

Organisations with a strong employee value proposition will win the war for talent

 By [Zahra Mirza](#)

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As much as customer experience and a clear customer value proposition differentiates an organisation, the Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in a growing acknowledgment that a well-defined employee value proposition (EVP) needs to be at the core of organisational strategy if businesses hope to attract the right talent, keep their people engaged and increase retention.



Source: www.unsplash.com

Despite South Africa's high unemployment rate – 32.7% in the fourth quarter of 2022 and an even more alarming 45.3% amongst the youth – the country has not been immune from the global 'Great Resignation' trend. In South Africa, the trend has a local nuance, largely restricted to professional and specialist roles that continue to be relatively scarce.

More flexibility

In the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic a significant proportion of employee resignations have been made up of individuals who re-evaluated their lives and their careers during the first year of the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns and resigned in search of a better work-life balance, more flexibility in their work lives, career development and a healthier organisational culture.

Prior to the pandemic, most organisations were consumed by how their external brand was reflected and paid little attention to their employer brand. Post the pandemic, the Great Resignation trend has highlighted the need for organisations to take their employer brand and EVP more seriously.

The lure of a good salary is no longer enough: increasingly, potential employees want to be assured that the company they are considering working for cares about them as a unique individual and will invest in both their personal and professional development.

Freelancing

Another trend that has become more apparent post the pandemic is the realisation by organisations that their employees no

longer need to reside within their geographic borders.

Organisations now face losing high-performers not only to local competitors and emigration, but also to businesses beyond our borders as the remote working trend makes it possible for employees to live locally but work globally. The pandemic also revealed the need for freelancers with a growing number of former employees choosing to go on their own.

Flexibility has become a priority for many employees. *The EY Work Reimagined Survey 2022* revealed that at least 80% of employees want to work remotely at least two days per week. A Gallup analysis found that only 3% of employees in professional services with remote-capable jobs would prefer to fully on-site and only a third prefer to be exclusively remote. That means that the majority prefer to be hybrid.



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The challenge, however, is that both hybrid and remote work arrangements make it harder to keep people engaged. In these environments, organisations without a succinct EVP often struggle to retain their top talent.

A Gallup study found that organisations with a strong, proactively managed EVP experience a 10% increase in productivity, a 69% reduction in employee turnover and a 30% increase in productivity. An EVP, essentially a promise between employers and current and prospective employees, is a reciprocal agreement which articulates the value offered to employees and, on the counter side, what value employees are expected to contribute in return. A strong EVP combines the promise, lived experience and community experience coupled with consistent activation.

Reversing brain drain

To reverse the brain drain and successfully navigate the 'Great Resignation' trend, local employers need to start thinking out of the box and become more innovative in their efforts to retain staff.

Given South Africa's unique power challenges, this could be in the form of solar allowances for employees, as just one example. In addition to providing compelling benefits, business leaders need to shift their mindsets and become more empathetic to the circumstances and unique needs of their employees.

Companies need to focus on creating an EVP that contributes to greater affinity and loyalty both to their organisations and to South Africa more broadly.

Ultimately, a strong EVP allows an organisation to differentiate itself from its competitors and provide for a more human-centred employee experience. Research and consulting firm Gartner maintains that employees who are inspired by the

right leaders and employee experience deliver better performance, including around 29% greater impact on business outcomes. In an increasingly competitive business environment, a compelling EVP can make a world of difference.

ABOUT ZAHRA MIRZA

Zahra Mirza is the managing director at HKLM. With extensive experience in working across the continent, on a diverse portfolio of clients in the travel, ICT, consumer, mining and financial sectors, Zahra has the vision, enthusiasm and necessary business expertise to see the big picture in order to make strategic business recommendations and grow business relationships. Zahra has a Bachelor of Arts (Marketing and Communication) and a Bachelor of Communications (Honours) from Monash University

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