

Building your employer brand.

We believe that one of the most significant challenge facing companies seeking digital talent is to maintain and build their employer brand even when they're not hiring.

Traditionally the recruitment process for most businesses is focused around reactive moves. Demand for specific skills and resource arises and so the business takes itself to the jobs market to meet that demand as well as it can. Once that's done, the business disappears from the jobs market until new demand comes about.

This approach risks failing to take advantage of a massive opportunity – the opportunity to build an employer brand that is continually visible, engaging and enticing irrespective of the number of vacancies that employer may be hiring for at a given time.

Why should a business bother to do something like that?

Well, strong brands attract the best talent. And the best talent will make a business more successful. But you don't have to be a mega-consumer-brand like Google, Nike or Apple to have a mega employer brand:

Consider the external perception of your rewards. Would you be embarrassed to tell a company outsider about your benefits package? Are your basic salaries something to boast about, or to hide from in shame? If you're not bragging up your rewards culture, then your rewards culture should be reviewed. Great packages will be talked about in the market, and will enhance your employer reputation no end.

Make examples of your talent. No, not in the horrible primary school sense - we're talking about holding up your best talent for all the world to see. Talent begets more talent - smart people like to work with other smart people. So if you've got great talent in your office, make sure people know about it. Have them contribute to industry blogs, speak at events, and show off their brilliance to the whole world. Don't be afraid that they'll be head-hunted - if you're treating them right then the rewards outweigh the risks.

Invest in your people. Listen to their ambitions and their hopes, understand what makes them tick, and then help them to realise their goals. This can be achieved through training, altered job specs, time to pursue interesting / different projects and more besides. If you're giving your people long-term opportunity and rewarding options in their work, they will be happy, and they will talk about it.

Share. Don't hide your employer light under a bushel. Your employer brand is a massive potential asset and can radically improve your talent pool over time - but it has to be visible. Remember that quote I started with? Maintain your employer brand even when you're not hiring - by engaging with the jobs market, and potential job seekers, consistently. Talk about what it's like to work for you, share your experiences and knowledge, and show your employer brand to the world.

Enable your staff to be your employer brand ambassadors. There are two simple steps to this one: firstly, make your staff happy - we've already suggested some ways to do that above. When you've done that, simply give them ample opportunity to share that happiness with the outside world. Send them to events, put them on social networks, make YouTube videos with them where they talk about their great working life - nothing is more valid or convincing than real-life testimony, and your staff can give it to you. But don't forget that first step - unhappy staff will be your biggest critics, and your employer brand will never fly.