

Alan:

Hi Tom good to see you again

Tom:

Good to see you again too Alan

Alan:

So for those that don't know you could you give us a quick introduction as to who you are and what you do?

Tom:

Sure yeah Tom Baker I've been in talent acquisition for about 25 years leading organisations as well as effecting change across organisations a lot of it being around employer brand technology strategies amongst other things.

Alan:

On that point of employer brand this is topic that I certainly want to know more about an organisation starting from scratch who wants to get out and communicate their employer brand to the world for the purpose of clearly hiring better people where should they start?

Tom:

I guess really it's you're trying through an employer brand to create a distinctively interesting and attractive place to work and then communicating that to the talent and skill sets of individuals that you actually need so it has to align first and foremost to you know the strategy the business what is it trying to achieve and then also from from that sort of angle it's about understanding what are the skills talents motivations required within that talent base to actually help the business achieve that strategy so it's must start with the future direction of the business but really then it has to start to look at you know the motivations of its current employees and understanding where it is here and now versus what it wants to project in the future both to its current but also potential employees the company wants to attract as well.

Alan:

How does EVP play into all this then?

Tom:

So EVP is my kind of description of it is like employer brand sort of the the entire experience of the meal but the EVPs and the key ingredients and its really comes down to a lot of people sort of say the give and the get the sort of the real intrinsic pieces about you want to get those skills motivations talent innovation from individuals but the give it's quite often can be very tangential intanbgentic it can be you know that the benefits the opportunity the innovation the development the training sense of purpose of the organisation and it's a it's a number of those attributes and in a

facilitation of what the employee will get as being a part of the you know a strong committed advocate of the employee of the company what is it you're going to give them in order for them to feel all committed to give you the skills and and you know the horsepower within their skill set to help you achieve what you need.

Alan:

So it's your side of the deal in essence what are you giving lambing for return for their time?

Tom:

Indeed it's the gate it's very much I think I was explaining to a chief exec of one of the banks he said don't give him this HR speak he said I said well it's everything you do and say to keep and to attract people to your company in order for them to you know to be part of the valuable fabric of the organisation.

Alan:

So assuming we kind of know what an EVP of employee value proposition is how does an organisation go about defining their particular EVP what are the kind of techniques?

Tom:

Well there's certainly elements that are fully more sort of operation in terms of the you know the benefits and the and the the environment that dynamic dynamism of the workplace the flexibility there the technology but I think one of the key things about the EVP elements of understanding what is the attraction personas really your understanding the personas of the of the the skill sets and talent that you want for the organisation so you know as you know and it's probably very much become this sort of marketing pull facet rather than the sales push of it and like marketing that they have consumer personas you're having employee personas what is the sort of backgrounds the social the desires the ambitions what are the objections what are the what are the real red red signs to some people that you need to be aware of in breaking down this talent skill sets into personas in therefore being able to sort of put the right sort of messages out to them through through through the EVP facets as it were.

So your EVP is the kind of overarching this is what we offer all of our employees yes and some loose culture that kind of reverberates across the organisation but you then go down so this is where you get to a granular level so how you target sales person is gonna be different to how you from target a techie and that's right and it's about being able to be sort of fairly granular like it like a consumer traits about what you want but you've got to make sure that you're not mis selling it's got it there's obviously consistency across a macro level but at the micro level the language you use the channels the places that you actually talk to the sorts of style of language and messages you're putting out visual as well as written has to sort of resonate with these

groups and these personas really.

I know there's not a one-stop-shop answer to every single organisation every organisation has its own idiosyncrasies and needs desires etc and but once you've got to that point of defining your EVP and the personas that you you want to target in hand potentially how you're going to talk to those individuals what's the next step than to kind of activating that employee brand I guess there's the piece about creating the the employee brand framework and the creative and the narrative around it but then actually activating it in the channels and I say channel is a bit of a broad term but you know there are a number and obviously they with innovation and technology they've broadened in the recent decades so the career site is certainly I think a core channel that some people it flippantly say it's so it's not as important it is very important actually is how it is curated and well how its presented is very different in the modern era but the careers site the social media channels having testimonial having even finding the right sort of micro channel specialist channels whether it's dribbble github Stack Overflow if you're looking at a technology sort of channels of engagement of your EVP you need to understand the build up of all these sort of major facets to activating the employer brand.

Alan:

You say having a career site is important- why is that?

Tom:

There's a kind of a place where it comes together we all know that those that are passive or active are are being approached in different sort of touching on the shoulder or even actively if you're in Google jobs now you're being served up you know content and and links that are paid or otherwise to to you to your organisation the career site needs to sort of bring it alive the EVP and the brand in its totality it's a place where people want to sort of get a feel for the essence of the organisation want a feel I trust see a lot more is that it's the word I should be using them read it because it's they'll want to see video they want to see people they won't see individuals they want to hear about what's the purpose and value of this company as well as what would I get if I don't work there so it needs to sort of it's a great place to actually bring it together as well as being the right place to say come and come why come and work for us as well.

Alan:

Do you have to have the careers site- does it need to be perfect the day you launch it can you build on it and grow and develop it over time that's a good point I think I think you kind of answer it in the question there I think there's a more of a move towards look you know start with something yes it needs to be consistent and there's two parts of that sort of brand about the corporate brand and there may be if you offer in consumer products or services to consumer services brand so you've

got to ensure that there isn't completely left field and contradictory but as long as it's that how big or small it you start somewhere start with some some good key messages about what the organisation's about what it's trying to do was its purpose as well as saying this is this is people who work it this is the real us because that's what a lot of potential people considering working for your organisation want to see what are they like it would it be fun will I learn will I grow you know that sort of thing.

Alan:

Some recruitment leaders say to me look we will have an amazing career so we want to really smash this employee brand thing we want everybody to see it as a destination a career that everybody will want the place to work but they're not marketeers what can they leverage internally from other colleagues outside of the recruitment function to kind of help?

Tom:

Yeah I think it's definitely the this world in the employer brand EVP and bringing it alive in a careers site is usually bringing together of minds now off the marketing of HR, leadership and also business leadership it's the seats we have really it's it's it's cataclysmic if you're sort of putting out this wonderful digital virtual picture of your brand and your the EVP components within that and then actually all leaders goes off and talks about something completely completely at odds with that and there and doesn't actually live the in behavioural or all presentation the purpose or values is completely adjunct to that it's it's going to have challenges so there is you know marketing leadership HR need to come together there's a number of facets within this.

Alan:

What can organisations do around the elements of their employee run that they can't control so there's stuff that they push out the other careers site and even to a certain extent some of the social stuff that either them or their employee put out there then this there so if they can't control?

Tom:

Yes you're referring to some of these you know there there is I guess it's like people actually say one of the best definitions of employer run you know probably both heard is about what people say about you when you're not in the room that's the real the real essence of it I think you've got to be act with integrity honesty and transparency because I think treating your potential in your employees or potential employees sort of fairly ignorant consumers is a big mistake you know people see through stuff pretty quickly and you have to be able to honest you know respond honestly I know there's a lot of challenge around you know the crowdsource sort of

feedback sort of environment that we're in but if you're going to engage in it engage in it properly be prepared to respond to it even if it's saying we haven't got this right yet but we're working on it or we're picking up on an individual level saying actually I'd like to take this offline and catch up with you there's obviously a resource and a time component to that but you know if you're going to start to engage in these channels be prepared to respond to it in the right way and not sort of just ignore it all just put bland messages out there people think you don't really care about it.

Alan:

So one of them an organisation's biggest strengths of course is their employees yeah but often for the purposes of recruitment they're not really utilised the best way what can organisations do to make the most of their colleagues in terms of using them as recruitment channels?

Tom:

Yeah you're right you know employee advocacy amongst your only employee but especially you imagine the scale and the multiplication factor of a large organisation is very powerful I think it starts with actually having honest delivery to those employees through of your EVP so if your EVP is working, then people are sort of committed there and they're motivated they're probably energised and then the actual become advocates and that's the piece you're referring to there Alan about how you actually operationalise that advocacy is because you should have really been including them giving feedback and genuinely acting upon that feedback about their experience of various traits of the EVP what you know you committed to great growth and development of me but I've have no access to any learning or what then you're failing on it so actually by delivering on your own EVP problems is one part and then there's obviously technologies and platforms by which you actually ask an engagement saying look you know to be part of how you were as a potential employee we need we want your honest engagement feedback and an actually quite often is a lot of it is its engagement pre in that the candidates in the talent pipeline with those individuals say look this is what it's good bad this is what I like this is what you'll find this is the real me this is what how I find it so you can through various tools whether they be social media or digital brand platforms you can actually engage those employees with potential employees or or to actually talk to what the reality is and they see it as self fulfilling because they want an engaging happy place to be working in and they don't want you know people coming to mess it up for them either so it becomes a bit of a two-way two-way street in that regard so if they're proud of where they work they're quite happy to tell the world about it it's advocacy it all comes down to that and actually advocacy is one of the key positive outcomes if you get your EVP right if you're delivering on the EVP you're delivering on the promises to bring on

not just beneficial commercial ones but you're living on the we actually are creating innovation we are creating dynamic workspace we are actually investing in your development people actually prepared to talk about it in the positive light.

Alan:

So we talked earlier about career sites and how they are important what's kind of minimum kind of criterion says what your career site needs to include what are people generally looking for?

Tom:

I think they're looking for actually a little bit more visual interaction with it I think because they all have to be mobile it has to be mobile responsive whilst there's still a lot of debate about how whether people actually take the final last step application but I'll come to that in a second it has to be mobile responsive it has to be clean it has to be visual I think video content delivering interesting with you can't hearing from people testimonials is quite a big thing has to be within there talking to some people just talk very lightly to the EVP you know they'll just have a sentence it'll be you know they're they're sort of call call to arms vision of their EVP some actually going to the details of these are all the benefits and things you can expect from us and of course critically has to have that that call to arms that commitment to apply for a job and that has to be really easy to use people are still doing this great stuff and then going pinch and zoom because they've implemented an ATS front end that sticks in there and drop downs and pinch and zoom screen and they're over it so Oh 18 fields and I can't do this possibly so it really needs to be sort of fairly because as you can measure as you need to sort of see whether this is working you can see nowadays through technology what is working what isn't working within your query site.

Alan:

For those organisations that have been hampered by a legacy applicant tracking system that doesn't do all the bells and whistles or he does it doesn't do a very presentable way to the to the end user or the applicant and what could people put in place that come back to there in between the ATS and the career site to serve jobs up in a nice way?

Tom:

Yeah I think that's is where we've seen the CRM solutions and the candidate engagement solutions that are out there really starting to offer they're more of what's the experiential engagement for you to be I like to wear them to understand discover interact and apply in in that in that sense I mean an engagement and serving up content that comes quite personalised in it and that's your almost as a sort of consumer if you like candidate going this is what I'd like to hear about this is what's

intriguing me and you're also measuring at the employer end you're saying this is where they're looking this is what they're clicking on this is what they're opening this is what they're responding to this is actually what they're feeling back on likings 5 starring etc so you're starting to get some you know feedback as well in that process so there are CRM tools out there that really help in this regard and they're quite easy to sort of plug and play because yes the interface between the old-school ATS is in there and the new world of sort of you know digital engagement through brand and career sites is is is is is a problem that's being solved in lots of different ways right now.

Alan:

We touched briefly on measurements how does an organisation measure whether their employer brand strategy is actually working or not?

Tom:

Number of different ways and I think it's it's useful because you've got a come back and I'm quite vociferous about making sure you engage the current employees as well as the potential ones so you know we we know that there's well in fact moving away from the old-fashioned employee surveys there's there's some quite immediate feedback that can be given through through various apps and through various social tools whether it be Yammer or Salesforce or either anything internally you can actually give some real-time feedback so you do need to collect collect that and it could be more prescriptive and and and granular with your own employees so you you can get that feedback from them from others you get the tools and technologies out there in the CRM the most up-to-date ATS is have provided as well as some of the brand content technologies is that you can actually measure it quite an incredible amount of as you're aware of of what's working and what's clicking and what's the pipeline fallout rates what's not not being opened and even down to the point as is is really helpful in the in the commercial investment side of things in the pay per click sort of world of if you like eyeball engagement is technology actually automatically direct your activity to the to the points of most effectiveness they're actually measuring in real time you know tools like click IQ etc it can actually really do this so there's a there's an increasing amount of I guess machine learned technologies being implemented dashboards are prevalent you're measuring pipelines you're measuring candidate activities but you also you can get real-time feedback as well from from tools and technologies that act on that feedback for you.

Alan:

We talked briefly there about some of the technologies that can help- are you seeing organisations using chat BOTS more and more?

Tom:

I think actually as even funny in fixing it within business about customers and consumers as well because they're their real logic

trees and one at the basic sense that have that opportunity to to give very immediate quick it feels like live interaction FAQ feedback on a number of key things that get people to the answers they want and I've I'm sure as you have seen a number of survey results saying actually you know the the satisfaction rates of dealing with chat box is in this 70th 80th percentile people are quite happy to say actually I'll get through if it gets me to the right place if it answers those really questions I might feel a bit dumb about asking if I was actually in a live conversation with an potential employer and get you to sometimes even to the shortcut through some of the content I would like to look at another time get me to the quick answers very very astutely so it is it is that they're now actually starting to happen.

Alan:

So what's the link between corporate brand and employer brand?

Tom:

I think it's quite important because potential employees are they're buying into a brand they're not necessarily buying into a company per se so it's a there's a very key link about how employer brands are leveraging off the corporate brand or trying to influence it sometimes just recently universal and published they're quite you know prestigious about a quarter of a million survey graduates about the most attractive employer brands to work for and there's been some interesting changes in there if you think about whilst interestingly some of the banks have come back since the days of the 2008 crash because they still offer some of the biggest future potential earnings one of the biggest EVP traits that's still amongst the top two or three but their sense of purpose is changing as well so one of the places I used to work for started this back back when I was there Barclay's which went through huge brand damage you know through the whole LIBOR scandal and things but actually if you look at anything and quite a lot of television advertising around life skills or digital Eagles about they're actually putting a different sense of purpose out there so they've built a completely different we're not just here to make money out of retail customers we're trying to actually educate and help people in their careers and actually regeneration that digital banking is not being good for so interesting and similarly in the other direction like Facebook actually fallen about ten places out of the top twenty you could say give them what happened last year with the whole Cambridge analytic era and data privacy breaches they didn't deliver on their EVP which is sort of connecting the wealth for every single one of us and one of their key pillars of EVP being being open will they open with our data so there's some interesting Andy and also to automotive sector that the Volvo's the Ford the Dane layers have moved up in the eyes of these Business and Technology graduates that they serve a quarter of a million of them globally because they're creating a sense of purpose around actually

creating sustainable you know transport you know the electric car and actually interesting in that regard as well actually driverless cars or the Tesla's you know that you're creating you know the things that aren't going to harm the planet it's so there's some interesting connections between the purpose of the organisation and the corporate brand actually what they stand for how they behave as a corporate entity like it may be a face book and the bank starting to turn around and and show a sense of purpose that's a bit slightly more beneficial than just getting paid well.

Alan:

That's sort of the reason for the two teams to keep close to each other and make sure the messaging isn't too divergent from the other?

Tom:

That's right very much so although there's also there's always a piece about employer branding but you're trying to be distinctive and actually if I think I looked at the Accenture that Deloitte the IBM and the Microsoft they all use the impact they all used impact so also there's also a challenge about yes they are all being impactful about the new world of digital change and and and recalibrating corporate organisations but trying to be distinctive is also a bit of a challenge for some of them as well so that's that's a part of it.

Alan:

I guess the best way of then doing that final bit of distinction is show you people show who they are that's the real difference isn't it the actual individuals?

Tom:

That's it and you know people actually connect with that on that on a very personal level very very easily the purpose thing has become quite a big big piece I think, you know what's the sense of purpose which it's difficult you know if you're a regulator organisation or as I previously was a tobacco organisation you know there's a bit more of a different difficult connection because you're regulated not to actually connect with your consumer products so what is your sense of what is it you do what is it you offer so you have to connect with something else about your EVP about the challenge of working there and and the internationalisation of it and so on so it really does need the you know the the business strategy the marketing and the HR to come together on these things.

Alan:

Fascinating, thanks Tom.

