

How to become an SME employer of choice – your 10 point plan

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Becoming an employer of choice

Looking to the challenges of growing and not merely surviving in 2023 the SME business owner has an opportunity to consider how working for them should become a sought after experience.

Becoming an employer of choice can be a rewarding and beneficial experience for any organisation. It helps to create a positive work environment, attract and retain talented employees, and promote a culture of success and innovation. By taking the time to invest in your team and focus on their satisfaction, you can create a workplace that employees are proud to be part of.



Creating an employer of choice culture

This thinking will pervade every aspect of the business and make the plan for next year come with a very different checklist. The benefits of becoming an employer of choice are huge in so many ways.

Here is a short summary of the key elements of delivering this for your SME or business :-

1.What does your ideal employee ‘avatar’ look like? What qualities do they possess? – define and design exactly what you are looking for in an employee and link this to the values and culture of the business.

2.Develop and promote from people within the business where possible – this encourages a culture of performance, increases loyalty, creates clear career pathways and is likely to attract high quality ambitious new recruits. In considering development as a clear priority for the employer of choice then this will include training and retraining opportunities, professional accreditation, educational advancement and the provision of coaching to support development and talent management creation and acquisition.

3.Create a clear employee benefits package – this may require a small investment but will make your business stand out from the crowd when recruiting and also be far more likely to create high retention levels of your best people now.

4.Ensure health and wellbeing is high on the benefits package list – this connects to the wellness and psychological safety needs that have become ever more evident in the last two years and again will keep a healthy workforce but also retain and attract the best people. This must include how to directly support or signpost your staff to safe and reliable mental health and wellbeing services.

5.Create a wellness aware business environment – there may be some obvious practical limitations on this but all businesses should consider how the décor is designed, what do the rest areas look like, does the business support wellness in terms of diet and exercise, are the work areas supportive of social contact and enabling quiet work areas too?

6.Culture and values –the best businesses will be clear on the culture and values of their organisation, this will be evident in the day to day, in walking the talk by the leadership of the business and also in the material available to potential recruits. This process might also be broadened to considering social responsibility as a business. This can range from support for local charities, to inclusive employment policies through to climate friendly policies and careful consideration of the social responsibility of customers and stakeholders.

7.Flexible working – an employer of choice will make flexible working a must not a ‘nice to have’. This does not necessarily mean working from home but it should include options around this and this will also in turn create efficiencies that may be yielded such as smaller

offices, greater availability of the team around the clock and more diverse skills brought into the business but not necessarily present in the office.

8.Enriching and diverse work – make sure that your business has considered how the nature of the tasks within roles offer variety and stimulation, how challenge can be included and how this itself is organically reviewed. Staff surveys are a great way to keep this approach to work fresh.

9.Reward and recognition – the employer of choice looks to celebrate success and this should be from the everyday messages of thank you, to celebrating quality, to encouraging staff to develop through reward and recognition and to creating a richly rewarding professional environment that introduces the concept of healthy competition but really engages people in the growth of the business.

10.Employee engagement – this should be an employer of choice's priority and it should be apparent in the recruitment and marketing of the business. This also engages the employees with each other and with leadership but very deeply to the customers and clients that the business may serve.

This is not a definitive list but does provide some pointers to those business owners and leaders who wish to become an employer of choice. Many of the tips are the type of issues that a business owner is highly likely to want to follow if they care for their employees and for the reputation of their business. Following this guide systematically takes your business from merely doing the right thing to creating a brand reputation as an employer of choice. This not only enables you to attract and retain the best people but also will have an impact on the attractiveness of the business to customers and clients. All of these factors give you a significant advantage in getting ahead of the competition but also they will support an overall strategy to get ahead in 2023.

Get in touch if you want to know more on how to implement this strategy at Mark@applebrightcoaching.co.uk, or fill out your contact information and I will be right back to you from www.applebrightcoaching.co.uk/welcome/contact/.