



The Talent Marketing Engine™

A practical framework to
attract, engage, convert, and retain talent
across the full lifecycle

BY MARGRIET PLATTEAU

Overview

The Core Shift What Talent Marketing is The System Foundation The Talent Marketing Engine™

- Stage 1 - Unaware
- Stage 2 - Aware
- Stage 3 - Engaged
- Stage 4 - Convinced
- Stage 5 - Employed
- Stage 6 - Invested
- Stage 7 - Ambassador
- Stage 8 - Alumni

Why Marketing Capability Matters Assess your Talent Marketing Maturity Next Steps



Over the past 15 years, **Employer Branding** has become a priority for talent-conscious organisations, driven by increased competition for skilled people and the realisation that company perception directly impacts the ability to attract and retain talent.

Everyone is obsessing over creating a strong and positive employer identity, articulating their culture and beliefs, wanting to stand out from the huge employer crowd.

Most often, it's part of the HR function who develops and evolves the Employee Value Proposition.



Over the last decade, we saw a new focus gaining force, notably in Talent Acquisition teams, with **Recruitment Marketing** rising as a new discipline.

Built for a world where hiring needs are changing fast and the war for talent is ever so tough, it's typically vacancy-driven, campaign-based, and focused on short-term conversion.

The Core Shift

Today's talent landscape demands more

Talent marketing is the evolution of Employer Branding & Recruitment Marketing.

It shifts the focus from filling roles to building long-term relationships. And it can only succeed with a strong foundation: your Employer Brand.

This guide explains the difference and introduces a framework to turn your employer brand into sustained talent demand.



Clearing up the Confusion

The market often uses these terms interchangeably, but there are key differences:

Aspect	Employer Branding	Recruitment Marketing	Talent Marketing
Focus	Positions your identity	Activates hiring campaigns	Builds sustained talent demand
Foundation	EVP & Positioning	Role-based promotion	Full-funnel strategy
Scope	Strategic foundation	Tactical campaign execution	Always-on lifecycle system
Coverage	Awareness primarily	Conversion	8-stage lifecycle activation
Outcome	Shapes perception	Drives applications	Drives measurable behaviour
Measurement	Hard to measure	Short-term metrics	Full funnel KPI's
Who leads	Mostly HR	Mostly TA	Marketing-powered



The shift to Talent Marketing is not cosmetic, it's foundational.

It changes how teams work, how content is created, and how talent experiences your brand.
It puts the focus on the audience and their journey, not the employer goals of identity and recruitment.

Employer Branding is the foundation.
Talent Marketing Brings it to life, every single day.

The good news is that you may already be moving in this direction.
Many organisations have gradually evolved their Employer Branding or Recruitment Marketing efforts to become more "Talent Marketing-like". There's a stronger focus on long-term talent engagement, going beyond awareness-building or purely conversion-driven campaigns.

If that sounds familiar, this is your sign to adopt and embrace Talent Marketing as the holistic term for your role. As a Marketing leader, it's my personal mission to make Talent Marketing the official discipline that includes all of the hats you might be wearing, from Employer Branding to Recruitment Marketing, Employee Advocacy and Retention. If it's driven by HR/TA and powered by Marketing expertise, it's Talent Marketing.

In this guide, you can assess your maturity using the Talent Marketing Engine™ framework



The Foundation Layer

Before we talk about the engine that will help you succeed, you need to have a strong foundation in place.

Your Employer Branding

It's your strategic truth.
Your identity, your story, your promise.

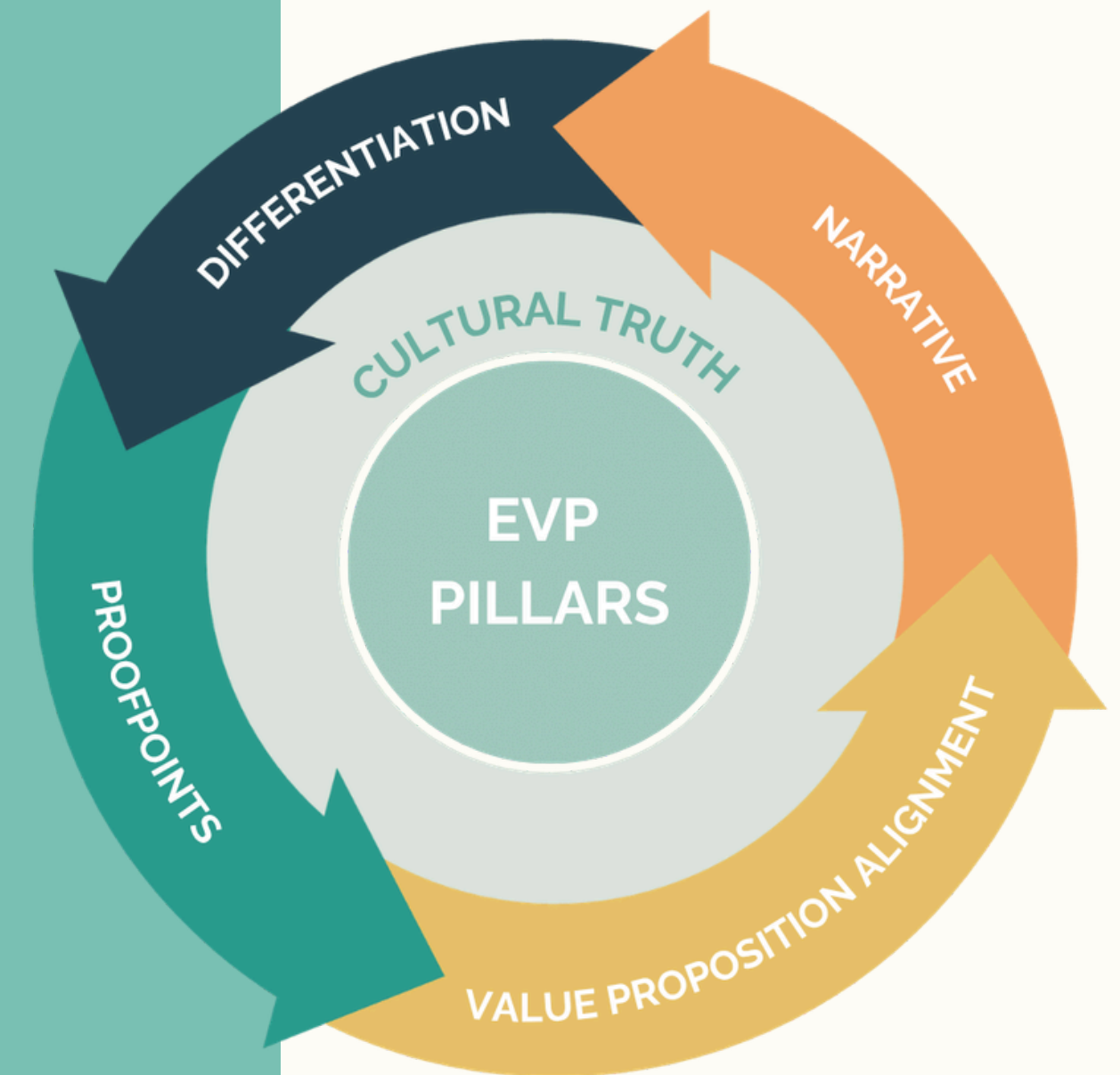
Without this foundation:

- Messaging is inconsistent
- Campaigns feel generic
- Retention suffers
- Advocacy feels forced

But a foundation alone doesn't create motion

Your employer brand can be perfect, but if it's not activated continuously across the talent journey, it remains static and invisible.

THIS IS WHERE TALENT MARKETING COMES IN



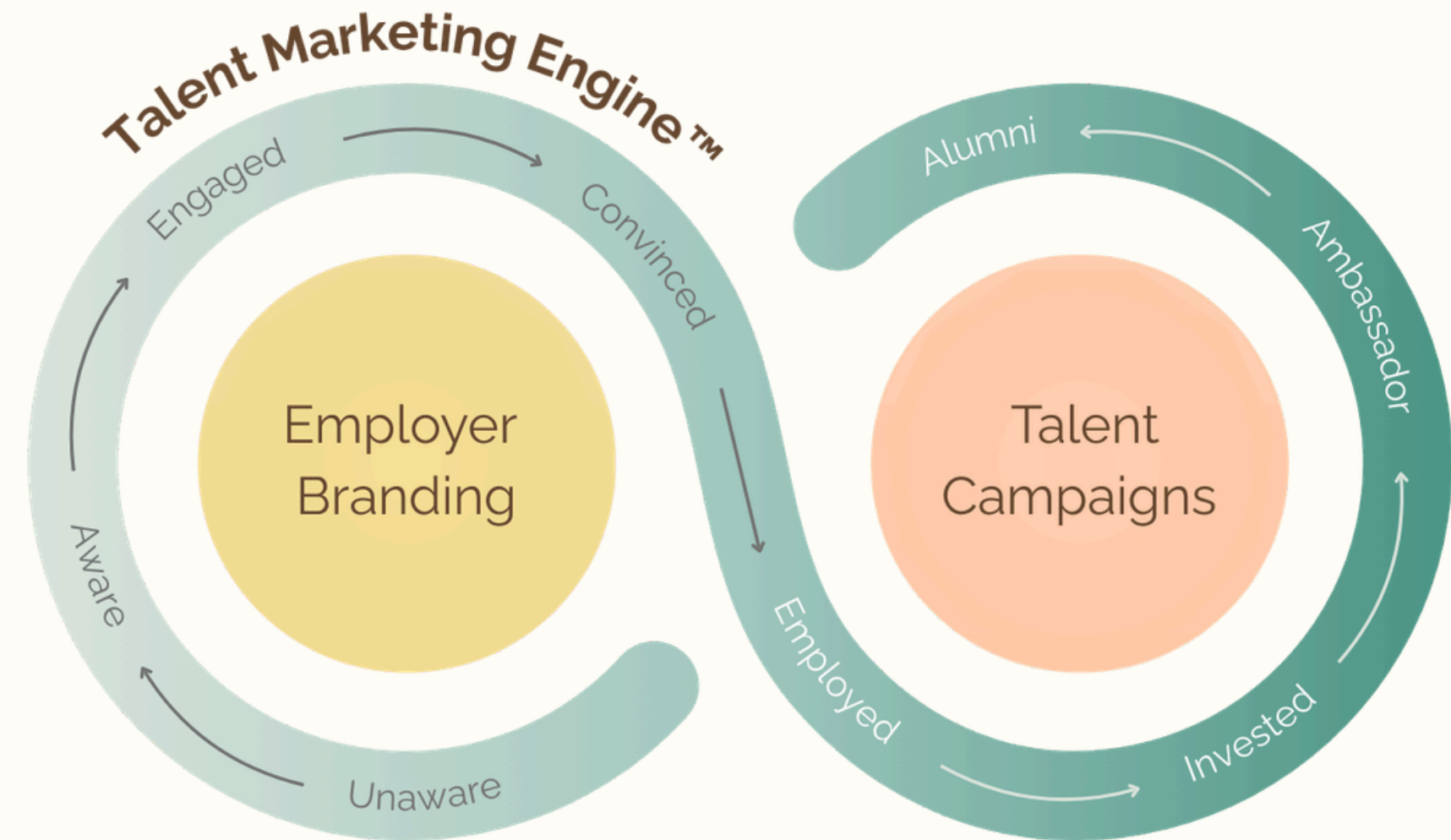
Introducing The Talent Marketing Engine™

The Talent Marketing Engine™ activates your Employer Brand foundation across the entire Talent Lifecycle and translates it into:

- A long-term talent strategy
- Messaging that speaks to each stage
- Channels that reach talent where they are
- Content that drives action
- A consistent Talent Experience
- Measurement systems that prove ROI

It consists of eight distinct lifecycle stages:

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Unaware | 5. Employed |
| 2. Aware | 6. Invested |
| 3. Engaged | 7. Ambassador |
| 4. Convinced | 8. Alumni |

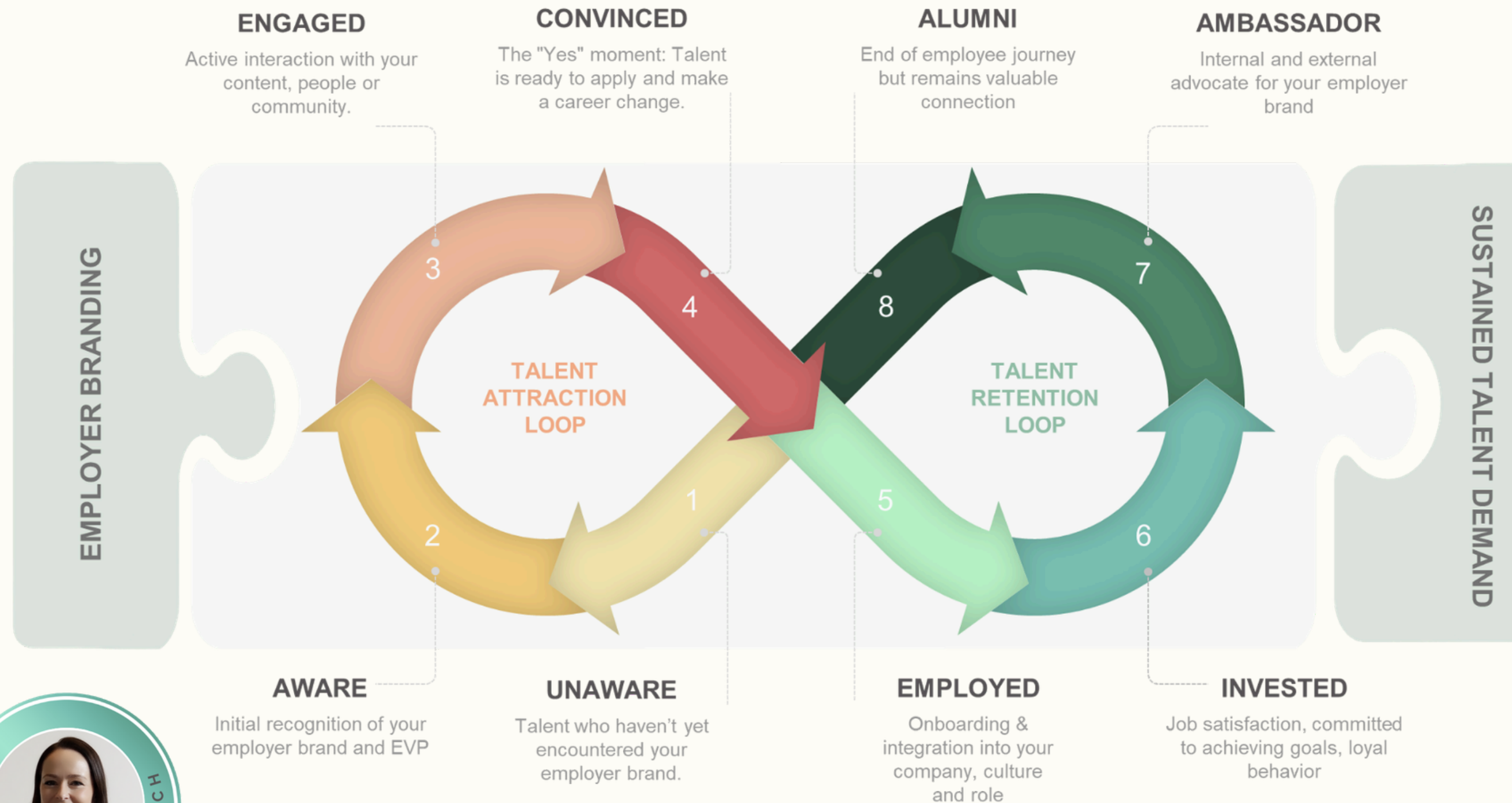


Turning Employer Branding and Talent Attraction, Engagement and Retention campaigns into a full Talent Lifecycle Marketing Strategy



The Talent Marketing Engine™

A framework to activate your Employer Brand throughout the full Talent Lifecycle to attract, engage and retain talent long-term, building sustained demand.



Most organisations focus on Stages 1-2 (employer branding awareness).

Many organisations focus on Stages 3-4 (recruitment marketing).

Few organisations activate all eight stages as an integrated system.

THIS GUIDE WALKS YOU THROUGH ALL STAGES COVERING:

- Stage goal
- Role of Employer Branding
- Role of Talent Marketing
- KPI's that matter
- Pitfalls to avoid
- Quick wins

STAGE 1

Unaware

GOAL

Make the right people aware of who you are and what you stand for

At this stage, talent does not know you or does not see you as relevant to them.

EMPLOYER BRANDING

- **Employer Brand Research**
 - Internally: employee interviews, surveys
 - Externally: Market analysis, competitor employer brand benchmarking
- **Employer Brand strategy & creative** development (incl. social media strategy)
- **Employer Brand Guidelines** (tone, voice, visual identity)
- **Core EVP** messaging framework & narrative
- **Employer Brand Positioning** (differentiation, purpose, mission)
- **Talent Persona research & Audience segmentation**
- **Moments of significance calendar** with key narratives (e.g. Pride, United Nations IDPD, IWD)

KPI's THAT MATTER

Brand reach • Brand recall in your niche/industry • Share of voice vs. competitors • Share of search
Media mention volume (incl. podcasts)

TALENT MARKETING

- **Talent Marketing strategy** across entire talent lifecycle (budget allocation, timeline, content mapping, channel mix, KPIs)
 - Aligned to TA Strategy hiring needs
 - Employer brand strategy fully embedded
- **Employer Brand & EVP storytelling activation**
- **Higher-level content** relevant for talent audience
 - Thought leadership and educational content
 - PR & media coverage
 - Podcast appearances and sponsorships
 - Industry positioning and speaking
 - Newsletter sponsorships
- **Employee-generated content and stories**
- **Organic and paid awareness-focused campaigns**
- **Employer Brand presence on social media**
- **Partnerships** with relevant industry communities

COMMON MISTAKE

Running awareness campaigns without unique positioning. Your awareness content becomes generic, blending in with hundreds of other employers.

QUICK WIN

Identify one unique story or insight about your culture. Tell it consistently across LinkedIn, other social platforms, your website, and events for the next 90 days.



STAGE 2

Aware

GOAL

Build interest and curiosity
by being authentic and
relevant

Talent now recognises your name,
but does not yet consider you as a
potential employer.



EMPLOYER BRANDING

- **Cultural proof points** - Stories, examples, data
- **Authentic employee story development** - individual/through a platform (e.g. iCIMS)
- **Clear EVP pillars** - What makes you different across key themes (e.g. DEI, Sustainability)
- **Career site** messaging and creative design (e.g. Home, DEI, People Experience page)
- Employer Brand identity across **external platforms and communities** (e.g. LinkedIn Life, Job board profiles)
- **Employer Brand presence on AI tools**
- **Credibility signals** - Awards, testimonials, rankings
- **Events** - Employer Brand positioning and creative support

KPI's THAT MATTER

Career site traffic (volume & quality) • New Users on career site • Follower growth • Follower quality •
Organic search ranking • Content performance (A/B testing) • Return visitor rate (are people coming back?) •
Share of voice on AI tools

COMMON MISTAKE

Creating employer brand content without clear and authentic relevance to your target talent pool. Relevance and authenticity drive engagement, it's a non-negotiable to invest in.

TALENT MARKETING

- **Continued Employer Brand Storytelling** and higher-level content relevant for talent audience
- **Deeper-level content** aligned to Talent Persona(s)
 - Employee story promotion
 - Social storytelling - Behind the scenes, employee experiences
 - Content series - Blog posts, guides, case studies around key theme(s)
- **Career site journey - Marketing & SEO optimization** including AI in SEO optimization
- **Paid Retargeting campaigns** for people who've visited your site (e.g. "Join our Talent Community")
- **Organic and paid Engagement-focused campaigns** (e.g. LinkedIn, Meta, Reddit, Google)
- **Talent Community promotion** (= ATS/CRM Database)
- **Event assets & promotion** (e.g. landing page, email invites, paid promotion, booth materials)



QUICK WIN

Identify 3 specific employee stories that each shows a different EVP pillar in action, relevant to your talent pool. Package them as short videos or articles. Promote across LinkedIn and career site.

STAGE 3

Engaged

GOAL

Move from passive interest
to active exploration

Talent begins evaluating fit.
They're asking:
"Could I actually work here?"

EMPLOYER BRANDING

- **Clear EVP messaging** aligned to key employee stories
- **Proof of cultural fit** ("Why this matters to you")
- **Continued credibility and trust signals**
- **Collaboration with employee networks & DEI team** on amplification of key themes & Moments of significance (e.g. IWD, Black History Month)
- **Talent Ambassador/Employee Advocacy Program activation:**
 - Social media content engagement
 - Conversion-focused campaign engagement
- **Talent-facing FAQ content**

KPI's THAT MATTER

Channel engagements & Eng. Rate • Content performance • Social & search referrals • Engagement quality • Career site engagement (time on page, scroll depth, downloads, etc.) • CRM/Talent Community growth • CRM: email open rate and click rate (CTR) • Webinar/Event attendance rate and drop-off

COMMON MISTAKE

Building a talent community but not nurturing it. You gather 500 people then go silent for months. Engagement drops. You're missing the opportunity to offer value to your community.

TALENT MARKETING

- **Create function/role-specific Talent Persona's**
- **Continued EB Storytelling and deeper-level content** aligned to Talent Persona(s)
- **Retargeting campaigns** to stimulate career exploration
- **Organic and paid Conversion-focused campaigns** (e.g. LinkedIn, Google SEA, Job boards)
- **CRM nurture flows to your Talent Community**
 - Marketing email campaigns that build on engagement
 - Talent survey/pulse check: "What topics matter to you?"
- **External talent community engagement** (e.g. LinkedIn Groups, Slack communities)
- **Outreach messaging & templates for TA** (e.g. Engaged pipeline campaign)
- **Authentic employee story development** (individual/through a platform e.g. iCIMS)
- **Virtual or in-person event communication and follow-up**

QUICK WIN

Start a monthly "Talent Insights" email where you share 3 things (e.g. trends, tips, updates). Do not make this about open roles, at most include a link to explore opportunities. Track who engages.



STAGE 4

Convinced

GOAL

Convert interest into application

Talent wants you as their next employer, they choose you.

This is where most recruitment marketing starts, but without prior stages, conversion is inefficient and expensive.



EMPLOYER BRANDING

Continued content to strengthen:

- **Trust** - They already know your story
 - Hiring manager content
 - Talent Ambassador/Employee advocacy supporting hiring campaigns
- **Consistency** - Everything aligns
 - Interview experience guidelines
 - Offer stage messaging
- **Proof** - You walk the talk
 - Candidate testimonials
 - Review & Ratings - Monitoring & management (e.g. Glassdoor, Indeed, local platforms)
- **Clarity** - Understanding what it's like to work here
 - Engagement/content of Business Leads and SME's (especially those hiring)

KPI's THAT MATTER

From your campaigns: Job sessions/New Users • Direct Applications from paid • % Applications by source • % Applicant diversity • Application conversion & completion rate • Cost per application • Application quality
Application drop-off rate by stage • Interview-to-offer ratio

COMMON MISTAKE

Promoting a role without context of your employer brand and focus on earlier stages. Job ad sits in the noise and is too generic. Result: low-quality applicants, high cost-per-hire.

TALENT MARKETING

- **Organic and paid Conversion-focused campaigns targeted to specific job opportunities**
 - External (e.g. LinkedIn) and Internal (CRM community)
 - Hiring Manager & their team campaigns
- **Paid performance media** (e.g. retargeting, lookalike audiences, abandoned application retargeting)
- **Career site content that supports recruitment** (e.g. Persona, Benefits, Training & Development pages)
- **Develop/Optimize job descriptions** in line with EB
- **Personalized experience on job pages/descriptions**
 - Content, e.g. pop-up employee video story
 - Chatbot or AI assistant on job pages to reduce drop-off
- **Leverage Talent Ambassador/Employee Advocacy community:**
 - Social media content engagement
 - Conversion-focused campaign engagement
 - Hiring Manager/SME engagement campaign



QUICK WIN

When you have an open role, create a 30-second Hiring Manager video explaining why the role matters and what they're looking for. Promote it to your engaged audience before posting publicly.

STAGE 5

Employed

GOAL

Reinforce the promise
after hiring

Talent starts experiencing what
work life actually looks like with
you as an employer.

This is where the reality of your
employer brand either matches or
breaks the promise.



© 2026 Talent Marketing Coach - All rights reserved.



EMPLOYER BRANDING

- **Pre-boarding experience** between offer acceptance and day one
- **"Welcome to the brand" content**
Helping new joiners understand and articulate the employer brand from day one
- **Hiring & Onboarding experience feedback**
 - First-week, first-month, 90-days check-ins (e.g. new hire engagement survey)
 - EVP validation touchpoint: does the experience match what was promised?
- **Manager/team culture feedback**
How the team integrates new joiners
- **Early attrition signals** - Tracking who leaves within 0-6 months and why, feeding back into the EVP work

KPI's THAT MATTER

From your campaigns: Early attrition % • Offer acceptance rate • Pre-boarding drop-off rate • Hiring score
Hiring quality • New hire engagement survey scores • Application-to-hire conversion • % Diversity hires
Cost-per-hire (by source, by role) • Time-to-hire (by source, by role) • LinkedIn influenced hires

COMMON MISTAKE

Great marketing campaigns painting a perfect picture + poor onboarding = high early turnover.
The employer brand promise didn't match reality.

TALENT MARKETING

- **Welcome gift or branded onboarding kit**
A tangible brand touchpoint that reinforces the employer brand promise at an emotional moment
- **Internal content seeding** - Onboarding storytelling and communication externally
 - e.g. "First-day on the job" social media template
- **Early engagement initiatives for new joiners**
- Promotion of **Employee Networks** and **Talent Ambassador/Employee Advocacy programs** to new joiners
- **Referral pipeline warming** - Even at this early stage, planting the seed that great people know great people



QUICK WIN

Send new hires a personalized welcome video from the CEO or relevant leader on day 1.
Include a "what to expect in first 30 days" guide.
This small touch can influence retention.

STAGE 6

Invested

GOAL

Deepen engagement and transform employees into ambassadors.

Talent is loyal and genuinely committed to their work, showcasing (high) job satisfaction.

EMPLOYER BRANDING

- **Capture real cultural experience**
What is it actually like to work here?
- **Employer Brand training for managers**, who are big carriers of the brand internally
- **Values in action** - How do we live our EVP daily?
 - Employee interviews and focus groups
 - Regular quantitative survey
- **Internal EVP communication cadence** with messaging focused on:
 - **Growth** - Opportunities for development
 - **Identity and belonging** - clear sense of purpose
 - **Community and connection**

KPI's THAT MATTER

Employee sentiment • eNPS (Employee Net Promoter Score) • % Attrition by function/level/etc. •
Internal mobility rate (% internal hires) • # Employee reviews • Company rating on external platforms

TALENT MARKETING

- **Internal Employer Brand content platform/intranet activation**
- **Internal mobility campaigns** - Help people see career paths
- **Learning and development** visibility and promotion
- **Recognition programs**
- **Employee engagement initiatives**
- **Employee Review program** - Encourage external reviews and ratings (which influences AI tools too)
- **Employee Referral campaigns**

COMMON MISTAKE

Not actively seeking public feedback from employees. Unhappy (former) employees and candidates dominate the review landscape, which influences what AI tools will say about you.

QUICK WIN

Launch a periodical Employee Review program to encourage employees to leave a public review and help strengthen your employer brand credibility and trust.



STAGE 7

Ambassador

GOAL

Turn employees into champions for your employer brand.

Employees want to actively participate in Employer Brand storytelling from their perspective.

EMPLOYER BRANDING

- **Launch/Grow Internal Talent Ambassador or Employee Advocacy Program**
 - Build Advocacy platform/intranet
 - Taskforce to shape and manage strategy and themes
 - Employee communication
- **Content co-creation with ambassadors:** Not just social sharing but involving them in actively producing content

KPI's THAT MATTER

Talent Ambassador/Employee Advocacy Program growth • Ambassador content reach & engagement rate • % Referral hire rate • % Applications from employee referrals

TALENT MARKETING

- Support Launch/Growth **Internal Talent Ambassador or Employee Advocacy Program**
- **Employee Referral campaigns:**
 - Consistent Employer Brand messaging in internal communication
 - External referral campaigns on key platforms
- **Thought Leadership opportunities:** Identify the right SMEs
 - On social media
 - External speaking/event representation: serve as brand voices

COMMON MISTAKE

Hoping employees will talk positively about you and refer talent they know, without building a strategy around it. Employees sharing your content expands your reach exponentially.

QUICK WIN

Identify 8 - 12 employees from different functions, levels and length of employment to join a focus group around creating an advocacy program. Start from here in defining the roadmap.



STAGE 8

Alumni

GOAL

Nurture relationships with former employees

Talent who may have embarked on a new adventure, but still want to maintain a relationship with their former employer.

EMPLOYER BRANDING

- **Offboarding experience design** - Influences whether they become an ambassador or not
- **Exit interview data & insights** - Feed back into the EVP work and do reality check
- **Boomerang interviews** - Reasons for returning are key USP's for your EVP
- **Alumni/Boomerang story development**
 - Alumni - Where are they now and how your company helped with next chapter
 - Boomerang - What made them choose you all over again
- **Alumni-focused content/page on career site**
- **Build Alumni Community** (in CRM, on LinkedIn)

KPI's THAT MATTER

Offboarding experience score - NPS equivalent at exit • # Alumni community sign-ups • Alumni referral rate • Alumni referral hire rate • Alumni-sourced pipeline volume • Alumni boomerang hire rate

TALENT MARKETING

- **Alumni Community campaign** to promote signups
- **Run Alumni engagement campaign(s).**

Could include:

- Alumni blogs: e.g. how [your company] helped with next chapter
- Boomerang testimonials
- Alumni networking events
- Alumni referral programs
- Alumni nurturing/newsletter
- Training/upskilling for alumni

COMMON MISTAKE

Losing all form of connection with talent that left on good terms. It's not because they chose a new adventure that there can't be a valuable and meaningful relationship

QUICK WIN

Start a monthly "Talent Insights" email where you share 3 things (e.g. trends, tips, updates). Do not make this about open roles, at most include a link to explore opportunities. Track who engages.



Why Marketing discipline matters in the world of Talent

This is not about ownership politics.
It's about capability.

Employer Branding is often defined within HR whilst Recruitment Marketing sits within TA.
And it makes sense that way for many companies.

But activating a full-funnel system requires marketing capabilities that HR and TA teams often lack:

- Lifecycle modeling and funnel analysis
- Channel optimization and media buying
- Content and messaging strategy
- Budget allocation and ROI analysis
- Multi-touch campaign thinking
- Marketing automation

No matter where your talent campaigns sit, the key to a full-funnel system that actually works is

Marketing capability at the core



Assess your Talent Marketing Maturity

Level 1 Campaign based

Main focus on Stages 1-3

Recruitment Marketing only when roles open

No or basic measurement system

No nurturing/warm pipelines

Inconsistent employer brand messaging

Basic Marketing expertise

Level 2 Structured Recruitment Marketing

Main focus on Stages 3-4

Improved campaigns (better messaging, more channels)

Some measurement

Basic nurturing/building warm pipelines

improved employer brand messaging

Medium Marketing expertise

Level 3 Full-funnel System

Full-funnel 8-stage activation

Always-on system

Clear measurement framework

Full focus on nurture to convert strategy

Consistent employer brand throughout Talent Lifecycle

Mature Marketing expertise



Employer Branding is the foundation at every level.

But only Level 3 turns it into sustained talent demand that drives business growth.

Next steps

If your employer brand exists, but your talent pipeline doesn't reflect it, that's not a campaign problem. It's a system problem.

CHOOSE YOUR PATH FORWARD

Path 1

Build the System Yourself

Learn the Talent Marketing Engine™ framework and implement it together with your team.

Start with a Power Hour or learn the full system with the Launchpad Programme.

Explore your Training Options →

Path 2

Build it With Me

We work together to audit where you are, define your strategy, and build a system that actually sticks.

You get senior marketing expertise applied directly to your talent function.

Book your free Advisory Call →

Path 3

Bring Me In

Need senior talent marketing leadership without a full-time hire?

I embed in your team, shape the strategy, and drive consistent activation, without the overhead.

Let's Talk →



ABOUT ME



By Margriet Platteau

Founder, Talent Marketing Coach

www.talentmarketingcoach.com



After 14+ years in B2B marketing and talent strategy - leading global teams -, I've seen first-hand how often marketing is underutilised in talent attraction.

So I founded **Talent Marketing Coach** to change that, because marketing expertise is the missing capability that transforms great EB and RM into a system that actually drives business growth.

Some highlights from my work include:

- Growing a Talent Marketing function from 2 to 16 specialists globally, training them to become Employer Branding & Talent campaign experts
- Supporting 20,000+ hires over 5y with effective Employer Branding & Talent Mkt campaigns
- Doubled the diversity % during that timeframe
- Contributed to earning 200+ employer brand awards & recognitions globally
- Leading Avanade's employer brand campaign "Together we do what matters" that won the '22 Momentum/ITSMA Marketing Excellence Award

“

Paul Phillips

Global Human Resources Executive

I thoroughly recommend Margriet Platteau. She was my partner which enabled us to more than double our hiring while also doubling our diversity %. If you want success, I know who I would talk to.

“

Lise af Ekenstam

CMO, Xplora Technologies

Analytical, detail-oriented, and results-driven, Margriet consistently delivers high-quality, impactful programs and campaigns. I've genuinely enjoyed working with her.

“

Sarah Heilig

Sr. Dir. Enterprise Strategy, Avanade

Margriet is, without a doubt, one of the most talented, capable, driven, and inspiring leaders I've had the pleasure of working with. Margriet brings clarity, energy, and excellence to everything she does.