



YOUR GUIDE TO EMPLOYER VALUE PROPOSITIONS IN THE LEGAL SECTOR



WHERE LAW FIRMS COME
TO RECRUIT LEGAL TALENT

Legal employees in the current market are increasingly discerning about whom they choose to work for.

We're living in the age of the [Great Resignation](#), where turnover is higher than ever. Attracting and retaining great talent now requires a new, updated strategy.

There is a new demand for legal employers today to "sell" their firm to potential candidates, focusing on the unique benefits and culture they offer. This means creating an Employee Value Proposition, or "EVP", with a lasting impact.

An EVP combines everything from the remuneration and benefits you can provide as an employer to the empathetic and engaging work environment you offer. The more compelling the EVP, the easier it will be to build your talent pipeline.

This guide will look at what it means to create an outstanding Employer Value Proposition in an age where the priorities of legal talent are changing.

Let's dive in.

V A L U E

What is an Employer Value Proposition?

An Employer Value Proposition or "EVP" is a subsection of employer branding related to how companies attract skilled professionals. According to experts, it's the "set of associations and offerings" business leaders can provide in exchange for their employees' unique talents.

In the past, many businesses assumed the key to a successful EVP was simply offering their team the best salary and benefits. However, today's teams are looking for more than just financial value in their careers.

The shifting focus of the EVP has become increasingly significant in recent years, as the pandemic and shifting economic environment have led to employees rethinking their priorities. Legal professionals have had an opportunity to reassess their relationship with their current firm.

Amidst the ongoing workplace transformation in firms today- we're seeing a new focus on concepts previously disregarded in Employer Value Propositions. Today's teams want more social responsibility, flexibility, and personal and career growth opportunities.

To create a powerful EVP, law firms need to redefine the priorities of their teams.

How Employer Value Propositions Have Changed

The concept of what makes a great "EVP" has been evolving for years. This transformation accelerated as employee attitudes towards work began to shift at the start of this decade. The employee and employer relationship has changed drastically in the past year, and while it's not the case to the same degree as then, the current market is still very much driven by legal candidates.

In the legal sector, your ideal candidates have many options regarding where and how they choose to work. Remote and hybrid working has opened the door to employment opportunities previously unavailable to modern teams. Staff are no longer restricted on where to work based on geography alone.

As a result, the common principles underlying old-fashioned EVP strategies have grown outdated. [According to Gartner](#), there are various factors demonstrating the inefficiency of current Employer Value Propositions, including:

- Engagement: Employee engagement, responsible for driving performance and retention outcomes, has remained consistently flat among all industries since 2016.
- Attraction: Only 29% of functional leaders believe they have the talent to meet current performance requirements. Attracting talent is becoming more difficult.
- Retention: A tiny 23% of HR leaders believed their employees would continue working with them after the pandemic was officially over.
- EVP satisfaction: Only around 31% of HR managers say employees are satisfied with EVP offerings, and 65% of candidates say they have stopped pursuing a job because of an unattractive EVP.

Law firms are discovering the need to update Employer Value Propositions with a new focus on a more “human” experience and show they can offer their staff a more effective life experience.

This means forming deeper connections between employees and employers, supporting more radical forms of workplace flexibility, and prioritising holistic well-being and empathy. Employees want to feel supported, respected, and invested in a shared purpose.

Why Are Employer Value Propositions Important?

Despite the plethora of changes that have occurred in the legal sector in recent years, many employers today still fail to fully understand the benefits of an EVP.

An Employer Value Proposition is one of the most important ways for any brand to stand out from other competing firms in an evolving legal market. As people continue to make tough decisions about how and where they want to work, and priorities evolve, it's now more critical than ever to get your EVP right.

Let's look at some of the main benefits of a strong EVP.

1) Attracting Top Talent

There's no denying that recruitment for law firms in the current legal landscape is growing more complex. Prospective employees are becoming better at navigating the industry to find their desired roles. The explosion of remote work opportunities also means candidates can find higher-paying positions with the freedom to work from home.

Your EVP acts as a key driver of talent acquisition, separating your firm from other competing brands and communicating why teams should want to work for you.

2) Retaining Employees

Finding the right talent is only the first step. You also need to ensure you keep your most valuable staff members around. Retaining high-performing employees is difficult in the age of the Great Resignation, and every person who leaves your firm causes internal disruption (as well as impacting your bottom line).

[According to Gartner](#), having a strong EVP is enough to reduce your team turnover by 69%. Not only do you hold onto your people for longer, but you reduce the need to search for, train, and onboard your replacement staff when people leave.

3) Optimise Recruiting

A strong EVP is a valuable tool in advertising your firm to prospective candidates. The more refined your Employer Value Proposition is, the more likely you are to attract the right legal candidates capable of melding well with your existing corporate culture.

As a legal recruitment agency, we already have a network of candidates we can utilise in sourcing the best possible fit for your firm – however, if your brand doesn't stand out in today's market, potential hires will say no to you and yes to someone else.

4) Improving Corporate Culture

Building a strong EVP is also a process which involves auditing and enhancing your existing working environment. You can redefine your core values and improve your chances of keeping employees engaged and motivated at work. A good EVP can even improve new employee [commitment levels by 30%](#).

Assessing everything from your compensation strategy to your workplace environment will improve the employee experience, boost internal productivity, and strengthen team performance.

What are the Key Elements of an EVP?

As mentioned above, the nature of the Employer Value Proposition is changing rapidly in the current economy. However, there are still several vital elements you need to consider when defining how you will attract and retain your candidates.

Some of the most common factors to look at include:

Compensation

The compensation aspect of your EVP is one of the first things you'll need to consider to attract potential employees. While some say an organisation's mission is more important than how much it can pay, every legal professional still wants to earn what they're worth.

Working with a [legal recruitment agency](#) can help you to determine the best possible compensation package to offer your candidates and some will even provide [Salary Bench markers](#) so you can see how your offering is positioned against other viable employers in the region and/or practice area. You'll need to provide a pay scale similar to the overall market average, as well as think about other remuneration factors, like:

- How to handle raises and promotions and corresponding pay scales
- Whether to offer share option schemes
- When bonuses will be provided

If your compensation package is lower than the average law firm in the market, you'll need to consider enhancing your EVP in other ways. It may be possible to attract new candidates based on the flexible working hours or distinctive culture you can provide.

Benefits

For some firms, the "benefits" section of the EVP will go hand-in-hand with compensation. However, it can also be an area worth exploring on its own. The benefits you provide can sometimes assist in outweighing a slightly lower base salary.

For instance, an employee might be willing to accept a slightly less competitive pay package if you can also provide a pension plan, health insurance, and excellent levels of paid leave.

Development opportunities

The inclusion of professional and personal development & training opportunities have been found to contribute to higher levels of employee satisfaction and increase the chances of candidates accepting a role with a lower base salary.

Employees who join your firm are (hopefully at least) in it for the long run. This means offering everything from technical training opportunities to personal development. You could give your team members the chance to take courses at work, access mentoring and career guidance, and even take leadership training.

It's also important to ensure there's room for lateral movement in your organisation. Today's team members want to be able to work towards promotions and new responsibilities.

Work environment

The “work environment” in the EVP conversation is becoming one of the most important parts of making your firm stand out. More and more employees today are looking for an environment which feels supportive, inclusive, and diverse.

Work environments must be healthy and engaging, focusing on well-being and empathy. This means your leadership team must invest more time in ensuring their employees are comfortable and engaged, and there are various factors to consider when approaching this aspect of your EVP.

For instance, can your team access flexible working hours and remote working opportunities to boost work/life balance in the modern world? Do you want to offer a four-day working week to allow people more time to recover on the weekend?

Other points to consider include:

- Team building and collaborative experiences
- Employee well-being initiatives
- Diversity Equity and Inclusion (to reduce bias)
- Recognition and rewards for team members
- Employee purpose (is the work meaningful?)

Job Security

Although several brands still overlook the job security element of a role, this aspect is becoming increasingly important for new hires with inflation increasing and a predicted economic downturn. Since the pandemic, team members have grown more concerned about their roles’ longevity and how long they can expect to stay with a firm.

In a survey by Mosnter.com, [around 45% of employees](#) said job security and pay were equally important when deciding where to work. Your team members want to know you’re just as invested in them and their growth as you are in your business. Consistent and stable jobs are a must-have in today’s economy. One way to improve the sense of security you offer your team members is to plan a path for development and promotion with each new staff member during the initial onboarding process.

Firm Culture

The concept of company culture has gained popularity over the years, and its definition is also evolving as we shift into a new landscape of remote and hybrid workers – however, many law firms still fail to understand what “culture” really is.

To build a strong firm culture, employers must consider the values they prioritise when advertising new roles and how they can strengthen team relationships. The best and most attractive working environments are where team members can feel like part of a family.

Law firms must ensure they’re focusing heavily on developing trust and equality within the workplace. Other points to consider when addressing firm culture include:

- Team communication and support options
- Positive relationships among all team members across hierarchies
- Aligning employees with firm goals
- Giving team members a sense of purpose and meaning
- Prioritising shared values or a shared vision

How to Design Your Employer Value Proposition

[According to Gartner](#), a leader in market research in this people management field, companies can reduce their compensation premiums by 50% and reach 50% deeper into the current labour market when candidates view their EVP as attractive. An EVP strengthens your position in the hiring landscape and improves your chances of retaining talent.

The question is, how do you start building one with a positive impact on your employees?

Step 1: Define Your Employee Personas

Now, more than ever, we're seeing the rise of new types of employees in the industry. Law firms need to recognise how diverse their target audience is to compete with an excellent EVP. Some employees will be looking for the opportunity to work from home or leverage a 4-day work week, while others will be more motivated by development opportunities.

In certain sectors, companies are even beginning to present their EVP in different ways, depending on the kind of talent they're trying to attract.

Although you might not be able to change your entire EVP for every employee persona, you can adjust the focus of your job descriptions and advertisements to suit the benefits specific teams are looking for. You might want to concentrate on development opportunities for entry-level legal talent and deliver more benefits for high-level hires.

The more you know about your ideal employee, the more you can cater your EVP to their interests. Think about the following factors:

- What kind of work/life balance is your employee looking for?
- Does your target audience belong to a specific generation – how does this affect their priorities or demands?
- What sort of work is your employee looking for?
- What values will they prioritise when deciding whether to work with you?

Step 2: Audit your Existing EVP

Once you have a clear view of your target candidate, it's time to assess what your firm is currently offering. Make a checklist of all the components mentioned in the above section, from remuneration to workplace environment.

For instance, you might offer a fantastic learning and development strategy but struggle to redefine the workplace after the pandemic.

Don't assume a great remuneration package will make the rest of the factors meaningless. As mentioned above, today's team members are becoming increasingly less interested in pay as the sole factor when choosing where to work.

Auditing your EVP should give you a good insight into where you need to start implementing new plans and policies to make your workplace more attractive.

Step 3: Interview existing and past employees

Sometimes, the best way to understand what you're doing right and what you're doing wrong with your Employee Value Proposition is to speak to your staff. Your team members can offer insights into what encouraged them to join your law firm in the first place. They'll also give you an overview of what you're doing correctly to retain your talent.

You could also send employee surveys to previous team members, asking them why they left your firm. Remember an exit interview is a good way to collect meaningful insights before someone leaves your brand for good.

Outside of your past and current employees, don't overlook the value of talking to the candidates you interview to join your team about their perspectives. Ask them why they want to work for your law firm in the interview and what appeals to them about the job description and role.

If you offer someone a job and they turn you down, find out what convinced them to look in another direction. Your [legal recruitment agency](#) can even collect some useful insights from candidates on your behalf.

Step 4: Define the Key Components of Your EVP

With your research in hand, you'll be able to start defining the key components of the future EVP you want to display to your potential candidates. This is the perfect time to start working on your differentiation strategy with a legal recruitment agency.

A recruitment agency will be able to advise you on how other brands similar to yours are attracting talent. They can also help you better understand what your target audience is looking for from an employer.

Using your research, you'll need to answer the following questions:

- What salary range and employment benefits are most attractive to my ideal candidate?
- What kind of career and personal growth opportunities will my ideal candidate look for?
- What sort of workplace environment appeals most to legal talent?
- What kind of firm culture and values are prioritised by these candidates?
- How can I ensure my employees feel secure in their new role?

You may find different answers to these questions based on employee personas. For instance, the EVP for recent graduates might focus on career growth and employee perks. The EVP for executive-level professionals might focus more on work-life balance, plenty of paid vacation time, and career stability.

Step 5: Write your Employee Value Proposition Statement

An employee value proposition statement clearly explains exactly what kind of experience you can deliver and how you differentiate your firm from the competition. Your statement might outline your exceptional career development opportunities or competitive salaries. You can also highlight key factors of your firm culture.

A good statement is clear, unique, and aligned with your candidates' expectations and the wider business. If you're struggling with this process, consider turning to your recruitment agency for extra assistance. They can help you to answer the question of "why" your ideal legal candidate should choose you.

Remember, employee value proposition statements need to be factual. Don't make claims you can't back up with actions and evidence.

Step 6: Promote Your EVP

Once you have your EVP statement, you can think about how you will promote your improved employee offer. Once again, your recruitment agency will be able to give you advice on how to make the right impact on your website, social media channels, and job descriptions.

The clearer your EVP statement is, the easier it will be for the recruitment agency you work with to highlight your key values to candidates. It's also worth making sure any internal brand ambassadors and employees willing to help grow your brand can assist with promotion too.

Brand ambassadors can discuss key factors of your employee value proposition when writing reviews on job forums or posting on social media.

Make sure you highlight your EVP during interview processes too. You'll need to ensure it's clear to your candidates what they're getting from this role.

Step 7: Review Your Results

Once you've formulated the perfect Employer Value Proposition strategy, implemented it across your organisation, and started promoting, it's time to measure. Measuring and tracking how people respond to your EVP will give you an insight into whether you need to change anything to make your roles more attractive. While there's no one-size-fits-all strategy for measuring your results, it's helpful to look at metrics commonly affected by EVP, such as:

- Time-to-hire
 - Quality of hire
 - Job offer acceptance rate
 - Retention or employee turnover
 - Employee referral numbers
 - Employee engagement rate
 - New hire retention rate
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Reviewing and tracking your results from a strong EVP strategy isn't just something you should do once. As industry hiring trends continue to change and candidate priorities evolve, it's important to keep coming back to your strategy.

Review your Employee Value Proposition from time to time, and make sure it's still having the right impact.

Build the Right EVP for Legal Talent

Creating a strong Employee Value Proposition is quickly becoming one of the most important things any business can do. In a skills-short marketplace, it's harder than ever to attract the talent you need to keep your firm thriving. With an EVP, you can augment and enhance your talent pipeline.

The easiest way to build, promote, and enhance an Employee Value Proposition, is with the assistance of the right legal recruitment partner. With a deep knowledge of the industry, their recruitment team will give you a behind-the-scenes insight into your ideal candidates and their needs. They'll also be able to help you separate your business from the competition.

When the time comes to attract new talent, your recruitment team will also be able to highlight the aspects of your EVP considered most important to new hires.

[Contact our team](#) today to learn more about how we can help you leverage your Employee Value Proposition and win the war for talent.

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 which 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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