

themuse

Employer Branding 101

Everything you ever wanted and needed to know about creating a strong employer brand for your company.



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CHAPTER 1

Is Employer Branding Really That Important? Um, Yes.



One early winter morning, Marriott employees were startled by a series of loud thuds.

At the entrance of the company's headquarters in Bethesda, Maryland, a large (and very determined) deer was trying to push its way through the revolving glass doors.

Aside from giving the front desk receptionist celebrity status for years to come, Marriott's Employer Brand team saw an opportunity.

Security camera footage of the deer's valiant-but-futile effort was edited into a short video for the company's social channels, closing with a simple one-liner: "There's an easier way to get your foot in the door at Marriott." The post teeing up the video described the ideal Marriott associate as being passionate, curious, driven, and a little outside-of-the-box.

IS EMPLOYER BRANDING REALLY THAT IMPORTANT? UM, YES.

Here's Why



One wrong turn for this poor deer became a creative way for the global hotel brand to connect with job seekers through original content, showcase the company's personality, and describe the people who would fit on the team.

Whether or not you have the help of local wildlife, investing in your employer brand is a powerful way to identify, attract, and even retain the very best talent. Whether you're a startup or a Fortune 500 company, determining what makes you unique and sharing it in a compelling way ensures you'll have the greatest impact on job candidates at every touchpoint of their journey.

Why Employer Brand Matters

"Branding" is a common term in the marketing world, but it isn't only about selling your products or services to consumers. You should place just as much emphasis on promoting your employer brand—the qualities that make your company a special place to work—to set you apart from the competition and humanize your organization.



Here's Why

It's how you tell your story and create a lasting, positive impression.

In today's recruiting landscape, candidates aren't just asking if they're a good fit for a company; they're considering, "Is the company a good fit for me?" They want to know everything they can about the culture, their colleagues, the office environment, various paths to success, and what their lives will be like if they show up there every day. Often, the decision to choose one company over another—or even apply to one company over another—comes down to how much they understand and relate to an employer brand.

Whether it's time to give your long-standing values a fresh look or you're starting from square one, let's walk through how to develop, strengthen, and nurture that brand—so you can attract the right talent.



CHAPTER 2

Your Vibe Attracts Your Tribe: What Does Your Brand Say to People?



First Things First: Listen to Your Employees

Every company is a community with its own unique culture, and your employer brand is your opportunity to show the world what it's like to be part of that community. But—and this is important—the story you tell can't be manufactured. It has to match what people actually think and feel about your organization.

The easiest way to find out if it aligns? Start talking to your employees.

Get on the Same Page

The first, most crucial step in assessing and strengthening your brand starts internally. Everyone who works for the company needs to be clear about your values, mission, and goals. If teams aren't on the same page and your external communications are all over the place, you can bet that'll be confusing to a job seeker.

And this is more common than you'd think! Public relations firm Weber Shandwick, in partnership with KRC Research, conducted a global online survey of 2,300 employees, revealing that only four in 10 employees can confidently describe to others what their employer does or what its goals are (42% and 37%, respectively).

To see where you stand, gather feedback on a regular basis. Ask questions, seek candid opinions, and listen to stories—these serve as the foundation of your employer brand.

IN A NUTSHELL, YOU WANT TO KNOW:

- What attracts people to your company?
- What keeps them there?
- Where can you improve?

Got it!



Umm...



So, like, we, like..



Yeah!



Well, we, uh...



Well..



You know what you want to hear, but is it what your employees are saying?

Hearing it from employees' perspective puts you in their shoes.

Whether it's at the monthly staff meeting, in one-on-one interviews, focus groups or retreats, or through office-wide surveys, constantly engage with your team to understand the strengths and weaknesses of your employer brand. (Here at The Muse, we conduct employee satisfaction surveys every six months.)

TO HONE IN ON THE SPECIFICS THAT MAKE YOUR COMPANY A GREAT PLACE TO WORK, ASK YOUR EMPLOYEES QUESTIONS LIKE:

Why did you join the company?

What values are important to you at a job?

How do you experience those values here?

What are your biggest motivators at work?

What's different about our company than others you've worked for?

What are our most meaningful traditions or office experiences?

What qualities do people need to be successful here?

What work are you most proud of?

What are your favorite parts about your job, the team, and the workspace?



First Things First: Listen to Your Employees

FROM THERE, NOTICE COMMON STORIES, VALUES, AND THEMES. THEN, MAKE NOTE OF THE DISTINCT VALUE YOU OFFER.

- ✓ Do you provide solid opportunities for employee development, based on what they want to learn?
- ✓ Are the motivators you offer in line with what your staffers want?
- ✓ Do you offer ways for employees to take initiative or create change at work?
- ✓ Are team members celebrated and rewarded for their accomplishments in a way that's meaningful to them?
- ✓ Does the office environment foster the kind of community that's motivating and meaningful to your people?
- ✓ What behaviors, values, and traditions do you want to be part of your culture for years to come? How can you encourage them to continue?

These exercises uncover great attributes and eye-opening suggestions for ways to foster a happier work environment—things much more aligned with your values than “free snacks.” Better yet, they help define your Employee Value Proposition—the reason to work for an organization, which should be consistently infused in all of your communications.



ABOVE A view into Airbnb's office

Not surprisingly, Airbnb offers employees an annual travel credit of \$2,000 to explore the world.

 Kyle Pickering, UI Designer

“The travel credit obviously isn’t just a perk. It’s an important tool that gives us valuable insight into how we can improve and build on the experience.”

On the other hand, more and more companies are providing unparalleled benefits that allow employees to stay home. Netflix recently announced a game-changing family leave policy, allowing employees to take unlimited maternity or paternity leave during the first year after their child's birth or adoption. They can return full-time or part-time, and even take leave at different points throughout the year.

Making an Impact Throughout the Candidate Journey

Once you've defined exactly what makes you stand out from other employers in your industry, it's time to share that message everywhere. From a video on your career page to recruiting events, your social media accounts to your profile on sites like The Muse, if you clearly and authentically communicate who you are, the more likely you are to draw in applicants who know they identify with your culture.

Also, know that you don't have to build your employer brand single-handedly. Find moments when your co-workers can share their pride in their company. At The Muse, employees often share social posts of fun goings-on at the office, and many of our LinkedIn headlines include the line "We're Hiring!", since we're totally open to networking with prospective candidates.



Where Should Your Employer Brand Live?

Your brand should be infused through all of these channels—and more!

PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

Email correspondence

Job postings

Recruiting materials

Event invitations and materials

Company website and career page

Company social channels

Videos, photos, employee blog posts, executive thought leadership

Partnership content

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

Employer feedback

Employee development and training materials

Intranet

IN FACT

69%

of job seekers care if an employer is pro-active with their brand.¹

(e.g. Updating its profiles, responding to reviews, and sharing updates on the culture and work environment.)

TIP

“There is no such thing as a good thing or bad thing in office walls when it comes to recruiting. Be as authentic as possible. Don't just say what you think people want to hear.”



Elliott Bell,
Director of Brand Strategy
and Community,
The Muse

1. Glassdoor, 2014

Show It, Don't Tell It (Throughout the Candidate Journey)

What You Bring to the Table

(AND WE'RE NOT REFERRING TO THE PING PONG TABLE)

Explaining your company culture doesn't mean tossing around buzzwords and emphasizing your perks. Perks keep people happy during the day—they don't keep them at companies. Nap pods and an on-site gym are nice benefits, but those aren't the reasons people choose an organization. In reality, they decide where to work because of the purpose, colleagues, management style, and opportunities to grow, not a game room.

Today's job seekers expect employers to be specific about their culture so they can determine if the company's mission is worth their time and energy. And it's easier than ever to find this information well before the first correspondence. For example, Progressive Insurance's profile on The Muse provides an inside view of their strong team-based culture and environment that's perfect for curious, open-minded, and driven people. Joshua, a Domain Architect says, "At Progressive, you can reach out to anyone in the company and ask a question. Barriers don't exist and that's very empowering."

**The earlier you start
branding, the less you'll
compete later.**

Target is known for having pretty much everything, at an affordable price. But they're lesser known for their great success in embracing new technology and pioneering innovation. (They've done collaborations with MIT's Media Lab and TOMS.) Ashley, an employee who is part of their Technology Leadership Program explains, "There is a lot of change happening, which tells me that Target is invested in technology. Target knows that technology is the future."

Kimpton Hotels has landed on Fortune's Best Places to to Work List seven times thanks in part to how they treat their employees. According to their careers page, "We've scored a perfect 100 percent on the Human Rights Campaign Foundation's Corporate Equality Index. That means we don't give a damn what you look like, or who you choose to love. All we care about is whether you can extend genuine, heartfelt care, comfort and delight to our guests. (Read the full page if you get a chance - their voice is warm, witty, and genuine.)

67%

*of candidates think
about job search*

6

MONTHS

*prior to actively
searching¹*

PHASE 1: AWARENESS

Career Advice & Getting Mentored & Networking

Employer branding comes into the picture long before people become active candidates. Defining, sharing, and living your employer brand means that the right candidates will want to learn more—even if they're not yet thinking about making a career change. If they start to engage with your employer brand, you'll be top of mind when they're ready.

Find communities, either online or off, full of the people you want to hire, and find a way to join them in a meaningful way. Offer to host a quarterly happy hour at your offices for a meetup of database engineers; just creating a venue for networking (and maybe picking up a few appetizers) gets you a new pool of future candidates.

HERE ARE A FEW OTHER WAYS TO BUILD BROAD AWARENESS SO THAT THEY HAVE A POSITIVE IMPRESSION BEFORE THEY SEARCH FOR NEW OPPORTUNITIES:

- Promote your executives as thought leaders at industry events.
- Be present in the press.
- Host panel discussions or networking meetups at your office.
- Publish content from your employees on third-party sites.

Sites like Medium provide a publishing platform to share industry expertise in really creative, collaborative ways with the right audiences. For example, *52 Things I Learned in 2015* is a great read by Tom Whitwell, a digital director and consultant at Fluxx Ltd. He shares all sorts of fascinating stats learned from his job and his personal life that really make you think.



“Using authentic content when you market to candidates gives you a chance to build a relationship with them. Just like in the advertising world, with repeated exposure to your brand, you can recruit people you might have missed otherwise.”

Doug Freeman, Vice President of Sales, The Muse

1
Awareness

2
Consideration

3
Application

The Candidate Journey

1

Awareness

2

Consideration

3

Application

PHASE 2: CONSIDERATION

Researching Opportunities & Engaging with Employers

Once people go into the early consideration stage, articulating your employer brand can cement your company in someone's mind. That includes everything from the information about you they discover online to how your customer-facing teams treat consumers. Be sure to create a great experience for job seekers on your website (keep reading for tips on giving your career page easy updates or a complete overhaul). They'll probably also scope out review sites like Glassdoor, company profiles on The Muse, and social channels.

YOUR VIBE ATTRACTS YOUR TRIBE: WHAT DOES YOUR BRAND SAY TO PEOPLE?
Show It, Don't Tell It (Throughout the Candidate Journey)



1

Awareness

2

Consideration

3

Application

PHASE 3: APPLICATION

Applying to Jobs & Going on Interviews

Don't underestimate the value of showcasing your brand throughout the entire application process. Every step of the application process, every email you send, every interview question you ask is a chance to show what working with your company is all about.

YOUR VIBE ATTRACTS YOUR TRIBE: WHAT DOES YOUR BRAND SAY TO PEOPLE?

Show It, Don't Tell It (Throughout the Candidate Journey)



Lauren Roberts, Talent Acquisition Specialist at The Muse, shares how to most effectively and authentically show your culture in action all the way through the candidate experience.

Create a supportive environment from the get-go and give them the tools to put their best self forward.

When we schedule an interview at The Muse, we share links to our articles featuring interview tips that they can read to prepare beforehand.

When you put your interview committee together, think about whom the candidate should interact with for the best experience.

Aside from meeting their potential boss and colleagues, introduce them to leadership, which can be really inspiring and motivating

During the interview, give candidates a tour and point out things that exemplify what's unique about your culture.

Like collaborative team workspaces, the famed gong that alerts everyone of a new business win, or a "shout out board" where team members share what others did that they appreciated.

Every person you come in contact with is a potential brand ambassador.

If you can't offer the job, give them objective feedback so they can walk away with something tangible to improve their chances down the road. At the very least, you have built a relationship and left them with a good feeling about your organization.

YOUR VIBE ATTRACTS YOUR TRIBE: WHAT DOES YOUR BRAND SAY TO PEOPLE?

Show It, Don't Tell It (Throughout the Candidate Journey)

Emily Pocrass, Vice President,
Human Resources-Brand, Marketing, Sales &
Consumer Service at Marriott International explains,

“You have to articulate what the job or company is all about in a way that is enticing, but real. You can't oversell it. People need to understand what they're coming into. If you portray what you really believe that job to offer, it's going to resonate with the right candidate.”

On the flip side, Pocrass adds, “If a company says that they're something they're not, and you attract people in, but it's not what they heard in the interview process, pretty quickly that starts to fall apart. You aren't living up to the brand that you put out there.”



CHAPTER 3

OK, So How Do I Make it Better?

How the Best Employers Do it Right



Rallying Your Team

Virtually everyone in your organization can play a role in evaluating, strengthening, and promoting your employer brand.

Aside from HR, Marketing, and senior leaders, you'll need web developers, creative thinkers, social media strategists, content creators, Google Analytics gurus, and more.

Rallying Your Team

Once your messaging is on point, a great way to raise brand awareness, boost your reputation, and attract talent is leveraging your employees to tell your story. People who love their jobs want to shout about them from the rooftops and help their company grow. They're your best, most authentic cheerleaders. While candidates can certainly learn a lot from your career page or a stellar job posting, talking to their peers in person builds trust and humanizes your organization in an even more powerful way.

The 2016 Edelman Trust Barometer (an annual trust and credibility survey) shows that trust in employees as credible spokespeople for companies is on the rise: In 2016, **52%** agree that employees are a credible source of information—four points greater than a year ago.

The Barometer also reveals that respondents are increasingly reliant on a “person like yourself”, who, along with a regular employee, are significantly more trusted than a CEO or government official. On social networking and content-sharing sites, respondents are far more trusting of family and friends (**78%**) than a CEO (**49%**).

Owning your brand and communicating it through a strong presence outside of the office is easy, it's cost effective, and it should be an ongoing effort. Raise visibility by encouraging your employees to represent your company at conferences and networking events, speak on panels, write thought leadership pieces for other outlets, and share great work on their social channels. This is especially important if you're a new business without much brand awareness. Even if you only have five people on the payroll, getting them out there legitimizes your organization.



“Virtually no spokesperson is more trusted than a company’s own employees. And yet, one out of every three employees doesn’t trust his or her own company. For nearly every company, deeper engagement with employees is a low hanging fruit—and a direct avenue to growing trust in business, at the organizational level, and at the institutional level.”

Michael Stewart President & CEO, Europe & CIS for Edelman

Need fresh ideas?

Pull together a “branding task force” of passionate employees of various levels and roles to be your eyes and ears. They’ll have great input on how to tell your brand story through events, social media content, video for your website, recruiting efforts, and more. Junior and mid-level employees can be especially helpful in providing insight on what’s important to their peers when seeking a new job opportunity. Another bonus: Including them in employer branding gives them a voice and makes them feel even more invested in the company.

“Connect with the people who are good culture fits, but not necessarily a role fit. So when the right roles do come around, you have a network you can reach out to.”



Shahzad Ahsan,
Marketing, The Muse



Employee referrals are also a great way to lure in new talent. Regularly provide links to the latest job openings to employees (which makes it easy to copy, paste, and share via social media) so they can tap into their networks and deliver pre-vetted, high-quality candidates. Most people wouldn’t recommend someone that they know personally if they aren’t a good culture fit. If the hiring process is taking longer than anticipated, encourage the referral sponsor to stay engaged with the applicant to keep things “warm.” Especially with referrals, a high degree of communication throughout the recruiting process is a strong way to stand out and show candidates you care.

When it comes to campus recruiting, fostering connections between students and a company’s employees often helps seal the deal. Sherri Wasser, a Senior Recruiter at McKinsey & Company explains, “The one-on-one conversations over coffee with our consultants really resonate the best. Students can see themselves doing what that person does, and it really gets them excited about working here.”



Optimizing Your Website

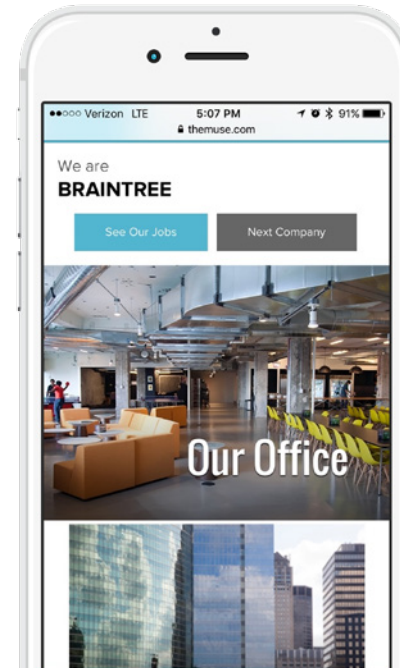
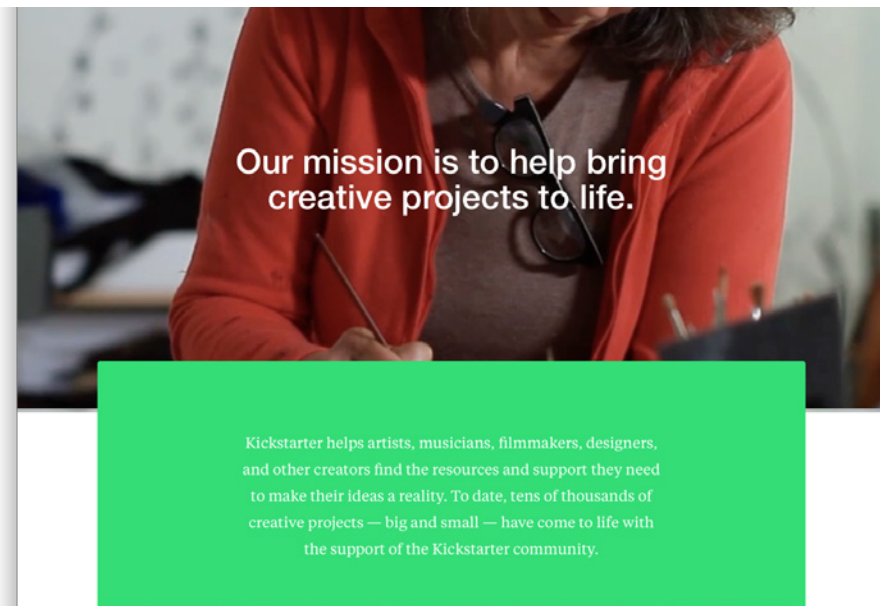
Oftentimes, your website is someone's first impression of your company culture (and not just the careers page—but we'll get to that in a bit). It's a platform for top talent to gauge who you are and how they might fit in. A well-designed, user-friendly site will score you big points with job applicants (and a lame or outdated site can be a turnoff, as it raises questions about how much the company cares).

HERE'S HOW

Know your mission and communicate it clearly

A solid one-liner about your company's mission is essential. A study by Deloitte shows that "mission-driven" companies have 30% higher levels of innovation and 40% higher levels of retention. Kickstarter, for example, communicates its values, not buzzwords. Candidates will instantly know how important it is for employees to be part of a company that fosters creativity around the world.

BELOW Kickstarter's website does a great job of identifying the mission, front and center.



Have a mobile optimized website

Whether candidates are skimming open positions while riding the subway or applying for a job from their couch, the entire experience should be easy, seamless, and work on smartphones and tablets.

Too many tedious steps, the inability to do simple things like email a job to themselves, and the dreaded "pinch and zoom" lead to drop-offs. Plus, Google favors mobile optimized sites in search rankings.

53%

of 18- to 29-year-olds have used a smartphone as part of a job search.¹

some

47%

of smartphone job seekers have had problems accessing job-related content because it wasn't displaying properly on their phone

and

47%

have had problems reading the text in a job posting because it wasn't designed for a mobile device¹

1. Pew, 2015

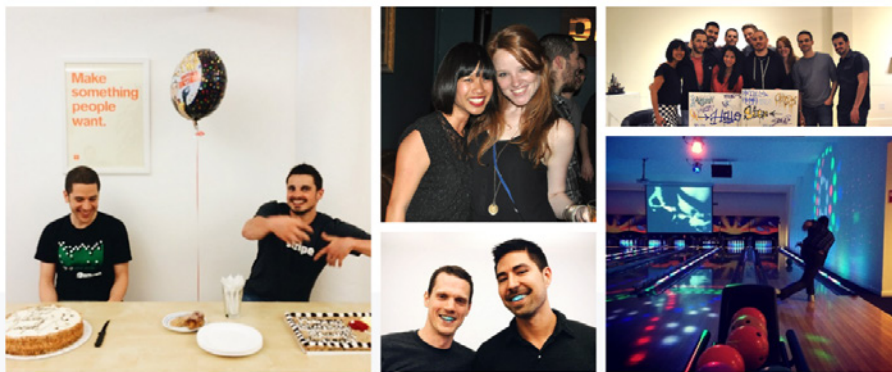
Optimizing Your Website

Infuse your employee value proposition



From copy to photos, your website should reflect your true company culture—the things that make your employees feel valued, fulfilled, and excited to come to work each day.

Avoid clichés, industry jargon, generic language, and the “We, We, We Syndrome.” Talk to your applicants not at them.



A GOOD RULE OF THUMB

Show off the best parts of your office (and any quirky ones). But there’s no need to actually write if it’s “trendy” - let the pictures speak for themselves.

Prioritize career content

Make sure that links to your career page are prominently featured throughout your site. The word “careers” in teeny, tiny 8pt font near the footer doesn’t exactly scream, “Come work with us!”

Add authentic photos and video

Anyone can spot a “people laughing in conference room while eating salad” royalty-free image from a mile away—so skip the stock photos. It’s no surprise that Discovery Communications includes gorgeous (definitely not stock) photos on its career site, mixed with images and video of employees. Whether you invest in a professional shoot to capture the vibe at your office or ask your team to get creative with their phones (bonus: you can use those shots for your social channels), make sure the look and feel is current and genuine. (More on creating great culture content later.)

New Case Studies

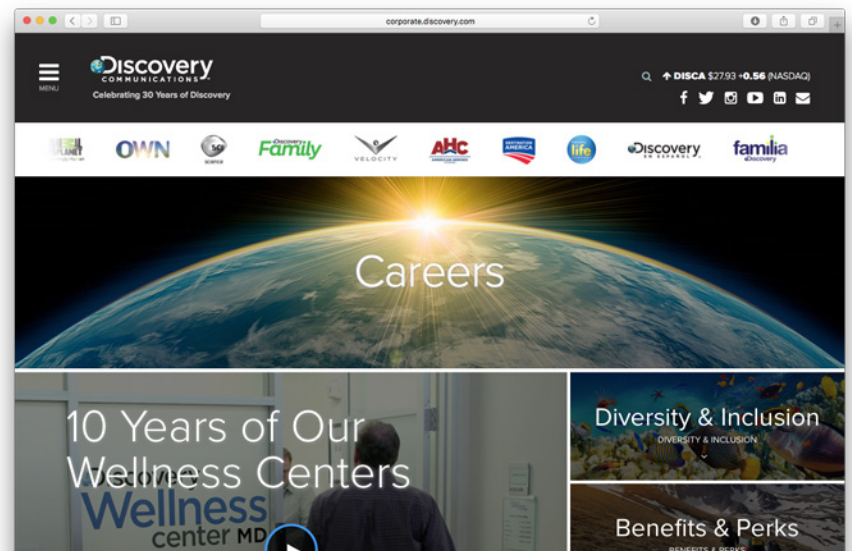
Career Content

Add Party Photos

Embed Videos

Add Job Alerts

BELOW See a great example at Discovery Communications



Optimizing Your Website

Assess the website regularly

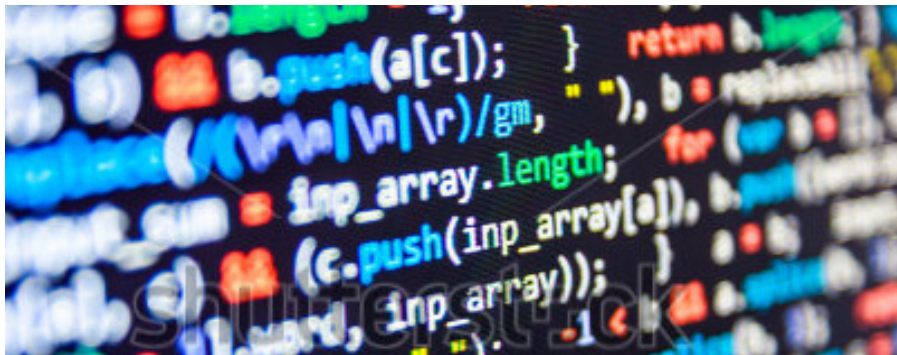
Don't "set it and forget it." Devoting time and resources to keeping your website up-to-date will pay off every time someone new comes to your site and has a good experience. As an example, make it a goal to add one employee interview to the site each month.



Invest in a redesign

If your website hasn't been updated in years, sometimes it's best to hit reset. Get your employees involved for fresh perspectives on design and content. From engineers to creative types, product managers to financial analysts, your site should appeal to people with varying career paths and interests, so you definitely want different teams to weigh in.

For instance, a big PR firm might be known for crisis management and media relations expertise but also have an award-winning digital practice that creates websites, apps, and social content for global brands. If the company's website mainly touted traditional PR, then developers, video producers, and graphic designers probably wouldn't know there were amazing opportunities there for them, too.



Learn from your data

Use Google Analytics (which is extremely thorough and free!) to assess page performance, traffic sources, demographics, engagement, and user behavior. Understanding search traffic could uncover surprising ways people are reaching your career page and help you strategize for the future. Use the data to set quarterly goals like increasing the number of applicants or the average time someone spends on your career page.

Make a plan

Some of these tips are quick fixes; others take time and planning. Plot out exactly how you'll overhaul your web presence across a set time frame. First, assess your website's strengths and weaknesses to determine how you'll approach updates or a redesign. From there, it's a matter of measuring and testing how the changes you make impact your candidate pipeline (thank you very much, weekly Google Analytics reports).



Give Your Career Page an Overhaul

As you get your website to-do list in order, the career page should be a top priority. The beating heart of your employer brand, it's what can either make a prospective candidate apply on the spot—or bounce and never come back. (No pressure, right?)

1 MAKE YOUR CASE WITH HARD DATA

Your marketing and dev teams probably won't view updates to your career page a priority—unless you have the numbers to justify improvements. Use Google Analytics to learn about the performance of your career page, and you'll have a sense of what you want to change and the impact on candidates.

2 TEST YOUR BRANDING

Find a few friends outside your industry—ideally friends who can't readily explain what your company does—and send them to your company's career page. Ask them to describe what your employees are like in five words. If their descriptions don't align with the employer brand you think you have, then you have some work to do.



The Muse's HR Director Shannon Fitzgerald said she'd like to project these five traits:

High-energy Trusted Hard-working Passionate Thoughtful

We asked a law student and a fashion designer to give their take, based on our careers page

FASHION Energizing Creative Deliberate Thoughtful Ambitious

LAW Energizing Creative Collaborative Challenging Rewarding

That result was close to what we aim to portray (which made our talent team very happy).

3 MAKE IT PERSONAL

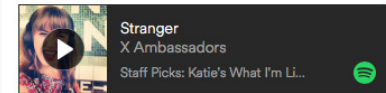
Highlight employees of all levels and roles, not just the top management. This brings your company's character to life. While a list of perks is nice to have, a video of an art director talking about her favorite photo shoot gives candidates a clear idea of the approach to work, core values, and what it's like being part of the team. And remember, a picture really is worth a thousand words on your career page. Steer clear of the wall of text and include really illustrative photos and video. Spotify does a great job of showcasing its "band" (a.k.a. employees) along with their favorite music.

RIGHT Spotify's employees show off what they're listening to and favorite music.



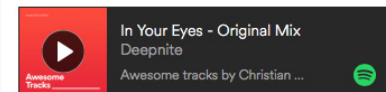
Katie Schlosser

North American Label Relations Director



Christian Wilsson

Director of Communication Design



Optimizing Your Website

4 INTEGRATE YOUR SOCIAL FEEDS

Candidates can scope out the latest content you've been sharing, like thought leadership blogs, press hits, event information, creative inspiration, fun team traditions, and third-party articles that are relevant to your industry and pique interest among job seekers.

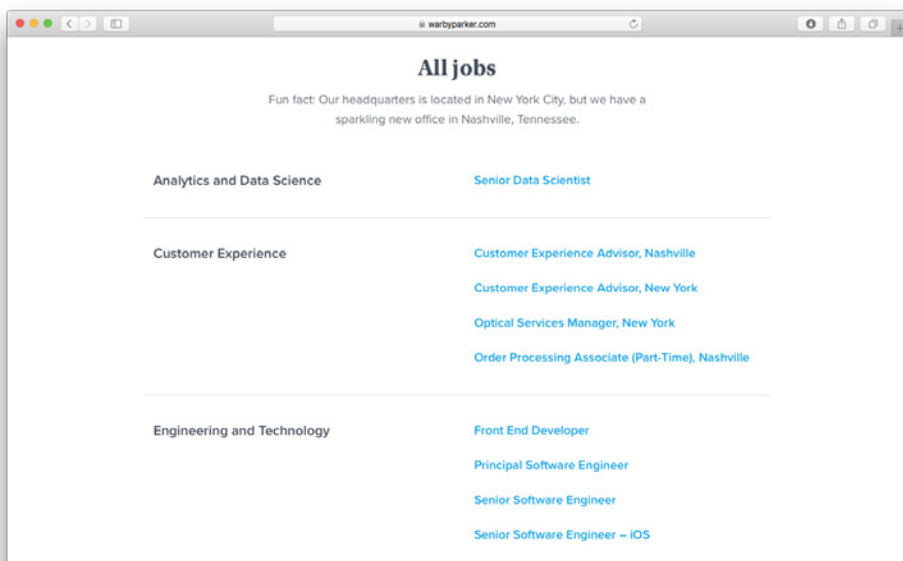


5 TAILOR YOUR JOB POSTINGS

Job descriptions are so important and often overlooked. Rather than aiming for the most applicants, think about what will get you the most hires. Write for your ideal role fit, their career motivations, and the specific functions of the job. If you're too general, you'll be inundated with thousands of resumes, which will ultimately burn out the hiring manager.

6 CATEGORIZE JOBS BY FUNCTION

Rather than posting one long list, make it easy for applicants to zero in on their area of expertise and just search those jobs.



CHAPTER 4

What Next? Content and Community FTW



Creating Content That Candidates Will Actually Care About

Original content is one of the most effective, engaging ways to tell your culture story and get the right candidates to care. Hearing employees share what gets them out of bed in the morning, the projects they're passionate about, and favorite company traditions could be the hook that turns viewers into future employees.

The best news? You don't need to spend a lot of money to nail it. When done right, stories told by your employees or 30-second, scrappy iPhone videos could get way more buzz than expensive, professionally produced articles or video.



LivePerson, a 20-year-old public tech company, has cracked the code on how to make videos that actually get people excited to work there. Its no-frills videos poke fun at Silicon Valley clichés—free food, massages, pet policies—with spot-on, genuine humor that highlights LivePerson’s authentic work environment.

Best of all? The culture team put these videos together themselves with iPhones and iMovie when their professional company video project was taking too long and feeling more forced.

Its no-frills videos poke fun at Silicon Valley clichés...with spot-on, genuine humor that highlights LivePerson’s authentic work environment.



The cliché Silicon Valley video

VIDEO IDEAS

- ✓ **Make a two-minute montage** of a few employees answering an engaging question like “What gets you out of bed every day?”, “How’d you get here?”, or “What’s the wisest advice you’ve gotten from a co-worker?”
- ✓ **Do an office walkthrough**—in 10 seconds. Instagram’s Hyperlapse app (free!) lets you record a few minutes of video, and then speed it up to be interesting, while removing that shaky cam look.
- ✓ **Create a short video message to share** right after someone applies to a job on your site. Round up your team and have them give an energetic “Thank you for applying!” Great brands know how to use small surprises to be memorable.





If you're a woman and have ever worn clothing, you've probably worn Spanx. While this slimming apparel is extremely well known, the company wanted to promote its employer brand (specifically product-focused roles and the diversity behind them) to early career Millennials. Spanx chose The Muse for a recruitment marketing campaign: Our team of videographers interviewed employees, and also handled photos, text, and web development, to create a micro-site about what it's like to work at Spanx' headquarters in Atlanta.

The campaign boosted Spanx's ability to screen for the right candidates, proving the typical text job ad doesn't tell a story about your employees or your culture; getting a profile supported by video and articles people want to read does.

WHAT SPANX THOUGHT

"The Muse is a great way for us to own the message with regard to who we are, and there's no better way to do it than through the voice of our team. Authenticity is so incredibly important—candidates want to hear recommendations from real people. And from a visual perspective, the way the brand is showcased has been wonderful."

John Berger, VP of Human Resources at Spanx



TAKEAWAY

The typical text job ad doesn't tell a story about your employees or your culture; getting a profile supported by video and articles people want to read does.

Before You Hit Record...

A well thought out content strategy can play a big role in your talent acquisition efforts.

A CONTENT STRATEGY

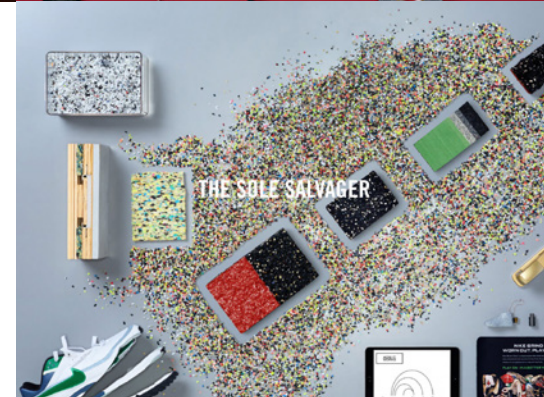
- Aligns your hiring goals and employer brand with tailored content
- Unifies your communications under a unique, value-driven identity in a crowded digital space
- Uses insights from your research to create meaningful content that supports user behaviors, values, and goals

Go back to the stories gathered during your research phase. Uncover common themes and bring them to life through content that complements your employer brand and really connects with job seekers.

Nike as a company is driven by innovation, and they know their employees are, too. They help job seekers discover their “inner innovator” by breaking this theme down into subcategories so candidates can zero in on the right jobs for their passions and skillset.



TOP & RIGHT
Nike groups its jobs by asking candidates, “What kind of innovator are you?” and describes skill sets that apply to different types of roles.



DO UNDERSTAND YOUR AUDIENCE AND CREATE CONTENT FOR THEM.

There's a lot of competition for attention on social media. Whether it's Instagram or Snapchat, focus your efforts on creating content that is most likely to be discovered by the people you're trying to reach. This past fall, Havas Chicago kicked off their second Snapchat recruitment program specifically for interns, asking job seekers to create social media campaigns about one of seven causes, from fighting hunger to ending gun violence. The winner got a 10-week internship and the opportunity to lead an agency wide initiative supporting the cause they covered.

DO MAKE YOUR CASE TO THE POWERS THAT BE

for a production budget if you have a great idea that needs the right resources to be done well. (This is where those Google Analytics to prove your point will come in handy again.)

DO KEEP YOUR CONTENT SHORT AND VALUABLE.

Think about what someone can learn, or why he or she would be compelled to share it. Give your fans information that's useful and actionable, like data-fueled infographics relevant to their interests or short career tips from your team. Nestlé USA Careers shares infographics like this one to provide a snapshot of what a particular role entails.

DO DEFINE METRICS FOR SUCCESS AND TRACK THEM.

Is it a certain amount of likes, shares, comments and re-tweets? Is it driving traffic to your career page or boosting attendance at an event? Is it buzz online from other websites?

DON'T WRITE (OR WORSE, FILM A BUNCH OF TALKING HEADS GOING ON AND ON) ABOUT YOUR "COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE."

We can't say it enough: Be specific about what makes your company unique. Dropbox, for example, highlights its employees through a video featuring puppets. But this portrayal of company culture is as real as it gets. Within just two minutes (that fly by because the video is so well done), job seekers will have a strong sense of the company values, diverse team, and positive environment.

DON'T COPY THE BIG GUYS.

If Apple or Google already did it, try something else. Figure out what's core to your company and run with it.

DON'T THINK CONTENT IS ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL.

Something created for Facebook can't just be copied and pasted on Twitter. Optimize your content for various channels.

DON'T GET TOO EAGER OR DISCOURAGED BY EARLY METRICS.

You'll see some trends quickly, like certain social posts gaining traction. But others, like web traffic from search engines and ups or downs in your overall apply rates, are going to take longer to show through.

The Dos and Don'ts of Producing Great Content

Get noticed with these guidelines:

Amplifying Reach on Social Channels

SO NOW THAT YOU'VE CREATED GREAT CONTENT, YOU NEED TO PUT IT OUT THERE.

Most candidates check out a company's social profiles—and often—so make sure they're updated frequently. If there's radio silence, you'll look out of touch, and they'll be turned off. On the flip side, don't bombard your followers with links to job openings. Create a content calendar (a simple Excel sheet works just fine!) that helps you plan and schedule your posts over the course of a week or month. This way, you'll have a bird's eye view of how you're pacing content and the types of things you're sharing.

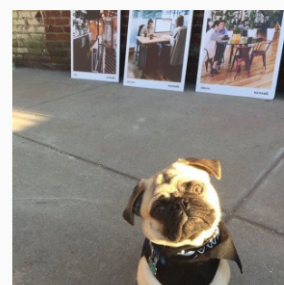
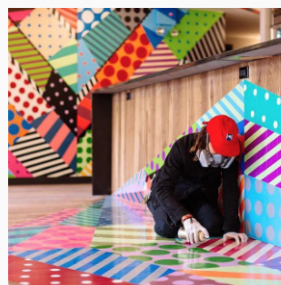
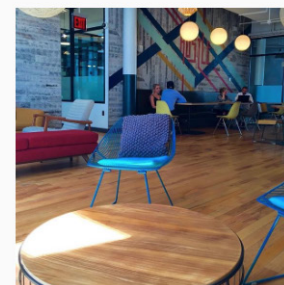
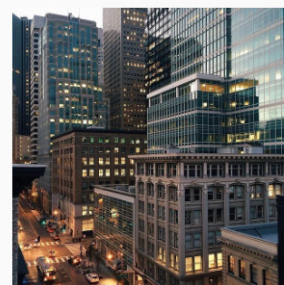
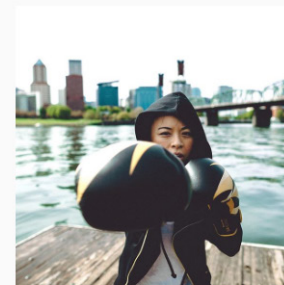
If you can, invest in social advertising, which allows you to target posts by interests and geography. With Facebook's organic reach on the decline, it's shifted to a "pay to play" model for businesses. By putting money behind your posts, you'll be able to reach your audiences more predictably, and with much greater accuracy.

Experiment with different platforms to see where you get the most engagement. For example, Instagram can be a great way to broaden your reach in a really visual way. Use hashtags (but don't go overboard) and post photos or videos that give an authentic behind-the-scenes glimpse of your company.

RIGHT
WeWork Instagram Feed

WeWork provides shared office spaces all over the globe, and its Instagram is packed with gorgeous photos to prove it.

The social team often integrates the slogan, "Do What You Love" to encourage sharing and emphasize the company's values and laid-back culture.



Amplifying Reach on Social Channels

Aside from posting content on your company's social channels, encourage employees to share it with their social networks, too. You can even turn social sharing into a contest. Give everyone custom URLs and see who drives the most traffic from their post.

You can also ask employees to be content curators for your company's social channels. They can snap photos of what's going on around the office—traditions, brainstorming, cool spots people set up camp with their laptops—or share inspirational images that tie back to your brand. It'll help you get tons of content, and it's fun for your team. Ogilvy Washington's Instagram is a group effort aimed at connecting with DC's creative scene through beautiful imagery of client work and life in and out of the office (the famed Beer Cart, obligatory cherry blossom shot, employee birthday festivities, brainstorming, and more).

TIP

Provide draft copy employees can cut and paste or use for inspiration for their posts.

Lastly, partnering with other media outlets on social media initiatives and content creation will add credibility and broaden your audience. Be sure to track the reach and engagement that's happening around your content on other outlets' social channels.

Video shoot @360livemedia offices. One employee said “a typical day here is atypical.” #regram #loveyourjob #officeculture #cooljobs #career #bts



A day in the life @roblyemarketing (and it's pretty awesome) #worklife



ABOVE
The Muse's feed features a mix of office lifestyle and a behind-the-scenes look inside some awesome places to work.



OgilvyDC
Instagram



Is This Working? Measuring Employer Branding Success

Measuring Success

You've done all this great work, but is it working?

TRACK THESE KEY INDICATORS OF EMPLOYEE BRAND SUCCESS:

- ✓ Your offer acceptance rate goes up
- ✓ Employee retention increases
- ✓ Internal surveys confirm your employees feel fulfilled and proud of your company as a place to work
- ✓ Traffic to your website, career page, and related content goes up
- ✓ Increased positive engagement on your company's social channels
- ✓ Increased positive ratings on review sites

**WHERE THE
RUBBER
MEETS THE
ROAD**

EMPLOYER BRAND AUDIT

To gather feedback on your employer brand, have you:

Conducted surveys?	Y	N
Held one-on-one meetings?	Y	N
Shared brand values with the company?	Y	N
Included employees in brainstorming and employer brand work?	Y	N

Do your employees:

Regularly attend networking events?	Y	N
Speak on panels?	Y	N
Share your company's content on their own social media channels?	Y	N
Drive recruiting/referrals?	Y	N

When communicating with candidates:

Are your job postings specific to the applicant you want to hire?	Y	N
Do all communications align with your branding?	Y	N
Have you put together the strongest interview committee?	Y	N
Are you building a talent pool of good culture fits you can tap when the right role opens up?	Y	N

Website

Is your website mobile optimized?	Y	N
Do you have a strong mission statement?	Y	N
Have you included authentic visuals (photo and video) to showcase your office environment and culture?	Y	N
Are your job postings tailored to the position?	Y	N
Is copy succinct?	Y	N
Can a user find information in a minimal amount of steps?	Y	N
Is the application process seamless?	Y	N
Are your social feeds integrated? If not, are there links to your social feeds?	Y	N

Content

Do you have a content strategy that aligns with your employer brand proposition?	Y	N
Do you have a production budget?	Y	N
Do you have videos currently on the site?	Y	N

If so:

Are they current and authentic?	Y	N
Do they tell your unique story and highlight your values?	Y	N
Do they showcase your office space?	Y	N
Do you have articles and blog posts written by employees?	Y	N
Do you use Google Analytics to assess traffic sources and user behavior?	Y	N

Social Media

Do you have a dedicated social media manager?	Y	N
Are you using a content calendar to plan and schedule your posts?	Y	N
Is your content designed/optimized for different social channels?	Y	N
Are you sharing third party content?	Y	N
Are you sharing content featuring your employees?	Y	N
Do you encourage employees to share company content and job postings on their social channels?	Y	N
Are you measuring success/tracking metrics (on your channels and partners)?	Y	N

Scoring Key

All 'Y's count for 1 point

0-10 You've got some of the basics covered, but you've also got some work cut out for you. If your careers page could use some help, start there.

11-24 You're on your way. If you've already created a strong experience on your site, try focusing on external-facing content and activities next.

25-35 Phenomenal! You're following best practices for employer branding.

Ready to get started? **We can help.**

We'd love to talk with you and identify how your employer brand is being perceived—and, more importantly, how you can change it quickly.

CONTACT THE MUSE →



The Muse helps people navigate every stage of their career. We offer expert advice, and an innovative job search experience that's actually engaging and doesn't suck.

For the companies that work with us, we help them recruit top talent from a large and diverse pool of qualified candidates by showing our millions of readers what it's like to work at a company before they even apply.

For our members, we provide valuable career advice alongside a personalized and simple job search that helps them discover roles and companies that are a perfect fit.



Itching for more?

Check out a deeper dive on how we help with employer branding in this case study.

[DOWNLOAD THE PDF →](#)

**Want an employer brand consultation?
Talk to us.**

[CONTACT THE MUSE →](#)

Contributors

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jessica Solloway is an experienced writer and content strategist, overseeing digital content development for global consumer and B2B brands, as well as government agencies. She resides in Washington, D.C. with her family.

ADDITIONAL EXPERT INSIGHT FROM

Elliott Bell

Director of Brand Strategy and Community at The Muse

Shahzad Ahsan

Demand Generation Manager at The Muse

Adrian Granzella Larssen

Editor-in-Chief at The Muse

Shannon Fitzgerald

Director of Human Resources at The Muse

Lauren Roberts

Talent Acquisition Specialist at The Muse

Douglas Freeman

Vice President of Sales at The Muse

LAYOUT & DESIGN

Jacob Gambino

Lead Designer at The Muse