

Developing Your Employer Brand

Over the past 30 years, our country’s workforce has grown at a pace unable to keep up with the demand. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, workforce participation is estimated to fall to 60 percent nationally by 2024.

During the Great Recession, the pain of this reality was delayed due to the many who continued to work instead of a planned retirement or had to return from retirement. But today, many are leaving the workforce for good.

To recruit a new workforce and retain top talent, companies should be thinking strategically about how to leverage their employer brand.

What is an Employer Brand?

Your employer brand is your public image and reputation among your past, current and potential employees. It is the ways they perceive your company and speak about it to others. It consists of everything from office culture to benefit packages to corporate social responsibility to diversity and inclusivity efforts. Each brand element is communicated through internal and external communications distributed across various channels.

Developing a strategy around your employer brand is the best solution for long-term success.

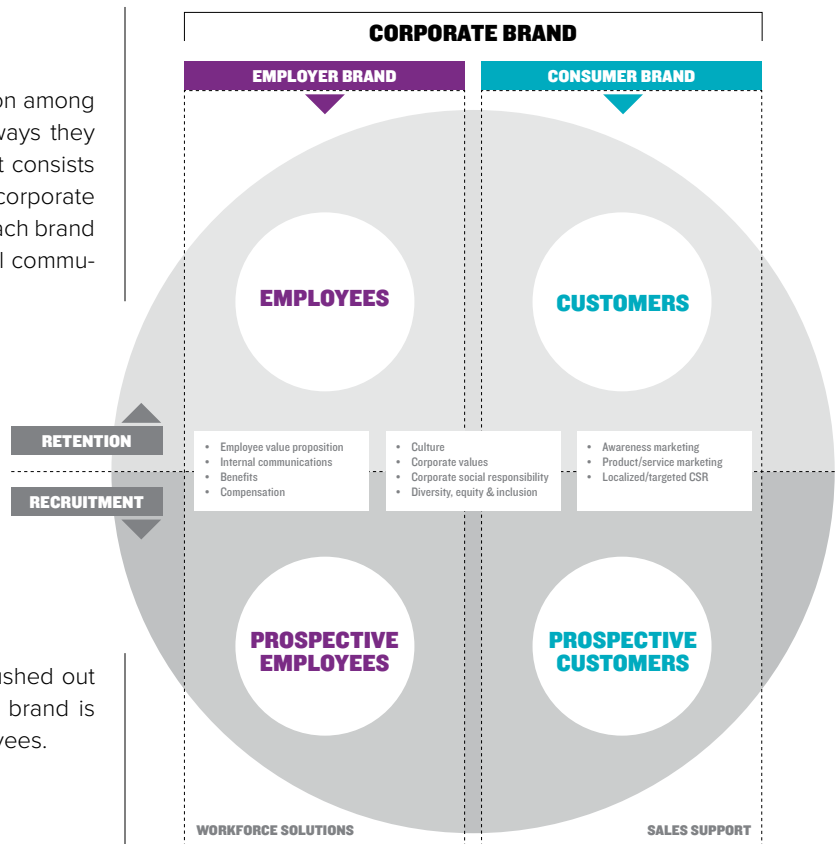
Employer brand vs. consumer brand

Your corporate or organizational brand is composed of your employer brand and your consumer (or commercial) brand. Your employer brand is different than your consumer brand, although both overlap and live under the umbrella of your corporate brand.

Your consumer brand is the external information pushed out to current and prospective customers. Your employer brand is information communicated to future and current employees.

Why is your employer brand important?

Recruit top talent. An authentic employer brand allows you to break through the noise and stand out from the competition to potential job candidates.



Your employer brand and consumer brand overlap and live under the umbrella of your corporate brand.

Sustain a quality workforce. Clearly communicating your employer brand internally allows your employees to feel informed and valued and ensures that they understand the investments your organization makes in them.

Increase company morale and revenue. Avoid costly bad hires and a negative company culture.

Defining Your Employer Brand

Start with a communications audit.

The first step of your employer brand strategy is an audit of your internal and external communications, which your company should complete annually at minimum. This audit will give you a snapshot of the information being shared about your company, both by you and among your audiences within the broader general public.

Internal communication examples

Target audience: Current employees

- Onboarding process for new hires
- Employee policies/handbook
- Employee portal
- Email communications
- Internal campaigns (i.e., safety)

“Nearly 4 in 5 candidates (78%) say the overall candidate experience they receive is an indicator of how a company values its people.”

Candidate Experience: 6 Things Candidates Expect from Employers (careerexperts.co.uk)

External communication examples

Target audiences: Potential employees

Analyze how efficiently candidates are able to access, enter and navigate your recruitment funnel: job descriptions, communication touchpoints, provided materials, etc.

Owned Media: website, emails, social media, press releases, etc.

Paid Media: digital, print, and out-of-home advertising

Earned Media: employer review sites, social media mentions, news articles, etc.

Gather metrics on what has resonated with your audiences and what has not worked well. If you discover negative communications during this process, determine what steps you can take to address it.

Next, assemble key stakeholders, including new hires and seasoned employees, to inform a clear definition of the elements of your employer brand.

Compensation and benefits: Do you offer competitive salaries? What is included in your benefits packages (insurance, medical leave, PTO, etc.) and are potential and current employees aware of everything available to them?

Office facilities, equipment, etc.: Do employees have access to the resources they need to do their job successfully? Any fun of-office perks that make your company unique?

Career advancement opportunities: What does growth look like at your company? Do employees feel they have job security? Flexibility & work/life balance: Are there clear office hours and expectations for work outside of them?

Professional development opportunities: Do you offer them and if so, are potential and current employees aware of everything available to them?

Safety and preparedness: Does your company invest in safety campaigns and initiatives effectively, and have you prepared for potential events (e.g., crisis events) that could impact your business?

Your **culture** is your brand's identity and has a major impact on both recruitment and retention. Unpack your office environment. What are your employees' general attitudes, behaviors and beliefs? Do new hires understand expectations?

Values, mission and purpose: Are these clearly defined in writing and communicated to current and potential employees?



“60% of the general public will choose a place to work based on their beliefs and values.”

Source: 10 Employer Branding Statistics for 2022 - McCann Synergy; McCann Synergy - Source: Edelman Trust 2022

Employee appreciation: Do your employees feel valued and recognized for their efforts?

Corporate social responsibility: Is your company accountable for its environment, economic and social impact? What strides have you made recently in these areas?

Diversity, equity & inclusion: Is your work environment inclusive in thought and backgrounds?

“Candidates still highly value three priorities that surfaced as a result of the pandemic, according to our Talent Drivers survey: work-life balance, flexible-work arrangements, and upskilling.”

Global Talent Trends: Data-Driven Insights into the Changing World of Work ([linkedin.com](https://www.linkedin.com/company/markstein))

After you’ve completed the audit of your current communications and clearly defined each element of your brand, ask:

Are you communicating your brand clearly, consistently and accurately on the right channels?

Your Employer Brand in Action

Engage your audiences and tell your authentic story.

Engage current employees (new and tenured) as you brainstorm the best ways you can communicate each element to both current and future employees, focusing on where and how to reach them and what makes your company unique. Rather than trying to tackle too many channels at once, focus on the ones where your audience lives. Experiment with different forms of content marketing: blogs, video, podcasts, etc., and measure what works best.

Below are a few ideas for how to communicate your employer brand:

Recruit top talent

- Make your company’s differentiators clear, and be genuine and authentic.
- Craft clear, engaging job descriptions and calls to action.

- Provide job candidates with a one-pager highlighting the best elements of your employer brand.
- Include current employee testimonials in all recruitment materials.

Retain star employees

- Make onboarding a priority and an ongoing activity – create cohorts of new employees and keep them engaged for 24-36 months.
- Find ways to highlight your existing employees and their unique experiences and expertise across your brand channels.
- Check in with current employees regularly about your employer brand and the messages you are sending prospective employees.
- Incorporate effective ways to measure employee satisfaction – through regular surveys and, if possible, in real time.

Protect your employee brand

- Conduct thoughtful exit interviews.
- Respond to reviews (both negative and positive) on employer review sites.
- Reply to comments and direct messages on your social media channels.
- Own who and what you are – don’t try to be something you’re not or make promises you can’t deliver on as an employer.

Let Markstein Unlock New Opportunities For You

We recognize developing and implementing a successful employer brand strategy isn’t easy. That’s where we come in. Combining strategy with creativity, Markstein crafts insightful stories and integrated campaign that that unlock new opportunities for companies and their current and potential employees.

“It’s fun to watch our clients and our audiences engage in these stories in a way that’s different than how they would engage in an ad.”

Chris Hoke, Chief Creative Officer.

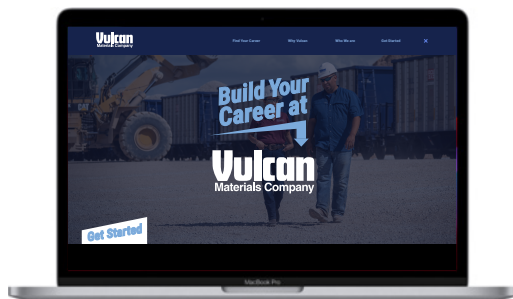
Here are just a few ways we’ve helped companies tell their brand stories and unlock new workforce opportunities.

Equipping you with effective recruitment tools

Vulcan Materials Company, the nation's largest producer of construction aggregates, partnered with Markstein to develop a workforce development and recruitment campaign to generate new leads and improve the company's interview process. Through research and focus groups, Markstein identified challenges as well as potential communication opportunities. We developed an integrated communications strategy that included a creative campaign, paid media, candidate toolkit, an interview playbook and microsite.

“We’re empowering the employees themselves to know how to use the tools that we’ve created for them.”

Susan Ann Roper, Director, Strategy & Innovation.



Creating a consistent visual brand identity

Installnet, a leading commercial furniture solutions company, engaged Markstein to elevate their brand and sub-brands' visual identities to ensure each aligns with the company's mission. Through a thoughtful creative process that included competitive research, Markstein developed a new brand architecture for Installnet, Ecoserve, Installhub (formerly OFIA) and Facilitynet with more modern, approachable logos and a new tagline: "Inspired workspaces made easy." We also refreshed the company's brand guidelines and delivered a suite of creative assets to create a unified look across channels.



Conclusion

Remember that developing and communicating your employer brand is an ongoing process. Your company should evaluate and update your brand annually to make sure it is accurately telling your unique story.

Ready to take your employer brand to the next level?

Visit <https://markstein.co/focus-area/workforce-solutions/>