

Creating a quality employment brand that will draw top new hires

Taking the time to build a quality employment branding statement for your company is well worth the effort. It can be used over and over again in all of your marketing materials to attract new top talent on an ongoing basis.

Soon, everyone will know what your company is about and it will also form a center point around which you can unify your present employees, too. One company that is both well known and serves as a fine example when it comes to creating an employment brand is Amway. They have taken the time to develop a very tight employment brand and they use it everywhere – from their TV and display advertising, in recruiting fairs and info packets, in their employee introduction kits, and even in their award's ceremonies.

Wanting everyone in its employ to be constantly reminded of their company's principles, Amway has chosen to even put them in a place where all company personnel and visitors will be constantly reminded of them – permanently engraved in stone outside of their world headquarters. Here is what it says: "Am-



way will always support the fundamental FREEDOM of people to determine their own future, allowing them the time and resources to protect and nurture their FAMILY. In addition, Amway will always offer HOPE to individuals and the opportunity to receive REWARD in proportion to their efforts." When you want to find some ideas for developing your own employment brand, you will find that a good place to start is often with your competitors. Find out what they have done. You will want to especially look at their employment and career Webpages, which will enable you to see how they built their employment brand.

GET EMPLOYMENT BRAND IDEAS FROM OTHER COMPANIES

Companies in other fields also have some excellent employment brands, as well. Some of these can also be found in the medical field, of which I have looked at ten of the top hospitals – ranked according to the 2008 U.S. News & World Report.

Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minn.
www.mayoclinic.org

"There are no inferior jobs in any organization. No matter what the assigned task, if it is done well and with dignity, it contributes to the function of everything around it and should be valued accordingly by all." – Dr. Charles W. Mayo (Now that's a powerful statement! Evidence that employee branding starts

right from the top.) Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center, Los Angeles www.uclahealth.org "UCLA Health System offers health care professionals the widest range of opportunities to practice the kind of health care that every patient deserves. We invite you to discover yourself what makes UCLA the perfect destination for those who strive to be great." (A good branding message and in smart form. The site includes a well developed portal with two sides: Applicants & Employees.)

Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston www.massgeneral.org "Make Greatness Happen... Join our team of dedicated individuals whose extraordinary talent makes Massachusetts General Hospital one of the best places to receive patient care. By embracing diverse skills, perspectives, and ideas, we choose to lead: EOE." (A very concise and well thought-out branding message!)

LOOK AT WEBSITES OF LOCAL COMPETITOR'S

one thing that you especially want to do as you seek to build your employment brand is to understand what your local competitors are doing. Look over their Websites and see how they are positioning themselves to attract top talent. Here's where you can start to assess the strengths and weaknesses of their employment branding. Because they are local to you, you will want to at least match their efforts – but you should not be willing to settle at that level – do better! Another thing that you will want to do when you visit other sites as you consider how well their employment brand is working, be sure to ask yourself if the message is strong enough to actually make you want to work there?

Even if some of the local competitors do have excellent Websites, you still do not want to forget about the ones that are the best – in any field. Visit top companies in other fields to see if there are ideas you can get from them. You may also want to look at it from a talent perspective, too,



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and look at Websites dealing with specific products, types of Websites, etc., that will appeal to the type of talent you are looking for. When you find a TV show or magazine, or restaurant that a certain talent likes, study those places or media in order to determine what it is about them that attracts the group you want to retain or hire. By better understanding the marketing appeal they use, you can get ideas to put into your Opportunity Marketing Piece and employment branding campaigns that will create an even better attraction for that group of people. Another place to look for ideas is to look at the largest employer in your area. Find out how they present themselves to the community and how they attract the talent they want. Taking a good look at these things can give you a many good ideas and tools to use in your design, content, and employment branding efforts.

DEVELOPING BRANDING TO ATTRACT THE BEST EMPLOYEES

remember that the goal of all your research is to enable you to attract the best talent to your business. To make sure that you are on target with this goal, meet with your "A" best employees and talk with them to find out if your materials will work if they were not already employed by you. By listening to what they say, and by asking the right questions, you will be able to move in the right direction. Here are some questions that you want to ask:

- Where would you look for a job?
- What are the best places to reach people with the same work ethic as you?
- What headlines, graphics, and/or colors would catch your attention?
- How should this company's employment brand be packaged so you see it and are motivated by it?
- What sentiment should be included in the employment branding messages in order to motivate people like you to respond?

As you develop your material to attract the best hires, be careful of not focusing your appeal to the targeted type of people you want to draw. Avoid the mistake of trying to reach out to a particular generation of people. Instead, if

you want only to draw "A" type employees, then only go after the "A" type employee you want in your marketing messages. Your employment brand needs to be developed simultaneously along with your marketing material to draw in the best employees. Remember that you can say anything in marketing materials, but the actual development of a desirable and pleasant place to work will only come from leadership. If the two things do not match, you will continue to have a revolving door for employees who are not satisfied to work there. This will also prevent top quality employees from staying very long, too. When your employment brand actually matches the workplace culture, then you will have a continual flow of top employees wanting to work at your company. The details of an interesting survey that took over 50 years was finally completed in 2009 dealing with this issue. The co-authors were Birkman International and Stanton Chase International - both of which are internationally recognized, either for personality assessment (Birkman) or as one of the Top 10 leading global executive search firms (Stanton Chase). The survey was conducted by both companies, and they asked the following question: How well does the leadership of your organization understand what needs to be done to attract, assess, and retain new generations of employees? Slightly over majority - 55 percent - believed that their CEO's were willing to learn about and use the necessary strategies to compete for talent. Eighteen percent of those who answered the survey, however, felt that their CEO's were either unwilling or partly unwilling to do what it takes to get the best talent.

Another thing that the survey discovered was that as many as 54 percent of the respondents felt that their company currently had a shortage of quality entry- to mid-level talent in their workplace. An additional 40 percent felt that an even greater shortage is expected in the future. When combined, this means that more than 90 percent believe that a large shortage of workplace quality talent will occur in the near future. Some of the companies, however, did admit that they were thinking about starting to address this issue. The bottom line of this survey is that 46 percent of those who were surveyed do not have any value proposition that differentiates them in any way from their competitors. In other words - they have no

planned employment brand at all.

USING YOUR CURRENT EMPLOYEES TO BUILD A STRONG EMPLOYMENT BRAND

Building an employment brand needs a good place to start, especially if you want to become an employer of choice. Writing for Wikipedia about employment branding, Minchington says that it is "the image of your organization as a 'great place to work,' in the mind of current employees and key stakeholders in the external market (active and passive candidates, clients, customers, and others). It is also concerned with the attraction, engagement, and retention initiatives used to make sure that its employees are happy." When seeking to establish a credible employee brand, it is necessary to start from the inside. You will need to create substance and credibility in your message. Two experts that are very familiar with developing employment brands, L. Sartain and M. Schumann, believe that an employment brand is the most powerful tool a business can get to emotionally engage their employees. They expanded this view in 2009 to include branding for talent. Companies need to become a magnet for talent, that is, they attract, engage, and retain the right people to do the right work at the right time producing the right results. When it is performed successfully, a company can be known as being famous for its talent just as it is for its products or services.

EMPLOYMENT BRANDING IS THE ONLY LONG-TERM RECRUITING STRATEGY

nearly all activity performed today by companies in their efforts to attract new hires are designed for short-term gain. From responding to requisitions, placing ads, visiting job boards, attending job fairs, etc., - these are all short-term methods. Out of all the many tactics used to attract new hires, employment branding stands alone as the one tool that management can use to guarantee a solution to their hiring needs. Still, only five percent of most company's budgets are directed toward such a powerful solution. Two companies that have definitely invested in employment branding, Google and Southwest Airlines, not only dominate their industries, but they also have turned their hiring problem into a mere sorting problem.