



Employer Branding: A New Way To Attract And Retain Best Talent

By Günther Tengel

Organisations around the globe are facing similar business challenges: the difficulty of attracting talent and retaining quality employees, a lack of employee loyalty, increased overseas competition, enhanced generational change and a shortage of skilled candidates.

Moreover, with the emergence of China, Russia, India and Brazil as economic powers - combined with the aging population in the U.S., European Union and Japan - the competition for skilled talent will continue to intensify.

At the same time, companies are being pressured to do more with less: cut costs, restructure and downsize while simultaneously preparing to expand globally with new offices, products and services. Businesses are concerned with growth and profitability, always maintaining their competitive edge. According to the *Global Workforce Study* conducted by Towers Watson, companies all over the world are reporting that the most significant potential obstacle to achieve growth is finding and keeping their top talent. Therefore, many organisations are focusing considerable attention and resources on making sure they stay ahead of the game in attracting and retaining the best talent.

Yet this becomes extremely difficult, especially since technological advancements, social media and the internet are altering how businesses operate and how people connect to their companies and peers. Mobile technology

and low-cost laptops, netbooks and tablets are flooding the market as companies like Google, Adidas, and Apple are beginning to look at new and innovative ways of sourcing and retaining star performers in a talent-tight market.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

As an Executive Search Consultant, my role is to provide solutions to my clients' needs. Within this context, I am advising them how to build a compelling Employment Brand as a means to attract, source and secure an ongoing talent pipeline. It is a fact that most of the actions and processes in recruiting are designed for short-term gain. As a result, the old way of finding people - reacting to filling a job after the fact - is too slow and takes too much time. As a trusted advisor, I've identified the many benefits that a successful Employment Branding program can provide clients, swaying even the most cynical non-believers:

- A Long-Term Impact;
- An Increased Volume of Unsolicited Candidates;
- Higher Quality Candidates;
- Higher Offer-Acceptance Rates;
- Increased Employee Referrals;
- Improved Employee-Retention Rates;
- Increased Employee Motivation;
- Increased Job Turnover Rates;
- Creates a Strong Corporate Culture;
- Creates a Competitive Advantage.

In essence, Employer Branding seeks to answer one basic question: why should someone choose your organisation over your competitor's? It is not sufficient to send out compelling messages about how great your business is to work for, or revamp your corporate website. It is about being able to deliver the promises outlined in your Employer Brand Value Proposition.

As trusted advisors it is crucial that we are able to help our clients understand that for any organisation to secure a talent pipeline, it must proactively, consistently and creatively market the company in the talent marketplace with the same discipline and energy as it brings to the retail marketplace.

Microsoft is a good example: This technology-driven company works hard to attract, integrate and retain its staff. It must respond to the demands of 'Generation Y' who never lived without a computer and tend to communicate in a different manner, while responding to the demands of the 'Baby Boomers' who tend to work longer and collaborate in a more conventional way than their 'Generation Y' colleagues.

Faced with growing competitive pressures and a diverse workforce, Microsoft is implementing its "New World of Work" (NWOW) initiative throughout many countries. At the moment, it is redesigning its Vienna office to adapt to the new work styles as a response to changes in the business world, such as a changing workforce, a globalising world and the development of new technologies.

The NWO approach provides both the organisation and its people with an environment that lets them do their best work wherever they are. One of the benefits includes higher employee satisfaction which in turn, increases productivity and sales, increases the brand's visibility as well as achieving a work-life balance that improves the company's ability to attract and retain its best talent. This is just one example of how Employer Branding is based on strategy and execution, not just on benchmarking the competition.

Developing and managing an effective Employer Branding strategy cannot be delegated to just one division within your client company. As a consultant, help them understand that the Employer Branding Value Proposition should be built from within the entire company. Efforts must be undertaken from the CEO to the newest staff member as an effective Employer Branding strategy must: get the right talent and skills onboard, allow the business to remain competitive, create the right environment and experiences, and deliver the incentives that will continue to reach, engage, source and retain that sought after talent.

SECURING A TALENT PIPELINE

To be effective, an Executive Search Consultant must stay a step ahead, anticipating the needs that will emerge so its clients can source or develop those needed skills. Within this context, Employer Branding is becoming a critical management tool we are advising more companies to use to convey to the 'employees that matter', why an employer's workplace is appealing and unique.

As executive recruiters, we must work with our clients in developing their Employer Branding strategy and then later, helping fine-tune areas where the strategy may need improving. This is an ongoing process, where you, as a trusted advisor, must engage with your client so that the people involved can reflect upon:

- What talent pools are and should your client be targeting?



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- What are the most effective channels to reach and engage with your client's top performing employees and potential candidates?
- How do your top performing employees and potential candidates really perceive your client?
- What are the main factors and experiences that attract and retain employees to your client?
- What do your client's top-performing employees and potential candidates really want and need from your client?
- Where is your client positioned in relation to its competitors?
- What can your client do differently to enhance their Employer Branding Value Proposition?

For the last three decades I have always tried hard to be a strong proponent of leadership development and human capital solutions. As an Executive Search Consultant, I will always focus on getting the right people on board, at the right place and time. But, top performers – which are in increasingly short supply – are dictating more and more the terms to their employers. Creating and designing an Employer Branding strategy allows your client to prepare the platform so that, regardless of the candidate, the needed skills are in place.

Although many executive recruiters say that they are strategic partners, the reality is that recruitment is only one part of the puzzle. Simply "filling positions" on a short time basis has, and will continue to, lead to transactional assignments. If search firms have no influence in the internal recruiting process – from the profile decision to the onboarding process of the candidate – or is booked after some in-house attempts already failed and has to deal with a client's lousy Employer Branding strategy, then the search is likely seen as transactional business. This type of business is focussed more on "terms of agreement" than of "finding the best fit", which is a big threat for everybody involved! In this case, decisions are influenced by Procurement and not taken by the Board or Human Resources.

Helping a client develop their Employer Branding means search firms must be treated as equal partners obtaining a better understanding of the market so they can proactively attract and secure the company's talent pipeline. In fact, Employer Branding creates a win-win-situation for all those involved in this complex, yet insightful, process. Are you ready for the challenge? G

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Günther Tengel started his career as business consultant 30 years ago. He has played an active role in the Group's expansion into nine CEE countries and built up local consultancies. In 2003, Günther Tengel became the owner of the company with the help of a management buy-out. Since 2005, he has been the Chairman of Amrop Central and Eastern Europe. He specialises in executive search, strategic consultancy services for supervisory and executive boards, consultancy services for investors and start-ups as well as human resources, marketing concepts.

Jenewein Consultancy, founded more than 30 years ago, has built up a regional search organisation after the fall of the iron curtain and joined Amrop in 1999. Today Amrop Jenewein is a competence centre and hub for Central and Eastern Europe.

With more than 80 offices in 57 countries, Amrop is the largest Executive Search organisation in the world. Amrop CEE is represented in 17 CEE-countries and offers essential advantages in terms of providing local support.

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