

5-Step Guide to Building a Business Case for Employer Branding Work.



Introduction.

In light of today's fiercely competitive job market, it's more critical than ever for businesses to prioritize an "always on" employer brand. Managing your company's reputation is essential to making a positive impression on job seekers and retaining your current employees.

The most important thing to understand about employer branding is this: it's a strategic process that never stops.

In other words, a strong employer brand isn't something companies sporadically work on. Rather, it requires businesses to consistently invest in showcasing their values, culture and vision in the most compelling way possible.

Even though employer branding can be critical to achieving business goals, it can be challenging to obtain funds. Therefore, talent leaders must present a strong business case that justifies the expense.

This guide walks you through the five steps you can take to ensure your organization's budget allocates funding for employer branding efforts. You'll learn how to align your employer branding strategies with the long-term needs of your organization and which KPIs can help illustrate the impact of your branding efforts. Building on that foundation, you'll find project ideas that strategically enhance your employer branding. Lastly, you'll find guidance for identifying the right tools to facilitate your projects and learn how to handle common objections you might encounter while advocating for employer branding funds.

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PART 1

Align Your Employer Branding Strategy With Business Needs and Plans.

Employer branding is a broadly-scoped process and, as such, can focus on any number of objectives. That's why it's vital to first take a close look at your company's business plans and top focus areas—both short- and long-term.

PART 1

Part 1: Align Your Employer Branding Strategy With Business Needs and Plans?

For example, if your organization is focused on retaining and promoting its current team, your employer branding strategy should reflect this short-term goal. That means working with your talent team to regularly highlight your organization's mission statement, values and initiatives, company culture, and employee opportunities. You and your team can think of it like public relations for your colleagues.

Conversely, if your company is planning to launch a new product in the next 2+ years, you'll need to ensure your employer branding aligns with this long-term goal. You know that your organization will need to hire developers to help build and deploy the product , so you can accordingly tailor and target your branded content to appeal to the top talent with those skills.



PART 1

To help you get started identifying and understanding your organization's business needs, we've outlined some questions for you and your leadership team to consider below. But before you begin, we want to share some cautionary advice:

Resist the bias of immediate gratification.

It can be tempting to focus your branding efforts to align with the company's short-term goals and leave the long-term for another day. But remember, [employer branding is a never-ending process that actively affects your organization's reputation](#). For example, if your business is expecting a hiring burst sometime in the next year or so, having a robust employer brand today is critical to attracting talented candidates tomorrow. Otherwise, you'll have to deal with the costly repercussions of a weak, tainted or non-existent brand.

Accordingly, we suggest asking yourself and your leadership team the following questions:

- What objectives will the business pursue over the next 12 to 36 months?
 - What talent gaps exist that could prevent us from delivering on these objectives?
- What new products and services are in the pipeline?
- What is the company's projected growth over the next 12 to 36 months?
 - How will this impact our talent acquisition needs?



PART 2

Outline the Valuable Benefits + KPIs Associated With Your Employer Branding Efforts.

One of the best ways to think of employer branding is to compare it to marketing. While it can be difficult to quantify an exact ROI, you notice its impact.

PART 2

Part 2: Outline the Valuable Benefits + KPIs Associated With Your Employer Branding Efforts.

Similarly, it's challenging to quantify something intangible, like your employer branding. Nevertheless, it's essential to recognize that your employer brand reaches and affects every part of your organization.

Consequently, robust efforts can yield a strong employer brand, while disregarding efforts to build a positive brand can result in a negative reputation. In turn, your employer branding efforts can significantly impact your organization's hiring costs and success in talent retention and recruitment.

[Glassdoor's Statistical Reference Guide for Recruiters](#) revealed that a company with a negative reputation can result in a 10 percent hike in hiring costs. In contrast, a company with a strong employer brand can reduce the cost per hire by as much as 50 percent. In other words, a strong employer brand can lower your cost-per-hire because you spend less budget on job ads and other methods to draw candidates in.

Furthermore, a strong employer brand helps improve your chances of connecting with applicants who are truly interested in working at your organization, saving your recruiters valuable time and effort.

[Glassdoor's report](#) shows that half of job seekers wouldn't even apply to a company with a negative brand reputation—even if they were offered a pay increase. The same report revealed that [more than 90 percent](#) of people would consider leaving their jobs if they were offered a position at a company with a strong reputation. Thus, companies with positive reputations will have an easier time reaching potential candidates.

Part 2

In fact, [LinkedIn found](#) that companies with strong employer branding are 31 percent more likely to receive responses from potential candidates. Logically, this makes sense: when job seekers already have a positive impression of your company's reputation, they will be more open and interested in hearing from you about job opportunities. A strong employer brand will also improve the talent that your company attracts, drawing in the right candidates and promoting a more diverse and experienced team.

Finally, a strong employer brand can increase the engagement and retention rates of your current team. Replacing an employee can cost [up to 150 percent of their salary](#), not to mention the rippling effects it can have on company morale and productivity. If you're seeing a high turnover rate, consider taking steps to increase employee engagement. Higher engagement levels help [increase both productivity and profitability](#).

These are just a few of the benefits to monitor when tracking the success of your branding efforts. But remember, a strong employer brand can't be accomplished instantaneously. It can take weeks or even months to see results, which only further demonstrates how essential it is to dedicate company funds and time to this ongoing process sooner rather than later.

To ensure you're monitoring the right success metrics, ask your talent team what results you want to see. For example, if you're concerned about employee engagement and retention, then employee engagement is an important KPI to track. This can be done by conducting anonymous employee surveys to determine if employees feel included in the company's mission and values.



PART 3

Identify + Plan Projects to Enhance Your Employer Brand.

The next step is to identify and plan out a few projects that put your employer branding strategies into action.

PART 3

Part 3: Identify and Plan Projects to Enhance Your Employer Brand.

We have a few project ideas to help get you started, but first, we suggest you and your talent team consider the following questions:

1. How does our current employer brand align with the overarching business strategy and vision?
2. How do our competitors approach employer branding, and what lessons can we draw from their successes or shortcomings?
3. How do our organizational culture and values align with our business goals, and how can this be leveraged to strengthen our employer brand?

Here are some project ideas:

- Update your website with content about what it's like to work at your company
 - Include employee testimonials
- Create and regularly post social media content about your company culture
- Create and post various forms of content on platforms other than the company website
 - Job seekers use multiple sources to research potential employers
- Strive to improve online reviews about your company, as this can draw in more potential candidates

When planning these projects, consider how you can bring in teammates across the organization – to improve both your results and internal support for the projects. [Noelle Holdsworth](#), Sr. Manager, Employer Brand at Toast, explains:



Traditionally, many people thought of employer branding solely in partnership with recruitment marketing and the external attraction of new candidates. But nowadays you see employer branding at the intersection of various integral functions across an organization with internal and external audiences. These cross functional synergies across areas such as reputation, employee engagement and retention, internal mobility, onboarding, social impact, PR, etc. allows for more authentic storytelling, overall increased engagement, and broader impact.

Timing of results will often vary depending on the maturity of your organization and your employer brand, but often I have found the more employer brand leaders invest in internal cross collaboration and aligning with organizational goals, the more progress they can make in helping leaders and teams understand why employer branding matters and what role they play in embedding it into their teams.”



Noelle Holdsworth
Sr. Manager, Employer
Brand, Toast



PART 4

Identify (Some of) the Right Actions + Tools.

First and foremost, it's essential to recognize that the tools you choose to utilize depend on the project you're working on. Every business is different, which means your organization's approach to employer branding projects will be unique.

PART 4

Part 4: Identify (Some of) the Right Actions and Tools.

However, to help you get the ball rolling, we've put together some hypothetical project objectives with their associated actions and tools in the table below.

Project Objective/Goal	Actions and Tools
Refresh your Career and Work with Us pages on your website	Take high-quality photos of your office space and team events (your cell phone camera will probably suffice). Website management tools like WordPress or Squarespace make it easy for your teams to manage these pages.
Highlight employee voices	Encourage employees to share their takes on different aspects of your industry and company culture. Consider using a platform like Medium, Built In and other social media channels to increase their reach.
Get your brand in front of potential candidates	Create various forms of content, such as employee spotlights and videos, that highlight your company. Consider using Built In to help you create "owned content" and apply to be included for earned media, which features your company amongst other companies in your space or industry. Built In can even target content to specific candidate profiles—by market, demographic, expertise and more.



PART 5

How to Handle Common Objections to Funding Employer Branding Efforts.

As you get ready to present your business case for allocating a portion of next year's budget to your business's branding efforts, it's important to be prepared for resistance. That doesn't mean having tough skin (although that certainly helps); it means knowing how to navigate and respond to objections.

PART 5

To help you prepare, we've included some helpful discussion points to two of the most common objections to funding employer branding for you to review below.

- “the ROI is too slow”
 - It's true that employer branding ROI will not be instantaneous. But building and elevating a trustworthy and reliable brand can take months. It might not seem profitable right now, but it will be when we need a strong brand several months down the line to hire the right talent and retain the best people. And if we wait, it'll be too late to invest in our employer brand.
 - While ROI might take some time, that doesn't mean it can't be huge—especially in retaining our current employees. Remember, it can cost up to [150 percent of an employee's salary](#) to replace them.
- “We're not hiring right now.”
 - Even if we're not hiring right now, building an employer brand will significantly improve our success in retaining current employees.
 - To attract top talent when we do hire in the future, we need to start working on our employer brand in advance—meaning, right now. Building our brand will build trust with candidates who might not be ready to leave their current role, but when they are ready, we'll be the first company they think of switching to. Don't forget that [92 percent of people](#) would consider leaving their job for a role at a company with an excellent corporate reputation.

If you need more proof as to the success of employer branding programs during slow hiring periods, take it from the Manager, Employer Branding, Recruitment Marketing, and Talent Scouts at DISH, [Rachel Guiles](#).

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We know it takes nearly 100 touchpoints over the course of seven months for a professional candidate to convert. Because of that, during slower hiring periods, our programmatic jobs might slow or turn off but we ensure to keep employer branding and awareness campaigns going to build and retarget audiences for when our hiring does pick up again.

Through our CandE survey, we've found that candidates with a social media or thought leadership relationship with us actually rate us higher than those without. Additionally, we measure "quality of hire" at DISH. We've found that those influenced by social media or recruitment marketing actually have around a 5-point higher quality of hire score. What that means is candidates who follow us, engage with us, or see an ad are more likely to not only have a more positive experience but also are higher quality candidates."



Rachel Guiles

Manager, Employer
Branding, Recruitment
Marketing, and Talent
Scouts,
DISH

Conclusion

Employer branding can be a powerful strategy to help your company achieve its objectives—but it's not a temporary endeavor. Like marketing any of your business's products or services, building your employer brand requires a constant and unwavering commitment to be successful. This entails company-wide support—both financially and collaboratively as colleagues. Thus, the sooner your organization starts investing in building your brand, the sooner you'll see company-wide benefits and gains.





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