunity to showcase what makes you unique.

Otherwise known as an "Employer Value Proposition", your brand can help you to attract top-tier talent to your organisation while ensuring that you fill your team full of people who share the same values. Defining your identity as an employer means thinking about the following things:

- 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 candidates?
  - Experience: How do you improve the recruiting and onboarding process?
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# Why Is Employer Branding Important?

Building a magnetic employment brand allows organisations to attract the right people for future growth. When you have a reputation that precedes client experience, you can compete beyond things like remuneration and job titles. Instead, you start offering people “opportunities” that fit with their personal and professional goals. While the benefits of this strategy are numerous, here are just some of the advantages you might consider when searching for an EVP in your company.

## 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 benchmark. While remuneration is essential to today's candidates, it's not the ultimate factor that convinces them to say “yes” to a job offer. One study found that 67% of applicants would accept lower pay for the chance to work with a company that has a good brand.

## 2. Attract and Retain the Right Talent

Around 78% of people consider a company's reputation before deciding whether to take a role. Having an employer brand that recruits can find when researching online allows them to determine whether they'd be a good fit for your business. This means that you not only captivate people who are well-suited for your culture, but you're more likely to give them a satisfying work experience too.

## 3. More Qualified Applicants

The numbers around employment branding speak for themselves. A strong reputation can lead to up to 50% more applicants -something that's particularly important in competitive sectors like finance, technology, manufacturing, and sales. 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 like the team members they work with, they're more committed 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. This ensures that more of your budget can go into investment in new opportunities for your business.

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## What Are the Most Important Attributes Employees Look For?

The Harvard Business Review suggests that employer branding is becoming more critical as CEOs and market leaders plan to boost their reputation by 2020. The question is, what characteristics do you need to show to attract the best talent?

The Randstad global workforce report for 2017 found that these features are currently the most compelling to world-wide employees:

- Salary and benefits (58%)
- Security (46%)
- Work/Life balance (43%)
- Opportunities for progression (35%)
- Financial health of the business (33%)
- Flexible working schedules (31%)
- Training opportunities (28%)
- Convenient location (27%)
- Strong leadership (26%)

As automation in the technology and finance sectors leave candidates worried about their future, and growing numbers of applicants in the workforce make it harder to achieve long-term employment, people are searching more for reassurance from the brands they apply to work with.

Though salary and security are still at the top of the list when it comes to factors that candidates care about, the number of people who prioritise these factors has dropped significantly since 2014; by around 10%. This might be because a pleasant work atmosphere and greater flexibility are starting to be more appealing to talent, than the promise of a large salary. Interestingly, the most appealing characteristics an employer can change, depend on where you look in the world.

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For instance:

- North America values: Salary (60%), Work/Life balance (46%) and Security (46%)
- Europe values: Salary (59%), Good work atmosphere (51%) and Security (50%)
- Latin America values: Salary (54%), Career progression (51%), and Good work atmosphere (47%)
- Asia Pacific values: Salary (56%), Work/Life balance (46%) and Security (45%)

Location isn't the only thing that determines what businesses need to consider when defining their brand either. Different sectors are growing more attractive by the day, for instance between 2016 and 2017:

- The attraction of the technology sector increased from 48% to 51%
- IT fell from 58% to 50%
- Life sciences decreased from 51% to 50%
- Industrial dropped from 50% to 49%
- Construction grew from 40% to 46%
- Financial increased from 40% to 41%
- Logistics grew from 36% to 40%
- Retail rose from 33% to 42%
- Services grew from 37% to 38%
- Hospitality fell from 34% to 33%

According to the Randstad report, the changing allure of different sectors is directly related to employer branding. Industries that offer more forward-thinking workplace benefits like unlimited holidays, remote working, and pleasant office environments are the ones that attract the best talent.



# How to Build a Strong and Successful Employer Brand

The statistics on company reputation speak for themselves. 87% of candidates accept offers specifically because of cultural fit, while 80% will willingly leave an employer who doesn't offer the right business environment. So, how do you define and build an attractive brand?

## 1. Listen to Your Staff

Before you can start making positive changes to your reputation, you need to understand what people are saying about you. A confidential survey can be a great way to determine how your existing team perceives your organisation. Ask them what they consider to be the best parts of working with you, and what makes you different from other competitors in the industry. Provide open space for "suggestions" too, as this will help you to determine where you need to make improvements to your attitude and appearance.

## 2. Define Your "Employer Value Proposition"

Today's talent is trading their time not just for high earnings, but also for the best possible career experiences. It's important to think about what you can offer that no one else can. The goal here is to articulate the key strengths of your remuneration and benefits plan. For instance, you might provide employee training opportunities, chances for remote working, and access to the top-of-the-range technology in your sector. 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
- Free gym membership

## 3. Articulate Your Mission

Demonstrating the benefits of working with your company is an excellent idea, but that's not all you need to consider in your Employer Value Proposition. Your EVP 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 your organisation will leave on people and the planet. The Millennial workforce cares more than ever about the ethical side of the businesses they work with. Showing that you're willing to get involved with charitable work or alter your approach to how you 'do' business will help you attract the engaged workforce you want.

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#### 4. Get Leaders on Board

Any strong employer brand begins with solid leadership. Attracting and retaining top-tier talent means getting executives involved in the branding strategy and convincing them to demonstrate the image you want to portray. 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 LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. They expect you to have a news or blog page that shares relevant information to your customers and potential new employees on a consistent basis. With today's ability to create paid targeted campaigns 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.

#### 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 of 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.

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# Current Trends in Employer Branding

Enrolling new talent into your team is an involved process and something that's seen significant change over the years. In the past, many organisations advertised in newspapers and their recruiting partner managed the whole process, including writing the advert and mailing and faxing CVs; remember those days! Today, the process is digital, with CVs easily accessible at any time of the day or night on all of our smartphones. The world of recruitment is changing alongside the impact of employer branding, and culture fit; here are a few things to now consider.

## 1. Thinking of the Candidate like a Customer

Many businesses believe that attracting the right people today is about creating a positive "customer" experience for the modern applicant. If a potential new hire moves through a search and onboarding process that makes them feel valued, then they're more likely to accept an offer, and even recommend the company brand to their friends at a later stage.

2. The "Talent Community" Sometimes, the people who apply for specific roles in your company are unsuccessful, but they may be suitable for different positions, which is why it's so important to maintain and build a talent community. Creating a good impression from the first step of the recruitment process and maintaining a healthy relationship even after the job is offered elsewhere can boost your employer brand and make it easier to keep essential skills within your organisation.

3. The Social 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.

## 4. Flexible Work is a Competitive Advantage

Finally, a 2016 survey by Gallup found that 51% of employees would change roles to accept a position with more flexible hours. Though some sectors will struggle to offer remote roles, companies in a multitude of other industries can benefit from considering the potential of virtual working. As more job seekers search for a work environment that suits their demanding lifestyles, demonstrating a brand that allows for flexibility might help you to get ahead of the game. Ultimately, the best strategy is to embrace an adaptable branding strategy that allows you to evolve with the changing requirements of the marketplace. As employment continues to grow, companies need to remain as agile as possible to create that "cutting edge" recruitment experience.

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# Prioritise Excellent Leadership The Danger of Ignoring Your Employer Brand

The talent shortage is a severe problem for almost every industry. In 2016, 40% of global employers suggested that they were having trouble finding the right staff for their team.

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 when things like job-hopping are becoming increasingly popular. Often, "employer branding" is commended as the ultimate way to reduce your risk of turnover, and talent gaps. Unfortunately, many companies are still overlooking the importance of reputation. Here are just some of the dangers involved with ignoring your employer brand.

## 1. Losing the War for Skills

Every day, organisations in finance, technology, HR, and many other sectors are competing to find the most motivated, experienced, and culturally relevant people for their teams. 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 Candidates

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 of 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!

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#### 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 that 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

Ultimately, employer branding is about giving your future hires, and current employees something that they can resonate with. It's a reputation that instantly makes any business more appealing -convincing the best talent that the opportunities their brand can offer are more compelling than any job title or salary amount.

Though branding your organisation can seem like a complicated process, it's just about getting to the bottom of what makes you different, and unique. If you can answer the following five questions, then you'll already be on your way to a strong EVP, and a better brand:

1. Why would the top-tier talent in your industry want to work for you?
2. What percentage of your leadership (managers, supervisors, executives) are involved in your employer branding experience?
3. How visible is your company?(Online and offline with a website, social media, and recruitment strategy)
4. What is the perception candidates and staff members already have of your employer brand?
5. What percentage of your team would recommend you as a great person/organisation to work for?

For most companies, the brand development process will begin with the answers to the above questions followed by an intensive audit. This means looking at your current strategy for reputation development, and management, and determining where the gaps in your plan are most prominent.

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Your audit may include the following four steps:

#### Step 1: Examine Your Online Appearance

Now that technology and social media have made it easier than ever for companies to promote themselves online, it's not enough to advertise in your local newspaper. The average applicant wants complete transparency from the organisation they plan on working with before they ever consider taking part in an interview. Your online presence is your opportunity to show hires what it's like to work for your organisation before they get a job offer. The easiest way to assess your current reputation online is to look at the following things:

- How engaging are your job descriptions? Have you worked with a specialist 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 demonstrates 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 into 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 maybe 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.

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### 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 that 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 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

### Candidate Experience:

- Application process
- Screening process
- Interviewing process
- Training and onboarding
- Notification process

### Current Employee Experience:

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