



The First Step in Crafting
Your Employer Brand

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You know that your employer brand is crucial for marketing your company to target talent. But, there's a question that often goes unasked: Where does your employer brand come from?

Your people, your culture, and your values all play an important role. However, when you really take a step back, you'll find that your employer brand all starts with your Employer Value Proposition (EVP).

Wait... what? Aren't an employer brand and an EVP the same thing? They're easily confused, but they're actually quite different.

In this guide, we break down exactly what your EVP is—and how it can help you develop an even stronger employer brand.

What's the Difference Between an Employer Brand and an Employer Value Proposition?

These terms are often used interchangeably and while they are closely related, there's an important distinction that you should be aware of: Your employer brand is actually a strategic subset of your EVP.



1.1 Your Employer Value Proposition

Your EVP isn't your employer brand. Instead, it focuses on the internal point-of-view of your company and encompasses all of the things that employees appreciate most about their experience working there.

As [Susan LaMotte](#), an employer branding consultant with Exaqueo explains, authenticity is important, which means that your EVP can't be based on the desires and assumptions of your HR or leadership teams.

Your EVP requires thorough and unbiased research. One employee survey or a few HR interviews won't do the trick—you need to use a variety of methods to dig in and gather all of the things that employees value about working for your company.



1.2 Your Employer Brand



Are you thinking that everything we described above sounds an awful lot like your employer brand? We can't blame you—there's plenty of industry confusion about the difference between these two terms.

Here's the distinction:

Your employer brand comes directly from your EVP. You pull out core qualities and attributes that you most want to emphasize, and then use that to form a brand that you actively market. Your EVP is the whole pie, and your employer brand is just a slice.

Think about the last time you saw a car commercial, for example. The vehicle featured in that advertisement is spacious, it's fuel-efficient, it has great safety ratings, and it's stylish. But, did the commercial touch on every single one of those things? Probably not. That automotive company knew they were trying to appeal to families in particular, so they decided to highlight only the safety and spaciousness.

You aren't selling cars, but creating your employer brand is similar. You look at the big picture (your EVP) and identify the qualities that you want to become known for (the foundation for your employer brand).

Your EVP and Employer Brand: Breaking Down the Relationship

Now that you understand the difference between these two terms, it becomes clear that you can't have an employer brand without having an EVP first.

Your EVP does the legwork of capturing all of those tangible and intangible things that make your company a great place to work. It paves the way for your employer brand, which leverages your EVP in order to build your reputation and messaging as an employer, which is then marketed and advertised to prospective talent.

As Jillian Einck explains in [this post for KRT Marketing](#), a recruitment marketing firm, your EVP is a lot like your mission statement. It captures exactly who you are as a company and guides your decisions internally more than anything else. In



contrast, your employer brand dictates how the public perceives your identity. It's outward-facing and promoted through your marketing efforts. The alignment between both of

these pieces is crucial when it comes to emphasizing your values, appealing to the right talent, and actually fulfilling the employment expectations you've set out for your team.

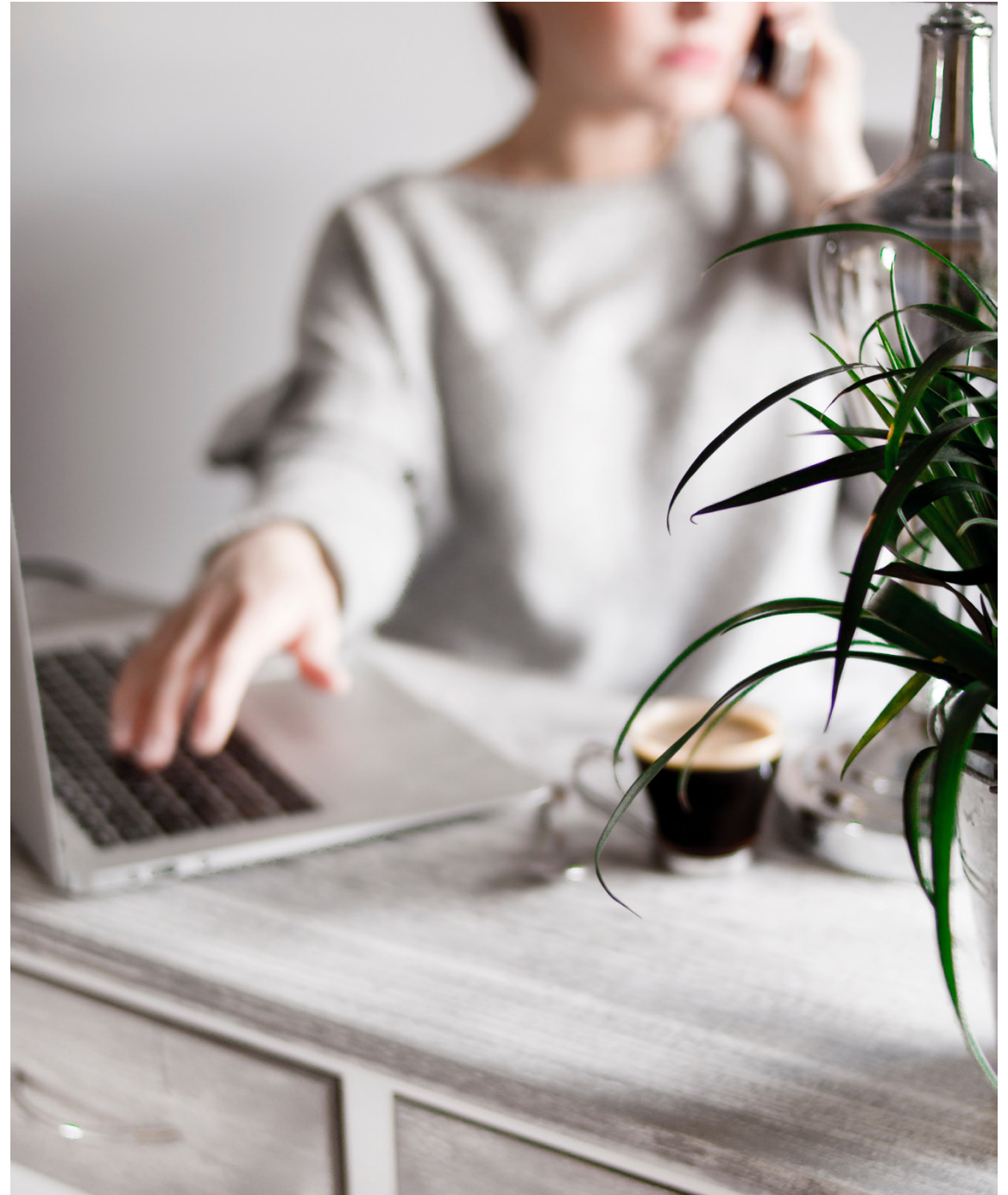
So... How Do You Define Your EVP?

That all sounds strategic and impressive... But, now you have another question: If you need to start with an EVP before anything else, how do you define your own?

As we mentioned previously, your EVP needs to be well-researched, as opposed to based on assumptions or idealized visions of your employer values and attributes. The best source for that data is real people—specifically, your current employees and candidates.

When it came to developing our own EVP here at The Muse, we dug into all of the data that our People Team regularly collects to get a solid grasp on what people value most about our employment experience.

To give you a sense of how we turned that data into our EVP, we're sharing what insights we focused on as well as our final value statements as an example below. Keep in mind that you can use any combination of these same strategies to craft your own EVP and lay the foundation for your employer brand.



3.1 Employee Exit and New Hire Data



Your current, engaged employees are a great source for information (and we'll get to that in a moment!), but it's also worth picking the brains of your brand new hires as well as the people who are leaving your company.

New hires are entering your organization with fresh eyes, which means they'll probably notice exciting attributes that fly under the radar for employees who have been with you for an extended time. After a week or two, sit down with these new additions to find out more about their first impressions of your workplace and what they're enjoying about working with their teams so far.

Exiting employees also offer a different perspective, since they're saying goodbye to your company

and, as a result, are more prepared to reflect on their employment experience as a whole. During your exit interviews, make sure to ask about things like what they valued most about their time, what kept them motivated, and what they feel your greatest strengths are as an organization.

Of course, don't just focus on the positives. Also prompt them for some constructive feedback that you can use to improve moving forward.

3.2 Employee Pulse Surveys

Surveys are not only a great way to identify areas for improvement, but they're also an effective way to gauge what your current employees think you're really doing well.

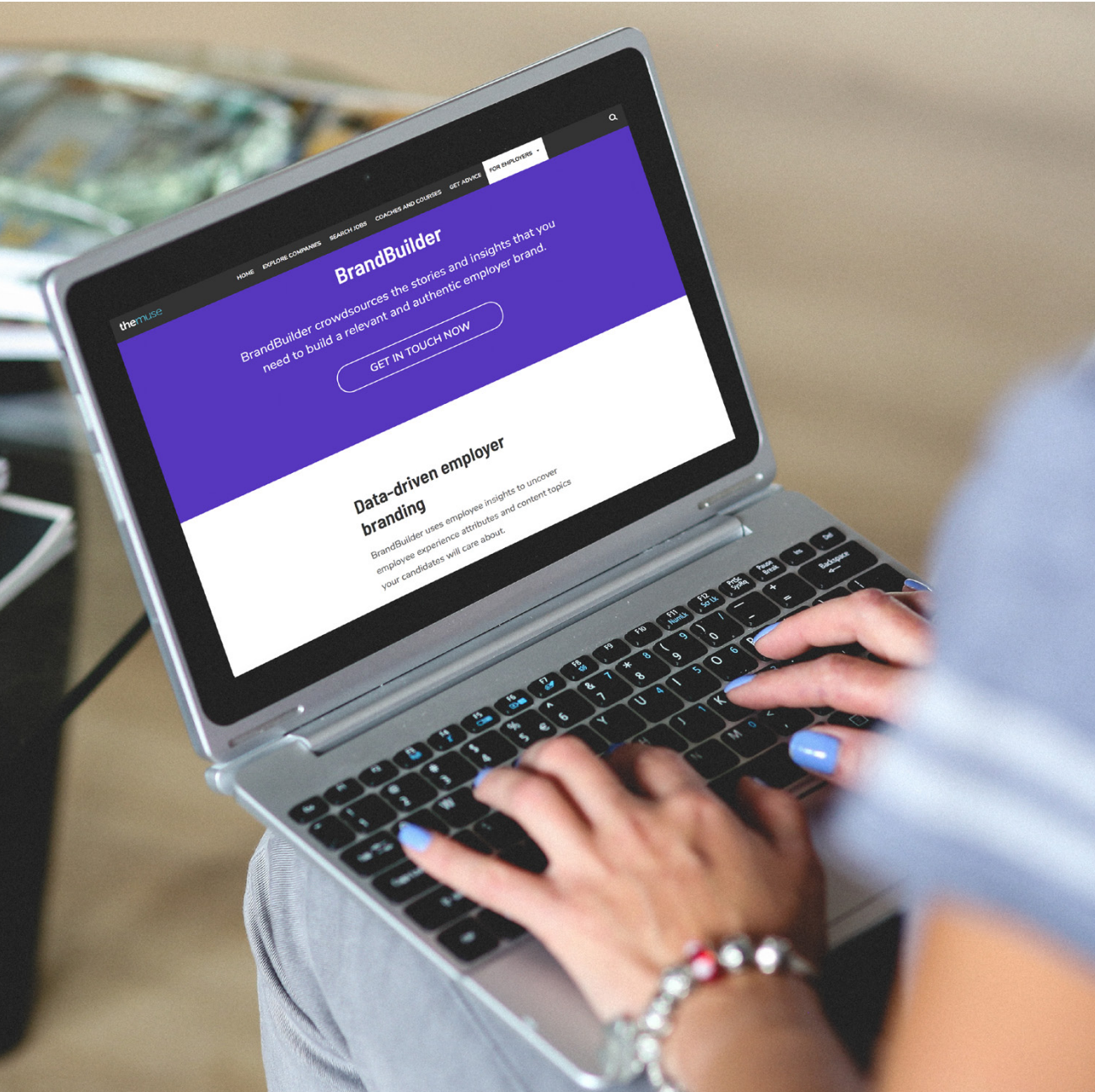
Here at The Muse, we send out a pulse survey twice per year to our employees to find out what's working really well with our culture (we recommend sending your own surveys at least twice each year—once just isn't enough). Through that, adjectives like friendly, flexible, open, transparent, and welcoming bubbled to the surface—all of which served us well when refining our own employer brand, providing insight into our most notable characteristics.

The survey also reveals elements of our culture that employees think need more work and emphasis, and we've used that feedback to launch numerous programs and initiatives to better serve our employees while also boosting our employer brand.

Finally, it emphasizes the fact that we value and listen to our employees. We take their feedback seriously and use that to prioritize areas of our culture that we need to focus on. In turn, they see that their input actually makes a tangible difference within our company.



3.3 BrandBuilder



In addition to our regular pulse survey, we also encourage employees to use our own tool, [BrandBuilder](#).

The platform asks employees a series of questions in order to source compelling stories, while also uncovering employee experience attributes that are helpful when identifying your EVP.

Attributes that we discovered about The Muse through BrandBuilder included terms like collaborative, flexible, supportive, transparent, and respectful. There was some distinct overlap between those terms and the ones that were revealed through our pulse survey, so we knew those were qualities worth highlighting.

3.4 One-on-One Meetings

Surveys and tools are great for getting a lot of data and information, but there's also a lot of value in just sitting down with employees one-on-one to have a candid conversation about your company.

At The Muse, managers make sure to ask a general question about the employee experience during their regular one-on-ones with employees:

- If the employee is a new hire, they're asked, **"Why The Muse?"**
- If the employee isn't new, they're asked, **"What makes The Muse special?"**

Those honest discussions brought other aspects of our company culture to light—from career growth and meaningful work to supportive co-workers and a high level of trust—that were also important considerations when pulling together our EVP.



Putting It All together

The efforts above, combined with combing through our brand book and our “How We Work” manifesto, armed us with all of the insights we needed to identify some key themes, including:

- Our work environment is flexible, transparent, collaborative, supportive, and respectful
- Working with a Muser is a great experience
- Musers are motivated by our mission—they’re proud to be doing meaningful work and helping people



From there, we used that information and the other characteristics we discovered throughout the process to establish five statements about what makes employees thrive at The Muse, which became our EVP:

1. You can be counted on to get your work done, and like being evaluated by your output vs. hours worked.
2. You are self disciplined enough to be given tremendous autonomy and want to be in charge of your own career.
3. You care about what you do everyday.
4. Sharing information is something you want to do, it's not a chore or a requirement.
5. You want to be part of a place that strives to hold people accountable while keeping them in a safe environment.

We now use these five statements to shape all of our talent attraction messaging and present an employer brand that's not only impressive and engaging, but also completely authentic.

Uncovering Your Own EVP

If you previously thought that your Employer Value Proposition was synonymous with your employer brand, you aren't alone. Those terms inspire plenty of confusion.

Here's what you need to remember: Your EVP is the first step. It's the foundation. When identifying your EVP, you look internally to identify all of the elements that your employees value about their experiences with your company.

From there, you pull out the most important ones to emphasize and market externally through your employer brand. You need an EVP before you can have a strong and genuine employer brand.

Fortunately, you already have all of the resources you need to craft your own EVP. Use this as your guide, and we're sure you'll end up with an authentic brand that resonates with your target talent.

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