

The Quest to Quantify

Measuring the Impact of
Your Talent Brand





CONTENTS

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“ *Talent Brand should be treated with the same rigor, focus, priority, and resources that go into building the world’s best consumer brands—from content strategy and marketing, to operations and conversion metrics.*

Do you treat it this way? For a long time, I surely did not. That was a mistake.

— **Brendan Browne**, VP of Global Talent Acquisition, LinkedIn

It goes without saying that good brands are good for business, but the quest to quantify the true impact that brand has on business goals has intrigued executives for decades.

Marketers were the first to start out on this quest. And now, in an era of unparalleled competition for top talent, talent professionals are joining in.

This quest to quantify is (and will always be) part science and part art. Yet today, talent leaders are more empowered than ever to investigate, test, and quantify the connection between talent branding and talent acquisition success.

This ebook will be your guide on this quest to quantify your talent brand’s impact on recruiting objectives—outlining the language, business partners, pitfalls, and key metrics that matter most.

Let’s get started.

STEP

1

LEARN THE
LANGUAGE



“ *The limits of your language
are the limits of your world.*

- Ludwig Wittgenstein



Before embarking on your quest to quantify talent brand, let's clarify what we're talking about.

employer brand *noun*

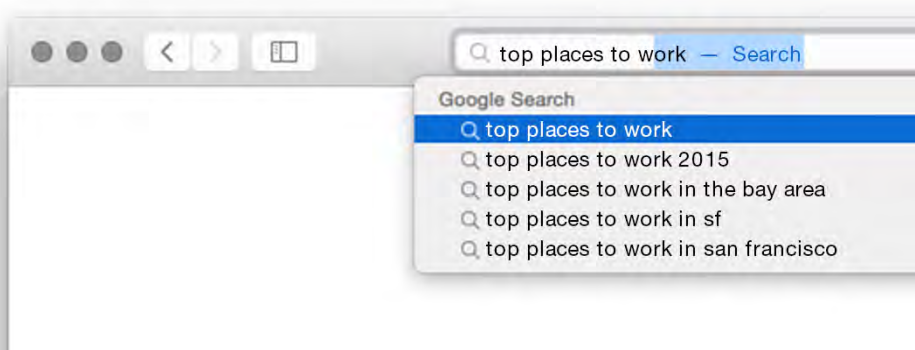
How you, the employer, promote your company as a place to work.

talent brand *noun*

The highly social, totally public version of your employer brand that incorporates **what talent thinks, feels, and shares** about the company or organization as a place to work.

Talent brand and the social web go hand-in-hand

The social web has taken brand from the control of the employer and put it in the hands of the talent, both current and potential.



A company can no longer expect to develop and promote its employer brand and be done with it, because it's no longer a one-way conversation. It isn't even a two-way conversation. It's a marketplace of interactions where recruiters, employees, customers and prospects are all listening to one another.

¹ LinkedIn Global Talent Trends 2015, May 2015. <http://linkd.in/1LFQmL9>

² 2014 LinkedIn Exit Survey, n = 1675, U.S. Voluntary Preventable Departures

Did you know?

Word of mouth is digital and scalable.

50%

of professionals around the world discover new job opportunities through word of mouth.¹

Hiring is intermittent, branding is constant.

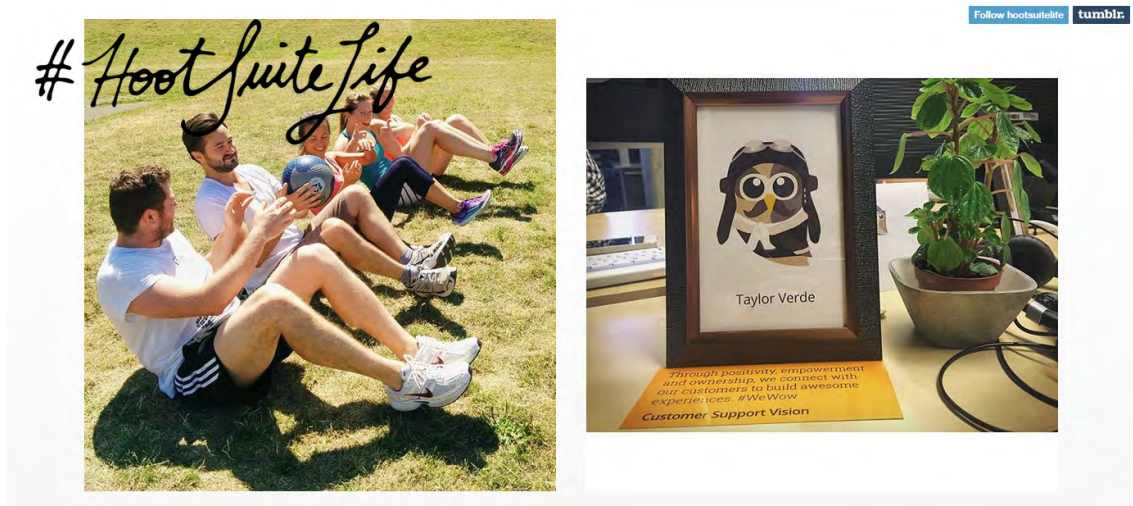
53%

of professionals start considering switching jobs at least 5 months before leaving.²

Your employees are your talent brand megaphone



Dell showcases real employees sharing their career experiences at the company. [🔗](#)



Hootsuite uses #hootsuitelife to curate employee-generated content across its social media channels. [🔗](#)

STEP

2

FIND YOUR PARTNERS



“ *The challenges of talent acquisition and marketing leaders aren't that different: Each needs to tell a compelling story about culture, people, opportunity, and mission, and find a way to do it at scale.*

- Theodore Chestnut, Regional Accounts Manager, LinkedIn



This section is designed to help you build a case for your marketing partners to join you on this quest to quantify talent brand's impact.

Here's your opening pitch: Quantifying brand's impact isn't just a marketing priority or a talent priority—it's a shared company necessity. Working together just makes sense.

Company brand and talent brand are two sides of the same coin.

Potential candidates are also consumers, and many consumers are potential hires. The social web has blurred these lines, making it all one brand at the end of the day.

“ *The best brands have consistency and clarity at every touch point. If marketing says the company stands for one thing, and you say it stands for something totally different, then the entire brand suffers. The best brands have a certain harmony when speaking to an audience.*

- **Anthony Limjoco**, Group Manager, Brand Marketing, LinkedIn

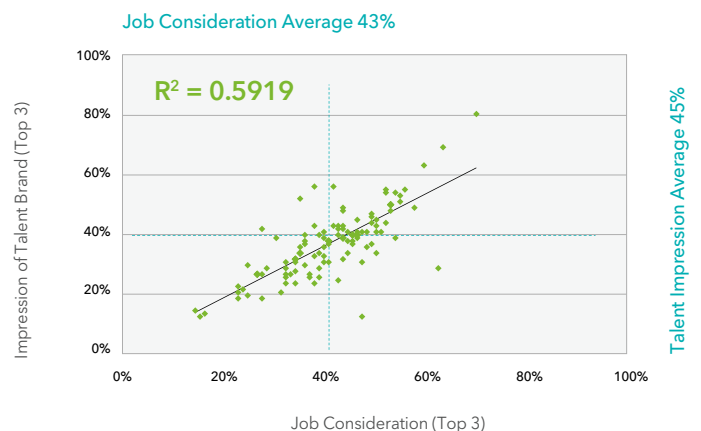
Check out the data that backs this up. In a survey of over 7,000 professionals around the world, we found a strong correlation between awareness of company brand and talent brand.³ Simply put, the more familiar someone is with your talent brand, the more likely they are to be aware of your company brand. It works both ways. Your marketing friends will love this.

Careful, don't take this to mean you only need one kind of brand. This same study showed that talent brand is **twice as likely to drive job consideration** as its company brand.

Knowledge of Company Brand vs. Knowledge of Talent Brand



Impression of Talent Brand vs. Job Consideration



³ LinkedIn global survey, March 2012, sample size = 7,250. <http://linkd.in/1HVdoZK>

When talent and consumer branding work together

General Electric's "What my mom does at GE" campaign

In February 2014, General Electric (GE) published a brand video on YouTube called, "[What my mom does at GE](#)." The video depicts a journey into a child's imagination as she envisions all the amazing things her mom makes as an employee at GE, from "airplanes that can talk" to "trains that are friends with trees."

This video, which has amassed over two million views and counting on YouTube, is an elegant example of how consumer branding and talent branding can work together to

elevate a brand campaign's overall impact. This campaign showcases GE, the ingenuity of its products, and the minds behind the technology that make everything possible.

Brands are promises, whether to potential customers or potential talent about what a company is all about. By working together, talent acquisition and marketing can perpetuate their brand's promise more effectively to more audiences, at scale.



STEP

3

MEASURE WHAT MATTERS



“ *However beautiful the strategy, you should occasionally look at the results.*

- Winston Churchill



Armed with the right language and key business partners, you're ready to begin tracking the metrics that will map this quest to quantify.

Know the goal

The goal of talent brand is to attract qualified talent to your organization and build a solid pipeline that fuels recruiting activity.

Talent brand achieves this goal by building awareness with key talent, increasing the efficacy of recruiters' outreach, improving applicant quality, and shortening the time it takes to fill your positions.

Metric 1: Social media follower quality

We all love a good spike in social media followers, but careful to not lose sight of the very purpose of talent brand (building a qualified talent pipeline).

More followers won't matter if you're still struggling to recruit the talent you need. By measuring follower quantity over quality, you risk masking a talent pipeline problem that will become clear when your followers never convert to candidates or hires.

To measure your talent brand's impact on the quality of your social media followers, you need a way to know who exactly your followers are.

With a richer understanding of who is in your talent pipeline, you'll be able to adapt your talent brand strategy to reach and grow relevance with specific audiences, and see a lift in your overall recruiting effectiveness.

Did you know?

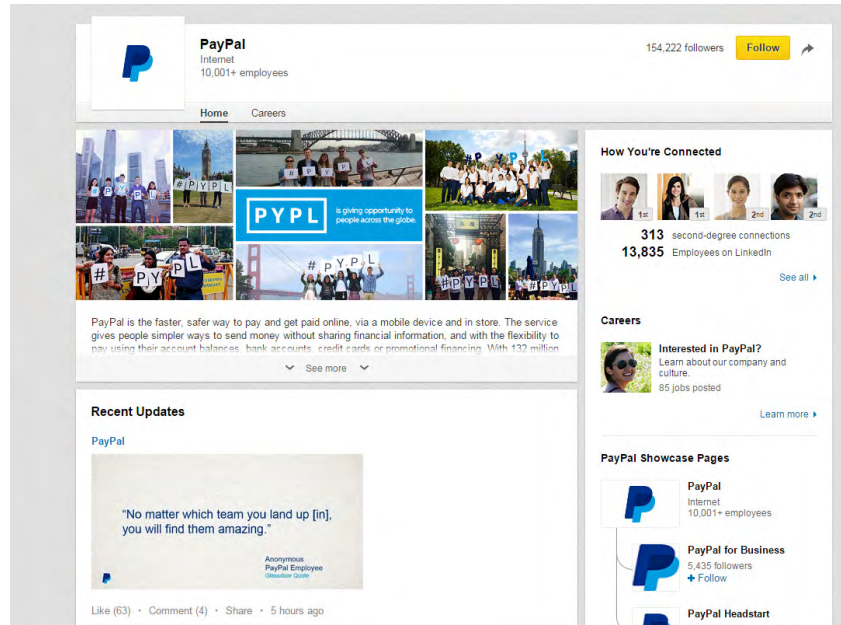
58% of LinkedIn Company Page followers are interested in joining your company.⁵

⁵ LinkedIn U.S. Survey, May 2015, sample size = 704

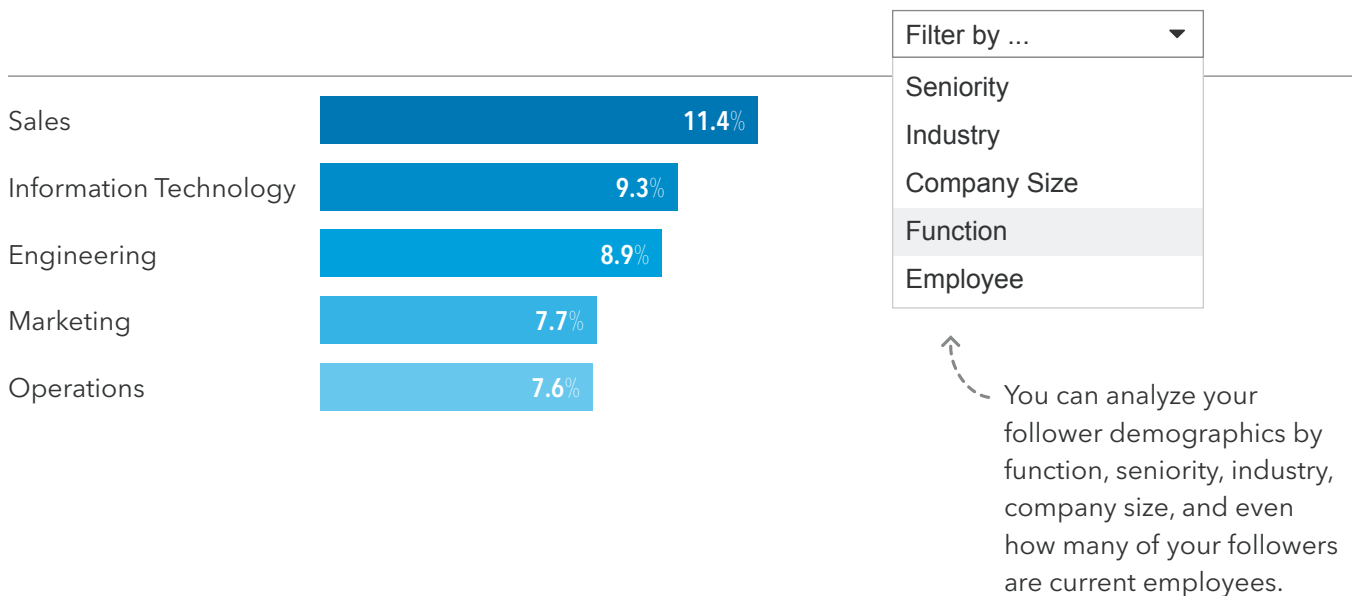
Measuring quality of follower growth with LinkedIn

With over 380 million professionals, LinkedIn is a natural place to showcase your talent brand and grow your following on your Company Page. What's more—your Company Page gives you loads of insights to better understand the quality and quantity of your follower growth over time.

Shown: PayPal's LinkedIn Company Page



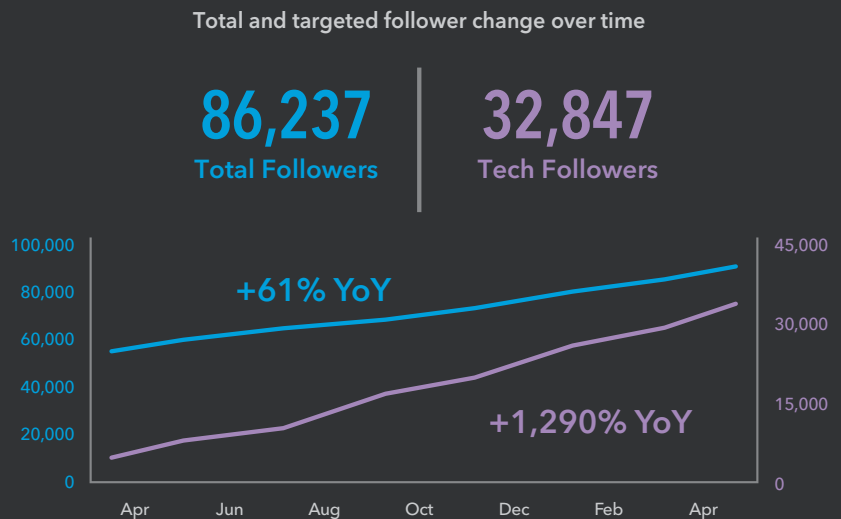
See follower demographics using LinkedIn Company Page analytics



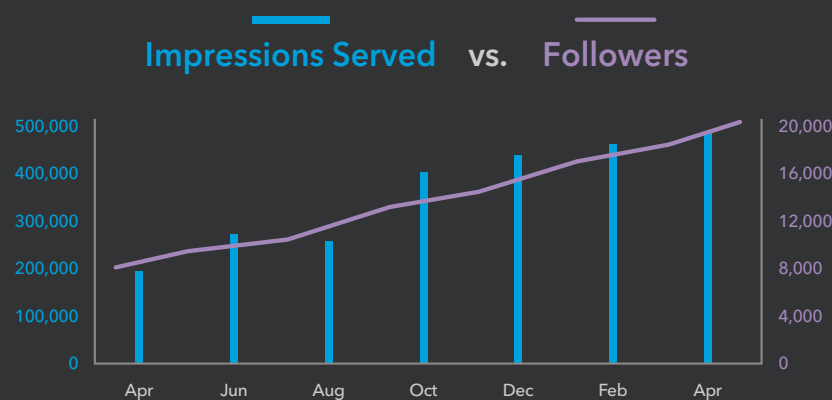
LET'S GET GRAPHICAL

Tips on visualizing your success

When it comes time to report, here is one idea to show your progress over time. This chart presents overall follower growth as well as follower growth specifically for talent in the technology industry. You can adopt this to show any type of demographic drill-down you want.



If you're running ads, LinkedIn status updates, or LinkedIn sponsored updates, consider plotting a campaign metric like total impressions, shares, or clicks on a graph along with a success metric like followers to see how they relate.



In this example, we plotted total impressions and total followers on the same chart, over the same period of time, to see how these two metrics relate.

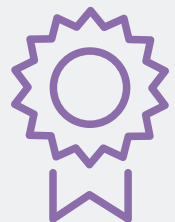
Adjust your talent brand strategy over time to ensure your follower demographics always reflect the priority talent you want to engage.

“ *Hiring the best person available for a position, rather than the best person who applies to a job posting, requires a different type of recruiter and a different type of recruiting process.*

- **Lou Adler**, CEO, The Adler Group

What does success look like?

Your social media followers are growing over time with quality talent that align with your company's hiring priorities.



METRIC 2
Talent response
rate

Metric 2: Talent response rate

If your talent brand is successfully raising awareness with the talent you want to hire, you can expect a higher response rate when you reach out to that talent to discuss job opportunities. Just like you're more likely to talk to friends than strangers at parties, talent is much more likely to respond to you if they are already familiar with your company as a potential employer.

Did you know?

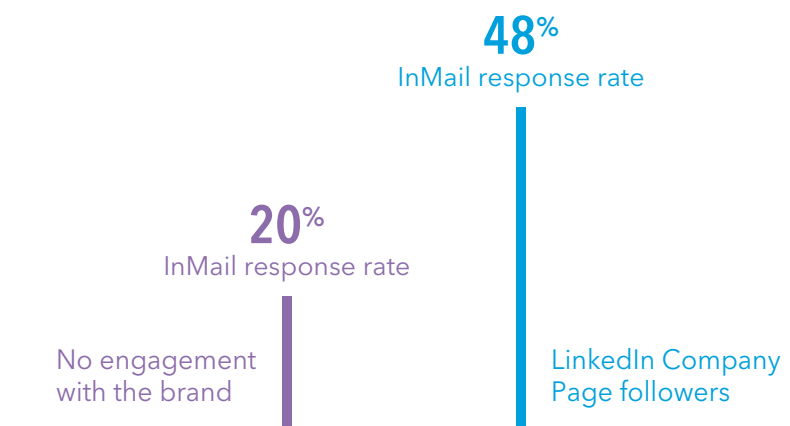
Compared to non followers, followers of your Company Page are

81% more likely

to respond to an InMail (direct LinkedIn message) from you.

Reach out to your followers first

Below is real data from one global e-commerce company who measured their average InMail response rate for professionals who engaged with their talent brand on LinkedIn vs. professionals who did not. In this case, brand engagement (such as following the company on LinkedIn) led to a 140% higher InMail response rate.



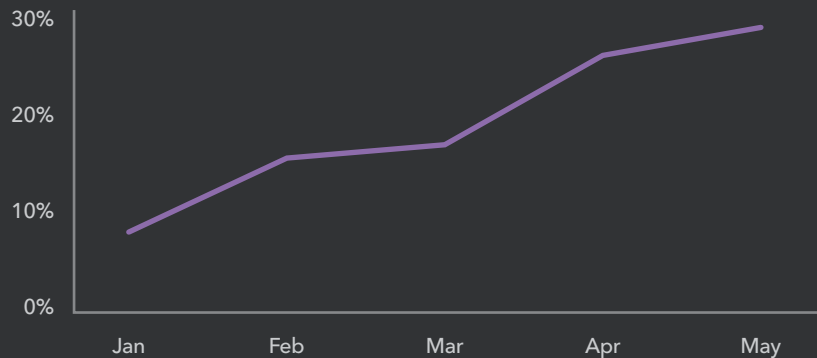
This global e-commerce company saw much higher InMail response rates from their engaged followers.

LET'S GET GRAPHICAL

Tips on visualizing your success

Track your response rate over time to demonstrate how your talent brand impacts your ability to start conversations with the talent you care about most.

Engineering Talent: Response Rate in Q1-Q2

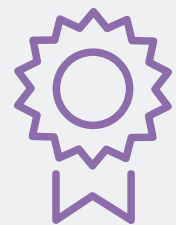


Benchmarks for InMail response rates vary based on factors like geography, seniority and industry, so there isn't a standard definition for success. Rather, ask yourself whether you're hearing too much silence and test strategies, like personalized messaging, to raise your response rate over time.

If you're getting a 13% or lower response rate on 100 or more InMails in a 14-day period, you may need to re-think your InMail strategy.

What does success look like?

You're building more relationships and having more conversations with qualified passive talent about your company and job opportunities. You're feeling more efficient in your outreach to talent and no longer facing radio silence.





METRIC 3
Applicant
quality

Metric 3: Applicant quality

As you build a following of qualified target talent, and start more conversations with this talent thanks to higher response rates, your overall applicant quality will rise with the tide.

Defining “quality” is subjective—only you and your team really know what it should mean. Quality can essentially be summarized as an applicant being a good fit for your company and role. The higher applicant quality you have, the easier it will be to shortlist candidates and the faster your recruiting timeline will move.

If you haven’t quite reached enough quality applicants, you’ll struggle to find candidates worth shortlisting and you’ll need to spend more time, energy, and money finding better applicants.

LET'S GET GRAPHICAL

Tips on visualizing your success

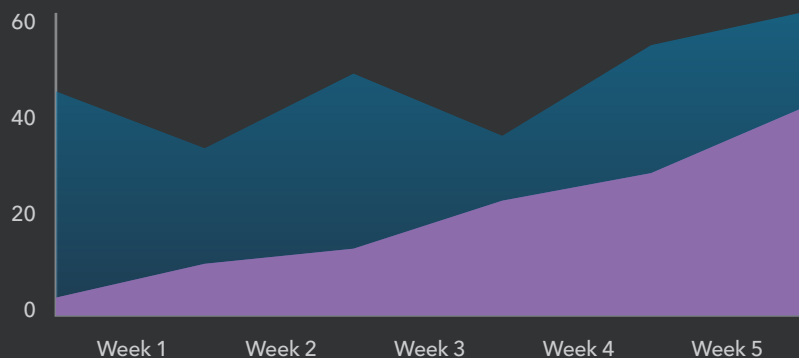
One approach to quantifying your progress with growing applicant quality is to plot your ratio of “quality” to “non-quality” applicants over time.

Consider creating a stacked area chart to show the ratio of quality to non-quality applicants over time, or per job opening. The goal is to increase quality over time,

despite natural fluctuations in overall applicant numbers.

If manually classifying applicants as qualified or unqualified is too lengthy a process, consider setting up tags in LinkedIn Recruiter or your ATS to label applicants. Then, run a report to quickly see total numbers in a given time period.

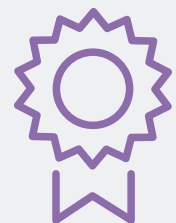
Quality Applicants vs. Total Applicants



In this chart, applicant quality improved week over week despite the varying number of total applicants.

What does success look like?

You're seeing what was once a deluge of unqualified applications become a steady stream of qualified talent interested in joining your company.



Metric 4: Time to hire

Talent brand enables you to grow a solid talent pipeline, start more conversations with qualified talent, and convert more of this qualified talent into applicants. In other words, a strong talent brand leads to more efficient, always-on talent acquisition.

Ultimately, your talent brand will set you up for success with our final metric – time to hire.

Did you know?

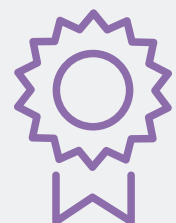
Companies with a strong talent brand on LinkedIn report a

20% faster

rate of hire.

What does success look like?

You're empowered to find, recruit and hire the best talent for your organization, faster.

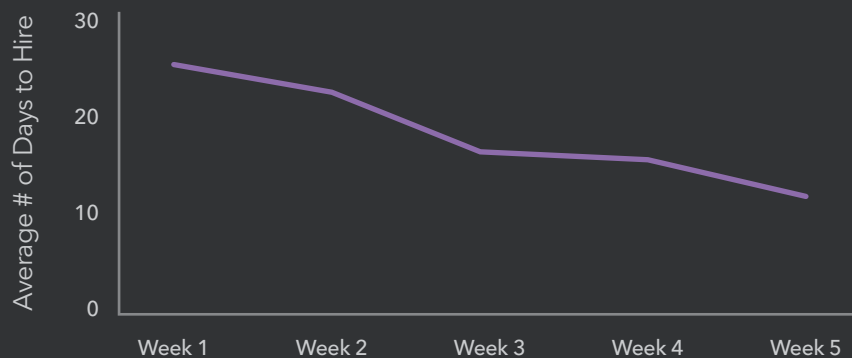


LET'S GET GRAPHICAL

Tips on visualizing your success

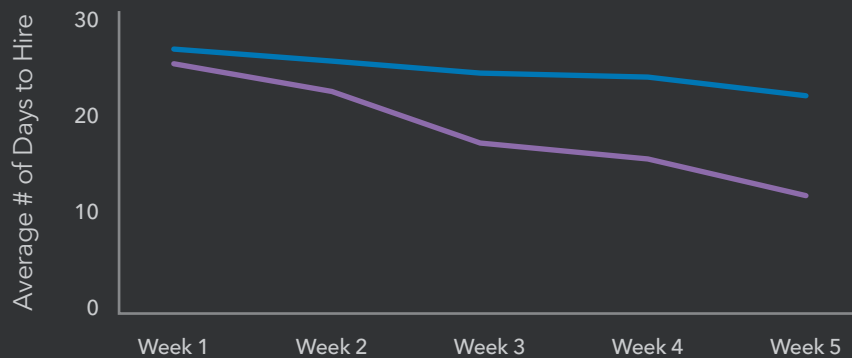
The most straightforward way to quantify this metric is to plot the median (average) number of days it takes to fill either all your company-wide roles, or roles within a specific segment, over time.

Time to Hire: Engineering Roles



To take this analysis a step further, consider plotting your company-wide average time to hire on the same chart as your average time to hire for one specific type of role that your talent brand is targeting. If your talent brand is targeting one type of talent (a certain function, seniority, or geography for instance) and you see a lower time to hire for that type— it's pretty clear that your talent brand is making a difference!

Time to Hire: All Roles vs. Engineering Roles



Want to go an extra step?

Monitor the authenticity of your talent brand with a new hire alignment check.

Talent brand is meant to give talent a glimpse into what it's like to work at your company, but if that glimpse is misleading and inauthentic, it could cause major recruiting and retention issues down the road.

To test how aligned your talent brand is with reality, survey your new hires to determine whether their expectations match their new realities as employees. In an ideal world,

talent understands what your company is all about before they sign the contract.

Partner with HR to send new hires—across the company or just within priority positions—a simple survey question at some standard date after hire. We recommend sending at 90 days, since new hires will have had a chance to settle into their role and assess company culture.

Has your experience working here matched your expectations?

Scale: 1 (not at all matched) - 5 (highly matched)

1 2 3 4 5

Please explain why.

Free tools like Google Forms or SurveyMonkey make these metrics easy to capture. Be sure new hires can answer anonymously to encourage honesty.

“ You have to embrace who you are, in all its hideousness or all its glory. Because that’s who you want to attract—talent with that shared passion and shared ideology.

– Ed Nathanson, Founder, Red Pill Talent

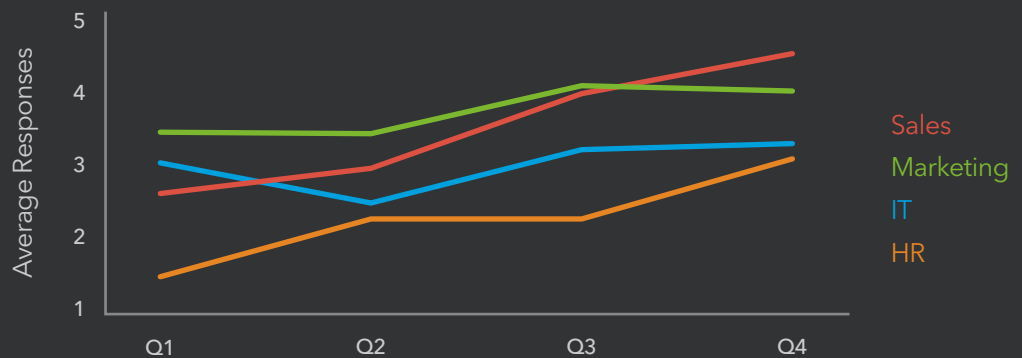
LET'S GET GRAPHICAL

Tips on visualizing the data

You've got a few choices when it comes to reporting your results—you can graph out all your responses and take an average, or you can further segment your responses by function, seniority, or another dimension to understand how your talent brand alignment changes based on who you're asking.

Employee Expectations Alignment by Function

This chart shows how well (or not well) expectations and experiences align in four employee functions over time.



Seeing poor alignment? It could mean two things:

1) You're not sharing enough!

If new hire expectations are misaligned because they've been exceeded, there's more to your talent branding story than you're telling. Tap employees to help you promote your company's great culture within their social networks.

2) You may need to course-correct (HR should be your ally!)

Read through the open-end responses to understand what talent brand promises are not being delivered. The best talent brands are authentic, since everyone at your company has a role in shaping the message.

A person is seen from behind, standing on a wooden ledge and taking a photograph of a city skyline at sunset. The scene is bathed in a warm, orange-red light. The person is wearing a grey hoodie, a plaid shirt, and blue jeans. The city skyline in the background is filled with buildings and lights, creating a bokeh effect. The overall mood is contemplative and artistic.

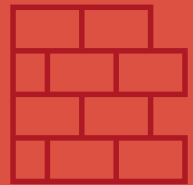
STEP

4

BEWARE OF PITFALLS

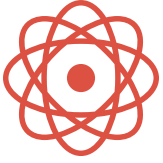
“ *If you run into a wall, don't turn around and give up. Figure out how to climb it, go through it, or work around it.*

- Michael Jordan



Along your quest to quantify talent brand's impact, keep your eyes open for common pitfalls that can throw even the most data-savvy talent professionals off track. Success is not just about knowing what to do, but what not to do.

The biggest pitfall of all is letting moments of discouragement derail you from your goals. You may experience internal pushback or revisit the drawing board more times than you'd care to. Keep moving. Remember it's easy to avoid resistance when you're standing still.



Pitfall #1

Forgetting that branding is both science and art

Despite our best efforts, we still cannot fully quantify the impact branding has on human behavior. We form opinions months, sometimes years, before we ever act and tracing specific actions to brand campaigns is nearly impossible.

The artist in you knows, without any data to back it up, what resonates with your target audiences. The quest to quantify should never keep you from trusting your gut.



Pitfall #2

Expecting results tomorrow

Rome wasn't built in a day, and neither is your talent brand. Company reputations are built slowly, over time, influenced by a variety of factors. When your boss demands data next week, gently mention that talent branding is about continually growing brand relevance and nurturing ongoing relationships with target talent pools over time.





Pitfall #3

Analysis paralysis

Sometimes getting data isn't the hard part, it's knowing what to do with it. Our advice? Get comfortable learning as you go. Use the tools and digital channels at your disposal to test what resonates with priority talent, adjust, and keep moving.



Pitfall #4

Losing sight of your destination

Always remember why you set out on this quest in the first place. Was it to grow your millennial talent pool? To change an outdated stereotype of your company? To show your boss that social media isn't irrelevant to your industry? Every metric you track, qualitative or quantitative, should help you better understand your progress towards your ultimate goal.



STEP

5

GET STARTED

“ *The journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step.*

- Lao Tzu



In this guide, we've covered the steps you can take to begin your quest to quantify talent brand's impact on your most important recruiting objectives. You know how to speak the language, build key partnerships, track metrics, and avoid the common pitfalls along your journey.

We hope you feel prepared to chart a course toward a more sophisticated understanding of your talent brand's impact on your most essential competitive advantage—your talent.

A rising tide lifts all boats

The four recommended metrics in this ebook are interconnected, each giving you insight into your talent brand's impact at a certain stage of the recruitment process.

Improve one metric and you may very well see its effect cascade down the recruitment process.

If you improve the quality of your followers, expect an improvement in your follower response rate. By starting more conversations with the right talent, expect more of them to apply to your jobs and applicant quality to improve. And when you're engaging the right talent from the get-go, your time to hire will decrease.



RECAP

Remember these steps to follow
along your quest to quantify

- 1 Learn the language
- 2 Find your partners
- 3 Measure what matters
- 4 Beware of pitfalls
- 5 Get started

CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION



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