



HOW TO
Build an Employer Brand That
Attracts the Talent You Want



Hello,

If you've never heard of an employer brand before, now's the time to expand your education.

According to the CIPD, a brand is the way organisations differentiate themselves from competitors in the labour market.

With the right reputation, you can recruit, retain and engage the perfect professionals for your team.

Now that the world is more “connected” than ever, with social media, review websites and online forums leading the way for digital communication, people have endless ways to talk about your organisation.

With the right branding strategy, you can get involved in the conversation and begin to influence it positively.

And with the help of the right recruitment and staffing organisation, you can differentiate yourself from other businesses, improve staff satisfaction and give yourself the edge in an increasingly competitive public sector marketplace.

Remember, today's employees don't choose a job for its salary and title - they're looking for a community and an organisation they 'buy into' that will pave the way to their future success.

Best Regards,

Heather Clarke
Managing Director, Harris Burns Ltd

What is Employer Branding?

Whether you're working in the NHS, housing or charity sector, it's becoming increasingly difficult to attract and retain the right kind of talent.

Of course, having the right people on your team is pivotal to successful growth. Now that the average candidate is more empowered than ever, with countless opportunities for employment on the horizon, it's up to you to convince applicants to stay.

A strong employer brand showcases values, strategies and company culture in your organisation - all essential for building stronger relationships with the people in your teams. In fact, more than **59% of managers** say that branding is one of the critical components of their HR strategy.

While there are many different definitions for "employer branding" depending on whom you ask, they all mostly say the same thing. Your brand is the way that potential new recruits perceive you and is your opportunity to showcase what makes you unique.

Otherwise known as an "Employer Value Proposition", your brand can help you to attract top-tier talent to your organisation while ensuring that you fill your team with people who share the same values.

Defining your identity as an employer means thinking about the following things:

- People: What kind of talent do you want in your organisation?
- Culture: What's the ethos that drives your organisation?
- Employer value proposition: What benefits can you offer candidates?
- Experience: How do you improve the recruiting and onboarding process?

Why Is Employer Branding Important?

Building an appealing employer brand allows organisations to attract the right people for future growth. When you have a reputation that precedes client experience, you can compete beyond things like remuneration and job titles. Instead, you start offering people "opportunities" that fit with their personal and professional goals.



While the benefits of this strategy are numerous, here are just some of the advantages you might consider when searching for an EVP in your organisation.

1. You Stop Competing on Salary

When your reputation is enough to convince individuals that they want to work with you, there's less need to pull out all the stops with inflated salaries that aren't in line with the current benchmarks.

While remuneration is essential to today's candidates, it's not the ultimate factor that convinces them to say "yes" to a job offer. One recent study found that 67% of applicants would accept lower pay for the chance to work with an organisation that has a great reputation.

2. Attract and Retain the Right Talent

Around 78% of people consider an organisation's reputation before deciding whether to take a role. **Glassdoor** also found that 69% of job seekers will not accept a job with a company that has a bad reputation.

Having an employer brand that recruits can easily find when researching online allows them to determine whether they'd be a good fit for your organisation. This means that you not only captivate people who are well-suited for your culture, but you're more likely to give them a satisfying work experience too.

3. More Qualified Applicants

The numbers around employment branding speak for themselves. A strong reputation can lead to up to 50% more applicants - something that's particularly important in competitive public sector roles such as finance, logistics, HR and procurement.

With the right brand, you waste less time sifting through unqualified candidates and spend more time onboarding people who fit your criteria.

4. Reduced Employee Turnover

When people are passionate about their role from day one and like the team members they work with, they're more committed and less likely to search for opportunities elsewhere.

The benefits of minimal turnover mean that you spend less on recruiting, training and advertising for new staff. This ensures that more of your budget can go into investment in new opportunities for your organisation.

What Are the Most Important Attributes Employees Look For?

The Harvard Business Review suggests that employer branding is becoming more critical as CEOs and market leaders plan to **boost their reputation by 2020**. The question is, what characteristics do you need to show to attract the best talent?

The Randstad global workforce report for 2017 found that these features are currently the most compelling to worldwide employees:

- Salary and benefits (58%)
- Security (46%)
- Work/Life balance (43%)
- Opportunities for progression (35%)
- Financial health of the organisation (33%)
- Flexible working schedules (31%)
- Training opportunities (28%)
- Convenient location (27%)
- Strong leadership (26%)

As automation in the public sector leaves candidates worried about their future, and growing numbers of applicants in the workforce make it harder to achieve long-term employment, people are searching more for reassurance from the employers they apply to work with.

Though salary and security are still at the top of the list when it comes to factors that candidates care about, the number of people who prioritise these factors has dropped significantly since 2014; by around 10%. This might be because a pleasant workplace atmosphere and greater flexibility are starting to be more appealing than the promise of a large salary.

Interestingly, the most appealing characteristics an employer can offer change depending on where you look in the world.



For instance:

- North America values: Salary (60%), Work/Life balance (46%) and Security (46%)
- Europe values: Salary (59%), Good work atmosphere (51%) and Security (50%)
- Latin America values: Salary (54%), Career progression (51%), and Good work atmosphere (47%)
- Asia Pacific values: Salary (56%), Work/Life balance (46%) and Security (45%)

Location isn't the only thing that determines what organisations need to consider when defining their brand either. Different sectors are growing more attractive by the day.

For instance, between 2016 and 2017:

- The attraction of the technology sector increased from 48% to 51%
- IT fell from 58% to 50%
- Life sciences decreased from 51% to 50%
- Industrial dropped from 50% to 49%
- Construction grew from 40% to 46%
- Financial increased from 40% to 41%
- Logistics grew from 36% to 40%
- Retail rose from 33% to 42%
- Services grew from 37% to 38%
- Hospitality fell from 34% to 33%

According to the Randstad report, the changing allure of different sectors is directly related to employer branding. Those who offer more forward-thinking workplace benefits like unlimited holidays, remote working and pleasant office environments are the ones that attract the best talent.

How to Build a Strong and Successful Employer Brand

The statistics on organisational reputation speak for themselves. **87% of candidates** accept offers specifically because of cultural fit, while 80% will willingly leave an employer who doesn't offer the right environment.

So, how do you define and build an attractive brand?

1. Listen to Your Staff

Before you can start making positive changes to your reputation, you need to understand what people are saying about you. A confidential survey can be a great way to determine how your existing team perceives your organisation. Ask them what they consider to be the best parts of working with you and what makes you different from other competitors in the public sector.

Provide open space for "suggestions" too, as this will help you to determine where you need to make improvements to your attitudes and ethos.

2. Define Your "Employer Value Proposition"

Today's talent is trading their time not just for high earnings, but also the best possible career experiences. Therefore, it's essential to think about what you can offer that no-one else can.

The goal here is to articulate the key strengths of your remuneration and benefits plan. For instance, you might provide employee training opportunities, chances for remote working and access to the top of the range technology in your sector.

When choosing your EVP, remember the benefits most valued by job-seekers are:

- More flexible hours
- More holidays
- Work-from-home options
- Learning and development opportunities
- Free gym membership



3. Articulate Your Mission

Demonstrating the benefits of working with your organisation is an excellent idea, but that's not all you need to consider in your Employer Value Proposition.

Your EVP must fit cohesively with your mission as an ever-evolving entity. Think about what you stand for as an organisation, what you hope to achieve in the future and potentially the legacy your organisation will leave on people and the planet.

The Millennial workforce cares more than ever about the ethical side of the organisations they work with. Showing that you're willing to get involved with charitable work or alter your approach to how you 'do' business will help you attract the engaged workforce you want.

4. Get Leaders on Board

Any strong employer brand begins with solid leadership. Attracting and retaining top-tier talent means getting executives involved in the branding strategy and convincing them to demonstrate the image you want to portray.

According to one survey by **Employer Branding International**, leadership is one of the most critical factors in shaping a strong brand. However, only 8% of CEOs are involved with reputation-based changes.

5. Get Social

Today's job-seekers automatically assume organisations will be present and active online. That means LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. They expect you to have a news or blog page that shares relevant information to your customers and potential new employees on a consistent basis.

With today's ability to create paid targeted campaigns on social media, it is easier than ever to promote your employer brand.

So, make sure that the information people can find out about you online is accurate, up-to-date and positive.

6. Personalise Candidate and Employee Experience

Today's top professionals want to know that they're more than just another number in your workforce. Working alongside your **recruitment agency** to improve the onboarding experience can help to generate a more beneficial reputation for your brand.

For instance, you can:

- Create development roadmaps: When introducing a new hire to the team, create a documented process that will help that individual to advance through the organisation and achieve their unique goals.
- Recognise employees: Recognition improves morale for staff and individuals alike. Sometimes, acknowledging your team can be as simple as telling them that you appreciate their hard work.
- Nurturing relationships: **58% of recruits** say that relations with immediate managers and supervisors are crucial to their happiness. Going the extra mile to encourage communication and collaboration can be a great way to improve engagement.

7. Identify Metrics for Tracking Success

Remember to consider the return on investment for your branding strategy. Perhaps one of the most straightforward metrics to track is the number of interested applicants your specialist recruiter receives on your behalf. Also, you can look at things like employee satisfaction scores and turnover rates.

Determining how you're going to measure the performance of your employer branding campaign will help you to ensure that your management strategies are having the right impact on your future hires - and people in your existing team too.

Current Trends in Employer Branding

Enrolling new talent into your team is an involved process and something that's seen significant change over the years. In the past, many organisations advertised in newspapers and their recruiting partner managed the whole process, including writing the advert and mailing and faxing CVs; remember those days?

Today, the process is digital, with CVs easily accessible at any time of the day or night on all of our smartphones.

The world of recruitment is changing alongside the impact of employer branding and culture fit: here are a few things to now consider.

1. Thinking of the Candidate as a Customer

Many organisations believe that attracting the right people today is about creating a positive “customer” experience for the modern applicant. If a potential new hire moves through a search and onboarding process that makes them feel valued, then they're more likely to accept an offer and even recommend the organisation to their friends at a later stage.

2. The “Talent Community”

Sometimes, the people who apply for specific roles in your organisation are unsuccessful, but they may be suitable for different positions.

Consequently, it's important to maintain and build a talent community.

Creating a good impression from the first step of the recruitment process and maintaining a healthy relationship even after the job is offered elsewhere can boost your employer brand and make it easier to keep essential skills within your organisation.

3. The Social Revolution

Social media has a profound impact on the employer branding experience, changing the way people look for jobs, assess new employers and communicate with their colleagues. Social platforms give prospective and current hires the opportunity to voice their views about business and research the organisations they want to join.

Knowing where your talent pool spends most of their time online and taking steps to manage your reputation in these places proactively, can help candidates to assess your offering better, while simultaneously improving your brand image.

4. Flexible Work is a Competitive Advantage

A 2016 survey by Gallup found that **51% of employees** would change roles to accept a position with more flexible hours. Though some public sector employers will struggle to offer remote roles, some can benefit from considering the potential of virtual working.

As more job seekers search for a work environment that suits their demanding lifestyles, demonstrating a brand that allows for flexibility might help you to get ahead of the game.

Ultimately, the best strategy is to embrace an adaptable branding strategy that allows you to evolve with the changing requirements of the public sector marketplace. Organisations need to remain as agile as possible to create that “cutting edge” recruitment experience.

The Danger of Ignoring Your Employer Brand

The talent shortage is a severe problem for almost every area of the public sector. In 2016, **40% of global employers** suggested that they were having trouble finding the right staff for their team.

Of course, the challenge isn't just finding the right people but also making sure that you have the resources in place to keep those individuals in your network when things like job-hopping are becoming increasingly popular.

Often, “employer branding” is commended as the ultimate way to reduce your risk of turnover and talent gaps. Unfortunately, many organisations are still overlooking the importance of reputation.

Here are just some of the dangers involved in ignoring your employer brand.

1. Losing the War for Skills

Every day, public sector organisations are competing to find the most motivated, experienced and culturally relevant people for their teams.

Unfortunately, it's not enough to only ask your candidates to prove that they're right for your role anymore. Instead, it's the responsibility of your organisation to convince new hires that they want to work for you.

A lack of employer branding means that applicants don't know what to think about your organisation. This pushes them to take a much more significant risk in accepting an offer from you than they would if they looked for a role with a well-respected brand instead.



2. Attracting the Wrong Candidates

The law of attraction dictates that “like attracts like”. In other words, if you build a brand that showcases values like hard work, dedication and innovation, you’ll draw people to you that share those characteristics.

On the other hand, if you have a vague or uncertain reputation in the marketplace, then you’re more likely to capture the attention of people who aren’t sure what they’re looking for, and your recruiting partner has a more challenging time ‘selling’ your brand to candidates.

3. Fewer Employee Advocates

If your employees love working in your team, they’re more likely to share their approval of your organisation with everyone they speak to.

Believe it or not, about 50% of your staff are already sharing messages about you on social media. So, it makes sense to use this online presence to your advantage when it comes to attracting new professionals and improving consumer perception around your public sector organisation.

Advocates make it easier for you to find new people for your team who are more likely to fit with your organisation’s culture, and they also help to market you to customers too!

4. Inconsistency

For your recruits to perform at their best, they need to know what’s expected of them.

Communicating your vision, goals and values with consistency and certainty is an essential element of employer branding. The more you can share what matters to your organisation with the people in your team, the more they can reflect your mission in everything they do.

Without the EVP you establish in your branding efforts, it can be challenging to give your employees direction as to how they should be acting in the workplace.

5. Poor Brand Authenticity

Today's consumers and professionals alike want to work with organisations that they feel they can trust. In the war for talent, candidates will quickly develop stronger relationships with those employers who demonstrate values that are important to them.

On the other hand, a lack of branding can make an organisation appear more like a corporate machine without any redeeming, human elements.

Key Points to Remember

Ultimately, employer branding is about giving your future hires and current employees something that resonates with them.

It's a reputation that instantly makes any organisation more appealing - convincing the best talent that the opportunities your brand can offer are more compelling than any job title or salary.

Though branding your organisation can seem like a complicated process, it's just about getting to the bottom of what makes you different and unique. If you can answer the following five questions, then you'll already be on your way to a strong EVP and a better brand:

- Why would the top-tier talent in the public sector want to work for you?
- What percentage of your leadership (managers, supervisors, executives) are involved in your employer branding experience?
- How visible is your public sector organisation? (Online and offline with a website, social media and recruitment strategy)
- What is the perception that candidates and current staff already have of your employer brand?
- What percentage of your team would recommend you as a great person/organisation to work for?

For most organisations, the brand development process will begin with the answers to the above questions, followed by an intensive audit. This means looking at your current strategy for reputation development and management, and determining where the gaps in your plan are most prominent.

Your audit may include the following four steps:

Step 1: Examine Your Online Appearance

Now that technology and social media has made it easier than ever for establishments to promote themselves online, it's not enough to advertise in your local newspaper.

The average applicant wants complete transparency from the organisation they plan on working with before they ever consider taking part in an interview. Your online presence is your opportunity to show hires what it's like to work for you before they get a job offer.

The easiest way to assess your current reputation online is to look at the following things:

- How engaging are your job descriptions? Have you worked with a specialist recruitment agency to ensure that you're attracting the right people with keywords, action terms and useful information about your brand? Would you benefit from adding case studies into the mix that demonstrates how your staff feel about you as an employer?
- What is the recruitment experience like? How simple or complicated is it for potential recruits to communicate with you and learn more about your available positions?
- Are you optimised for the digital world? As more experts continue to search for opportunities online through social media and forums, are you adequately equipped to advertise yourself in the right spaces? If you are, can you ensure that your digital media shows up correctly on mobile devices too?

Step 2: Know What You're Searching For

The more you know about the kind of talent you want to attract into your organisation, the more you can adjust your brand to appeal to the right type of person.

For instance, if you're an NHS Trust who wants to recruit a Clinical Business Advisor who has a passion for improving your service to over half a million



people, then you'll need to demonstrate to your candidates that you have plenty of opportunities for them to work with a skilled and compassionate team to ensure successful delivery of their targets and focus on excellence.

Alternatively, if you're searching for an Investment Manager who can help you develop your international charity, you might want to consider things like cultural awareness and a personal affinity to your organisation's values and aspirations, allowing you to attract people who are interested in aligning their ethos to the organisation they choose to work for.

A great place to start is to compile a list of critical characteristics you want for your organisation. Then, compare that list with your mission statement and business vision, and think about how you can incorporate specific features into your brand to captivate key talent.

Step 3: Learn How to Listen

There's no easier way to determine how you need to improve your current employment branding efforts than by evaluating what's already being said in the public sector marketplace.

From social media listening tools that allow you to pick up on what outsiders think about you, to internal surveys that give organisations the ability to generate authentic responses from their staff, there are countless ways to expand your knowledge.

When gathering insights from your existing employees, remember to give them the opportunity to remain anonymous. This can sometimes improve the chance that you'll get realistic responses from individuals who may otherwise fear negative repercussions as a result of their honest opinion.

You can even speak to the applicants in your hiring pool that reject your job offers to find out what turned them off about your brand.

What's Next?

Successful employer branding is crucial in a world where reputation rules. As Millennials take over the workforce and your brand experience becomes more important to the average candidate than remuneration or benefits, the easiest way to get ahead in the public sector marketplace is to prove that you're an employer worth working for.

The steps above will help you to understand which elements you need to highlight, your brand character and where you need to make a change to your existing strategy.

Once you've outlined the key points of your audit, you can conduct a SWOT analysis of your organisation and determine the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that come with making actual changes to the way you're perceived.

Here are just some of the points to keep in mind as you go through the process:

Online Presence:

- Organisation interactive website
- Recruitment forums
- Online reviews
- Social media presence

Recruitment and Hiring:

- Recruiting channels
- Specialist recruiting partner
- Recruitment advertising
- Job descriptions
- Job boards
- Social recruiting efforts

Candidate Experience:

- Application process
- Screening process
- Interviewing process
- Training and onboarding
- Notification process

Current Employee Experience:

- Entry and exit interviews
- Role development plans
- Ongoing education and training
- Employee satisfaction surveys
- Employee advocacy

Finally

We hope this guide has been useful. Please feel free to share with colleagues who are currently involved with developing their own employer brand.

Best wishes,

Heather Clarke,
Managing Director, Harris Burns Ltd



HARRIS BURNS

About Harris Burns Ltd

Set up in 2017, Harris Burns is a specialist recruitment business and talent partner with a strong knowledge and understanding of the Public and Not for Profit Sector.

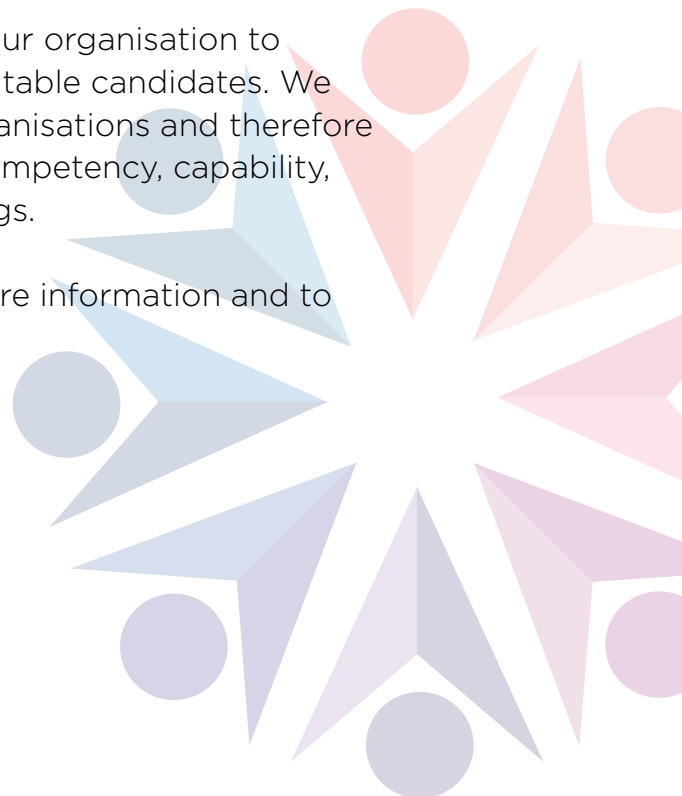
Our highly experienced, specialist consultants each have extensive knowledge of the market, proven track records and an established network.

We provide a wide variety of recruitment solutions to clients and candidates alike.

Our aim is to provide you with a seamless recruitment process with a view to becoming an extension of your business. Our consultants bring with them proven experience and are able to utilise their networks to find 'passive' individuals, not widely available to other agencies.

We take the time to understand the dynamics of your organisation to put us in the best position possible to search for suitable candidates. We understand how key placements can transform organisations and therefore all our consultants explore candidates' individual competency, capability, attitude and suitability through face to face meetings.

Please visit our website at [Harris Burns.com](https://www.harrisburns.com) for more information and to view our latest **blog posts**.



About Heather Clarke

With over 20 years experience in the recruitment market, Heather has extensive experience covering executive permanent appointments across a variety of specialisms.

She has an in-depth understanding of public sector organisations and has developed a client portfolio ranging across the whole of the NHS, Social Housing, Charity, Education and NDGB sectors.

As a trusted recruitment partner, Heather thrives by gaining a detailed understanding of her clients situation and constantly look to attract candidates who would fit into these organisational cultures and really live the values. Developing excellent client and candidate relationships and working with an honest and professional approach is of the highest priority.



Heather has personally recruited for clients across Midlands region for roles including: Chief Finance Officers, Directors of Finance, Directors of Nursing, Director of Strategy, Chief Operating Officer, Deputy Director of Finance, Head of Information, Head of Procurement, Head of Commissioning etc.

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To book a private conversation about your recruitment needs or personal career call, contact us at info@harrisburns.com or call **01952 743243**

Best wishes

Heather

