

Leveraging an employee value proposition strategy:

How to attract, engage and retain the best employees for your company

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In a highly-competitive and transparent job market, the war for talent has never been more important. Leading companies leverage an employee value proposition strategy to achieve their goals of attracting great candidates, increasing employee engagement, developing exceptional leadership and driving great business results.

So what exactly is an employee value proposition (EVP)? It's everything your company has to offer that supports the employee experience, from making the decision to join the company through referring it as a great place to work. It's not one single gesture; it's an accumulation of experiences, emotions and interactions between your company and its employees. It exemplifies your corporate culture and values. More importantly, it's what your company will do day in and day out for its employees in return for their best work.

EVP really gets to the heart of your business and the reasons why employees come to work each day. Part of it includes obvious things like pay, benefits and job security but it's also so much more than that. Do employees find meaning in their work? Can they see how it connects to the bigger corporate strategy? Are they valued and appreciated? It's the things your employees would tell their friends and family about to describe why they're happy at work.

An authentic EVP should be crafted around the priorities of the types of employees your company is seeking to attract. To get the best results, companies need the *right* people working together, doing the *right* things to the best of their abilities. Your employee value proposition will help you attract – and keep – these *right* people.

Where does employee engagement fit in?

EVP is simply a broader look at the employee relationship. Engagement only comes into play while a person is employed at a company but a successful EVP strategy includes peoples' views of the company before, during and after employment. Also, unlike an EVP strategy, engagement programs are usually short term, often linked to annual surveys where it's up to employees to self-report on what's working and what's not. EVP, on the other hand, puts the responsibility on companies to offer the work, opportunities, culture and benefits of greatest value to the employee.

Let's talk a little bit about culture.

Culture is what people mean when they say "the way things work around here." It includes the values, beliefs and rewards that influence peoples' day-to-day behavior. When a company's culture matches its business strategy, it attracts people who feel comfortable in that environment. This results in a high level of engagement, also known as "the way I feel about the way things work around here."



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According to the Seattle Times (January, 2016), "... with companies offering similar benefits and salaries that are at least competitive for their respective sizes, recruiters say the thing that sets one business apart from another is that indefinable quality: culture." Also, interestingly: "studies show when culture and strategy are aligned, companies can show as much as a 50% differential in performance."¹

There are six components of a great corporate culture:²

1. **Vision** – guiding a company's values to give them purpose, which determines every decision employees make.
2. **Values** – offering a set of guidelines on the behaviors and mindsets needed to achieve the vision. They are the core of a company's culture.
3. **Practices** – the daily policies and procedures that are developed from a company's values. They must be reinforced in review criteria and promotion policies.
4. **People** – who share the company's core values and are willing and able to live them in order to build a coherent culture. The best firms are fanatical about recruiting talent that is best suited to their culture. In fact, studies show:
 - a. Applicants who were a good cultural fit would accept a 7% lower salary.
 - b. Departments with cultural alignment had 30% lower turnover.
5. **Narrative** – tells your company's story. It's created based on your unique history, and is another central element of culture creation.
6. **Place** – your work space and environment help shape culture too.

Combining EVP, culture and engagement is essential to each company's long-term success. This is also where an effective plan for recognition comes in to maximize the powerful, positive impact of all three. Recognition can shape and reinforce culture – and help bring about culture change – by providing the platform and tools needed to amplify your employee value proposition, brand values and desired behaviors. You'll also realize that what is recognized will often be repeated.

Even your customers will benefit from a great EVP.

When you've inspired your employees through your brand and recognize those who live it out each day, your customers feel it. After all, a customer's

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experience will rarely exceed that of an employee's. An EVP that's done right will become what you're known for among your employees while heavily influencing what you are known for among your customers.

Here's how we approach EVP.

Once you've clearly defined what your unique EVP is, the next step is bringing it to life throughout every interaction your company has with its employees. Our approach takes specific action to answer the questions employees ask during each phase of their employment, from the time they first consider applying through becoming an established employee with a clear career path.



Decision Day: "Can I see myself here?"

Show prospective employees the heart of your business. Getting to know your mission, values, culture and plan for the future will help them see how they'd fit into the bigger picture.



First day: "Did I make the right choice?"

Make an impression from day one. Help new employees feel like they're already part of the team with a personal welcome and a clear training path.



Every day: "Is this a place I'd like to stay?"

Not every day is going to be great. But if you show employees day in and day out the work they're doing matters, it will become so much more than a job.



Achievement Day: "Am I valued and appreciated?"

Recognize employees who give their best each day. Anniversaries and big accomplishments deserve to be more than noticed – they deserve to be celebrated.



Referral Day: "Am I happy here?"

Your best employees stay for a reason. Encourage them to spread the word that your company is a great place to work.

This broad view of your company's relationship with its employees will help you identify where you've successfully activated your EVP and where you have gaps. What's your employer brand perception when potential candidates are researching you? Do you promote early recognition of new employees to help them get off to a fast start? Are you looking to your best employees to refer others who would be as good a fit as they are?

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Establishing your company's unique EVP and living it out each day is the foundation of attracting, engaging and retaining the best employees for your company. Give them a reason to want to join, do their best work and stay.

To learn more about how BI WORLDWIDE can help with your employee value proposition strategy and activation, visit: biworldwide.com or email info@biworldwide.com.



¹ Deloitte Development Infographic: Shape Your Culture, Drive Your Strategy. 2016

² Coleman, John. "Six Components of a Great Corporate Culture." Harvard Business Review. May 6, 2013.