



EPISODE 22

Developing an Effective Employer Message That Attracts Talent

Intro: Welcome to Strategic Insights brought to you by PrideStaff. On each episode, we bring you interviews with leading management and employment experts from across the country. Your host for Strategic Insights is Brad Smith. And now here's Brad.

Brad Smith: Hello, and thank you all for joining this episode of Strategic Insights from Pride Staff. I am your host, Brad Smith. And today we have a special guest Amy Linn from the North Dallas office. Amy, thank you so much for joining us today.

Amy Linn: Absolutely my pleasure. Thanks for having me Brad.

Brad Smith: So, Amy, as you know, today's episode is all about the employee value proposition or the acronym EVP. I think it's imperative that companies really define what their value proposition is for employees right now. There's a recent job vice study that just came out that said, half of all those surveyed, we're either actively looking for a job, or plan to look for a new job within the next year. So, as we can imagine, some companies might have massive turnover, some companies might have a huge influx of talent. And I think this discussion is going to be really constructive to help define which side of the coin our companies fall on.

Brad Smith: And I think if we can define a really good EVP employee value proposition, and not just define it, but live that value proposition throughout our organization, we're going to be more likely to retain talent, we're going to be more likely to attract new talent, and not be one of those organizations that are dealing with just this massive turnover. Now, no matter what you do, you might still have turnover in your organization and sometimes that's healthy, but we want to do everything that we can to make sure that employees feel valued, and they're aligned with company goals, and company goals are aligned with staff goals.

Brad Smith: So, to kick things off, I wanted to start by talking about the technical definition of EVP or employee value proposition. And that's defined as the promise that you as the employer make to employees in return for them doing a great job. It's really more employee centered approach in which the employee clearly understands what's expected of them, but it also goes on to outline what the

employee should expect from the employer in return for their services, their knowledge, their expertise and their great work.

Brad Smith: But as I mentioned, that's really kind of just the technical definition. And for me, when I think about EVP, it's really about as the employee, what's in it for me? What do I get back from the company for doing an amazing job, for hitting my goals, for hitting my KPIs, my metrics? What makes me want to stay at the employer? What makes me want to do an amazing job and maybe even go above and beyond. And to me that's really what the employee value proposition is about. What's your take on that, Amy?

Amy Linn: Well, I think with that technical definition, one of the words that need to be underscored is promise. And when you think about promise, that really implies trust. And I think when today employers are shifting to the idea that they have an employment brand, they need to look at that brand promise from their employee's perspective. And if that trust is what is going to build the relationship, and as you indicated, the future potential of that relationship with the employee, it has to be built on trust, and that's the promise. If you break down anywhere along the way, what that potential candidate becomes a future employee of your business and looks for a job six months later, why? And evaluating that process, and what promise you made, and how you followed through on that, I think is a basis of any EVP.

Brad Smith: I think you're dead on that promise and that follow through is crucial. The data actually supports what you just said. So, I mentioned that job light survey a minute ago, what they found was that, 62% of workers were actually satisfied with their jobs, however, as I mentioned to start this off, half of people are looking for a new job or plan too shortly. And then it went on to find that, 32% would actually feel comfortable quitting their job without having another job lined up, 30% have left their job within the first 90 days of starting, 23% have changed industries since the start of the pandemic.

Brad Smith: So, as you just mentioned, it's that promise. And if we're making that promise, we have to follow through on that, otherwise we're going to have half of our people leaving, potentially. We really need to live that value proposition and follow through on it. And all of this is having just a huge impact on employers. When they surveyed employers, they found that 40% have experienced high turnover over the last year. 40% of leaders reported that their own workload has increased due to turnover. So as employees are leaving, it just reverberates throughout the entire organization, and it underscores the importance of living that and following through on that that promise. Now, Amy, with the employers you consult with, have they struggled with some of these issues? Are they seeing the turnover? Are they seeing the increased workloads for themselves?

Amy Linn: Well, that struggle is real, Brad. We consult with hundreds of employers in the Dallas market and individual managers as well as executive leadership, and at every level what's happening in the employment market has an impact. So it's not only the statistics and these reports reflecting life, but life reflecting the statistics. It's prevalent, it's in every organization we work with, some to a greater degree than others. And when you stop to evaluate what those that are feeling the pinch less are doing, you find some really actionable strategies that any employer, any manager or executive can implement in their own organizations to succeed.

Brad Smith: So, when we're talking about things to implement, I want to start off first by talking a little bit about salary. Now, obviously culture and value proposition are way more than salary, but salary is table stakes, and we're dealing with wage inflation right now. And what's happening is that, 37% of workers report that they are paid fairly. Only 37%, that means the majority of workers feel like they're not paid fairly. And if salary is the starting point and is really just table stakes, everything that you do above and beyond that matters if salary is there. So how do employers, I'm sorry, know that their salary is on par with what the market is really dictating now?

Amy Linn: That's a great question because it is so fluid. We're very data driven and we will provide the clients that we consult with reports that come from our partners, Emsi Data is one of those that we utilize to be able to get data that's on point with the specific positions that they're recruiting for, the type of industry, the size of company. But as I mentioned, is fluid, we have to check with a number of different sources to make sure that we are up to date. Dallas's Business Journal, just as an example, did a survey of salary increases in our market and found, just over the last three months, there's been a 9% increase on average. Is that reflected in the data that we will access for our clients?

Amy Linn: Yes, but it needs to be paired with other information. And we speak directly to candidates all day long, hundreds of candidates on a weekly basis. And we know what the competition is offering candidates, what job offers they're getting, and what their expectations have now risen to be because of what's happening in the market. So the kind of marriage of all of that information, some of it anecdotal, some of it directly from companies that specialize in reviewing that and analyzing that data, but combined that provides a really solid picture to be able to make those decisions.

Amy Linn: But ultimately once we consult on evaluating the salary, that's offered for the roles that we're being asked to help recruit for, we have to advise our client companies to do that same data analysis within their own organization, and to look at that pay that they're offering across the board, because if they look to bring in new talent at a higher wage than what they're offering their existing employees, we're back to the question of trust. And we're back to evaluating

what type of turnover they're going to experience within their organization if they're not being true to the promise they made the employees that have been with them for years.

Brad Smith: So that's an amazing point. I mean, you're not just providing value in recruiting or in low level staffing, you're actually consulting with your clients on these extremely strategic workforce initiatives. So you mentioned all those data sources, you mentioned you're talking with hundreds or thousands of candidates to really get this data and this information. As the end employer, I don't have access to any of that, so how do I pick your brain? How do I go about getting that data and that information and is there a cost associated with it?

Amy Linn: No, actually there isn't. I think the interesting thing about our service industry is that, all the work that we do for our clients is reciprocal. So if we are able to help our clients build a stronger employment brand, they achieve their goals, and as their partner, we achieve ours. So to answer your question, no, that information is completely free. And any of our consultants by phone by email, are able to provide that information.

Brad Smith: Wow, that's terrific. What an amazing resource. So getting beyond salary, which obviously is very important and it's not only new incoming people that it's important for, but your existing staff. Beyond salary, though, what are the other reasons that you're hearing from people on why they're looking for a new job? We mentioned half of people are potentially looking for a new job, either actively or over the next year. What's the reason for it?

Amy Linn: I think right now are at an inflection point, we are experiencing change happen on a daily basis. And it is going to rewrite the social contract between employers and employees. It's almost as if the rules of the game are changing and the employees have the pen and are rewriting day by day. But I think the specific things that we are hearing in the market is the way their employer performed through the pandemic. How did they support their employees? Did they feel that they were valued during that timeframe? And in those organizations, there is less turnover.

Amy Linn: That trust has been forged, and they have built that relationship for a longer term with their internal employees. And in those organizations, the reason they're staying, and they're not part of the statistics that are looking, isn't just about the salary. And some of these places have implemented four-day work weeks, or they have no meeting Mondays, they're coming up with ways that they can show their employees that they value their time, they value them, the whole person. And they're following through on what they promised that employee that they would provide them with, that employment relationship that is reciprocal.

Brad Smith: You've mentioned that word promise so many times, we can't underscore the importance of that. There is trust, transparency, and promise that we all have to follow through on to make sure that employees are happy. Now, Amy, I've seen a lot of data that says that a lot of employees are leaving because of opportunity, or a lack of opportunity at their existing employer. And a lot of those things that you just mentioned and what was presented to them throughout the pandemic and how employers handled that and opportunities for growth really play into whether somebody stays or leaves an organization. What are you seeing in the market right now? And what are employers doing to help their employees grow and grow organically within the organization as opposed to leaving?

Amy Linn: You're right, we did talk a lot about trust and I'm about to bring up another really important key word, and that is training. We have found that one of the first questions our candidates are asking when we're presenting an opportunity from one of our clients is, what is offered to them as far as growth in training and development? Where can they go within the organization and what tools are they going to be given to get there? This is a cross generation, so a lot has been written about the generation entering the workforce and how quickly they want to advance.

Amy Linn: But this is not limited to the incoming millennial generation, I think, this is across the board. What training is being offered to me and what that signal to an employee is the value proposition, that they are viewed as more than just entering this role and the expectation being that they would stay in that role for the next 25 years, and then retire with the gold watch. I mean, that is out the window. So, the value proposition for trust extends to training, you are going to help me grow in my career through resources that you have within this organization. And the reciprocal is that, I then will help you meet your business goals through the training you've provided me.

Brad Smith: Terrific. Amy, staying on training for a minute, with the shortage of talent today, and we hear this in the news all the time, there's a pandemic or a lack of talent right now, are you seeing companies invest training in people with little or no experience, or are they still looking for people with degrees, with certifications, with a year or two of experience?

Amy Linn: The employers that are still being prescriptive in their job descriptions that they require the four-year degree, they're going to require three years of experience, they need these specific programs. Those employers unfortunately are losing the war for talent. Those that are more adaptable today and really evaluating, is that's what your degree necessary for this role? Is industry experience necessary for this role? Is software experience exposure necessary? Or can I train to those things? Can I bring somebody in from an industry that has transferable skills, teach them my industry, teach them my

software and provide them a path to advance? Those are the employers that are winning.

Brad Smith: Got you. Switching gears a little bit. You mentioned some things earlier that employers are doing to really attract and retain talent. You mentioned things like a four-day work week, no meeting Mondays, we're hearing of companies that are going hybrid or remote, so allowing employees to work from home so that there's a little bit more work home balance. When it comes to remote work or work from home opportunities, are you seeing that a lot in your market? And how are companies adapting?

Amy Linn: Are we seeing that a lot in our market? Every candidate that calls and inquires about opportunities that we have available, the very first question they ask is, it remote or is there a hybrid work schedule? In fact, before the pandemic, only one in about 70 jobs that were posted, listed anything regarding remote work. Now, it's one in seven.

Brad Smith: Wow.

Amy Linn: So, it is absolutely not only a trend, but it is a competitive advantage. If employees are seeking out employers, in fact, they're two and a half times more likely to respond to an ad if it mentions the opportunity for remote work, then employers that want to remain competitive and win the war for talent have to evaluate that as an opportunity.

Brad Smith: Amy, you mentioned several things that you're seeing in the market with employers changing, maybe going to a four-day work week, looking at that hybrid model, offering remote, what other changes are employers making to make their organizations, their companies, more attractive to talent and to retain their existing employees?

Amy Linn: I think that goes back to the beginning of the conversation with the employer brand and really looking at, do you remember when you were in school and you had to show your work? I think about that a lot when we're talking with clients that we serve or prospective clients, and they're wanting to show their work, they're wanting that social proof, that what they're saying, what their promise is is actually being followed through in the workplace. And so they're doing things like putting a larger focus on celebrating their internal diversity, maybe they're celebrating women in leadership.

Amy Linn: When somebody gets an internal promotion that isn't just anymore in the internal newsletter, but that's going out on social media. When somebody's recognized in the industry, that something that senior leadership is taking note of. So, it is telling their story in a way that not only helps to reengage their internal workforce, but they are showing that employer brand to perspective employees. And in so, what we found really interesting is they're gaining more

referrals for new employees and in that way, they are helping to beat, if you will, the pandemic situation that you mentioned with the lack of available employees where can they get them through referrals.

Brad Smith: I love that concept of telling that story of showing your work. As a company, you can have the greatest employee value proposition ever internally, but if that's not reaching externally, if that story isn't being told, you're not going to reap those benefits. Now, PrideStaff, I want to commend you, first of all, you've done an amazing job of getting your staff, your employees to tell that story for you. If you look at any PrideStaff office in any market, they're in most cases one of the highest rated most rated staffing companies in every market that you're in. How did you do that?

Amy Linn: It's every experience that we have with an employee, a potential employee. Our goal is to help that individual find work, whether it's through PrideStaff or whether it's helping them to update their resume, gain new skills and find employment outside of PrideStaff. If we reach that goal of helping them along the way in their job search, we've made an impact on their life, we've lived our mission. And in so doing, they're going to refer their friends, their family to us. We just had a story, we had a couple come into our office yesterday and bring breakfast for our entire team. I swear, Brad, it was probably three dozen bagels and cream cheese and all of the toppings that they brought in, just to say, thank you that we-

Brad Smith: Wow.

Amy Linn: ... Recognized them as an individual and asked what else they could do for us. I think it's those types of experiences that people are going to not only talk about at their dinner table, but they're going to take the time to put a review on Glassdoor or on Google, on Yelp. They're going to share that story. And we look at that from a consulting perspective with their clients as well. Can we coach them through the experiences they're creating for their internal teams and help craft them in a way that is true to their brand and helps them to retain and find referral employees as well.

Brad Smith: Amy, that is so powerful. You and I both know that the quality of an employee referral often outpaces other sources, and those are so powerful. And I love that you've defined your EVP. You have an extremely strong corporate mission. You live that day in and day out. And those stories come organically, not that you don't have to work for it because you do work for it. You do work to deliver on that promise, but just by delivering on that promise, you're creating amazing value proposition and employees are becoming advocates for you.

Brad Smith: They're becoming recruiting sources, they're becoming referral sources, and it is so powerful. Amy, I want to, first of all, thank you, great insight today. So

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many amazing tips that hopefully everyone listening can implement in their own organizations to enhance their employee value proposition, recruit more people and retain their staff. But I want to close by asking you a simple question. We've talked about a lot of things here. What happens if an employer doesn't adapt? If they don't embrace these things, what's the risk?

Amy Linn: I mentioned earlier that I felt like this was an inflection point, the war for talent. I guess employers just have to ask themselves, do you want your story to look like Netflix or Blockbuster? And I think being able to adapt to what's going on in the market is the story of Netflix being in front of what it is employees are seeking in their employment relationship and providing it. So it's really not an option.

Brad Smith: I love that, it really is not an option. If you don't do this, you are going to become Blockbuster, unfortunately. And you can't wait to adapt, because as other organizations adapt shift, they are going to get the top talent and you're going to be left behind trying to scrape together talent to fill seats instead of creating innovation, creating leadership, and building yourself as an expert and a leader in your industry.

Brad Smith: Amy, thank you again. Great insight today. For those that are listening, I want to encourage you to reach out to PrideStaff, visit pridestaff.com. Take advantage of those compensation reports in the data that Amy mentioned, take advantage of the consultation and the strategic leadership. Having another set of eyes in your organization can be extremely powerful and helpful to make sure that you have the right EVP in place that you're living your mission and you're following through on promises. So Amy, thank you again so much today,

Amy Linn: A pleasure, Brad. And if we are able to help those organizations achieve their goals, we will achieve ours.

Brad Smith: Amy. I love that concept of fulfilling your mission and helping other organizations fulfill theirs too. It's mutually beneficial. Thank you all so much for listening. I hope you find value in today's episode and can implement a lot of the ideas that Amy shared in your own organizations. Take care.

Closing: Thank you for listening to Strategic Insights brought to you by PrideStaff. Whether you're looking for high level workforce consulting or staffing help to meet demands, PrideStaff is here to help.