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10 Steps  
to Corporate Recruiting

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# CONTRIBUTORS

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## KIM PETERS

Our cover story on page 24 tackles the nuts and bolts of employer branding. Who better to break it down for us than Kim Peters, vice-president of online classifieds at CanWest MediaWorks and working.com, Canada's national job search network.



## PATRICIA MCQUILLAN

Patricia writes about internal branding strategy in "Walking the Talk: Internal Branding" on page 39. Patricia founded brand consultancy Brand Matters in 2000 following 12 years in brand management at RBC, TD Waterhouse and Kraft General Foods.



## BRETT MINCHINGTON

In "Building Brand Equity" on page 32, Australian writer and employer brand specialist Brett Minchington talks about the importance of auditing your employer brand to determine the key drivers of why people enjoy—or dislike—working for you.



## RYAN ESTIS

Ryan Estis discusses salesmanship in recruiting in our debut HR 101 column on page 42. Estis is chief talent strategist of NAS Recruitment Communications and senior associate of the Employer Brand Institute, as well as an author and featured keynote speaker on best practices in talent management.

# BUILDING BRAND EQUITY

**Auditing your employer brand will determine the key drivers of talent attraction and retention**

BY BRETT MINCHINGTON AND KAYE THORNE

**W**HEN 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?

An organization's ability to attract and retain talent depends on defining and communicating clear employer value propositions (EVPs) to a target audience, while consistently delivering on the employment promises made during recruitment and on-boarding initiatives. Right now, someone is either reinforcing the key behaviours and positive messages about your employer brand, or quietly destroying them.

A tactical way to determine the strength of your current employer brand, and identify priorities for the future, is to conduct a comprehensive employer brand audit, which will provide clarity when assessing brand effectiveness and identify priorities for further investment.

## **Step 1. Determining audit objectives**

The aim of the audit is to determine the key drivers impacting the strength of your employer brand as perceived by your internal (current employees) and external (active and passive candidates) target audience.

The audit seeks to quantify and provide an understanding of two particular gaps:

1. The gap between what employees want and what they perceive your employment is offering based on their direct and indirect experiences with the company;
2. The gap between the employee-employer relationships you currently have and the one you need for the future to deliver organizational business goals.



PHOTO: ROY MCMAHON/CORBIS

“Right now someone is either reinforcing the key behaviours and positive messages about your employer brand, or quietly destroying them.”

Objectives should also provide clarity to your employer brand strategy and identify priorities for future spending and initiatives.

## Step 2. Conducting an employer brand audit

An initial meeting should be scheduled with the branding team and senior managers to discuss objectives and the success of current attraction, engagement and retention strategies.

Existing employee measurement, research and HR data should be reviewed to determine any indicators of employer brand drivers and to establish guidelines and objectives for any further research that may need to be undertaken.

Undertake an assessment of the company's recruitment management system, sourcing methods and recruitment advertising to

determine alignment with the company's employer brand. Highlight any capability gaps in systems, processes and policies that support the delivery of the employer brand promise.

## Step 3. Review of existing consumer brands research

Analyze existing consumer brand research to determine any opportunities to leverage the market reputation of the company's brands. Companies with market-leading brands enjoy a higher share of voice, and synergies between the consumer brand and employer brand should be exploited in attraction and retention activities.

## Step 4. Review of talent acquisition and talent development systems

When reviewing your talent

development approach examine what already exists. Build on what's working. But also ask what would make you unique and different. How can you build loyalty?

One of the major considerations in creating a talent development process is the ability to enable different parts of the business to talk to each other. As part of the background research it is important to capture a broad spectrum of views from the CEO and the board, senior and line managers and the current cadre of people who are considered to be talented members of the HR team.

## Step 5. Qualitative and quantitative research methods

The CEO and a sample of senior managers from different areas should be interviewed to:

- Identify leaders' perception of the actual organizational culture and the preferred ideal organizational culture;
- Identify leadership's view on the essential tangible and intangible attributes in an ideal employee and why these are considered to be important;
- Identify mission critical roles and what the firm can realistically deliver in its employment offering.

Conduct employee focus groups to:

- Define the driving motivators for engagement and retention of current employees and to determine any gaps between the aspirations and perceptions of management and employees about the employment experience;
- Determine what employees value most in the employment offering and how well the company is currently meeting these values.

## Step 6. External research

Research a sample of the company's external target audience to provide

a view of the company's image as a "great place to work." This may include interviewing key vendors (e.g., recruitment agencies) and talking to active and passive candidates accessed from the talent database. Opinions of key clients and stakeholders should also be sourced as they may be influential in identifying and referring talent.

## Step 7. Competitor review

Reviewing the career website and recruitment advertising of key competitors will assist in determining the market positioning of each competitor. Gaps can be identified and exploited as part of the positioning of the company's employer brand.

## Outcomes of the employer brand audit

A detailed analysis of the data collected in the audit will identify the key drivers of the company's employer brand, competitor strengths, talent acquisition and sourcing strengths, and the level to which systems, processes and policies support talent acquisition and retention strategies.

Use the data to create a strategic road map to provide clarity and priorities in mapping out an employer brand strategy that will drive the company's talent acquisition and retention strategy. The road map should determine the metrics for tracking and measuring return on investment and success of future employer branding initiatives.

Above all, the audit and subsequent implementation of your employer brand strategy should elevate the standards and competencies of the whole organization and raise its profile as an employer. When asked to describe the brand of the organization, there should be a common belief based on shared vision, goals, aspirations, behaviours and practices. The audit process ensures senior managers are involved and committed to the program. The road map links all the stages together in a holistic way. The key drivers of the employer brand are prioritized and metrics are established to track and measure the success of future employer brand initiatives. **HR**

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