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HR TRENDS

9 EMPLOYER BRANDING TRENDS

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For many years, having a defined employer brand was a trend that only “privileged” corporations could afford to explore. Between 2020 and 2023, that myth was debunked as many realized that employer branding is a must, not a nice-to-have. This realization emerged after the employment market shifted from an employer’s market to a candidate’s market.

As organizations acknowledged the importance of having a strong EVP and an honest company culture, employer branding became the solution to attracting and retaining top talent. And yet, 2023 brought unexpected events in employer branding, most of them stemming from the aftermath of the massive layoffs phenomena of 2022.

This downturn prompted widespread budgetary constraints across various sectors. Read on to learn more about the trends in employer branding for 2024.

COMMENTS



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In 2024, employer branding continues to evolve with emerging trends reshaping the recruitment landscape. Organizations increasingly prioritize authenticity and transparency in their employer branding efforts, focusing on showcasing their unique company culture, values, and employee experiences. With the rise of remote work and hybrid work models, employers are leveraging digital platforms and virtual experiences to engage with candidates and communicate their employer brand effectively. Employee well-being and mental health also take center stage, with employers investing in initiatives that support work-life balance and prioritize employee wellness. Personalization and targeted messaging become more prevalent, as employers tailor their employer branding strategies to specific candidate demographics and preferences.

Overall, in 2024, employer branding trends reflect a shift towards authenticity, inclusivity, and digital engagement, as organizations seek to attract and retain top talent in an increasingly competitive hiring landscape.

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TREND #1: TALENT ATTRACTION GETS PERSONAL

Although the wave of layoffs in tech accentuated throughout 2023, it would be unrealistic to expect 2024 to become an employer's market. We've seen many organizations switch off external activities related to attracting talent, with the majority maintaining their focus on keeping internal employee engagement. As a result, it is anticipated that 2024 will be about customizing employee work policies. For recent hires, the focus could be on offering better learning and development opportunities in-person, in the office. For seniors and high-performers, the focus could be on providing better flexibility or a more diversified benefits package. In an uncertain macroeconomic climate, external hiring becomes a luxury. This means that organizations will look inward to give new opportunities or learnings to existing team members.

HIGHLIGHT

A personalized approach to attracting talent in 2024 will help employees decide whether they fit a certain company culture or not. From a business perspective, the strategy could be about setting priorities straight from the get-go. From our experience, after working with tens of companies in tech on building their employer brand image, we've noticed a need: amid severe budget cuts, organizations no longer have the resources to work with agencies on building EVPs. However, they need the hands-on experience of an agency to train current in-house employees on employer branding best practices.

TREND #2: TAILORED EVPS THAT HELP CLOSE THE GAP BETWEEN WHAT ORGANIZATIONS WANT AND WHAT EMPLOYEES NEED

The concept of Employee Value Propositions (EVPs) is undergoing a transformative evolution. This evolution is marked by a strategic shift towards tailoring EVPs to bridge the gap between organizational objectives and the diverse needs of workers.

A one-size-fits-all approach is no longer sufficient, as the workforce becomes increasingly diverse, catering to the varied expectations, aspirations, and priorities of candidates and employees.

Recent research shows that a solid EVP can lower turnover by 69%. As a result, a tailored EVP holds the key to not only attracting top talent but also fostering long-term employee engagement.

By recognizing and addressing the individual needs of employees, organizations can create a more inclusive and fulfilling work environment.

HIGHLIGHT

Customized EVPs go beyond traditional compensation and benefits packages. They delve into factors such as career development opportunities, work-life balance, and a supportive workplace culture. For instance, a younger workforce might prioritize professional growth and mentorship, while more experienced employees may value recognition.

For 2024, consider tailoring your EVP, which allows you to align your offerings with the specific needs mentioned above. This will create a mutually beneficial relationship that goes beyond the transactional aspects of the employer-employee contract.

TREND #3: HUMANIZING LEADERS ON SOCIAL MEDIA, USING INFLUENCER STRATEGIES

One of the best performing content types out there is posts from leaders on LinkedIn. Leader posts overwhelmingly outperform posts from branded accounts: in the beta launch of LinkedIn's thought leadership ads, companies saw a 70% higher CTR (click-through-rate) and 60% higher engagement rate with thought leader ads vs. single image ads from their corporate accounts. Gaining popularity this past year, activating leaders on LinkedIn will become an essential marketing activity in 2024. And as more leaders commit to regular posting, they'll need the help of communications and marketing to plan content, stand out from the noise and bolster results.

HIGHLIGHT

Creating compelling stories around these topics takes time and skill, and knowing how to frame these posts using influencer and content marketing best practices is key to being successful. The leaders who can do this well – and the communications teams behind them – are winning for their brand. A leadership storytelling series can be a great place to start. Some examples of stories that make for great leader content include:

- How your leader grew their career
- Why they make certain cultural or business decisions for their company
- Sharing their perspective on industry trends



TREND #4: AI FOR EMPLOYER BRAND CONTENT CREATION

Let us lead with: creating compelling employee storytelling content will always be a human-driven endeavor. A facilitated, human conversation will always uncover the best stories. And, AI can't replace the nuanced understanding people leaders have of their organization's company culture and the talent strategy that drives content creation efforts. Also true: AI-powered tools have streamlined many technical aspects of the content creation process. In 2024, we expect culture communicators to use AI to create more employee storytelling content, more efficiently.

HIGHLIGHT

In 2024, we expect more companies to integrate AI into their employer brand initiatives. Content personalization means diversification; and diversification will help hiring managers reach more accurate audience segments. Rather than depending on one-size-fits-all solutions, employers will use AI technology to communicate messages with better precision across various channels.

TREND #5: ACTIVATING EMPLOYEES AS BRAND AMBASSADORS

In tandem with leaders adding their voice to social media, employee advocacy programs will continue to be on the rise in 2024.

It's no wonder why: Data shows that employees sharing their perspectives on social media is a win-win-win scenario for companies, ambassadors, and candidates. As more companies tap their employees and company leaders to become brand ambassadors, the real winners will be companies with ambassadors sharing personalized, high-quality content that captures the attention of their networks.

HIGHLIGHT

With this goal in mind, employee advocacy leaders' focus will evolve from simple content amplification efforts to include regular ambassador training sessions. These training sessions will achieve two important goals: educating and empowering advocates to share their own stories on social media; and serving as regular touchpoints to keep ambassadors engaged with the program.

TREND #6: MORE COLLABORATION BETWEEN EMPLOYER BRAND AND INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

As many of these trends suggest, employer brand roles are increasingly responsible for engaging and retaining employees. In addition to metrics like brand awareness, impressions, and website traffic, employer brand leaders are being asked more and more to own—or at least weigh in on—internal communications and employee engagement. This evolution makes sense.

An organization's employer brand should be a reflection of the company culture. Therefore, employer brand content should resonate with both candidates and current employees. From employee recognition programs to hot button topics like remote and hybrid work, company culture content has an impact on both current employees and potential candidates.

HIGHLIGHT

Some of employer brand/internal communications content collaborations include: Communicating core values

- Covering company events, like all-hands meetings or sales kickoffs
- Employee recognition spotlights
- This partnership is long overdue in the employee engagement space and we anticipate EB becoming more involved in employee communications in 2024!

TREND #7: MATCHING CANDIDATE WANTS WITH ORGANIZATIONAL NEEDS

Candidate experience impacts the way external candidates perceive a company; a perception that builds up following multiple candidate-company interactions, ultimately shaping the employer brand. Whether good, bad, or neutral, your reputation as an employer draws candidates in or out of your recruiting funnel.

How candidates are treated reflects upon how employees are treated. If you're not dedicated to creating a positive first impression, you won't be able to transform candidates into new employees. Sadly, this wasn't the case for 2023, at least in tech. Rather than being candidate-centric, 2023 was candidate-static, and the anticipated Great Retention trend of 2022 became the Great Stagnation throughout 2023.

HIGHLIGHT

The key to matching candidate wants with organizational needs begins internally. We anticipate that 2024 will have a greater focus on the entire employee lifecycle, from onboarding to offboarding. Successful employee onboarding/offboarding is dynamic, and it's time to accept that one-size-fits-all methodologies won't help with retention in the long term. A top priority companies have for the next year is retention of current people and focus on strengthening internal employer branding initiatives. To do that successfully, onboarding needs to be customized per role, or at the very least, role cluster.

TREND #8: ACTIVATE EMPLOYER BRAND GLOBALLY

If 2023 was all about overhauling EVP and culture overview content, the natural continuation we expect to see in 2024 is activating that EVP around the world. Global companies know it's critical to communicate how your culture is experienced by all team members, not just those in close proximity to your HQ. You can't effectively refresh your EVP and general culture content without activating it with a global lens.

HIGHLIGHT

For global employer brand leaders, this content will fall into two categories: universal and local. Universal culture content answers the question, "What do employees experience no matter where they work?" Understanding what's consistent about your workplace culture around the world is incredibly powerful (and assuring) to candidates. These topics often include mission, purpose, and benefits as well as culture themes such as flexibility, innovation, and DEI. As you think about global content, 2024 will also bring the need for localized content personalized to specific regions. Beyond the universal experience, company culture can be drastically different per location and candidates often have different questions and expectations due to cultural nuances and unique office cultures. The more specific your employee stories, the more insight you give candidates and the faster you can move them through the candidate funnel.

TREND #9: EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING AND MENTAL HEALTH

Employers are increasingly recognizing the importance of prioritizing employee well-being and mental health within their employer branding efforts. This involves not only acknowledging the significance of work-life balance but also actively implementing initiatives to support the holistic wellness of their workforce. Such initiatives may encompass flexible work arrangements that accommodate individual needs, access to mental health resources such as counseling services or employee assistance programs, and the organization of wellness activities and workshops focused on stress management, mindfulness, and resilience building. Additionally, fostering a supportive and inclusive work environment where employees feel valued, respected, and able to openly discuss mental health concerns plays a crucial role in promoting overall well-being. By demonstrating a genuine commitment to employee well-being and mental health, employers enhance their employer brand reputation as a caring and responsible organization, ultimately attracting and retaining top talent in a competitive market.

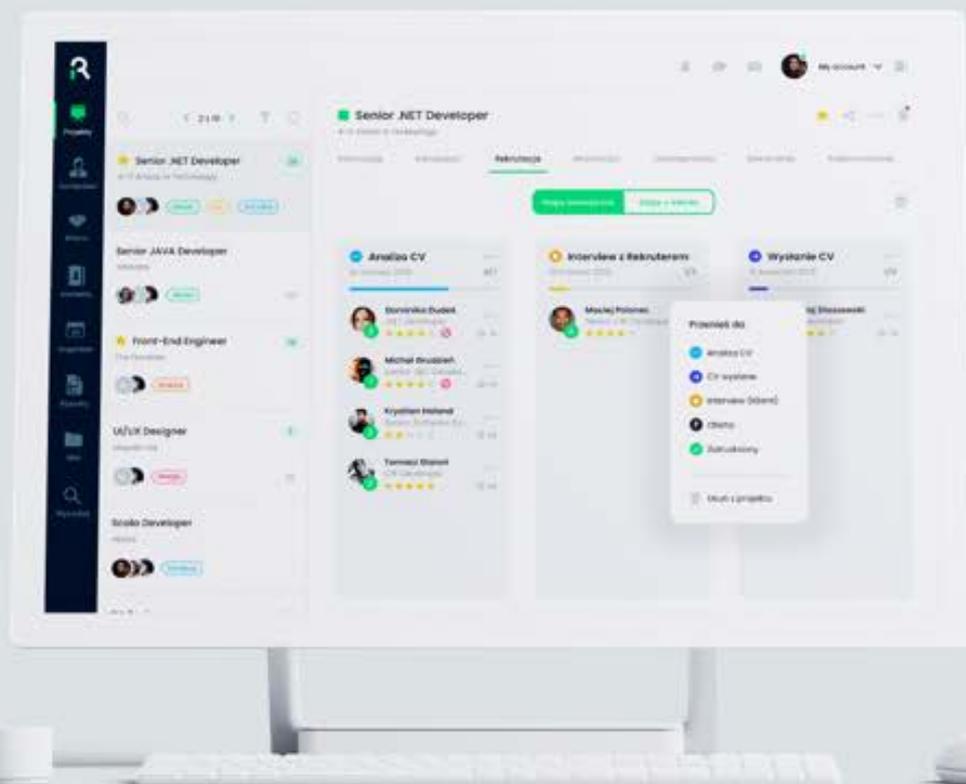
HIGHLIGHT

Here are some examples of initiatives that employers may implement to support employee well-being and mental health:

- **Flexible Work Arrangements:** Offering options such as remote work, flexible hours, or compressed workweeks to accommodate employees' personal schedules and preferences.
- **Mental Health Resources:** Providing access to confidential counseling services, therapy sessions, or mental health hotlines for employees experiencing stress, anxiety, or other mental health challenges.
- **Wellness Programs:** Organizing wellness activities such as yoga classes, meditation sessions, fitness challenges, or nutrition workshops to promote physical and mental well-being.

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