



The Power of All-Way Brand Alignment

Combining your employee value proposition, employer brand, and your external brand to engage candidates, employees *and customers*

Workforce Communications Practice
Employer Brand • Employee Voice

The worlds of consumer and talent engagement are changing, due in large part to what we call **consumer-driven communications**. It's the state of communications behavior where every notion is digitally searched, researched and reviewed within minutes. And, it's where brand impressions are formed and solidified.

The point is that this behavior isn't confined by distinct areas of investigation. Whether we are looking for a new car, the menu of that hot new restaurant, or a new job, our communication behavior is the same. And, as we are investigating every notion in this way, we create heightened experience expectations. We have brand allegiance to those experiences we like; we quickly move-on from those we don't.

But, we want to take it a step further. The implication that people approach interest investigation in a consumer way is much more than just making sure that the careers site is as cool as the commercial site; it represents the blurring the lines between external brand and employer brand *experiences*.

The most effective Human Resources functions, in their role as an attractor and engager of talent, are consumer-oriented in their approaches and customer-driven in their actions.



We see the opportunity for organizations to create a branding platform where the brand is “lived” by employees, future employees and customers. Employees who live their organization’s brand tend to be highly engaged. Organizations can leverage these high engagement levels to create better and longer-lasting customer relationships. Those opportunities can be found by aligning your external and employer brands.

And it all starts with your employee value proposition. Here’s our All-Way Brand Alignment methodology.

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All-Way Brand Alignment.



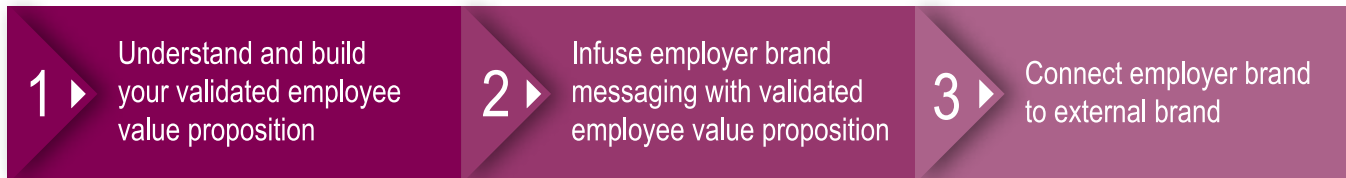
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A simple thought, really.

Our All-Way Brand Alignment is really a simple thought. It starts with a validated understanding of who you are and then infuse that understanding into both your employer brand and your external brand messaging. In doing so, organizations can improve the candidate, employee and customer experiences.



1. Validated Employee Value Proposition.

A validated employee value proposition is the authentic employment story of an organization. It's the everyday experiences of employees that encompasses everything from the empirical (compensation, benefits, PTO) to the inspirational (career growth, empowerment, etc.).

Validation comes from verifying the everyday experiences of employees through:

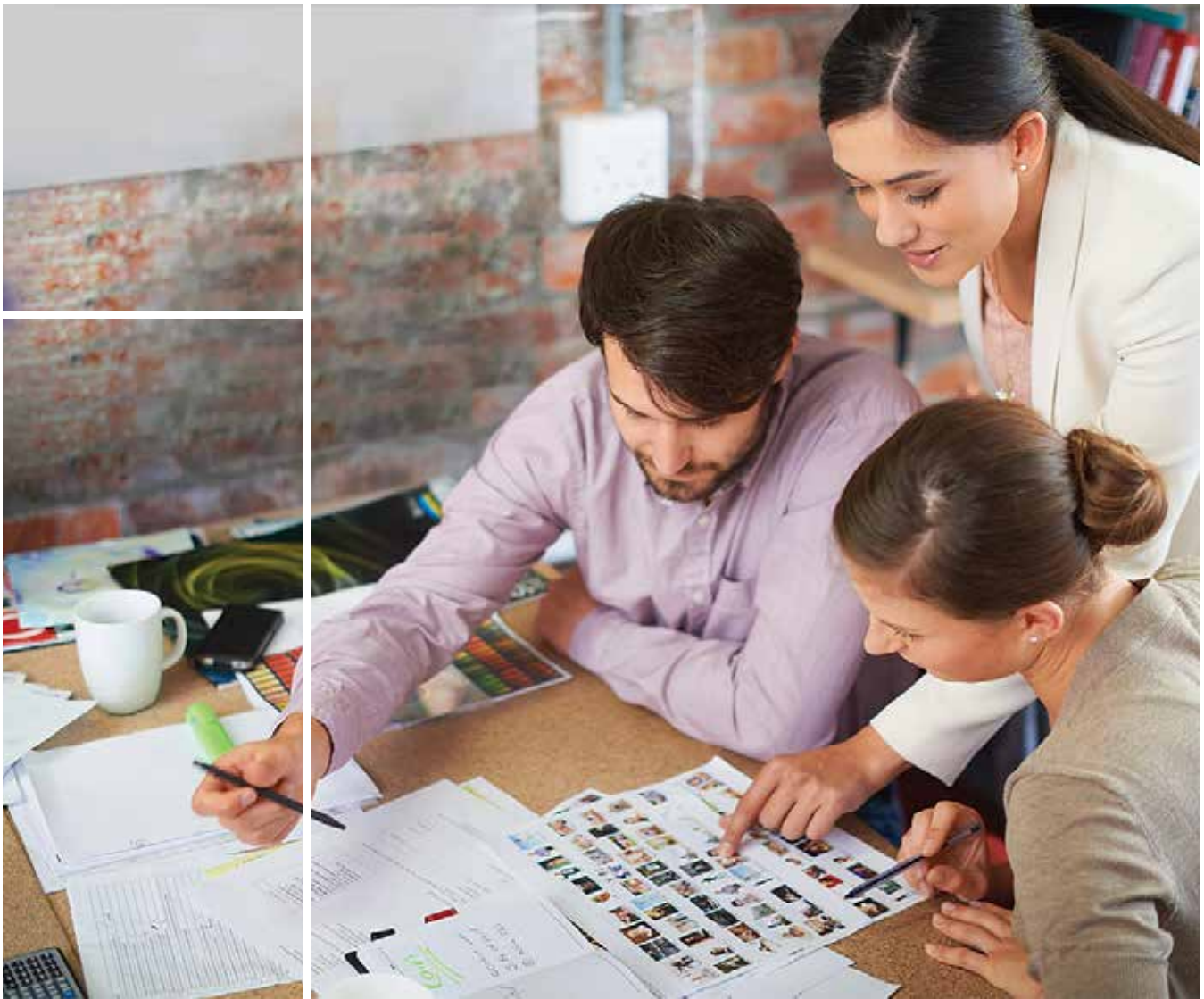
- Engagement surveys
- Focus groups and one-on-one interviews
- Leadership input and direction

2. Infusing Employer Brand Messaging with Validated EVP.

Employer brands are always stronger when developed from the everyday experiences of employees. A validated employee value proposition is a solid foundation in building a stronger employer brand platform and messaging.

In our All-Way Brand Alignment approach, employer branding is going beyond job descriptions and careers sites. In this context, employer branding is the action of stating and infusing the EVP throughout the organization's culture.





3. Connecting Employer and External Brands.

The last All-Way Brand Alignment step is to connect the brands.

In our All-Way Brand Alignment approach, the external brand taps into the EVP-infused employer brand, allowing the organization to benefit from letting people outwardly live the brand. It's about telling the story of the organization's products or services through its people in this new consumer-driven communications world. And, it's about creating a storyline and environment that enables customers to engage with employees who are living the brand.

What it Looks Like.



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Essentially, the All-Way Brand Alignment approach has two distinct actions: the alignment of a validated employee value proposition to the employer brand; and the alignment of the employer brand to the external brand. The natural question to ask is what it looks like when an organization is branded this way.

The All-Way Brand Alignment Matrix.

When organizations can strongly align their EVP to their employer brand and also strongly align their employer and external brands, they will reap many benefits. We've created a framework to think about where you may be in your own alignment.

All-Way Alignment Model for Employment Branding.



A Forgetful Story: Weak on EVP and Employer Brand Alignment and No Connection between Brands.

This is not a good place to be. Your employer brand isn't based on an authentic employment story and your brands aren't aligned. Your employer branding story is forgetful to employees because they don't experience it. Thus, they have a less of a connection to your organization. And, because of that lessened connection, they are more likely to be less connected and engaged with your organization's customers. That's okay if the basis of your business is essentially a one-time transaction.

A Disjointed Story: Strong Alignment between EVP and Employer Brand and No Alignment between Brands.

This is a risky place to be. All is good for your employees. They are connected to you and your employer brand. But, what they see being said through external branding may be different. They might feel confused about what you really stand for. Your customers may be in a risky spot as well. They may be seeing one thing but hearing and experiencing another resulting in two separate experiences. As referenced above, today's consumer-driven communications world doesn't like confusion.

An Unfounded Story: Brands are Aligned but the Employer Brand isn't Validated.

This too is a risky place to be. While the combined branding story you're telling is the same, the resulting effect could be disastrous. If the story you are telling to the public isn't authentic, employees could become highly disengaged and will, eventually, leave. You are at risk of having customer experiences that are managed by highly disengaged employees, impacting customer loyalty and sales.

A Living Story: Strong All-Way Alignment between EVP and Brands.

This is the best place to be. Your people are living the brand. They are highly engaged. They are creating a superior customer experience, one that connects with customers and pulls them to come back.



What You Can Do.



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Where to Start: Invite Everyone to the Table.

All-Way Brand Alignment, if implemented correctly, is likely to have a broad-based effect on your total organization, encompassing talent success, customer and business success. It makes sense to have everyone involved from the C-suite to human resources, marketing and operating functions.

Yes, each group will have its own perspective, and data, on brand positioning and attributes. The key to success is to create a framework where these different inputs can be shared and leveled.

Branding Framework: Connecting Employer and External Brands.

The framework is built from taking a close look at your consumer and employer brands to discover differences and similarities. For each brand, we want to know:

- What are they saying?
- Where do they appear?
- What audience demographics are they targeting?
- What do they look and sound like?
- What are the primary messages that drive them?

Become an evidence-based talent marketer.

- Strive to understand your talent audiences (internal and external) and validate your employer messaging to arrive at an authentic employment brand.
- Immerse yourself in all available HR, recruitment and marketing data.
- Validate with employee experiences via focus groups, interviews, etc.

Align experiences.

- Work with marketing, line leaders and functional leaders to align external and employer brands.
- Become a knowledge expert in your company's consumer (external) branding: (emotion, value proposition, promise, attributes, etc.)
- Bring that knowledge to your already experience-validated employer brand.

Summing Up

The competition for talent is getting tougher. At the same time, people are connecting with companies – as both a consumer and as a potential employee – in new ways. This represents a blurring of the lines between external and employer brand experiences.

Where some may see a challenge, we see an opportunity. We see the opportunity to create a unified branding platform, one where employees can actually “live” the brand. Companies filled with employees living the brand will not only attract top talent, they will reap the rewards of stronger customer engagement.

About Us.



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The David Group

We are experts in recruitment, retention and workforce communications. Our agency's focus is to help organizations find, attract, engage and retain talent.

Workforce Communications

The focus of The David Group's Workforce Communications Practice is to strengthen employer brands, engage people and cut the cost of talent. Please contact us to learn more about how our **All-Way Brand Alignment** methodology, or other workforce communications services, can help you achieve higher performance.

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