

REAGENT

Employer Marketing

REAGENT RANT NO.2



EMPLOYER BRAND MARKETING CHECKLIST

INTRODUCTION

This Rant is written during the early signs of stabilisation and recovery following the GFC of 08/09, but is relevant at any time or economic cycle.

We are taking a look here at the essential requirements of a good Employer Brand and how to go about auditing and assessing its performance within your organisation.

It is intended as checklist for future action, and perhaps to underpin your business case for budget submission. It is not designed to shame you into action (much) nor is it necessarily supposed to be a recommendation on the content of the perfect Employer Brand.

It is simply an action list to help you assess where your Employer Brand weak points are and what needs to be done to plug the gaps.

THE BUSINESS CASE

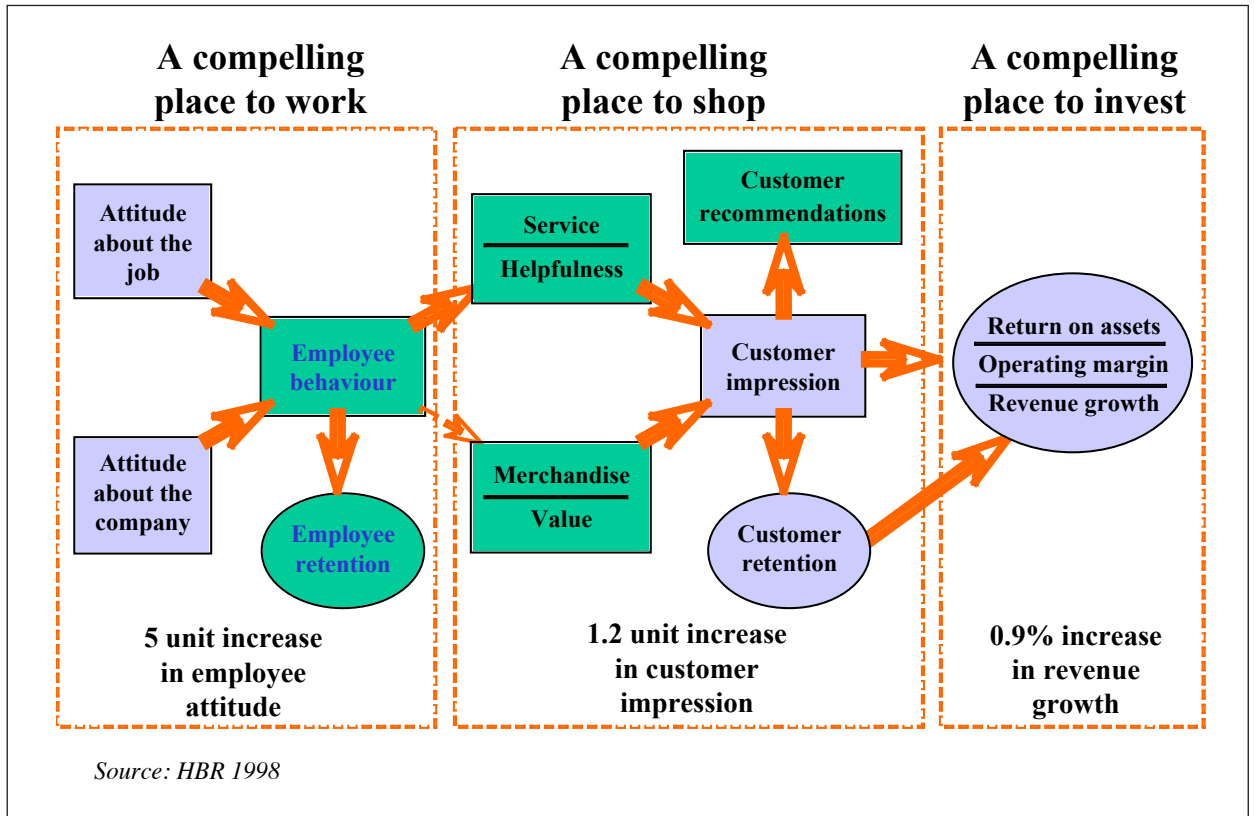
Before we get into the 'how', let's look at the 'why'.

Employees, as a rule, don't stand still. They are either on their way **up** through the organisation, or they are on their way **out**. If we accept that notion, then we also have to accept that both states of existence are long and drawn-out processes, both can take years to play out.

If it's the former then it's all good. Just cheer them on their way from the sidelines and chuck in the odd payrise and extra challenge.

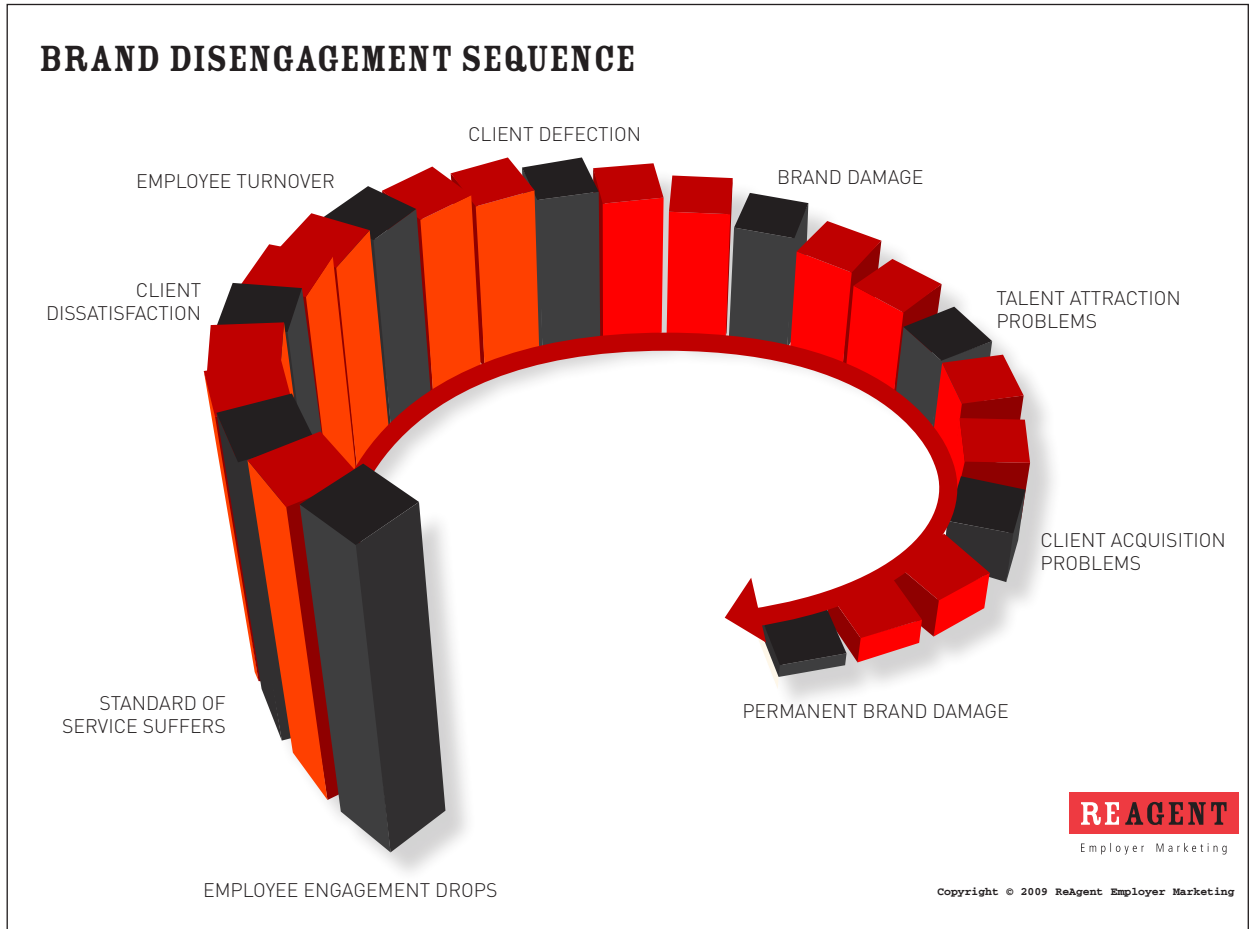
But when people become disengaged and begin their exit strategy, there can be severe collateral damage. Most talented people don't leave quietly – they take emotional hostages. They can be your customers or other staff – either way, it can be a significant risk to your business.

You may have seen the Harvard Business Review's famous connection between employee attitude and investor returns:



Well, what happens in reverse? What happens when employees go bad?

Here is our opinion on the impact that engagement decline can have on your organisation's brand:



Not a pretty picture.

THE CUSTOMER'S PERSPECTIVE

As with any marketing exercise, the most effective method of assessing any activity is to view it through the eyes of the intended target.

Now, it's important here to not get too far ahead of ourselves, and remember who our targets are. There is a universal tendency in talent sourcing to assume we are looking for 'candidates'.

There is a key flaw in this train of thought, in that a 'candidate' is someone who has already decided they are looking for a job. Now, in many roles and disciplines this may create a sufficient pool of talent from which you can view a usable selection.

But this 'spot-buying' of talent on the open market is a short-sighted and dangerous exercise – if the ideal person for your role is not looking, at the time you go seeking, there is no way on earth you are going to connect. Chances are, you'll end up with second best, or worse.

Anyone who knows ReAgent knows our obsession with analogies, so here goes for this one.

The above approach to sourcing is a bit like going to a nightclub and sitting at the bar demanding a line-up of the people who would like to sleep with you, without even meeting them.

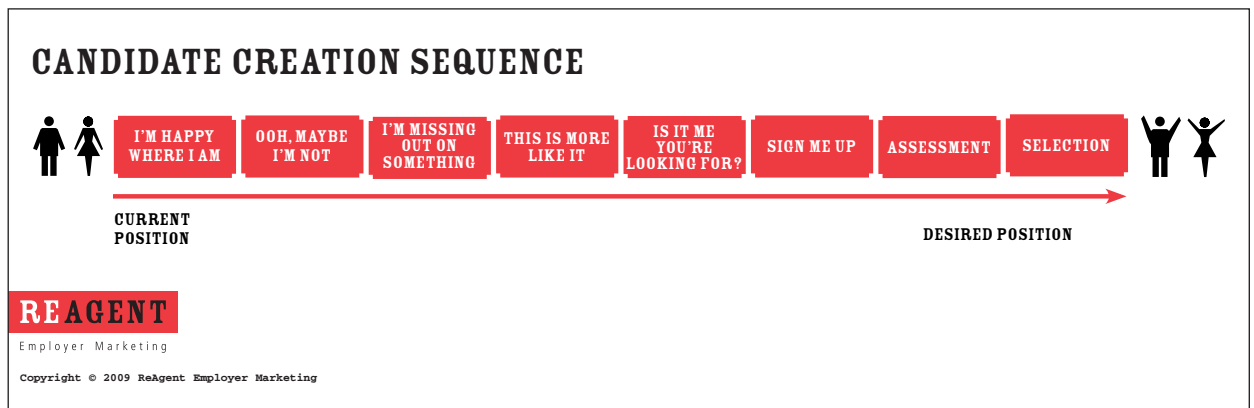
Now you may well be hot, but no-one's that hot. Most relationships require at least a bit of chatting-up.

CREATING CANDIDATES

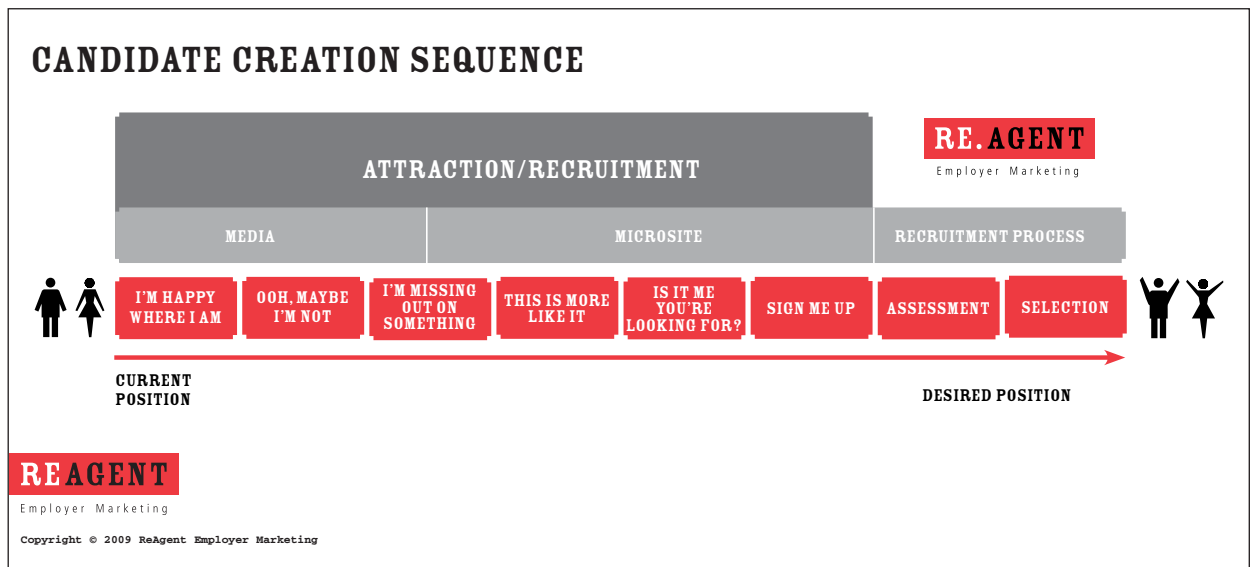
Now hopefully you are hot, at least as an employer. But being hot, and being seen as hot, are two very different things.

Hotness still needs promotion. Even Ferrari needs a helping hand from Marketing to mate their cars with their potential owners.

So, we need to make a connection here with our potential audience and we need to do it on their terms, not ours. We need to let them know we may just have something in common, and that they may just be interested in what we have to offer. We need to convert them from a state of indifference into active participants in our assessment process.



And this shows us the components we need to 'activate' a potential candidate:



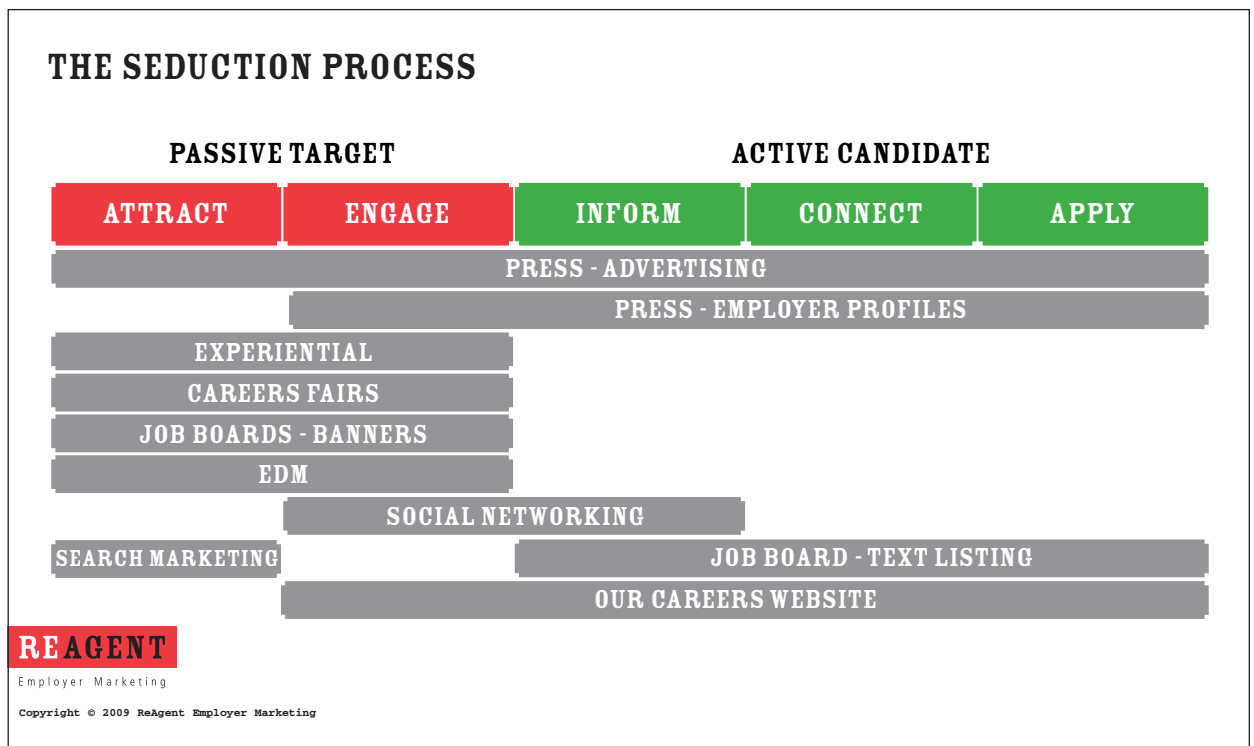
SEDUCTION

We have hopefully agreed that we can't just demand a candidate line-up – there needs to be some sort of chat-up process.

If sourcing were as simple as announcing all our vacancies on massive job boards and then sorting through the perfect candidates, then why do we have such a fascination with emerging social media and technology?

The fact is, it isn't.

If we want the best people to join us, we have to woo them. Announcing vacancies just doesn't cut the mustard – we have to develop some effective chat-up lines and then deliver them through the media channels our targets like to use, not just the ones we as recruiters find convenient:

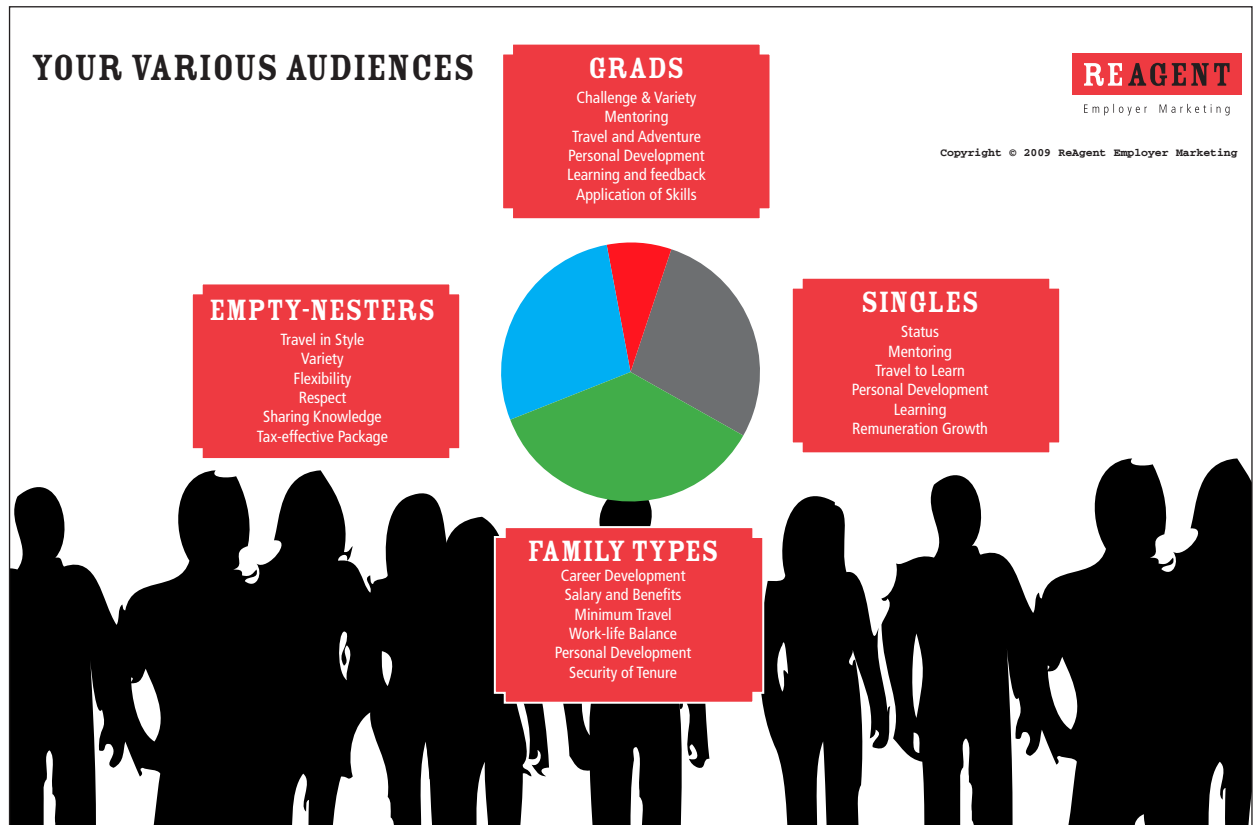


Go take a look at your existing recruitment ads and make an honest assessment of whether they fill the red and green boxes.

EACH TO THEIR OWN

We must also remember that people's habits and drivers evolve as they go through their various life stages, and our media consumption habits change along with them.

Not that we wish to pigeonhole people, but this chart shows the basic life stages our existing and potential talent audiences go through, and how our employment engagement drivers change along the way:



Remember, the media channels to reach each of these groups will vary – some channels may span all groups (more mainstream media like press and TV) but others will be highly skewed towards one demographic or other (eg Twitter broadly to under-30s).

So, broaden your media schedule to take into account the different demographic target groups.

NO STALKING

We are all familiar with the term 'Candidate Relationship Management' yeah?

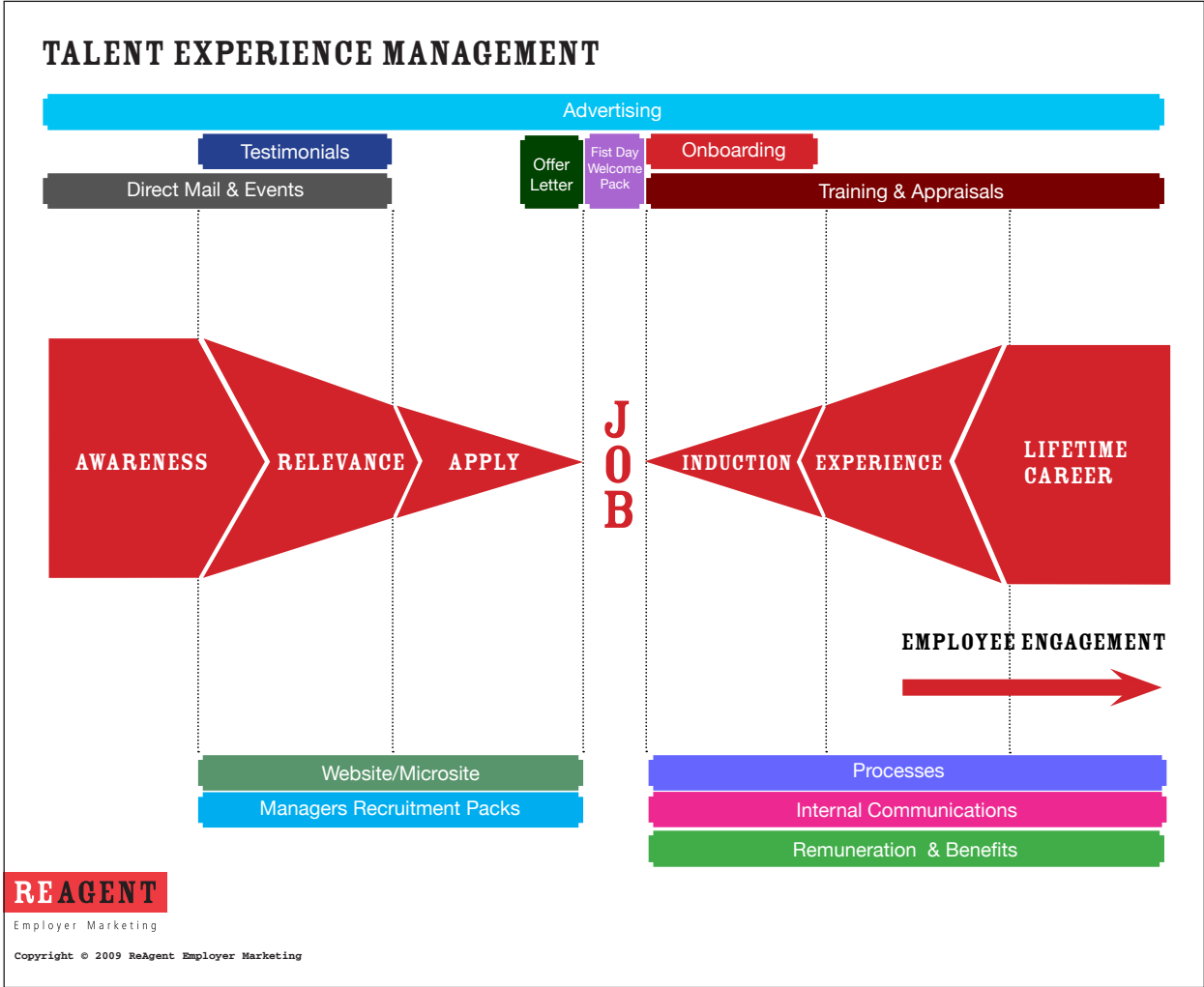
Well, I'm sorry to tell you that you cannot have a relationship with someone who doesn't want one with you. And if you persist in trying to develop the relationship, it's called stalking.

So if we can't manage relationships, what can we manage? What can we do to affect people's opinion of us?

Well, we can manage the experiences people have of our organisation – the 'touchpoints' where they connect, however briefly, with us and make that instant assessment of us which is somewhat unfair, but human nature.

So, managing experiences eh? How do we do that then?

Well, the answer is not easy I'm afraid, But it is doable. We must chart out our target's likely path into the organisation and ensure, as much as we can, that each connection they have with us is positive and consistent:



Above and below the talent pathway we have listed some possible touchpoints which will affect the target's experience of us.

Get three or four positive experiences in a row, and chances are you've got yourself the makings of an engaged person.

THE TALENT PATHWAY

So, from first impressions to lasting engagement, the journey we need to take our targets through will be navigated by touchpoints.

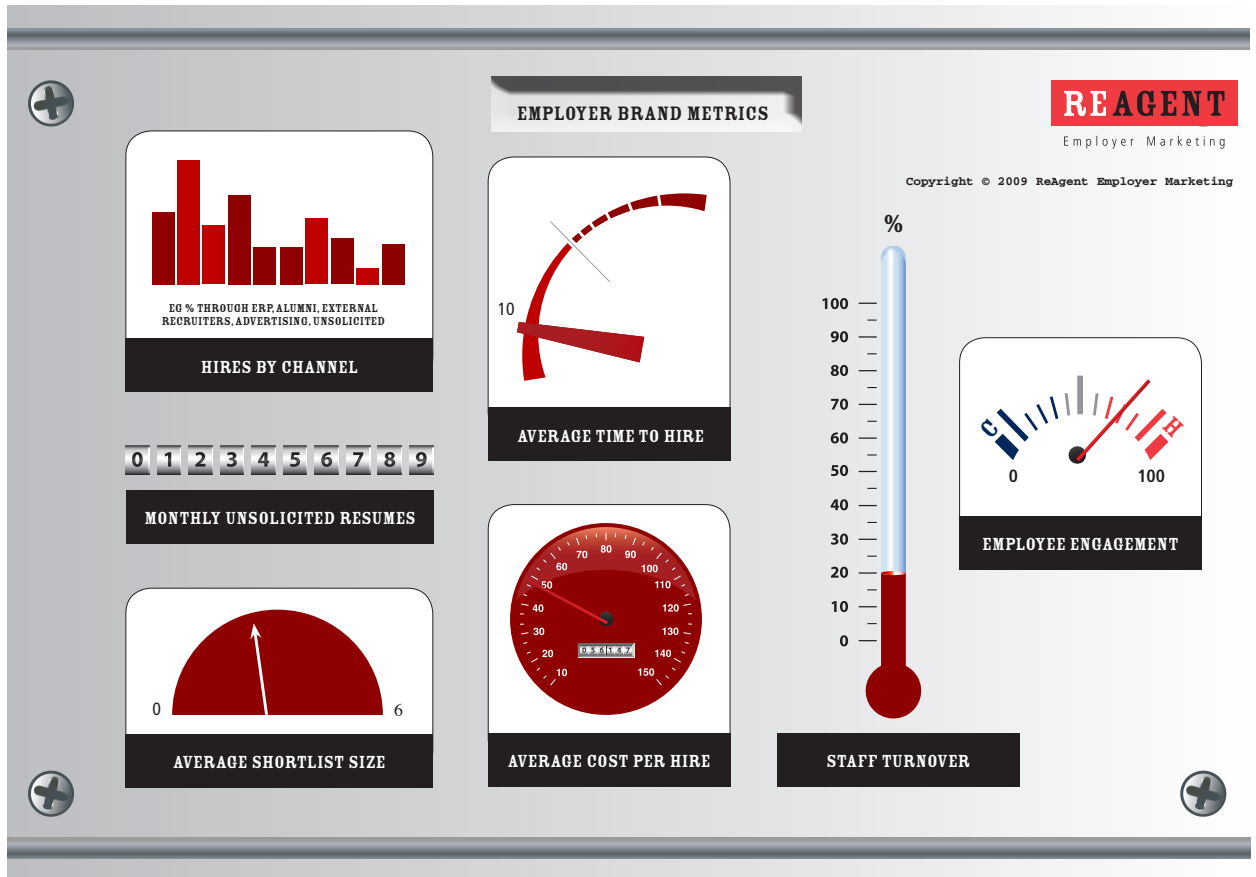


Touchpoints – very useful things to plot and measure our success.

MEASUREMENT

How do we know how well our Employer Brand is performing? Or indeed, how can we measure the success of the touchpoints?

The most common metrics we use are the general metrics you use in managing the performance of your talent attraction and retention process:



But these are long term metrics – they will only improve through the brand if the brand is successful, and that could take months.

By far the most effective and immediate test is employee engagement – if your existing staff respond to the brand then chances are your external targets will too. Involve your people, not just those around you in HR. Build a core team, across as many disciplines of your organisation as is feasible to manage, to guide and own the process.

And engage an external supplier with the skills, resources and experience to create a true and unique Employer Brand, based on your EVP. This is the ‘emotional contract’ you have with your employees – what you promise and what you deliver in terms of the working relationship. It is what we base our Employer Brand campaigns around – how we articulate the EVP within and outside of the organisation. And if you think you don’t have one, think again. If you don’t know exactly what it is, chances are it’s not a good one.

You’ll find this invaluable in creating a market-competitive and unique Employer Brand, and for mediating through the internal disagreements. Most experts agree, a powerful Employer Brand is the single most effective attraction and retention tool you can have.

But that’s why it’s also the hardest to acquire.

Good luck. But if that runs out, give us a call.

www.reagent.com.au

FURTHER READING

If you've still got the stamina after this rant to find out more, here are some of our favorite Ps of V from around the world.

Our own home-grown Aussie product, the Global Employer Brand Institute -
www.employerbrandingonline.com

What the Yanks think -
<http://www.ere.net/?s=employer+branding>

The view from the Poms -
www.ri5.co.uk

Our very smart friends in the UK -
www.peergroupcomms.com

Some of the best, and worst, in the world of global employer branding -
www.andrewbaird.co.uk