

A black and white photograph of a man in a hoodie sitting at a desk, working on a laptop. He is wearing a white earbud. In the background, there is a chalkboard with some writing on it. The overall mood is professional and focused.

EMPLOYER BRANDING.

How to win the war for talent.



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Before you do anything.

Before you enact any of the advice in this white paper, it is recommended that you spend the time to develop a vision, purpose and employee value proposition for your company. These are the foundations as to why good people would want to work with you.

Employer positioning works in the same way as for how you attract clients to your organisation. But in a world where high level resources are in high demand, this branding exercise may be even more important.

Your *employee vision* should set out your intention for your team – your commitment to attract, retain and reward the best people. You should also outline the criteria by which you'll measure your success in achieving the vision.

Your *employer purpose* should describe why your company exists in the context of your employees. Why do you want to grow, for example? For your shareholders, it should be to maximise their return on capital. As far as your employees are concerned, however, growth is the best way of ensuring they have a career path. Tell them this so they know you have their interests at heart.

Your *employer value proposition* should be a statement about what you offer that other firms don't. For DPR&Co, because we're a small-to-medium sized agency, we offer our people exposure to a broader range of experiences (as opposed to multinationals where the employee scope is specialised and often limited to a single client). Things like training, performance incentives and office environment can also be powerful attractants to the right people.

Now that you've got that sorted, let's look at how to make the most of your brand-new employer positioning, starting with the employee market itself.

An evolved employer market – the hunter becomes the target

There is a sector that is now being shaken awake by the digital rollercoaster; human resources.

As in-demand talent becomes scarce and opportunity becomes globally visible, the old rules of the employer being in the driver's seat no longer apply. Employees know they'll have many employers in their lifetime. This dynamic makes the retention of good people a bigger issue than ever.

1 Online recruitment: hunter becomes target.

In addition, the way we shop for jobs has been transformed by technology. Matchmaking is faster, more accurate and less expensive.

How do you position as an employer of choice in this environment?

This white paper is the sum of the experience of AMIN agencies across the globe (in particular Intracto in Belgium) and that of DPR&Co – ourselves an organisation that has worked extensively in the field of employer branding.

Not so long ago...

If you were looking for new blood for your bustling company 20 years ago, you would place a job advertisement in the jobs section of a newspaper. In fact, classified and display job ads were referred to by some publications such as 'rivers of gold'. As digital media began to emerge, you'd usually received a bonus online ad on the publication's website as an incentive.

The dailies ran thick with 30 to 40 pages of job ads. The jobs classified section was thicker than early general news. HR managers ordered media space in the paper recruitment media as if the budgets were inexhaustible.

The exodus from print

In the late 90s a new generation wanting to go digital turned to Seek, Careers.com and Monster.com.

For job seekers these digital job boards were the perfect place to quickly explore the market, a phenomenon that resulted in a tectonic shift in how employers seek out workers and vice versa.

Today, the landslide continues.

Recruitment is predominately done digitally, on both sides. On the one hand, the employee has a completely different set of behaviours, expectations and media consumption habits than 10 years ago. On the other hand, we've seen a proliferation of digital HR start-ups in recent years, not to mention Google Jobs. Disruption galore!

The battle for talent has never been more intense. With ubiquitous information on employers, it is now essential for brands to promote and defend their good name and use smart, targeted weapons to win the best people.

2 Paradigm shifts.

Employer branding is essential

The mindset of jobseekers has also changed. In the past, a match with your qualification and written competence for the job spec meant you were 90 percent of the way to a job. Today, a connection with corporate culture is essential. Profiling your values as an employer has become vital in attracting the best people: hello employer branding!

On some employment sites, users can access a questionnaire to find out which companies best suit their personal values and professional personality. The list of participating employers doing the same is also significant. It's very much like a dating site for employers and employees.

Advertisers often ask applicants to include the test result of this potential match to their applications.

Company as candidate

As an employer, it's important to realise that you are no longer the sole driver of the employment transaction. While the applicant has demonstrated interest in your offer, he or she may not opt for the first proposal or the best paid proposal. They are likely to be assessing a host of factors that will determine where they choose to work.

This is because the most talented Gen Zs and Millennials understand that they'll have many employers over their working life. Equally, they're clear about what they want from a job – *a great employment experience of a type and for a period that suits them at the present moment.*

What constitutes an ideal employer profile may change over time. But it will almost certainly be a composite of culture, the people they'll work with, the location and nature of the working environment, the size of business, pay, conditions, location and access to public transport.

Because good talent is in high demand, the best candidates know that, if they miss your position, there'll be another one soon.

This all adds up to the company becoming the candidate on the applicant's list. That's a seismic shift in thinking for employers. But it's one you cannot afford to ignore.

3 Optimise your reach.

While the shift in power has made some things more difficult for employers, reaching out to your target group effectively and efficiently is now easier than ever thanks to social media and search. Facebook (with all its tentacles) understands our needs and interests, our private activities and passions better than any human because it knows what we search or respond to.

Search is a vital component in this dynamic. In his book *Everybody Lies*, ex-Trump campaign advisor Seth Stephens-Davidowitz goes to great lengths to emphasise that search habits are one of the most reliable indicators of our real intentions (hence how he picked a Trump win well in advance of the 2016 election). What we do in the privacy of our internet time says a lot about people and it's all captured for you to use as a job advertiser.

Moreover, we now increase the amount of information people can search about us as we faithfully inform LinkedIn of every professional movement we make.

This is great for everyone who is looking to recruit insightfully. On Facebook you can easily search by parameters such as place of residence and interests. On LinkedIn you can perfectly target the position, education or the name of a current or previous employer. It is also much cheaper than advertising in a published recruitment medium.



Only reach your target group

The key to success in digital marketing is avoiding waste. Avoid reaching people you don't need by selecting a mix of social media, bannering and SEO that ensures your ads are viewed as much as possible by only relevant people.

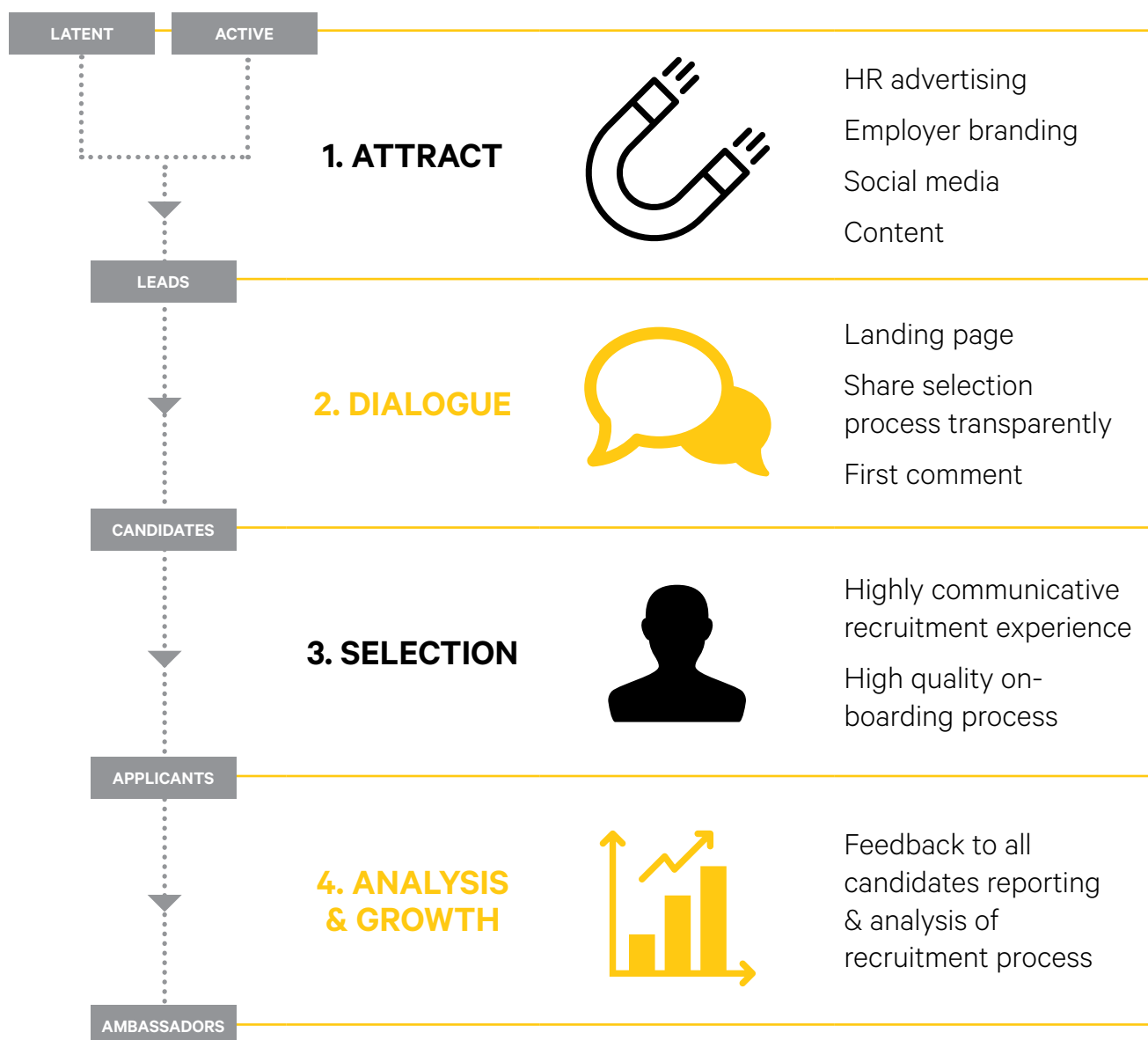
So, what about offline advertising? It can definitely serve its purpose, especially for people who are in market and who know their local paper is a job marketplace. A correctly placed display ad can reach large numbers of applicants in certain circumstances. Print media can be especially useful for the image-oriented employer. Strongly supported regional media effectively supports recruitment for jobs close to home.

Reach is, of course, only part of the story. A great job advertisement communicates through a compelling message supported by enticing imagery to the right target group. Looking to recruit a computer scientist? Then speak in his or her language and use attractive (moving, if possible) images.

In short, make the impression you create of your company relevant and attractive to the recipient.

4 Employer marketing.

At DPR&Co, we strongly believe in customer journeys. In recruitment terms this is called the candidate journey. Which sites does the candidate visit? What does the candidate think? What is he or she sensitive to? This is about crawling into the brain of the candidate. Once you've done this, use the following model to determine what to do next:



5 Employer marketing.

Employer marketing can be defined as the sum of employer branding and recruitment communications. You build your employer brand (your reputation as a brand and employer), by creating awareness, consideration and interest for your organisation through paid, earned and owned media.

There's an old PR maxim that is particularly applicable here – be good and tell people about it. If you have positive stories (and you certainly will have them), tell them. Both internally and externally. That not only shows to the outside world who you are and what you do, but also ensures a lift in team pride.

Compelling recruitment communication

The term 'recruitment communications' refers to more than just the social post of recruitment ad. It covers communication about the complete selection, recruitment and onboarding process.

A study by *Young Capital* shows that when young people are given the choice between an attractive job with an average wage or an unattractive job with a high wage, 68% opt for the former. There is no better motivation to work on your employer brand.

6 Website or Jobsite?

Extremely important and often undervalued is the principle point of interaction between your company and your candidates – your website. All too often, especially for B2B employers, candidates find themselves trying to engage with an unsightly, dry and uninspiring candidate area somewhere deep in a website.

It's worth asking the question: do you reserve a spot on your general website for employer branding and recruitment purposes or do you create an autonomous job site?

Easier monitoring with a job site

A job site is more interesting from a technical perspective. Visitors to your regular website may have any one of many intentions, while the buying agenda of visitors to a job site is much clearer. This enables you to speak to them more intimately about the employee space you've created while also enabling better prospect identification and follow-up. Our rule of thumb advice is: if you recruit more than ten profiles per year, then definitely consider a separate job site!

Note: You may have detected how much consumer language we're using to advise on employee branding and marketing. The reason is simple. Your employees are now talent *prospects*. You should aim to win the best of them as you would a customer.

Tailor to mobile traffic

More than 50% of online recruitment activity today is mobile. That figure will only increase. So, make sure that the application process can easily be done from a mobile device. And please make the website or job site responsive.

Keep the threshold low

Another optimisation technique is to make a separate page per vacancy. That takes time, but it is much more inviting than a form.

Also, is a resume and introductory/ motivation letter necessary? Or is a link to a LinkedIn profile and a mobile number sufficient? If people share this data with you, you can assume a healthy interest. Don't set the threshold too high.

“Remember that money is not the main reason potential employees choose a company. It is the total package that you as an employer bring to the candidate market.”

Larger employer? Use live chat

A tip when trying to lower the threshold: install a live chat on your page. These are the pop-ups or chat windows that move up in the bottom right of your screen as soon as you stay on a page for more than 10 seconds.

Don't panic. A live chat does not mean that you have to man it continuously. You will automatically receive a notification when someone uses the chat, with their message, name and email address or mobile number.

If you can respond, great. If you can't, a friendly automated message will inform the questioner that you are temporarily unavailable, but that you will contact the prospect quickly.

What about chatbots?

In addition, chatbots are on the rise. If they can help anywhere, it's in HR.

Candidate communications require a lot of interpretation and the material is sometimes sensitive. But for companies with high recruitment volumes, consider a chatbot for intake and orientation. You can perfectly script scenarios and provide directional answers to well-defined questions.

Over the past 5 years, consumers have taken female chatbots to heart. (<https://www.amdocs.com/media-room/consumers-want-female-and-funny-not-youthful-chatbots>). The preference for a female bot is three times higher than for a man. Moreover, she must also be friendly, empathetic and intelligent.

Make yourself attractive

To attract the best talent, the candidate journey should be as interesting as possible without setting an unrealistic expectation. That starts with the way you approach people and continues during the application and onboarding process.

Remember that money is not the main reason potential employees choose a company. It is the total package that you as an employer bring to the candidate market.

Make applying fascinating

What is perhaps even more important than the choice between a website and a jobsite, is the user interface and user experience on your platform. For example, take a look at this gem: <https://interview.ueno.co/>

“ The more strongly your company presents itself, the more enthusiastic people will be about taking a position with you. ”

If you were the right candidate, this would make your day. More importantly, it'd tell you a lot about the kind of company that Ueno is. And because it's interactive, the HR team get a sense of your fit to the corporate culture before you even apply.

The more strongly your company presents itself, the more enthusiastic people will be about taking a position with you. And whether you're selling screws or you're multinational corporate, every company has the potential to be an attractive employer.

Set realistic expectations

While telling your story well is important, it is vital to set accurate expectations about the working environment and experience you offer.

We saw this first-hand with a global consulting client. Its recruitment ads promised a highly supportive working environment with amazing systems and training. In reality, it was a place that demanded a high degree of self-sufficiency and resilience in order to succeed. This mismatch resulted in a 'revolving door' of thousands of very expensive employees.

What changed this was not a shift in workplace culture but a shift in expectation setting. Only those who were up for making their own way applied for positions and they got exactly what they were looking for. The problem was solved and tens of millions of dollars were added to the firm's bottom line.

What if your story is not that great?

The ability to attract great talent to your firm is a strategic pillar for success. If you can't develop a credible story about what makes your workplace attractive, it may be worth reviewing the relationship you have with your staff.

We conduct annual blind employee satisfaction surveys and take the results very seriously. The insights we learn from the team's responses help us reshape how we behave as an employer.



Make being an employer-of-choice part of your vision

Advertising luminary and DPR&Co director, Siimon Reynolds, once said “Having a great strategy, great people and a sense of urgency” are the three most important attributes for a company’s success.

Part of your strategy to attract good people should include a ‘best employer’ plank to your corporate strategy. *It is that important.*

There are so many ways to measure your progress in this area. Surveys and awards are among the most valid because they usually require third party validation.

7 Attracting the maximum number of quality candidates.

This is the most important section of this white paper: how to ensure a maximum influx of correct profiles?

A recruitment procedure is always accompanied by a lot of questions. Am I describing the role accurately? Is how I'm describing the role compelling? How much response can I expect?

In the past, the costs involved in recruitment were high. You could spend a lot of money and get few appropriate candidates. Here's how to maximise your responses.

Digital marketing technology and 'fail fast'

Digital marketing technology can help you get answers to questions quickly, then improve and test again. Over time, you should be able to refine the process to the point where you can estimate recruitment costs with a high degree of accuracy, especially if you're employing in large numbers.

You'll then be able to estimate how much reach is required to deliver a strong response. The cost per thousand impressions will convert to cost-per-click which will, in turn, convert to cost per applicant, then cost per recruit.

Remember that cost per recruit will be likely to increase with the seniority of the role you're filling.

Reach as a holy grail

Naturally, the wider you cast the net, the more prospects you're likely to bring into your orbit. But it can be wasteful. *Targeted reach* is the better starting point. You can ensure minimum waste by setting objective parameters that you know will impact propensity-to-apply. Set a geographic radius of 25km around your worksite. Be specific about interests outside of the job that you think will contribute to a successful appointment (an interest in marketing, for example, can be very helpful for an IP lawyer).

Aiming for the right profile

We recommend starting with a clear definition of your ideal profile – traits, attributes, competencies or interests – and set your targeting accordingly. Google (display or SEO), Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter or other channels can all help here too. Target carefully for maximum effectiveness.

“ The most direct definition we ever heard for ‘advertising’ is ‘convincing people to do things’. ”

To make the position look as attractive as possible, craft your message as you would for a consumer. Aim for the most compelling employer story while not stretching the truth.

Target the message directly to them. Use the word ‘you’ a lot.

The most direct definition we ever heard for ‘advertising’ is ‘convincing people to do things’. And convince them you must. You not only want people to see your ad, you also want them to click on it and visit a landing page that delivers a compelling overview of the role and vital information about the business. Your call-to-action needs to be simple, clear and have a sense of urgency.

Cost per lead: a concrete case

For your early campaigns, you won’t know exactly what level of response to expect, so anticipating the effective cost per lead (in this case, the cost to collect a resume) is impossible.

To make things clearer, we offer a concrete example of a recruitment campaign for a difficult-to-fill role at an SME.

This organisation had tried every channel, from job boards to national newspapers to regional publications, but continued to struggle to find suitable

candidates. An online two-phase promotion was their last resort.

Phase 1: Multichannel advertising

Phase 1 consisted of four promotions on three different platforms. Ads were running on Facebook and LinkedIn while, simultaneously search ads ran on Google’s display network were leveraged.

An investment of roughly \$5,000 resulted in more than 700,000 impressions and 2,000 click-throughs to the landing page.

To make the people on the landing page convert as smoothly as possible, the ‘CV’ was made non-mandatory.

Through the advertising campaign, eighty applicants registered with their CV.

Considering most recruitment firms charge around 20% of annual salary (albeit for a more comprehensive service with candidate filtering), this is amazing value to gain access to a wealth of qualified prospects.

Phase 2: Remarketing

Remarketing is often forgotten, especially in recruitment advertising. It is essential that you install Google Tag Manager and the Facebook Pixel to enable respondent tracking. You can easily install these two applications on

“The two key factors are total cost per applicant and cost per hire. ”

your website, after which you can reach people again via GDN or Facebook Advertising.

Retargeting is efficient in addressing people who visited the landing page but did not apply. Ads are tailored to the fact that the candidate has considered the opportunity already. In the above case, the target group in the re-targeting phase consisted of 2,000 people who had been to the job site.

Again, remarketing paid off as the employer continued to express interest in the prospect.

Measure, improve, measure

The last step in any campaign is performance measurement. The two key factors are total cost per applicant and cost per hire. How can both of these be reduced in future?

In calculating your cost-to-hire, it's worth factoring in the other components of the campaign. The time it took to identify and target prospects, to create the recruitment messages and landing pages, and the time to bring prospects to the point of interview.

Then, list the statistics for each vacancy. How many people do you need to reach in order to get the optimal number of applicants? Leverage your statistics into rough benchmarks for all future campaigns.

8 Complete transparency is the future.

In the digital age, information is ubiquitous.

An example of this is [glassdoor.com.au](https://www.glassdoor.com.au). On this site, employees are able to share anonymously what they think of their employer, including how they treat their people and how they compensate them.

It is an important issue to take into account as an employer. In the same way that a poor consumer experience can damage your company, a poor employee experience can hinder your ability to grow. Ensure your policies are up to date, are regularly reviewed and acted upon.

Internal communications have also taken on new levels of importance. Good employees expect to be 'in the tent' when it comes to what's going on with the firm.

“In the same way that a poor consumer experience can damage your company, a poor employee experience can hinder your ability to grow.”

Need help?

If you need assistance with branding as an employer of choice, let us know. We'd be happy to walk you through our process and help you develop a sustainable and compelling employer positioning.

