

EMPLOYER BRAND.

THREE STEPS TO TAKE WHEN STARTING AN
EMPLOYER BRAND INITIATIVE.

strengthen employer brand • engage people • cut the cost of talent



THE DAVID GROUP



EMPLOYER BRAND. THREE STEPS TO TAKE.

This may be a pivotal moment for you.

Deciding to take action to strengthening an employer brand doesn't happen everyday. Not every organization is ready to do so. But for those who are, the rewards can be significant. Increased employee engagement, improved talent acquisition and retention performance, and lower human capital costs are just a few of the great outcomes derived from strengthening your employer brand.

But before you jump into a focused effort to strengthen your employer brand, here are three steps to consider. Working through each of these steps will help to ensure a more successful employer brand outcome. These steps include:

STEP ONE Get buy-in through strategic thinking

STEP TWO Assess readiness by comprehensive planning

STEP THREE Adopt the right mindset

We believe that the communication world has changed. Brands—external and employer—need to stand out and, at the same time, stand *for* something. Authenticity is the new paradigm. Committing to strengthening your employer brand is indeed a pivotal moment, one that is at the beginning of a great journey.



EMPLOYER BRAND. THREE STEPS TO TAKE.

STEP ONE Get buy-in through strategic thinking.

Employer brand projects involve the efforts of many, representing all areas of your organization. Beyond HR, employer brand projects tap into every facet of your workforce. Senior executive leaders, business line leaders, peer functions (sales, marketing, IT, compliance) and everyday workers all have a stake in your employer brand. All are integral to the success of your employer brand initiative.

Getting buy-in is critical. Foremost, executive buy-in is paramount. Even if starting small—perhaps reinventing your college recruiting program through employer branding—it's important to ensure that senior executives are onboard and kept aware of progress. Employer brand is about the “heart and soul” of your organization: mission, culture, values and everyday experiences. Senior executives are leaders in defining, executing and supporting those elements.

One way to get buy-in is to think strategically. Have a vision of what you want to accomplish and make the case. People connect with a bigger picture and commit by reasoned thinking. And while senior executives clearly appreciate strategic thinking, all other stakeholders need to see and feel it too.

Finally, don't be afraid to use the emotional elements of your employer brand. Combining strategic thinking, measured outcomes and an emotional appeal is a great way to get people to buy-in on your employer brand project.

- ▶ Have a vision of what you want to accomplish
- ▶ Make the case by aligning vision to measured outcomes
- ▶ Tap into the emotional elements of your mission, culture and the everyday experiences of your people



STEP TWO Assess readiness through comprehensive planning.

It's important to assess your organization's readiness to plan, design and execute an employer brand initiative. Employer brand projects, from "one-off" initiatives to firm-wide engagements, is about getting to the real story.

This means tapping into the perceptions, beliefs and everyday experiences of your current and future employees. Focus groups, employee engagement data and employee interviews are among the planning elements to consider.

It also means reviewing and evaluating all facets of your communication including items like your social media presence, career sites, intranet portals, collateral materials and other forms of HR communication.

You are also going to look at segmentation. Depending on the mission of the initiative, segmentation could include any combination of workforce divisions, roles, age, gender, location and so forth.

If your employer brand initiative includes developing an **employee value proposition**, you'll need to have your benefits and total rewards

team ready to participate.

Finally, another area of readiness includes ensuring that stakeholders are ready to participate. Setting forth a schedule of stakeholder interviews—CEO, CFO, SVPs—is a quick way to assess the readiness of your project.

Let's make one thing clear: not everyone will be ready. But, you shouldn't wait until everyone is ready or you'll never get there. The mission of this step is to clearly understand the gaps. Knowing which areas are ready and which aren't will help you to know where and how to address those gaps.

Employer Brand Readiness Checklist

If you would like a copy of our **Employer Brand Readiness Checklist**, please contact Bob Johnson, practice leader, at nrjohnson@davidgroup.com or by calling Bob at 216.685.4486.



STEP THREE Adopt the right mindset.

It's often said that your employer brand is your story. That's true. An organization's employer brand is the authentic, everyday experiences of your people. (This is one reason we see authenticity as the new paradigm of employer brand and employee communication.)

There's a good news and bad news scenario here. The good news is that people are eager to tell you what they think. The bad news is that *people are eager to tell you what they think*. That is, it's bad news if you aren't ready hear it.

The right mindset is to embrace the feedback. Understand at the outset that you'll hear about the good and the bad. Be ready to celebrate but also be equally open to addressing those elements that aren't working. Just as you would approach an engagement study, be ready to fix what needs to be fixed.

Let's illustrate the point. You want to undertake an employer brand initiative to better tell your story as a preeminent employer-of-choice. It's natural because there are so many positive things you provide to

your employees. Upon discovery, you find that find that, in fact, many of your employees are ready to leave you with very little provocation. They regard you as a good place to work but when asked, you find that you're not seen as the place for career or personal growth. That's a barrier to being an employer-of-choice.

As troubling as it may seem, this illustration also brings forth the beauty of employer branding. The process of strengthening your employer brand will show you where and how you can build a stronger relationship with our employees.

There's a second mindset to embrace. Getting to your employer brand story—the authentic truth—takes time. As with any project worth pursuing, it takes commitment. Employer branding not a “just push a button” proposition.



About us.

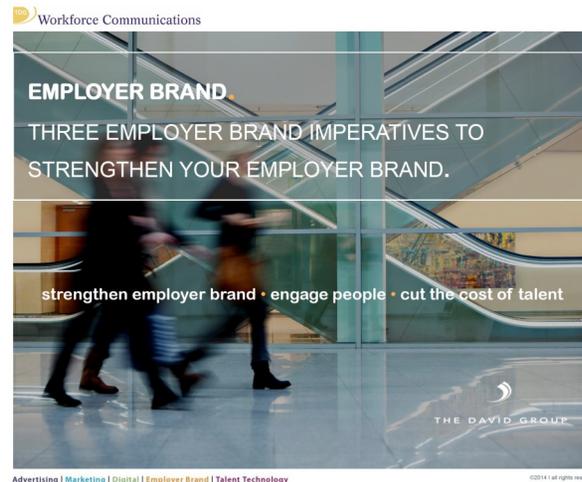
The David Group's Workforce Communications Practice is an emerging force in employer brand and employee communications. Our mission is to work with North American organizations to strengthen their employer brand, engage their people and cut their cost of talent.

We bring creative and innovative thinking to make employer brands stronger. Our focus is to engage people through their experiences. We're guided by a belief that when a workforce is united by mission, culture and shared experiences the cost of talent goes down.

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related white paper

THREE EMPLOYER BRAND IMPERATIVES TO STRENGTHEN YOUR EMPLOYER BRAND

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