

glassdoor

An exclusive report on employer branding

# Your Talent Is Talking

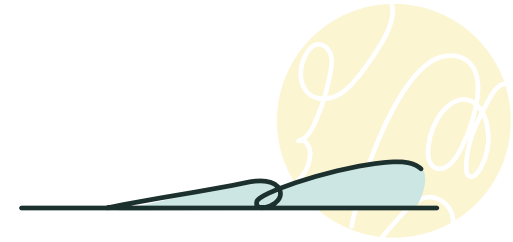
Listen in to what matters to them today.  
(Hint: It's transparency.)

September 2022





# Contents



03	Introduction
04	Methodology
05	Executive summary
06	Talent is talking. Here's what they told us.
06	What matters most: Transparency
08	What matters most: The company's brand
10	What matters most: Keeping their options open
11	Mind the gaps
15	Follow the leaders
19	Employer brand makeover cheat sheet
20	Where ya headed?



# Introduction

COVID-19, the rush to remote and hybrid work, and economic pressures have transformed the state of work in ways we're just beginning to absorb. Employees have found agency over their lives that they didn't know they were missing, and they aren't going back to the way things were before. The genie is out of the bottle.

Employees want to feel like they can be authentic at work. They want to feel safe sharing their opinions. They want employers to listen to and act on their feedback, and to deliver on promises made during the recruitment process. Leading employers agree that this is important, too, as they seek to promote a satisfying workplace and retain talent.

As of this writing, the potential of a recession looms. What that means for this power shift, we will all see. But, we do know that post [Great Resignation](#) and the [Great Re-negotiation](#), the conversation starters and deal breakers are not what they used to be.

Glassdoor surveyed job seekers, employees, and employers to understand what matters the most to talent — and where employers are winning and falling short. Our survey showed across

the board how imperative employee experience and workplace transparency — open, honest two-way dialogue with leadership — is to employee satisfaction and retention. **We also discovered that companies with the strongest employer branding practices are also the ones that prioritize transparency.**

We'll dive into what transparency practices employees value the most and why. We'll also cover what strong employer branding looks like now, review the journey and evolution of employer branding (and ask you to consider where your company is on the continuum), and emphasize how employers can evolve their practices to embed transparency and authenticity into their workplaces.

With the information contained in this report, we invite you to consider which practices you can adopt or adjust to close the communication gap between you and your employees. With investment in the right areas and taking heed of your employees' voices, you can emerge as a stronger company, with job seekers who not only can't wait to join, but also will stay and thrive in your organization.



# Methodology

The information in this report is derived from two surveys fielded May 16–30, 2022.

## Employer survey

We gathered input from **475** employer branding, employee experience, and talent acquisition professionals with at least six months of experience employed full-time by organizations with at least 100 employees.

- **105** responses from professionals employed by small or medium businesses (between 100 and 1,000 employees) in the United States
- **259** responses from professionals employed by enterprise businesses (1,000+ employees) in the United States
- **56** responses from professionals employed by enterprise businesses in the United Kingdom
- **55** responses from professionals employed by enterprises in Canada

## Talent survey

We also surveyed **850** employed professionals and job seekers in the United States.

- **300** job-seeking knowledge workers (e.g., attorneys, HR professionals, accountants, etc.)
- **300** employed, not job-seeking knowledge workers
- **250** skilled laborers, craftspeople, retail workers, the military, etc.





# Executive Summary

Our recent research has found that regardless of employer size or employee demographic, companies that operate on a culture of transparency are fairing the best in this new employer-employee dynamic. How your talent experiences your company, from the first recruitment outreach to the day-to-day at your company, determines the impact and legitimacy of your employer brand. When you deliver to employees what your brand promises, employees are happier at work and more likely to stay and fuel your employer brand with their positive voices and stories.

Our survey found:

- Employees are hungry for more information about the company, employee feedback, salary, and diversity, equity, and inclusion. More than a third of your workforce would like greater transparency.
- Employees are taking note of how often their employers just pay lip service to the feedback they offer. Many of them are unhappy with what they're seeing.
- Your employees want to work for a company with a mission and values they can be proud of. They want to see that mission reflected in the leadership team and culture as well.
- Your company's public reputation is the first impression you make on job seekers, and our data shows that it's an important driver in whether they recommend your company. With management and employee engagement as other big drivers, employee experience is at the center of whether employees will stay or leave.
- We found 80% of employees feel happy at work most of the time. But, that's not stopping them from keeping their resume current. Loyalty to a company comprises more than just keeping employees "happy."
- There's a notable gap between what employees want and what employers are doing. Those who identify as women and non-white employees are feeling a greater sense of disappointment and dissatisfaction as compared to men and white employees.
- Above average or leading employer brands monitor employee engagement on social media and professional forums, take action on employee feedback, develop candidate-facing content and communications to convey company culture, and keep an eye on employer brand health more than average or below-average employer brands.



# Talent is talking. Here's what they told us.

## What matters most: Transparency

Employees made it clear in our survey: transparency in all forms matters. Yet, many employers are falling short in this area, and their employees would not recommend their company to others.

### Transparency, as we see it

- Authenticity
- Following through on the promises made during recruitment
- Being open and honest about successes, failures, setbacks, possibilities, and pivots
- Proactively sharing the decisions that affect employees' careers and livelihood
- Admitting to mistakes and working together toward a resolution

*"Employees can tell if you're holding something back. When you take that transparency out of it, you're leaving space for insecurity, which means people are questioning things instead of being able to really flourish and contribute back to your organization."*

— Kieran Layton, Field People Officer, McDonald's

**Finding:** Employees are hungry for more information about the company, salary, and diversity, equity, and inclusion. More than a third of respondents would like greater transparency.



of employees surveyed feel a lack of clear, transparent communications to employees (e.g., all hands meetings, newsletters, town halls)



of employees surveyed are less than satisfied with company communication with the public (e.g., press releases, public employer branding, etc.)



of employees surveyed are less than satisfied with the sharing of salary information for all levels within the organization with employees



of employees surveyed are less than satisfied with the sharing of DEI goals and progress on meeting these goals



**Finding:** Employees are taking note of how often their employers just pay lip service to the feedback they offer. Many of them are unhappy with what they're seeing.



of employees surveyed are less than satisfied with how employers engage employees



of employees surveyed are less than satisfied with whether their employer asks for employee feedback in the first place



of employees surveyed are less than satisfied with follow up on employee feedback with meaningful action



of employees surveyed are less than satisfied with the sharing of results from employee surveys, polls, etc.

## What it means

At least a third of the workforce craves greater transparency. They want employers to provide it, encourage it, and respond to their attempts at being more transparent. It's fair to deduce that employees want the practice of open and honest dialogue

embedded in the culture, as a given in their day-to-day experience with you. In this competitive hiring landscape, offering transparency could be the edge you need to keep employees who place it at a high value.

### Action Item: Lean into transparency

Your first step is to elevate employee voice. Ask for and respond to employee feedback. Give talent a sense that you hear them and are building an action plan. Even if you cannot take concrete steps to address concerns right now, let employees know that as well. If you receive negative or critical feedback, respond constructively. Try to never leave employee comments unacknowledged, as this damages employee experience and therefore your brand.

*"If you have employee inputs into your employer brand on day one, you have the opportunity to gain an employee's trust because what they show up and experience is what you told them that they would experience. The flip of that is if you haven't infused those employee voices into your employer brand, you have the opportunity to lose their trust on day one."*

— Kelby Tansey, Manager of Recruitment Marketing,  
Southwest Airlines

## What matters most: The company's brand

Employees want a company they're proud to support so they can bring their authentic enthusiasm to the workplace. Your company's brand also reflects upon their personal brand — granting them bragging rights or alternatively, burdening them with the need to justify why they work with you. Companies that align with employee values have a better chance of earning their loyalty.

**Finding:** Your employees want to work for a company with a mission and values they can be proud of. So it's no surprise that they want to see that mission reflected in the leadership team and culture as well.

**69%** of employees surveyed say it's extremely/very important that their employer has a brand they are proud to support

**70%** of employees surveyed report that it is extremely/very important that the leadership team that actively promotes the company's values and culture

**Finding:** Your company's public persona is the first impression you make on job seekers, and our data shows that it's an important driver in whether they recommend your company. With management and employee engagement as other big drivers, employee experience is at the center of whether employees will stay or leave.

### Top 3 drivers of employee's likelihood to recommend their company

1

#### Public-facing Brand and Communications

How the public views the company overall and the news they hear related to it

2

#### Management

How people in management represent the company mission and values and how they treat their employees

3

#### Employee Engagement

How employees engage in the mission and their overall satisfaction with their experience at the company



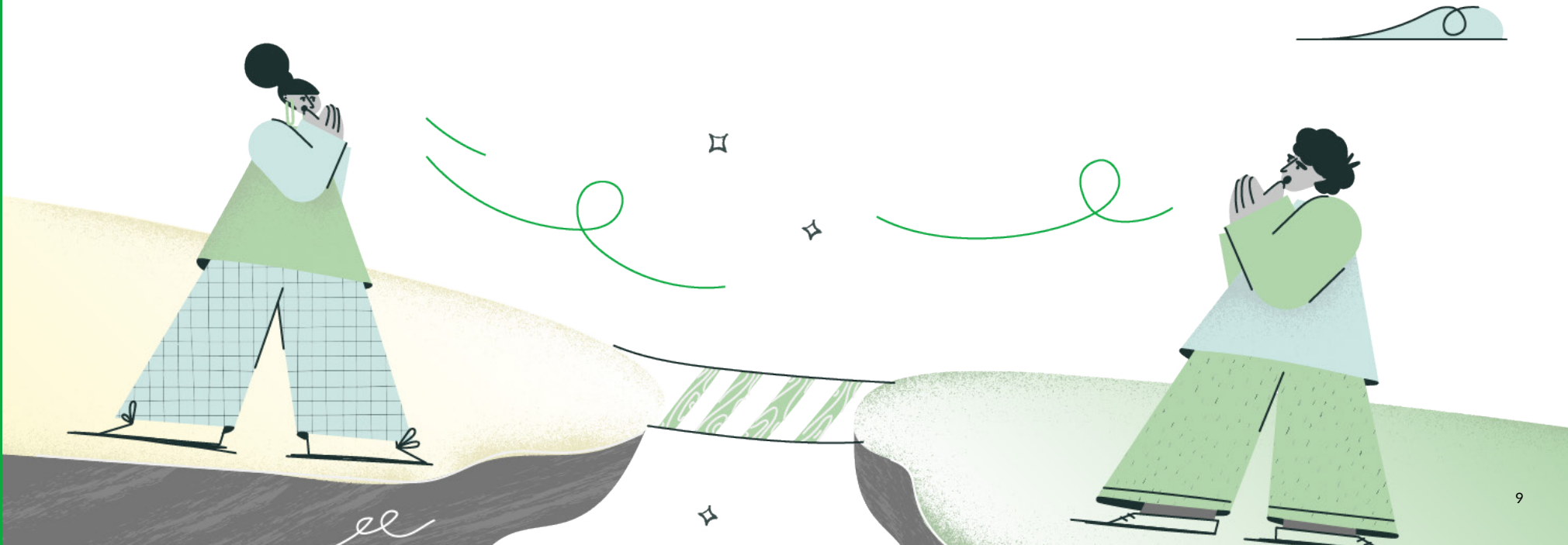
## What this means

Talent takes great stock into how your company presents itself to the world. Your company's public persona piques their interest to learn more about who you are as an employer, inclusive of your employee value proposition, how your employees experience your company, and how leaders engage with them. In this regard, your public persona is a gateway to your employer brand, which is reliant on how you treat your employees.

The feelings talent has about working at a company signifies the health of your employer brand in real time. They talk about what it's like inside the company to others on the outside. We found that focusing on that employee experience is the most important way to improve how you are perceived. It can both improve retention and attract new talent. **The majority of employers surveyed agree, with 82% saying that their employees' experience is a big part of their employer brand.**

## Action item: Build an employer brand dream team

Developing an employer brand can take a village. Leading employers enlist employee experience, marketing, communications, and talent acquisition, and they have a dedicated team of employer brand practitioners. Often, they develop an [employee value proposition](#) that they live by. If your company is smaller, you may not have all these teams, but even identifying one cross-functional champion across these teams will help your brand level up in the right direction. Adopting just a few practices can help your brand level up.





## What matters most: Keeping their options open

Naturally, unhappy employees are at high risk of leaving your company and deserve your focused attention. But our survey showed that even those workers who are satisfied are still searching for or open to new job opportunities.

**Finding:** There is good news and bad news. Let's start with the good: 80% of employees surveyed strongly or somewhat agree with the statement "I feel happy at work most of the time.<sup>8</sup>" However, that's not stopping them from keeping their resume current.

**42%** of surveyed employees are highly likely to recommend their current employer to a friend

**58%** of those most satisfied employees\* are either searching or open to a new job if the right opportunity presents itself

### What this means

Meeting employees' basic needs or simply making them "happy" no longer translates to high levels of loyalty. If you want to retain them, you need to give them additional reasons to stick around.

\* We define the "most satisfied employees" as promoters of their current employers (i.e., those who rated their likelihood to recommend their employer as a 9 or 10 on a scale of 0 to 10).

### Action item: Nail the basics

Our survey showed that there are a few things employees must experience in order to be excited to work for their employers. These are table stakes, so investing in these will get you to the starting line.

- Pay employees fairly and equitably
- Invest in DEI programs and other inclusive practices
- Support employee wellness with great benefits

**What employees say they need and what employers focus on is mismatched. And some employees have it worse than others.**



## Mind the gaps

The things employers are focused on are not all the same things that matter most to employees. **Non-white employees and women are feeling the brunt of this disconnect and most likely to feel unseen and unheard.**

*"Diversity and inclusion is throughout our EVP strategy. We founded associate-led ERGs ... we're really trying to be bolder with our imagery... whether it's somebody with a sleeve of tattoos or a nose ring because that's what you really see when you go into some of our animal hospitals. We're trying to make sure that we also are showing an accurate perception of what our associate population looks like."*

— Ally Brown, VCA Animal Hospitals, Brand Manager,  
Employer Brand and Recruiting

**Finding:** There's a notable gap between what employees want and what employers are doing. It might be time to re-think where you're putting your resources.



### On support

**73%** of employees surveyed say it's extremely/very important that their employer encourages them to reach out for help when they need it

**65%** are satisfied with their employers performance

### On fair pay

**81%** of employees surveyed say that it's extremely/very important for their employer to pay employees fairly & equitably

**66%** are satisfied with their employers performance

### On benefits

**75%** of employees surveyed say that it's extremely/very important that their employer supports employee wellness with great benefits

**65%** are satisfied with their employers' performance



**Finding:** Those who identify as women and non-white employees are feeling a greater sense of disappointment and dissatisfaction as compared to men and white employees.

*Promises kept*



say their employers deliver on most promises



say their employers deliver on most promises

*On being themselves*



say their employers allow them to bring their  
authentic selves to work

*On fair pay*



feel satisfied that their employer pays fairly  
and equitably



### On inclusion



feel satisfied that their employer makes all  
employees feel included and valued

### On feeling safe to share



say their employer creates an environment where  
employees feel safe to share their opinions

### On communicating big changes



feel satisfied that their employer is clear about big  
changes that will affect employees' workload

*"A commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion is the best way to transform your employee experience because it literally touches all aspects, both the system as well as the culture mindset. Because when the most marginalized person in your company feels empowered to be their authentic self, they can contribute their best ideas. And that will absolutely impact your culture and your bottom line."*

— Jacob Little, Senior Director, People Experience,  
D&I and Talent Acquisition, Glassdoor



## What this means

Across the board, women and non-white employees feel less able to bring their whole selves to work and less valued and appreciated by their employers. These groups are more susceptible to looking elsewhere for fulfillment and less likely to speak highly of their employers. Remember, a large portion of your happiest employees are actively looking or open to another opportunity, so leaving the needs of women and non-white employees unaddressed sets your company up for avoidable turnover.

### Action item: Commit to creating an inclusive culture

Create employee resource groups, make sure they're funded, supported, and promoted, and that employees have time in their schedule to participate. Encourage allyship and provide training on how to do it well. Set diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) goals in talent outreach, vendor relationships, leadership representation, and more, and take steps to reach them. And don't forget to share progress. Your employees want to know and your potential new hires may be interested as well.

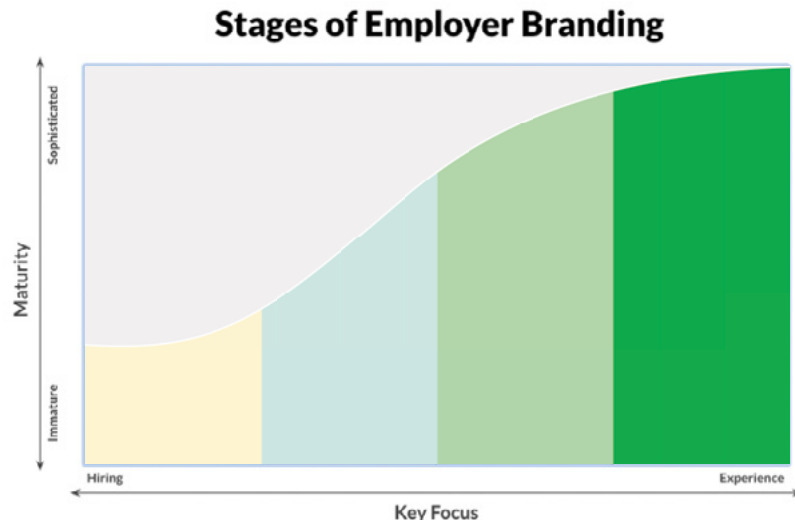
# The brands with the most evolved employer branding strive for a culture of open dialogue and feedback and have a robust employer branding operation.





# Follow the leaders

We've talked a lot about what employees want, how some employers are falling short, and how the needs of women and non-white employees are unmet more than men and white employees. But employers operating with these less-than-satisfying practices can turn it around. Employer branding is a continuum, so whether your company is just starting or well into your employer brand journey, there are lessons here for you too.



Employers with strong employer brands — the leading group — make transparency central to their company cultures. They put more effort into being upfront with job seekers about employee experience, responding to employee feedback, and actively developing their brand.

Here's how they do it.

## Starting

- Employer brand: Undefined
- Candidates' perceptions are based on interactions with the company as a customer, or on third-party sources, such as reviews or media coverage
- Hiring is done through traditional talent acquisition channels, such as job boards and your corporate career site
- Pain point is attracting enough appropriate candidates
- Next step: Identify the challenges to meeting hiring goals, and begin strategizing how to overcome these challenges

## Developing

- Employer brand: Early stages, building a broader recruitment strategy
- Hiring is primarily done through traditional talent acquisition channels but open to experimenting with new channels
- Pain point is attracting enough qualified, 'right fit' candidates. Starting to understand your hiring challenges and how to overcome them
- Next step: Define your brand promise and embed it across your organization



**Finding:** Above average or leading employer brands monitor employee engagement on social media and professional forums, take action on employee feedback, develop candidate-facing content and communications to convey company culture, and keep an eye on employer brand health more than average or below-average employer brands.

#### *Commitment to employee experience*



agree that their employee experience is a big part of their employer brand

#### *Honest recruitment*



share employee experience sentiment with job seekers monthly or more often

## Growing

- Employer brand: Becoming formal but employee experience does not align
- Hiring strategy works to attract qualified candidates
- Pain point is the mismatch between brand promise and your employee experience.
- Next step: Identify and address challenges to a good employee experience, and communicate your brand promise internally

## Leading

- Employer brand: Strong, with good alignment between your brand promise and employee experience
- Hiring strategy works well. It's easier to attract and retain the best talent
- Pain point is maintaining your competitive advantage and you may lack the tools to gather/analyze engagement data to help you do this
- Next step: Monitor your employer brand and maintain its authenticity and attractiveness, both internally and externally





### Act on feedback



**81%** of leading employers surveyed



**65%** of average employers surveyed

take action on employee feedback monthly or more often

### Enlisting leaders



**85%** of leading/above average employers surveyed



**61%** of average/below average employers surveyed

have company leaders who are actively involved in employer branding efforts



**79%** of leading/above average employers surveyed



**58%** of average/below average employers surveyed

say their company's executives are engaged with building their employer brand

*"We partner with our marketing team. We partner with our employee experience team, with our communication team, both our internal comms, as well as teams like social business. In the last year, we've hired a little bit over 15,000 people."*

— Kelby Tansey, Manager of Recruitment





**Evolving your brand strategy consists of a series of small steps and large leaps.**

## What it means

Leading employer brands recognize that without investment in and maintenance of a valuable employee experience, their employer brand is at risk. If the public face of a company doesn't match the experience employees actually have, their employer brand is less credible. Companies with authentic employer brands are sharing the real deal with potential new hires, fostering a two-way dialogue with employees, taking feedback they receive to heart, and making changes. Plus, their leadership has bought into these practices. From the top down, “truth” is the goal. That being said, being a leading employer doesn't mean always getting it right. It's about the intention and desire to progress.

### Action item:

#### Turn your leaders into brand evangelists

Get the top brass involved in promoting company values and ensuring that they come alive internally, externally, and even within the product or service the company offers. Also, enlist their participation in posting and responding to comments from employees in online forums. This will send a message that employee voice is top of mind and a priority.



# Employer brand makeover cheat sheet

## Good

- Pay employees fairly and equitably
- Invest in DEI programs and other inclusive practices
- Support employee wellness with great benefits

## ✧ Better ✧

- Monitor and respond to employee engagement on social media and professional forums
- Take action on employee feedback
- Develop candidate-facing content and communications that accurately portray company culture
- Monitor overall employer brand health
- Respond to employee reviews somewhat regularly

## ✧✧ Best ✧✧

- Welcome employees to co-create company norms and culture
- Invite employees to collaborate on company vision and strategy
- Include employee input on decisions about resource allocation

Engage in the following monthly or more often:

- Take action on employee feedback
- Share employee experience sentiment with job seekers
- Respond to employee reviews
- Develop an employee value proposition and/or employer brand
- Engage their organization's executives in branding



*"When you're on these big corporate projects, sometimes you have a tendency to start losing sight of what the actual end goal is and what your users actually want. And so, we would utilize employee listening and the employee voice always to bring us back to that true voice."*

*Kieran Layton, Field People Officer, McDonald's*

**The employer branding journey will have twists, turns, climbs, and descents. Leaders can show you the way, but it's up to you to forge your own path.**



## Where ya headed?

Many employers like you are actively trying to manage their employee experience, but are a bit lost. Our goal was to offer actionable insight, to help you find that "ah-ha." We believe the sweet spot is tuning into the gap between what your employees really want as compared to what you are offering and then close that gap. We've found that taking down walls that block openness, encouraging two-way feedback, keeping promises, and practicing authenticity is the gateway to an optimal employee experience and therefore a more powerful employer brand. That's where you need to focus on adjusting your efforts to increase employee satisfaction, retention, and the likelihood of your talent recommending the company to others.

While our data offers guidance on where you might want to focus your efforts, keep in mind that your company, talent, and culture is one of a kind. What works at one organization may not work at another. The best thing you can do to improve your employer brand is to talk to your employees, listen to what they're saying, and take action on that feedback. Conduct live Q&As with management, anonymous employee surveys, monitor [Fishbowl](#) conversations, or read online reviews. These are all treasure troves of sentiment that can help guide your next steps.

*To learn more about how to evolve your employer brand, reach out to us. CTA TBD*

## About Glassdoor

Glassdoor is revolutionizing how people everywhere find jobs and companies they love by providing deeper workplace transparency. Professionals turn to Glassdoor to research ratings, reviews, salaries and more at millions of employers, and to Fishbowl by Glassdoor to engage in candid workplace conversations. Companies use Glassdoor to post jobs and attract talent through employer branding and employee insights products. Glassdoor is a subsidiary of Recruit Holdings, a leading global technology company, and a part of its fast-growing HR Technology business unit. For more information, visit [www.glassdoor.com](http://www.glassdoor.com).

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