

Three Sensible Steps to Burnish Your Brand

Every recruiter worth their salt recognizes the importance of branding. You can write the best recruitment ad on the planet and still come up empty handed if your employer's brand is the organizational equivalent of Bernie Madoff.

Unlike consumer branding, however, employment branding is not simply a cutesy tag line or solemn statement of values. In fact, the image that's created in a prospect's mind comes more from what you (and your colleagues) do than what you say.

So, what should you do? Well obviously, there are a lot of practices that can positively affect your recruiting outcomes, but the following three are my choice for those that will most likely burnish your brand.

Step #1. Tell them what you're going to do, and then do it.

The number one complaint candidates have about employers is that their application is never acknowledged. And when it isn't, no words can undo the negative view an applicant has of an employer.

Ironically, most employers actually do notify job seekers when their resume is received. So, what's causing this disconnect? The applicant's spam filter. How do you fix that?

- First, tell applicants that you will acknowledge the receipt of their resume. Make that statement a prominent feature in every recruitment ad you post.
- Second, tell them what email address your response will be coming from and encourage them to add it to their email white list so they'll be sure to get it.

Step #2. Stop selling and start farming.

The career areas on most corporate career sites have the look and feel of a store. They leave candidates with the sense that employers see them as commodities—pencils with personalities—rather than persons of talent.

What's a better culture for a corporate career area? Create a farm where you can nurture relationships with prospects, when they're looking for a job and when they aren't. How can you do that?

- First, add one or more career advancement features (e.g., a free online course about setting career goals, a listing of upcoming professional development conferences in various fields) to all of the job search content you provide for your site's visitors.
- Second, expand your advertising so that it explicitly promotes your site's career features and makes your support for their career success a part of your organization's brand.

Step #3. Remember what your mother taught you.

The first lesson your mother taught you was probably "Don't speak to strangers!". Sadly, however, that's how many candidates feel as if they've been treated. They are all but unknown

to the organizations that recruit them. Such an arms-length approach may be rational in an era of resume overload, but it's also harmful to any organization's claim that it is "employee friendly."

Put 100 recruiters in a room and ask them what sourcing method produces the best new hires, and 99 will tell you it's their employee referral system. How can you leverage that success to turn strangers into devoted fans of your organization?

- First, reach out to those employees who have participated in your employee referral program and identified some of your best new hires. Ask them to volunteer for a virtual Candidate Mentoring Program and train them in the best responses to the typical questions candidates ask.
- Second, set up a blog in the career area on your corporate Web-site and have your Candidate Mentors engage with candidates as real people by answering their questions. Obviously, they won't get to every question, but the effort they make to be helpful and assist candidates will go a long way toward humanizing your organization and its brand.

Are there other ways to build up an employment brand? Of course. What's important, however, is that these are actions, not statements. And actions, as we all know, speak louder than words.

Thanks for reading,

Peter

Visit me at Weddles.com

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