

MFB report

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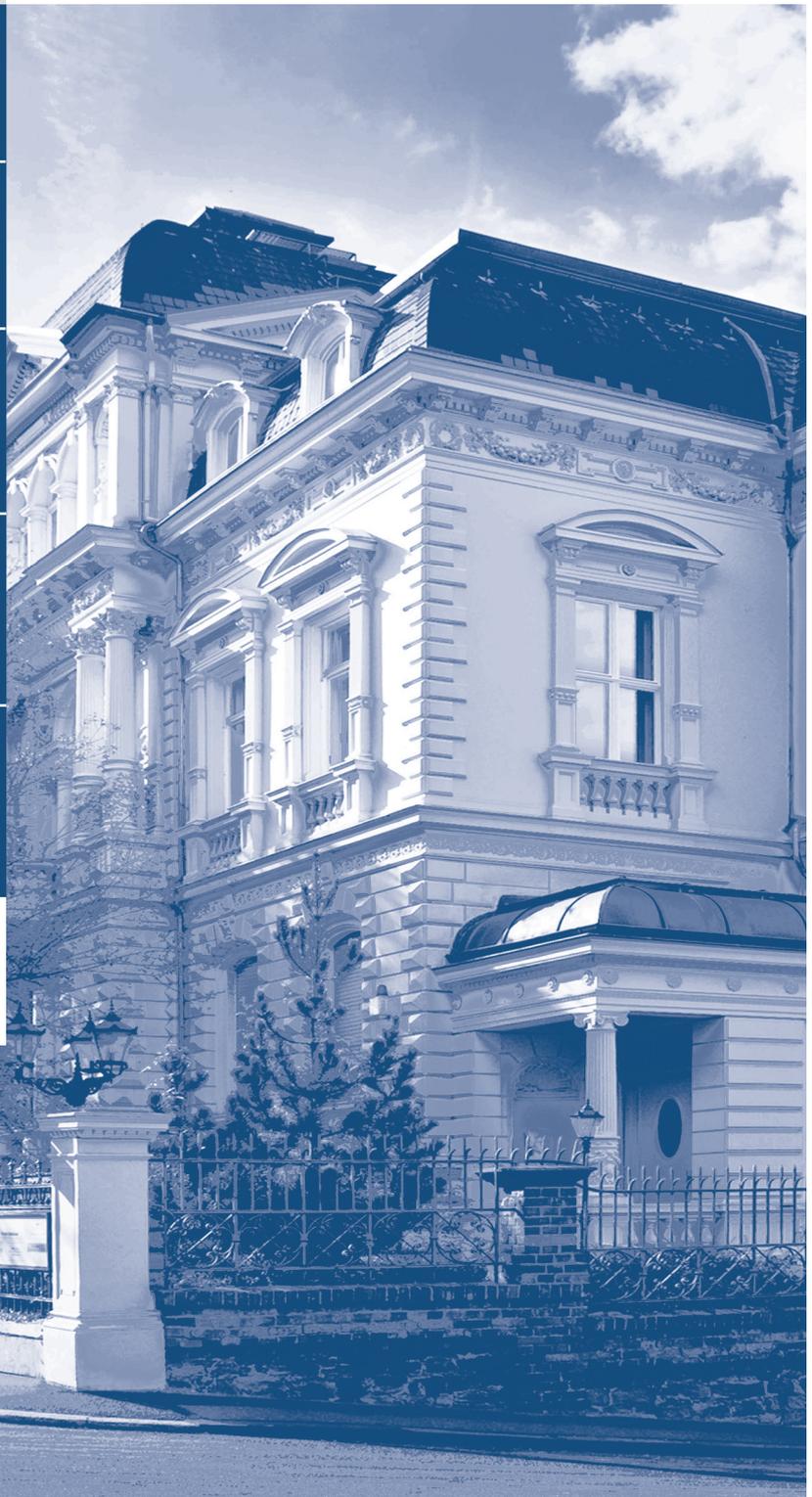
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MFB

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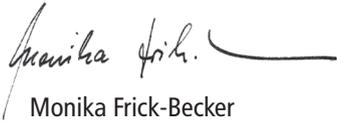


Welcome and Guten Tag,

For any company, it is vital to develop strategies to deal with the lack of qualified employees as soon as possible. For smaller companies in particular, it is not enough to complain about a dearth of suitable staff. SMEs who don't yet have a plan of how to meet their future requirements for a qualified workforce risk being pushed out in the medium term.

Employer branding is about creating an idea in the minds of the company's potential and existing employees. To that end, companies may begin by first ensuring that their visions are lucidly expressed and that values are differentiated and well-defined.

Yours,



Monika Frick-Becker

EDITORIAL

HOW TO CREATE A SUCCESSFUL CORPORATE BRAND: EMPLOYER BRANDING FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZE COMPANIES

According to a study by the German Economic Institute, the German economy alone loses € 20 billion of turnover every year due to a lack of specialist personnel. It is the small and medium-sized enterprises in particular that threaten to fall behind as competition intensifies for increasingly rare employee potential.

There does not seem to be any prospect of an improvement in the situation in the near future- specialist staff, in particular for technical jobs and in marketing and sales, are few and far between and are in great demand.

THE DEMOGRAPHIC TREND



It is, therefore, vital to develop proactive strategies to deal with the lack of qualified employees as soon as possible. To simply complain about a dearth of high potentials and to continue sending bland promises will not convince any qualified candidate. The competition for top performers makes it crucial for your company to establish a strong employer brand-a unique profile and a convincing company message. This requires an awareness of changing workplace considerations from employees' perspectives to formulate a value proposition to your employees that clearly answers the question, "What's in it for me?".

STRONG BRANDS ARE NOT BORN: EMPLOYER BRANDING AS AN ONGOING PROCESS

The conception, implementation and strategic positioning of an employer brand is not done overnight. It is a lengthy and continuous process. Strong brands are not born. They are the result of the tireless and engaged work of management and employees. Taking action in good time demands a certain degree of creativity, simply relying on marketing tools does not suffice. First, understanding what distinguishes your employer brand and how it may affect attracting and retaining employees is an essential component to being an employer of choice. Like with consumer brands, a corporate brand must be lived daily. You have to keep what you promise. Therefore, building an employer brand needs to start internally to ensure you are creating a work environment that your employees will rave about – you can't be an employer of choice for top talent if you don't have an engaged workforce. The lesson to be learned is simple: Use management practices that support your desired brand.

EMPLOYER BRANDING AT A GLANCE



LIVING RESPONSIBILITY: A SUSTAINABLE CORPORATE CULTURE AS KEY TO BRAND SUCCESS

Talented people want to work for successful companies with great reputations. When choosing between employment offers they often turn to family members, friends or colleagues or contact social networks for advice and approval. That is why it is crucial for the employer brand to be viewed favorably by the group the potential employee most often turns to for advice and approval.

Employers can reach out to these reference groups in various ways. For example, they can tout themselves as award-winning employers, responsible entities and good corporate citizens through advertising and public-relations campaigns. They can support local schools and universities, sponsor community services and sports teams and offer scholarships to promising students.

For SMEs, social media such as Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter provide an important and cost-effective way of advertising jobs to people at all levels and in quite a targeted way. The biggest asset in attracting talent, however, is a great corporate culture where existing employees not only like where they work but also believe in the products and solutions they support. Enthused employees are perfect ambassadors who can spread the word of your company's mission, vision and values.

EMPLOYER BRANDING: THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS

Direction of communication	Internal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff newsletter • Email • Intranet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff interviews • Personalized emails • Mentoring • Qualifying
	External	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web/social networks • Brochures • Image campaign in (print) media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internships • Workshops • Events
		Mass communication	Personalized communication
		Medium of communication	

BORROWING FROM PRODUCT MARKETING: ALIGNING THE CORPORATE BRAND WITH THE BUSINESS PLAN

A corporate brand is designed to attract and retain the kinds of workers the company needs most -- those who can help it increase sales, profits and market share. And the key to doing that is to borrow a tool from the product-marketing toolbox. Marketers divide consumers into groups based on parameters like their demographics, buying behavior and lifestyle, and then tailor product offerings and advertising messages specifically for them. Each product has its own marketing and advertising message.

The same principle applies in employer branding. It is more profitable to treat certain groups of current and potential employees differently (according to their position, qualification, salary, expectations, etc.) than to treat them all the same. Employers who use segmentation to pinpoint who they need to attract and what they need to do to attract them will have an advantage over those who don't.

EMPLOYER BRANDING AS A MULTISTAGE PROCESS



EMPLOYER BRANDING FOR SMEs: SUCCESS THROUGH CUSTOMIZED SOLUTIONS

Large multinational organizations can use their big pockets and higher profile to attract talent more easily. Highly qualified candidates tend to work for the really renowned companies and the SMEs often lose out. Without a strong branding message, small companies will find it increasingly difficult to hold their own next to the major corporations and attract top executives for themselves.

On the other hand, you don't have to be big to build a strong employer brand. Smaller, often family-owned businesses can have an impressive range of employer benefits available. They can forge a distinct identity as employers, because they are more nimble and can create a local identity. Their further assets are flexibility and lean structures, whereas change processes in large organizations often fail because of red tape, office politics and silo thinking. To identify the one thing that makes an SME stand out as an employer of choice is the challenging task of a successful branding campaign. However, to become an employer of choice, smaller companies cannot simply copy branding campaigns of big corporations. They have to utilize creative, customized strategies to grow their own talent pools. The expertise of specialized consultants can support the management of smaller businesses in identifying and defining the company's brand profile, attractiveness and viability. These branding experts will draw up and implement proposals for ways in which you can boost your image as an employer of choice. Especially for smaller companies, professional employer branding can provide maximum impact and efficiency without carrying hefty costs. At its best, an employer brand will attract and retain the best people to the most critical jobs, helping the organization achieve its business goals.

CUSTOMIZED SOLUTIONS FOR SMEs: MFB CASE STUDIES

Particularly in the case of SMEs, investments in the building of a strong employer brand pay off quickly. Three examples from the work of the MFB branding experts:

1. Away from big city centers: A family business establishes itself as a strong brand

Because of a lack of resources on the "talent shortage", a medium-sized manufacturer of promotional items faced great difficulties to serve the growing demand. Although a leading player in his sector the company was relatively unknown to the wooded group of skilled workers and engineers. In addition, the rather rural location of its production sites was dragging on the company's attractiveness as an employer. MFB Resultants helped the family-owned business achieve a positive image. Together with the management our experts analyzed the employer branding performance of the manufacturer against best practice, identified potentials for improvement and defined a detailed action plan. As a result, to enhance its reputation within the community, the company initiated co-operations with universities and high schools and started sponsoring regional sports teams.

Knowing that building a brand needs to start internally, MFB Resultants supported the management shaping clear employer value propositions that focus not just on compensation but also on other key factors that matter to talented employees, including professional development, a family-friendly work environment and comprehensive healthcare programs. A new tagline was created for the emotional part: "We live responsibility". This tagline captures the personal commitment each employee makes to themselves, customers and the company. The company's branding efforts received a prominent and positive echo in media. More qualified candidates than ever before applied for advertised jobs. Moreover, for the first time, the manufacturer received nationwide speculative applications.

2. Small budget, much creativity: Successful employer branding of an IT consultant

In 2010, the IT consultant had to turn down project orders because it lacked the necessary workforce. Faced with the "War for Talent", the medium-size firm discussed strategies to avoid losing out to the larger regional competition. The management turned to MFB resultants to introduce counter measures fast.

The consultant's budget for marketing activities was rather limited. Its assets were an enormous creative potential among its employees and their great team spirit. The goal: To define and implement a strong employer brand. In a first step the employees described values and visions of their company that, in their opinion, made it stand out from everyone else: (1) a creative, dynamic work environment, (2) a great team spirit, and (3) the possibility to bring in own ideas. The result was a new company slogan: "We Move Forward. Brilliant Minds Welcome." Employee engagement also involved organizing open dialogues between management and the people within the firm. The career site has been modernized, updated and conceptually integrated into the overall communication strategy of the company.

Improvement of knowledge management and internal communication

To document the company's drive for transparency and employee engagement a quarterly newsletter for every employee was launched, covering topics from company news, to project reports, the introduction of new colleagues, and upcoming events. Many of the articles are written by staff, apprentices and trainees are responsible for sending and distribution. Initial success: Three months after MFB resultants had initiated the branding campaign the consultant was able to recruit two highly qualified IT specialists. The new career site lists a significantly higher number of clicks.

3. Internal brand positioning: Employee motivation stops brain drain

A family-owned automobile supplier was suffering from poaching his best employees. A poor work climate and the much better image of nearby competitors caused a high turnover of skilled workers (3 years of average stay).

Investing in employee motivation and retention

Together with the management the MFB experts conducted a survey on employee satisfaction. Based on the findings, MFB Resultants together with the HR Department introduced a program to provide people jobs that fit with their personality and then take the time for a proper orientation. For the first time, the manufacturer introduced training and skills development opportunities for all staff accompanied by an incentive and bonus system for exceptional employee engagement. A friendly and well-constructed introduction (including a "Welcome Pack") makes new employees able to quickly integrate into the workplace. A family-friendly culture offers support and help for employees on parental leave and supports their reintegration after returning to work. Colleagues on parental leave are regularly updated on company news.

The implementation of branding initiatives helped to increase employee satisfaction significantly. The profile of the corporate brand was strengthened considerably. Various indicators document the success of the branding campaign. In his region, the automobile supplier is now regarded as an employer of choice.



Source: StepStone Employer Branding Report 2011, StepStone Deutschland GmbH