

## How You Treat People: Your Most Important Employer Brand by Stacy Pursell, The VET Recruiter [www.thevetrecruiter.com](http://www.thevetrecruiter.com)

**Employer branding** is all the rage these days, and there are a number of reasons why this is the case. Below are **three** of them:

1. It's a **candidates' market**. In such a market, employers must care more about what job seekers and candidates want. What they want is to work for a top organization, one that has an excellent reputation within the industry.
2. The **Millennial Generation** cares less about profit and more about purpose in regards to their career. This means they want to work for an organization that also values purpose over profit.
3. The advent of the **Internet and social media** has allowed for an almost instantaneous transfer of information. This includes people's opinions and perceptions regarding their employer. As a result, your organization has an online reputation whether it wants one or not. The only question is whether you're taking steps to *manage* it.

The problem is that many employers are not grasping employer branding as a concept, they're not recognizing what contributes to positive employer branding and what doesn't, or both. This is a problem because their inability to do these things is hampering their ability to hire top talent in the Animal Health Industry and Veterinary profession.

There are many different ways to brand your organization in a **positive way**. Showing that you care more about purpose than profit is one way, such as placing an emphasis on community outreach. Another way is by providing training opportunities for employees to sharpen their skills and increase their value.

But what is the **best and most important way** for your organization to brand itself?

### **Survey says . . .**

The VET Recruiter® conducted a survey of candidates in the Animal Health industry and Veterinary profession. As part of that survey, we asked a series of questions, many of which dealt directly with employers and the hiring process.

We also asked candidates what they look for in an employer. Two of the top answers were as follows:

1. Integrity/honesty/great reputation
2. Fairness/to be treated with respect

As you can see, integrity and honesty are important to candidates. So is fairness and being treated with respect. Top candidates in today's market want to be treated fairly and with respect by employers that they believe are honest and display integrity. It really is that simple.

Are salary, benefits, and other perks important? Of course they are. But those things can literally be achieved by just about any employer. But being treated fairly and with respect, not just every once in a while, but **all of the time**? That, I'm afraid, is a bit rarer.

It's true that one of the main reasons people leave their employer is other people. Most of the time, these people are their manager and/or supervisor. And what has prompted these professionals to leave? They believe that they're not being treated fairly or respected enough, if at all.

Of all the retention tools that lay at an organization's disposal, treating its employees fairly and with respect should be the **simplest and easiest one to implement**.

## **5-point checklist**

So the reality is that your organization's most important employer brand is not profit. It's not prestige. It's how it treats its employees. In fact, we're going to take it even a step beyond that. It's how the organization treats both its employees and also the job candidates that are within its hiring process. Why is this? Because how you treat candidates during the hiring process gives them an idea of how they'll be treated if or when they're hired.

But let's address current employees. What does it mean to treat them well? The following **five things**, among others:

### **#1—Compensation/benefits**

Yes, this must be included on the list. However, the emphasis is on fair compensation and benefits. Employees aren't trying to be greedy. They simply want to feel as though they're being adequately compensated. (Or once again, fairly compensated.)

### **#2—Schedule flexibility**

This doesn't mean allowing employees to work from home all of the time. However, a little flex time in their schedules goes a long way. There's no need to verbally berate an otherwise good employee simply because they're five minutes late.

### **#3—Criticism balanced with encouragement**

Employees, especially top employees, crave honest feedback. However, a balanced approach is definitely the best avenue for accomplishing this. Encouragement is always appreciated, especially in those employees who want to excel and accomplish more.

### **#4—Freedom to make mistakes and learn from them**

Ideally, you want employees to grow and evolve. When they do that, they provide ever-increasing levels of value to the organization. However, no employee can grow without making occasional mistakes. If they feel like they will be lambasted for making them, though, they'll be less inclined to try.

## #5—No discrimination or harassment whatsoever

This should go without saying, but it must be said, anyway. That's because some people don't realize that the things they say to co-workers, colleagues, and subordinates can actually be classified as harassment. This is why harassment training should be mandatory for all employers.

Every member of management within an Animal Health or Veterinary employer should ask themselves, *“How well do we treat our employees? Do we treat them fairly? Do we treat them with respect? If we do, then how do we? If we don't, then what must we do to rectify the situation?”*

If your organization has branded itself as one that treats employees badly, that is the **“kiss of death”** in terms of employer branding. Not only will you not be able to hire the top candidates in the marketplace, but they will also avoid you like the plague . . . and tell everyone else to avoid you, too.