Want to Attract Diverse Talent? You Need to Work on Your Employer Brand — Here's Why.



Opinions expressed by Entrepreneur contributors are their own.

Now more than ever, this question of what a business' values, perspective, and stance are on certain social issues is under the microscope of diverse applicants. According to Monster.com, 86% of applicants actively engaged in a job search care about an employer's reputation with regard to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI). The same survey found that 62% of applicants would turn down a job offer if their employer did not support DEI.

In this hiring climate, where hundreds of thousands of jobs

have been added to the economy in 2023 alone, employees are looking for their perfect match and feel certain they can afford to wait until they find it. Without communicating DEI as a key value of your business on online platforms, you could be turning off high-value applicants who could join your team.

So, how can businesses like yours stand out in the vast sea of "now hiring" signs and attract the best of the best diverse talent? The answer is clear: Develop an employer brand.

What is an employer brand?

Employer branding is a marketing and communication strategy that builds an emotional connection between the potential employee and the employer by demonstrating a positive image and reputation in its marketing.

Employer branding involves the rhetoric that's written on the company's website, the posts it touts on LinkedIn, and the word-of-mouth reputation that represents its staff makeup, values, and commitments.

When a diverse applicant sees your newly posted job description and is curious about your business, they likely go to your LinkedIn profile or website to see if yours is the kind of organization they'd like to be a part of. One of the ways companies can present themselves in the most positive light to these applicants is by discussing their values and initiatives around DEI.

However, there are several missteps companies make when engaging in employer branding that could turn diverse employees off in seconds.

Related: How Employer Branding Can Help Your Company Be Perceived As A Great Place To Work

How employee branding could be turning off diverse candidates

From the brand’s policies to its website messaging, these five mistakes may cause diverse candidates to dismiss your job posting before they even apply.

1. Your business doesn’t have a DEI statement on job applications

If you don’t have a DEI statement at the end of your job applications, you’re sending the wrong message to diverse candidates. This statement can be simple and should say something to the effect of “We’re an equal opportunity employer and are committed to providing equal employment opportunities for all applicants and employees, regardless of race, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, marital status or veteran status.”

As basic as this statement may sound, it acts to lower the perceived barriers to entry for some diverse applicants. It’s the first step in DEI-centric employee branding that serves as a handshake to diverse candidates. It communicates that “all are welcome” and that one’s identity doesn’t qualify or disqualify someone from being here. It’s a small step that can lead to more diverse applicants applying for your open role.

2. Your business doesn’t offer ERGs, BRGs, or wellness groups

An employee resource group (ERG), business resource group (BRG), or wellness group is an important component of promoting a sense of belonging in a company. Diverse applicants are looking for businesses that offer affinity groups, especially if the staff makeup has a sizable group of

individuals who share a similar identity.

It doesn’t always have to be about race, gender, or other common identities. Groups can also be formed around shared values like faith, health, sports and more. The goal is to demonstrate that your business is making a good-faith effort towards promoting community and belonging, and these are important components of a desirable workplace, especially for diverse applicants. Having a page on your business’s website or social media showcasing special groups that employees can join can help your business stand out and appear more welcoming to diverse applicants.

Related: How to Utilize Employee Resource Groups for a More Diverse

3. Your business doesn’t offer a flexible work environment

It’s 2023, and more applicants are looking for flexible workspaces, whether they’re a parent or someone looking for more work-life balance (or work-life blend, as I call it), companies who brand themselves as flexible or accommodating workspaces are more attractive to potential employees than those who enforce rigid work schedules and mandatory in-office days.

Since the world was taken by storm by the Covid-19 pandemic, more diverse applicants, including people of color, those with disabilities, and gender minorities, began looking for “safer” spaces to work. Minorities have always had to face microaggressions and adapt to the dominant culture in the workplace. However, having more flexibility around their office environment and schedule has helped those individuals find a work-life blend and has eased the burden of daily microaggressions and code-switching in the workplace.

Related: How Code-Switching Hurts People of Color in the Workplace

4. Your business doesn’t offer outside-of-work activities

We all like to have fun and enjoy quality time with others. Companies that brand themselves as “fun” workspaces or ones that offer outside-of-work activities like company outings, retreats or sports activities can attract more diverse applicants and likely retain them longer. Although not every employee should *have* to participate in these activities, it’s nice to have the option for diverse candidates who are seeking community in the workplace.

These activities aren’t just for show; they allow employees to bond and cultivate a true sense of belonging and community. Belonging is a critical element of a diverse workplace and should be promoted. Most companies do the bare minimum in offering outside-of-work activities. The consequence is that it can lead many minorities to feel isolated or disconnected from their coworkers—and this certainly does not attract or retain diverse talent.

5. Build an employer brand that attracts — not repels — diversity

Your business could have some of the best benefits packages and offerings available, but if you’re not actively discussing them, writing about them on your website and on social media, and sharing them in company emails, your employee brand isn’t going to benefit.

Don’t neglect to speak about issues potential employees care about, like maternity and paternity benefits, flexible hours, and remote working, as well as diverse representation at all

levels of the organization.

These components of an employee brand can make or break your business’s competitiveness in the hiring market. Be the brand that stands out and attracts the best of the best by honing your employer brand and letting diverse employees come to you.

https://www.entrepreneur.com/growing-a-business/want-to-attract-diverse-talent-you-need-to-work-on-your/459203