

Employer-Branding – absolute necessity or just “nice to have”?

The term "Employer-Branding" has recently become a buzzword in HR concepts. However, it remains unclear what the goals of Employer-Branding are. Is this the powerful instrument to successfully optimize the perception of employees and external candidates?

Independent of Employer-Branding, every company has a particular image. An employer's perception may be positive or negative and is continuously influenced by numerous factors. To name a few: History, business success, leadership and communication, rating by existing and former employees, attitudes towards sustainability and diversity, social engagement, sponsoring, and unplanned events and crises that impact the firm's reputation.

” *A positive employer perception is crucial to accessing and retaining the best talent* “

Early signs of a negative employer image include high fluctuation, unexpected departures of leaders and key people, difficulties or delays in finding suitable internal and external candidates in the talent pool, loss of productivity and competitive edge.

Regardless of seniority, job profile and remuneration, every employee and candidate strive to work for a successful, well-managed, socially responsible, sustainable employer with career potential – trust-building values with which they can identify in the medium to long term.

Solid and authentic Employer-Branding creates orientation points for employees and applicants and positively affects motivation and identification with the employer. In this context, "branding" does not only refer to communication measures to promote the employer's values to the outside world - but also to measures that improve the real experience from an internal leadership- and employee perspective. It is essential that the adjusted image always remains authentic and matches the lived corporate culture.

External candidates scrutinise potential employers very carefully before deciding on a specific offer. A strong employer brand substantially increases the attractiveness and rating of the employer and thus improves access to best-qualified external candidates.

Is it feasible to adjust an employer's image at all?

Yes, but it may take some time until results become evident and have the desired impact. First, an employer value proposition will be created by analyzing both the environment and competitive benchmarks. Optimizations can then flow into measures that improve the external perception, the recruiting process, and sourcing channels. Internally, there may be adjustments to employment standards and processes, talent development, performance incentives, team events and communication.

The complexity and importance of an Employer-Branding process require an experienced team with full buy-in and support from all hierarchical levels. Typically, an Employer-Branding initiative is sponsored directly by senior management and involves specialists with Employer-Branding know-how, HR, marketing, and most importantly, employee representatives.

Risk of talent drain due to the dried-up talent pool

According to estimates, Switzerland alone will have a shortage of around half a million professionals by 2030. But already today, retaining and promoting skilled talent as well as the ability to attract the best external candidates in the talent pool are among the essential pillars for securing future Human Capital requirements.

Nevertheless, there may be considerations not to classify Employer-Branding as a top priority, as it ties up resources and costs that only show results in the medium term. We disagree with this view – Employer-Branding is a crucial process that must be anchored in every competitive company. The goal is not to create a "feel-good club" but to secure internal- and external talents as stakeholders who ensure long-term corporate success through their availability, motivation, and performance.

Robert Hemmi, Partner, rhemmi@tcpgroup.ch

The Consulting Partnership

Since 2001, we are Management Consultants, dedicated to optimizing Human Capital and Leadership.

As trusted partners, we offer an integrated approach to developing a successful and effective pool of next-generation leaders and key people aligned to future strategic requirements.

We combine consulting-, business intelligence- and search capabilities in the subjects of Employer-Branding, Succession Planning, Leadership & Team Performance, and External Search.