

# Reimagine employer branding in the roaring '20s

 By [Celeste Sirin](#)

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One hundred years have now passed since the beginning of the infamous roaring '20s - an era of dramatic economic, social and political uncertainty, together with much technological development and change - a world no different to what we are facing now.

[via GIPHY](#)

It's a given that the role of human resource management is becoming increasingly complex and challenging, especially having to navigate four generations, the aged population, the scarcity of skills, mismatch of talent and the eminent growth of automation.

This being said, HR leaders have an enormous opportunity to transform human resources into a strategic function as they continue to focus on people to ultimately innovate effectively and meet growth targets.

Research by LinkedIn has proven that more than 75% of job seekers research a company's reputation and employer brand before applying. Companies with a bad reputation not only struggle to attract candidates, but they also battle to retain employees. Therefore employer branding is one of the top recruitment trends for 2020.

The 2019 Universum Employer Branding Now SA regional survey confirmed the ongoing growth and need for employer branding with 44% of SA companies regarding employer branding as one of their top talent priorities; which should be the case if organisations are to remain relevant in attracting, engaging and retaining top talent. With the turn of a new decade, I highlight the future trends within employer branding and recruitment marketing – a field which every CHRO, Talent

Acquisition Specialist, HR Professional and the like can no longer ignore, if they are to survive the world at work in the '20s!

## **Diversity and inclusion**

[Pivotal to the 1920s](#) was the wave of change and transformation towards women in the workplace, taking traditionally male dominant jobs and the roar of all genders and races to be heard; with the fight to close the inequalities in gender pay gaps without being harassed and threatened in the workplace.

Ironically, the talent market is comparable today as Universum confirms recruitment for diversity as a top priority for 85% of the [Worlds Most Attractive Employers \(WMAE\)](#), with increased attention on gender equality, age and ethnicity. A recent [BCG study](#) confirms that increasing the diversity of leadership teams leads to better innovation and improved financial performance. This is applicable in both developing and developed economies. South African companies will continue to pay closer attention to women in leadership roles and getting their ethnicity balances right within the workplace.

[via GIPHY](#)

## **Talent competition from start-ups**

Universum's SA research found that 75% of large companies are starting to view [start-ups as competition](#) with entrepreneurial and technical being the most sought-after skills needed within their organisation. These companies are realising that big brands and name recognition are no longer enough when it comes to attracting Gen Y and Gen Z who are looking for purpose, leadership opportunities, training and development and strong ethical standards within future employers. Once again, this highlights that companies need to make a conscious effort to ensure that the key drivers within their employer value proposition are tailored towards effectively addressing their audience.

## **More prominence required on internalising employer brands**

This same regional survey confirmed that 53% of their respondents were looking at changing their employer within the coming year. Despairing as this might be, it's questionable whether companies are doing enough to circulate, share and articulate their existing Employer Value Proposition to engage and retain their valued workforce. Companies have realised that there is work to be done in personalising the employee experience, which would include improving efforts to embed and further elevate their employer value proposition within. This will be an important focus area for employers, considering large sums of money are being invested in training and developing employees who then leave. Informed and engaged employees are your best employer brand advocates - which brings me to my next point.

## **Employee-generated content remains a strong driver of the employer brand**

Companies will continue utilising employees as their trusted ambassadors to showcase their employer brand, recognising that the most credible/powerful message continues to be driven by its people. By now they recognise that candidates thrive on authentic reviews in the form of testimonials and videos showcasing current employees portraying the company culture versus having to rely on corporate brand messaging. Candidates consider the employee voice to be 3x more credible than the CEO's when it comes to articulating the working conditions in their company. Additionally, if companies remain true to their internal people promise, employees will be great contributors to building a strong employer brand.

## **Social recruitment marketing continues to grow**

Beyond companies recognising social media platforms to market to their consumers, talent acquisition specialists are realising that in order to gain top-of-mind awareness within the various generational groups, they need to be actively showcasing and channelling their employer brands through the correct social media channels. This is especially the case if they are looking to address millennials and the incoming [centennials](#). With talent pools being so diverse and scarce skills hard to find, companies are turning to building [talent personas](#) where they map out not only the skillset and qualifications, but the values, behaviours, aspirations and drivers. Once completed, a recruitment marketing campaign is activated. Through tailored content messaging, companies can take a calculated approach in addressing niche market segments which, in the case of our centennials, would be around what you are doing to not only employing women, disabled, disadvantaged, LGBT etc. and contributing to truly making a difference to society.

## **AI, VR, AR, bots remain the biggest game-changers**

New age technologies will continue to grow as organisations employ the likes of chatbots to address candidates in real time, seeking methods to improve on the candidate experience and minimise the workloads. Larger companies tend to be utilising AR and VR to improve on the training, onboarding and interviewing. Through a more engaging and interactive approach, companies are progressing towards differentiating themselves from their competitors in securing talent.

[via GIPHY](#)

## **Localisation of global brands**

Whilst companies recognise the need to position a strong global employer brand, leaders will continue to factor in the attributes within their EVP to address the cultural differences, environment, tangible preferences etc. across each country. Through knowledge and market insights of local teams, tailored recruitment messages will continue to be built to address the country's nuances.

In today's elusive and ever-developing talent market, the talent industry shares mixed sentiments towards making every

effort to remain relevant as the 4IR continues to evolve. However, what is evident is Steve Jobs' insight:

“ *Technology is nothing. What's important is that you have faith in people, that they're basically good and smart — and if you give them tools, they'll do wonderful things with them. Tools are just tools. They either work, or they don't work.* ”

With revolutionary changes upon us, companies need to prioritise and navigate how they choose to blend technologies and humans in order to secure the best results.

## ABOUT CELESTE SIRIN

Celeste Sirin is an employer branding specialist, speaker, facilitator and founder of Employer Branding Africa which aims to develop employer branding best practice in South Africa by educating South African leaders. She is a leading authority in positioning and elevating employer brands for companies, offering extensive insight into local, African and international employer branding trends.

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