

How to become an employer of choice

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The war on talent is intense and to a certain extent, it is now in the hands of the employee. Not all that glitters is gold and prospective employees have begun to realise this. In today's skills short marketplace, in efforts to attract and retain quality staff, many employers are adopting an employer of choice strategy, offering a variety of employee benefits. By definition, what makes a company an employer of choice is its ability to attract and retain the best candidates with desirable company culture, leadership style, and employee engagement. The essence of becoming an employer of choice is the quality of the employment relationship or psychological contract. Nowadays your reputation will precede you and employees will seek you out as a desirable place to work.

Every organisation these days wants to become an employer of choice. Many claim they are and in reality, few can be considered as such. The best talent in the industry want to work for you - and they do. To be an employer of choice, there are many issues that you must put into consideration, action them and work to continually improve.

Understanding the following issues is crucial to achieving your goal of becoming an employer of choice:

1. **Job Security:** Secure employees can do their best work. Free from concerns about losing their jobs, employees can concentrate on their goals and core functions without worry.
2. **Empowerment and Authority:** When employees are allowed to make decisions and to take responsibility if how to do their jobs they feel empowered. They will be able to control their choices and how to perform their core functions to achieve the strategic framework of the company. They are empowered by actively seeing how their contribution works towards a greater goal.
3. **Respect:** With an employer of choice, employees feel that their bosses and co-workers fundamentally respect them. They feel that their ideas are listened to and appreciated.
4. **Opportunity for Growth:** At an employer of choice, employees feel as if they are encouraged to continue to develop their skills and careers. These employers offer performance development planning, career paths, and internal and external training opportunities. They are also given job assignments that help them to expand their skills.
5. **Access to Information:** Employers of choice share information with employees that range from the company's financial progress to the results of where the company stands with its strategic framework. Employees feel as if they are members of the in-crowd because they know what is happening.
6. **Commitment:** Employers of choice are committed to their employees and their customers. This is reflected in everything from Human Resources policies to business strategies. This commitment plays out in retention and engagement strategies and perks that can range from free lunches and beverages to monthly employee and family events.
7. **Involvement:** At an employer of choice, employees feel as if they have the opportunity to

be involved. They can make suggestions, think up new products or innovations, serve on employee committees to plan events and work processes, and attend appropriate meetings and have input on work processes that affect their jobs.

8. **Positive Relationships With Co-workers:** Gallup research finds that engaged employees are likely to have a best friend at work. On a larger scale, at an employer of choice, because the cultural fit is considered in recruitment, co-workers like and enjoy working with each other. A bad boss is dealt with by the organization before he or she can negatively impact employees and the work culture.
9. **Work-Life Balance:** Increasingly demanded by employees, work-life balance initiatives such as flexible scheduling choices, allow employees to work undistracted by the family and life events and needs occurring outside of the workplace. These initiatives minimize employee stress and help them accomplish life's challenges while working.
10. **Performance Culture:** An employer of choice finds ways to tie the performance and the interests of employees with those of the employer — two of the ways that employers accomplish this are through their variable compensation system that ties rewards to performance and a job plan process that provides regular guidance and feedback.
11. **Fairness:** Perceptions of unfair treatment or a workplace that favours certain individuals over others for unknown, undefined reasons, is an anathema to an employer of choice. Employers need to fairly develop and apply policies, treat employees with the same regard and consideration, and make the workplace guidelines clear and enforceable across the board.
12. **Recognition:** Employers of choice provide feedback to employees about their performance, growth prospects, accomplishments, and areas needing improvement regularly. One of the most powerful forms of feedback is employee recognition. For an employer of choice, recognition is regular, targeted to real successes, and used to reinforce positive, desired behavior.

Benefits of Being an Employer of Choice

Companies being a preferred company to work with to attract the best talent and being known as a magnet employer. Being an employer of choice has its benefits and advantages like:

1. Since employees are willing to stay with you, you will have a low attrition rate
2. With many talented people willing to join you, you will have the best talent in your organization
3. Having the best talent in your organization itself is a competitive advantage
4. Recruitment becomes easy as you can give more importance to choosing people than attracting them to apply for the job

Questions to ask yourself

- Do your employees love to work for your company?
- Are employees deeply engaged?
- Are employees' full potential being realized?
- Are employees planning on staying with your company?
- Are communications open, honest, positive and future-focused?
- Are people proactive and see, own, and act on problems quickly and efficiently?

- Are truth-telling and risk-taking encouraged and rewarded?
- Is there a high level of cooperation and collaboration?
- Are people respectful and seek to bring out the best in each other?
- Is there a healthy work-life balance?
- Do employees have energy and passion?
- Do employees trust and respect their managers and feel valued and supported?
- Are your leaders trusted and respected?
- Are employees treated fairly?
- Are employees regularly rewarded and recognized for good performance?
- Are there opportunities for growth and development?
- Are employees encouraged to contribute and make a difference?
- Are employees proud to work for your organization?
- Would your employees recommend your company to their friends as a good place to work?

Organisations conduct extensive searches when looking for quality candidates, but a 2017 Glassdoor survey found that potential employees are also doing their own homework. This is why having a good brand and reputation as an employer of choice is important.

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