



## EVP Discussion Document

### Thought leadership lunch

The first in Rullion's series of thought leadership meetings took place last Thursday, 7<sup>th</sup> July, as we welcomed ten North West based clients to a three course lunch at Manchester's Restaurant Bar and Grill.

The conversation around the dining table was focussed on Employer Value Proposition (EVP), a subject that is currently on the lips of many HR and talent acquisition professionals, across every industry.

Sharing their thoughts with the group, a number of varying challenges were cited as reasons for our guests' attendance, including developing an attractive employer brand on a budget and bringing together different cultures and demographics within an organisation to create one prevailing EVP.

Other attendees, whose EVP programmes were more mature, were able to exchange ideas and first-hand experiences, gaining an understanding of how their methodology compares to that of other brands.

## Main EVP challenges included:



## And some of the specific questions were:

- How does a company celebrate employees' individual differences but maintain an overarching theme within the employer brand?
- We have a very strong consumer brand, but no employer brand. How can we align the two?
- There are a vast range of ages within our workforce - from apprentices to people nearing retirement. They all have differing priorities and opinions in regard to what the EVP should be. How can we promote a brand which is appealing to all ages?
- What made our employer brand strong in the past, but it now needs reinvigorating. How can we evolve it without losing the passion that our organisation is known for?
- There is a huge gap between our consumer and employer brands. How do we ensure that we attract the right kind of people into the business?
- Our organisation is experiencing rapid growth, both organically and through acquisitions. As we bring more companies into the fold, how do we bring all of these different cultures together to form one strong employer brand, which appeals to all demographics?
- The launch of our EVP has been attempted a couple of times and hasn't been as successful as we would have liked, so we're starting again. With a limited budget, we have to be resourceful - how can we attract talent via our EVP whilst on a budget?
- We want to get an attractive EVP in place but we don't really know who we are as an organisation - how can we define and develop our EVP?
- Should we be consulting unions (on pay/rewards) when going through EVP?

## Defining your EVP

A number of our guests spoke about challenges surrounding the identification of an EVP and their offerings as an employer, particularly where an organisation's goods or services are not deemed as glamorous or desirable.

One overriding theme was apparent, however, and the group agreed that the authenticity of an EVP was paramount. It was suggested that the most authentic EVPs are perhaps those developed from the bottom-up, as opposed to top-down, involving both leadership and cross sections from every area of the organisation to ensure a holistic view.

Many felt that regular employee surveys both to identify the EVP, and following the roll out of the EVP, are essential for organisations to be aware of the opinions of their people and not just those of The Board.

One client, whose EVP has successfully been in place for some time now, described how their approach to defining the EVP was not based upon the needs of employees, but of its customers. A customer led approach of marrying business objectives with customer requirements, has enhanced and enriched the performance of the business.

Another client shared that he had met with the CEO before defining the EVP, to ascertain anything that may be 'off limits'. For instance, if salary increases are not possible, they should not form part of EVP discussions, so that employees' expectations are managed.

The conversation moved on to the stages that should be taken once the main elements of your EVP have been identified. Focus groups were deemed as important for understanding what is important to the different job types, age groups, locations, etc. The order of priority for each element will likely be different for different demographics and the EVP should be tailored accordingly.



## What should your EVP include?

Our guests shared some of the items that they felt should form the basis of an attractive EVP. They included elements such as pension, holidays and healthcare plans, culture and values, work environment, corporate social responsibility, recognition programmes, career progression, development, a rewards structure, and flexible working options.

Attendees stated that the success and growth of a business will also add to the enhancement of an employer brand and should be communicated to employees and candidates.

An interesting subject was whether or not to harness an organisation's consumer brand. Should your employer brand align with it? The responses were mixed and provided pros and cons, depending on the individual brand and/or sector. For instance, retail clients felt that their consumer brand was desirable and would therefore add value to their EVP, whereas representatives from sectors such as power or utilities felt that a separate employer brand would attract more interest from potential employees.

## Communicating your EVP

According to those around the room, the way in which your EVP is communicated is as important as the EVP itself. Here are some of the tips shared for the effective communication of your EVP:

- **Communicate it well internally, and especially with anyone involved in your internal recruitment process.**  
A client told us that their EVP forms a major part of recruitment training.
- **Ensure that the benefits of your EVP are communicated, not just the features.**  
Demonstrate to people what your offering means specifically to them.
- **Be consistent in your communication strategy and be clear with candidates at interview stage.**  
One guest shared that their company makes a point of asking candidates to explain their understanding of the EVP, and reiterating it, where necessary.
- **When using recruitment agencies, ensure that your EVP is understood and represented accurately.**  
This can be a particular issue where large numbers of suppliers are used.
- **Ensure that you have the ability to tailor your EVP for different people.**  
Employees nearing retirement will have different priorities to graduates.
- **Be innovative in creating multiple ways of communicating your EVP.**  
Some of our guests admitted using Slack and WhatsApp for employees who are not desk-based and do not have intranet access.

## Measuring your EVP

Whilst everyone agreed that there was no single effective measure for EVP ROI, our clients told us that measuring ROI is one of their biggest challenges. We asked our guests, therefore, how they go about measuring the strength of their EVP and the following suggestions were given:

- Some of our attendees actively use surveying as a way of measuring employee engagement and satisfaction levels. The group agreed that this should be done regularly and consistently to gain the most accurate feedback. It was also noted that differences in individuals' roles and work locations could impact upon survey responses.
- The group heard how one client uses Net Promoter Scoring (NPS) in all areas of the business with employees, candidates and customers. The scores allow the business to effectively measure how the company is performing and improvements can be made in line with this.
- Where employee engagement is high, we know that the likelihood of referrals is also high, meaning that the EVP is promoted by existing employees, and not only those involved in the recruitment process. Referrals were therefore deemed as a clear indicator of an EVP's success.
- The group questioned staff attrition, and whether your attrition rate can be used as an indication of the strength of your EVP.
- An interesting comment was that a more accurate measurement of ROI would not necessarily be the number of applications received for vacancies, but a measure of the number of applicants that the company would potentially hire.
- And a final tip offered was to ensure that your leadership team, HR and recruitment staff are closely involved with all areas of your business. One of the most simple means of measuring your EVP and staff engagement levels is through human interaction and picking up on the vibes across the workplace.



## Conclusion

It has often been said that employees are your greatest asset. Both candidate and employee engagement has a direct impact of the success of your business, meaning it is important that your EVP is attractive and authentic.

As well as engaging and attracting employees, logic tells us that the right EVP should have a direct impact on lowering the cost of hiring. Direct sourcing ratios and referrals should increase and correspondingly, retention levels in the business should also impact.

The group of clients who we spoke with commented on the fact that the war for talent has recently been stepping up in the North West and there has been a noticeable increase in the number of workers relocating to Manchester.

This would perhaps suggest that it is now, more than ever, critical for businesses to have a competitive employer brand and EVP offering in place.

Our thanks go to those who joined us at the first in our series of Thought Leaders' meetings and for sharing your insights with us. We look forward to welcoming you to another event soon.

