

Do what it says



This is the first in a series of eight CPD articles from automotive experts Rts looking at ways to attract, develop and - most critically - retain talented employees.

Like retail customers, job candidates are looking for something that meets their needs and lives up to expectations. Disappoint them and you're back

on the familiar (and costly) ground of re-advertising.

Ten years ago, as a new human resource employee within a major retail chain, I attended a presentation by the group HR director who turned my traditional HR thinking on its head:

"The best people find the best companies to work for these days and therefore we need to concentrate on the employee rather than the customer. People want to know that your company name looks good on their CV. So we need to understand what we are and what we offer in order to entice them to join us."

Reflecting upon my own recent job search at that time, I realised this was

exactly the approach that I was subconsciously undertaking. I had been reviewing every potential employer as a retailer – me, the customer, looking for the best deal to suit my needs.

The HR director was introducing the concept of being an 'employer of choice', and to achieve this a company needed to assess and review the strength of its 'employer brand'.

In a recently published CIPD guide employer branding is described as: "A set of attributes and qualities – often intangible – that makes an organisation distinctive, promises a particular kind of employment experience and appeals to those people who will thrive and perform to their best in its culture."

So how do you recruit the best? From our experience it is about aligning your people strategy with your 'employer brand' – this is what achieves differentiation for prospective employees within the labour market.

If you understand your employer brand, then you can use it in all of your recruitment advertising. Every 'touchpoint' is about engaging and enticing someone to want to come and work for you.

The potential candidate quickly begins to get a feel for what it would be like to work for you and can then recognise if their beliefs, attitudes and behaviours align with that of your organisation. In other words, there's a much better

on the tin!

PART ONE

chance of a 'good' fit' if their expectations are aligned with the reality.

So how do you begin to understand what your employer brand is like? The answer is to 'ask'. Ask everybody involved with your business: employees, customers, suppliers, marketing, ex-employees – everyone. And, of course, be prepared for responses that are at odds with how the business sees itself.

From this research it should become clearer about who you are and what you stand for. Key

themes can be incorporated in recruitment marketing. You're now selling the organisation for what it is, not for what it could be, or the way you would like it to be.

Without this approach, you risk that familiar experience of new recruits leaving within the first six months because the job didn't meet their expectations. Disillusionment set in. It's like a customer who is disappointed with something they've bought, gets a refund and looks elsewhere.

Except, of course, there's no refund on recruitment and

induction costs. Even worse, more money has to be spent on finding a replacement.

A brand that truly reflects your organisation will imprint itself on candidates, regardless of whether you go on to hire them or not. Like customers, they will relay their experience to their circle of friends and family.

People that are aligned to your employer brand will naturally live the brand, and internal satisfaction will feed through into customer satisfaction. Research from Towers and Perrin shows that "for every 1%

improvement in employee engagement, a 0.1% improvement in sales growth will surely follow". (Employer Branding - CIPD 2007).

To take this sentiment a step further, is it possible to say that by recruiting the more discerning job hunter it will have a direct impact upon acquiring the more discerning customer? **MIM**

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Note: To obtain a copy of the CIPD 'Employer Branding Guide' please contact Gemma Pritchard at rts. Email: gpritchard@rts-uk.co.uk



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