

# HR Insights

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## Employer Brand and COVID-19

Internal and external communications during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic can have an impact on how an employer is perceived by both current and prospective employees. Organizations can boost their recruiting efforts by ensuring that their employer brand is resonating with those seeking employment, and importantly, meeting the evolving needs of job seekers.

As the coronavirus threat evolves, it's important to demonstrate a commitment to transparency, adaptability, diversity and inclusion. Trust is earned when employers show compassion and empathy. When appropriate and authentic for your organization, give back to your community if you're able to. Similarly, you could consider establishing a corporate social responsibility program. A little bit of kindness can go a long way during these times.

This article explores how your employer brand plays a role in retaining and recruiting talent in a post-coronavirus world.

### Why It Matters

According to the Society for Human Resource Management, job seekers in the post-coronavirus employment market are looking for:

- Safety
- Consistency
- Stability
- Longevity

Social distancing measures have changed the way that we interact, and there are ways that employers can use technology to best engage the job market. Employers should consider using online platforms, such as LinkedIn, Indeed and Handshake, to build

their employment brand on the same platforms applicants often use to search for employment opportunities. Just as important as external websites, don't forget about the careers page on your organization's website either. Organizations can also expand the reach of their employer brand by participating in virtual events like career fairs and webinars, and can continue to be represented without physically attending events. Ensure your post-coronavirus brand is reinforced through recruiting efforts—both online and offline.

Employers should consider how their brand is resonating with the current employment market—and how their employer brand plays into post-coronavirus plans.

### Employer Brand Updates

Employer brand is as important as ever—and your organization's coronavirus response can be effectively communicated to job seekers. When considering updates to your employer brand, topics to consider include:

- **Safety**—At the forefront of concern for current and future talent, is safety. While your organization may be going above and beyond to ensure the safety of employees, ensure that these efforts are highlighted in your employer brand. This can be done by:



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- Prioritizing safety in all company branding—both employment and non-employment related
- Including safety-related expectations in job descriptions and postings
- **Benefits**—Job seekers care about health-related benefits such as sick leave and mental health support now more than ever. As your organization updates any benefits packages, ensure these changes fit into your recruitment efforts.
- **Career focus**—Much of the employment market has recently been laid off or furloughed, and hope to avoid a repeat with their next employer. Ensure that the career-orientation of your job openings is clearly part of your employer brand. Job seekers are looking for stability and the opportunity to build a career.
- **Diversity and inclusion**—It's not about just saying you care about people, it's about actively showing that you care and making changes when necessary. A focus on diversity and inclusion is crucial to retain diverse talent and their trust. People want to feel a sense of belonging and value in their communities, and that includes the workplace community. Organizations have a responsibility to build trust and acceptance, which will help create a safe environment for their workforce.
- **Social responsibility**—During the pandemic, organizations are focusing on putting people first. Just as you would support employees and candidates, this is an opportunity to give back and contribute toward economic and societal recovery. If you haven't already, consider implementing initiatives to help your customers, employees and communities get back on their feet. Be authentic and talk about people, not solely numbers and business.
- **Coronavirus impact**—The pandemic should be a core component of your current employer brand as it's had a significant impact on the lives of most.

Job seekers will appreciate this acknowledgment, demonstrating the organization's transparency. Consider dedicating a section of your website to the coronavirus, or be prepared to address the topic with prospective employees during screening and interviewing processes. Remain truthful and transparent, but include takeaways such as:

- How did your organization respond to the coronavirus?
- What tough choices has your organization made? Why?
- How has your organization continued to contribute to society?
- How is your organization engaging in safe workplace practices?

Your organization likely has taken significant steps to be adaptable during this challenging time—so make sure that applicants are aware of your efforts.

### Other Considerations

Although you may be focused on recruiting new talent, as the coronavirus threat shifts, it's vital to keep in mind the health, safety and well-being of employees when making business decisions. The coronavirus pandemic has led to a collective loss of normalcy. As you protect the employer brand from COVID-19 implications, current employees can be the main drivers of your reputation.

Internal communications can help keep employees calm and reduce stress levels. Everyone's been dealing with much uncertainty. There's a need to communicate with employees openly, honestly and frequently. Along with prospective employees, external audiences may also include your customers and partners.

Employers can continue to consider how their business practices and branding resonate with current employment markets. Recruiting techniques will vary for every employer. Remember that the workplace will continue to change, and employers should be prepared to adjust accordingly. Transparency now builds trust later.

As laws and guidelines related to the coronavirus evolve, employers should consult with legal counsel when updating

or changing policies. To learn more about leveraging your company brand to retain and attract talent, contact Wallace Welch & Willingham today.