

# How to Be an Employer of Choice

5 COMPONENTS  
OF A CAPTIVATING  
EMPLOYER BRAND



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**W**ith an overall unemployment rate at or below 4.1% since 2018<sup>1</sup> – even lower among workers with bachelor’s degrees<sup>2</sup> – employers today must hunt for qualified candidates at the lowest unemployment rates in decades. While this is great news for the economy and highly qualified professionals looking for jobs, it creates a unique challenge for recruiters. Hiring is tough enough when the advantage goes to the employers – it can feel nearly impossible when the vast majority of candidates already have jobs.

Fortunately, hiring in a job seeker’s market doesn’t have to be impossible if your employer brand is strong enough.

“Three or four years ago, you could post a job and hundreds of applicants would apply,” says Janna Millette, recruiting manager at Workhuman.

“Today, you can expect more like eight or nine applicants, because job seekers simply have so many options. And employers aren’t just competing with other local businesses; they’re competing with everyone who hires a remote workforce, which is as much as 60% of companies today.<sup>3</sup> If your employer brand doesn’t stand out, you won’t stand a chance, because when job seekers have the power, they’re going to choose the company that’s made itself known.”

“What motivated your workforce years ago won’t motivate them anymore.

**Today’s candidates want to know exactly what kind of company they are going to work for.”**

Maeve McSweeney,  
Recruitment Manager at Workhuman





“Candidates want to find a company that gives them **a sense of belonging**, and a company’s employer brand can help them **find the right fit.**”

Maeve McSweeney,  
Recruitment Manager at Workhuman

Employer brand, a term coined in the late 1990s to capture everything that goes into your organization’s reputation as an employer, is what persuades candidates to apply for your job openings. It has the power to boost or botch your recruiting, especially among in-demand employees who have a lot of choices in their careers. In fact, 84% of job seekers indicate the reputation of a company as an employer is important when deciding to apply for a job,<sup>4</sup> and 80% of talent acquisition managers say they believe employer branding significantly affects their ability to hire great talent.<sup>5</sup>

What can you do to build and improve your employer brand?

**This playbook outlines five steps you can take to become an employer of choice for the people you want to hire.**

## EMPLOYER BRAND BOOST #1



# Build a red carpet recruiting pipeline.

Candidate experience is critical to your employer brand, because even candidates you don't hire can affect your reputation as a considerate and credible employer. If you need to recruit in a job seeker's market, you should prioritize the quality of the service and communication in your recruiting pipeline.

"Recruiters have to be very mindful about their candidate experience," says Maeve McSweeney, recruitment manager at Workhuman. "Think of your recruiting process as a best-in-class, concierge experience that gives prospective talent an idea of what it will be like to work with you. How you hire is an indication of what a candidate can expect when they accept the offer. Personalize your messages to candidates, be proactive and considerate when scheduling interviews, and always follow up to let them know where they are in the process."



“Our recruiting team spends a lot of time making sure we’ve thought about every step of the process, from the initial email to the close of the phone interview, to how we’re following up, to their experience when they walk in the doors here. **We’ve cultivated an experience that speaks to our culture so they’re experiencing a piece of who we are from the second they walk in the door.**”

Janna Millette,  
Recruiting Manager at Workhuman

## EMPLOYER BRAND BOOST #2



# Stretch your limits on compensation and benefits.

For every headline saying compensation and benefits aren't the most important factors for job seekers,<sup>6</sup> there's another saying they are.<sup>7</sup> But if you want to attract the most qualified candidates – and if you want them to stay – experts agree that compensation and benefits are foundational for recruiting in-demand candidates. Paying at or above market rate and offering opportunities for employees to be recognized by their managers and peers<sup>8</sup> offer a good starting point for stretching your limits on compensation and benefits.



“In an employer’s market, you could offer the basics and expect a candidate to accept,” says Janna. “But in an employment environment where companies offer things like ‘pet-ernity’ leave for employees who adopt pets, you need to get creative and think beyond health and life insurance. Both your compensation and benefits packages need to be the very best you can offer, and social recognition is a powerful tool for keeping employees on board, engaged, and motivated to do their best work.”<sup>9</sup>

A photograph of a man with glasses and a woman sitting together, looking at a tablet. The man is wearing a dark green sweater and the woman is wearing a light-colored button-down shirt. They are in a bright, indoor setting, possibly an office or a meeting room. The man is smiling and looking at the tablet, while the woman is looking at him. The background is slightly blurred, showing a window and some office equipment.

“Benefits can make all the difference to your employees **if you’re mindful of which ones your target talent is looking for and intentional in what you offer.** A reputation of providing flexible or remote work options, open versus private offices, generous family leave, and comprehensive life and health insurance can make all the difference when a candidate is comparing offers.”

Maeve McSweeney,  
Recruitment Manager at Workhuman



## EMPLOYER BRAND BOOST #3



# Weave in your authentic company culture.

Your employer brand and your company culture are tied together – if you want to be authentic, one cannot rise above the other. But the pressure to attract top talent can often lead recruiters and hiring managers to sidestep the challenging work of defining company culture, which leaves candidates uninformed about what makes a company unique or, worse, uninformed about what the job will really be like.

“Most applicants go into interviews knowing they can do the job based on the job description, but the goal of an effective employment brand is to help candidates figure out if they’ll be fulfilled working at your company,” says Tamara M. Rasberry, HR manager at National Community Reinvestment Coalition. “We spend so much time at work – understanding your company culture and communicating it successfully to candidates will help them self-assess whether or not they’ll be successful in the one you have.”

“When candidates come on board, they need to be fully informed of the challenges ahead of them and what the job is going to look like. **When you build an employer brand that is true to who you are, you’re giving them what they need to make an informed decision about what they want out of their career and their employer. They can opt in or opt out accordingly.** That’s why companies that invest in their employer brand see a night-and-day difference in their ability to attract and retain talent.”

Maeve McSweeney,  
Recruitment Manager at Workhuman





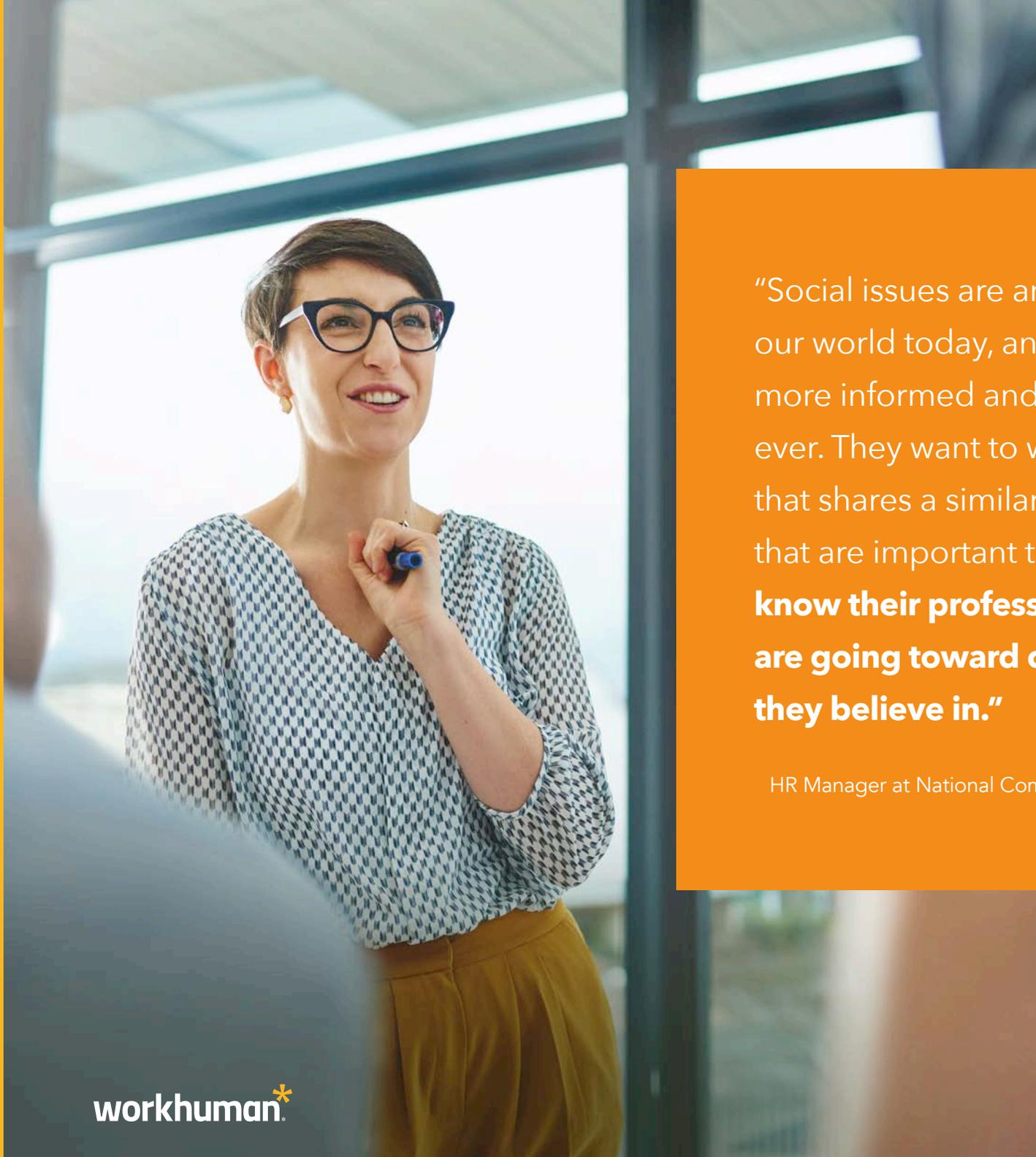
# Stand for something.

Until recently, employers were assessed by how they treated customers and employees. But as younger generations make up more of the workforce, employees increasingly look to companies to take a stand on social and political issues. In fact, a recent study from Gartner found 87% of employees want businesses to take a public position on relevant social issues and 74% want businesses to take a position on issues even when they aren't directly relevant.<sup>10</sup>

"Companies have shied away from taking stances in the past," says Janna. "But employees increasingly want to work with companies that share their values and beliefs. If you're trying to attract candidates who are aligned with your beliefs, your employer brand can be a very powerful differentiator. It's worth reviewing your mission and values to identify causes to weigh in on and support."

**One of the most effective ways to take your values off the wall and make them actionable is by incorporating them into a social recognition program. This way, when someone demonstrates one of your values, there is an opportunity for co-workers to publicly appreciate that behavior and tell your company story.**





“Social issues are an important part of our world today, and candidates are more informed and opinionated than ever. They want to work for a company that shares a similar stance on issues that are important to them, **so they know their professional contributions are going toward causes or missions they believe in.**”

Tamara M. Rasberry,  
HR Manager at National Community Reinvestment Coalition

## EMPLOYER BRAND BOOST #5



# Actively manage your reputation.

From ten years ago to real time, potential employees have access to everything your company has said or done, which can make it difficult to manage your employer brand. So while the first step of building a solid employer brand is to be an excellent employer, the second step is to promote and manage your reputation where it matters.

A few examples of managing your employer brand include the following:

- Ask candidates what they've heard about your brand during their interviews.
- Send candidates follow-up surveys asking for suggestions for improvement.



- Create and maintain a Glassdoor account for your company.
- If you are customer-facing, create and maintain your Yelp or other review site account.
- Create and maintain social media profiles on strategic channels.
- Deploy social media monitoring and listening tools that alert you to brand mentions.
- Track your employer Net Promoter Score through internal surveys.
- Invite employees to contribute articles or videos describing "a day in the life" of different roles within the company.

“The best way to build an employer brand is to **provide your employees, prospective candidates, and customers an experience you would be proud of.**

Then follow that up by managing how you engage with the public online and in person – proactively communicating with your candidate pipeline, responding to both positive and negative comments online, and maintaining an active social media presence.”

Janna Millette,  
Recruiting Manager at Workhuman





# Attracting in-demand talent with an attractive employer brand

What's happening in the recruitment space is more than an economic phase or employment trend. It's a comprehensive sea change that requires a response from employers who want to entice new talent to their brand. Being an employer of choice now requires more than offering an interesting role with a competitive salary. Today's talent has higher expectations for just about every piece of their work experience, from how they're treated during the recruiting process, to the offers they'll consider, to the companies they'll work for. And as more companies open their workforce to remote employment and invest in popular perks, employers seeking an edge over their competition's recruitment efforts must prioritize their employer brand.



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# workhuman<sup>®</sup>

Workhuman<sup>®</sup> helps forward-thinking companies energize their cultures, unlock their employees' passion and potential, and unite their workforce around a shared purpose. With the world's fastest-growing social recognition and continuous performance management platform, our mission is to lead the movement to celebrate the power of humanity in the workplace through gratitude and peer-to-peer recognition. Workhuman<sup>®</sup> Cloud uncovers provocative workplace data and human insights, delivering tangible results powered by our core belief – the more motivated and valued employees are, the more they can perform the best work of their lives. Workhuman (formerly known as Globoforce) was founded in 1999 and is co-headquartered in Framingham, Mass., and Dublin.

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