

Perception is reality when attracting and retaining talent

PART ONE

IN THE FIRST OF A TWO PART SERIES BRETT MINCHINGTON EXPLAINS HOW TO DEFINE YOUR EMPLOYER VALUE PROPOSITION (EVP).

BRETT MINCHINGTON

(W) With the increasing fragmentation of offline and online channels used to communicate, 'What it's like to work for this organisation,' it pays to ensure the employment experience you project to current and future employees is matched by what you can realistically deliver upon throughout the employee lifecycle from hire to retire.

At the heart of your employer brand strategy should be your employer value proposition (EVP). Your EVP is an employee-centred approach that is aligned to existing, integrated

"Your EVP is an employee-centred approach that is aligned to existing, integrated workforce planning strategies because it has been informed by existing employees and your external target audience."

workforce planning strategies because it has been informed by existing employees and your external target audience. In its simplest form, your EVP is a set of associations

and offerings provided by your organisation in return for the skills, capabilities and experiences an employee brings to your organisation.

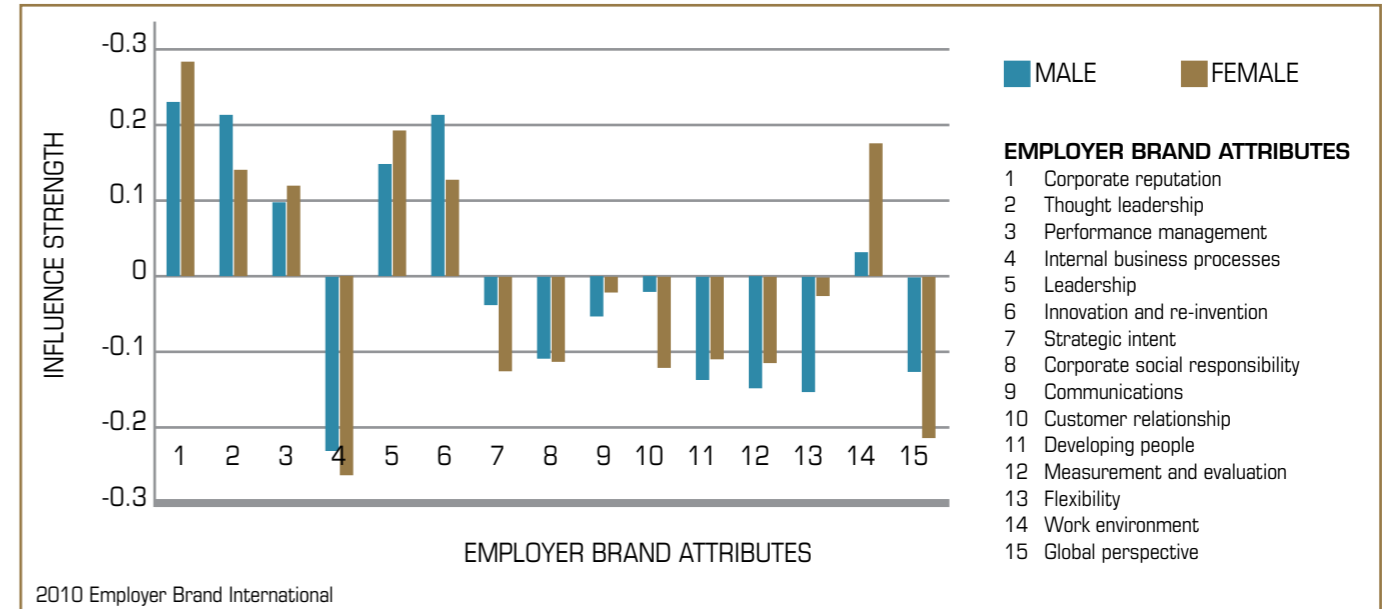
A unique, relevant and compelling EVP that is well defined, communicated and relevant can be the difference between why talent chooses your organisation compared to any one of your competitors.

One of the most effective EVP definitions I have found was developed by BASF. Their Global Employer Value Proposition is based on the following core aspects:

- ❖ As the world's leading chemical company, we offer intelligent solutions both for our customers and for a sustainable future;
- ❖ We connect people with very different talents worldwide and offer them a variety of opportunities; and
- ❖ And for us, our employees' performance counts as well as their personality.

In addition, BASF developed EVP rules and the regions were empowered to select specific EVP focal points they considered most important for their region. With respect to each regional communication of the EVP, the global EVP represents the umbrella that ensures the overall consistency of

FIGURE 1: INFLUENCERS OF EMPLOYMENT CHOICE - GENDER



BASF's employer communication. It allows customisation as necessary in order to really meet the needs of the target groups approached in a particular region.

DEFINING YOUR EVP

To define your EVP, you should conduct in-depth research to determine the most important attributes your target audience is seeking from an employment experience, why employees chose to join your company, why they stay and which employment attributes you could improve. As a minimum, the research agenda should include 1) research across the entire employee population using a reliable online survey tool; and 2) focus groups of employees chosen from homogenous segments of your workforce e.g. by division, region of job tenure. You should also include a sample of new hires (0-3 months) in your sample as this is when the perception vs reality test of the employment experience is most evident. Your research outcomes should:

- ❖ define the driving motivators of attraction, engagement and retention of current employees and determine any gaps between the aspirations, expectations

and perceptions of leaders and employees about the employment experience; and

- ❖ determine perceptions of your organisation as a 'great place to work,' amongst your external target audience.

Accessing relevant secondary research will save you time and money when trying to understand the employment needs of your external target audience.

In a recent global study by Employer Brand International (EBI) to determine which employer brand attributes have the strongest influence on employment choice (see figure 1) we found the strongest influencers of employment choice by gender include: working for a company with a strong reputation, the opportunity to work with thought leaders, being rewarded for good performance, working for a company that has a culture of innovation. Interestingly, the study also found a friendly work environment was six times a stronger influence for females compared to males. (Figure 1)

This type of research can assist to inform the development of your external facing EVP and make it clear that the same EVP does not necessarily work across all of your employee segments. It is important

to understand the implications of these differences. For example, if your workforce has a high percentage of females, it is important to assess your policies, systems and processes to determine if they work towards creating a friendly working environment. Failure to do so could result in an important value proposition being overlooked.

PICTURE WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS

On completion of your EVP research you should bring together your results into an 'Employee Lifecycle Engagement Map,' a consolidated picture of how your EVP impacts on talent attraction and retention.

The Map will inform managers on the 'key moments of truth' for your EVP along the employee lifecycle. The map focuses efforts on aligning values, behaviours and actions with your EVP and is reflective of information revealed during the research process. Rewarding managers' for delivering on your EVPs will assist to build a culture of leadership focused on delivering a positive employment experience aligned with the needs of your talent.

(HR)

Next month: Part 2 – Communicating and embedding your EVP.