

Employee Retention Strategies: What's Your Employer Promise?



By Patrick Healey

[excerpted from
The Employee Attraction™ Workbook]

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What's your employer/employee promise and can you keep it?

Inherent in every relationship you have with an employee is a promise, whether or not you've stated it to him. The historical model was simple: be reliable, do decent work and you'll get paid on time and have a job for life. Today, younger generations need and want much more—and you need to promise and deliver it in order to attract and retain them. (We'll delve more deeply into that topic in a later strategy.)

Here are some new promise models that a leader might say to her team:

- Share all your great ideas, and as a team we'll listen to them and implement as many viable ones as we can. Your input is valued, and we'll all grow and prosper together.
- You will always be treated with respect and fairness here. All your questions will be answered openly and promptly, and any concerns will be handled quickly and seen through to satisfactory resolutions. While superior efforts are acknowledged and rewarded,

there is no favoritism. Every team member has an equal chance to expand his skills, his income and his satisfaction outcome.

- You will actually look forward to coming to work, because this is a place where team members do jobs they are well-suited for and few tasks that they do not enjoy. Each employee has been selected for her own special aptitudes, and together we make a highly functional, effective group. This in turn relieves stress and allows us all to thrive in a more relaxed environment—where having fun at work is the norm, not the exception.

Keep in mind that you must be prepared to keep any promise you make to your team—or have a great reason why you can't. Be prepared to share that with them too. Whenever I give workshops, I always ask participants what they fear will happen afterwards. The overwhelming response from team members is that they do not expect their employers will follow through with the new promises they made. If that's been an issue for you, think about it as you formulate new promises.



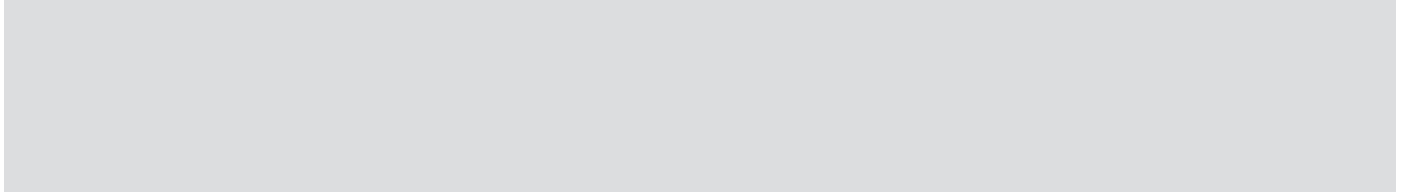
**What promise will make
top job candidates
choose your agency?**

WORKSHEET

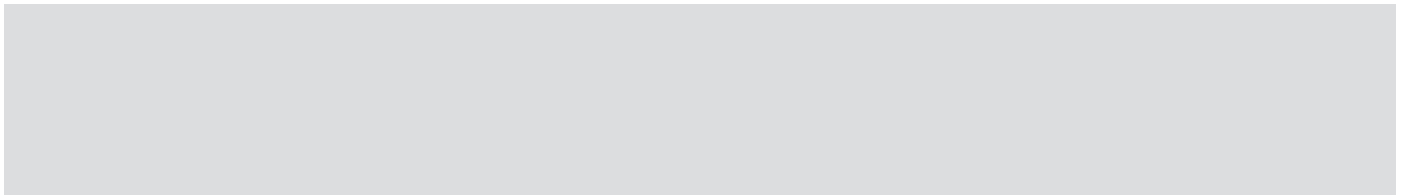
What's Your Promise And How Will You Keep It?

Give plenty of thought to these questions, especially the implementation aspects. Empty promises will only backfire on you. In fact, as a great reality check, begin by listing some unkept promises you made to your team over the last year. If you're drawing a blank, just ask them, and they'll be delighted to remind you!

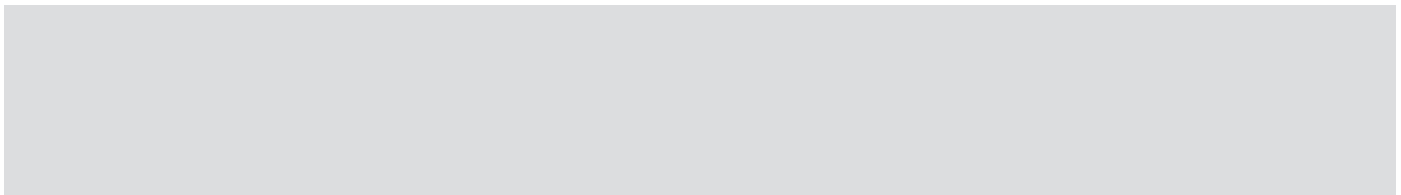
1. What promises do you already make—and keep with your team?



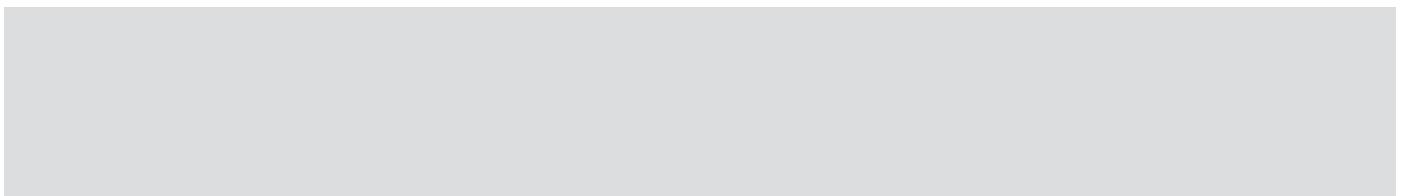
2. Keeping in mind what you've already learned and decided about your personal and agency brand, how can you extend that to your employer brand?



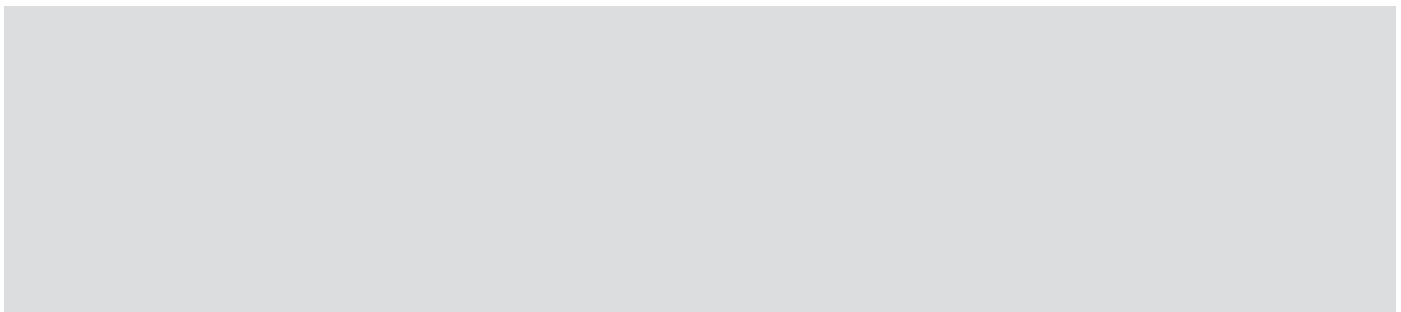
3. What new promises can you make to job candidates--that you will absolutely keep?



4. How will you make those promises known?



5. How will you demonstrate past commitments and your follow-through?



6. How will you be sure you stick to those promises? Who is empowered to hold you accountable?

7. Once you have proven you can keep that level of commitment, what higher levels can you aspire to offer?

8. Are you willing to ask your team what promises they'd like you to make?

My Promises To My Team

Now take a few minutes to analyze your answers to those questions. State as clearly as possible what your current promise is. Commit to an open discussion with your team about this—especially if you have a history of unkept promises. If you dare, hold yourself truly accountable by creating a **Promise Board**, where you put in writing for your team to see exactly what promises you are making to them and where your progress is marked.