

HR Toolkit

Employer Branding

Provided by: **Horst Insurance**



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Introduction

An important aspect of an organization's reputation is its employer brand, which refers to how the employment market views an organization, and the efforts used by an employer to adapt or shift this perception. Branding encompasses a variety of components, including both intangible benefits (e.g., workplace culture, values and mission) and tangible benefits (e.g., salary, benefits and other perks). It is a core component of recruiting and retaining employees. Employer branding has the goal of promoting a workplace as a good place to work, with the targeted audience being both current and prospective employees.

A strong employer brand helps employers stand out from others. Like most aspects of the workplace, the ongoing needs and desires of employees change. Regardless of the employment market, employers that take care of their employees and communicate transparently and effectively will have an edge. Organizations can boost their recruiting and retention efforts in the current employment market by ensuring that their brand is resonating with those seeking employment.

An effective employer brand can have a positive bottom-line impact, as organizations that excel with their reputation can spend less on recruiting efforts—and can improve retention of top talent. By displaying an employer brand that tells an authentic story about what it's like to be a part of the workplace and how employees collectively work toward the company's mission, organizations can attract candidates who think, feel and strive for the same.

This HR Toolkit will further explain the significance of employer branding, provide an overview of branding components and suggest tips for building, managing and evaluating an employer brand.

Employer Branding Overview

An organization's reputation could be good, neutral or bad. However, this reputation can be altered by branding, which plays a key role in various aspects of business, such as marketing efforts, and an ability to sell products or services. While these types of initiatives are important, employers are additionally tasked with recruiting and retaining top talent to succeed—and having the right people is especially important in today's competitive job market.



What Is Employer Branding?

An employer brand is the market's perception of the organization as an employer. The employer brand answers the simple question of, "Do I want to work there?" Every organization has a unique employer brand—whether it's formally managed or not. Stakeholders' perceptions of the employer may even be neutral if not much is known about the organization. As an employer, an organization should be actively monitoring and managing its employer brand both internally and externally.

A strong employer brand speaks to the organization's mission statement, taking their outlined values and principles and turning them into an external-facing message. An employee value proposition (EVP) is the unique set of benefits employees receive in return for the skills, capabilities and experiences they bring to an organization—and can be a core component of an employer brand. The following sections highlight these elements further, and explain how an organization can leverage them to manage their brand both internally and externally.

Mission Statement

A mission statement speaks to who an organization is, the core beliefs and principles the organization aims to embody, and a pledge to live up to those self-instilled values. A mission statement is aspirational—but always attainable—and is a guiding light for organizations throughout their growth and evolution.

A mission statement answers the following:

- What does the organization do?
- How does the organization do it?
- Why does the organization do it?

An organization's mission statement should be visible in the workplace, on the website and throughout marketing materials. Keep in mind that the mission statement is both internal- and external-facing.

Values

Core values are extremely important for any organization, regardless of the size. Even if there aren't currently formalized efforts, organizations hire based on their values, whether intentional or not.

Candidates who are the best fit are the candidates who embody the same values of the organization. Human values have the potential to support a positive employer brand. Like the mission statement, values are outward-facing and represent the common beliefs of the organization and engaged employees. Values answer *why* the job matters and *what* the organization stands for.

Core values are innate to an organization. A set of strong, authentic values can benefit an organization by attracting potential candidates, clients, customers and investors. Additionally, values can help keep employees engaged and motivated, which in turn increases performance and productivity. An organization that prioritizes values will be able to articulate what their values mean in real terms and support employees through engagement and commitment.

Some common values include integrity, accountability, customer service, fun, innovation, respect and trust. Values should be demonstrated in daily operations and communications—both internally and externally. It's equally as important to speak to these values by using real examples. When employees respect and believe in an organization's values, they often have a greater understanding of their job role and how they can help achieve and contribute to business goals.

Employer Value Proposition (EVP)

To reiterate, an EVP is the unique set of benefits employees receive in return for the skills, capabilities and experiences they bring to an organization. A strong EVP gives employees a powerful reason to work for the organization. It can attract and retain the top talent, prioritize organization goals, reengage the workforce and reduce hiring costs. Most importantly, the EVP contributes to a positive and strong employer brand.

The EVP is discovered, developed and tested with existing employees. It should be unique, relevant and compelling. Consider what influences a person's decision to accept a job offer or not, including:

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
|  Career development |  Company culture |  Company values |
|  Company location(s) and facilities |  Employee benefits |  Employee recognition |
|  Job security |  Non-salary financial perks |  On-the-job perks |
|  Overall compensation |  Management style |  Team dynamics |
|  Travel opportunities |  Volunteer opportunities |  Work-life balance |

Why Is Employer Branding Important?

In a tight recruitment market, with skill shortages and increased competition for talent, employer branding should be leveraged to promote organizational culture and values. It's important to reinforce that the organization provides a great place to work. Employer branding is critical to winning candidates, while securing and retaining the strongest talent.

LinkedIn research found that a strong employer brand reduces turnover by 28% and cost-per-hire by 50%. Additionally, LinkedIn explored the benefits of investing in employer brand and found that it:



Decreases Recruiting Costs

Organizations with positive or favorable employer brands can get up to twice as many applications as companies with negative or unfavorable brands. This can make a great impact on how efficient a recruiter or HR professional can be, especially when battling skills gaps and other factors. When top candidates want to work for an organization, recruiting costs can drop by about **43%**.



Decreases Retention Costs

When organizations fail to invest in their reputation, it can end up costing them an average of **\$5,000 per employee**. Additionally, almost 50% of workers said they wouldn't work for an organization with a bad reputation, even with a big increase in compensation.

With a negative or nonexistent employer brand, organizations are spending 10% more per employee hired. When an employer brand is strong, recruiters experience less friction when introducing the organization to top talent and getting to the offer stage. Organizations cannot afford to pass up these benefits.

Components of an Employer's Brand

If employers don't manage their brand, others may define it. The previous section highlighted the importance of identifying company values and a mission statement. This section is going to explain how to take that foundational groundwork and help them come to life through employer branding. There are a variety of components—both internal and external—that make up an employer brand.

Branding plays a key role across various aspects of business, such as recruiting and marketing efforts. For an employer brand, there are a variety of key workplace topics to address. Though organizations can take steps to manage how they are perceived by the employment market, it's important to understand what constructs that brand. The following sections further explain components of an employer's brand.

Company Culture

Company culture is the personality and environment of an organization. Defined by more than just a mission statement or organizational values, company culture encompasses the unwritten norms of how employees interact with each other. While a poor company culture can be detrimental, a strong company culture and employee morale can positively impact recruitment efforts, retention and the bottom line.

Company culture has long been associated with the way interactions take place among employees. Additionally, company culture is defined by its leadership, communication methods, wellness offerings, environment, corporate vision and social aspects. For example, company culture translates through interactions taking place via communication channels such as email, phone, video, instant messaging, employee intranets and more. As utilization of remote work expands, employers should consider how their culture is translating into the virtual workplace. Additionally, they should make sure their company culture aligns with its mission statement and values—this will vary from workplace to workplace.

There isn't one specific company culture that is ideal, but positive company cultures commonly have some of the following themes that matter in today's economy:

- Agility
- Collaboration
- Customer focus
- Diversity
- Innovation
- Integrity
- Performance
- Respect

Ultimately, company culture will be part of an employer's brand—for good or for bad. Consider highlighting key initiatives, and consider how company culture is reflected in employer branding efforts.

Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is an extremely powerful force that has the potential to impact an organization's trajectory—and employer brand. According to Gallup, 70% of workers in the United States are not engaged. Engaged employees are more than just satisfied with their jobs; they are committed to the organization and its goals. They have passion, pride and energy for their work and their organization, and are willing to go the extra mile on a regular basis. Employees who are truly engaged stay because they enjoy their work and support the organization. Furthermore, employees are the face of the organization, and engaged employees can be an organization's best promoters. Today, word-of-mouth is a powerful tool used to drive an organization's external reputation.

There are downloadable scorecards available in the [Appendix](#) to help evaluate an employer's effectiveness with employee communications and employee retention. Both aspects directly impact an employee's workplace experience, which extends to the employer's brand.

Employee Well-being

Good health and well-being can be a core enabler of employee engagement and organizational performance—which translates to a positive employer brand. An employer that demonstrates a clear commitment to looking after its employees, and supporting them to look after themselves, will stand out as a great organization to work for. Also, the workforce will be more engaged and energized. Today, employees' health and wellness goals come in a wider variety and fit into a more holistic approach. Well-being is a modern concept that includes physical health, social health, mental health and financial health.

The 2018 Global Talent Trends survey by Mercer found that 1 in 2 employees would like to see a greater focus on well-being at their organization. Organizations should consider instilling employee well-being into company values. Putting a workplace culture of well-being at the center of the employer brand creates an attractive employer value proposition (EVP).

Employee Benefits

Along the same line as well-being, organizations should consider how their employee benefits play into their employer brand. It's important that employers communicate—often and clearly—the full breadth of services and benefits offered to employees. Not only will that boost the employer's brand internally, but an understanding of the benefits package can be a big motivator for employees too.

To differentiate from competitors, consider benefits that other organizations may not be offering, such as a dollar-to-dollar 401(k) match with no vesting schedule, employer-paid parking or fully covered health insurance premiums. A nontraditional benefit like student loan repayment assistance may be especially attractive as financial stress increases during the pandemic. Discover what makes financial sense for the organization and aligns with company values. Benefits can help an organization stand out to job seekers, and keep current employees on board.

Keep in mind that the value these services provide extends beyond the employees themselves and may cover immediate family members, which provides them with the added peace of mind that their loved ones are cared for by their employer too. And that's something that an employee would want to brag about to their friends, family and network—positively spreading the employer's brand externally.

Workplace Safety

If the health and safety of employees is at risk, the organization's reputation will be as well. Now, more than ever, organizations will be judged not by their words, but by their actions. Proactive and effective safety efforts may help an organization recruit and retain employees during the pandemic and beyond. It's vital to keep in mind the health, safety and well-being of employees when making business decisions. The goal is to remain truthful and transparent. Consider the following ways to help highlight safety efforts through employer branding efforts:

- **Establish a safety and health program.** Creating initiatives or committees to address workplace safety and health can further document and promote desired behaviors. Organizations can publicly share general safety initiatives as well.
- **Provide usable and appropriate safety training or education.** It's important that employees understand and follow workplace controls like personal hygiene protocols and personal protective equipment usage.
- **Include safety-related expectations in job descriptions and postings.** Key messaging or FAQs may help leadership or designated spokespeople understand and deliver talking points for both internal and external audiences. Additionally, human resources and communications departments should maintain a consistent message.
- **Prioritize safety in employment-related company branding.** Employers should consider updating their careers webpage to include attractive employee benefits like telecommuting, flexible work hours, staggered shifts and hazard pay.
- **Prioritize safety in nonemployment-related company branding.** Employers should consider dedicating a section of their website or posting on the organization's social media to highlight how employee health and safety is being prioritized, especially during the pandemic. On these sites, employers can identify thought leadership opportunities, but should be prepared to publicly address any topics discussed if asked to do so.
- **Create a dialogue with vendors and partners.** Employers should talk with business partners or customers about their safety response plans. Employers are encouraged to share best practices with other local businesses—especially those in their supply chain.

If an organization has taken significant steps to be adaptable and keep employees safe, those efforts are part of their brand story. The coronavirus pandemic offers a unique opportunity for employers to redefine their employer brand. It's important for organizations to put employees first and lead with empathy, authenticity and transparency.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

All organizations have an impact on society, whether it is positive, negative or a combination of both. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) generally refers to what that impact is, and how an organization approaches accountability for their actions. There are a variety of ways that an organization can impact society, and key CSR topics fall under the following categories:



Often used interchangeably with sustainability—**environmental CSR** refers to how an organization's actions impact the environment through natural resource management. Environmental and sustainability efforts are often at the core of a CSR strategy, as organizations strive to make decisions that balance both short- and long-term goals.



Social CSR can include topics such as working conditions, inclusion efforts and labor practices.



Economic CSR refers to efforts that financially impact an organization and society concurrently, such as job creation, profit sharing with stakeholders and more.

While some organizations have a more informal approach to CSR, others formally conduct external reporting. In fact, 93% of the world's 250 largest corporations formally report on sustainability, according to the Global Reporting Initiative. However, whether through formal initiatives or not, CSR efforts are a component of an employer brand.

Integrating CSR into recruiting practices can help ensure recruiting efforts are hitting relevant topics. Keep in mind that CSR is applicable for employers regardless of a formalized process or organization size. When integrating CSR, consider these tips:

- **Implement CSR into your employer brand.** Whether it be your careers page, online platforms such as LinkedIn or marketing materials, include your corporate social responsibility initiatives as part of your employer brand.
- **Focus on the why.** CSR extends to the core impact of your products and services, including your mission statement. Ensure job seekers are aware of the mission statement and values.
- **Include CSR as part of recruiting efforts.** Job candidates may want to talk about the organization's impact—and the impact that employees make at the organization. Be ready to discuss CSR initiatives with candidates as they apply and interview for positions within the organization.

When seeking an employer, many applicants hope to find an organization with values that align with their own. Job seekers are keeping an eye on how organizations are treating their employees and their communities. Organizations can boost their brand by not only engaging in activities that benefit society, but by ensuring that these accomplishments are included in their employer brand and recruiting efforts.

COVID-19 Response

Internal and external communications during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic can have an impact on how an employer is perceived by both current and prospective employees. Organizations can boost

their recruiting efforts by ensuring that their employer brand is resonating with those seeking employment, and importantly, meeting the evolving needs of job seekers. Now, more than ever, it's important to demonstrate a commitment to transparency, adaptability and safety. Trust is earned when employers show compassion and empathy.

Employers should consider how their brand is resonating with the current employment market—and how their employer brand plays into post-coronavirus plans. Employer brand is as important as ever—and an organization's coronavirus response can be effectively communicated to job seekers. The following topics should be considered when updating an employer brand:

- **Safety**—This is at the forefront of concern for current and future talent. While an organization may be going above and beyond to ensure the safety of employees, ensure that these efforts are highlighted in employer branding. This can be done by:
 - Prioritizing safety in all company branding—both employment and nonemployment
 - Including safety-related expectations in job descriptions and postings
- **Benefits**—Job seekers care about health-related benefits such as sick leave and mental health support now more than ever. As organizations update benefits packages, ensure these changes fit into recruitment efforts.
- **Career focus**—Much of the employment market has recently been laid off or furloughed, and hopes to avoid a repeat with their next employer. Ensure that the career-orientation of job openings is clearly part of an employer's brand. Job seekers are looking for stability and the opportunity to build a career.
- **Social responsibility**—During the pandemic, organizations are focusing on putting people first. Just as you would support employees and candidates, this is an opportunity to give back and contribute toward economic and societal recovery. Consider implementing initiatives to help customers, employees and communities get back on their feet. It's important to be authentic and talk about people, not solely numbers and business.
- **Coronavirus impact**—The pandemic should be a core component of your current employer brand as it's had a significant impact on people's lives. Job seekers will appreciate this acknowledgment, demonstrating the organization's transparency. Consider dedicating a section of the organization's website to the coronavirus, or be prepared to address the topic with prospective employees during screening and interviewing processes. Remain truthful and transparent, but include takeaways such as:
 - How did your organization respond to the coronavirus?
 - What tough choices has your organization made? Why?
 - How has your organization continued to contribute to society?
 - How is your organization engaging in safe workplace practices?

Although organizations may be focused on recruiting new talent, as the coronavirus threat evolves, it's vital to keep in mind the health, safety and well-being of employees when making business decisions. The coronavirus pandemic has led to a collective loss of normalcy. As organizations protect the employer brand from COVID-19 implications, current employees can be the main drivers of an employer's reputation. Keep in mind that external communications in response to COVID-19 may be sensitive, and it's best not to turn them into political statements. Focus on what is required by state and local safety laws and regulations, and how you can help employees or job seekers through general safety efforts.

Employers can continue to consider how their business practices and branding resonate with current employment markets. Recruiting techniques will vary for every employer. Remember that the workplace will continue to change, and employers should be prepared to adjust accordingly. Transparency now builds trust later.

Employer Branding Management

This toolkit covers a variety of different topics. It will be up to organizations to consider which components of an employer brand they'd like to adopt or promote, and how they would like to do so. While the toolkit's [Components of an Employer's Brand](#) section highlights different topics within an employer's brand, this section discusses ways that a desired employer brand can be developed, managed and evaluated.

Building an Employer Brand

Whether it's already been done strategically or not, understand that all organizations already have an employer brand. There are steps that employers can take to cultivate and adapt their brand on an ongoing basis. An employer's brand can continue to address the current questions, concerns and needs of both current and prospective employees. Consider the following tips:

- 1. Fully evaluate the purpose of the organization.**
You may be able to shape this from a mission statement and values.
- 2. Evaluate the current state of the employer brand.**
What are the current initiatives within the employer brand?
- 3. Define the objectives of the employer brand.**
What is the organization hoping to accomplish as an employer?
- 4. Deliver external initiatives.**
Take steps to align the employer brand with recruiting and public-facing efforts.
- 5. Deliver internal initiatives.**
These might include internal communication campaigns, employee engagement efforts and more.
- 6. Evaluate and repeat steps.**
Employer branding isn't a one-time initiative. Branding can and will adapt over time. By being proactive, an organization can gain control over *how* its employer brand adapts, and *what* it adapts into.

While those steps are being taken, questions may come up about who owns employer branding and ongoing maintenance. At smaller organizations, it could be the CEO controlling the messaging or, more traditionally, talent or HR leads. At larger businesses, recruiters might lean on their HR, communications, public relations or marketing departments to help hone an employer brand.

No matter who owns the duties of developing and growing an employer brand, it's critical to remember that employees are doing most of this branding work. The brand is based on the experiences of employees and what they have to say about the organization. If the company work environment and culture aren't healthy, an employer's job is to work on that first. If an organization already has a great company culture, then it's time to amplify and promote it. Read on to explore ways to monitor and manage an employer's brand.

Managing an Online Reputation

Job websites, such as Glassdoor, Indeed and LinkedIn, are critical for an employer's brand. Job seekers search these sites to find out more about workplaces, culture and experiences. In fact, more than 80% of U.S. online job seekers visit Indeed or Glassdoor. These types of websites can allow employees to anonymously report on their employee experience, which gives job seekers a glimpse into the workplace experience.

Tips for monitoring and managing an online reputation include:

- **Claim company profiles and details, if possible.** This allows an organization to add critical details that job seekers consider before applying for work at any company, such as the number of employees, industry details, company mission, benefits, perks and photos. An employer should be in control of all profiles to monitor, respond and update as needed.
- **Expect a range of reviews, and consider them as feedback.** It is inevitable that many employers will receive negative reviews online. While the hope is that most online feedback will be positive, consider negative reviews as a learning opportunity.
- **Respond directly to poor comments.** According to a Glassdoor survey, 62% of job seekers said that their perception of an organization is improved after an employer directly responds to a comment. Don't be afraid to give specific action items, such as how the you will review current policies to ensure future employees have a positive experience.
- **Know that the brand can change.** Employers who seek to transform their brand can do just that. Set manageable expectations because it won't necessarily change overnight.

Websites such as Indeed, LinkedIn and Glassdoor are online communities that organizations can leverage to attract and interact with prospective applicants. There are other industry-specific websites as well to consider. Since other companies will be promoting their brands on these sites, be sure to differentiate the organization and articulate company values well.

Since we live in a digital age, prospective employees have many channels available to them as they search for and discover information about organizations. A good reputation means that a business is more credible than its competitors. Reputation is all about public perception, whether it's based on facts or not.

There's a need to be proactive, as reputational risk often strikes without warning. Here are some additional common online channels to monitor:



Business review websites



Social media



News releases and articles



Blog posts



Forums



Competitor websites

People will talk about an organization regardless of whether it has an online presence. But, if an organization isn't online or monitoring channels, there's no way to discover what's being said, and the company may risk even bigger reputation problems.

Creating Thought Leadership Content

Without the right people, no organization can create or sustain success. An important goal of an employer's brand is to create aspirations and ambition among employees. Thought leadership can be a powerful tool to build an influential employer brand.

Word of mouth, testimonials and news are more powerful when coming from a trusted source. Organizations can drive employer branding efforts and ensure that these reach the right people. Consider providing a personalized insight into how the organization works. That will let current and prospective employees know about the employer's strengths and help them believe it. Thought leadership activities enhance the organization's image and give validity to the company's expertise in its field. While being authentic to the organization, consider exploring content opportunities within the industry or at a local level.

Thought leadership content is another way to give employees an assurance of knowing an employer before joining the organization. Most importantly, thought leadership content should be unique and offer a fresh perspective that provokes thinking. It might be worth looking beyond the CEO or other leaders—find out who has the strongest, most unique voice and expertise on a topic, and give them the spotlight. According to the Edelman Trust Barometer, employee voice is three times more credible than the CEO's when it comes to talking about working conditions in the organization. Find those voices that will resonate better with current and prospective employees.

Developing a Recruitment Marketing Plan

Employer brand goes hand in hand with recruiting efforts. An effective employer brand can help attract not only high-quality candidates, but the right candidates. An accurate and well-positioned brand will attract the type of talent that aligns with organizational values.

Recruiting top talent continues to be a major challenge, and that is especially true in today's labor market. Sometimes hiring departments sink hundreds of dollars into their recruiting processes before realizing that none of the applicants are suitable. With such an unpredictable employment market, hiring failures are costlier than ever. Avoid wasting time and money by using the proper recruitment marketing

practices from the onset. Recruitment marketing describes all the strategies an organization uses to promote its brand in a way that attracts and secures candidates. Things like search engine optimization (SEO), search engine marketing, employee referrals, analytics and social media all fall within recruitment marketing. Recruitment marketing differs from traditional recruitment strategies due to its breadth of tactics. Traditional methods, like posting to job sites or job boards, still fall within the scope of recruitment marketing, but may fall short of providing the same value to the organization and finding the right candidates.

The next few sections detail various aspects of recruitment marketing that can help rejuvenate recruitment initiatives and promote the employer's brand.

Leveraging Social Media

Successfully using social media channels, like Twitter or Facebook, is just one of the tactics within the scope of recruitment marketing. Social media's reach guarantees an audience. The trick will be finding the best audience for the organization, grabbing its attention organically or investing to target that audience.



More than three-quarters of job applicants use social media in their job search.

Take advantage of that behavior and use social platforms to interact personally with candidates and show off the organization's interests. Develop social media pages that focus on the organization's brand values, not just the jobs it offers. Post pictures of volunteer activities or employee outings to show off the work culture. Pictures of employee activities speak volumes to candidates who are assessing the organization. Additionally, direct candidates to a specific recruiting or career section on the organization's website, instead of the home page.

The end goal is to attract candidates who identify with the organization's brand values because they will be the best fit. Only posting job descriptions will get candidates who merely want a job, not those who are driven by values. Keep in mind that an organization's social media persona will dictate what kinds of people they attract. Make sure content resonates with ideal or desired candidates.

Posting on Job Boards

While job boards may seem outdated when compared with social media, they can still play an important role in recruitment marketing. Job boards—such as Monster, CareerBuilder and Indeed—are traditional job posting sites. The classic formula has been to post a job description and hope for a qualified candidate to apply. This is no longer the case for savvy recruiters.

Organizations should still use job boards, but include information that goes beyond merely describing the available position. Candidates should get a clear picture of the organization and its values after reading the post. Do not just sell the position—sell the organization's brand. Since these sites are specific to job-seeking individuals, make it clear that the organization is interested in applicants who are excited about the organization's values, not just a job. This is also a good spot to link to an organization's social media channels and website, so candidates can get a better picture of company values and employee experience.

Promoting Benefits and Company Perks

Beyond pay, things like employer-sponsored benefits, comfortable workspaces and fitness facilities attract candidates. These workplace benefits can make the difference for someone choosing an offer between companies. They're the benefits people typically list when asked, "Why do you work at that organization?" Moreover, the benefits an organization offers is telling about its values and can bolster brand messaging. For instance, if the organization says it's committed to employee health, that messaging can be reinforced by offering an on-site workout facility or meditation program. Just be sure claims are truthful and that the organization lives up to its message.

Many employers are expanding remote work opportunities to more employees than ever before. Remote work practices extend to the recruiting and hiring process, including practices such as virtual interviewing and remote onboarding. Some job seekers may be enticed by the opportunity to work remotely, as remote work can offer many benefits. If the organization is using remote work practices, ensure remote work options are communicated with potential applicants. It's important to keep in mind that interviews and onboarding influence candidates' and employees' perceptions of the organization. All interactions impact the employer brand, whether intentional or not.

Make sure candidates know about all employee benefits before their first communication with the organization. Candidates should not have to wait until their first contact to find out about these offerings. Advertise these perks on social media and the company website to attract more candidates. And don't forget about current employees. Ensure all perks are communicated clearly and often so employees are aware of what's offered and take advantage of them—and then ultimately talk about them with their networks.

Internal Communications

Traditionally, there can be a divide between organization owners and other employees. Effective internal communications can eradicate those barriers and, in turn, employees may be more engaged with the organization as a whole. Ensure employees are always updated, and bring them into the fold to help shape internal efforts. This will help make sure everyone is informed and feels a part of the overall collective team.

The following sections will highlight internal factors that impact an employer's brand.

Onboarding

Onboarding is the first chance to follow through on interview promises and set up new employees for success within the organization. Onboarding helps develop the employer brand and can build a positive reputation among talented job seekers.

According to a study by the Wynhurst Group, when employees go through structured onboarding, they are 58% more likely to remain with the organization after three years. Everyone benefits when employers can share company goals and values with new employees while simultaneously showing or explaining to them how to do their jobs. To feel engaged, new hires must understand that what they will be doing matters to the organization and that their performance will make a difference. Illustrate the impact of

new employees' roles by encouraging the workforce to own their work and to take pride in what they do. It's even better if ownership and accountability are already built into the company's values and culture.

Workplace Culture

Culture exists in every organization either by default or design. An employer brand is partially shaped by its reputation as a place of work, created by the perceptions of internal and external talent. Since how employees think, feel and act at work is a big part of that, workplace culture directly influences an employer brand.

Workplace culture can more easily shift when leadership is authentic and has a clear vision and core values—and then hires people who are aligned with and excited by that vision and values. It takes more than signage, events or fun swag to keep employees engaged in the workplace. To effectively reinforce or shift workplace culture, it's important for leadership and managers to reinforce and integrate company values in meetings, training sessions or other companywide events. Organizations will see the benefits when an employer brand is authentic, aligned with workplace culture and showcases the employer value proposition.

Workplace culture is an organic way to reinforce an employer's brand. Spread that reputation outside the workplace walls by empowering employees to talk about their employer externally. That can help add credibility, authenticity and validity to brand conversations.

Evaluation and Evolution

As with any organizational strategy or policy, there may come a time to change or evolve the employer brand. The motivation has to be grounded in reality and supported by numbers or other benchmarks. Part of any successful workplace process involves listening to employee feedback and using that feedback to make changes as needed.

Improving an employer's brand is an ongoing process and may seem hard to quantify, but it's all about tracking the right metrics. Here are some metrics to consider:

- **Reviews and ratings**—Track ratings on review sites like Glassdoor over time, and identify common critiques that could indicate a larger problem within workplace culture.
- **Retention rate**—Employee turnover is fluid and unpredictable, but retention rates can be a key indicator of employer brand and workplace culture quality.
- **Source of hire**—During the interview process, find out how candidates applied. That will help an organization discover their top channels to determine where to focus recruiting efforts.
- **Employee satisfaction**—A healthy culture and happy employees are vital to a strong employer brand. Measure employee satisfaction across all teams and departments to get the big picture.

There are sample employee surveys available in the [Appendix](#). Deciding whether to keep survey responses anonymous depends on what's expected from the survey's results. It is sometimes difficult to make necessary changes when there are no details surrounding anonymous survey responses. However, employers are more likely to get honest answers when the survey is anonymous. If going that route, consider websites such as SurveyMonkey, which helps users customize and distribute surveys.

Alternatively, employers can directly email a survey to employees, expecting complete transparency to more easily adjust internal processes.

Summary

As the employment market continues to evolve, employers should monitor and evaluate how their reputation and employer brand resonates in today's market. The world and workplace will continue to change, and employers should be prepared to adjust accordingly and communicate efforts in a timely manner to those whom it impacts. Employer branding influences the quantity and quality of applicants an organization attracts, while also having a positive impact on current employee productivity, retention and overall job satisfaction.

An effective employer brand can boost recruiting efforts, while saving money and building upon a company's culture and values. Customers or other stakeholders want to work with organizations where employees love their work, are happy and are treated fairly. Employees want to work for those types of organizations as well. If a reputational issue or crisis does arise, the quicker employers respond to and fix any problems within their control, the better off the organization is. To prepare for the good, the bad and the unknown, consider an employer brand strategy today.

Contact Horst Insurance for more information about employer branding or employee recruitment and retention efforts.

Appendix

Establishing and maintaining a strong employer brand is not a simple task. It requires a lot of work from many stakeholders. This section takes away some of that burden by offering valuable resources to evaluate brand effectiveness. This appendix contains sample surveys, an infographic, checklists and scorecards that can be used to demonstrate the importance of employer branding and how to identify and maintain the brand.

Speak with Horst Insurance if you have any questions about these resources. Note that some sections may require customization.

Printing Help

There are many printable resources in this appendix. Please follow the instructions below if you need help printing individual pages.

1. Choose the “Print” option from the “File” menu.
2. Under the “Settings” option, click on the arrow next to “Print All Pages” to access the drop-down menu. Select “Custom Print” and enter the page number range you would like to print, or enter the page number range you would like to print in the “Pages” box.
3. Click “Print.” For more information, please visit the Microsoft Word [printing support page](#).

Employer Branding Surveys

These example survey questions focus on employer brand, workplace culture and alignment to company values or mission. Review, customize and distribute the following example survey to gauge employees' brand perception, and workplace engagement and satisfaction levels. Employees' perception about anything workplace-related can easily become the employer brand when employees publicly or privately share their experiences. would benefit most from sending this survey to all employees.

does its best to create a safe, comfortable and productive work environment for all employees, and takes pride in the impact that we have. To ensure we are doing our part, we need some feedback from you. Please complete the short survey below to help us understand your working experience. This survey is anonymous and is meant solely to help enhance the overall employee experience at .

Thank you in advance for your valued participation!

Branding

- Before applying for this job, were you familiar with ?
- What aspects of company branding influenced your decision to apply for this position?
- Do you feel aligned with our organizational mission statement and values?
- How would you describe our employer brand?

Values

- What values are most important to you?
- Do you feel the core values at reflect your own?
- As an employee of , do you feel you are able to make a positive contribution to society?

Employee Communications

- How often would you like to receive communications from your manager?
- How often would you like to receive communications regarding organization updates?
- What are your preferred communication channels?
- What topics would you like to see covered during ongoing communications?

Employee Benefits

- What benefits are most important to you?
- What benefits offered influenced your decision to join ?
- Are there any benefits not currently offered that you would like to see?

General Questions

- What was your motivation for choosing to work here at ?
- Would you recommend working here or refer someone to work here?
- Is there any additional feedback that you can share?

Please speak with HR if you have any questions or concerns about completing the survey.

The Impact of Employer Branding

An employer brand is its reputation as a place of work, created by the perceptions of current and prospective employees. A strong employer brand is critical to attracting ideal candidates and retaining top talent.



Workers care about **employer branding**, so you should too.



84%

of job seekers say the reputation of an organization as an employer is important when applying to jobs.



9 out of 10 candidates

would apply for a job when the employer brand is actively maintained.



A strong employer brand reduces employee turnover by **28%.**

Three reasons to invest in employer branding:

1.

It can lower costs to attract candidates, slashing cost per hire in half.

2.

It can differentiate your organization from competition for the same talent.

3.

If you don't manage your brand, others will define it for you.

Employer Branding Checklists

Employers can review the following checklist to assess their current employer branding efforts.

Employer Brand Management

- ☐ Evaluate the mission of your organization.
 - ☐ Evaluate the current values of your organization.
 - ☐ Evaluate the current state of your employer brand.
 - ☐ Define the objectives of the employer brand.
 - ☐ Determine internal initiatives (e.g., internal communication campaigns and employee engagement).
 - ☐ Determine external initiatives (e.g., recruiting and public relations efforts).
 - ☐ Evaluate and evolve, if needed.
 - ☐ Repeat steps annually to continuously adapt.
-

Additionally, employers can review the following checklist to bolster alignment between the employer brand and several extensions of the workplace. Ask these questions to help ensure a positive and consistent recruiting and onboarding experience at .

Employer Branding Components

Mission Statement, Values and Culture

- ☐ Do you have a mission statement?
- ☐ Is your mission statement visible in the workplace?
- ☐ Is your mission statement visible on your website?
- ☐ Is your mission statement incorporated in marketing and recruiting materials?

Culture and Communications

- ☐ Do company initiatives support the overall workplace culture?
- ☐ Is the employer brand articulated in the interview process?
- ☐ Are company values or branding addressed during onboarding efforts?
- ☐ Are company values reinforced by leadership during companywide events or meetings?
- ☐ Are managers trained to integrate company values in meetings or other sessions?
- ☐ Are employees empowered to talk about their employer externally?
- ☐ Is workplace culture reflected in employer branding efforts (e.g., social media or your website)?

Workplace Safety

- ☐ Do you have a safety and health program?
- ☐ Do you provide safety training or education?
- ☐ Is safety included in employment-related company branding?
- ☐ Is safety included in nonemployment-related company branding?

Corporate Social Responsibility

- ☐ Are you contributing to society through environmental initiatives?
- ☐ Are you contributing to society through social initiatives?
- ☐ Are you contributing to society through economic initiatives?
- ☐ Are any corporate social responsibility efforts included on your website, social media channels or marketing materials?

Employee Benefits

- ☐ Do you support employees' physical health?
- ☐ Do you support employees' mental health?
- ☐ Do you support employees' social health?
- ☐ Do you support employees' financial health?
- ☐ Do employee benefits align with your company values?

Online Reputation

- ☐ Is the employer brand articulated in the interview process?
- ☐ Are you actively managing company profiles on online platforms?
- ☐ Are you monitoring print and online channels for company mentions and reviews?
- ☐ Do you have a reputation-management or response plan?
- ☐ Are you responding to positive or neutral comments?
- ☐ Are you responding to negative comments?

Thought Leadership Content

- ☐ Do you post or distribute thought leadership content?
- ☐ Does the content offer a fresh perspective?
- ☐ Does the content resonate with current and prospective employees?

EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATION SCORECARD

Communicating effectively with employees is consistently a top priority for businesses. Falling short in this area can make employees feel underappreciated, which contributes to low morale and decreased productivity. Now more than ever, technology makes it simple to communicate with your workforce. However, doing so effectively can still be challenging. Complete the scorecard below to see if you are doing everything to communicate effectively.

Instructions: Begin by answering the questions below. Each response will be given a numerical value depending on the answer. After completing the questions, total your score using the scale at the bottom of the page.

Yes: 0 points | **No:** 2 points | **Unsure:** 2 points

QUESTIONS	YES	NO	UNSURE	SCORE
1. Do you offer monthly newsletters on topics employees find interesting?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2. Do employees receive easy-to-understand descriptions of their benefits prior to open enrollment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3. Are you reaching out to employees through methods besides email, like social media or mail-home flyers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4. Does your organization hold in-person, all-staff meetings at least once a year?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5. Are your internal communications written so that everyone can easily understand them?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6. Are employees kept up to date on important news regarding the company, like mergers, executive-level structure changes or open positions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7. When relaying important news, do you set aside time for employee questions and feedback?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8. Have you surveyed employees in the past two years about their preferred methods of communication?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
9. Do employees receive praise in a semi-public forum, like a team meeting or an all-company email?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
10. Are employee promotions announced to individuals outside of the immediate department?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
TOTAL SCORE				

Low risk. Contact Horst Insurance to confirm: 0-6

Medium risk. Contact Horst Insurance today: 7-14

High risk. Contact Horst Insurance today: 15-20

EMPLOYEE RETENTION SCORECARD

Retaining employees is critical for any business and falling short on retention can be devastating to your bottom line. It costs nearly 20 percent of an annual salary to replace an employee, so implementing proactive retention strategies is key to maintaining your workforce.

Answer the questions below to determine if your organization has a high turnover risk.

INSTRUCTIONS: Begin by answering the questions below. Each response will be given a numerical value depending on the answer. After completing the questions, total your score using the scale at the bottom of the page.

- **YES:** 0 points

- **NO:** 2 points

- **UNSURE:** 2 points

QUESTION	YES	NO	UNSURE	SCORE
1. Have you reviewed employee pay scales within the last three years?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2. Do you survey employees' career growth desires each year?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3. Have you compared your health insurance against similar companies in your industry?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4. Do you routinely survey employees to ensure they feel comfortable and included in the workplace environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5. Do you track top employee performers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6. Do you monitor the market to ensure top performers are appropriately compensated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7. Have you surveyed employees in the past to gauge their workplace satisfaction?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8. Do you have a retention strategy in place for when a top performer comes to you with another offer?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
9. Do you offer incentives beyond health benefits to employees?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
10. Have you implemented employee engagement strategies to curb turnover proactively?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
TOTAL SCORE:				

Low risk. Contact Horst Insurance to confirm: 0-6

Moderate risk. Contact Horst Insurance today: 7-13

High risk. Contact Horst Insurance today: 14-20