

"Would you like to work for this company?"

by Deb Monfette

Each year the world's largest survey is conducted and taken by 225,000 professionals in 23 countries. It's completely independent, generates thousands of valuable nuggets into the needs of employees worldwide, and is based around one simple question.

Would you like to work for this company?

It's the global Randstad Award. <http://www.randstad.com/randstad-award/> The award represents the *employer brand* selected as "the most attractive company to work for worldwide". It includes 10 key attributes including career development, training, and salary.

This years top 3 global Randstad Awards go to ... drum roll please...

#1 Microsoft, <http://www.microsoft.com/>

#2 Sony, <http://www.sony.com>

#3 Samsung. <http://www.samsung.com/>

The branding report was published April 24th, 2015.
<http://www.randstad.com/randstad-award/>

It's filled with valuable insights and differences into the effects of employer brands. For example, it shows that no *specific* characteristics will attract everyone. There are many factors that motivate people at different times and need to be measured regularly. It also shares what drives people in different countries with different values.

Understanding whom you want to attract and connect with, and why, is key.

An employer brand starts from within your organization and affects everyone in your company and everyone your company comes in contact with. That includes your communications tools and all your content, including a job description.

In this article, you will discover the top two challenges companies are up against, why they are not just an HR topic anymore, and how HR has a growing role in branding.

You will also find out how, and why, 12 talent leaders from successful organizations are reinventing themselves into “very attractive companies to work for”.

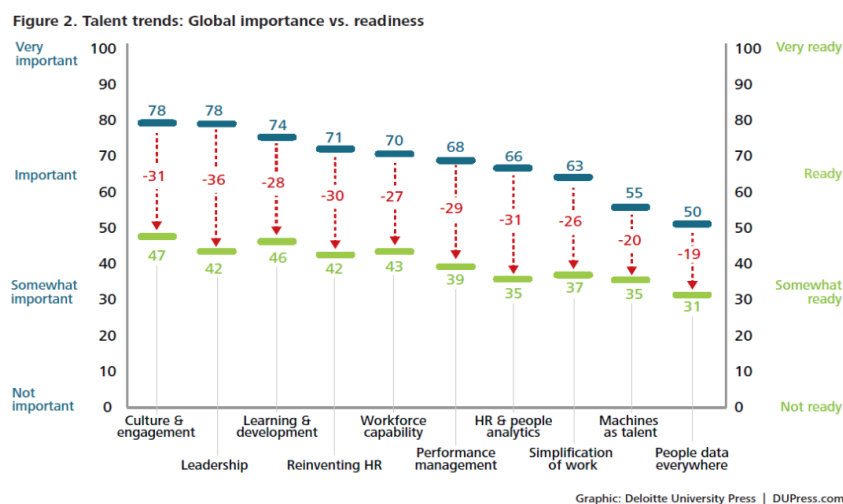
Are You Facing These 2 Top Challenges?

Last month I attended the **BE (Branding Engagement) HR Conference 2015** <http://hrc-brandingengagement.com/> in Boston, sponsored by Syncota Ltd., <http://syncotaltd.com> a demand-led, worldwide conference and event company. It was an intimate setting with 12 expert thought leaders in HR and Talent Management from various industries.

After real conversations with more than 100 HR professionals from the US and Europe, Syncota discovered two top challenges. **Branding to attract the right talent** and **employee engagement**.

Dr. Bouvier Williams, the Chairman of the BE HR Conference 2015 and Sr. Director of Talent at DSM North America, <http://www.dsm.com/corporate/home.html> shared a study by Deloitte University Press <http://dupress.com> on reinventing and reimagining the new world of work. According to the 2015 Global Human Capital Trends <http://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/pages/human-capital/articles/introduction-human-capital-trends.html> report, the number one most important talent trend, at 78%, was Culture & Engagement. But only 47% of the companies surveyed are somewhat willing or ready to do it.

2015 Global Human Capital Trends



The theme at the BE HR Conference 2015, as well in the Global Human Capital Trends report, stressed a major change in mindset and the merging of roles. *Brand culture and employee engagement* is not just an HR topic anymore. It is a crucial business issue that can easily be scrutinized or praised and posted online in the public eye. At the same time *branding* is not just left to marketing anymore.

Why Is Brand Culture and Engagement So Important?

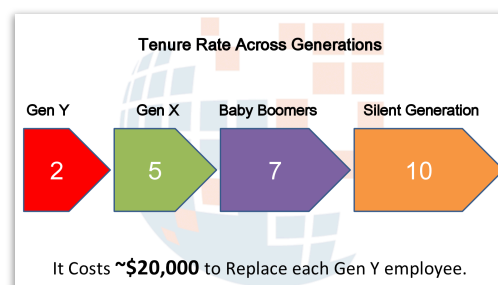
Companies are faced with restructures and layoffs, mergers, acquisitions, talent exiting, and fatigued employees. But, they are also faced with new generations of workers, and hiring and retaining talent that has become used to getting what they want, when, and where they want it.

Dan Schawbel, Founder of WorkplaceTrends.com, discussed these trends in today's workplace at the BE HR Conference. He shared five important facts:

1. Boomers are **retiring** at a pace of **10,000 per day**.
By 2020, you're looking at **20 million retired boomers**.
2. The **tenure of a millennial** at a company is **two years**.
3. Employees of today **don't aspire to executive level positions**.
4. Employees today want to **learn online**.
5. Employees want **more regular feedback**.

Your brand culture and engagement will either attract and develop future leaders or be ignored by today's workforce as they take jobs elsewhere or become entrepreneurs and freelancers.

Schawbel also shared the tenure rates in years across generations and the estimated cost to replace each Gen Y employee every two years or more.



Think of vacancy costs, recruitment costs, productivity and training costs. Is your company prepared? Are you ready to develop a brand culture and focus on engagement?

According to Schawbel, 60% of workers are currently job-hunting while still employed and 55% of employers have hired a job-hopper.

Your company's branding affects the way everyone around you communicates, how you are perceived as a company, and how people interact with you.

It affects your actions, your thoughts, and your beliefs. It feeds into all your communications throughout the entire company—from upper management to sales, training, IT, engineering, customer service, and HR, including potential new hires, and beyond—from your customers, partners, advocates and fans.

How you communicate your brand from the beginning, when acquiring top talent, can be the key to growing leaders who stick around, employees who engage and inspire happy customers, and simply being more profitable. It's also the key to being known as *an attractive company to work for*.

Let's see how these 12 talent branding and engagement experts are connecting with, engaging, and nurturing their audience to make great strides in attracting and retaining the right talent.

Peggy Frazier, VP Global Talent Acquisition at Blackbaud and formerly Microsoft and Apple, cuts to the chase, "It's time to reinvent HR and go out and find talent."

Pull Quote:

"It's time to reinvent HR and go out and find talent."

Peggy Frazier, VP Global Talent Acquisition at Blackbaud and formerly Microsoft and Apple

What is a brand?

According to Dr. Bouvier Williams, the Chairman of BE HR Conference 2015 and Sr. Director of Talent at DSM North America, a brand is a combination of 3 things:

- 1. Attributes** ... People, products, services, values, beliefs
- 2. Perceptions**... What people see you as and think you stand for.
- 3. Reputation**... Collective view of multiple stakeholders over the course of time.

Brands are everywhere you look. Actors, TV personalities, athletes, teachers, politicians, foods, companies, even countries, everything can be branded.



Don't just adopt a best practice or brand value that's working for another company. Take an idea and make it your own.

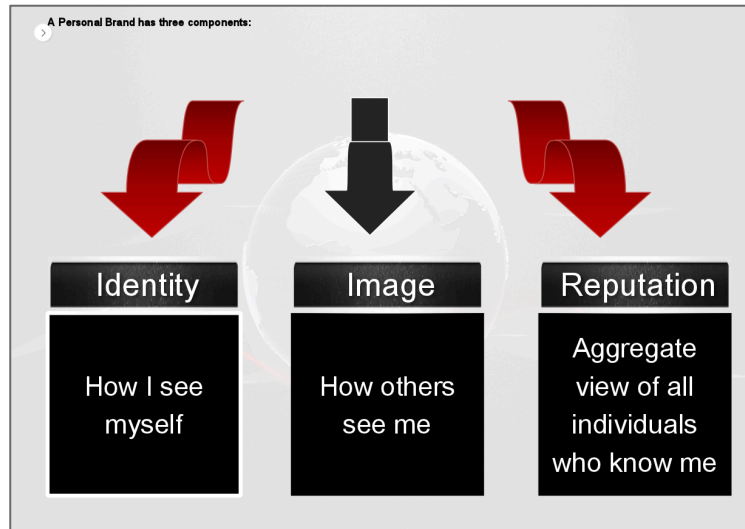
Dr. Williams explains that there are 3 types of brands:

- 1. Personal brand.** It's all about you, achieving what you want, and your reputation in the industry.
- 2. Employer brand.** Makes the organization a great place to work and gives its people something to believe in, from the culture and vision to the products and services.
- 3. Employee brand.** Demonstrates those characteristics that inspire you to make an impact in the work you do and that shows the company is a great place to work.

Let's take a closer look into the 3 types of branding.

Personal Brand

"A Personal Brand is the employee engagement tool of the 21st Century," explains Dr. Williams.



There are 3 components:

1. Identity

Who you are as an individual including your values, passions, vision, beliefs, personality, strengths, and skills.

2. Image

How others view your character.

3. Reputation

It's a common opinion of your character that could span thousands of different people. Your overall reputation defines your personal brand.

Fast Company <http://www.fastcompany.com/3026791/dialed/personal-mission-statements-of-5-famous-ceos-and-why-you-should-write-one-too>

captured the personal brands of 3 famous CEOs:

- **Oprah Winfrey**, Founder of OWN <http://www.oprah.com/app/own-tv.html>
 “To be a teacher and be known for inspiring my students to be more than they thought they could be.”
- **Sir Richard Branson**, Founder of the Virgin Group <http://www.virgin.com>
 “To have fun in my journey, ... learn from my mistakes, ... and learn how to be a good leader.”
- **Amanda Steinberg**, Founder of Dailyworth.com <https://www.dailyworth.com>
 “To use my gifts of intelligence, charisma, and serial optimism to cultivate the self-worth and net-worth of women around the world.”

Dr. Williams exclaimed, *“Everyone should have a brand to define who you are. You can't move up if you don't stand out.”*

Employer Brand

“As a talent recruiter,” explains Love Welchel, Chief Talent Officer at DeVries Global <http://www.devriesglobal.com>, “you have to sell and market to your own customer, the potential employee. You have to know your audience and what their desires are to acquire the best talent and fit for your company.”

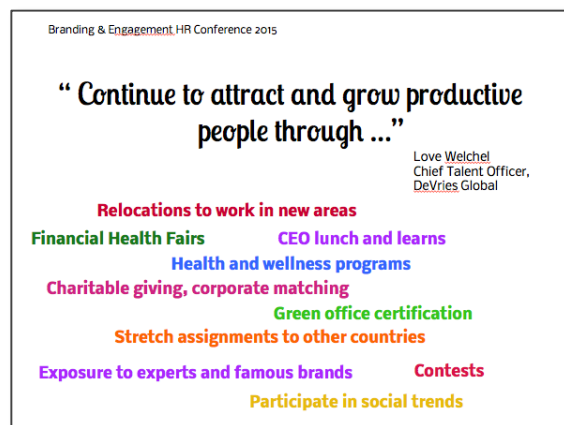
He points out that people need to feel a connection with your company, your culture, and your offerings. Without a connection, it's difficult to engage and hold their interest.

Creating a brand for your company is the way to develop this connection.

An employer brand also allows you to cultivate the proper atmosphere and voice for everyone in the company.

Welchel is involved in ongoing social and community activities at DeVries. He explained the importance of continuing to attract and grow productive people through activities they can be a part of.

He suggests giving back to the community by supporting development programs, doing volunteer work, and doing it well. It supports your Employer Brand, builds your Employee's Brand, inspires the Personal Brand, and gives back to the community.



Welchel shared important advice, *“If you clearly define who you are and what you represent to the public, your brand identity will lead you to others.”*

Get Clear

Martha Restrepo, Sr. Director of HR and Formerly Monster, suggests to get clear and define 3 areas:

1. Employer Branding

What is your vision and what experience are you trying to create?

2. Value proposition

What do you want to achieve? What are going to offer and promise candidates and employees from Baby Boomers, and Millennials to Generation Xers?

3. Corporate Culture

What do you stand for and what do you believe in? It starts at the top. Lead by example. Have open and candid communication inside the company. Recruit and hire to fit your company culture.

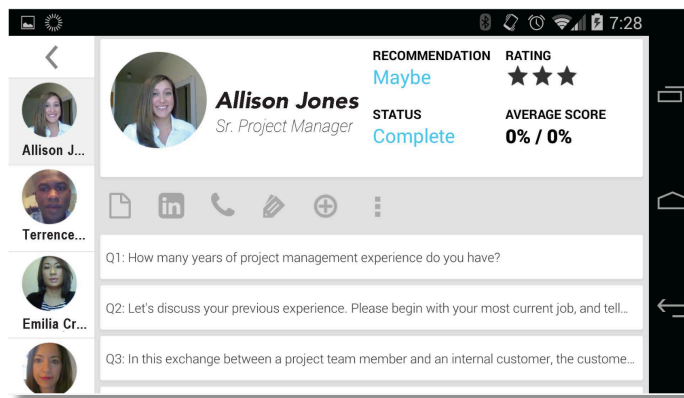
It's All About the People

"Your brand and branding have to believe that people are the most essential part of the business," points out Peggy Fraizer, VP Global Talent Acquisition at Blackbaud <https://www.blackbaud.com> and formerly Microsoft and Apple.

She says it's about "being human."

Fraizer explains that staying in touch with talent is one place most companies drop the ball. She recommends using technology to enhance your brand. At Blackbaud, she implemented a new, interactive way of recruiting by using on-demand video interviewing.

They use HireVue www.hirevue.com to screen candidates and schedule, evaluate, and share video interviews. It keeps the process moving, and allows them to stay in touch.



The best part is that everyone gets to tell their own story and show their personal brand in their best light because they can record it till it's perfect.

How is it working?

They received over 25,000 applications and hired over 600 people. They had a 90% completion rate for the video interviews and it took candidates an average of 2.9 days to complete them.

Are You Sending the Right Message?

"If you don't have the right culture in place everything goes wrong," explains Mark Morgenfruth, VP of HR at Larson Design Group <http://www.larsondesigngroup.com> .

The culture and the values of the company should be clear and consistently filter down from the CEO to the Executive Teams, Hiring Managers, Marketing, and the HR Recruiter. Your message, how and where you communicate, the job ad, and especially the description are all essential.

Peggy Fraizer, VP Global Talent Acquisition at Blackbaud shared a job description she stumbled on, with personality, unlike your every day, impersonal job description.

Conversion Optimization Consultant

Our need:

We're seeking an online marketer with a red hot passion for onsite optimization. Think Ryan Gosling and Rachel McAdams in the rain type of romance. Well, not quite that passionate. We don't need you getting romantically involved with your new laptop in the rain (they're not waterproof).

Specifically, we need someone who knows how to use data, testing, and personalization to improve user experience and conversions for eCommerce sites. If hired, you'd collaborate with other members of our team – designers, developers, and analysts – to help our clients drive revenue gains.

So if you like the idea of playing a critical role in the decisions our clients make, and have a relentless drive for continuous improvement, then apply because you'll probably be a great fit.

What you know changes, who you are doesn't. Morgenfruh explains, "Hire for character, train for skill later".

Employee Brand

Dr. William's advice is to help employees build strong brands. When they see an employer invested in them they usually become more engaged and satisfied in what they are doing.

Build Your Talent

Roger Ahlfeld, VP of HR and Training at Tedeschi Food Shops <http://www.tedeschifoodshops.com> , shares his advice. Create a plan to develop candidates. Always discuss with them your thoughts on their future potential and ask if they are looking for additional responsibility. Regularly monitor their growth and desire to get to the next level, and discuss possibilities with a range of people in your company.

He also recommends keeping these candidates engaged. A few examples include:

- Have them mentor and develop others
- Give them advanced projects
- Consider lateral moves to other departments or work groups if advancement is currently not an option
- Use tools to regularly measure talent an progress

Be Authentic and Create New Opportunities

Dan Schwabel, Founder of [WorkplaceTrends.com](http://workplacetrends.com) <http://workplacetrends.com> , encourages companies to hire boomers as consultants, consider freelancers for certain projects, and create internships for high school and college students.

Bradford Wilkins, Director Talent Management at Adcap Network Systems <https://adcapnet.com> , has another angle. He explains that if you cannot find employees with the specific skills for the job, find someone who has the desire and the motivation to make a difference in your company.

Create a **modern apprentice program** for professionals in transition. Hire someone who was laid off and is transitioning from a prior position, someone who is interested in a new industry, or even veterans returning to the workforce. Give them the opportunity to build their employee brand and learn the skills they need.

Create an environment of teamwork and motivation. Give employees the chance

to become mentors. Connect the apprentice to a mentor and give him/her options for advancement. Don't forget to reward mentors on the success of their apprentices and on the performance of the team.

At Adcap Network Systems, they use a 50-30-20 Apprentice Program.

- Job Activities = 50%
- Training = 30%
- Mentorship = 20%

Wilkins explains that their mentors can earn over \$100,000 a year if their apprentices are successful. They've seen a 23% increase in revenues from this program based on teamwork.

Branding Enables Employee Engagement

"Branding is an enabler of employee engagement," explains Dr. Williams.

What exactly is engagement?

Dr. Williams referred to William H. Macey and Benjamin Schneider's research <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1754-9434.2007.0002.x/abstract> on Employee Engagement, and explained that engaged individuals have 3 characteristics:

- 1. Trait:** Having a positive attitude daily in life and work.
- 2. Psychological State of Mind:** Feelings of energy, satisfaction, involvement, and commitment. People that see the glass half full and want to get up when they're knocked down. They are the "change ambassadors." They embrace change.
- 3. Behavioral:** Actions that demonstrate being proactive, flexible, and harness discretionary effort.

The Cornerstone of Engagement

According to *Martha Restrepro*, Senior Director HR, Formerly Monster, the cornerstone of engaging employees is communication based on trust, credibility and mutual respect.

In other words, an engaged leader inspires peers to trust that if they give an extra effort they will be recognized.

An engaged employee can take a customer from being unhappy to more satisfied, and even delighted.



Is HR in the Business of Marketing?

Beth Rudai, Senior HR Manager at TD Bank <http://www.tdbank.com>, explains that Marketing and HR have a common link. Both require getting the potential customer's attention. Then convincing them that what you have to offer will satisfy the need they have, *better than anyone else*.

Her advice is to create a bucket list. Know your audience, know your brand, and share your story.



The Link between Marketing and HR

1. *Who are you marketing to? | What's their brand?*
Their generation, market pressures, their skill set and geography.
2. *What are you marketing? | What's your brand?*
Your internal brand, your external brand, your culture, and your difference.
How do people perceive your brand?
3. *Making and keeping the connection | Share your story and appeal*
The appeal of your mission, your relationships, flexibility, opportunities, and social responsibility.

Rudai advises, *"Make connection a priority."*

Dan Schawbel, Founder of WorkplaceTrends.com, adds, "HR's job has to become better at marketing and data, and HR and Marketing need to work together."

Use Tools To Engage



Peter McCue, VP of HR for TE Connectivity <http://www.te.com/usa-en/home.html>, shares that they use Pulse surveys to monitor employee engagement. The survey covers up to 15 questions— 10 tracked by all business units and 5 open ended questions for each business unit for real-time, personalized feedback. A different sample is sent each month to a different region. Everyone completes it twice a year.

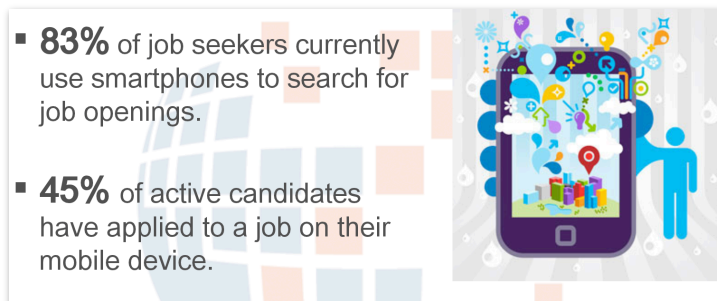
He says that their managers get motivated and excited in each business unit to see where they stand when they post the results across the company. It gives them the drive to focus on making improvements and setting new goals to reach.



Get Social and Mobile

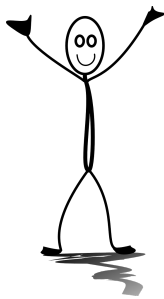
Dan Schawbel, Founder of WorkplaceTrends.com, reminds everyone to get social with talent. People expect a person behind the brand. Use tools like LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, and Flickr.

Be mobile and use Mobile Apps, and Widgets especially for recruiting.



Other Tips

Bradford Wilkins, Director Talent Management at Adcap Network Systems <https://adcapnet.com> shares a few tips:



- **Invite employees in.**
“Instead of “**no phone calls please,**”invite employees in and give them the information they need.”
- **Make it easy to apply.**
When posting a position in LinkedIn don’t have a button that says “Apply on Company Website”. It turns people away. Instead create a button that reads “Apply now”. Clicking on the button allows you to use your LinkedIn profile to apply.
- **Test copy.**
Use A/B testing to see what copy engages the candidate and promotes action. Example: Adcap tested two ads for one of their job openings. One emphasized a higher salary. The other one, “Less than 10% travel”.

Results: Less than 10% Travel had the better response.

- **Get them to say, “Yes!”**
This is a psychological copy trick that plays on their emotions and thinking.

Ask 3 questions that they would obviously say yes to.

1. Want to work at a place with career growth and promotion opportunities?
2. Do you enjoy working with the latest and greatest technologies?
3. Are you looking for a career at a company that treats you like an adult, but let’s you have fun like a kid?

- **Always include a Call To Action.**

- Are you ready?
- Does this sound like a fit for you? What are you waiting for?
- Apply TODAY!

- **You can run but you can’t hide.**

Be sure to monitor sites like Glassdoor <http://www.glassdoor.com/index.htm> . Respond to feedback both good and bad, Millennials expect it.

Have a Steady Supply of Talent

A great deal of money goes into recruiting talent. Implementing an engagement and retention strategy is crucial to keeping talent and growing leaders. Traci Spero, Director of Talent at Macy's <http://www.macys.com>, emphasizes, "Great organizations who don't continuously invest in developing a robust portfolio of leaders fall behind." Don't wait till someone walks out the door.



Spero adds, that developing and enhancing talent requires an integrated and actionable talent strategy with the right people, in the right place, at the right time.

It should be integrated into your entire organization with the managers and supervisors in each of the department. This way everyone speaks the same language. One-to-one communications enables leaders to discuss ideas and challenges with real time feedback.

To be actionable, develop a roadmap to guide leaders and see measurable results. Include things like timelines, goals, competencies, focus groups, surveys, assessments, coaching and rewards.

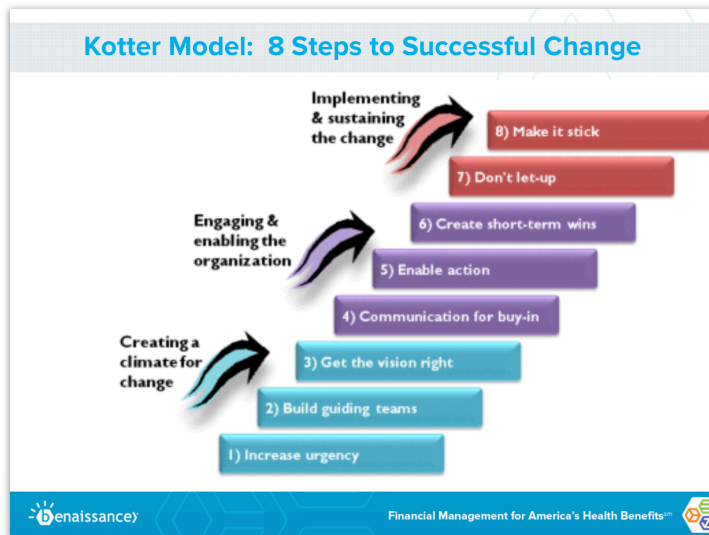
A Recruiting Secret

Last, here is a recruiting secret for your arsenal. A lack of talent can hold back your business and impact the entire company. If all the old school techniques are just not working, it's time to try something new. So ...

"Let the talent come to you," exclaimed Theresa Nordstrom, VP of HR for Benaissance <http://benaissance.com>.

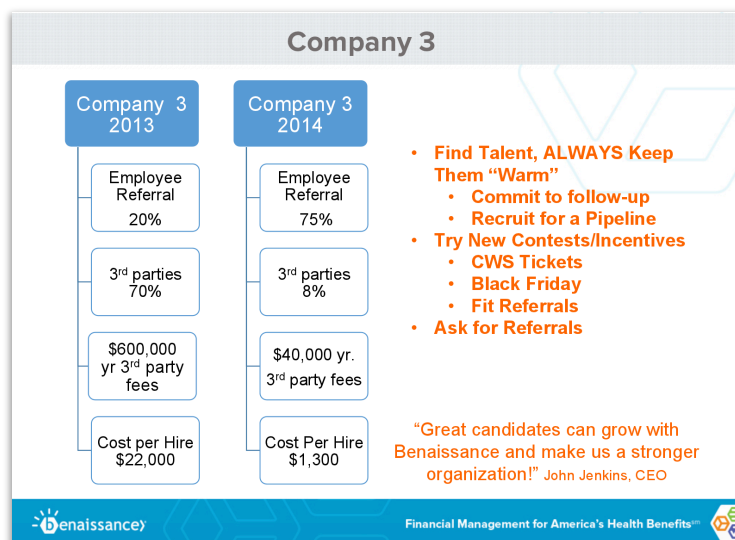
She suggests implementing an Employee Referral Program because, "It's not who you know, but who your contacts know."

However, the secret to a successful referral program is in the planning. She uses the 3 stage, 8 step **Kotter Model**. <http://www.kotterinternational.com/the-8-step-process-for-leading-change/> Creating a climate for change, engaging and enabling the organization, and implementing and sustaining the change.



Case Study

Using this model, one company increased Employee Referrals by 75%, and saved \$560,000 in 3rd party fees, and \$20,700 in Cost per Hire.



Nordstrom exclaims, “Keep the new culture ALIVE! Be spontaneous and have fun. Talk to your staff and ask for referrals. ALWAYS seek great talent. Get top candidates interested, build relationships and leave the door open.”

She reminds you that communication isn't one email. It's constant messaging to get individuals to work together and find and retain new talent.

In Summary

In light of fast-paced digital lifestyles and mindset shifts, branding to attract the right talent and employee engagement are the two top challenges faced by companies today.

This makes 3 things very clear:

1. Change isn't an option for businesses that want to succeed and attract top talent.
2. Brand culture and Employee Engagement are business issues that involve the entire company and should be implemented with care and teamwork.
3. HR has to become better at marketing and data.

As well, your brand culture should shine through all your content to attract and engage your customers, your employees, and your best talent.

I'd like to extend a big thank you to these 12 talent leaders from the BE HR Conference 2015. They shared their experience and insights into how they are reinventing themselves to keep on top of all the changes and challenges.

I hope you were able to gather profitable ideas to develop your brand culture, attract top talent, and engage and retain employees so you can be perceived as *a very attractive company to work for*.

Are you already a very attractive company to work for or do you need to make changes?

Check out the SlideShare deck, “Is HR in the Business of Marketing?” It's repackaged from the BE HR Conference 2015. It tells a visual story using images and quotes from the 12 talent experts.



Branding & Engagement HR Conference 2015

Many thanks to the HR and Talent Experts for sharing all their insights at [BE HR 2015](#):

- Dr. [Bouvier Williams](#), Chairman, Sr. Director Talent; DSM North America
- Traci [Spero](#), Director Talent; Macy's
- Brad [Wilkins](#), VP of HR; [Adcap Network Systems](#)
- Dan [Schawbel](#), Founder; [WorkplaceTrends.com](#)
- Beth [Budai](#), Senior HR Manager, TD Bank - "Is HR in the Business of Marketing?"
- Love [Whelchel](#), Global Chief Talent Officer; [DeVries Global](#)
- Martha [Restrepo](#), Senior Director HR; Formerly Monster
- Peggy [Frazier](#), VP Global Talent; [Blackbaud](#) (formerly [Microsoft](#) and [Apple](#))
- Peter [McCue](#), VP HR; [TE Connectivity](#)
- Mark [Morgenfruh](#), VP HR; [Larson Design Group](#)
- Theresa [Nordstrom](#), VP HR; [Benaissance](#)
- Roger [Ahlfeld](#), VP HR; [Tedeschi Foods](#)
- [Syncota](#), B2B Media & Information Company, Event Coordinator

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