



Reflecting the true employee experience through branding

Organizational culture and branding
strategies for a connected culture

Organizational culture and your employer brand should work together

Aligning organizational culture and employer branding goes beyond surface-level cohesion. Challenges like a competitive labor market, high voluntary turnover and lack of perceived differentiation in who to work for prove the real need for alignment.

5-step road map strategy



STEP 1

Gain
C-suite
buy-in



STEP 2

Establish
performance
goals



STEP 3

Prepare
for
rollout



STEP 4

Launch
and
sustain



STEP 5

Measure
and
modify

The external brand story reflects the internal brand experience

Organizational culture carries a variety of connotations, while employer branding—and the need to market your organization—is a bit harder to capture. **The two go hand in hand, and understanding their differences makes it easier to keep them aligned.**

Employer branding

YOUR BRAND IMAGE

How an organization brands and markets itself as an employer to attract and retain best-fit talent

- > Supports EVP by marketing employee benefits
- > Supports organizational culture by selling your unique culture story

Employee Value Proposition (EVP)

YOUR KNOWN DIFFERENTIATORS

What employees value most about working for an organization

- > Supports employer branding by identifying what differentiates your organization
- > Supports organizational culture by using reliable research to reveal what employees value most

Organizational culture

YOUR WAY OF WORKING

The way people work and behave in an organization, including norms and traditions

- > Supports employer branding by staying adaptable, depending on the needs of employees, the industry, etc.
- > Supports EVP by shaping how work gets done

The case for creating buy-in

According to the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), employer branding impacts employee recruitment, retention and engagement, and the organization's perception in the market.

An effective employer brand is part of the EVP

Use an EVP to boost the company's reputation as a great place to work. It continuously reminds employees how their work benefits others and ties to the company's greater purpose and mission.

An EVP should:

- > Clearly define the brand's larger purpose
- > Help employees understand how their contributions bring value and help the company achieve its goals
- > Reflect the organization's employees and industry

**ATTRACT
EMPLOYEES WHO
WANT TO WORK
WHERE THEY'RE
VALUED**

More than 50.5 million Americans quit their jobs in 2022, surpassing Great Resignation levels.

—STATISTA

Pair organizational culture and branding with your mission, vision and core values

Your mission, vision and core values are unique to your company—and your culture and brand should reflect it.

An employer brand clearly aligned with its mission and vision provides a clear purpose for employees; employees who invest in, connect with and understand how they contribute to the company's bigger purpose are more productive, more invested in the culture and more likely to stay.

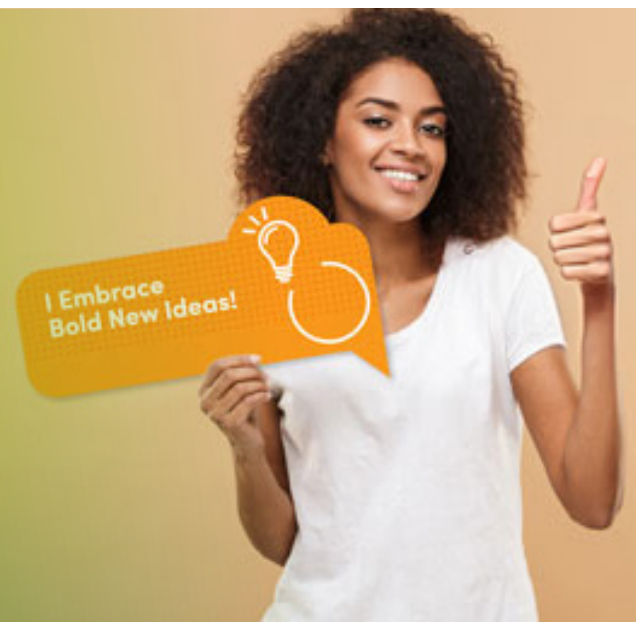
That's a win-win-win.

ORGANIZATIONAL PURPOSE INSPIRES PERSONAL PURPOSE

82% of employees say an organization's purpose is important

70% also say their work defines their sense of purpose

—MCKINSEY & COMPANY



Conduct an EVP brand audit

Go directly to the source: employees. Ask what's important to them and how they connect with the brand today.

Implement employee surveys and focus groups

Soliciting firsthand feedback lets you learn how employees truly feel in their day-to-day work. Conduct surveys and/or focus groups with current employees, and even consider interviewing prospective or past employees.

Make it a goal to:

- > Uncover beliefs and motivations
- > Provide a pressure-free space to share experiences (consider sending an anonymous survey)
- > Share that leadership cares to hear from employees

Host an executive visioning session

Oftentimes employees think and feel differently about the brand than decision-makers (like C-suite executives). **To develop an effective EVP and brand that reflects the culture, leadership must know how employees feel.** An executive visioning session closes that gap by sharing what you learned from employee surveys and focus groups. It also gets their input and buy-in before you craft messaging. Determine and adjust key performance indicators (KPIs) based on what you hear from employees and executives.



PREPARE LEADERSHIP FOR THE ROLLOUT

Executives shouldn't hear and understand the updated brand messaging for the first time during launch. Give them time to internalize it so they can communicate it to the organization, including the overarching philosophy and how to be advocates.

Keep your employer brand relevant

Not relevant in terms of following trends for trends' sake, but up to date with what job seekers are looking for and authentic to who your brand is today. If it doesn't reflect employees, they'll soon be demanding it does. (Team members asking for visible diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging [DEIB] website messaging is a great example.)

Generational shifts create nuance in your approach

Each generation has different needs, wants and expectations, naturally causing shifts in work culture. External influences also impact the workplace, forcing brands to become more inclusive, equitable and flexible to attract employees and keep current ones happy. **What's equitable depends on the needs of your people.** For example, the same solution won't serve twentysomethings in the same way it applies to team members in their 20th year with you.

UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN EMPLOYER BRANDING & CORPORATE BRANDING

An employer brand focuses on attracting and retaining talent while a corporate brand creates a brand image.

A disconnect between the company brand and employer brand makes the organization seem disingenuous and makes employees feel misunderstood. Creating a strong connection between these two elements creates credibility and helps employees identify how their day-to-day work contributes to a greater purpose.



Use the employer brand to reflect the authentic voice of employees

When employees can relate to an authentic employer brand, it creates emotional connections, buy-in and overall engagement. If you miss the mark, employees won't feel that your company is the right fit for them. They may feel more like an object making the company money than a human being contributing toward a shared goal.

Segment employee communications

Defining groups with different needs when rolling out new brand messaging makes a huge impact. For example, you wouldn't engage warehouse/field workers the same way as office-based workers. Their environment and responsibilities are worlds apart!

Know what employees are saying about your employer brand

Are they talking about it? A well-crafted employer brand creates excitement and buzz. If they aren't connecting with it the way you expected, it's vital to understand why. Pulse and annual surveys help leadership understand how the brand resonates with employees.

32%

of U.S. employees say the mission or purpose of their company makes them feel that their job is important.

—GALLUP



Employees should experience the brand every day

Everyday interactions like break room chats, department meetings and weekly one-on-ones should reflect the brand. Leaders who embody the brand better help employees understand valued behaviors.

The employer brand should also be tangible—in all departments and at all seniority levels—through visuals, policies, practices and strategies. **From onboarding to retirement, make team members “get” the brand, regardless of whether they’re remote, deskless or in the office.** If an employee faces a difficult decision at work, the employer brand should guide them on how to respond.

Create true brand experiences

Empower employees to see themselves in the brand. **Here are ideas that can easily scale based on your budget and resources.**

- > Employee give-back events
- > Workplace community-building activities
- > A recognition and awards engagement platform

HIGH-VISIBILITY BRANDING OPPORTUNITIES

Workplace signage

Vehicle decals

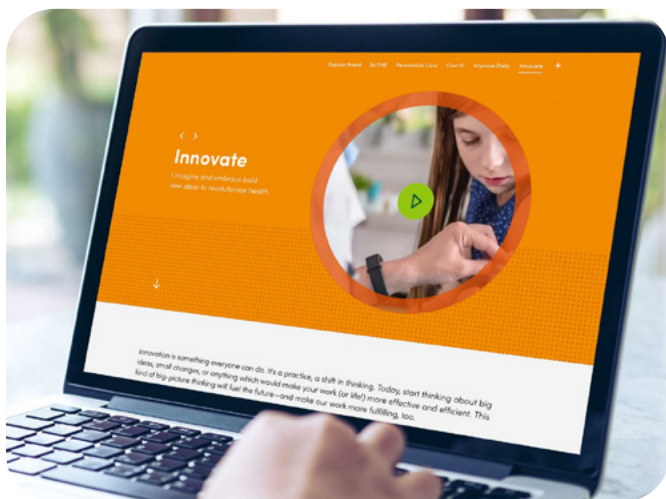
Social media

External branding and advertising

Employee handbooks

Onboarding tools

Recruitment marketing



Pulse surveys are the answer to, “Is our brand resonating?”

A quick pulse survey of employees and leader groups will tell you if your program is working. Just make sure to include a section for more candid, short answers.

Identify feedback themes

- > Evaluate the impact of the brand over time
- > See how the brand messaging and communication strategy are performing
- > Make future recommendations

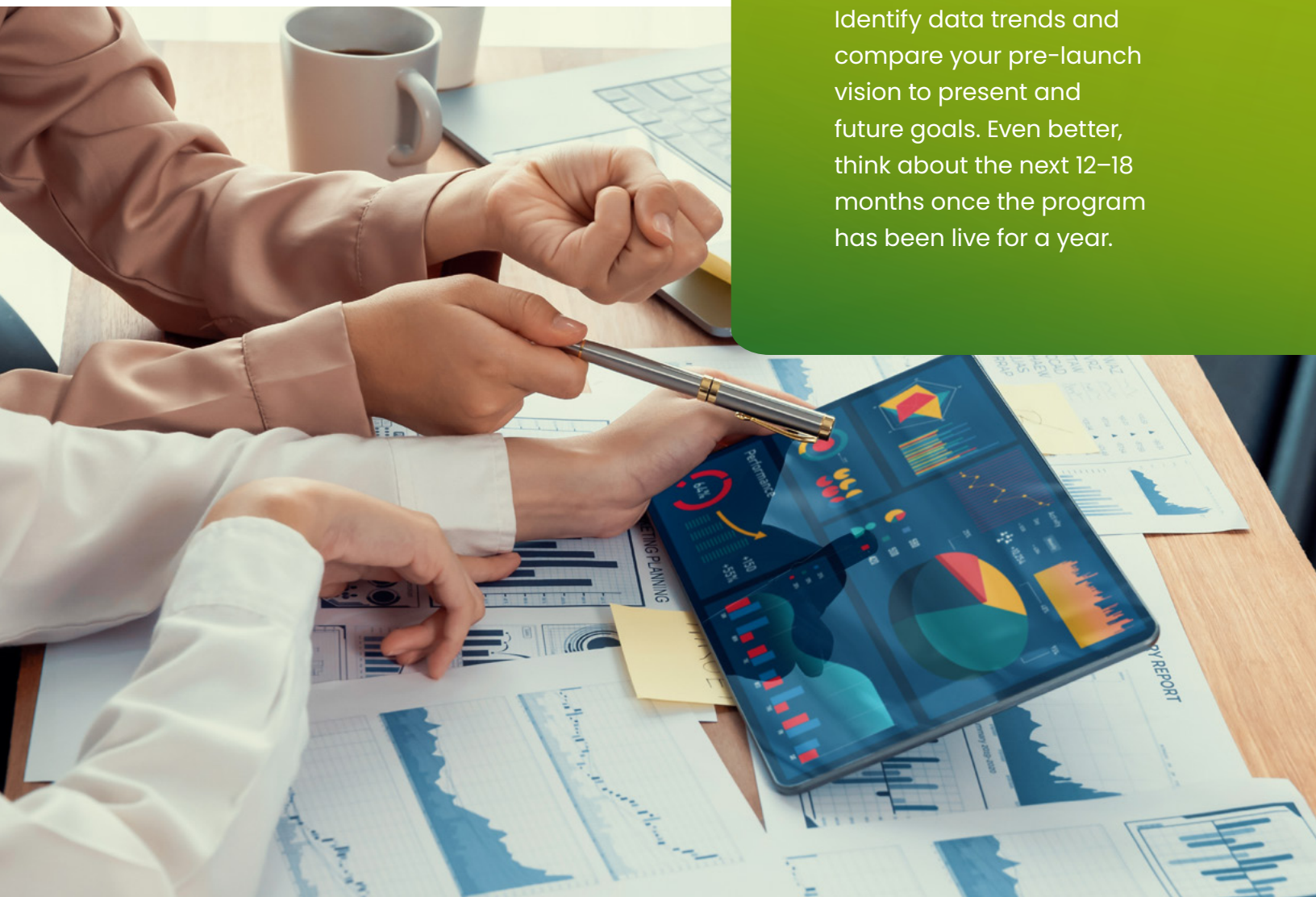
Modify the program based on data

- > Time to hire
- > Cost to hire
- > Referrals
- > Engagement
- > Retention, especially among new hires



TRACK PROGRESS REGULARLY

Identify data trends and compare your pre-launch vision to present and future goals. Even better, think about the next 12–18 months once the program has been live for a year.



Now apply steps 1–5

Celebrate what's working, spotlight engagement gaps and work toward a truly connected culture

The organizational culture and branding road map is your self-paced guide on how to evolve your program, when to involve key audiences in decision-making and feedback, and what actions to take during each of the five steps.

[Download the road map →](#)

Build a connected culture

Think of employee engagement as a connected experience. Our broader ebook, *Ultimate guide to aligning employee experience programs*, includes the information you just read on organizational culture and branding, as well as step-by-step program road maps for leadership development, employee recognition, and learning and development. Whether your organization is interested in broad strategy shifts or small-scale program adjustments, our employee engagement team is also a resource. We'll assess your current environment and discuss areas for potential improvement.

[Download the ultimate guide →](#)



Make your brand a tangible experience.
Let's talk—itagroup.com



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