

Implementing a successful strategy

Online education company, [GetSmarter](#) and sponsor of Bizcommunity.com's Focus on Employer Branding, is known not only for their innovative online short courses and exciting collaborations with leading universities, but also for their strong company culture - one which attracts and retains some of South Africa's top talent across various job roles.

What's the secret behind their mission to become the best place to work in Cape Town?

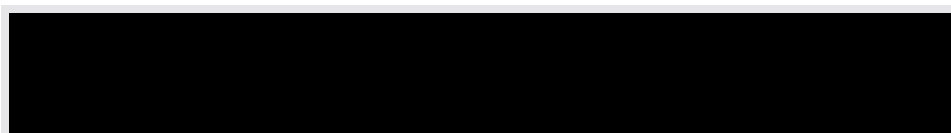
In this interview, Ryan Alcock, one of GetSmarter's talent managers, shares insight into what a successful employer branding strategy looks like, and how GetSmarter is implementing theirs.

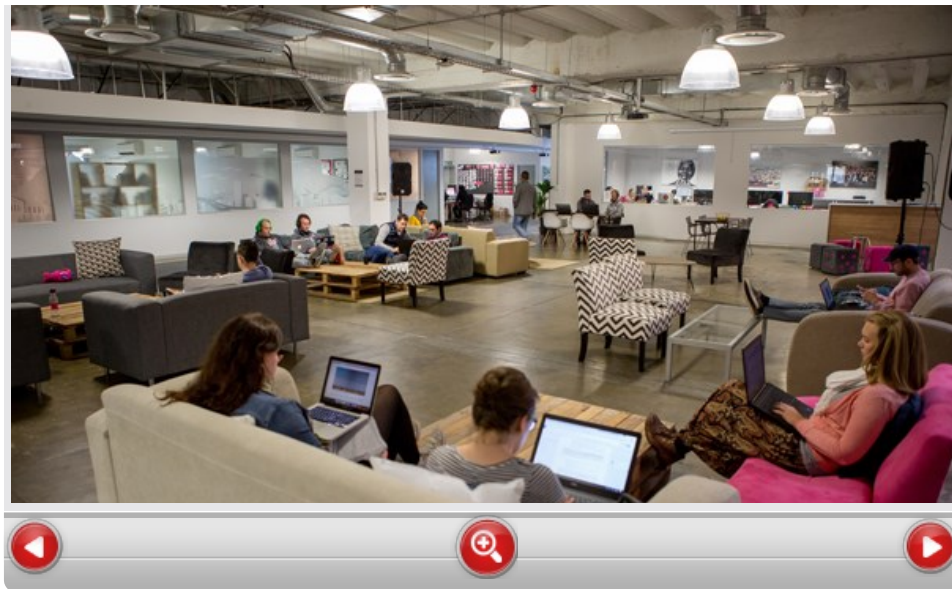
■ What are the key attributes for a successful employer branding strategy?

Employer branding is more than just talent acquisition - it's also crucial for employee retention - and the workplace is the first place to focus on if you want employees to be engaged and motivated. Key to any workplace, I believe, is establishing a culture of openness, one which encourages employees to contribute and share their ideas. Live out your company values - let them be more than just a sign on your wall, but rather something that lives and breathes within every employee. Having a senior management team that encourages, measures and rewards this sort of workplace culture is also important - when your leadership is really committed to ensuring your company values lives and aligns with your employer branding, it has a huge impact on employee attraction and retention.

■ What is your prediction for the biggest trend in employer branding, going forward?

More than ever before competition for talent has become almost as strong as competition for customers, buyers and sales. I would say the biggest trend going forward for companies will be managing the employer brand in relation to the various generational groups that could work alongside each other in your company. From Gen X to Millennials to Gen Z, what attracts and retains one group will be different to what attracts and retains another. At the end of the day trends change, but the one thing that doesn't have to is the authenticity of your brand - that is something every generation can buy into.





■ What is the fundamental change in the marketplace today that is impacting on employer branding strategies, that you have observed?

The digital era means that job candidates have far more access, through the use of social media, to a company's information. This means transparency needs to be a key factor in any business's employer branding strategy. Companies that neglect to keep their LinkedIn, Twitter, or Facebook pages on brand and up to date, may lose out on attracting key candidates and the opportunity to market their amazing workplace culture to a massive pool of talent. According to a 2017 employer branding survey from Universum, social media channels are continuing to attract the greatest increases in employer brand and recruitment marketing investment.

■ What is the cornerstone of your employer branding success?

At GetSmarter, we subscribe to the philosophy that human performance precedes financial performance. In support of this philosophy, the talent we're able to attract and retain is key to our growth ambitions. Devising and communicating a strong Employer Value Proposition (EVP) is extremely important to us, considering the relatively small talent pool we're recruiting from.

This means that understanding the profile of talent we want to attract, and then tailoring our employer branding activities to those profiles, has been key. Social media continues to be our biggest driver when it comes to employer branding activity - considering we're looking to attract young, intelligent, tech-savvy intrapreneur-type individuals into our organisation. We have also invested a lot of time into employee referral programs, which has been key to our talent sourcing.

We've created a positive and comfortable office environment; made health and wellness a massive focus of our employee benefits through the implementation of a gym, yoga and pilates classes; and continue to run initiatives that create a sense of fun around the office - ensuring GetSmarter is a productive, inspiring and fun place to work.

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