

WHY BRAND

When was the last time you benchmarked your employer brand against the best in the industry? Are you aware of the key drivers of why people enjoy (or dislike!) working for you? Founding partners of the Employer Brand Institute, Brett Minchington and Kaye Thorne, discuss a new tool to measure employer brand effectiveness



The Minchington-Thorne Employer Brand Global Index (MTEBGI™) was designed by Brett Minchington and Kaye Thorne to measure the development of employer brands within a global context. The index measures the perceptions of how effectively employees believe their organisation is in building their employer brand across strategic and operational constructs or enablers.

Developing a leading employer brand is important not just for attracting and retaining talent – it is a ‘whole of business’ concept that can be used throughout an organisation to identify employee, customer and stakeholder satisfaction.

“Some of the key challenges for organisations seeking to develop their employer brand are to define their starting point and to gain clarity through all the clutter – this was the driving force for establishing the Employer Brand Institute. We wanted to provide a centre of excellence for employer brand research and strategy to assist organisations develop a stronger employer brand,” Thorne says.

Developing your employer brand will assist in creating a nurturing culture which enables individuals to give their best performance and supports the organisation in delivering on its brand promise. As a holistic process it has a strategic and dynamic role in delivering a truly competitive edge to organisations.

Recruitment is about attracting the most talented and capable people efficiently and effectively, so any positive messages and demonstrable actions that you can transmit into your local community about

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your employment offering gives a company the advantage it needs. Equally important is engaging and retaining these people beyond the initial induction period.

It is an employee's market and job candidates can be very choosy about where they work. It is not just about pay and benefits. Increasingly, employees are looking for organisations which match their values, who care about the environment they work in and the service they offer to their customers.

The biggest challenge in employer branding is ownership. As it is often unclear who should sponsor it, the responsibility can fall down the middle between marketing, corporate communications and HR. To succeed, it needs an integrated process linking all departments and with endorsement from the highest level within the organisation. As an aspirational goal, it also needs a pragmatic approach to achieve it.

Consistency in the delivery of the employer brand is very important. The companies who really live by their employer brand are those who consistently deliver through their people, products, premises and processes, a level of service excellence that is consistent, 24/7, 365 days a year.

Employer branding is not about smart advertising – the best recruitment advertising is pointless if the communication inside the organisation is disconnected or the time to hire is slow due to bureaucratic processes.

Having carefully researched the marketplace, Minchington and Thorne found there was an absence of a measure to link all the stages together in a holistic way. Hence, they developed the MTEBGI™.

Through extensive research and analysis of the key drivers of an employer brand, 14 constructs or enablers, which fundamentally contribute to the development of a company's employer brand, were identified. These include:

- Strategic intent
- Recruitment & induction
- Communications
- Leadership
- Internal business processes
- Performance management
- Innovation and re-invention
- Work environment
- Measurement & evaluation
- Thought leadership
- Global perspective
- Corporate social responsibility
- Developing people
- Customer relationships

Having identified the constructs, Minchington and Thorne then drilled down to analyse the day-to-day touch points (or pain points!) which significantly impact on the development of an employer brand.

Interestingly, every organisation has an employer brand. Whether you own it or not, your organisation is influencing its employer brand 24x7x365.

As you are reading this article, someone is either reinforcing the key behaviours and positive messages about your employer brand, or quietly destroying it.

This is not just relevant to your front-line, customer-facing employees; it equally applies to the CEO, the executive board and your interactions with suppliers.

The most fundamental part of developing a strong employer brand is built on behaviours, self-esteem, confidence and pride in the organisation.

These concepts are not fundamentally new but what is different about the MTEBGI™ is that it links all the stages together in a holistic way.

The execution of your employer brand strategy should raise the standards and competencies of the whole organisation and raise its profile as an employer of integrity. When asked to describe the brand of the organisation, there should be a common belief based on shared vision, values, aspirations, behaviour and practice. By

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bringing all these aspects of an employer brand together, not only is there more coherence, there is a constant benchmark.

As well as using the index in their consulting engagements, Minchington and Thorne recently had an opportunity to undertake a benchmark survey with a sample of middle to senior managers from a mix of ASX100, private companies and government departments using the MTEBGI™.

Respondents were asked to rate how effective they believed their organisation

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was in delivering on the total employment experience. A scale of one ('to a very little extent') to seven ('to a very great extent') was used to rate the responses.

"The results from the Australian benchmark study revealed some very interesting findings," Minchington says.

One of the highest scores related to corporate social responsibility (see box). An increased global emphasis on both becoming a preferred employer and the need to be an ethical employer is reflected in its high score. Organisations are realising that brand loyalty is created in many ways but is essentially based on the relationships that an organisation builds with its partners and its local community.

This is equally reflected in the scores about the work environment – at a time when retention is on the minds of employers, improving the working environment is one way of improving the commitment from employees.

Most organisations also realise the importance of communicating with their employees. However, one of the lower-scoring individual questions related to the question 'employees are empowered to provide feedback', which highlights communication may only be one way in some organisations.

Surprisingly leadership was also comparatively low scoring and questions within this construct, such as 'having a clear strategy for succession planning' and having 'active mentoring programs across the organisation', were areas also flagged for attention.

Adopting a global perspective also appeared low on the agenda of many organisations. In many ways SMEs are ahead of their corporate counterparts by recognising and leveraging the power of the internet in creating a global marketplace. Also, increased use of technology has opened up the world for



trading, as well as global communication. No longer can organisations afford to trade just in their own backyard.

Other areas that require greater emphasis by Australian leaders based on the results of the study include:

- Employees require training in how to deliver the employer brand promise to customers
- Increased involvement and engagement of employees across all levels in the development of the strategic plan
- Establishing and supporting a process for capturing, sponsoring and encouraging individual innovation
- Identifying employer value propositions for target audiences and reinforcing our unique employment offerings through internal and external communications
- Designing workspaces that are conducive to creating good working conditions

The results of the study indicate the beginnings of a benchmark across Australia in how effective organisations are in building their employer brand. Minchington and Thorne plan to significantly add to this benchmark on a global basis by the end of 2007. **HC**

More information

If you would like to know more about the MTEBGI™ or the Institute's Employer Brand Audit methodology, please contact Brett Minchington at brett@employerbrandinstitute.com or on +61 8 8443 4115, or visit the website at www.employerbrandinstitute.com

Minchington-Thorne Employer Brand Global Index™ Australian Benchmark Study results

	Rating (1-7)
Corporate social responsibility	5.21
Work environment	5.07
Communications	4.96
Recruitment & induction	4.93
Performance management	4.91
Measurement & evaluation	4.90
Customer relationships	4.90
Strategic intent	4.89
Innovation & re-invention	4.88
Thought leadership	4.79
Developing people	4.75
Internal business processes	4.72
Leadership	4.26
Global perspective	4.14