

W H I T E P A P E R

The Branding Effect

Why a Strong Employer Brand Will
Help You Win the Talent War

Author: Michael Palmer
Executive Director, Talent Acquisition Practice
Ceridian Canada Ltd.

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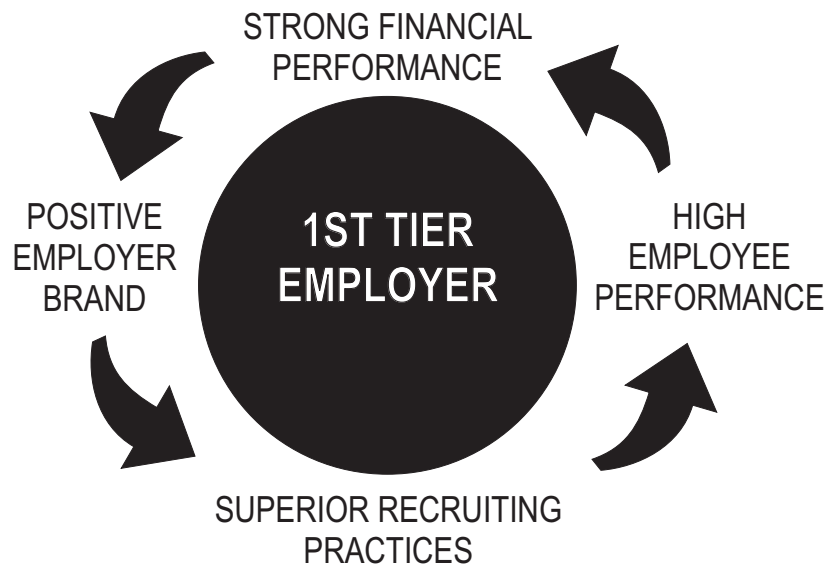
The facts are alarming. Research shows that this year, for every one person entering the workforce, two workers will leave. By 2020, The Conference Board of Canada predicts there will be a shortage of 1 million skilled workers.

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The Conference Board of Canada also reports that "the war for talent is fierce, and is likely to become more so with the massive number of employees retiring in the next five years. Top organizations are moving beyond the vanilla 'employer of choice' concept to a more rigorous strategy of attracting and retaining the right employees through branding."

High performance companies understand that the key to attracting and retaining talent is to be recognized as a first-tier employer that can meet the needs of high potential/high performance employees. There is a direct link between recruitment practices and high performance. According to a 2005 Watson Wyatt study, companies with superior recruiting practices financially outperform those with less effective recruitment programs.

To be effective, traditional marketing practices must be applied to recruitment. After all, every candidate is a potential employee whether it's now, or in the future, and every candidate is a potential referral source for future hiring needs. By creating a strong employment brand, employers get the edge they need in attracting, recruiting and retaining top talent.



How to Create and Live Your Employment Brand

There are some key areas to focus on when creating, living and enhancing your employment brand.

➤ Find a Way to Touch Every Candidate

Each and every time you advertise an opportunity, you attract a number of candidates. Some may fit this opportunity today (the "right-now" candidate), some may fit another existing opportunity, some may be a great fit in the future, and some may never become a serious candidate. Most recruiting organizations focus only on the "right now" candidate, and unfortunately ignore the latter three groups.

Brand-centric organizations recognize the value in all candidates as potentials for existing and future opportunities, referral sources of top talent, and existing or future customers. Aided by technology to track and communicate with all candidates, market leaders view every applicant for their "potential". The manner in which you communicate, or fail to communicate, is a clear demonstration to every applicant of how you operate as an organization and how your company values its employees and candidates.

➤ Avoid the Black Hole of Recruiting

Most companies do not acknowledge the receipt of a résumé. Some indicate on their job ads that "only candidates selected for an interview will be

contacted". And less than 1% of companies notify candidates of their status if they are not selected for an interview. Frequently referred to as the "Black Hole" of recruiting, correcting this situation is by far the simplest way to set yourself apart from your competition. Finding a way to keep all your candidates informed of their progression, or lack thereof, through the recruitment process may require the use of some technology, but the impact this simple enhancement brings to your recruitment process will pay off in spades.

➤ Leverage your Talent Pool

Through the effective use of an Applicant Tracking System (ATS), Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software, or a creative manual system to track qualified candidates, you will find there is already a pool of qualified, interested and, more often than not, available talent, at your fingertips. If, for every employment advertisement that you place you receive 50 candidates, and 49 of those candidates are not hired, you've just created a pool of 49 candidates. In the world of recruiting, this is often referred to as Talent Pool management.

This concept has received much media attention over the past few years, though few companies truly leverage the networking opportunity that each employment advertisement creates. To illustrate this point, the Ceridian Talent Acquisition Practice has attracted more than 50,000 candidates for positions within Ceridian and/or within its

recruitment customers in the last 12 months alone. Every single one of those candidates is potentially a perfect match for one of the many postings that are open at any given time. Effectively marketing to, and mining from, this database of interested and networked candidates is more efficient and effective than re-advertising, and far less expensive.

In addition, many applicants will not apply twice for a similar role unless personally invited to do so, as they make the assumption that once a company has their résumé, there is no need to re-apply. This is a great opportunity to enhance your brand.

Imagine you are a financial institution and hire Accountants on a regular basis. Imagine that you could reach out to the 1,500 Accountants who applied to your company in the past, personally inviting them to re-apply, or to refer someone they know each time a new role opened up. Imagine you had a mechanism to allow candidates to come back and update their profile every time they gained new experience, every time they completed a new assignment, every time they moved or changed their e-mail address. Imagine the marketing power in taking this approach to recruiting top talent.

➤ **Train Hiring Managers to be Effective Interviewers**

Many managers who make hiring decisions are not highly effective interviewers. This, of course, is not for lack of capability or desire; it is a result of a lack of training, coaching and

ongoing support. The interview or series of interviews for candidates is a way for them to judge and assess their potential future employer and Manager. If there are significant issues with the interview and its process, you the employer could be setting unrealistic expectations, hiring candidates based on emotion as opposed to "best fit" and therefore contributing to unnecessary turnover. Most importantly, you could be missing the best candidates.

There are many interviewing methodologies, the most popular being behavioural. A behavioural interview is designed to ascertain a candidate's skills in relation to the required competencies to perform the role for which he/she is being interviewed. When done effectively, this interview will help the hiring manager select the best candidate for the position, based on competency as well as cultural fit.

However, the effect of poorly conducted interviews can have a negative impact on the company, as candidates will tell people they know about their experiences, resulting in a "knock" against your brand. Conversely, properly conducted interviews leave candidates with a positive perception and are more likely to attract a candidate that will be a good fit. A good interview experience can also help candidates accept a rejection when they are not the best fit.

The interview, and the process surrounding it, is an incredible opportunity to maximize your company's brand.

➤ **Build and Use Consistent Employment Messaging - Internally and Externally**

Your employment brand is far more than just what you're "messaging" to the outside (and inside) world about what your organization represents, and what your employment experience is all about. That being said, consistently and repeatedly messaging why your company is a great place to work is the way to begin your branding initiatives.

Try soliciting an honest portrayal of the employment experience from your employees

To start, you need to truly understand why your company is an enterprising place to work. Try soliciting an honest portrayal of the employment experience from your employees. They will gladly tell you, not only that your company is a great place to work, but more importantly, why it is so. If your own employees have difficulty articulating this value proposition, this indicates that there are some areas of focus for future Human Resources programs and initiatives.

However, there will always be aspects of the employment experience that are extremely positive; these are the areas that your brand message should focus on. Much like a "vision" or "mission" statement, the articulated employment

brand message for your organization is not all that makes up your employment brand. Ultimately it comes down to the employee experience - how much they enjoy working for the company and how engaged they are.

➤ **Have a "Great Start" Program**

Probably the single most significant opportunity to affect employee retention is during the first month of employment of your new employee. A "Great Start" program goes far beyond orientation classes, or even on-boarding, as both of these processes tend to be event driven, not experiential. Filling out forms and signing up for benefits (orientation sessions) and ensuring the right tools and equipment are in place (on-boarding) are important.

However, the best programs include all of the above and help to create a welcoming environment to your new employee. Brand-focused companies are quick to realize that new employees' first experiences form the foundation of their affiliation with their new company and, as your employees represent your employment brand, isn't it better to start them off on the right path?

Conclusion

There is little doubt that recruitment over the next decade will have its challenges. We can mitigate some of these challenges by embracing our employment brands as our "raison d'être" and living "best of breed" recruitment practices. At the most fundamental level, how we recruit, manage the hiring process and bring

new employees into our organizations is what will set us apart from our competition. It will involve significant change management to view every résumé as a person with skills, knowledge and experiences and to regard that person as either a candidate for today's need, tomorrow's opportunity or a potential source for the next great employee.



Michael Palmer
Executive Director,
Ceridian Talent Acquisition Practice

As Executive Director of Ceridian's Talent Acquisition Practice, Michael Palmer is responsible for the overall business strategy, growth and development of Ceridian's staffing and recruitment solutions business across Canada. He led the successful launch of Ceridian's Talent Practice in 2003. Michael's 15-year career in Human Resources has primarily been focused on recruiting and staffing in challenging, high demand environments where his passion and accomplishments in this field have established him as a knowledge expert. His breadth of

experience includes re-engineering the recruiting processes for a large IT outsourcing organization in Canada and the United States, as well as developing the recruiting process model for EDS' entry into the HR BPO market in the U.S. While at EDS, Michael created and implemented the U.S. West Region Recruiting Organization, which managed more than 2,000 new hires annually across EDS' four business units.

About Ceridian

A trusted partner to more than 40,000 Canadian customers, Ceridian is a global corporation that delivers best-practice Human Resource solutions that maximize the value of people. Ceridian is the only company in Canada that has all the solutions to help customers acquire the best talent, pay their staff accurately and on time, improve HR decision-making and reporting, and drive employee engagement and wellbeing. The only HR solutions company that has been recognized as both a 50 Best Employer and one of the Top 100 Companies in Canada, Ceridian provides customers the freedom to focus on their core business by relieving them of the burden of transactional HR processes resulting in improved efficiency and cost savings.

For more information call 1-877-CERIDIAN or visit our website at www.ceridian.ca.

