



RECRUITMENT FEATURE

Brand Marketing

Talent management meets marketing

With the highest unemployment rate for 14 years, is there any need to bother with building an employer brand? The UK is experiencing a deluge of extremely qualified people in the jobs market so you would imagine there is no shortage of talented individuals to choose from when you have a key role to fill. But are the conventional ways of attracting and recruiting enough to successfully place the right candidate in the right job as quickly and cost-effectively as possible?



ONE SCHOOL of thought is that talent management can effectively encompass some of the characteristics of marketing roles – in effect you are selling and marketing an organisation to potential candidates, and keeping them engaged as ‘customers’ within a business.

Mhairi McEwan, Managing Director of marketing capability consultancy, Brand Learning, believes there is a lot of scope for talent management professionals to open up their methods to learn from other functions: “Even during the recession there is still a shortage of top talent. There are a lot of people on the market but it becomes much harder to screen the right ones for a particular organisation, culture, business or role. Using marketing techniques can help the HR community to target them all effectively,

to build better insights into candidates’ expectations and to help them to manage all the touch points with candidates just like marketers do with consumers.”

Of course everyone knows the importance of an effective employer brand, but surely in a time when you have candidates coming out of your cubbyhole you don’t have to pay much attention to it, do you? “You have an employer brand whether you manage it practically or not, so irrespective of the complexity of the market it’s a very important factor in how you’re perceived,” says Martin Cerullo, Director, Resourcing Communications at Alexander Mann Solutions, the Recruitment Process Outsourcing (RPO) provider. “Your employer brand is about how you position yourself, what it’s like to work for you, what you offer, and what connects you to candidates. The very strong positioning of your employer brand actually helps people differentiate between you and



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So, what do you do if your recruitment advertising budget has been cut and yet somehow you have to find that perfect person in a sea of over-qualified candidates, in a short time scale, while still ensuring that your employer brand is protected with the right messages and processes that position the company as a great place to work? Big questions, but there are simple solutions according to Cerullo: “Irrespective of what budget you have there are always methods you can apply. For example, we had a limited budget when working with one of our clients but we managed to put a careers link on its consumer website for the first time, which led to a 58% increase in traffic. Employee referral programmes are becoming increasingly popular; not only the traditional methods, but also in getting employees to spread the word through social media like Facebook or LinkedIn.”

Doherty believes that as the use of social networking sites in recruitment will continue to rise in 2010, inevitably talent management professionals will need to have a basic understanding of the marketing tactics that are associated with them: “As Generation Y is entering the employment market with full force, talent management professionals are going to need to expand on their core set of skills to understand how such sites operate, as these candidates will have been using social networks for some time. A close relationship between marketing and talent management is becoming more important than ever; the attraction and retention of talented individuals is going to heavily rely on brand value and perception of a company, so talent management professionals and marketing teams are going to need to ensure that their aims are closely aligned, and that they are always striving towards the same goals when it comes to attracting the best employees.”

The following case studies aptly demonstrate the importance of employing marketing tactics in the recruitment process »

other organisations, which is crucial in retaining talent, and at the same time can create much more efficiency in the hiring process. Investing in your employer brand actually helps streamline the volume of applications coming in because people are making an educated choice about who they're applying to, rather than just spreading CVs.”

A strong and consistent employer brand is fundamental to attracting candidates to a careers website in the first instance, explains Richard Doherty, Group Vice President of Solutions, Jobpartners, the talent management solutions provider. “Consequently, HR departments must engage with marketing and communications departments in order to have an integrated strategy. Employer branding deals with much more than just the attraction of candidates however. At a time where such high unemployment means an increase in applicants, organisations must ensure that they

are prepared to manage volume recruitment effectively with a clear, effective and consistent recruitment strategy. Organisations should consider the consequences that a poor candidate experience could have on an employee brand – especially those within the retail/consumer industry space where possible candidates are possible customers.”

McEwan explains that marketing the employer brand is paramount from the outset of a recruitment campaign and needs to be continually reinforced, “all the way through the interview and assessment processes, the offer, on-boarding and then, once they have been brought on board, career planning, motivation and retention. The entire candidate journey is really important as the HR community is trying to maintain a distinctive relationship with candidates and to differentiate what they are offering from other companies. It is incredibly relevant to the challenges that HR face.”



» case study

Alexander Mann Solutions

Background

The brief was to find 25 passionate, ambitious, global citizens with three to five years' work experience to join Momentum, Prudential's management development programme. 'Mometees' would take up a real role within Commercial Management, HR, Finance, Internal Audit and Communications. The benefits of the programme are that candidates would be able to immerse themselves in a different culture, with its own markets and customers, and so be able to offer a fresh perspective on Prudential's local operations on the other side of the globe.

Approach

The solution was an entire recruitment process that demonstrated 'a richer experience' from beginning to end. Alexander Mann Solutions (AMS) targeted experienced candidates all over the world with press ads, banner ads and social media. AMS brought the Momentum

programme to life with profile films shot in different countries around the world. In this way, candidates could find out the reality of what a role at Prudential would really be like, by discovering the stories of people who had successfully joined the previous year.

Results

AMS measured results by tracking online media and through a feedback email sent to all candidates applying to Prudential Momentum. Their website received over 20,000 visits (over 17,000 unique) between mid May and the end of June 2008. And they received over 800 applications.

What changed as a result? AMS made amends to both the media schedule and website copy to focus on and better reflect each particular stream of the course: HR, communications, finance and general management.

