

# Employer Brand Development Guide

A strong employer brand is regarded as the most powerful and valuable asset a business can possess in today's tough and competitive employment market. It gives a business a distinctive head start in the chase for attracting and retaining quality talent.



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## What is an Employer Brand?

In simple terms, it is a perception: the way the market perceives your organization as a place to work. Wikipedia defines it as “the image of the organization as a ‘great place to work’ in the minds of current employees and key stakeholders in the external market (active and passive job seekers, clients customers and other stakeholders)”.

The Employer Brand of a business is reflected in the actions of its leaders and flows through the businesses policies, procedure, practices and most importantly its employees.

## What are the benefits of a strong Employer Brand?

A strong Employer Brand will put you top-of-mind and top of the list with prospective employees. You will have a head start when it comes to hiring top talent, a genuine competitive advantage. You will increase your volume of quality unsolicited applicants, attract higher quality talent and enjoy higher offer-acceptance rates. You will also increase employee referrals, retain employees longer and improve their motivation and engagement levels whilst they are with you. Overall you will enjoy a stronger working culture and which is likely to translate into a more positive and productive work environment.

You need look no further than Google to see the benefits and advantages of a strong Employer brand. Everyone knows Google is a great place to work. More importantly they can tell you why. Google has been successfully able to build a strong employer brand in a short time, through openly sharing stories about their business with the world. A recent survey by Hays, of more than 400 senior HR professionals and 1000 employees across Australia found: “Only 29% of employees surveyed expressed a belief that their employer provided a clear and compelling reason as to why their organisation was a great place to work”. I am sure that Google does not suffer from this problem however it is a reality for the majority of Australian businesses. If your employees cannot articulate why your business is a great place to work, it is important for your business to discover why and address the outcomes promptly.

# Employer Brand Development Guide

## How do you create a strong Employer Brand?

A strong business culture is built on a solid business foundation and supported by robust brand pillars. These pillars are the major segments of your image, or your Employee Value Proposition (EVP) because they form the framework of your desired Employer Brand. Your EVP can come in various forms, be that financial, psychological or functional and are what existing and prospective employees identify your employer brand with.

Your brand pillars might include things such as:

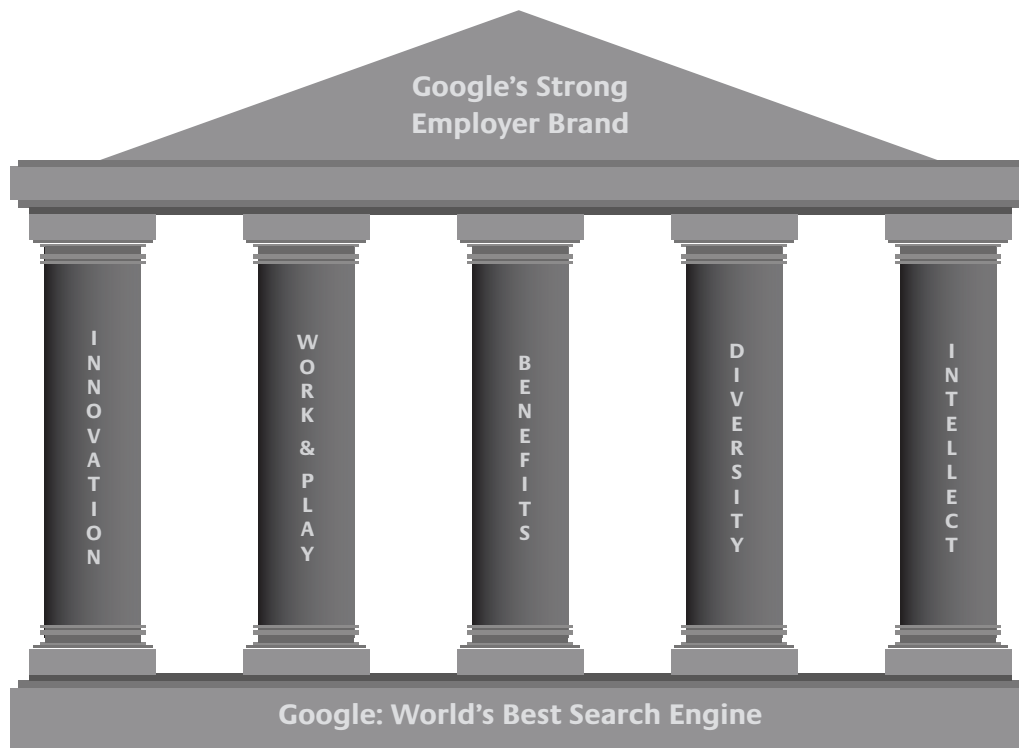
- Direction & leadership (ANZ, John McFarlane)
- A culture of R&D and innovation (Google)
- A strong environmental focus (The Body Shop)
- Global opportunities (Accenture)
- Fun and friendly (Virgin)
- High financial rewards (Macquarie Bank)
- High performance culture (GE)
- Genuinely caring for staff (St George Bank)
- Family friendly initiatives (CSIRO)
- Social conscience (NAB)
- Cultural commitment to the arts (UBS)
- Culture of learning and development (Bain & Company)
- Work life balance (Sales Force)

The choices are many; but you cannot be all things to all people.

Always remember, however, that your Employer Brand and structure will be much stronger supported by a few very strong pillars (see example of Google next page) than many weak ones.

# Employer Brand Development Guide

## Elements of a Strong Employer Brand



## **How do you maintain and grow your Employer Brand?**

This is your BRAND IN ACTION, the part where you deliver and make it work every day.

To use a sporting analogy “you must take a good hard look at yourself”, determine how you want to be perceived in the marketplace and the brand pillars that will help get you there.

Then it’s a matter of walk the walk, talk the talk. You must establish and maintain the practices and procedures that make it happen - bring it to life.

Building your Employer Brand will require commitment, resources and most of all communication. It’s no good having the strongest pillars in the world if the world doesn’t know about them. Send your message and communicate through staff, external COMMUNICATIONS programs, advertising and promotions, newsletters, reports, brochures and leaflets.

Most of all don’t forget your website. Most businesses have websites that do a great job in selling the business brand for their products or services, however very few sell the business to perspective employees. Your website must live and breathe your Employer Brand. A tab that says Careers and a listing of current available jobs is not enough to get the average person excited enough to apply, let alone the top talent.

# Employer Brand Development Guide

Make sure that wherever and whenever your Employer Brand speaks it speaks with one voice. If you are sending mixed messages the authenticity of your Employer Brand comes into question. Whether this has arisen because of poor communication or due to your employer brand promises not being met, it will ultimately have a negative effect on your business.

Take the time to determine your EMPLOYER BRAND supported by sturdy BRAND PILLARS, instigate and maintain ongoing BRAND IN ACTION plans and internal and external COMMUNICATION programs. Each of these elements will feed into each other and grow stronger and stronger, individually, and collectively over time.



# Employer Brand Development Guide

## Getting Started

The first thing is to decide that you are determined to have a strong Employer Brand: it takes commitment and resources.

Then talk to your staff and their families, some customers, management HR, Marketing, and other stakeholders. Make these discussions frank and open.

You should end up with a pretty clear understanding of how people feel you're your organization is as a place to work, and how they see your Employer Brand.

Learn and understand your company strengths and weaknesses, positives and negatives.

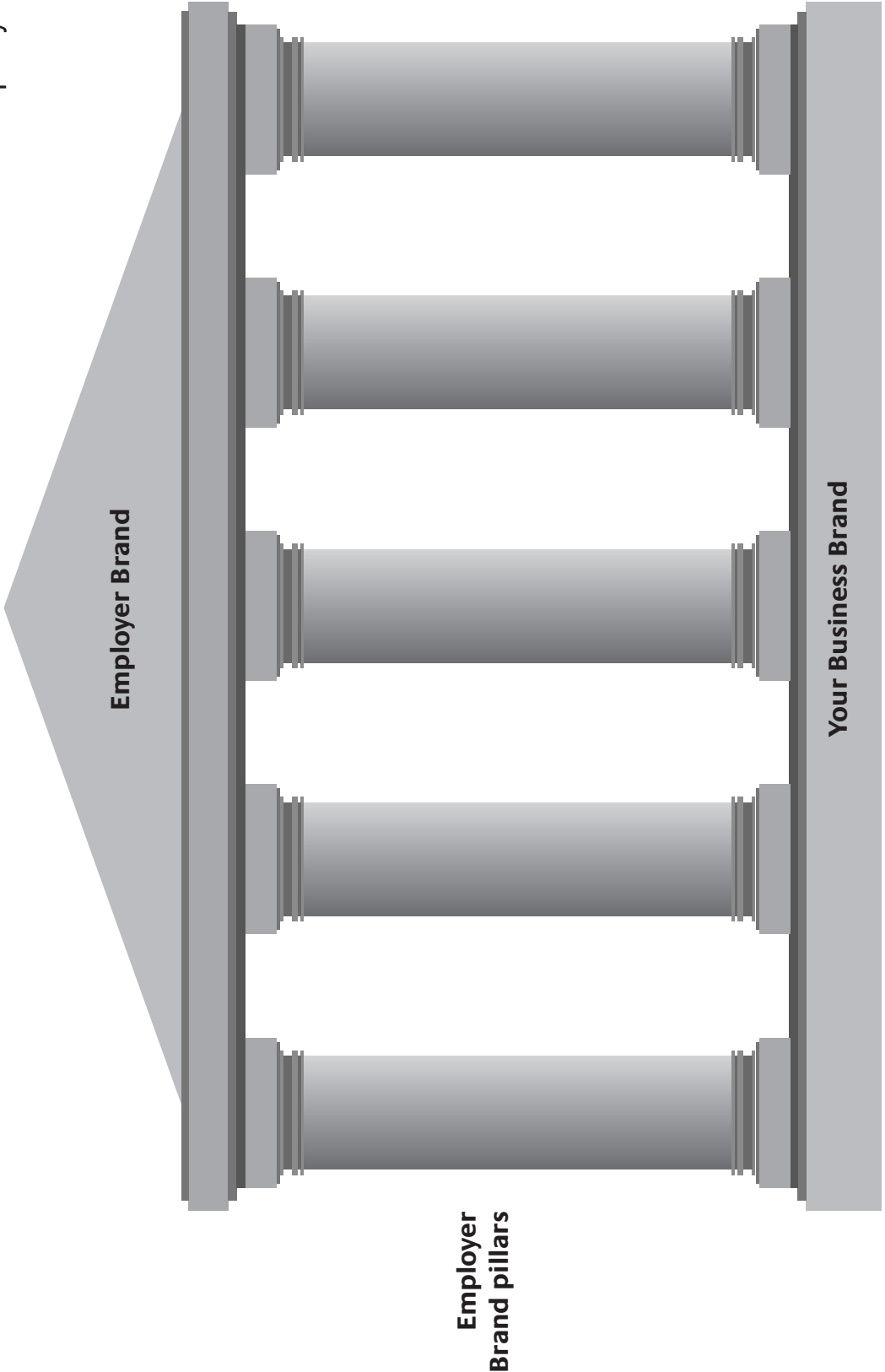
Be aware of your negatives and take remedial action if required.

Most importantly concentrate on your positives and build your Employer Brand around the pillars you are already good at.

## Like some help?

Six Figures can provide more help and information on creating a strong Employer Brand. Visit [www.sixfigures.com.au](http://www.sixfigures.com.au) or call 1300 780 177.

Six Figures  
Employer Brand Pillars



Employer  
Brand pillars