

The role of Branding & Communications in developing an Employer Brand

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Abstract

In a competitive labour market, prospective employees have the power of consumers. They can choose whether to engage with your organisation. In that context there are various elements that feed in to building the story of your brand so that the ‘consumer’ or prospective employee is willing to take that first step of engagement. It involves a multi-layered approach to communications and message that reaches your target audience through a hierarchical structure.

Brand Awareness

The most successful brands in the world e.g., Coke, Nike, Apple have an identity that transcends the products they make. While people associate them respectively with beverages, sports equipment, and technology, what attracts them to the brand initially is more abstract and is associated with success, aspiration and ‘coolness’. While we may not aspire to the ‘cool’ factor achieved by these brands, it is important to understand the gateway that brand recognition provides to persuading people to engage with us. The foundation is laid with how we position the organisation as a whole and what associations are created when people recognise our brand.

Key messages here could include.

Public good, Important to society, Government, Independent, Trustworthy, Ethical, Values-Driven

What is in it for me?

Persuading any customer or consumer to engage with you requires delivering a pay-off or advantage for them. If you are not meeting a need then it can be difficult to catch their attention. Understanding the key needs of those you are looking to recruit can help tailor the message about who you are as an employer and what they can expect when working for you. Research consistently shows that financial reward, while important is not the only driving factor that people consider when choosing an employer. Others include.

What will I be doing?

- Meaningful and challenging work
- Ownership and responsibility
- Potential to make a difference

How will you take care of me?

- Opportunities to develop
- Further education
- Flexible Working
- Pension Schemes
- Well-being programmes

The country, type of organisation, and working conditions will inform how messaging is developed in this space. There may be a value to carrying out some ‘market research’ amongst existing employees or graduate cohorts to establish the key selling points to be incorporated into recruitment or employer brand promotion campaigns.

Closing the circle and following through

Maintaining brand reputation and customer loyalty are key components of ensuring growth and success for any business. Ensuring that these are maintained requires that people feel that their expectations have been met and they ‘got what they paid for’.

Equally, in the case of newly recruited employees it is important that the organisation they join and the work they are doing reflects what was advertised during the recruitment process. This will ensure that they contribute to positive brand association when describing their experience as an employee of the organisation. Our staff can be highly effective brand ambassadors and recruiters provided we continue to meet their expectations as employers.

Discussion Points

Extent to which this type of strategy is used across NSO’s

How many organisations have a specific strategy for marketing themselves as Employers?

What approaches have they taken?

Is this led by HR or Communications?

Has the strategy been developed internally or using external consultants or advice?

If there is no strategy are there plans to develop one?