



The Candidate Perspective: Employer Brand

By Rullion 2019



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What is Employer Brand?

Employer brand describes an employer's reputation as a place to work, and their employee value proposition (EVP), as opposed to the more general corporate brand reputation and value proposition to customers

(Richard Mosely and Simon Barrow).

Overview

In 2019, competition for the right talent in companies across the UK is fierce. In a recent [PwC study](#), 77% of CEOs said they found it difficult to get the creativity and innovation skills they need, while 73% said that lack of availability of key skills was the biggest threat to their business. With the best organisations fighting to attract enough of the right people to support and drive growth, the term 'Employer Brand' is at the forefront of conversations around talent attraction and retention.

We set out to find out exactly how candidates feel by launching The Candidate Perspective: Employer Brand, a survey to assess whether employer branding and reputation really matter, what candidates want to see from employers, and how best to reach prospective candidates. This eBook explores the insights we gained from our candidates and gives helpful suggestions for employers looking to build a winning employer brand and employee value proposition (EVP). You can find out more about the survey behind this report on [page 18](#).

“ Candidates say what matters to them

“the treatment of employees, the philosophy of the company and how its employees comply with it, the fact that they support employees to continue training.”

The candidate perspective: employer brand

Candidates say ‘Work-life balance’, ‘Salary’ and ‘Employer Reputation’ are the top elements that attract them to work for an organisation.



Employer Reputation



Work-life balance



Salary

How important is an employer’s reputation?

58% of employed respondents see Employer Reputation as either the most important or one of their top priorities when choosing an employer.

95% of candidates will research a new employer to some degree before accepting a role.

66% of employed candidates say they would tell others about a poor experience with an employer and advise them against applying.

Factors you need to consider when creating your employer brand

Over 20 years on from the first publication under the topic of ‘Employer Brand’, the buzzword still resonates with businesses across the UK.

As candidates take to peer review sites and social media to review their hiring experience, it’s now more important than ever for employers see things from a candidates perspective; what do they value in an employer, and what’s a priority in their role?

i Try our persona mapping template

Why not try creating personas specifically for your most in-demand candidates to help you find out what they are interested in?

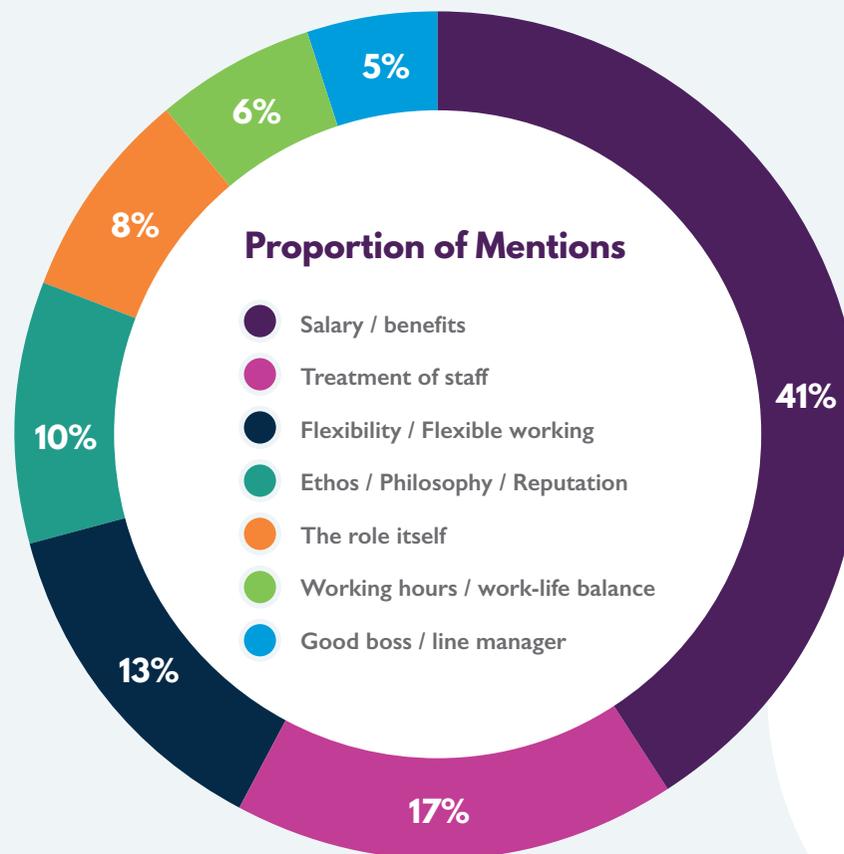
What do candidates care about?

By understanding your candidates' motivations and interests, you'll understand what elements you need to prioritise in your employer brand to help you attract the best talent. So, what do candidates really want to know about? We interviewed over 300 permanent and contract workers to find out, scoring answers into categories that were commonly mentioned. Not surprisingly, salary and benefits scored highly. However, for most, the picture is not one-dimensional:

“Good benefits and salary, good brand reputation. I would like a position with possibility of promotion.”

Additionally, there are people whose priorities lie in the behaviour of an employer. Reputation, integrity and treatment of staff were common answers:

“They have good reputation on how they treat staff.”



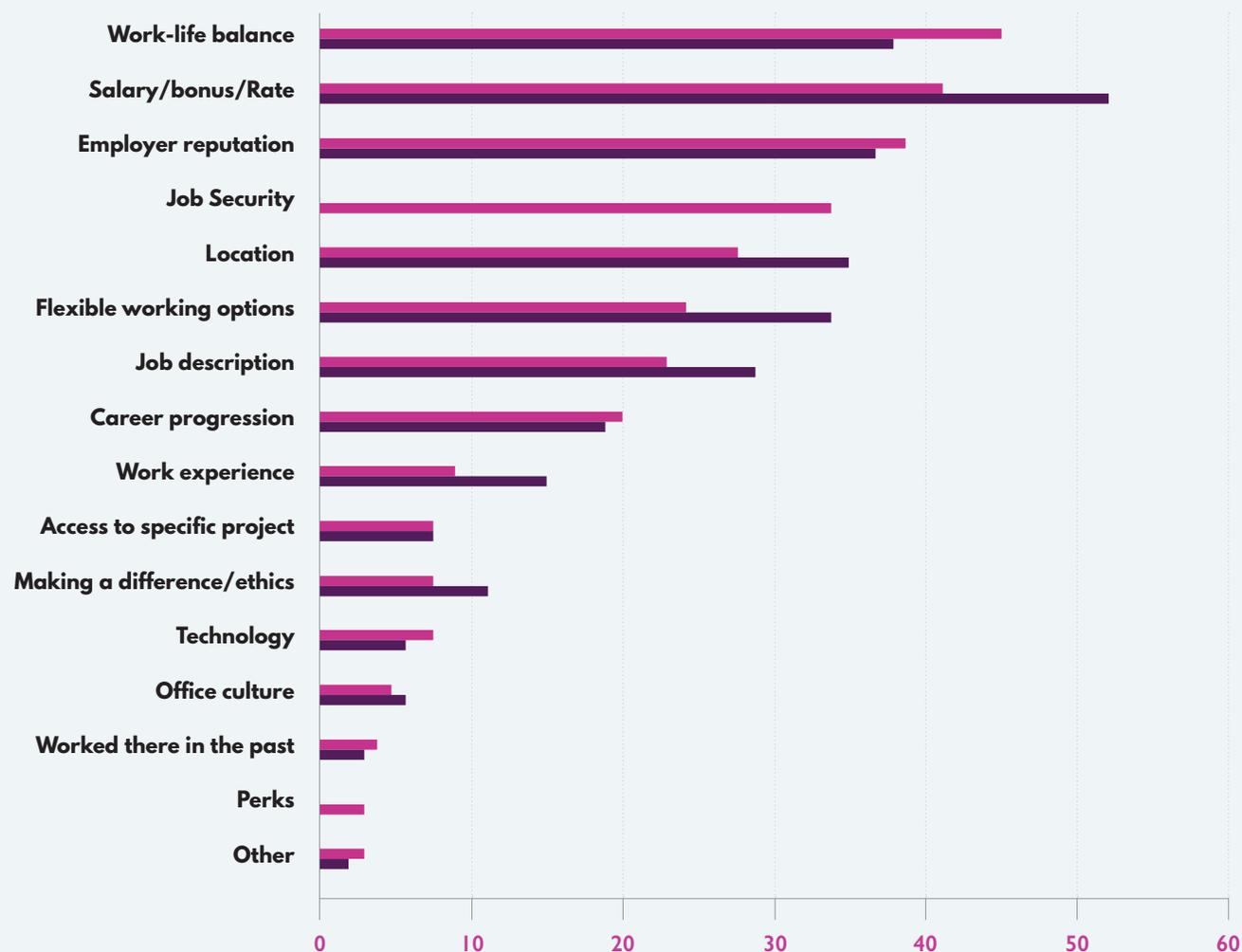
“The treatment of employees, the philosophy of the company and how its employees comply with it, the fact that they support employees to continue training.”

To ensure these elements are reflected in your employer brand, consider interviewing your current employees. Integrate testimonials and honest views of your organisation from review sites such as Glassdoor into your careers website and hiring campaigns to paint an authentic picture for candidates. If you offer perks like flexible working, make sure this is clear in your communications to encourage a diverse range of applicants.



What's a priority for candidates when searching for a new role?

Choose the top 3 elements that attract you to work for a company (%)



We asked respondents to choose the top three factors that attract them to an organisation (whether they are currently seeking a new role or not).

- **Work-life balance, Salary and Employer Reputation** were the top elements that candidates chose, regardless of their employment type.
- **45%** of those currently in Permanent employment value Work-Life balance, closely followed by Salary (41%)
- For **52%** Contractors salary is a key driver
- Contractors rate **Flexibility** more highly than those in permanent employment (34% compared to 24%).

● Contractor
● Permanent



What's a priority for candidates when searching for a new role?

Understanding the most important elements that candidates are looking for in a new role is a key driving force for the messaging surrounding your employer brand. You need to identify the messages that will resonate with your candidates. You can then tailor your hiring campaigns to attract the best talent to your organisation.

When promoting opportunities, try to put yourself in the candidates' shoes, thinking about what will most benefit them. Our evidence suggests that, while it's important to advertise an attractive salary, you should also think beyond money. The work-life balance you offer, your reputation as an employer and the job security you can provide are all appealing factors that you can promote to attract the best talent.

Why not ask your existing employees why they joined your organisation, and why they've stayed?



"A common mistake that employers make when writing job adverts is focusing on their own needs and requirements. In a candidate-short market, you have to think from a jobseekers' perspective; a list of the skills you need just won't cut it. Think about the added extras that make you love your company and put them into every job spec you write."

– Kim Strachan, People Director, Rullion

i Do you know what candidates are saying about you?

Read our latest insight here to learn how to use social media to monitor your reputation as an employer.

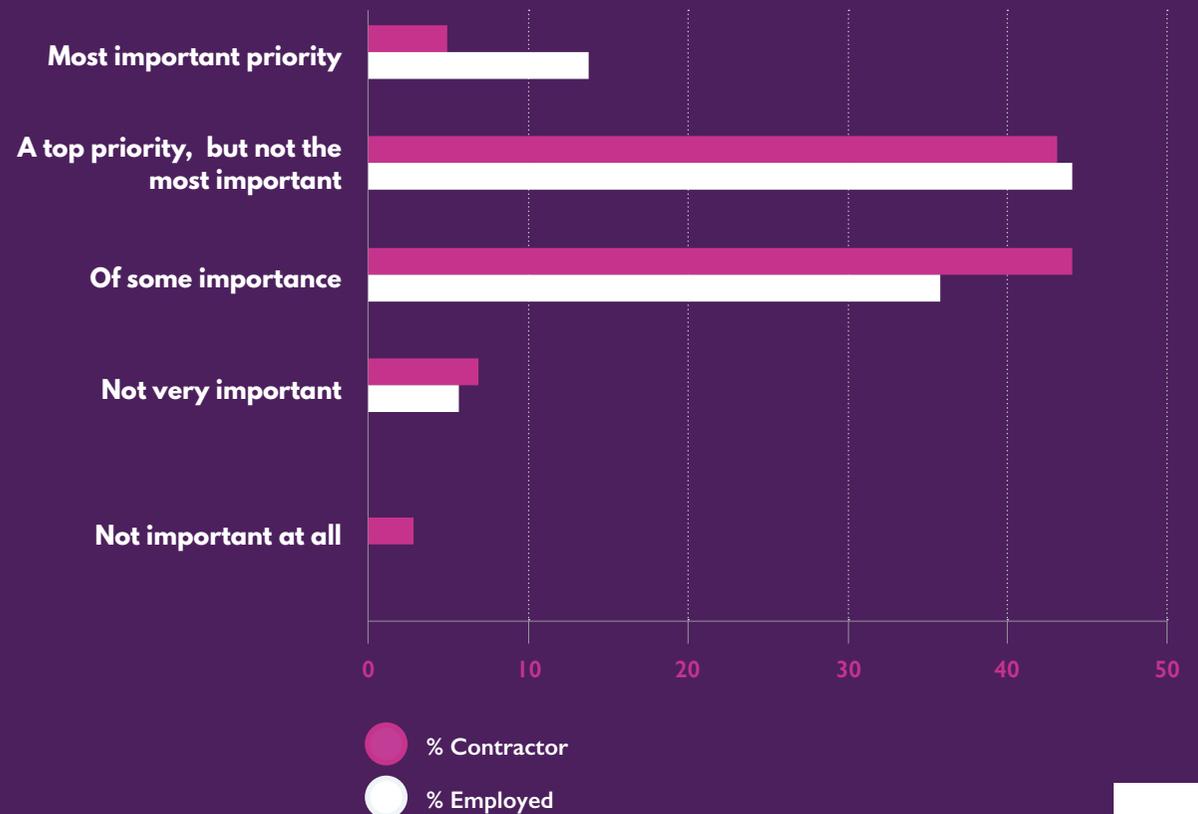
How important is an employer's reputation?

Does your company care about its perception as an employer?

Candidates certainly do.

More than 50% of employed respondents see employer reputation as either the most important or one of their top priorities, with a slightly lower proportion of contractors feeling this way.

How important is an employers reputation to you?



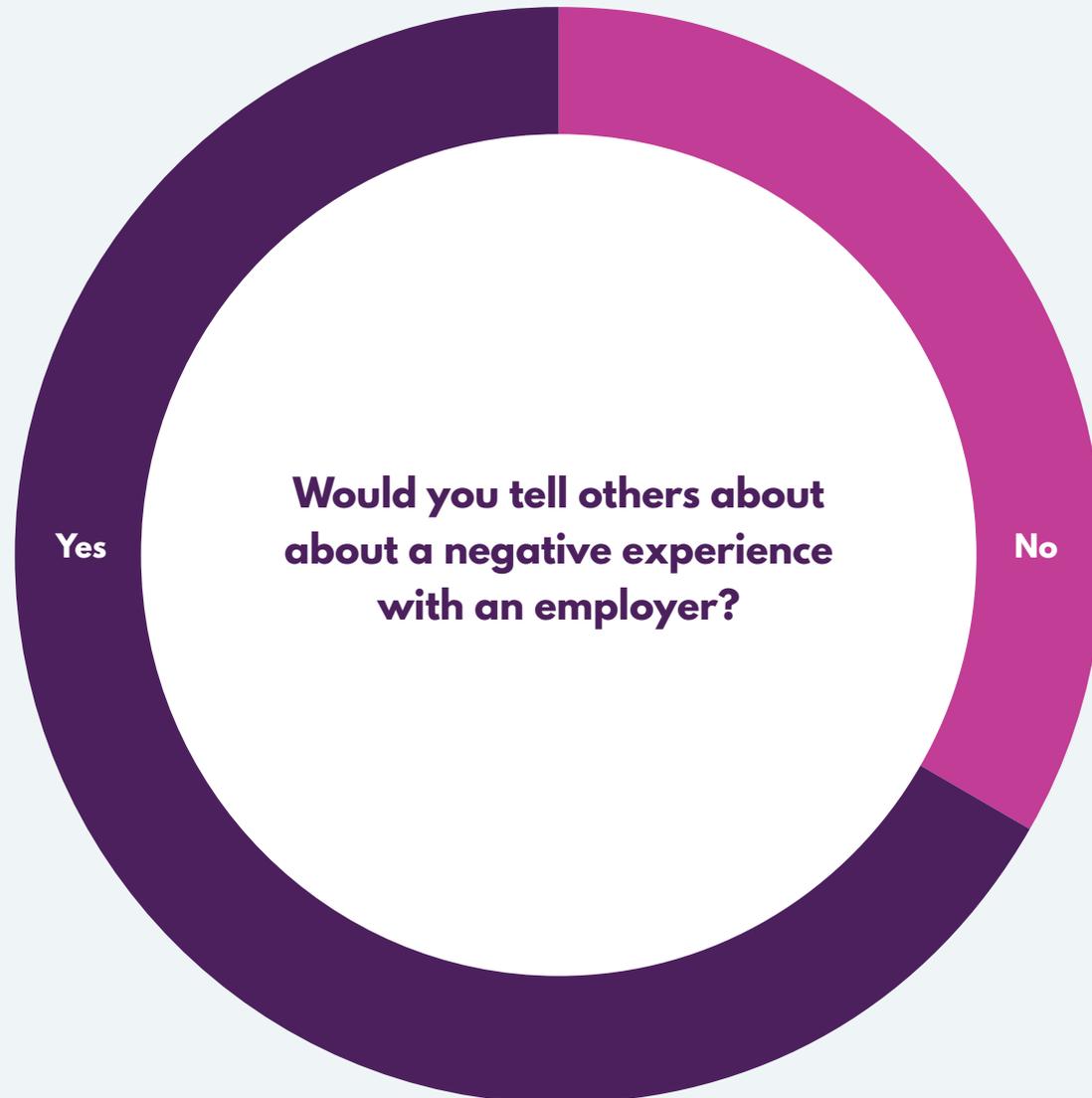
Why does reputation matter?

Bad news spreads fast,

and if you have a poor candidate experience and candidates feel your employer brand doesn't reflect what's actually going on in your organisation, then you could be in trouble.

Two-thirds of employed candidates said they would tell others about a poor experience and advise them against applying to the same company.

It's time to take ownership of your reputation. Start by checking peer review sites such as Glassdoor and your social media channels regularly. Be quick to respond to any positive or negative views, to represent your brand in the best possible light.

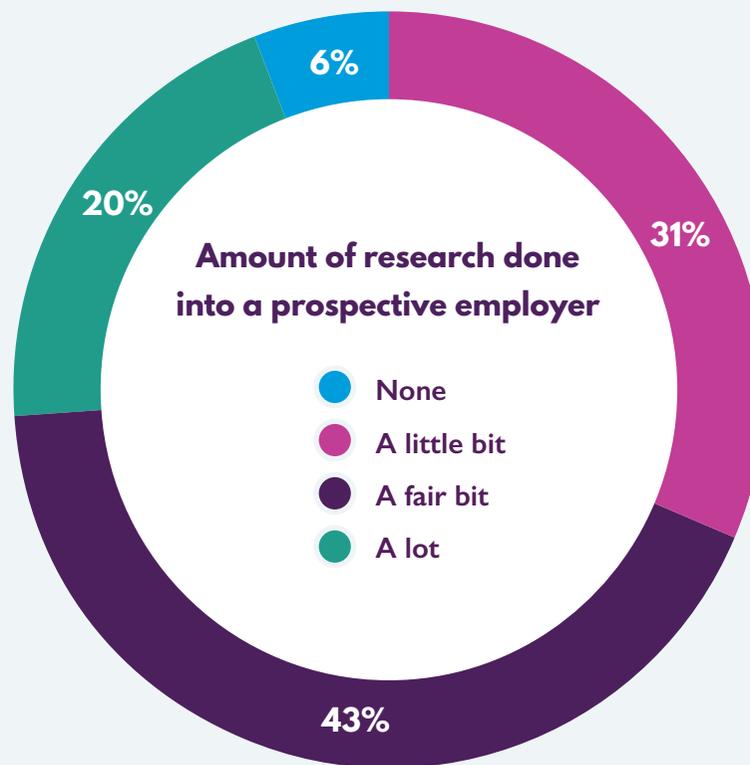


What percentage of candidates research an employer?

To understand how much knowledge of a company matters to candidates, we asked about the effort they put into researching an employer. Our research shows that the vast majority of candidates (95%) are ready and willing to take proactive steps to inform their choices.

Close to **two thirds** (63%) see this to be of great or some importance and will carry out extensive research into an employer.

Only **5%** of respondents said that they would not research an employer at all before taking a new role.



i Want to learn how to impress your candidates?

Read our 10 top tips for a winning candidate experience here.

“When you’re thinking about your reputation as an employer, don’t forget to consider the role of contractors, particularly if you have a large contract workforce. Our data shows that Contractors are just as likely to research an employer as those in a permanent role, so you shouldn’t overlook the need to impress them with your employer brand! What’s more, contractors only stay a short while. When they move on from your business, they can be your best employer brand advocates if you show them a great employment experience.”

– Kim Strachan, People Director, Rullion

Next,

try mapping your candidate experience. Think about the journey for candidates from responding to an advertisement to interview to offer. Is it a smooth one? Would you recommend your own processes? How do candidates feel at each stage? Feedback surveys or interview questions about the hiring process can help you identify any problem areas and equip you with the knowledge you need to fix them.



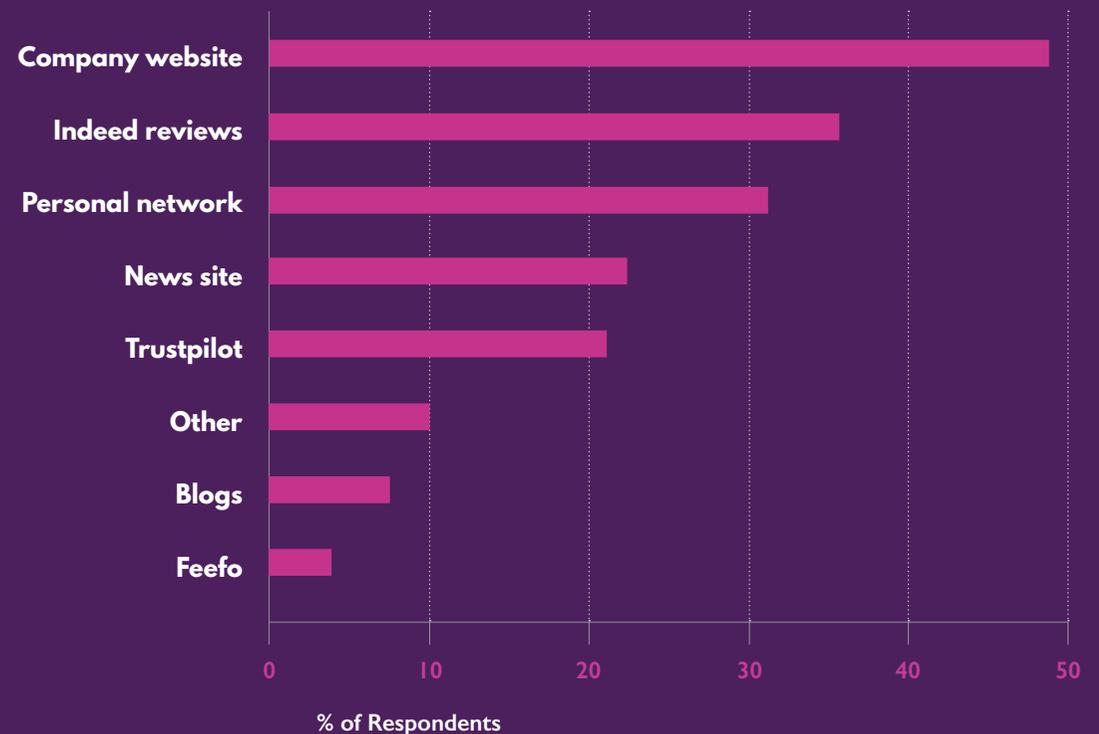
Why not read our guide to optimizing your careers page and creating an amazing user experience, written by the brains behind our award-winning recruitment website.

Factors to consider when promoting your employer brand

Where should you promote your employer brand?

We asked candidates where they look for information about a prospective employer. Company websites dominated, with nearly half (49%) of candidates surveyed using these as a source of information. This is a positive for companies ready to take ownership over their employer brand. It reinforces the need to create content which engages candidates and positively represents an employer. Interestingly, candidates also said they visited consumer rating sites like Feefo and Trustpilot to check up on employers, demonstrating the blurred line between candidates and customers for many companies.

Where do candidates research an employer?



Which social media channels should you use?

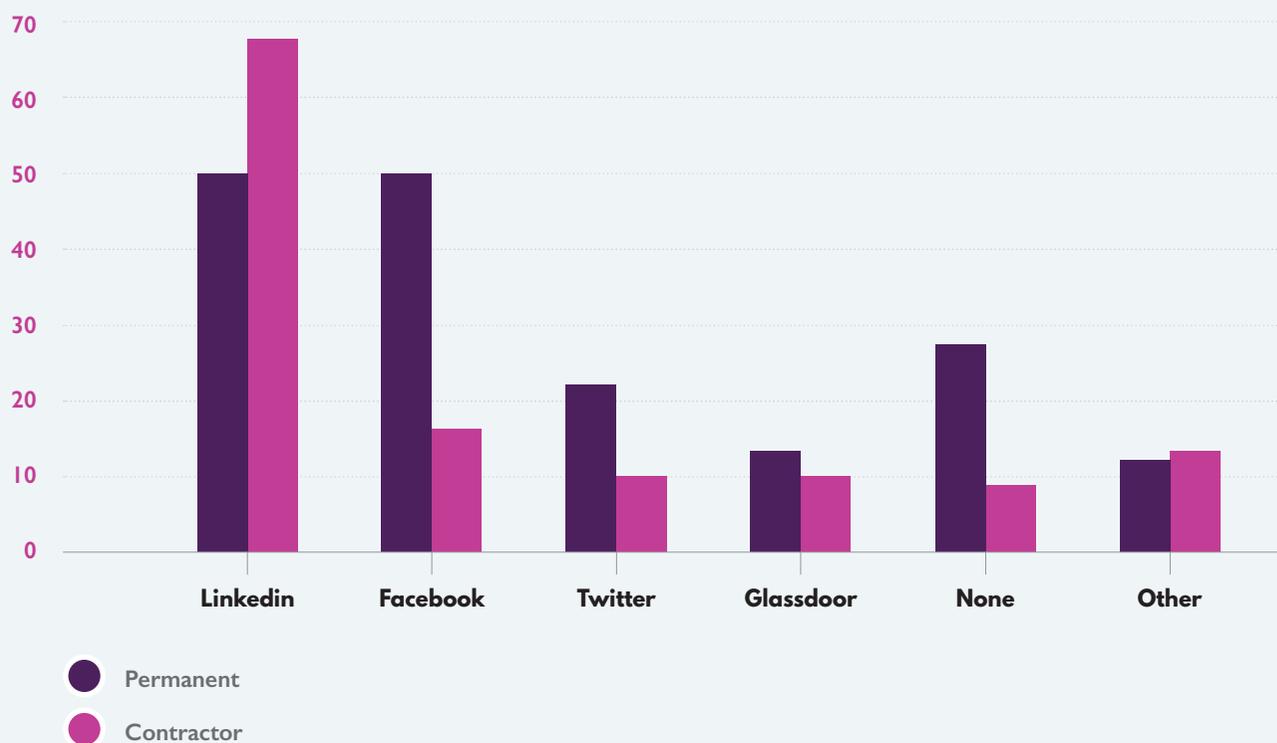
We wanted to understand which social media sites are most used by candidates during the job search process. LinkedIn was a clear leader amongst contractors, being used by two thirds. This reflects the higher propensity to network amongst contractors, with 21% landing their latest role 'through a friend or colleague'.

LinkedIn and Facebook were used equally by those in permanent employment, with just under half saying that they would use the sites when looking for a new role. In comparison, Facebook was used much less by contractors with only 16% taking to the site to look for a new position.

“Social media is key to promoting your employer brand, but it’s still not the number one destination for candidates to actually apply for a role. Use social media as a pathway to share your brand message and the roles you have available. Drive traffic back to your careers site to ensure candidates have all the information they need about your brand and the role they are interested in.”

– Kim Strachan, People Director, Rullion

Social media sites used in job searching (%)



What should you tell candidates?

We asked candidates what they were most interested in hearing about from a potential employer. On one level, the practical information such as job notifications and company news was important (for more than half).

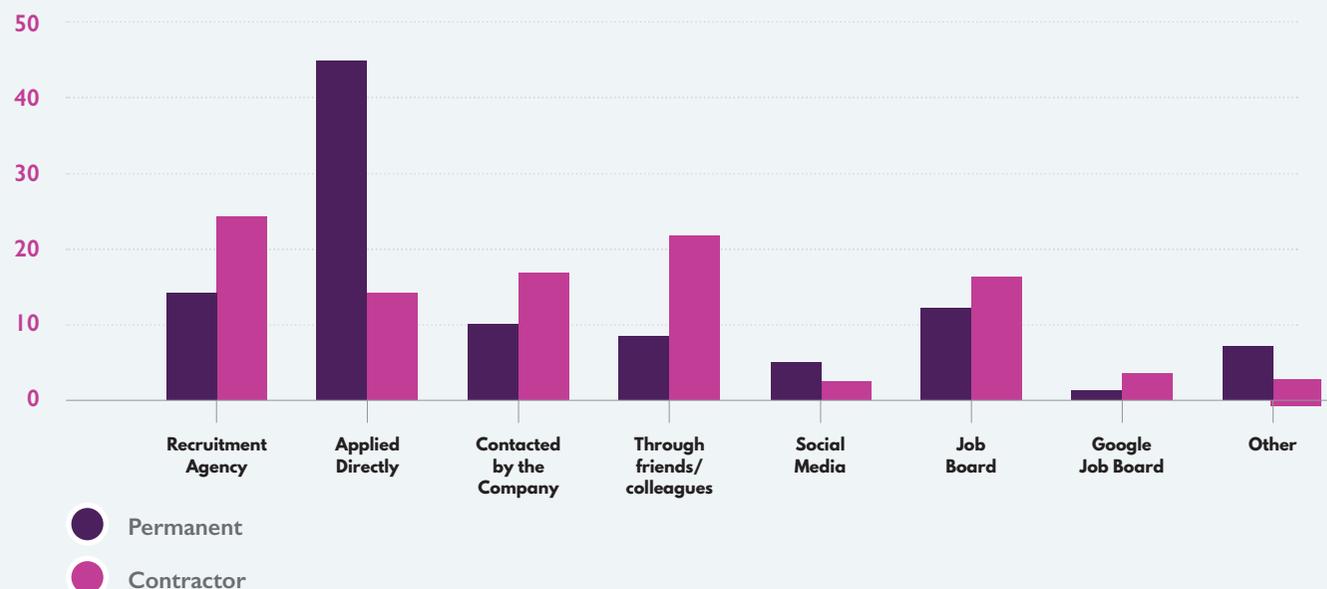
However, employee testimonials rate almost as highly, with **51%** citing these as of interest.

Where do candidates find a new role?

To better understand how to reach candidates most effectively, we asked how our respondents found their current roles. Permanent employees were three times more likely to be proactive than contractors, with 45% applying directly to the company compared to only 14% of contractors. Contractors, however, were more than twice as likely to rely on their own personal network, with 21% saying they were referred by a friend or colleague, as opposed to only 8% of permanent workers.

Only 3% of our survey respondents said they found their current role through social media sites such as LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter or Instagram.

Method of Initial Contact with Current Employers (%)



With contractors still relying heavily on networking with personal contacts and recruitment agencies to secure a new role, employers need to ensure their contract recruitment strategy aligns well with these preferred channels.

Having a strong, well communicated, internal referral scheme in place is a great start and can

ensure a steady influx of quality contractors.

In addition, choosing to partner with a relationship-focussed agency should be a priority for contract vacancies.

Employers should prioritise agencies that seek to uphold their employer brand and communicate the right positive message to candidates.



Our employer brand checklist

Using the insight and experiences of our candidates, we've created this checklist of advice and tips for you to use when creating and promoting your employer brand.

01 Understand your candidates

– understanding what your candidates care about most when searching for their new role is key to creating advertising campaigns that resonate.

Download our candidate persona template to start understanding your candidates.

02 Broaden your message

– there's strong evidence that candidates are looking beyond salary as the be-all and end-all over other factors. The leading factor appealing most to those in permanent employment is work-life balance, closely followed by employer reputation.

03 Think about your company reputation

– strong reputation matters significantly to candidates, with 95% saying that knowing about an employer matters to them when considering a new role.

Make sure you are monitoring your online reputation on social media and Glassdoor.

04 Perfect your candidate experience

– three quarters of candidates would reject an employer after a poor candidate experience. Adapt and perfect your candidate experience and listen to feedback throughout the process.

Top 10 tips for a winning candidate experience.

05 Use your existing employees

– over half of the candidates we spoke to say they want to see real employee testimonials, as well as practical information such as vacancies and company's news, from a prospective employer during their application process.

Summary

Our report shows that there are several inter-connected factors to consider when creating and promoting your employer brand. Understanding what candidates care about most when searching for a new role is key to creating advertising campaigns that resonate.

There's strong evidence that candidates are looking beyond Salary as the be-all and end-all to prioritise other factors. The leading factor appealing most to those in permanent work was Work-Life Balance (very slightly above Salary), closely followed by Employer Reputation.

Throughout our study, we confirmed that a strong reputation matters significantly to candidates. Our results also demonstrate the risks of a negative reputation, with 40% of permanent employees saying they would reject a role based on a negative feeling about an Employer Reputation. A poor reputation will also inevitably spread, as two-thirds of candidates in work who have a bad experience say they would tell others about it.

About the Survey

In a competitive market where candidates have increasing power of choice and widening sources of information, the way prospective employers present themselves is seen to be of greater competitive value and differentiation.

This survey was carried out by Rullion to understand the perceptions of candidates in the UK towards Employer Branding and the impact of employers' brands on the candidates' job choices.

The survey was carried out online in October 2018. In total we obtained the views of 366 candidates.

Job Status of Respondents

Job status of the survey respondents is as follows:

- 67% are in permanent roles
- 22% are contractors or temporary workers
- 11% say they are not working at the moment

For the remainder of this document we analyse by permanent vs contractor and only comment on those out of work where they differ significantly from the norm.

Age and Job Level

The survey respondents show a good spread of ages, with around one third being under 34, a similar proportion between 35 and 44 and 40% over 45.

Age	% Respondents
18-24	5
25-34	26
35-44	30
45-54	20
55+	20
TOTAL	100
N= 307 respondents	

The survey reached a good spread of job levels as shown in table below:

Level	% Employed Respondents
Entry level	13
Intermediate	31
Middle Management	29
Senior Management	16
Owner / Executive / C-Level	9
Other	2
TOTAL	100

Sector

Four key sectors are represented in the sample: IT/Tech, Retail, Engineering and Accountancy/Banking/Finance. These sectors are broadly mirrored by the specialisms of our Contractor respondents, although Other specialisms account for 21% of the Contractor group with slightly lower representation of IT/Tech (14%) and far fewer in Retail (4% of Contractors/Temporary).

Full details are as follows:

Sector Employed in	% Respondents
IT/Technology	7
Retail	9
Engineering and manufacturing	15
Accountancy, banking and finance	2
Other	22
Public sector and administration	2
Business, consulting and management	0
Energy and utilities (including nuclear)	13
Charity and voluntary work	6
Infrastructure	2
Rail	2
Creative arts and design	7
Law	13
TOTAL	100

Technical Appendix

Survey Method

The survey was carried out online in October 2018; a sample were selected from the Rullion candidate database (143 completed responses), in tandem with a survey posted to the wider UK candidate population via

Survey Monkey (233 completed responses). The results of these two surveys have been combined for the analysis in this report. In total we obtained the views of 366 candidates.

Sample Breakdown

Job status of the survey respondents is as follows:

- 67% are in permanent roles
- 22% are contractors or temporary workers
- 11% say they are not working at the moment

For the purpose of this document we analyse by permanent vs contractor and only comment on those out of work where they differ significantly from the norm. Respondents were routed into questions relevant to their job status.

Analysis Method

This analysis combines data from:

- The online survey of Rullion candidates
- The SurveyMonkey Paid-For survey of the wider markets
- Responses to the “core” questions answered by all respondents regardless of method and job status
- Combined responses to similar questions to give comparisons between Job Status
- Where necessary further analysis of the cross-tabulated data showing Permanent vs Contractor candidates
- Coding of the open-text questions into themed groups

References

- Ambler, T., & Barrow, S. (1996). The employer brand. *Journal of brand management*, 4(3), 185-206.
- Barrow, S., & Mosley, R. (2011). *The employer brand: Bringing the best of brand management to people at work*. John Wiley & Sons.

attract

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['Find out more'](#)