



OUR FRESH THINKING

Would you work for you?



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Employers admit recruitment is increasingly becoming competitive. Attracting the best talents in today's labor market exceeds dangling the heaviest wads of dollars in the face of job seekers.

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly disrupted the labor market, making job seekers prioritize job satisfaction as much as financial remuneration.

With job seekers now more discerning about the opportunities they welcome, it is no surprise that a historic 11 million jobs remain unfilled as of July 2022, according to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Would we say the increased selectiveness of labor providers is exclusively an American movement? Definitely not! It is now a universal phenomenon.

Globally, job seekers are becoming pickier. The BBC reports (for the first time) that the number of unfilled jobs exceeded the number of unemployed people in the United Kingdom in May.

This clearly reveals that paradigms have largely changed for employers. Now more than ever, job seekers – especially the A-class talents – are keenly watching out for the branding and records of their employer.

SUMMARY HIGHLIGHT

Job seekers are more selective when looking for employment. Company branding and employer leadership records hold more value than a fat payday.

Top-tier employees and recruits want leaders who lead from the front. They want to be part of a work culture that strives for excellence and provides the tools, training, and opportunities to reach their goals.

Empower your employees and get out of the way. Trust that the A-class team you have put together will make the right decisions. Then, provide feedback, support, mentoring, and recognition along the way.

Employee and customer relationships are the heartbeat of a healthy company. Open door policies, one-on-one time, and team-building opportunities should be utilized. Assess your current relationships and be innovative.



According to CareerArc, 89% of passive candidates evaluate your brand before applying!

Employer branding is becoming central to recruiting

An insightful Glassdoor survey revealed that over 85% of HR professionals agree that successful recruiting must seriously integrate brand marketing to job seekers.

Yes, you read that right. Job seekers are now the jury, and you must sweat it out with other recruiters and MARKET your brand to prospective hires.

But wait, what if we told you job seekers are now even diving deeper into evaluating the leadership excellence of their prospective team leader before accepting an offer from your company?

“Spoiled brats...they should have asked to be CEOs of the company”, we expect you to grunt in disbelief sprinkled with resentment.

Believe it or not, employees now care about your brand and leadership qualities. According to CareerArc, 89% of passive candidates evaluate your brand before applying!

Yes, your position as a manager or business owner is gaining incremental significance in the capacity of your unit to retain or attract new hires.

According to Gallup, over 50% of employees who quit their roles admitted that their managers didn't do enough to keep them.

A fat salary is strangely no longer enough to pull in your dream hires. Topnotch employees want to be assured of robust leadership before they put pen to paper and come on board.

They want to be guaranteed a painstakingly designed work ecosystem facilitative of growth, with a leader whose branding and portfolio oozes excellence.

Job seekers now scrutinize employers and prospective managers

Yes, job seekers do their investigation. Top candidates are known to sniff through their prospective leader's social media pages, especially LinkedIn, to calibrate intellectually such leader.

Gordana Sretenovic, co-founder of Workello told me that employees no longer commit to interviews with companies with poor online branding.

According to Gordana, “gone is the time when companies could demand candidates to go above and beyond just to get a second interview. Nowadays, it's more important than ever to present your company and your brand in the best light possible and excite your candidates about the possibility of working with you.

Apart from public-facing values and company culture, you should have an active social media presence where they can share their wins and losses, as well as showcase their team in a positive light.”

At this juncture, we have sufficiently established the criticality of a leader's brand, attributes, and track record when job seekers evaluate the suitability of a job offer.

The bigger question now is how you can, as a leader, professionally garnish your branding to attract (proactively and reactively), retain, and develop top talent for your team.

6.5 steps to constructing first-class leadership for attracting and retaining A-grade talents

In this section, I will tap into my 20+ years of leadership experience to illuminate the vital aspects of building a brand that attracts and keeps your best hands.



1. Be a transformative leader leading from the front

The years of screaming for results you (as a leader) can't achieve are extinct. Contemporary workplaces are psychologically configured in a way where the workforce inherits the excellence or mediocrity of leadership.

These days, top employees want to work in organizations where leaders lead from the front. You must fundamentally establish a personal culture of excellence and disperse it across your team.

In my "Fresh Notes On Personal Branding: Get a Brand or Die a Generic", I emphasized the essentiality of standing out to stay at the top.

I call it "living-evangelism", preaching through the life you live in the office and the personality you cultivate among your teammates (and subordinates).

Exceed KPIs yourself. Consistently overperform and challenge the boundaries of your abilities.

Baruch Labunski, CEO of Rank Secure, agrees with leadership inspiring by example instead of screaming lame orders and impractical dictations.

According to Baruch, "a leader must set a good bar of standards for management in balancing employee needs with those of the company.

Good leadership is about balance and motivation. You must inspire your employees to do better rather than dictate."

When you transmit a searing distaste for underperformance and practically reflect such antipathy (for amateurishness) in your deliverable, such over-performance will inevitably rub off on your team.

And this is what top talents want to see before they come in or stay on board. They want a work setting that perpetually pushes them to probe the limits of their intellectual audacity. They want a work culture that aggressively prohibits settling for less.

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2. Treat your employees as # 1

Throughout my career, I have experienced managers prioritizing the customer above the employees. In some really unfortunate incidences, I have seen managers forcing employees to lick the feet of unruly customers.

Yes, customers are king. But it is actually a constitutional monarchy where your work culture (herein the constitution) precedes the monarchial customer.

If you have a work culture where employee respect and job satisfaction are core, you wouldn't unreasonably sacrifice your employee's satisfaction on the altars of sycophantic customer glorification.

In my book "Fresh Notes on Customer Service", I laid out the actionable blueprint for treating the employee as #1 and the customer as #2 to get valuable customers for life.

On the surface, the recommendation to put employees ahead of profits appears theoretical and overdosed with ethical idealism.

But putting your employees first, and leading with empathy, is one of the most sustainable ways to grow your business while attracting and retaining top talent.

Ayman Zaidi, Digital Marketing & Asst. HR Manager at Great People Search couldn't agree more with putting employees ahead of profit to attract top talents.

According to Ayman, "Our company's graphs are going in the right direction despite us valuing our employees more than profits. We never ask my subordinates to work like crazy. We also have a paid



“It doesn’t make sense to hire smart people and tell them what to do; we hire smart people so they can tell us what to do.” – Steve Jobs

time off policy for every employee in the company.”

Top talents deeply value empathetic leadership – a leadership that genuinely cares about job satisfaction. According to statistics from Gallup, more than 50% of employees who quit their jobs had managers who never discussed their job satisfaction with them within the three months before they left.

3. Encourage innovativeness in your team

There is no way you are attracting or retaining top talents if you have a track record of stifling the inventiveness of your team.

Top talents enjoy challenging work environments that consistently push them to veer outside the norms and innovate.

Mentally incarcerating them to perpetually think inside the box will push your best heads out (quit) and even repel others from coming in.

As much as you don’t want to relinquish every fragment of authority, you at least want to give your team a measured sense of autonomy to solve problems their way without always running to you for direction.

Create an accommodating framework for getting work done such that employees can yet hit deliverables in approaches they are most comfortable and satisfied with.

Such creative flexibility and autonomy have been strongly linked to employee engagement.

Research by Effortory reveals that organizational autonomy does more than just unleashing your team’s creativity.

It fosters a stronger spirit of accountability,

clarity on the part of employees regarding which responsibilities fall under their jurisdiction, and clear alignment (and belonging) to the company’s goals.

Don’t attempt to micromanage the whole process. Seek to hire the best hands, allocate responsibilities and let everyone be a feudal lord of their fief, answering to you who takes a supervisory position.

In the famous words of Steve Jobs: “It doesn’t make sense to hire smart people and tell them what to do; we hire smart people so they can tell us what to do.”

4. Commit to the growth of your team

This is one of the loudest indices of a progressive leader. Leaders prioritizing their teams’ professional, physical, and even spiritual advancement never run short of top talents.

Unfortunately, many leaders don’t sufficiently prioritize the growth of their team, as demonstrated in a robust training scheme.

Frightening statistics from Lorman reveal that about 59% of employees admit they had no workplace training.

This culture deters job seekers from accepting offers from such companies whose workforce is malnourished of 21st-century-relevant skilling programs.

Lorman further reveals that 59% of millennials finger development opportunities as a crucial parameter when evaluating an advertised job position.

Yongming Song, CEO of Imgkits, told me empowering employees to perform has been the bedrock of the growth of his photo editor company.

According to him, he always asks himself if he has appropriately furnished his team with the skills and environment they need when he sets expectations for them.

“From my assessment of my company, leadership style, and as an individual, I empower my employees to develop and get better. To enhance effectiveness, I always evaluate if I would



A TINYpulse survey found that 24% of employees denied the recognition they felt they deserved interviewed for another position within two weeks after they felt snubbed.

achieve expectations if roles were interchanged, and I always seek ways to improve my leadership and management style,” he explained to me.

So important is employee empowerment to job seekers that PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) reports job seekers are open to giving up to 12% of their salary for training!

5. Facilitate Employee Recognition

Who doesn't love being commended, especially after extraordinary delivery? Employees love recognition, and this majorly factors into their job satisfaction.

TINYpulse does justice to revealing how important recognition is for employees (and prospective job seekers).

A TINYpulse survey found that 24% of employees denied the recognition they felt they deserved interviewed for another position within two weeks after they felt snubbed.

For comparison, only 13% of employees who got recognized interviewed for other positions.

Interesting, isn't it?

Build a reward mechanism in your work culture. These must not be massive financial packages. Little things can be particularly symbolic to your employees.

A custom mug, a specially designed shirt, or even a shout-out during a board meeting all count!

6. Invest in topnotch technologies and systems for increased efficiency

You will struggle to attract top talents if you deploy redundant work systems. Topnotch technologies and tools have astronomically revamped today's workplace, and you should maximize them.

I have harped on the need to gird your team with the cutting-edge technological awareness or

technical competency they need to work in a 21st-century-optimized-ecosystem.

Invest in tools and systems that help employees work more intelligently, significantly slashing redundancy.

With distributing workforces creeping into the mainstream, encourage teams to leverage more cloud-based project management tools and communication technologies for asynchronous collaboration.

6.5. Don't neglect team bonding

Here is the icing on the cake. For me, successful companies are successful relationships. These include internal relationships between employees and the brand's relationship with customers.

No one wants to work in a toxic workplace anymore. An interesting report from MIT Sloan Management Review reveals that employees are ten times more likely to quit in a toxic workplace.

You want to build a socially healthy workplace. Your best hires want to be assured they are coming into a mentally and sociologically conducive workspace to do their best work.

They want to be sure they have a leader that enforces healthy interactions between teammates and encourages win-win camaraderie among staff.



You want to build a socially healthy workplace.

Final thoughts

A company's culture begins with the model exhibited by its leaders. Unfortunately, the techniques some leaders utilize are born from their former leaders' criticism and old-school mentality of their former leaders. This will not work today.

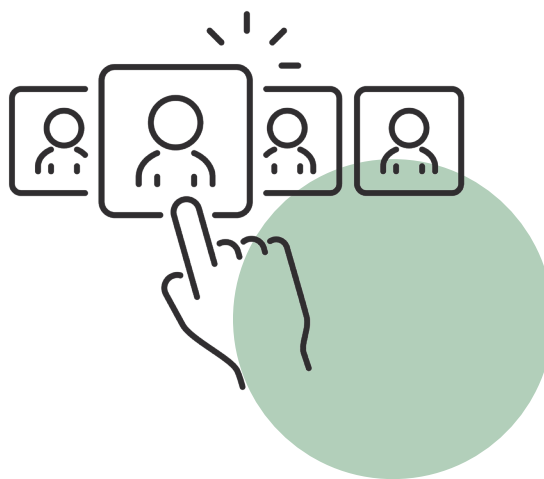
In recent years, people have become more vocal in what they are willing and not willing to accept from each other and from those in leadership roles in our nation.

The same has become true in the workplace. Leaders must now lead – and by example – because the old-school way of doing things is no longer acceptable by the ones who actually do the work.

Current workers, especially those just entering the workforce, will not be motivated or manipulated by a boss having a tantrum over poor results. Supervisors and others in company leadership roles must develop an environment that inspires their personnel to do well because they know they will be rewarded or otherwise recognized for it.

One of the best ways to inspire your subordinates is to provide support even when they fail and to show respect at all times. Be a mentor. Be the leader everyone wants to be. Employees who feel support, appreciation, and empowerment will do anything to ensure the team wins. Then the recognition received inspires them to continue onward.

So, we are closing this article with the same question we began: would you work for you? Honestly, would you?



ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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Michael D. Brown is a Global management expert, and award-winning author of *Fresh Passion: Get a Brand or Die a Generic*, *Fresh Customer Service®: Treat the Employee as #1 and the Customer as #2 and You Will Get Customers for Life*, and *Fresh Passion Leadership: Become a Distinct, Branded Leader or Extinct Generic*.

Michael is a sought-after speaker and thought leader on the topics of *Talent & Human Capital Strategies*, *Competitive Customer Experience*, *Laser Focus Personal Branding*, and *Profitable & Sustainable Business Growth*.

Leveraging his track record of delivering competitive commercial results, developing and executing competitive talent & human capital strategies, Michael continues to partner with organizations eager to leverage top-tier talent for transformative growth and results. Together, these partnerships lead to the Unlocking and Unleashing of World-Class Talent, enabling the achievement of ultimate potential for the individual and organization.



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