

Taking care of employer brand



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With top talent having a choice of job offers, building a brand which creates both aspiration and inspiration is critical to win the best candidate against competitors.

With headlines bemoaning the increasing demands of both early career and more seasoned talent, there is significant temptation to manipulate reality to sound as appealing as possible to potential applicants but with authenticity also high on the same list, employers run the risk of shooting themselves in the foot.

If your employer brand is basically click bait to bring in new hires, chances are you will be replacing them again within 6-12 months.

Talent solutions providers have the benefit of both objectivity and a wide-angle lens, with access to what is working (or not) across numerous clients and often multiple market sectors. When this is supplemented by both supplier and candidate feedback data the result can show clear opportunities for brand messages which are both authentic and well-attuned to candidate requirement.

Strengthening understanding and capability have become essential not only to win, but also to keep client

partnerships. The Talent Solutions Power List (TSPL) sets out the key areas which distinguish the top performing talent solutions providers in delivering, driving, and living diversity and inclusion.

The TSPL has three key objectives:

- To enable employers who are considering or changing a recruitment outsourcing provider to make an informed decision based on their own specific needs.
- To help recruitment outsourcing providers to clearly demonstrate their expertise in relevant areas based on an independent, rigorous evaluation.
- To provide confidential feedback to providers on ways in which they can finely tune the services they offer to respond effectively to customer needs and market trends.

The TSPL examined how the recruitment outsourcing industry has increased capability in the development and use of employer brand to achieve better long-term hiring for their clients and themselves through continuous monitoring of recruitment behaviour and development of real-time application data.



Building a great brand is only half the work, creating resonant messaging which is consistent across all platforms and every route to market is key. With the whole recruitment supply chain collaborating with a single brand story, rather than with variations on a theme, the impact on candidate awareness and interest are increased exponentially.

The TSPL has identified five distinct factors, which define best in class employer brand and distinguish the top performing Talent Solutions providers in their market.

1. ASK THE QUESTION – EVEN IF YOU BELIEVE YOU KNOW THE ANSWER

The best performing Talent Solutions Providers demonstrate consistent strength in use of feedback from candidates, contractors, suppliers, and existing employees to build client employer brands which are true to the culture, value and work environment. The resulting messaging and imagery is not only authentic but can also be recognised by employees and easily articulated by applicants. This leads to more accurate hiring while also demonstrates listening to those whose opinion really matters.

2. COLLABORATION IS KEY

Impact comes through communication of a shared message. Those achieving

positive results engage with the marketing teams of their clients to create consistency and the best deployment plan. These providers also share the brand messages across their attraction content, passive candidate approach, supply chain, candidate referral conversations and contingent workforce.

This collaboration around a single version of the client's brand story can create powerful connection and engagement for potential candidates.

3. ONE ROUTE DOESN'T FIT ALL

Despite each having proven strength in delivery through direct sourcing, it was notable that the top performers reported equally high effectiveness in other routes to market including use of Talent Pooling (including relationship management of "silver medallists"), Preferred Supplier Lists, but even more interestingly in use of Community Partnerships, which are often valuable resources for more diverse or disadvantaged talent populations.

These providers also reported sourcing management across the full spectrum of role types from entry level and volume hiring to management and executive appointments.

4. KNOW THE PRIORITIES OF YOUR TARGET POOLS

Brand messaging must reflect the zeitgeist of applicant attitude; it is not a static message but rather evolves over time to remain relevant. Given the candidate market in the last year, the top performances reported highly effective use of their clients' policies on flexible working, learning and development, team culture, CSR and DE&I, both to build candidate pipelines but also to create strong market reputation as an employer of choice.

5. PRACTICE WHAT YOU PREACH

Without exception, the top performing solutions providers gave equally high priority to their own client brand, proactively testing their brand perception through employee surveys, candidate feedback -including the unsuccessful ones and those going on to reject their offer. They all conducted exit interviews as part of their leaver process, and captured external market data standard, seeking to understand how their brand is perceived both internally and externally, using consistent points of measurement to monitor performance.

IN CONCLUSION

At the heart of a great employer brand is having something that employees and candidates aspire to, then putting that message out consistently and authentically. After that, the best performance in recruitment and retention is attained through continual monitoring of response, adaptation of messaging to align with internal transformation, then continuing to

gather feedback and regularly reviewing impact data.

Building a great brand requires honesty, objectivity and collaboration, maintaining it requires great partnership around a shared story which responds to internal and external change over time. When it comes to hiring and retaining the best people, investment in brand and attraction is a business imperative but it is a specialist area and those without internal capability would be wise to seek expert guidance.



We asked our top-ranking talent solutions providers to tell us what makes their Employer Brand and Candidate Attraction strategies effective:

“ *The Brand & Attraction Advisory team is a full-service employer brand and recruitment marketing agency that sits within AMS. Unlike traditional recruitment marketing agencies, this positioning enables thinking beyond branding and attraction, approaching each client challenge with a holistic view of talent acquisition. By drawing upon the insights and expertise of our colleagues, we offer truly integrated solutions, at every touchpoint of the candidate journey. Where other employer branding agencies' capabilities end, ours continue.*

We consider the total talent life cycle from attraction through to employee engagement, to advocacy. At each stage we seek to understand our audience, know where to find them, how to engage them, and continuing to each step beyond attraction – ultimately enabling them to be employer brand ambassadors for our clients.”
Fionuala Goritsas, Head of Analyst Relations, AMS

“ *For us, employer brand and candidate experience strategies are rooted heavily in a comprehensive understanding of our client's identity, that which truly defines their proposition.*

We collaborate closely with our clients to ensure they're heavily engaged, allowing us to truly get to the heart of how to add innovation and excitement when developing their brand. Our group of experts are then uniquely placed to provide insight and understanding to ensure that the candidate finds themselves in an authentic, engaging and exciting process.”

David Macfarlane, Talent Solutions Director, PeopleScout

“ *Representing Employer Brand for our customers is intrinsic to the way in which we partner at Hays. Immersing ourselves in an organisation’s culture is not only a starting point, but a continuation of the way in which we evolve our delivery as a lifelong partner.*

Collaboration with our client’s Marketing department is key, ensuring consistent messaging in both internal & external communication. Feedback from candidates, employees, and our sourcing team all input into future considerations on brand.

We tailor our approach through social media, focussed advertising channels, and verbal communications. This is further nuanced to the skills of the target candidates, whilst retaining key messages representative of each customer.

Employer Brand is of paramount importance and forms a key part of our training and is repeatedly behind our continued client retention.”
Mike McNally, Solutions Director, Hays

“ *Candidate attraction is a core driver of success for Allegis Global Solutions (AGS) clients across both employee recruitment and contingent workforce engagement solutions. The reach for candidates begins long before the req is issued and extends long after the req is filled.*

Client strategy and brand execution are areas where AGS has cultivated a strong, best-practice function that amplifies employer brand value for clients around the world enhanced by their own brand. AGS has helped build a culture positioned to deliver value in a challenging and innovation-driven talent marketplace.

Through its dedicated IGNITE consulting service, AGS builds compelling employer brand stories, leveraging digital media, creative collateral and strategic campaigns to help provide an effective talent attraction strategy.”

Rob Marley, Executive Director, EMEA, Allegis Global Solutions

The Talent Solutions Power List Leaders for Employer Brand and Candidate Attraction – in action

A|M|S

CHALLENGE

AMS' client was committed to building a diverse and inclusive culture and sought new ways to attract diverse talent – from building local awareness to improving website engagement and conversions to application, particularly in key hiring locations.

As part of their commitment to D&I, the client increased their focus on skills-first positions and committed to adding more non-degreed roles; they wished to promote these efforts to help increase the diversity of their applications.

Simultaneously, the client was expanding their operations to markets which had low brand awareness in the region.

SOLUTION

- To address the challenge, AMS developed research-lead, objectives-driven recruitment marketing campaign that addressed the entire candidate attraction cycle.
- They partnered with their internal Insights Team to conduct market research and understand the talent pool within the market, also holding a focus group with current client employees to understand the strengths and challenges in attracting diverse talent.
- Based on their research, AMS

developed an inclusive messaging and creative platform that promoted a skills-first approach to hiring, highlighting the breadth of career opportunities offered across all campaign touchpoints to fuel engagement and applications.

- From their research and in-house historical data from previous media campaigns, AMS deployed a media strategy with a mix of on- and off-line channels to build awareness and drive traffic to the location landing page.
- They updated the landing page to communicate an inclusive approach to hiring (skills-first roles), make it clear what areas were hiring, feature local employees speaking about career opportunities and inclusivity, and then a call-to-action to search and apply.

RESULTS

The results of the campaign exceeded expectations. AMS increased landing page traffic by over 1300% with an average of 2,500 weekly website visitors during the campaign, compared to 180 weekly visitors pre-campaign. They delivered over 1,600 apply-clicks as a direct result of the digital media channels.



CHALLENGE

PeopleScout's public sector client wanted – and needed – to do more to reach a new, more diverse audience. They could no longer rely on campaigns alone to secure their future workforce. They needed to engage with the right candidates in a variety of different ways. PeopleScout identified four key areas to improve: Talent Attraction, Candidate Experience, Value Proposition, Equality & Diversity.

PeopleScout focused all activity around a new, strong employer brand. One that communicated the real diversity of opportunity, challenge, scale, and pride in achievement offered by the client.

SOLUTION

- PeopleScout started with research, seeking to get a full understanding of their client's employment offer and experience, they conducted qualitative research with their senior leadership team and over 50 employees.
- This research showed that their client is a council like no other. The geography, number of residents, budget and supplier relationships are bigger than most councils in the UK. The financial scale of what they do is bigger than many corporates and the talent in the organisation includes many sector leaders.
- And these statistics aren't just impressive,

they're the driving force behind the culture of the organisation. Nobody comes to this council for a rest. It's about using their unique resources and ambitious mindset to deliver transformative change for residents.

- Working with HR leads and functional areas PeopleScout gathered authentic case studies for creating videos and other materials to support talent attraction activity. They captured proud, celebratory, and confident shots of people from across the council, marrying hero shots with real quotes, and reflecting what the EVP pillars meant to them personally. Brand visuals and messages combined to give a sense of the career-boosting challenges and real feeling of achievement that can be gained working with this organisation, as well as the importance of the work.

RESULTS

In ten months: to illustrate the new brand's impact PeopleScout compared the Finance and Technology Graduate campaign year on year. The 2021 programme saw a 400% rise in applications from 2020 figures, with 51% of applications coming from BAME candidates.

The EVP and careers site have been live for just over ten months, and PeopleScout have already seen a positive upward tick in applications, even during the pandemic. Council staff have been really proud of their new brand, and the bright and bold articulation across all channels.



HAYS

CHALLENGE

Hays' client's employer branding was focussed on the USA and whilst there was an appetite for regionalised content, they were not comfortable giving responsibility for brand in EMEA to an external RPO provider. System access was restrictive, and the global technology team were a bottleneck for ideas and innovation to flow through to the CRM provider, Phenom People (PP). There was only one person responsible for the employer brand (sitting outside of Europe) and this made it impossible for the company to achieve their own objectives by themselves and push localised content. The client was looking to launch a careers blog but lacked the right level of content, requiring the employment of someone to write it.

SOLUTION

- Hays first focused on building the trust and strong relationship with employer brand, plus global and regional marketing people. They provided advice and guidance around Glassdoor (e.g. how to generate more reviews) and connected them with other marketing teams across EMEA able to share contents and insights.

- Hays then connected with the CRM Phenom people, enabling them to make the changes needed in the system to advance the employer branding activities. Although the client wished to talent pool, they did not have a plan to deliver this. The Hays team worked with them to set up a method for accurate talent pooling, which was then adopted and rolled out elsewhere.
- Hays compiled regional articles and worked with Hays marketing to create blog content, thereby effectively increasing contributors to shape blog content but also giving access to a wider library of topics. The client strategy was focused on increasing campaigns, but Hays saw the need to grow the audience first for these campaigns to reach the greatest number of people.

RESULTS

Hays successfully elevated the client's employer brand across EMEA, without the need to hire externally, and improving the client's talent pollicised succession plan. The marketing collaboration increased the availability of regionalised content. In 12 months, Hays increased the volume of engaged talent in the database by 31%



CHALLENGE

AGS' client's recruitment efforts were challenged by poor visibility in the marketplace. Additionally, programmes targeting potential new employees and top-level candidates were delivering less than satisfactory results.

SOLUTION

- AGS initially proposed a pilot programme focused on EMEA to develop an employer value proposition (EVP). The programme would include several workshops in the UK as well as an audit to better understand the challenges of attracting talent. In response to presentation of their preliminary findings, the client, recognising the strategic importance of the work, approved a comprehensive global branding project.
- AGS conducted a series of discovery workshops at 17 of the client's locations globally, which gathered the perspective of more than 160 employees, offering a clear and consistent picture about what it was like to work for the client. The findings were presented and developed into a global EVP.
- Following the workshops, AGS worked with their client to develop internal and external communication plans, redesign a global career website, and increase links to various social media outlets to create a talent community.
- AGS partnered with the clients' HR

operations, to develop a dedicated talent acquisition intranet giving access to information regarding the recruitment process and relevant EVP documents and tools, including a Tone of Voice Guide.

- AGS used their internal sourcing platform to assist the recruitment process, helping to extend the client's employer branding through providing and playing a vital role in the technology company's global talent acquisition strategy.

RESULTS

AGS' programme to develop an employer value proposition for the client had an immediate positive effect, leading to exciting and innovative talent solutions that were in line with the innovative personality of the company.

The employer brand initiatives proved to be successful, with a huge increase in the talent community of job candidates from just over 2,000 members to more than 137,000 in a three-year period. This talent community is now over 200,000 members.

A year after the programme launched, the client received 95,800 visits to their SEO landing pages, up from 5,666 visits the year before. In addition, global careers site traffic increased by 40% in the first year. By establishing automated email campaigns that communicated relevant job openings to its talent community of job candidates twice a month, AGS were able to achieve a 98% open rate on emails.



Connecting the talent ecosystem

We bring together a global network of leading employers and solution providers to make better talent and technology decisions.



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