



The UK Job Market in 2016 and the Importance of Employer Branding



Table of Contents

Introduction	3
The Candidate Power Shift	4-7
The UK Unemployment Rate	5
The Number of Vacancies in the UK	6
The Competition for Jobs	7
Candidate Expectations	8-9
What Candidates Want	9
Employer Branding	10-13
What Job Seekers are Looking At	11
Your Employer Brand	12-13
Conclusion.....	14

How to Adapt your Recruiting Strategy to Effectively Compete in the Current Job Market

In a job market that is continuously shifting and reacting to the current economic climate, employers can't afford not to regularly review and adapt their recruitment processes. The UK employment rate is changing, job seekers' expectations are changing and the salaries on offer are changing. Employers who do not react to these changes will be left behind in the battle to attract and hire the best talent for their businesses.

We have transitioned into a job market where much of the power has shifted from the employer to the candidate. Today's candidates have more choice and will often have a number of interviews lined up. They also have high expectations of employers and armed with the power of Google, they can learn more than ever about your business, company culture, financial information and employees.

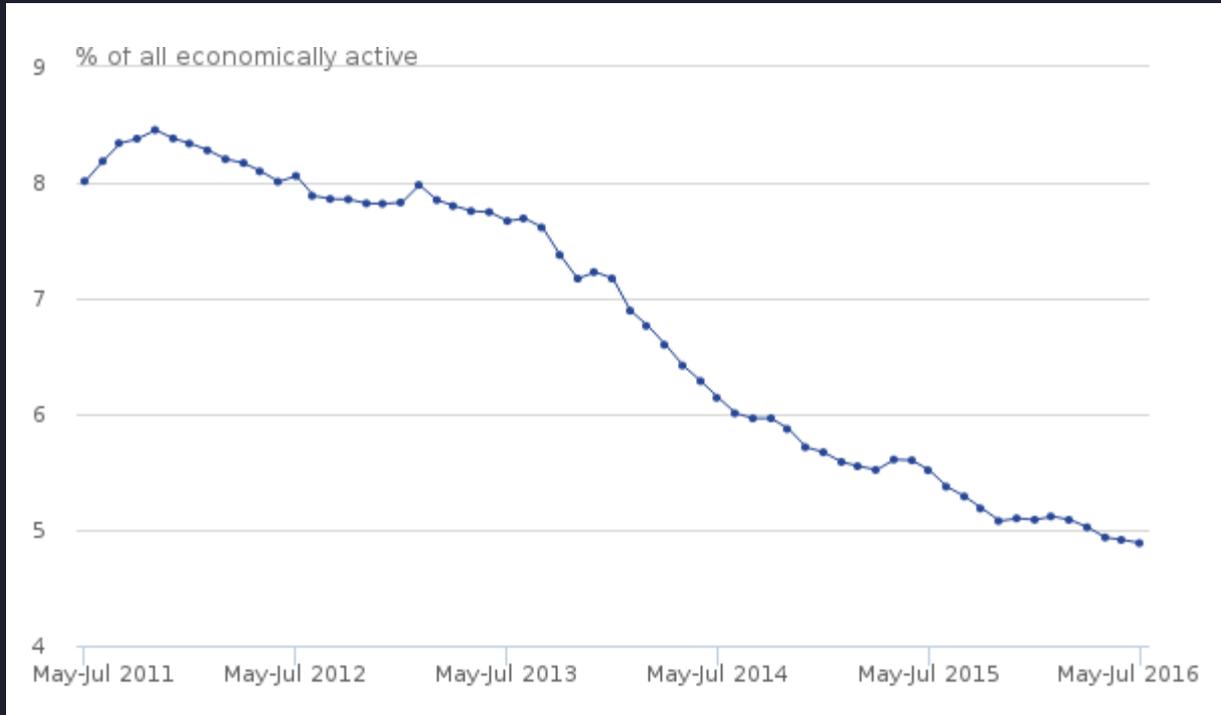
Read on to discover what's happening in today's UK job market, the effect it is having on job seekers and how you can tailor your recruitment strategy in order to attract and win the best talent in your industry.

The Candidate Power Shift

Falling unemployment rates and rising vacancy numbers are causing a power shift in the UK job market.

Candidates have more choice and less competition which puts employers in a position where they need to work harder and do more to attract and impress new talent.

UK Unemployment Rate (people aged 16 and over)



Source: Labour Force Survey; Office for National Statistics

The unemployment rate is at its lowest since 2005.

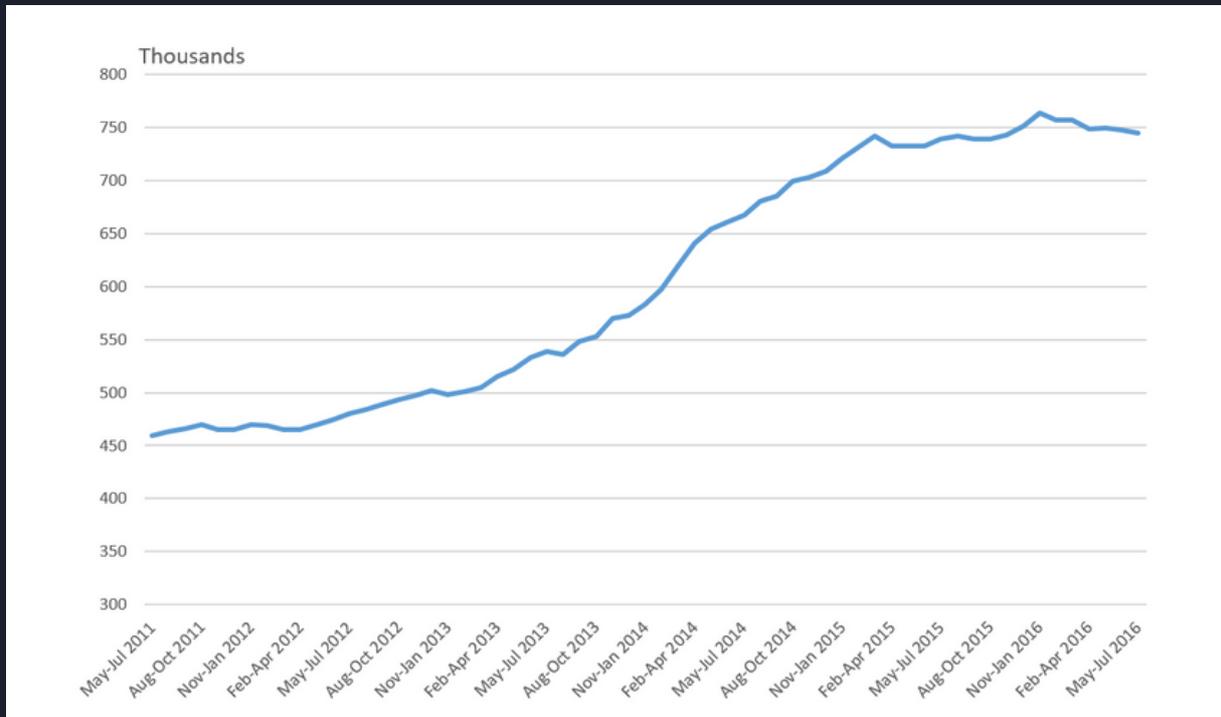
What does this mean for employers?

A falling unemployment rate is both good and bad news for employers.

- More people in employment should mean there are fewer job seekers. However, a falling unemployment rate reflects a growing economy and in this climate, people are much more open to changing jobs.
- To persuade top talent to move elsewhere, employers are increasingly working with recruitment consultancies with specialist search and selection strategies.
- Naturally, the falling unemployment rate correlates to a rise in the number of available vacancies in the UK. This is where recruiting starts to get more difficult.

Let's take a look at what's happening with UK vacancies...

Number of vacancies in the UK



Source: Vacancy Survey: Office for National Statistics

Key Findings

- There were 752,000 job vacancies available between June and August 2016.
- 676,000 of these job vacancies were in the services sectors, which constitutes almost 90% of all vacancies.
- Looking at services in more detail, the sectors with the largest number of job vacancies were wholesaling, retailing and repair of motor vehicles.

What does this mean for employers?

Are you looking to recruit? So are a lot of other employers. With so many opportunities on the market, candidates are spoilt for choice which means they can afford to have higher expectations and be more picky with the roles they choose.

More jobs means there's less competition for candidates and more competition for employers. Let's get down to the nitty-gritty.

The Competition for Jobs

The competition for jobs varies quite significantly across the UK. Job seekers in Northern Ireland face fierce competition with an average of 8.39 job seekers per every vacancy advertised. Wales and Scotland follow as the next most competitive areas.

In contrast, job seekers in the South East have plenty of more opportunities to choose from with little competition. With only 0.25 job seekers per vacancy, finding a new, well-paid opportunity (the average salary is second only to London) is a relatively easy task for job seekers.

Region	Jobseekers/Vacancy	Average salary
Northern Ireland	8.39	£28,134
Wales	1.53	£28,789
Scotland	1.48	£30,599
North East England	1.23	£28,443
Yorkshire and the Humber	1.04	£29,780
West Midlands	0.71	£30,287
East Midlands	0.55	£29,151
North West England	0.53	£29,329
UK Average	0.49	£32,784
London	0.34	£39,607
Eastern England	0.33	£30,232
South West England	0.33	£29,583
South East England	0.25	£31,187

Source: Adzuna Job Market Report September 2016

Employers need to adapt

These findings show that employers need to adapt their recruiting strategy not just to the UK job market as a whole, but to the particular region they are recruiting in. Finding candidates in the South East and South West is much more challenging, so when recruiting in these areas, it may take a higher salary and better benefits to attract talent.

Currently, the number of job seekers per vacancy is particularly low in almost every region in the UK. Because of this, we have seen a rise in the number of roles that employers outsource to recruiters, with greater expertise and various search and selection strategies being necessary in finding new hires.

Candidate Expectations

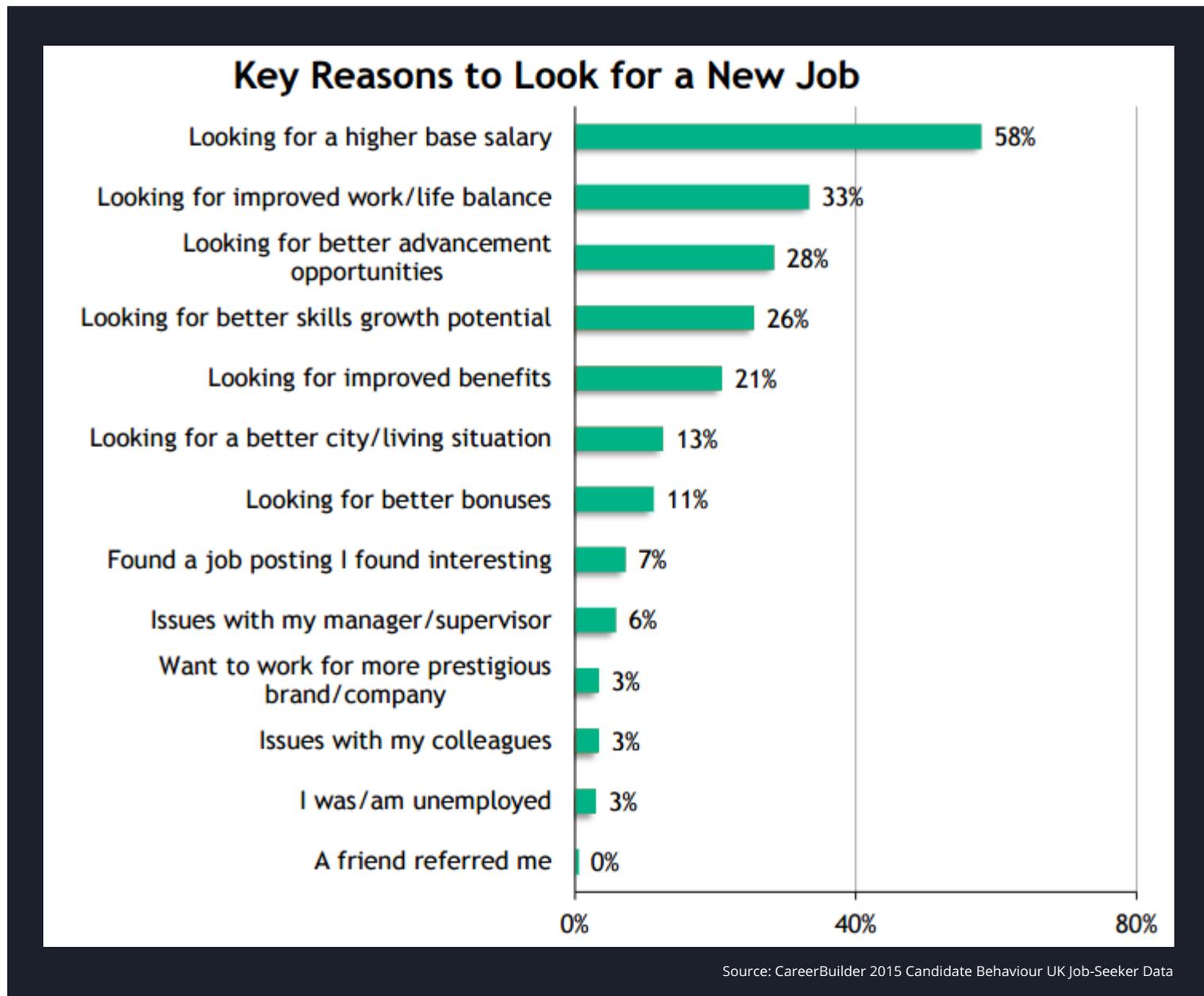
With plenty of opportunities to choose from, today's candidates can have numerous interviews lined up within a matter of days.

With so many more options, candidates can afford to be picky with their expectations. So what do candidates expect from potential employers and are employers delivering?

What candidates want

Did you know, 70% of people in employment are open to new opportunities?

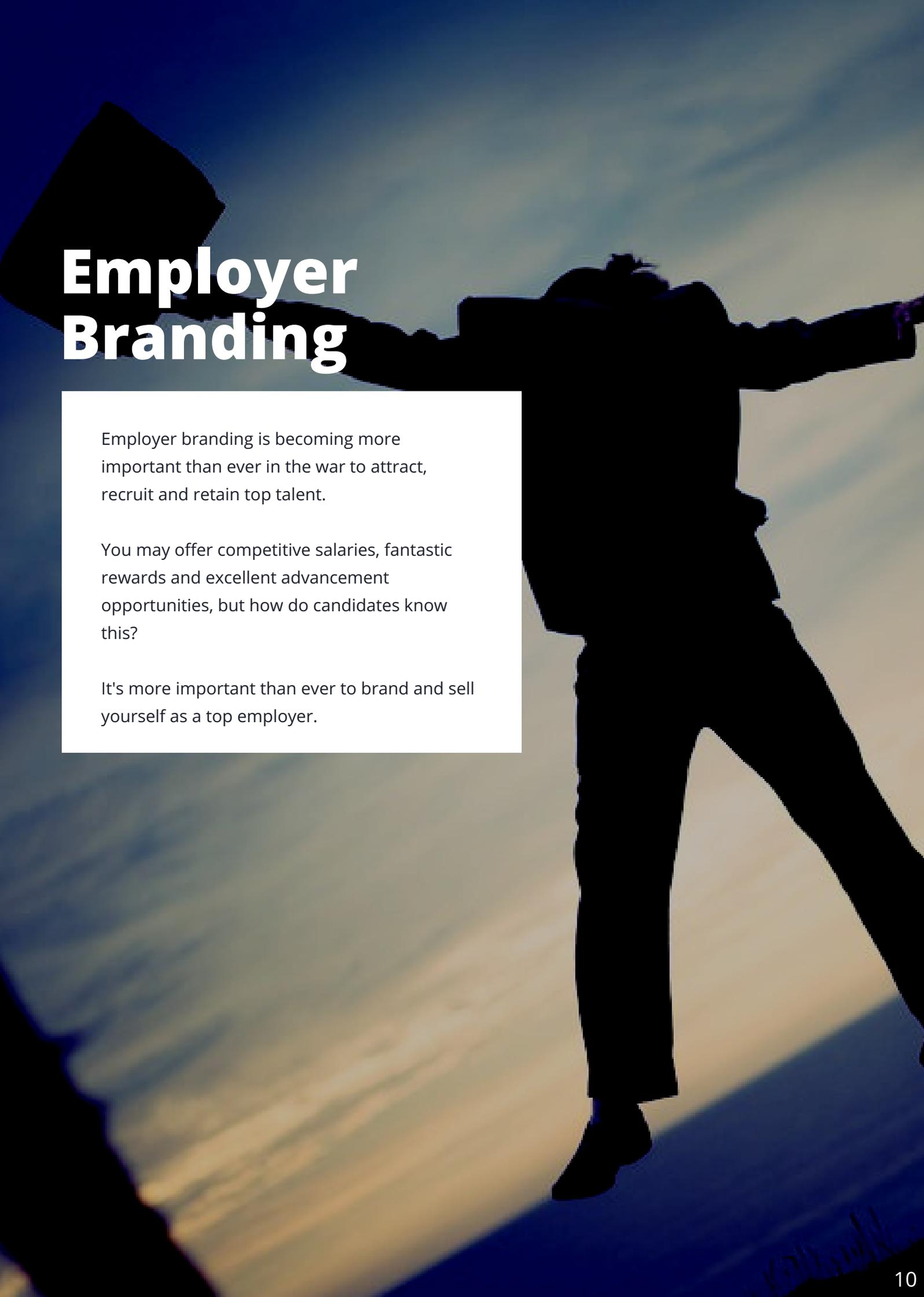
The UK unemployment rate may be low, but that doesn't mean that there aren't plenty of candidates on the market. Today's candidates expect more from their employers and if their current employer isn't providing it, they will be tempted to look elsewhere.



Are you offering what candidates are looking for?

In order to effectively compete in today's job market you need to be able to meet and exceed candidate expectations.

Remember, your company culture and benefits aren't only important for attracting candidates. They will also help you to retain the top talent you already have and wouldn't want to see go.

A silhouette of a person in a business suit celebrating on a mountain peak. The person has their arms raised and is holding a briefcase. The background is a bright, hazy sky over a mountain range.

Employer Branding

Employer branding is becoming more important than ever in the war to attract, recruit and retain top talent.

You may offer competitive salaries, fantastic rewards and excellent advancement opportunities, but how do candidates know this?

It's more important than ever to brand and sell yourself as a top employer.

What are job seekers looking at?



On average, job seekers use a total of 16 resources when researching a potential employer.

With so many tools and platforms available to them, job seekers are well equipped to conduct in-depth research in order to build a better picture of your business and to assess whether it is a good fit for them.

These are just some of the key places where candidates are carrying out their research:

- Google
- Industry associations
- Job boards
- Review sites such as *Glassdoor* and *What Are They Really Like*
- Social media platforms such as Facebook, Google+, LinkedIn and Twitter
- Your career site/website

What are job seekers finding?

When trying to attract top graduate talent, employers need to be aware of what candidates can see online and the impression they get of your business.

This is where employer branding is crucial. If you don't take control and make the most of what candidates can see about your company, you will miss out on top talent!



Your employer brand

Are you looking to hire some high-calibre people in 2017?

The end of the year is the perfect time to review and improve your employer branding. As 2016 draws to a close, set some time aside and make sure that you are ready to start the new year with a solid employer brand.

Complete our recommended employer branding exercise and be sure to cover the basics when you are creating and putting your branding plan into action!

Employer Branding Exercise

Put yourself in the shoes of potential candidates.

Imagine that you are looking for a new job. You have three interviews lined up and one of them is with your company. For the sake of this exercise, imagine you don't know anything about your company. Now start your research (don't forget to check out the sources listed on the previous page).

- What can you find out?
- Is there anything that puts you off?
- Is there anything that you would want to know but can't find online?

From here you can take steps towards building and improving your employer brand.



Now let's make sure we cover the branding basics...

Covering the basics

1. Your Website

Your website is probably tailored specifically to your clients or customers, but don't neglect potential candidates. In order to recruit effectively, every business should have a careers page that offers an insight into what it is like to work there.

Sell yourself! Talk about your values and company culture, include real images, showcase employee testimonials and highlight the types of roles you have available.



2. Social Media



Does your business use social media? Social media platforms can be a great place to showcase your employer brand alongside other promotional activities. You can share some insights into what it's like to work for your business, post photos from employee events and advertise your most recent vacancies.

However, the general rule for social media is: if you don't have the time or resources to dedicate to running your social media channels, don't bother doing it. If you do, then go for it!

If a candidate comes across a channel with barely any followers and where the last update was 3 months ago, it may put them off.

3. Review Websites

What's being said online about what it is like to work for your business? The main employer review site in the UK market right now is [Glassdoor.co.uk](https://www.glassdoor.co.uk).

On Glassdoor employees can comment on what they do and don't like about working for your business, give you a star rating, disclose salary information and rate your CEO.

It's important for your employer brand that you monitor your Glassdoor page. If you can't find your business on Glassdoor, candidates may find this a concern. Set up an account and ask current employees to leave you a review. If your company is already on there but it's not looking great, again get your current employees to go ahead and leave their feedback.



Conclusion

Hiring the right people is one of the toughest challenges that every business faces. It is only with the right team that your company can thrive and grow. This is why it is vital to be aware of and react to the ever-changing job market.

Right now businesses need to work harder to attract top talent because of the candidate-driven market. It is no longer enough to simply put out a job description and wait for the great applications to roll in. Without strong employer branding to back you up, you'll lose out to companies who are investing in it.

You may know that your opportunities are fantastic and that your business is an exceptional place to work, but all of this doesn't amount to much if candidates don't know and believe it too. And as today's candidates are more demanding, they may need more persuading than ever before.

About Bridgewater Group

Bridgewater Group specialise in recruitment for wholesale, distribution and manufacturing industries, working with market-leading businesses across the UK and Ireland. They forge the bridge between clients and high calibre candidates and between candidates and their ideal career.

About CareerExperts

CareerExperts is the go-to career site for professional development tips, management and leadership innovation and job search advice. They are made up of a national group of career experts – recruiters, managers and directors – with specialist expertise and a whole lot of experience.