

A man and a woman are working together on a laptop. The man, on the left, is bald with a beard and glasses, wearing a white shirt. The woman, on the right, has blonde hair, wears glasses and a grey knit beanie, and is smiling. They are both looking at the laptop screen. The background is blurred, suggesting an office or meeting environment. The bottom half of the image features a decorative pattern of overlapping orange and yellow triangles.

Become A Talent Magnet

Strategies and tools for building your Employer Brand

Learn how top employer brands:

- Attract & retain top talent
- Create internal & external brand advocates
- Boost retention, engagement and performance




A more human resource.™

Your employer brand matters...

This guide contains strategies, tools & templates that will help you define, improve and market your employer brand. Use it to become your company's employer brand champion, defining and marketing reputation as a great place to work.

What's an employer brand and what does it do?





Former Coca-Cola marketing guru Sergio Zyman once defined brand as “**a container for a customer’s complete experience with the product or company.**”¹

Much more than a name and a logo, your brand conveys a sense of quality, and influences the perceptions and behaviour of everyone who comes into contact with any aspect of your company.

An employer brand is similar, but focused on how prospective, current and even former employees interact with your organization.


There are three key pillars to an employer brand: culture, leadership and opportunity. It’s best expressed by the formula:

culture + leadership + opportunity = employer brand


Canadian companies produce between \$1.68 and \$6.32 of profit for every \$1 invested in wages and benefits.² It’s a wide range and begs the question ‘What are some companies doing that others haven’t figured out?’ While there are many reasons that margins vary, employer brand is a key differentiator in successful companies’ abilities to attract the right talent and hang on to top performers, even in very competitive industries.

Good employer branding produces measurable results...

- ↓ Up to **50%** reduced cost per hire³
- ↓ Up to **19%** reduction in employee churn⁴
- ↑ A **54%** increase in the quality of the talent pool⁵



69% of job seekers say they would not work for a company that had a bad reputation, even if they were unemployed⁶



94% of job seekers are likely to apply to a job where the employer actively manages their employer brand⁷

A group of four diverse office workers are gathered around a desk, laughing and talking. A man with glasses and a mustache is in the foreground, smiling broadly. Behind him, a woman with long dark hair and a beanie is laughing. To the left, a woman with blonde hair and glasses is also laughing. In the background, a man with a beard and a plaid shirt is smiling. They are in a bright, modern office setting with large windows and a brick wall. A laptop is visible on the desk in the foreground.

**Your
employer
brand is
having an
impact.**

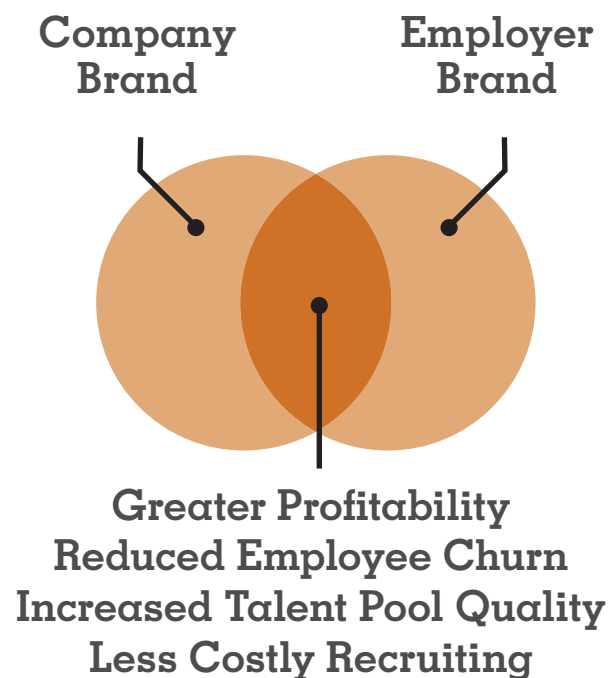
A strong employer brand is about catching the eye of the top talent, **driving engagement and shaping perception** among employees and other stakeholders.

Building your employer brand will have a significant impact on your entire business. Like it or not, your employer brand is out there, exerting a daily impact on your company and on your total brand value.

It's no coincidence that many of today's most valued brands are also top employer brands. Just as having great people and a good reputation as an employer builds preference for your brand, the opposite is also true. **Fully 64 percent of job seekers who have had a poor candidate experience will never buy products or services from that company again.**⁸

There are many ways of gauging employer brand health, including turnover, time-to-hire, productivity, and employee engagement. If you're wondering how your company stacks up, you might already have a rating on glassdoor.ca or indeed.ca, the TripAdvisor of the HR world.

The executives behind top employer brands don't wait for annual survey results; they are listening in real time on social platforms and using online survey tools—quick and easy ways to take the pulse of their employee and candidate communities.





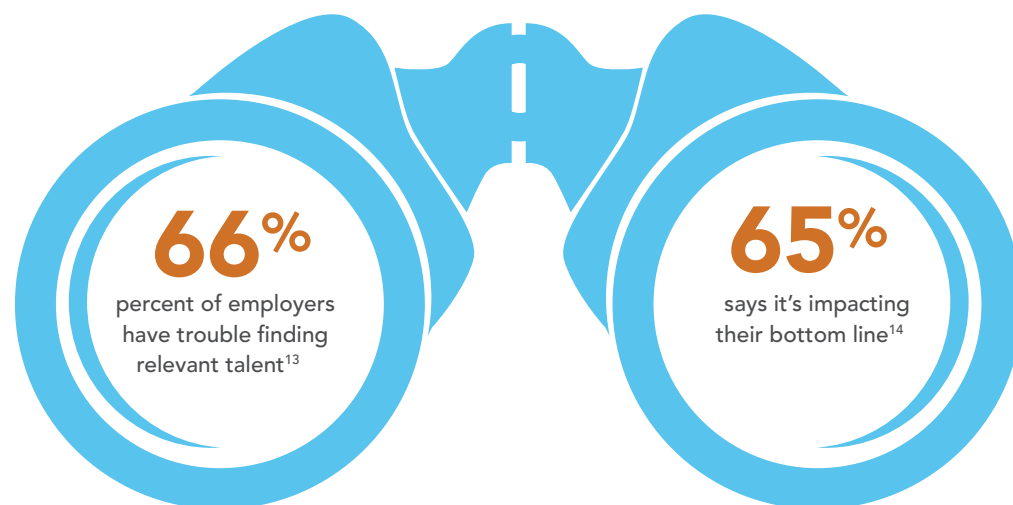
The strategic disconnect.

Skilled candidates are in the driver's seat.

42 percent of recruiter offers are rejected. Yet less than 20 percent of organizations have implemented an employer brand strategy to retain top talent, increase engagement, or attract the best and the brightest⁹. Globally, only 36% have implemented an employee referral program¹⁰—an important (and inexpensive) source of talent in a world where many conversations begin with 'How's work?'.

With talent as one of the top C-suite concerns, employer branding is fast becoming a critical strategy to address current and future shortages. But since only 27 percent of total HR time is spent on strategic business activities, building the employer brand is not on most HR executives' radar¹¹. There's a pressing business need to shed rote tasks in favour of high value strategic planning and execution.

43% of employers are recruiting because of churn¹²



What top employer brands have:

- ✓ C-suite buy-in, commitment and investment
- ✓ An employee value proposition (EVP)
- ✓ Employee brand advocates
- ✓ Mobile platforms & social media strategies that target job searchers¹⁵
- ✓ An effortless candidate experience
- ✓ Candidate feedback loops
- ✓ Employer brand tracking



Indigo Books & Music Inc.



Indigo
Books Music & Café
www.indigo.ca





Why they are a **market leader**.

Indigo drives traffic and margins by diversifying around its core offering of books. Whether it's premium toys, housewares or niche literature, Indigo keeps pace with its customer culture, adapting product lines and training the specialized teams that sell them to complement customer preferences. They do just as good a job with their employer branding: in 2015 the company won a Randstad Award for top Canadian retail employer brand.

Why they're a talent magnet

When it comes to employer branding, Indigo does two things really well:

Digital employee community

Indigo has developed a countrywide digital employee community, called Galileo, that has seen great success in connecting employees, crowdsourcing improvements in all areas, and providing a rich source of employee engagement data for Indigo's HR leaders.

Imparting the Employer Brand to products & acquisitions

The retailer has successfully extended its employer brand to both product launches and company acquisitions. For example, hiring and

training teams for the recent product launch of American Girl®, a line of dolls, books, clothing and accessories, involved a full social recruitment campaign with requests for 'auditions' via Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn.

Practical takeaways

- Provide a forum for your employees to share: company-wide meetings to discuss performance and foster ideation, bulletin boards, or enterprise resource groups.
- Consider building or adding on a private social network. Big players in the space include enterprise offerings from LinkedIn, Facebook, Jive and Microsoft, whose offering is gamified—now that's fun.
- When preparing for a rebranding, product launch or any major company event, engage employees as brand ambassadors.

How to **build** your employer brand.



Building Your Employer Brand – Broad Strokes



Building an employer brand is an ongoing process that needs to address every aspect of recruitment and employment.

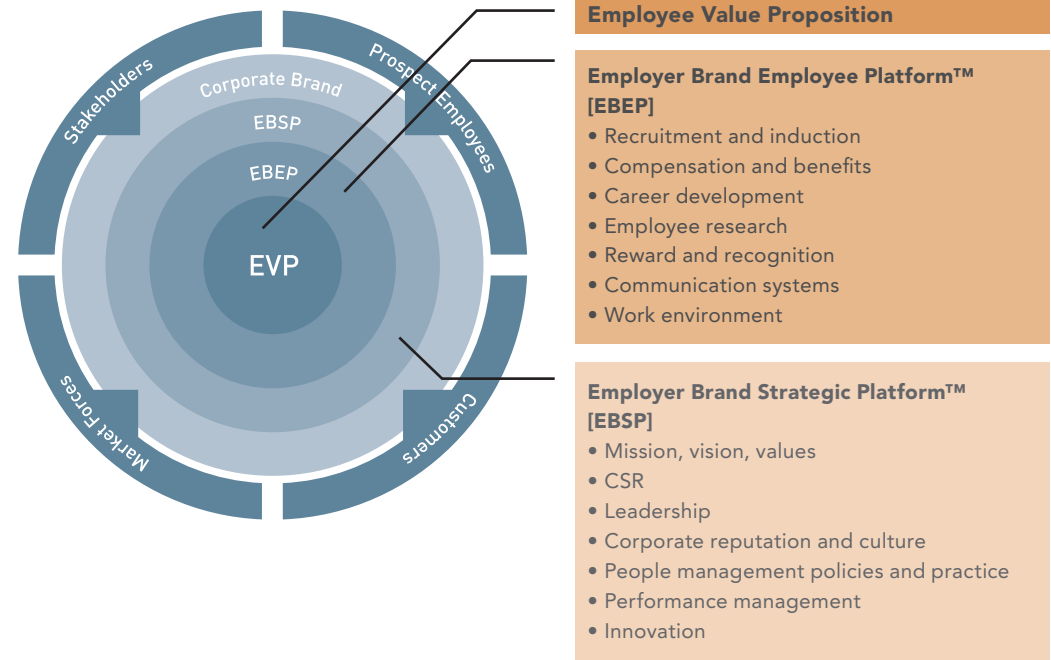
It impacts every candidate or employee interaction with your brand—how you are communicating, working, rewarding and engaging in recruitment. Keep in mind that the employer brand must serve all employees, spanning generations and needs.

The Employer Brand Excellence Framework™ (see diagram) defines the employment experience from a strategic perspective. The Framework also takes into account the roles of employees, prospective candidates, customers, investors and society in employer branding.

There are two parts to putting your employer brand on the front burner: strategy and implementation, both of which require C-suite commitment. The following pages describe how to put strategy and implementation into practice.

Employee engagement is the top metric for measuring employer brand success. Organizations in the top quartile of engagement are able to produce 22 percent greater profits than their bottom quartile counterparts.¹⁶

Employer Brand Excellence Framework™



Source: Brett Minchington, www.employerbrandingcollege.com¹⁷
Reproduced with permission

EVP

A close-up, profile view of a man with glasses and a mustache, wearing a light blue shirt and a yellow patterned tie. He is looking intently at a document or screen that displays various charts and graphs. He is holding a dark pen in his right hand, pointing it towards the data. The background is softly blurred, showing more of the document and a warm, golden light source.



The Employee Value Proposition (EVP) is the heart and soul of your employer brand.

Developing a compelling EVP is important both for employees and candidates, and as a foundation for your employer brand strategy. A recent survey indicates that a clear EVP is just as important a tool as social media for employer brand enhancement¹⁸ and can improve new hires loyalty by up to 29 percent.¹⁹

Think of your EVP in terms of the ongoing value that your employment experience proposes to deliver to candidates and employees. It sets out what's relevant and valuable to them, rather than to the company. As a quick example, 'performance' is something companies value in their employees, whereas the 'challenge' of learning new skills is something that employees value.

Keep in mind that your EVP isn't theoretical. Use it to fine-tune policies and programs, empower managers to impact employee behaviours and attitudes.

Here are the steps involved in developing an EVP:

- Have a cross section of employees answer the question "Why should I work for you?" then work towards a finished statement
- Analyze employee surveys for a deeper dive into what employees like about your company and why they stay
- List the top 5 employee reasons why yours is a good place to work
- List the top 5 ambitions of your overall business strategy
- Find the commonalities among employee wants and business drivers for each group of employees (management, line workers, etc.)
- Validate and refine your draft EVP with existing and prospective employee groups
- Ensure that you leverage your EVP in all communications to existing and potential employees



Get Strategic



A clear, employee-focused EVP is the precursor to developing a framework to **manage the employee brand strategy across the business.**

A strong strategy includes culture, work experience, external perceptions, key talent drivers, management practices, and leadership vision. There are many moving parts to a solid employer brand effort, so there's a real need to establish a formal strategy and to gain the executive buy-in required to move it forward.

Here are the steps involved in building an employer brand strategy:

- Tie your employer brand to the business strategy. What are the specific ways that the employer brand supports business drivers now and in the future? Hint: quality of hires and upticks in both employee engagement and results should factor in.
- When you talk about your brand, solicit anecdotal and formal feedback to gauge perception.
- Regularly measure external perception on [glassdoor.ca](https://www.glassdoor.ca), [indeed.ca](https://www.indeed.ca) and other resources. Measure internal perception by tapping your internal communication network, corporate social media pages, or pulse surveys.
- Interview new hires within 60 days to identify any gap between brand perception and reality, and read the exit interviews of outgoing employees. A survey conducted by Human Resource Executive Magazine revealed that while 96 percent of HR managers conduct exit interviews with employees who are leaving voluntarily, the data is rarely put to constructive use.²⁰
- Develop long-term metrics based on desired outcomes. Measuring the right things—those that reflect your business's objectives and unique challenges—is intrinsic to justifying an employer brand investment. Go beyond short-term metrics and measure quality of hire, employee engagement, retention rates and other indicators of long-term value.

1-800-GOT-JUNK





Why they are a **market leader**.

This Canadian success story expanded rapidly with a winning formula: using the marketing power of branded vehicles, inspiring trust with uniformed employees, and garnering the positive feedback with punctual, fastidious service.

Why they're a talent magnet

The CEO of 1-800-GOT-JUNK made a painful choice early on: he let go of bright people who didn't share company values, then invested heavily in his employees:

Sharing in success

Everyone at 1-800-GOT-JUNK tastes financial success through profit sharing. And that's on top of great benefits and a good work/life balance. Employees get four weeks' paid vacation after their first year and up to 20 personal days off each year. New parents get generous leave top-ups and an accommodating work environment when they are ready to return to work.

The gift of responsibility

1-800-GOT-JUNK CEO Brian Scudamore is big on empowering his people to make decisions and boost the employer brand through engagement. He does this by challenging his team to get involved, lead, take risks, and make mistakes. "When the environment is superficial," he says, "real engagement isn't happening."²¹

Practical takeaways

- Don't compromise on cultural fit. Employees who share your corporate values will build the employer brand.
- Consider tools such as profit sharing to create a shared sense of purpose.
- Use employee benefits to help differentiate you from other employers in your industry.

A woman with short, curly brown hair is smiling broadly, looking towards the left. She is wearing a bright yellow cardigan over a white V-neck shirt. She is sitting at a desk, and her hands are visible near a keyboard. In the background, there is a blurred office environment with other people working at desks, a computer monitor, and a desk lamp. The overall atmosphere is positive and professional.

Applying your employer brand



With your employer brand background and framework in place, **it's time to get down to the nuts and bolts of applying it.**

The basics are obvious: making sure that resources you own like job postings and careers pages reflect your desired tonality and look. But your biggest gains will come from improving the ways that you foster communication and manage onboarding, namely building the social proof of your employer brand's worth, streamlining recruitment, and potentially improving your mobile and social strategies.

Zeroing in on mobile & social

If you're hoping to attract the best and the brightest—bearing in mind that millennials will comprise 75 percent of the workforce by 2025—you need to assume that candidates will rely on social media and mobile devices. According to Glassdoor, 79 percent of job seekers are likely to use social media to find a job. And while 43 percent of searchers use mobile devices in their job searches, 59 percent of recruiters invest nothing in mobile-friendly career sites.²²

Visit your career site on your own smart phone. Is it responsive, or do you have to zoom in to actually read anything? Read a career posting or apply for a job on your smart phone or tablet. Is it easy to navigate? Think one-click entry/resume upload and optimized videos for quick playback. Condense the wording you use, including job descriptions, for quick and easy digestibility and think about leveraging a mobile HR app. They're not only timesavers for employees looking for pay statements and benefits info, but also a great way to engage candidates.

Building social proof

When it comes to trusted resources for learning about potential or even current employers, word-of-mouth beats all other information sources combined²³. That's why it's important to encourage positive social conversations around your employer brand.

One way of fostering social proof is to give yourself every advantage on review sites like glassdoor.ca and indeed.ca by populating your employer profile pages with branded messaging, videos and social

Applying your employee brand (cont.)

media integration. You should also leverage your existing presence on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and other social platforms to share the employment experience and celebrate your culture. Be sure that you respond to any comments or questions candidates or visitors post on social media channels.

Streamlining recruitment marketing & processes

Recruitment marketing is a catch-all term that includes social media messaging, ads, blogs, brochures and videos—tools that can be very effective in attracting top talent, especially if the design and messaging reinforce your EVP and tie in with your customer-facing brand. It's a chance to give candidates an inside look into what it's really like to work with you and to showcase benefits and perks. Materials—especially video—that focus on current team member experiences and testimonials can be very powerful.

If recruitment marketing is a promise, the recruitment process will show candidates how likely you are to deliver on that promise. From first contact to hire, everything from the wording and details of a posting to your response speed must positively reinforce your employer brand. For

many companies, however, there's just no time to actively manage the candidate experience.

One shortcut to enhancing the experience is to increase the level of automation. Top employer brands look for opportunities to automate or outsource as much of the recruitment process as possible, from initial screening to tracking candidate interactions. This frees up time to hone in on choosing candidates that fit perfectly.




79% job seekers use social media in their searches



43% job seekers rely primarily on mobile devices²⁴

Creating experiences and advocacy





Many different groups influence the character of your employer **brand**: employees, former employees, candidates and the organization as a whole.

Not surprisingly, the thing that people find most compelling is that which is not under your control—the opinions of employees and candidates, not the corporate voice.

Your website might be a great reflection of the employer brand that you want to project, but what everyone wants is the social proof provided by current and former employees and candidates.

Internal brand advocacy is a powerful tool: when employees share information, you stand to get eight times the share rate compared to the same content from the brand page.²⁵ Start fostering advocacy by focusing on your most effective advocates: employees who are already most actively engaged.

If you don't measure employee engagement currently, know that it's a bellwether for financial prosperity, turnover, productivity and customer satisfaction.²⁶

"I listen better to people directly involved than people paid to pitch. In-person connections are where it's at." ~ Scott Kirsner, The Boston Globe

Creating experiences and advocacy (cont.)

Here are some of the ways to help brand advocates build your employer brand:

- Give employees opportunities to participate in your industry. Rank and file staff will have a much greater impact on audiences at industry shows, conferences and recruiting events than will sales or marketing people.
- Involve all employees in projects to improve products and customer service. A shared sense of responsibility builds brand advocacy.
- Look for opportunities to turn internal subject matter experts into industry thought leaders.
- Use technology to encourage advocacy, both via an internal platform that can knit your community together and through structured use of social media.

Building internal advocacy provides many benefits. It can improve the product that you deliver and the manner in which customers are engaged, heighten your ability to hire better candidates, boost external audience engagement, and foster further advocacy. If you have the resources, combining the actions above into a formal program could be a valuable undertaking.

Most trusted resources for learning about companies²⁷:



52% Friends & Family
14% Current Employees
5% Company Website
2% Recruiter

"At Zappos, our belief is that if you get the culture right, most of the other stuff—like great customer service, or building a great long-term brand, or passionate employees and customers—will happen naturally on its own." ~ Zappos.com CEO Tony Hsieh

Clearing the decks





It's clear that **a strong employer brand supports not just HR, but overall business goals and metrics.**

It results in a better quality of candidate, better retention rates and ultimately a better bottom line.

Achieving a strong employer brand takes dedicated resources and a strategy with clear metrics-based goals that reflect the needs of employees, management, recruitment, customers and owners/investors.

Success takes buy-in, but also plenty of time. Outsourcing less strategic aspects of HR is a compelling way to clear the decks for the high value work required to make your company the employer of choice you want it to be.

HR outsourcing can include:

- ✓ Talent acquisition
- ✓ Payroll administration
- ✓ Benefits administration
- ✓ Time and labour management
- ✓ Talent management

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