

# Communicate your EVP to attract and retain talent

## THIS SECOND ARTICLE OF A TWO PART SERIES DISCUSSES HOW TO BRING YOUR EMPLOYER VALUE PROPOSITION TO LIFE!

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**C** Communicating your employer value proposition (EVP) is one of the most challenging, but rewarding initiatives undertaken by leaders.

As stated in part one of this series, the EVP is a set of associations and offerings provided by your organisation in return for the skills, capabilities and experiences an employee brings to the organisation.

The EVP should answer the following questions:

- ❖ Why should I join your organisation?
- ❖ Why should I stay?
- ❖ Why should I give my best?
- ❖ Why should I recommend your organisation as an employer and business? and
- ❖ Why should I re-join?

The key to building an employer brand that attracts and retains talent is to effectively communicate the EVP to the target audience. Companies can no longer rely on traditional media such as press advertising to

recruit talent. Today's talent have access to numerous online and offline communication channels and companies need to ensure the communication of their EVP cuts through the clutter of increasingly fragmented media and is evident in the actions and behaviours projected by leaders and staff.

EVP communication occurs at two levels. The first level I call "above-the-line". These activities include using online and offline communication touchpoints such as the ones listed in Figure 1.

Below-the-line activities are those that are evident to staff through the behaviours and actions of employees throughout the business (see Fig 2). Some of these may occur at a more sensory level and be influenced by the level of trust, respect and rapport developed between the people involved.

The above-the-line activities are usually the activities which are

actioned first in any EVP communication strategy. This is usually driven by vendor or leadership objectives of wanting to be seen to be doing something tangible following what is often a rigorous research project and assessment of people policies, processes and practices.

The below-the-line activity tends to fall into the background whilst everyone starts to see the communication of the EVP through the above-the-line touchpoints. The lack of below-the-line focus is usually evident when people first view the EVP and remark in a cynical way, "It looks great, but nothing like what really happens around here."

Too often I have seen the process to develop the EVP passed off as just another HR project that needs to get the tick to say, "Yes, we have one of those." I spend a considerable amount of time helping clients to understand that the EVP is part of a much bigger picture, their Employer Brand! The

FIGURE 1: EVP TOUCHPOINTS

ONLINE CHANNELS	OFFLINE CHANNELS
Career website	Press advertising
Social media pages	Career fairs
Job boards HTML emails	Guerrilla advertising
SMS job alerts	Posters
Webcasts	Paycheque stuffers
Podcasts	On-campus marketing
E-newsletters	Public relations
Video testimonials	Employee referral programmes
Company videos on YouTube	Community events
Digital TV	Company events
	Company intranet
	Performance appraisal
	Induction programme
	Welcome packets
	Induction programs

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challenge for many companies is that they fail to connect or position the EVP in light of their overarching employer branding strategy.

An EVP must be reviewed and refreshed as business needs evolve or as market forces dictate. I am starting to see a number of companies simply dust off their pre Global Financial Crisis (GFC) EVPs and plug them in as part of a new recruitment drive. These companies need to understand that for many employees the 'employment deal has changed.' During the past two years they have seen employees made redundant, severe cost cutting, eradication of career development programmes and in some cases were asked to reduce their hours or take a pay cut to keep their job.

So how do companies communicate the EVP in below-the-line activities where the impact is more authentic and sustainable?

- 1 It starts with developing a platform of trust between leaders and staff upon which all EVP activities can be structured;
- 2 Conduct new or review current employee research to understand how your EVP is currently being perceived by your employees;
- 3 Acknowledge where you are

FIGURE 2: ABOVE-THE-LINE AND BELOW-THE-LINE ALIGNMENT WITH THE EVP



strong and areas where you are weak on the employment deal. Focus programmes on enhancing strengths and eradicating weaknesses;

- 4 Build a team across functional lines to collaborate and ensure consistency in communicating your EVP; and
- 5 Celebrate success in achieving EVP objectives

Encouraging authentic internal communication amongst leaders and staff is critical in creating an environment which facilitates a culture of openness where ideas and views can be exchanged and challenged respectfully.

Open communication builds trust amongst employees and on a foundation of trust anything is possible! [\(HRJ\)](#)

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