

'Centre of excellence' created

As more companies continue to develop and strengthen their employer brand, a new enterprise has been launched to provide a point of reference and expertise.

Experts Kaye Thorne (1) and Brett Minchington (2) created the Employer Brand Institute in early 2007 with the aim of providing a 'global centre of excellence in employer branding' for organisations.

Thorne explains some of the reasons behind establishing the institute: "We wanted to provide research, guidance and thought leadership to organisations and individuals in developing their employer brand, which is key to attracting and retaining talented employees. Organisations are realising that directly, or indirectly, it's people and not products that deliver most brand promises."

The Employer Brand Institute operates as a virtual network, providing points of contact in countries throughout the world. Minchington is

based in Australia, while Thorne works out of the UK: "We want to make a virtue of the fact that we can work virtually," she said. "I think that has made a significant difference because we have been

able to shorten the development time quite considerably through the advantage of using the northern and southern hemisphere time zones. As a principle, that's a benefit we want to be able to



Flexibility key for IT

Organisations are being urged to review their working options for IT professionals or face a shortage in IT skills, following new research on flexible working.

Online recruitment firm theitjobboard.com found that a quarter of IT workers have turned down a job because flexible working was not on offer. Forty six per cent currently work to flexible hours but 71.6% have never been offered the chance.

The failure of companies to reassess their working options could have severe consequences on their ability to attract IT talent, as a huge 93.2% of IT professionals would like the option of flexible working hours.

Ray Duggins, Managing

Director of theitjobboard.com said: "With an impending skills crisis in the IT sector, employers have no option but to ensure they are going the extra mile to retain high-calibre candidates - and that starts with an attractive recruitment package. Failure to focus on this aspect will severely damage their business offering. Our research shows that flexible working is clearly highly valued by current staff and potential candidates - companies that take this issue seriously will reap the rewards."

The survey aimed to examine what employees consider to be the benefits of flexible working - 51.9% believed it would improve their overall work/life balance, 16.8% said it would allow them to travel at less busy times, and 13.5% believe it would make them more productive at work.

Duggins commented: "It is imperative that employers recognise there is a sound business case for offering the option of flexible working hours - many staff feel they are more productive if they have more choice in the actual times that they work. Not only that, but the technology that these employees are responsible for implementing and maintaining often requires that they are on hand outside the normal nine to five, as well as enabling them to work remotely."

for employer branding

pass on to clients that might engage with us."

Minchington and Thorne are currently conducting employer brand audits on a global Tier 1 accounting firm and a diversified food company. "We have created a global network of Senior Associates in the UK, US, Australia, New Zealand, Asia and Europe who are the best in their field."

Thorne and Minchington have a lot of experience in the field of employer branding, both having written books on the subject. Minchington is an international employer brand strategist, and professional speaker, having delivered keynote addresses, executive briefings and workshops around Australia. Thorne has worked with both large organisations and new businesses in developing their employer brand.

"We decided that by combining our knowledge and expertise we could share our research findings and best practice examples to create a

dynamic centre of knowledge," said Thorne. "We have also worked together to create new assessment tools to measure the robustness of an employer brand in the key areas of attracting and retaining talent and in employee engagement. We aimed at creating a best practice

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example of what could be achieved through global networking and the opportunity to work in a virtual environment enables us to offer this benefit to clients."

Perhaps the launch of this new one-stop shop for guidance and expertise will increase employers' awareness of the importance of implementing and developing their employer brand.

Tom Crawford, Head of Employer Branding for Deloitte and Touche, commented on the launch of the institute: "I think this shows that employer branding is moving up the organisational agenda, not just the HR agenda. Done properly it is a commercial tool that should be on the CEO's agenda and not confined to HR. Employer branding should start with the consumer and link back to employees, that's how we manage our employer branding - as we are a service business delivering products through our talent."

- Brett Minchington is conducting an international speaking tour in 2007 and will conduct a series of masterclass events in London in mid-October 2007 with HDA. Details can be found at <http://www.hda.co.uk/HDAMasterclass>

News

Sunday Times explains employer branding



THE SUNDAY TIMES

To reflect the growing importance of an organisation's employer brand, The Sunday Times will be holding a conference on the subject at The British Library on 28th June 2007.

The one-day event aims to provide employers with an opportunity to discuss and learn how to sell their organisation to current and future employees, and will address the key issues surrounding employer branding and the impact it has on businesses. The event has been tailored for senior HR and Marketing professionals with responsibility for the branding and recruitment process.

Speakers include Helen Rosethorn, CEO, Bernard Hodes Group; David Russell, HR Director, William Hill; Lorna Farrar, Brand Engagement Manager, Vodafone and Sir Ranulph Fiennes as the guest speaker.

They will be covering topics including: Using branding to win the global war for talent, Developing a strong employer brand in a global multi-brand environment and Brand engagement and how it supports employer engagement.

Alison Hodgson, Head of Resourcing, Royal Mail comments: "As a business that stands and falls on its staff, we know the aim of employer branding. The message it sends is to get the right talent and to unite the organisation to succeed and grow. No organisation can afford to send messages to the external market that are at odds with the internal reality."

For more information and to book your place visit www.sundaytimes-employerbranding.co.uk

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