



Great Place To Work<sup>®</sup>

# Employer Branding



**"Employer brand is the image of your organization as a 'great place to work' in the mind of current employees and key stakeholders in the external market (e.g. active and passive candidates, clients). The process of employer branding is concerned with talent attraction, engagement and retention strategies deployed to enhance your company's employer brand."**

Brett Minchington (2014)<sup>1</sup>

## The importance of a positive employer image

A positive image is important for organizations. It increases brand awareness, helps attract and retain customers and distinguishes the organization from its competitors. Research shows that public trust is highest in peer relationships and in the organization's CEO<sup>2</sup>. With this, the image of an organization is strongly determined by the reputation you have as an employer and how you treat your employees.

## Employer branding is crucial

In addition, attracting, engaging and retaining talented employees is becoming increasingly difficult. It's a challenge for many organizations to find talents that fit the organization. The influence of employer branding on image and the search for new employees mean that organizations increasingly benefit from profiling themselves as an attractive employer. Employer branding is crucial as a result.

<sup>1</sup> Minchington, B. (2014) 2014 Employer Branding Global Trends Survey Report.

<sup>2</sup> Trust Barometer 2022: <http://www.edelman.com/global-results/>

**Great Place To Work.**

Employer branding



## About this whitepaper

This whitepaper is intended for (HR) leaders and recruiters who want to strengthen their employer brand and/or attract more and better talent.

This whitepaper focuses on internal and external profiling and on attracting new employees.

In this whitepaper, we share our vision on employer branding and answer the following questions:

01

**What is employer branding?**

02

**How to develop a strong employer brand?**

03

**How to improve labor market communications?**

04

**What does a strong employer brand yield?**

To win externally  
is to begin internally.

## What is employer branding?

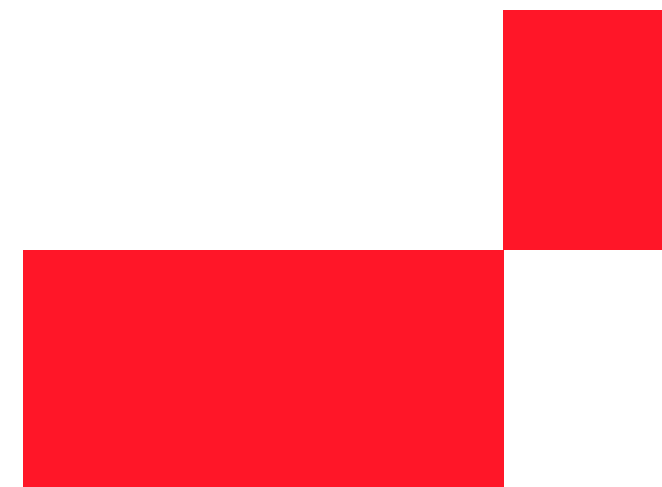
Employer branding is still often seen as a strong recruitment campaign or a good recruitment website. But employer branding is much more than that. Employer branding is not only about attracting new talent, it's mainly about creating an attractive workplace and retaining and engaging your current employees. Ultimately, this results in an improvement of your organization's image.

## What is the definition of employer branding?

Waasdorp, Hemminga and Roest, the authors of the book 'Bouwen aan het Nieuwe Employer Brand', define employer branding as follows: "Obtaining and maintaining an authentic and distinctive preferred position as an employer in the mindset of (potential) employees and their influencers, with the aim of attracting and retaining the right employees."

Employer branding is not an end in itself, but a means by which you bind, captivate and engage your current employees and recruit potential employees. Many organizations think employer branding is mainly about external communication, conveying the message that the organization is a good employer. But employer branding is primarily about being a good employer, for both current and future employees. It's crucial that your external message matches the internal situation. In other words: to win externally is to start internally.

The question is, of course: how does your organization create the image of a good employer? Below you can read how to establish a strong employer brand in five steps. The starting point here is that your employer brand must be supported by the internal organization. Before an organization invests in employer branding, it's essential to consider this.



In 5 steps to a rock-  
solid **employer brand.**



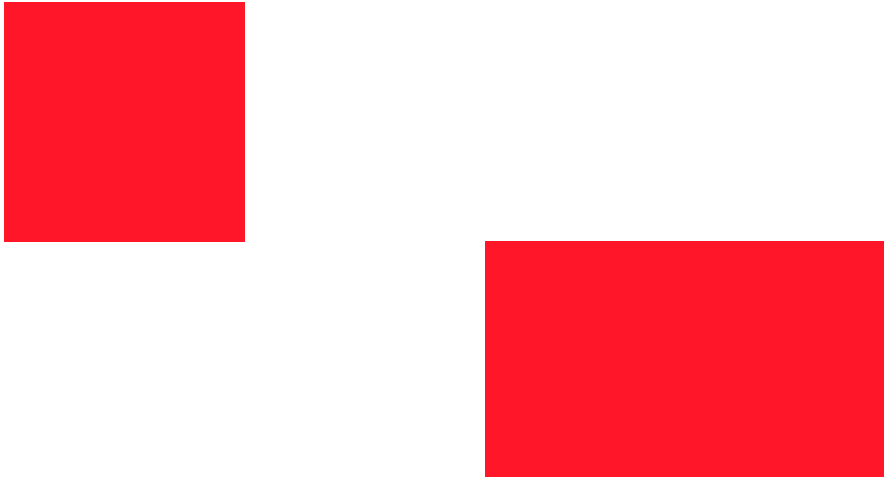
## Step 1: start by building a strong internal culture

### What makes your organization unique?

Employer branding starts with building a strong internal organizational culture. What makes your organization unique? What values and mission do you pursue? We see that good employers have a clear picture of who they are and where they are going, and that this picture is understood and felt throughout all levels of the organization. Employees are aware of the vision, know their part in achieving the strategy and know how people interact with each other. Because the "way we do things around here" is the same in all layers of the organization is the same, a unified image emerges and everyone carries the same message everywhere.

### Focus on current employees first

As we wrote earlier, it's primarily about inspiring and engaging employees at first in order to create a strong brand internally. Only then can you then credibly present yourself externally as an attractive employer. Of course, a strong internal culture is not something that can be achieved overnight, and for many overnight and is still developing in many organizations. This is not necessarily a problem. But before investing in employer branding, think carefully about whether your organizational culture is solid enough to be deployed externally.





## Step 2: position yourself as a distinctive employer

### Engage with employees

The second step is to get clear on how you want to position yourself as an organization. What aspects of your culture do you want to emphasize and include in the communication? Employees can help to find out which elements that make your organization so special. By talking to employees, you can find out what they find important in their work and what they value. What elements ensure that they enjoy working at your organization? Are these development opportunities, the team feeling, a special mission, a unique contribution to society or flexibility to arrange your own work?

### External message matches internal reality

The information from interviews with employees helps to identify the identity and distinctiveness of your organization. This information can help determine what message you want to convey externally, in order to define your position. By basing your external message on the perception of your employees, you can be sure that this message will be supported internally.



## Step 3: turn your employees into the most loyal ambassadors

### Employees as the most credible spokesperson

When an organization has a strong internal culture with engaged employees, employees behave as ambassadors of the organization. This is an essential element in creating a strong employer brand. As you read on the next page, public trust is highest among colleagues and the organization's CEO. Therefore, the role of employees is very important in employer branding.

### Make employer branding a task of the entire organization

We often see the task of employer branding being placed solely in the hands of HR or recruitment. But to successfully profile yourself as an attractive employer, it's important that there is support in all layers of the organization. So make employees aware of their role as ambassadors, encourage them to share their story and involve them in your communications.

Do make sure you facilitate your employees in their role as ambassadors. Give them time, space and resources to share your message. Crucial to this is the involvement and role model role of HR, communications, marketing and senior management.

## Public trust is highest in peer relationships and leadership within an organization

PR firm Edelman conducts the Trust Barometer worldwide: a survey of public trust in business and society.

In the 2022 Trust Barometer, Edelman states that people have the highest trust in scientists (75%), colleagues (74%) and their own CEO (66%). There is low trust in CEOs in general (49%), journalists (42%) and government leaders (42%).

These results show that an organization's internal image is the most important factor in the level of trust people experience. This is consistent with our philosophy that starting internally leads to winning externally.

Having a strong internal organizational culture where people trust their colleagues and their leaders is critical to building a strong employer brand.

People **trust** most the people they work with (74%) and their organization's CEO (66%)



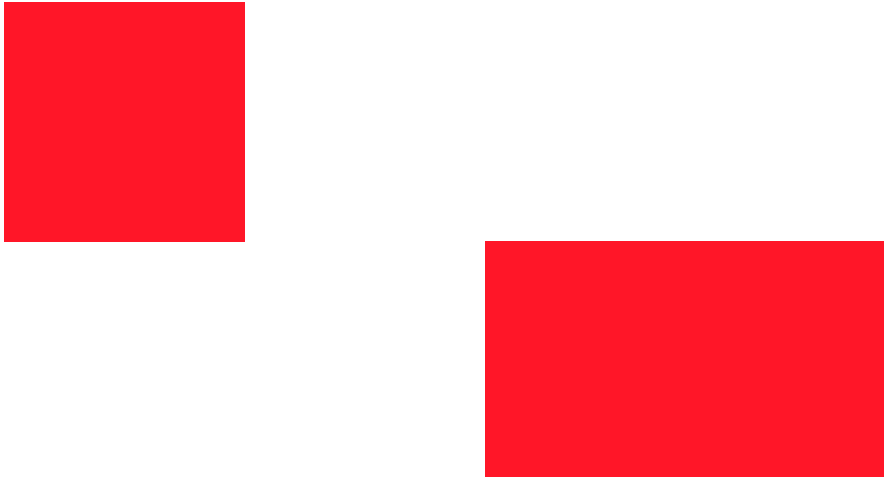
## Step 4: know what you are looking for in new employees

### Determine your target group

Which people do you want to reach? In particular, do you want to strengthen the general image of your organization or increase your brand awareness to attract more customers? Or is it about attracting new talent? Form a clear picture of your target group. If this is clear, you can later adjust your means of communication and message accordingly.

### Desired behavior

If you want to strengthen your public image, you need to present yourself in a different way and at a different place than when you want to attract new talent. And if the latter is the case, consider what you are looking for in new employees and how you will ensure that you attract people who fit your organizational culture. By forming a clear picture of the employee you want to attract, you can also adjust your communication and recruitment activities accordingly. By translating the mission, vision and strategy into desired behavior, you can form a picture of the characteristics and qualities of the ideal candidate. Make a clear choice that is in line with your culture and define qualities that are crucial to working for your organization. Then incorporate these into your external communications. Talking to your employees, as we wrote about earlier, can be enormously valuable.



## Step 5: be transparent

### Do not create false expectations

Last, but certainly not least, step: be honest in your communications. Many organizations make the mistake of presenting themselves better than they are, which can create false expectations in candidates.

When the candidate starts working for you, you want the pre-created expectations to be met. Moreover, it's often actually appreciated when organizations are open about the challenges they face or explain why they don't offer certain things.

In addition, again, current employees are important ambassadors of your organization. They too are familiar with the situation. So make sure you have a sincere and consistent message in your communication.

Spread the  
word.

## How do you communicate your brand?

Now that we have listed the five steps, let's turn to the communication of employer branding. If everything is in order internally (a clear picture of the organization's culture, positioning, support within the organization, message and target group), then you can communicate your employer brand externally.

### Communication tools

There are a variety of ways to do this, with different costs and results. Extensive (recruitment) campaigns are very effective, but also costly and not always necessary to communicate effectively. Social media, blogs and newsletters are very effective and relatively inexpensive communication channels you can use for external communication and strengthening your image as an employer. Aligning your general communication and the message on your website can also have a huge effect. This also applies to content advertisements, interviews and articles in trade publications.

### Ensure consistent content

Whatever method you choose, the key to external communication is to think carefully about what, as well as how, you communicate.





The content must be consistent, honest and in line with your culture, target audience and predetermined message. In addition, the form also largely determines how the message comes across. Who is speaking? What is the tone of voice? What atmosphere is being created? Where is the focus? What does it look like?

For example, as an organization, do you want to position yourself as a young, innovative organization with a focus on fun? Then your communications must exude this. Is development one of your spearheads? Then make sure this is reflected over and over again.

### **Employee stories**

The goal of communication is to promote your organization's culture through employee stories and real-life examples. It should be more than a nice story and supported with "evidence."

The following four tips will help fill and shape your job market communications.







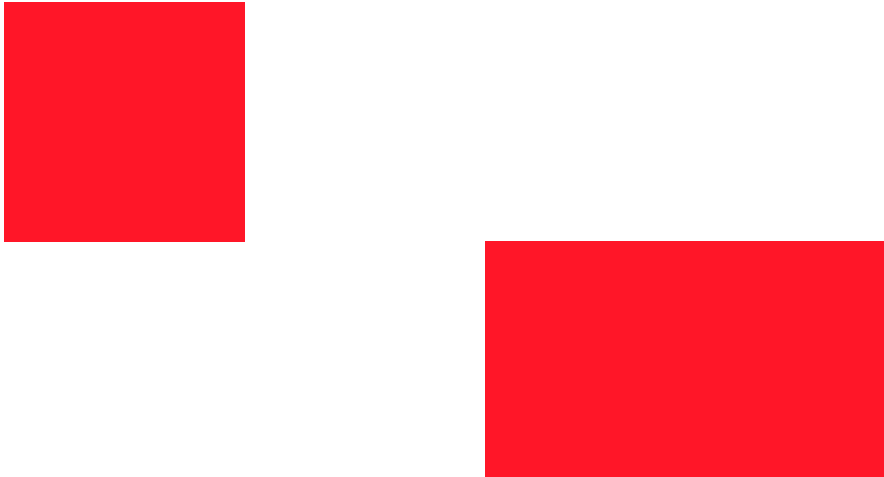
## 1. Share your vision and best practices

### Blogs

Show what you do policy-wise as an organization and what the organizational culture is. For example, write blogs about special programs you offer, show how employees are inspired and engaged and share your best practices. We see that good employers have developed special and unique programs that they use to inspire other organizations. If social media is widely used within the organization, employee posts can serve as 'evidence' and demonstrate how employees experience these programs (with employee permission, of course). This shows what makes your organization unique, which in turn is confirmed by employees, making it more than just a "recruitment pitch."

### Vision on being a good employer

Additionally, as an organization you can choose to actively share your vision of being a good employer. Organizations that are known as good employers are a source of inspiration for stakeholders and are often seen as experts in the field as experts in this field. By having managers speak at conferences or publishing in (HR) magazines and journals, you position your organization as an attractive employer and as an expert.



## 2. Get your employees talking

### Employee stories

Let your communication clearly show what makes your organization unique and let your employees have a say. the floor. The Edelman Trust Barometer shows that people trust their colleagues the most. Letting employees get the message across increases their credibility. Therefore, when getting your message out, it's very important to create support among your employees beforehand. Get employees from all levels of the organization to speak, or specifically employees who fit the profile of talents you are looking for.

### Tone is decisive

In communication, it's not always necessary to literally name what makes an organization unique, but the tone in which someone says something, or the topics (development, company parties, products, care, colleagues) that someone talks, can give a strong picture of the organization's culture (formal, informal, focus on development, a lot of focus on fun, et cetera).



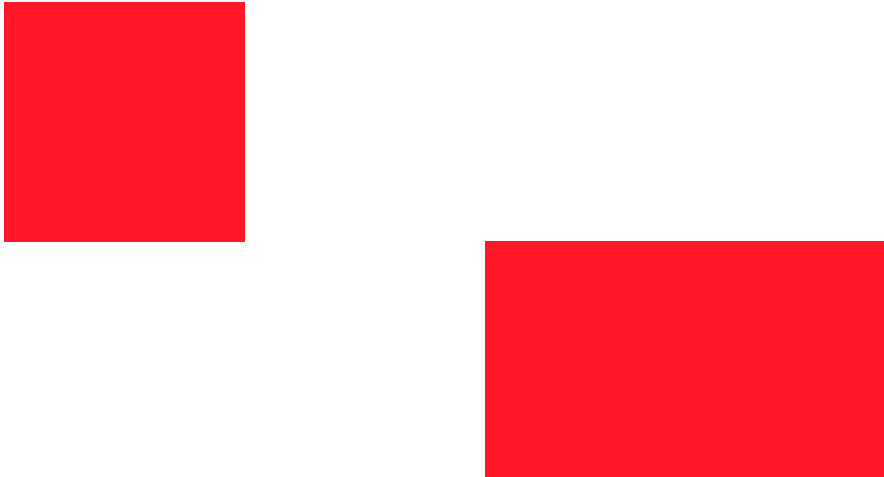
### 3. Actively seek out your target audience

#### Proactively seek out your target audience

Another important tip for strengthening your employer brand, especially when it comes to attracting talent, is to make direct contact with potential employees and seek them out. You can think campus recruitment, speaking at schools or organizing in-house days in your organization. These types of opportunities provide the perfect opportunity to establish your organization as a unique employer. It's Again, it's wise to involve current employees and let them tell their story. At these events, pay at least as much attention to the culture of your organization and peculiarities as an employer as to professional matters. It's crucial that you know who your target group is, where they are and where you can best reach them.

#### Do not forget the image towards customers and suppliers

Towards customers and other relations, the direct approach works. For example, during an open day for customers or suppliers, pay attention to what you do as an employer. People often find this incredibly interesting and it has a great effect on trust in the organization. In smaller meetings or personal conversations you can also briefly mention what your organization does for its employees. Talking about this with pride and enthusiasm will inspire people.





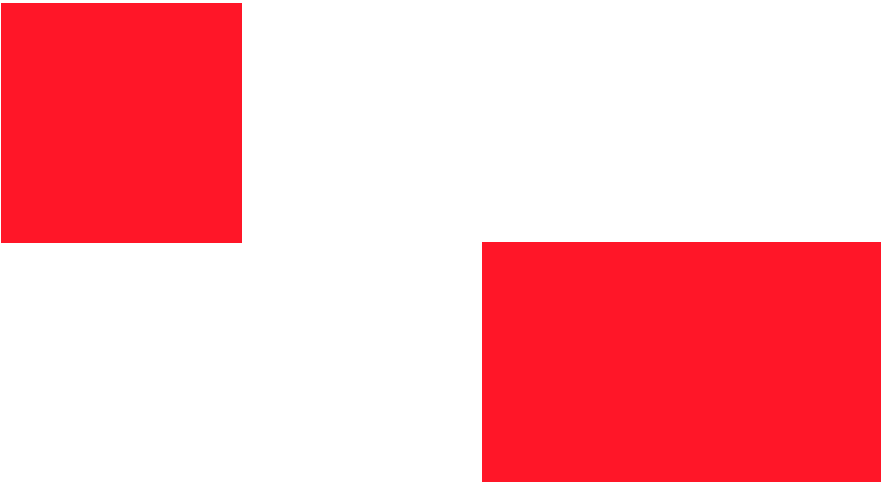
## 4. Get recognition for being a good employer

### External recognition

Finally, getting recognition from an independent agency can strengthen your employer brand. As we have described, employees at good employers act as ambassadors. If your organization receives external recognition from an independent agency that labels your organization as a good employer, it greatly enhances your organization's reputation.

### What does recognition mean?

There are several agencies in The Netherlands that recognize good employers, each with its own philosophy and criteria. For most, this is done through a list or certification. Before making a choice, it's essential to know what these agencies examine and what a place on the list or certification means. Is the opinion of employees tested or does it only look at policy? Is just participating enough to get on a list, or is there a hard lower limit that an organization must meet? And what exactly is being surveyed? This could be satisfaction, engagement and trust. When you have chosen an agency and you get the recognition, share what the certificate or logo means. Clearly state what this recognition says about your organization.



# These are the **results** of a strong employer brand.

01

Better business results

02

Lower recruitment costs

03

More and better  
applicants

04

Less turnover

05

Better image

06

Proud and motivated  
employees

## **Better service**

A strong employer brand strengthens an organization's overall reputation, provided it's supported internally. We described earlier in this white paper that the public trusts an organization's colleagues and CEO the most.

This is also true for customers, suppliers and other relationships. This perception is confirmed during their association with the organization. In fact, we see that with good employers, employees are more productive due to their dedication and there is more entrepreneurship and innovation.

This leads to higher service quality and better relationships with stakeholders, which ultimately contributes to the organization's positive image.

## **More applicants**

Organizations with a strong employer brand also attract more job applicants.

People like to work for an organization where they can get the best out of themselves and where people treat each other with respect. Word-of-mouth advertising still plays a big role in this regard. Former or current employees who tell how great it's to work at an organization contribute to greater appeal.

## **Better applicants**

Organizations with a strong employer brand also attract better applicants because the organization positions itself powerfully in the market. They are clear about what makes them unique, what they have to offer employees and what they expect from them. These organizations tend to attract candidates who fit their culture.

In addition, top talents are often looking for an organization where they can grow, develop quickly, be given responsibilities, be allowed to develop entrepreneurship and have unique opportunities.

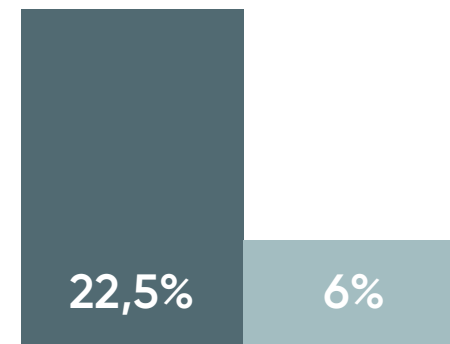
## The importance of trust

Great Place To Work measures workplace trust using the Trust Index employee survey. This survey consists of 60 statements about 5 universal values.

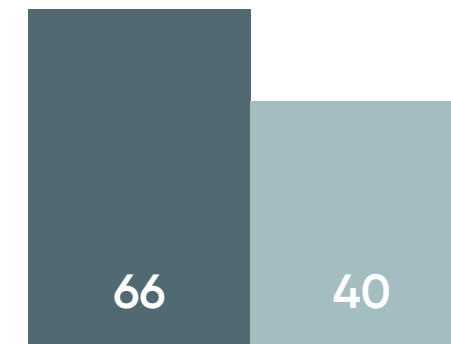
We see big differences in business results between organizations that score high on trust and those that score lower on trust:

Results

### 3,75x higher sales growth

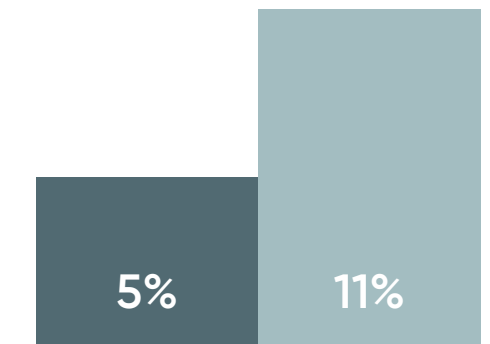


### 1,75x more applicants\*



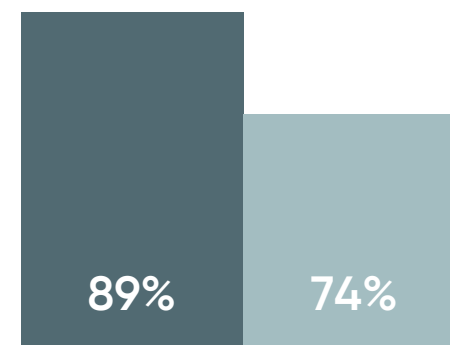
\*Number of applicants per 100 employees

### 2,2x lower turnover in employees

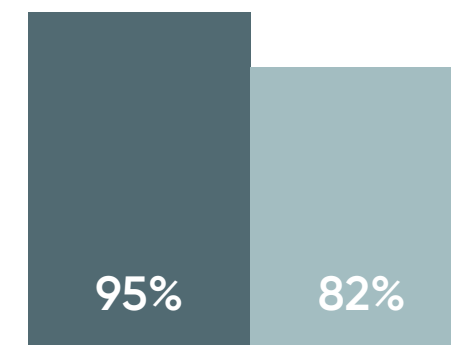


Employee experience

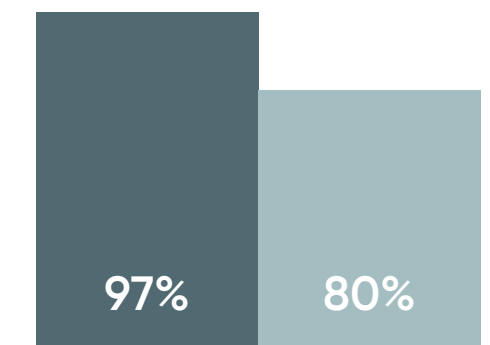
### Intention to stay



### Employees as ambassadors



### Productivity



- Organisations with a Trust Index score between 90% and 100%
- Organisations with a Trust Index score between 70% and 80%

## Employer branding as a top priority

Positioning your organization and building a strong brand is a top priority at a time when companies are fighting to stay ahead of the competition.

That competition is always coming from new corners, as companies are constantly innovating and also changing and expanding their own services, makes it a challenge to find the right people for your organization. This is precisely why employer branding should become a crucial part of your overarching positioning strategy.

It's about candidates with the right mindset, passion for the company and a strong set of competencies. No longer do extensive job profiles seem to be the deciding factor whether someone is a good match, but the feeling that a candidate fits within the organization and can contribute to the goals.

All the more important, then, to load this aspect of your brand as well. What kind of employer are you? What do you stand for? This will make you more effective in finding and selecting talented, agile employees who will take your organization another step forward.





"Participating in Great Place to Work makes our organization an attractive employer. It sets us apart from the rest. We show that we are certified: it's on our website, we mention it in our vacancies and during job interviews, it's visible in our office and we share it on social media. It really is part of our employer branding. Especially in a tight job market, being Great Place To Work™ Certified is extra valuable."



Mirella Lenters

Manager Interne Organisatie bij HLB Blömer



## Great Place To Work-Certified™

With the Trust Index employee survey, we measure trust, pride and enjoyment in organizations. The survey consists of 60 statements on a variety of topics.

Organizations that meet the following criteria are Great Place To Work-Certified for one year:

- A score of 70% or higher on the Trust Index
- A minimum response rate
- A completed Culture Brief™

Participation is available for as few as 10 employees.



## Best Workplaces™

Each year we announce the list of Best Workplaces. Certified organizations with the highest Trust Index scores, have a chance to win a spot on the list.

The list consists of a selection of organizations divided into 3 categories:

1. Small: 20 to 49 employees
2. Medium: 50 to 500 employees
3. Large: more than 500 employees

For large organizations, completing the Culture Audit™ is an additional criteria.



## About Great Place To Work

Great Place To Work helps organizations create a culture of trust. We do this using the Trust Index, the employee survey we use to measure trust, pride and joy. Every year, we conduct this employee survey in more than 10,000 organizations worldwide.

We believe that trust is the basis for better individual performance, better team performance and better business results. Growth and innovation then follow naturally.

Our philosophy is based on more than 30 years of experience in 60 different countries.

[Let's meet!](#)

**Question or comments?**

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