

TALENT AUDIENCES AND TALENT SEGMENTATION

IN MODERN EMPLOYER BRANDING



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Our talent audiences are not the same for recruiting and for employer branding



A recruitment profile tells us the exact criteria a candidate needs to match with in order to become invited into our selection process and be considered for the vacancy.

In recruiting it pays out to be specific to a tee. The more specific we can be about the ideal candidate, the more targeted marketing we are able to do to help find this person. Unfortunately, often times we lack this detailed understanding of what exactly we are looking until the actual hiring needs pops up.

For this reason, recruiting criteria tends to change on a needs basis. This month, replacing this employee we might make the decision on such and such criteria. But next month, hiring for the same role, but to another team, we might favor some other criteria.

"A recruitment profile is for today. An employer brand profile is for the future."

The act of employer branding is actually very different from the act of hiring. When hiring is a sprint, employer branding is a marathon.

When hiring is done to fill a seat with the best option from the available candidates, employer branding is done to expand your available audience and help your business to win the talent your business really needs with the intention of not having to settle with what is available during your process..

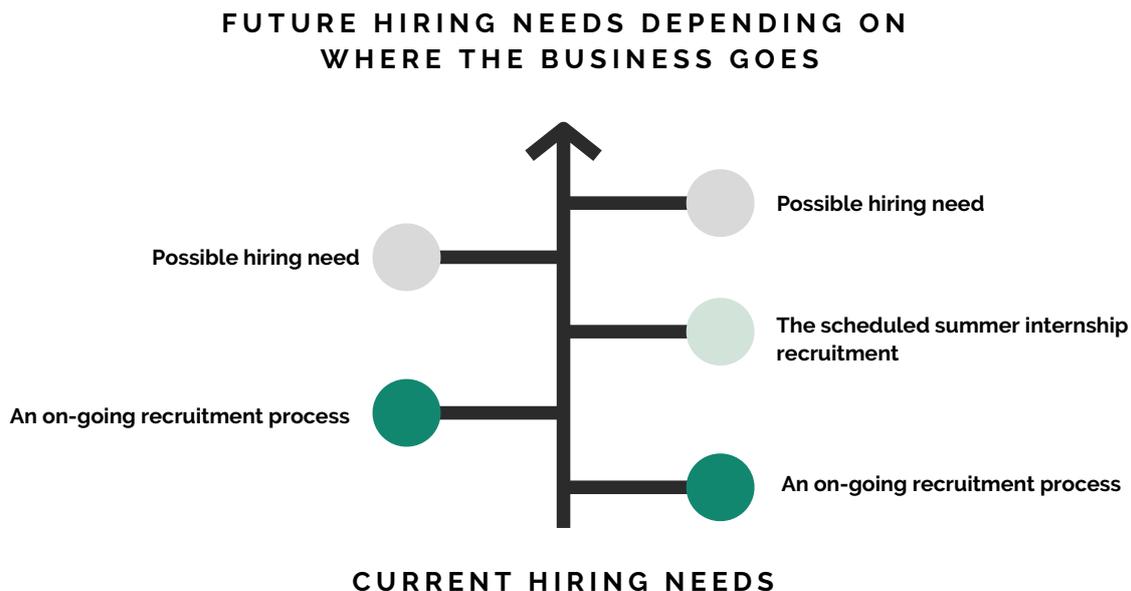
Furthermore, because of the digital transformation, most organizations are in the process of transforming their businesses. Their strategic competence needs are likely to shift or change completely in the coming years. Who they hire today is likely to change.

Employer brand is an outcome of those activities in which we use the marketing mix to position ourselves different from the competition. Employer branding means we pursue an emotional connection between what we represent and our ideal talent audiences. You can't rush a relationship. It takes time. Building an employer brand on today's hiring needs can actually be a huge and costly mistake.

Most businesses have short visibility over their actual hiring needs

Unfortunately, we all lack the crystal ball required to see what exactly lies ahead of us in the future. We are unable to be as specific about our employer brand audiences as we can be about our current hiring needs. The further ahead we look at, the less able we are to know for sure.

The reality is that most hiring managers tend not to know who they want to hire until the recruitment process starts. By then, you no longer have the luxury for the long game. That's why we need different tactics for employer branding and recruiting.



The difference between our recruitment audiences and our employer branding audiences.

The key differences between our talent audiences for recruiting and for employer branding

- 1** Recruiting audiences are active job seekers identifying themselves in our recruitment criteria.
- 2** Our ideal recruiting audiences are those active job seekers who match with our selection criteria.
- 3** Employer brand audiences are active and passive job seekers who are emotionally connected and drawn to what we represent as a place of work.
- 4** Our ideal employer brand audiences are our strategically ideal talent audiences as in, those talents our business must be able to hire in the coming years.

Who are our employer brand talent audiences?

In **The Modern Eminent Employer Branding Methodology**© I developed, we focus our employer branding activities for who I call the strategically ideal talent audiences. These are talents strategically important and critical to our business due to their skills, their abilities, their experience and their potential.

The modern employer brand audience is an audience our business wants to hire in the coming years. Often times, they may not even know about us, or their perceptions are dated. They may or may not be the same talents we want to hire today. The point here is, we don't know in enough detail that would allow us to treat them like they were recruiting audience.

Almost daily I see our customers struggling with their employer brand audiences. The struggle is caused by trying to write recruitment profiles and hiring criteria for something that doesn't exist yet.

Instead, turn to your business strategy. Look for the strategic emphasis' and discuss the strategic direction for the next few years. Use your people knowledge to assess and evaluate what type of skills, competencies, values, experience, interests, potential and work personality characteristics are likely to be useful and required to execute this strategy. After all, this knowledge is the value HR & recruiting professionals should be able to bring to the table. Don't expect business leaders to have in-depth understanding on who are ideal to make it all happen. This is where you can shine!

Using talent segmentation for defining employer brand audiences

Some examples of criteria used together in talent segmentation to create talent personas.

The Person



- Demographics
- Education
- Length of experience
- Professional skills & competencies
- Stage of life
- Current position
- Job history
- Job related needs and expectations
- Career ambitions
- Work personality

Geographies & cultures



- Current location
- Ideal future locations
- Professional language skills
- Understanding of different cultures
- Location-tied networks, connections and knowledge
- Willingness to travel

Personal preferences



- Values and value-based drivers
- Motivators
- Priorities of life
- Interests
- Needs and desires
- Personal connections
- Hobbies and other spare time activities
- Media use

Audience segmentation is a process used in marketing to divide and group members of the targeted audiences into subgroups based on various criteria. Using talent segmentation in employer branding helps us to overcome the struggle of not knowing what our recruitment criteria is going to be next year or the year after.

"Talent segmentation is a process of dividing and grouping people into subgroups based on specific criteria."

When we segment our talent audiences for employer branding we look for people insight that helps us to understand a vast range of drivers influencing our ideal talent decision making and behavior.

We then use this data to create specific **talent personas** to target our marketing messages to. As employer branding is not about promoting jobs and career opportunities, we need to figure out what else might be important and relevant enough to our ideal talents to win their attention.

I once used suggested a customer a talent segment "all the mothers and fathers working in tech in this city and matching with our three culture-based attributes." That is an example of talent segmentation.

The talent segmentation data is used to help us formulate our marketing messages and select the right media. It is not used as recruiting criteria. Imagine how different your marketing message is when it is tailored to the mothers and fathers in tech, not to all experienced software developers in the city.

5 Q& A'S ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF TARGETING AND SEGMENTING TALENTS IN MODERN EMPLOYER BRANDING

1. WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT TO DEFINE THE TARGET TALENT AUDIENCES FOR EMPLOYER BRANDING?

It is paramount for successful employer branding to end up being the preferred place of work for those talents our business will need from that point onwards when we actually have a brand. Otherwise, we risk targeting our messages to our current recruitment audiences. What if they are no longer valid in 12-36 months time?

The act of employer branding is different from the act of recruiting and recruitment marketing. Employer branding is a long game. It takes time for the brand to evolve. You simply cannot rush it. You don't want to end up with a wrong brand audience.

2. HOW DO I KNOW WHO SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN OUR EMPLOYER BRAND AUDIENCE?

The answer to this can be found from the business strategy.

- The decisions made about our future services and products will tell us what type of skills and experiences are required to develop, market and sell them.
- The decisions made about our future operative environment and market places will tell us whether we need to expand our audiences outside current regions and change the language of our marketing and communications.
- The financial goals will give us insight into what are likely to be the real values of this company. Which in turn will impact the type of leadership and work personalities likely to enjoy working towards such goals.

When we explore and learn how the strategy might change the current decisions and plans, we are in a better place to make sense whether our talent audiences will need to change from what they are today.

We should also keep in mind that the purpose of employer branding is to position the company in a specific and memorable way as opposed to the competition. An international business accountancy firm is a business accountant employer even when they recruit for sales, IT, marketing, customer service and so on. Their key employer brand audience are business accountants preferring an international career. Without business accountants able to deliver their services, this company will fail to deliver their business strategy.

3. WHY ARE MY RECRUITING AUDIENCES AND EMPLOYER BRANDING AUDIENCES DIFFERENT?

- As mentioned earlier, we hire for a current need. And the more specific we can be about this current need, the better we can identify where to find these talents and how to get their applications.
- Employer branding on the other hand is about building relationships and emotional connections between what we represent and our strategically ideal talent audiences. Because this is a long game, we have to choose audiences that are relevant to us in about 12-36 months from the time we start to pursue an employer brand.
- While it is possible for our future audiences to be the same as now, it is as possible they are something totally different. The current operative environment is changing this for every business looking to grow in the future.

4. WHAT IS AN IDEAL NUMBER OF TALENT SEGMENTS FOR EMPLOYER BRANDING?



The ideal number of talent segments depends on the resources allocated to active and ongoing employer branding. In my experience, already **four** is a handful. Keep in mind, active employer branding requires commitment for routines taking place every week. The more segments you have, the more activities you need to cover to achieve the same level of connection with all your audiences.

In our **Modern Eminent Employer Branding Methodology**© we teach and guide to segment your strategically ideal talent audiences into maximum of four strategic segments, but to start your actual marketing activities from the most critical segment.

This way you can achieve a better control and sense of achievement over your actions while you also build the routines and learn from the data. Once you have basic practices in place and you know what you are actually doing, you can expand to your other segments.

5. ARE THERE ANY COMMON MISTAKES I SHOULD KNOW ABOUT?

The most common mistake is to confuse your recruiting profiles and employer brand audiences with each other. This often leads to situation where we've used our employer branding budget but failed to deliver any value.

The second most common mistake is to confuse recruitment marketing with employer branding. While you can use content marketing to boost recruiting, the difference is in the target audience. You need active job seekers in your recruitment process. Employer branding brings the most value when targeted to passive job seekers.

The Modern Eminent Employer Branding Methodology©

Hi, my name is **Susanna Rantanen**. I started to develop this modern employer branding methodology in 2017 because most of our customers on the Finnish tech sector were struggling in the war for tech talent.

At first, I wanted to create a systematic approach for our customers to follow in order to win attention and stand out from all the marketing noise with a distinctive employer brand. I wanted their audiences to be able to explain clearly what set them apart from the other tech employers.

I soon discovered this methodology useful also for our customers starting or in the middle of their business transformation. Again, this meant they needed to clarify who they were to become, why and for who.

Due to this methodology, we were recently recognized as one of the **Top 10 Employer Branding Agencies in Europe 2020**.

INVITING IDEAL TALENTS ON A CANDIDATE JOURNEY WITH YOUR COMPANY UNTIL THEY ARE READY TO CHANGE JOBS

This methodology storifies the business strategy, strategic company culture and employee experiences into a unique brand position.

The ideal talent is positioned as the hero of the employer brand story making this approach the opposite from the more traditional employer branding..

Content marketing, storytelling, persuasive marketing as well as words that impact and influence are used to win the attention and invite the ideal talents on a Candidate Journey with the business. The marketing activities are planned to move the talents on this journey over time towards conversion, until they are ready to change jobs.



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