

# How to ensure your employer brand remains recession-proof

 By [Celeste Sirin](#)

1 Aug 2022

Recent articles, webinars, ongoing conversations with clients, talent and employer branding specialists, begs the question of how individuals and organisations plan to remain relevant wedged between navigating the uncertainties of the post-pandemic recovery and a threatening global recession.



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Worldwide, the Great Resignation turned many talent markets upside down, although some countries experienced the whiplash more than others. We recall how companies scrambled to double up on their recruitment teams with [LinkedIn](#) reporting 7% growth in recruitment roles. Our global talent market remains in a state of flux as we witness a [slowdown](#) or [hiring freeze](#) with the likes of big employer brands, namely Uber and Meta. Coupled with this, some companies like [Apple](#) and Google are requiring employees to adopt a strict hybrid model with others call everyone back into the workplace ([Goldman Sachs](#) and [Tesla](#)).

As with previous recessions, people are pulling in their belts - their needs changing as inflation and the cost of living start gnawing holes in their pockets. People scale down on [entertainment](#), luxury items, travel and holidays and shift their focus to more basic needs; this in turn also affecting these recovering industry sectors. With this in mind, companies, employees and jobseekers cannot escape the knock-on effect that the Russian-Ukrainian war and the pandemic has on the present [global inflationary pressures](#), all of which is creating rising food and fuel prices and disrupted supply chains.



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In the face of change, we will continue to witness the shift in global talent markets with the likelihood of companies placing pressure on their HR departments to reduce their talent teams, cut their recruitment budgets and/or reduce or place a freeze on their hiring. This will require both internal and external agency recruiters and talent leaders to repurpose themselves and to level up through these headwinds.

‘Resilient’, ‘determined’, ‘influential’, ‘confident’, ‘versatile’, ‘opportunistic’, ‘solutions-orientated’ are just some of the common recognisable behavioural qualities wrapped up in the DNA of a recruiter. What this does mean is recruiters are survivors and can reinvent themselves to remain relevant.

Whilst some of these practical guidelines might sound obvious and/or you might have them on your radar, consider fast-tracking these action items as the precarious inflation starts to become a reality, and your lead time begins to run out.

## **Uncertain labour markets call for a reality check of the company’s business objectives, forecasts and the direct impact it will have on your people strategy and budgets**

With people at the front and centre to the success of any organisation, insist your senior leadership team provide you with an accurate understanding of their business objectives, goals, and projections for the remainder of the year and into 2023, with a view to you closely aligning on your forecasted talent strategies. Pre-empt possible budget cuts (doing more with less), freeze on headcounts, possible layoffs, placing certain projects on hold, implementing stronger retention strategies, fine-tuning and relooking talent acquisition of certain/new roles etc.



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## **To remain “future-proof” you should be revisiting *your* role to see whether *you* are adding enough value to your organisation**

Irrespective of whether hiring stops or not, ask yourself the question whether you are doing enough to demonstrate added value. Nowadays, to remain relevant and indispensable, one needs to be a lifetime learner, realising that you need to continuously upskill, train, and develop your knowledge to grow personally and professionally. This includes remaining knowledgeable of both global and local political, economic, social, technological, legal and environmental affairs and the effects on the fluctuating needs of both jobseeker and employee.

Attending webinars, reading articles, listening to podcasts and keeping abreast of ongoing research/insights/trends is all very necessary if you want to remain relevant. Through your learnings and arsenal of progressive innovations/interventions, you can confidently demonstrate your professional self-worth and be equipped with value-added skills, especially when recruitment is not a priority. Instead, your advisory skills can be employed to assist navigating choppy waters.

## **Validate, internalise and amplify the relevance of your employer brand to retain your employees**

As employees continue to adjust to remote/hybrid work environments, require financial, mental and wellness support and

flexibility, talent leaders retain a vital role in ensuring employees' needs are being effectively met.

Being deliberate in holding ongoing real-time discussions with your valued workforce, together with ongoing pulse surveys can reduce the likelihood of employee disengagement, non-productivity and risk of attrition. At the same time, let us not lose sight of the time and cost involved in recruiting, onboarding and the effect it has on production upon replacing an employee.



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## Creating a competitive employer brand that differentiates you

Companies need to be clear on how they present themselves to the candidate market. Whilst hiring might decline, the ongoing war for tech talent will persist, as well as the need to address the appetites of the [emerging generations](#) entering into the workplace.

Although employer brands remain fluid through these precarious times, it is certainly worth investing time to create and/or validate whether you have a unique and attractive employer value proposition and memorable candidate experience to address your talents' needs. LinkedIn confirms that a strong employer brand translates to 43% cost savings when hiring.

With change being the only certainty, it is a given that recruiters and talent leaders need to remain focused on global talent markets trends. Remaining future-proof will provide relevance to not only you personally, but how you can add value and direction to your organisation professionally. Don't wait to "recession-proof" yourself.

## 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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