



Randstad  
Award  
2015



# STANDING OUT

insights from celebrated employer brands





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## Standing Out: insights from celebrated employer brands

The annual Randstad Award survey is the largest independent employer branding study globally. Some 225,000 people from around the world are asked what makes an organization attractive to work for, what are the most attractive sectors and whom they would most like to work for.

The publication of 'Standing Out: insights from celebrated employer brands' marks the announcement of the 2015 Randstad Award survey country winners and global winner. Featuring interviews with HR executives from six organizations that have consistently scored highly in the Randstad Award survey, we explore what makes an employer appealing to prospective and existing staff. The organizations were selected to cover a range of different sectors, public and privately-owned.

Among the areas under the spotlight are how to attract and retain the elite graduates, people with rare skills and other prized talent that can pick and choose where they work. Far from

simply paying top rates, the challenge is how to keep these people interested and motivated. We look at how to move from a passive to an active employer branding strategy. As social media becomes an indispensable recruitment tool, we also look at why many organizations are having to rethink how they engage with potential candidates and sustain the credibility of their employer brand. Further discussions range from how to keep an established brand fresh to the value of values in attracting top talent. This publication also looks at the results of this year's Randstad Award survey and Randstad's own perspectives on what makes an organization attractive to work for.

We would like to thank the executives from Rolls-Royce, Sony Japan, Microsoft India, Patek Philippe, Janssen Pharmaceutica and the Netherlands Organization for Applied Scientific Research (TNO) for kindly sharing their insights.

We hope that you find this publication interesting and useful for your organization. ■

The Randstad Award survey began life in Belgium in 2001 and in the subsequent years has expanded to cover some 225,000 respondents in 23 countries around the world. We asked **Herman Nijns, Managing Director Randstad Group Belux** and one of the main instigators of the research, to give his perspectives on how employer branding has evolved since 2001 and what role it plays now that many organizations are undergoing major restructuring and change.



Randstad:  
**employer brand** is more  
**critical**  
 than ever

**B**elgium's economy was very much on the up in 2001; business confidence was rising, the labor market was tightening and job mobility was increasing sharply. A lot of skilled people could pretty much pick and choose where they worked," says Herman Nijns. "At Randstad, we were intrigued as to why some companies were much better at attracting talented candidates than others. Money was clearly a key factor, but by no means the only one. We launched the Randstad Award survey to get

some hard data behind what actually makes an organization appealing to work for."

"The early development of the survey was very exciting as it coincided with employer branding's move into the mainstream of business management," says Mr Nijns. "When we began, employer branding was still a relatively new concept and most companies hadn't yet started to actively manage it. But by about 2005, employer branding was firmly on the agenda and more and more organizations ►

**Herman Nijns**  
Managing Director  
Randstad Group Belux

- Herman Nijns started his career with Interlabor Interim in Belgium in 1988.
- In 2005 he became Managing Director of Randstad Belgium and after the acquisition of Vedior in 2008, Chief Executive Officer of the Randstad Group Belgium and Luxembourg
- Mr Nijns holds a Master's degree in Economics, English and Danish.

were using the results of our survey to find out how they are perceived, not just by potential candidates, but also by people who might influence them such as family, teachers and others in their profession."

"One of the things our clients tell us they find especially useful about the findings, is being able to gauge their own strengths and weaknesses against the organizations they compete against for talent. They can use these insights to shape their branding strategy and put together a strong business case for investment. They can also track public perceptions over time and hence judge whether their branding strategy is proving to be successful or not," says Mr Nijns.

Since 2001, the research has expanded to cover the public as well as private sector organizations and has gradually taken in more and more countries. In addition to rating the perceptions of different organizations and what respondents are looking for in their work, this year we also asked people for their reasons for either leaving or staying in their current job. We also asked respondents if they use social media to look for a new job and, if so, what channels are they using.

#### what works?

So what makes a company attractive to work for? "From the outset, the results demonstrate just how nuanced and often very personal the attributes of the ideal employer are," says Mr Nijns. "Rather than any one factor being dominant, the

research shows that the choice of employer is a complex trade-off between multiple attributes. While pay is invariably important, the final choice may come down to an aspect of the job that organizations may not focus on quite so closely such as the working environment or work-life balance. Many of these determining factors vary greatly between ages, sectors and types of work. A 40-year-old delivery driver tends to be much more interested in long-term job security than a 25-year-old designer, for example."

"Since we began the survey, the sophistication of employer branding strategies has greatly increased. A lot



## "the light from within a company shines through to the outside"

of organizations have set up dedicated teams and have created highly developed communications campaigns across both traditional and social media," Mr Nijns continues. "But what we've found through the survey and our own experience is that the foundations for an effective employer brand go beyond marketing and can only be built up over the long-term."

Mr Nijns believes that one of the most striking and consistent findings is just how closely employer branding ratings correlate with employee satisfaction within an organization and the HR policies that underpin it. "The light from within a company shines through to the outside," says Mr Nijns. "Employees tell their friends about what it's like to work at their organization and, thanks to social media and professional networks, word quickly spreads. And these impressions aren't just shaped by what employees say, but how they behave with customers, suppliers and other stakeholders."

"At Randstad, the importance of behavior is reflected in the value we place on relationships with all our stakeholders," Mr Nijns continues. "We know why this is so important from the results of our own employer branding and employee satisfaction studies, which show how closely client and flexworker sentiment matches the relative satisfaction among our corporate employees."

Mr Nijns believes that the other key attribute that cuts across all strong employer brands is culture, both in the values an organization upholds and in what kind of contribution it makes to society. "When employees are proud to work for an organization, again this shines through," says Mr Nijns. "At a time when many organizations are going through a lot of difficult restructuring, we've found that a favorable impression of the culture and values of an organization is hugely important in helping to sustain its appeal to candidates and those that influence them."

#### why some fail?

So what are the common failings in employer branding? Mr Nijns believes that a lot of organizations are still uncertain about their strengths and weaknesses and how to influence them. "Everyone has an employer brand, whether they actively manage it or not," says Mr Nijns. "The big question is are you getting the people you want or are they going elsewhere? Having compared yourself against your competitors and identified your strengths, you can build on them and focus your communications around them. Dealing with some of the weaknesses may take longer, but if you understand them you can get on the right track," says Mr Nijns.

With regard to relationships, an area that Mr Nijns believes some organizations don't

handle as well as they could, is how they engage with unsuccessful candidates. "In simply focusing on the candidates who make it through to the next stage of selection, some organizations don't provide enough support and respect for the ones that don't make it through. Inevitably, this creates a bad impression, which can deter candidates from applying again and put off others they speak to. It's therefore vital that organizations write or speak to unsuccessful candidates to explain why they haven't been chosen and what they could do to be more successful in the future," he says.

#### art or science?

So is employer brand an art or a science? "The importance of values, culture and behavior in shaping your brand definitely makes this an art rather than a science," says Mr Nijns. "At the same time, there are ways you can measure the appeal of your brand. Our survey is one. Others include net promoter scores and ratios of job offers to acceptances. It's also useful to look at your budget for recruitment advertising as the more effective your employer brand, the less you should need to spend."

So how does Mr Nijns see the future?

"While labor mobility is increasing, it may be some time before we see the job mobility rates of ten or 15 years ago. Yet the kind of skills businesses need are changing faster than at any time in living memory and many organizations are seeking to create a new vision for the future. These developments make understanding, shaping and communicating the employer brand more critical than ever. For me personally, I think the Randstad Award survey continues to provide fascinating insights into what people want from their work and how employers can meet these aspirations," he says. ■

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Rolls-Royce  
group

Rolls-Royce was ranked second in the 2014 Randstad Award UK survey, with more than 60% of respondents indicating they would want to work for the company.

#### high rankings

Rolls-Royce was the first choice for the 18-24 age group, who are more interested in career opportunities and working for a global company and less concerned about pay and job security than older workers.

#### top factors

Competitive salary and job security were the two most important factors for UK respondents. The aerospace/automotive sector has been the most popular to work in over the past three years.

# Rolls-Royce: power boost for a famous brand

Rolls-Royce is one of the most famous brand names in the world. But it was only recently that the group began to develop an active employer branding strategy. **Daniel Perkins, Global Employer Brand Manager**, explains how the group is seeking to bring renewed clarity, consistency and impetus to its mission to attract top talent worldwide.

"We create power," says Rolls-Royce. While the cars that originally made the name famous are no longer manufactured by Rolls-Royce, the group continues to be one of the world's leading power systems companies, providing power for aircrafts, ships and land applications.

Employing 54,000 people worldwide, this is a group that has always seen opportunity as being at the heart of its mission. This commitment to nurturing talent is reflected in the fact that around 30% of senior management started out as apprentices. Its determination to make 'better power' through investment in innovation and sustainability is reflected in their £1.2 billion annual R&D budget, which contributes towards making its engines and power systems cleaner and greener.

"Our name is a mark of quality that has always helped to open doors into new markets and attract some of the brightest and best people. But we recognize that competition for talent

around our global operations is mounting, especially among graduates and school leavers. We're also mindful of the greater mobility among young graduates, which requires a new kind of employee value proposition," says Daniel Perkins. "We've always had an employer brand – everyone does, whether they manage it or not – and we were performing well in a range of popular surveys that specialize in ranking engineering companies that people prefer to work for. But, the lack of an active employer branding strategy meant that we weren't conveying who we are and all that we could offer in the most effective ways. We were potentially not engaging with or recruiting certain pockets of talent."

#### crystallizing the vision and values

Mr Perkins joined Rolls-Royce in 2011 to develop and drive a new and more active employer branding strategy. "The development of our employer branding strategy has gone hand-in-hand with the creation of a more dynamic and differentiated employee value proposition (EVP). I see the employer brand as all the ways in which the EVP is communicated ►

## "the basic questions we wanted to answer were why do people want to work for us and what marks us out from our peers"

to candidates and employees – if the EVP is the cake, then the employer brand is the icing," he says.

"One of the main catalysts for our move to an active employer branding strategy was the launch of the Rolls-Royce Corporate Passport, following the arrival of our new CEO in 2011. The Passport crystallizes everything we stand for and want to achieve as a business and is given to every member of staff, whatever position they hold or wherever they operate. By moving to a more active employer branding strategy, we're seeking to bring this same clarity and consistency to how we attract and retain talent," he continues.

### laying the foundations

So how did Rolls-Royce prepare the ground for the updating of its EVP and move to a more active employer branding strategy? "We began by surveying what our employees feel about working for Rolls-Royce and auditing all of the ways we communicate to potential recruits," says Mr Perkins. "The basic questions we wanted to answer were why do people want to work for us and what marks us out from our peers. We also wanted to know whether our employees' experience lived up to the promises we make in our marketing."

"The results were positive in demonstrating how proud our employees are to work for the group. Our value 'trusted to deliver excellence' fits very well around what inspires our people. In turn, a lot of the communications were

broadly in line with what we wanted to say about the company but the messages were articulated in various ways in the market. We recognized that how we communicated needed refreshing," he continues.

### taking the brand into the market

This research helped to shape the development of an ambitious branding strategy and multi-channel communications campaign, which reaches out to both current candidates and the next generation of potential employees. "We want to inspire potential recruits, while explaining what kind of people we want to attract and what they can do to make sure they've got what it takes, both in their outlook and their academic record," says Mr Perkins.

Building on the survey of employees' inspirations and aspirations, a key part of the campaign is providing opportunities for employees to convey in their own words what working for Rolls-Royce means to them.

Rolls-Royce has also developed a new recruitment marketing toolkit, with various messages formed around the common anchor word of 'create'. Mr Perkins and his team have been working with the group's recruitment partner to ensure that the messages are rolled out in a consistent way worldwide.

"While we've set reasonably firm parameters for how these messages are conveyed in different markets, we recognize that some customization is needed to reflect local sentiments. For example, the word 'global' is



seen as a positive attribute in some markets, but off-putting in others."

### building a talent pool for the future

As Rolls-Royce looks to the future, its employer branding strategy focuses on building a community of followers within schools, universities and social media.

"We found that we had a huge amount of fascinating material on new research projects and innovations, which didn't really have an outlet until we started actively communicating it through social media. A catalyst for change was when we received

a model Lego engine from a five-year-old boy, who wanted to be an engineer when he grew up. We were so inspired by this, we set up a team of apprentices and graduates to make a scale replica Lego model of our Trent 1000 passenger jet engine for the Farnborough Airshow. This received national media coverage and became the centerpiece for our recruitment roadshows," says Mr Perkins. "By the beginning of 2015 we had attracted more than half a million Facebook followers, providing a wonderful audience for our stories. We also had more than 170,000 people following us on LinkedIn. We can track what they're viewing to gauge what

they're interested in and shape our digital content around this. Alongside our work with schools and colleges to encourage young people to study and take up careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, social media engagement is helping to create a valuable pool of talent for the future."

### measures of success

So how does Rolls-Royce measure success? "We look closely at where we stand in the various favored engineering employer rankings. We also track what kind of people are applying and from where as we seek to identify untapped pools of talent and create a more diverse workforce," says Mr Perkins. "Our ultimate aim is to move recruitment from a reactive 'we need to fill this post' to a more proactive approach, in which we can work with our colleagues in the business to judge future demands and draw on the talent pool created by our employer branding to meet them. We know that we've been successful if the recruitment advertising spend and time to hire are going down."

So what does Rolls-Royce's move to an active employer branding say to other companies that have yet to take this step? However famous the name, you can't trade on it indefinitely – a passive employer brand lets others decide what you're known for and can easily miss the changes and innovations that are going on inside the business. Without active management, there is also a risk that the brand could become staid and remote. When Rolls-Royce began to roll out its campaign, it clearly had a head start in terms of recognition and good will, but is still pleased by how much interest it has been able to generate across various social media networks. What this suggests is that potential recruits now form an important stakeholder community in their own right. Making the most of their potential requires strategies for engagement over the long-term. ■



**Daniel Perkins**  
Global Employer Brand Manager,  
Rolls-Royce

- Daniel Perkins joined Rolls-Royce in 2011.
- He had previously held a number of sales and business development roles at EMAP Publishing before moving to a recruitment advertising agency that specialized in employer branding and digital solutions.
- He worked with an extensive list of blue chip and public sector organizations, from HM Treasury to Orange, delivering integrated recruitment and sourcing campaigns with a key focus on employer brand development and digital solutions.

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Patek Philippe

Patek Philippe was seen as the most attractive company to work for in Switzerland in the 2014 Randstad Award survey.

#### high rankings

Almost 70% of respondents who said they know Patek Philippe would like to work for the company. Patek Philippe had high rankings among the 20 most attractive companies in Switzerland for its strong management, career opportunities and pleasant working atmosphere.

#### top factors

Switzerland was the only country where a pleasant working atmosphere was the top factor for choosing to work for a company. Competitive salary and benefits package, and long-term job security followed in second and third place.

Patek Philippe:  
always  
something to  
**strive for**

Patek Philippe watches excite a passion among connoisseurs that no other timepiece can match, reflecting generations of fine craftsmanship and artistic flair. But are young people brought up in today's fast-paced world still prepared to put in the long years of apprenticeship and on-the-job honing of skills needed to make one of these watches? We asked **Director of Human Resources, Daniel Rochat**, to explain Patek Philippe's enduring appeal to new recruits.

In November 2014, the world's most expensive watch was sold at auction – the winning bid was more than \$20 million. Set in 18 carat yellow gold and weighing half a kilogram, the bespoke *Supercomplication* was made for Henry Graves, an American financier, between 1925 and 1933. Yet it is not the precious metal that makes this watch so special. What really sets this exquisite timepiece apart is that it is the most intricate ever produced without the aid of computer technology. Its 24 'complications' (the watchmaker's term for features and functions that go beyond simply telling the time) range from Westminster chimes to an astronomical map of New York.

The maker was Patek Philippe of Geneva. And today, its watches are still produced with the same innovation, aesthetic ambition and mechanical precision that make them the pinnacle of haute horlogerie. It takes more than a thousand steps to construct a single timepiece, with everything still made in-house and a huge array of different skills required. From conception to completion, there are some 1,800 people working on the products in Geneva. They stretch from designers and engineers, through to watchmakers, jewelers, enamellers, engravers and finishers.

#### trusting to tradition

"Watchmaking reached a crossroads in the 1970s with the arrival of digital quartz technology. While many others went down the digital quartz route, we chose to stick with traditional mechanical

methods and this has been vindicated by the fact that our products are now more prized than ever," says Daniel Rochat, who had a background as a watchmaker and engineer before he moved into HR.

This sense of heritage is reflected in the company's famous advertising slogan: "You never own a Patek Philippe. You merely look after it for the next generation." And this is no idle boast as the company takes pride in being able to repair any of its watches, the earliest of which date back to the 1830s. While much of the work and training is still carried out in Geneva, the company has developed global service capabilities, which include a new watch repair school in Shanghai.

At the same time, technology plays an important role in the business, be this 3D printing of prototypes or the computer-operated machines used to make working parts too minute for even the finest craftsman to create by hand.

#### what makes employees tick?

The obvious challenge is how to attract and retain the people with the select skills upon which the product relies. This is a career that calls for supreme patience and dedication. It takes four years to study for a technical degree in watchmaking, and then many more years of hands-on experience before you can consider yourself ready for a 'complication'. It could be decades before you can move on to working on the most intricate 'grand complications'. In ►



**Daniel Rochat**  
Director of Human Resources,  
Patek Philippe SA, Geneva

- After holding several positions as General and Operational Director of industrial firms in areas such as electronics and medical, Daniel Rochat resolved to orientate his career in the management of human capital, a longtime passion of his.
- His expertise in the field of Human Resources was proven with Givaudan Suisse SA as Human Resources Director for Switzerland and HR business partner for Global Operations (Fragrances) in 16 different countries.
- Mr Rochat joined Patek Philippe in 2007 as Director of Human Resources. As an experienced manager benefiting from a background in watchmaking and micro-technology engineering, he is now working towards the development of skills within the organization, relying on a strategy based on adherence to values in order to help employees of this family-owned company produce the finest watches in the world.

a world of tech-driven immediacy and instant rewards, finding people who are prepared to put in all this time can be difficult. Companies taking part in the latest annual Deloitte Swiss Watch Industry Study cited shortages of qualified labor as among the three biggest risks they face, ranking alongside weaker foreign demand and the strength of the Swiss Franc. Thierry Stern, who took over from his father as President of Patek Philippe in 2009, highlighted the challenge in an interview with Fortune magazine in 2014, when he said: "It's not easy to say to a young person: 'You need 15 years to apprentice before you can even start to be a little good'."

Yet, the numbers enrolling on college watchmaking courses and apprenticeships have actually been rising in recent years. The 2014 Randstad Award survey found that watchmaking is the most attractive industry to work for in Switzerland and all three of the most popular employers were watchmakers (Patek Philippe was number one, with Swatch in second place and Rolex in third).

So what gives watchmaking such an enduring appeal in Switzerland? It isn't money. For all but a few at the summit of their profession, salaries tend not be as high as bankers, teachers or other professionals. But watchmaking can offer a kudos that no other industry can match. "Clocks and watches are very much part of our heritage here in Switzerland and there is still a lot of status attached to making them," says Mr Rochat. "But we recognize that we are competing with other luxury brands for the best people."

#### the product is king

So what gives Patek Philippe the edge over other watchmakers? "I think what has helped to mark us out is the passion for our products and all the artistry and ingenuity that go into them," says Mr Rochat. This passion is the essence of Patek Philippe's employer brand. "The product is king," says Mr Rochat. "The more we can set our craftsmanship apart, the higher our expectations,



the more people want to work for us. And it's not just the engineers and craftsmen who want to be part of our brand, but people in marketing, logistics and other support functions as well."

#### taking the career to the next level

If the employer brand is built around the product, the employer value proposition is founded on the opportunity to always strive for something more. "People work towards different levels of complication, so wherever they are now, there

is always something more to learn and an opportunity to go further in their career. At the summit are the grand complications, which are the supreme test of the designer and craftsmen's expertise, and what all the years of training and experience are building up for," says Mr Rochat. The company sets high store on preserving and passing on some of the rarer skills in areas such as watch enameling, which otherwise would be in danger of dying out.

#### a rare level of intimacy

When so many luxury brands have been swallowed up by conglomerates, Mr Rochat believes that the other big attraction of Patek Philippe is that it is still an independent family-run business. "Family ownership enables us to maintain a clear strategic vision and strong and enduring values," he says. Alongside stated values that one would expect in such an enterprise, such as attention to aesthetics, service and fine workmanship, Patek Philippe places strong emphasis on 'emotion'. Among customers this is reflected in the commitment to repair any watch in recognition of what it might mean to the owner and the associations it holds. Within the workforce, the emotion is reflected in the close relationships between owners, management and staff. "Despite being a global enterprise, family ownership enables us to operate on a human scale," says Mr Rochat. Patek Philippe's high employee satisfaction and low turnover rates are a testament to these close bonds.

Nonetheless, Patek Philippe knows that it cannot take its position for granted. One of the challenges the company faces is that while

**"the more we can set our craftsmanship apart, the higher our expectations, the more people want to work for us"**

it has a high profile within the technical schools from which a lot of the craftspeople are sourced, it is less well-known than other watchmakers elsewhere. Drawing on the findings of the Randstad Award survey, one of Mr Rochat's priorities is to increase the company's visibility among university students, from which a lot of the people engaged in marketing, logistics and other business processes are sourced.

Even if skilled people are available, ensuring that potential recruits have the necessary passion and dedication remains a challenge for Mr Rochat and his team. "We have a presence on social media. But what we really value are face-to-face interactions. We meet and talk with potential recruits at our factory many times, as that is the only way to really get to know the candidates as people, what motivates them and whether they have the zeal to put in all the many years of training and preparation," he says. There are no formulaic questions or interview techniques that would single out someone who has what it takes. Mr Rochat believes that you can only see the passion if you look into their eyes.

#### lasting appeal

So what can other organizations learn from Patek Philippe? This is clearly a rare and unusual company, whose attractions can't really be fitted into conventional descriptions of an employer brand. Yet in a world of automation and immediacy, what Patek Philippe's appeal as an employer does show is that many people still cherish the opportunity to bring time, craftsmanship and devotion to their work. It is hard to see how the talent model would work without the watchmaking heritage and concentration of technical schools focusing on the necessary skills that exist within Switzerland. Therefore, this is a triumph of local tradition in a globalized world. Ultimately, this is about the chance to do something that nobody else has done, even if it takes decades to win the opportunity – that takes a passion that only people who have it would really understand. ■



# standing out in the competition for talent

Randstad Award 2015:



As labor mobility continues to rise, the Randstad Award survey 2015 provides fascinating insights into what makes employees want to look for a job elsewhere, what encourages them to stay and which organizations are the most attractive to work for. To what extent is pay the decisive factor? Could work-life balance and flexible working arrangements actually trump salaries in making people want to stay with their current employer? Why does the use of social media for job searching vary so much by country? What role does a strong employer brand play in helping an organization to stand out in a competitive labor market? ▶

The annual Randstad Award survey is the largest independent employer branding study globally. Some 225,000 working age respondents in 23 countries (covering some 75% of the global industries) were interviewed for the latest study about what makes an organization appealing to work for and what are the most attractive sectors.

Respondents are first asked to rank the top five attributes they look for when choosing to work for an organization. They then pick the organizations they know from a random list of 30 of the 150 largest companies in their country and, based on their perception of the organization, whether they would like to work for them. Finally, they evaluate each selected organization on factors ranging from pay, training opportunities and career progression to the strength of its values, management and financial health.

### description of online respondents

	respondents	%
global sample	226,578	100%
gender		
men	110,788	49%
women	115,790	51%
age		
18-24 years old	32,096	14%
25-44 years old	127,118	56%
45-65 years old	67,364	30%
education		
higher education (master)	75,636	33%
higher education (bachelor)	65,894	29%
secondary education and lower	83,683	37%
no diploma/other	1,365	1%

### what is your top 5 of most important criteria when choosing an employer?

criteria	global most important	global top 5 2015	2014
salary & employee benefits	22	63	67%
long-term job security	14	52	54%
pleasant working atmosphere	8	48	50%
good work-life balance	8	42	42%
career progression opportunities	6	38	38%
financially healthy	8	37	38%
interesting job content	8	36	37%
conveniently located	5	32	32%
offers flexible working arrangements	4	29	29%
good training	3	24	24%
strong management	3	19	18%
strong image/strong values	3	16	16%
quality products/services		16	15%
diversity management		12	11%
international/global career opportunities		12	11%
environmentally & socially aware (CSR)		11	11%
uses latest technologies		11	10%



#### core values searched by potential talent in 23 countries

- potential employees search...
1. salary & employee benefits
  2. long-term job security
  3. pleasant working atmosphere
  4. job content
  5. financial health
  6. work-life balance
  7. career prospects
  8. strong management
  9. good training
  10. corporate social responsibility

#### core values attributed to largest employers in 23 countries

- employers score best on...
1. financial health
  2. strong management
  3. good training
  4. career prospects
  5. salary & employee benefits
  6. job content
  7. long-term job security
  8. pleasant working atmosphere
  9. corporate social responsibility
  10. work-life balance

Additional questions in the 2015 survey included:

- have you changed or do you plan to change employers in the past/next 12 months?
- what factors contributed to your decision to change employer?
- what factors contribute to your decision to look for another employer?
- what factors make you stay with your current employer?
- did you/do you use social media when applying for a job and, if so, which sites?

#### confidence spurs stronger competition

So what do the latest findings reveal about sentiments within the labor market?

When economies are in the doldrums, people prize job security above all. But as economies pick up and people become more confident about their prospects, they are likely to be more selective about what they want from their job.

The renewed confidence in economic conditions worldwide had already seen pay overtake job security in last year's Randstad Award survey. As optimism continues to rise, the latest findings show that people are now even more discerning in seeking out work that supports their career goals and fits in with their lifestyle. While salaries and job security remain important, the gap with other

### what makes people join, stay and leave

	no.1	no.2	no.3
<b>joiners</b>	salary / benefits	job security	working atmosphere
<b>stayers</b>	work-life balance	competitive salary	flexible working
<b>leavers</b>	lack of career growth	low compensation	work-life balance issues
<b>potential leavers</b>	low compensation	lack of career growth	lack of recognition/ reward

prominent factors such as a pleasant working atmosphere, work-life balance and career progression has narrowed. If we look at the different generations, training, job content and international opportunities are key attractions for younger workers (25 and under). Work-life balance is especially valued by people in the middle of their working life (25-44), while salary and security gain in importance in later years.

While the shift to a more aspirational and selective approach to the choice of employer is fairly universal, it's especially marked in the markets that had been worst affected by the global economic downturn and are now seeing signs of recovery, such as Italy and Spain. The clear implication is that organizations now need to work harder to retain their top performers, especially as what respondents believe leading employers offer doesn't quite match the priorities of the talent they're seeking to attract. It's especially noticeable that while salary, job security and pleasant working atmosphere are the top three criteria for potential employees, they're much lower down the list of what employers score best on in the survey.

#### itching to move

With greater choice comes increased job mobility. Thirteen per cent of respondents in the survey left their jobs voluntarily in the past 12 months. Even more (21%) would consider looking for a new employer in the next year. The desire for change is especially marked in the fast growth economies of India (37% considering a change) and China (32% considering a change), though in almost all countries there is a significant increase in the proportion who are looking to switch from those that have left in the past year.

The main reasons why people have left or plan to switch are lack of career opportunities, and insufficient compensation, but waning interest in the job and work-life balance issues also rate highly. Work-life balance is by far the most important factor in encouraging people to stay

### attractiveness global sectors worldwide (\*)

	2015	2014
1. IT	56.26%	55.52%
2. technology	51.61% ▲	46.51%
3. life sciences	51.33% ▲	48.52%
4. automotive	49.96% ▲	47.32%
5. industrial	49.90% ▲	45.45%
6. consulting	49.39%	47.59%
7. FMCG	46.70% ▲	43.94%
8. financial services	42.83% ▲	40.11%
9. chemical	42.00% ▲	38.94%
10. construction	41.95%	40.11%

(\*) global sectors including approx. 6,000 companies surveyed worldwide

### have you changed employer in the past year or would you consider changing in the next 12 months?

	leavers		potential leavers
global	13	global	21
Russia	19	India	37
Hungary	18	China	32
India	18	Singapore	30
Singapore	17	Russia	25
USA	16	Hong Kong	24
Hong Kong	16	Argentina	22
New Zealand	16	Hungary	22
Australia	15	Poland	21
UK	15	UK	21
Sweden	15	New Zealand	20
Poland	14	Australia	18
China	14	Italy	18
Argentina	13	Canada	18
Canada	13	France	17
Switzerland	13	Sweden	17
France	11	USA	17
Germany	10	Switzerland	16
Belgium	9	Spain	16
Spain	9	Netherlands	16
Italy	9	Germany	15
Netherlands	8	Japan	14
Japan	7	Belgium	13

with their employers (46% putting it in their top three), with compensation (32%) and flexible working (29%) next on the list. Work-life balance and flexibility are especially valued by the experienced personnel, who can be most important to retain. And while flexibility is seen as more important by women than men, the gap is marginal. The clear implication is that you can't just rely on top rates of pay to secure the talent you need. While pay needs to be competitive, creating a pleasant and supportive working environment can be just as important in attracting, and certainly retaining, high performers.

In both attracting and retaining the most qualified and prized talent, the survey also underlines the importance of ensuring that

people have opportunities to keep learning and aspiring. These findings are echoed in the interviews with HR executives carried out for this latest edition of 'Standing Out'. For example, Microsoft India, the most attractive employer in its home market and winner of the 2015 Global Randstad Award, believes that the license it gives its employees to explore and experiment has been crucial in enabling it to buck the high turnover rates in India. Similarly, Sony Japan sees its encouragement to staff to explore the limits of their imagination – even if sometimes they fail – as vital in attracting, retaining and nurturing the innovators it needs now that the country's declining birth rate and shift away from jobs for life have intensified competition for smart young graduates. ▶



## China and India are among the giant economies where social media job searching is especially prevalent

A closely related motivation, highlighted in both the survey and the interviews, is the desire to make a difference to society, especially among the elite graduates who can pick and choose where they work. This might be new medicines at Janssen Pharmaceutica, cleaner and more efficient engines at Rolls-Royce or safer bicycles for older people at TNO, the Dutch research organization.

### most attractive sectors

The most attractive sector to work in globally is once again IT. However, while the sector scored highly in the key attributes of pay and career progression, it was much lower on work-life balance and flexibility. This suggests that it may need to do more in these areas to appeal to the broadest pool of talent, especially high-performing women and people in the middle of their careers.

The technology and industrial sectors have seen strong rises in both rating and ranking. At the other end of the spectrum, sectors with low attractiveness and recognition scores will need to work hard to enhance their appeal. A key part of our follow-up to the Randstad Award survey findings is engaging with clients to show them how their relative attractiveness compares to peers within their sector and identifying ideas for improvement.

### social media job seeking

Nearly half of job seekers now use social media to look for work. The most commonly used media are Facebook (56%), followed by Google+ (38%) and LinkedIn (34%). Twitter (27%) is used less frequently to find work and only a small group uses Instagram (9%).

Hungarians and Argentineans are the most likely to use social media in their job hunt. China and India are among the giant economies where social media job searching is especially prevalent. Japan is notably much lower, reflecting a cultural wariness of self-promotion, though attitudes are gradually changing.

## do you or would you use social media to find a job?

	use social media	1	2	3
global	49	Facebook	Google+	LinkedIn
Hungary	75	Facebook	Google+	Blog Oldalak
Argentina	72	Facebook	Google+	LinkedIn
Italy	71	Facebook	LinkedIn	Google+
China	69	Google+	Facebook	Twitter
Spain	66	Facebook	LinkedIn	Google+
India	66	Facebook	LinkedIn	Google+
Russia	59	VK	Google+	Professional.ru
Netherlands	59	LinkedIn	Facebook	Google+
Sweden	52	Facebook	LinkedIn	Google+
Germany	51	Facebook	Google+	Xing
Belgium	49	Facebook	LinkedIn	Google+
Hong Kong	49	Facebook	WhatsApp	Google+
Switzerland	48	Facebook	LinkedIn	Google+
Singapore	46	LinkedIn	Facebook	Google+
USA	42	Facebook	LinkedIn	Google+
Canada	40	Facebook	LinkedIn	Google+
Poland	40	Facebook	Google+	GoldenLine
New Zealand	40	Facebook	LinkedIn	Google+
UK	39	Facebook	LinkedIn	Twitter
France	34	Facebook	LinkedIn	Viadeo
Australia	34	Facebook	LinkedIn	Google+
Japan	26	Facebook	Line	Twitter

Our interviews highlight the value of social media in not only reaching out to potential candidates in the short-term, but also creating a more proactive approach to recruitment in the long-term. This includes connecting with high school and university students and encouraging them to think about working for the organization in the future. Rolls-Royce now has more than half a million Facebook followers, for example, which it sees as a 'valuable pool of talent for the future'.

### the value of employer brand

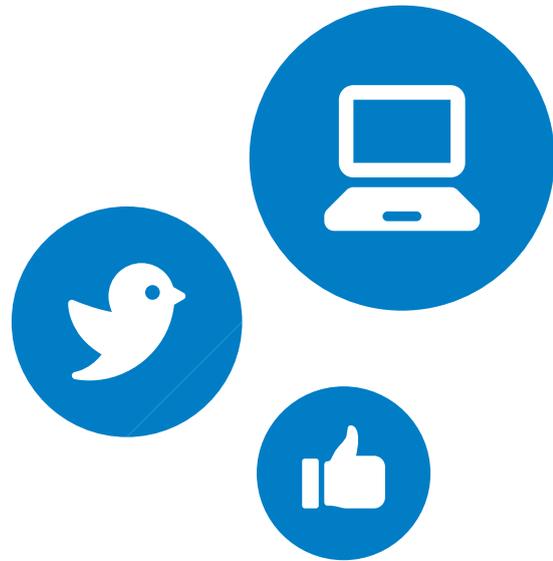
The findings of this year's Randstad Award survey once again underline the importance of an effective employer brand.

The employer brand is the essence of what makes people want to work for you or drives them away – the billboard for your

organization. As competition for talent increases, a compelling employer brand can thus boost your ability to attract, engage and retain a high-performance workforce. As social media becomes an indispensable recruitment tool, an engaging and authentic social media presence could be especially important in enabling your organization to convey its culture and connect with a broad network of potential candidates.

What comes through strongly in both the interviews and the survey findings is that just as people's motivations and aspirations are exceptionally varied and individual, an employer brand is highly nuanced and multi-dimensional. Countries, companies and even people within them all want something slightly different and the employer brand should therefore seek to articulate and convey the rich and varied traits that make the organization unique. ■

## work-life balance is by far the most important factor in encouraging people to stay with their employers



# TNO: bringing innovation to life

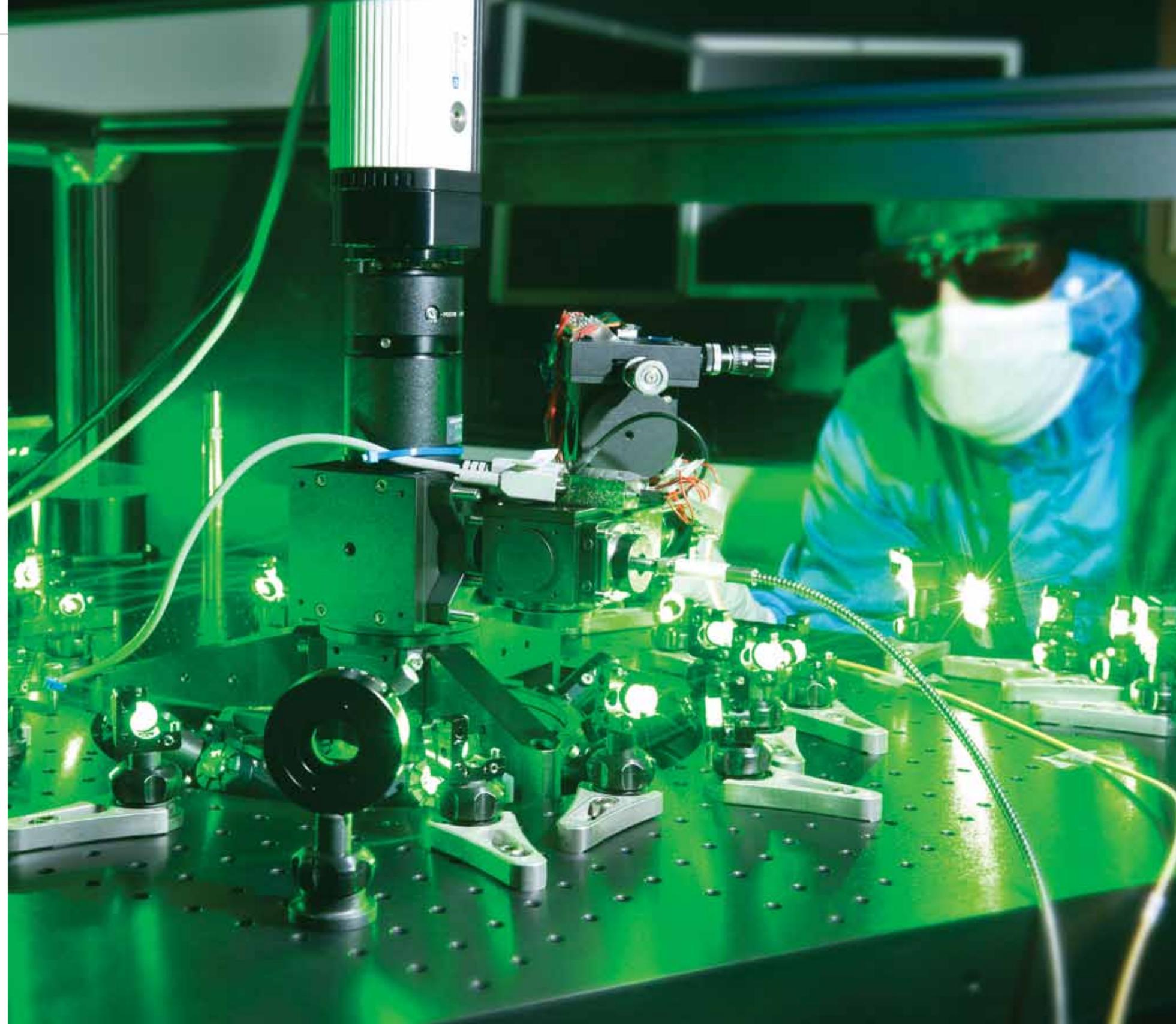
From intelligent bicycles to edible algae and healthier bread, the Netherlands Organization for Applied Scientific Research (TNO) exists to provide practical solutions for the challenges facing business and society. **Irene van den Broek, HR Director**, explains the distinctive appeal of what is the Netherlands' most attractive non-profit organization to work for and the role HR can play in fostering

Imagine talking late into the night about the world's problems you would like to solve or how to apply the latest scientific discoveries within innovative new products. While most of us go back to our day jobs the next morning, the 3,000 employees of TNO get paid to turn their ideas into practice.

TNO works with industry and government on assignments designed to promote economic growth and the wellbeing of society. Its focus includes sustainability, healthy living, developing commercial applications for new technologies and providing solutions to congestion, pollution and other urban challenges. "Our mission is to create innovation with purpose," says Irene van den Broek. "We

don't create knowledge for its own sake, but for practical application."

Among the research projects that made international headlines over the past year is a new electric smart bike, which is due to come onto the market in the next two years. One of the key aims is to enable older people to carry on enjoying cycling, while cutting the high accident rate among this age group – nearly 70% of fatal cycling accidents in the Netherlands involve people over 65. Drawing on developments in automotive safety, the bike's computer operated anti-collision system collects signals from an array of cameras and electronic sensors to alert riders to the imminent danger of an accident. ▶



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TNO

TNO was ranked number one in the 2014 Randstad Award Netherlands survey in the not-for-profit and public sectors, with 44% of respondents indicating they would want to work for the organization.

#### high rankings

TNO scored above average among 35-54 year-olds, who tend to favor a good working atmosphere, pay and benefits and job security higher than younger colleagues. The organization also rated above average with university graduates and those with a secondary education.

#### top factors

TNO's interesting job contents and a strong management were the two most important factors for Dutch respondents. The care sector has been the most popular to work in over the past three years, with the public sector being the second-most attractive sector over the past two years.

Projects being carried out in partnership with industry include the development of HealthBread, a bread that feels and tastes like white bread, but is at least as healthy as wholemeal bread. The product was developed to help overcome consumers in many parts of Europe's reluctance to eat wholemeal bread, even though it has more health promoting dietary fibre. Other ground-breaking developments include new ways to extract food, chemicals and pharmaceutical products from different types of algae, which could provide a huge boost for sustainability and create thousands of new jobs in the country's biotech sector. Building on TNO's pioneering work in the field of nanotechnology, projects getting underway in 2015 include developing cost-effective techniques for the production of nano-composites, which TNO is coordinating in partnership with around a dozen private companies.

#### communicating the buzz

"There is a constant buzz around TNO," says Ms van den Broek. "When you talk to our people about their work you see a sparkle in their eyes: they have an intrinsic motivation for the work they do because it contributes directly to the social and environmental challenges our society is facing. That's what TNO's employer brand should be. Join us and you can make it happen."

"We're looking for people who are at the top of their classes, but also versatile enough to apply their expertise in many different areas. And we know that excellent people attract other excellent people. If potential recruits hear about us from people they respect, they're more likely to be interested. That's why our leading people spend so much time in campuses explaining who we are and what we do. We're fortunate in the fact that a lot of our researchers also hold posts within the country's universities," says Ms van den Broek.

**"when you talk to our people about their work you see a sparkle in their eyes..."**

"As an organization dedicated to finding smart solutions for complex problems, we also recognize the importance of being innovative in the way we seek to attract recruits. Examples include the interactive gaming sessions during our on-site days for graduates."

Some of the media stories involving TNO tend to focus on its testing work in areas such as product safety and pollution, which misses a lot of the more exciting innovations and original

*Projects being undertaken by TNO's automotive branch include improving life boat safety. The picture shows a life boat landing in the water from a great height. These boats are deployed on oil rigs for use in an emergency. One of TNO's tests was to measure the impact on the human body of such a drop.*



**Irene van den Broek**  
HR Director, TNO

- Irene van den Broek joined TNO as HR Director in 2009.
- Prior to that she worked for ABN AMRO Bank for 25 years, holding a number of positions including HR Director and secretary to the Board of ABN AMRO bank in Singapore.

research. "We use social media and our website to give a broader view of the many different projects we're involved in," says Ms van den Broek. "Rather than just concentrating on the dry technicalities, we want to convey the inspiration and passion behind these projects. One of the ways we do this is by asking the project leaders to explain what they're trying to achieve in their own words."

Does being a non-profit organization help or hinder their ability to attract the people they need? "We pay reasonably well, but would never be able to match the salaries of some of the bigger 'for profit' corporations in the country. But I don't think money is the main motivation for a lot of the people we want to attract," says Ms van den Broek. "At the same time, a big part of our work is carried out in partnership with private sector clients, so our people also need to have a commercial outlook. Overall, I think we can position ourselves as offering the best of the academic and business worlds."

#### collaborative development

TNO is mindful of how funding, research and the career paths for the scientists, engineers and other people it's looking to attract are all changing and has been reshaping its organizational structure and offerings to recruits to reflect this.

"Few recruits are looking for a job for life and that suits us as there clearly isn't a place on the executive board for every graduate we recruit. Five to ten years would be a good amount of time to spend with us, but if people want to join us for shorter periods we can also cater for that. This flow-through of talent helps to bring in new ideas and refresh the organization. In turn, people like to have TNO on their CV and can act as our ambassadors when they leave," says Ms van den Broek.

Organizationally, TNO has moved from

operating as five autonomous divisions covering key focus areas such as industry or healthy living to a matrix structure in which everyone from across the organization is encouraged to collaborate. "We're constantly looking for ways in which developments in one area can be applied in another; this cross-fertilization is a key priority. We recognize that some of the best innovations emerge at the intersections between fields," says Ms van den Broek. In a recent example, TNO's healthy living team was approached by a group of carers, who had found that at least two hours of their day was being spent pushing wheelchairs; time that could be better spent on actual care. As a result, the healthy living team is now working with its colleagues in automotive on plans for a self-driving wheelchair.

TNO is now looking to extend this collaborative approach by taking on more of a coordinating role within multi-agency projects. It's also looking to share researchers especially in areas where qualified people are in short supply such as econometrics or where there would be possibilities for people to move from project to project in different organizations.

#### making it happen

So what can other organizations learn about employer branding from TNO? This is an organization with a compelling employee value proposition (EVP) built around the chance to bring innovation to life and make a positive contribution to society. In return, it wants people who understand the realities of business and project funding. While TNO has a reasonably good media profile, it recognizes that its people are the best ambassadors for its EVP. Rather than 'selling' TNO, HR's key role is to develop a culture, structure and environment capable of nurturing innovation and finding solutions. As such, it is a clear case of why effective HR policies are the most important foundation for a strong employer brand. ■

Janssen Pharmaceutica:

# real people make better stories

Janssen was the fourth most attractive company to work for in the 2014 Randstad Award Belgium survey (three of the top five were pharmaceutical companies).

#### high rankings

Janssen was in the top three for competitive salary and employee benefits, long-term job security, interesting job content, good training and good work-life balance.

#### top factors

The three most important factors in choosing a company to work for in Belgium were salary and employee benefits, long-term job security and pleasant working atmosphere.

**E**mploying 4,600 people in Belgium (including 1,600 research scientists and 1,600 production personnel), Janssen is one of the largest pharmaceutical research and manufacturing subsidiaries within the global Johnson & Johnson group (employing 150,000 people worldwide). Its medical breakthroughs stretch from the revolutionary fentanyl anesthetics developed by its founder, Dr Paul Janssen, in the early 1960s to a new generation of bone marrow cancer drugs currently under trial. Its production facilities make more than 60% of the active pharmaceutical ingredients for Johnson & Johnson worldwide.

Janssen Pharmaceutica is one of the 29 research-based international pharmaceutical companies operating within what has come

to be known as Belgium's 'Pharma Valley'. The Randstad Award survey consistently shows that this is the sector that people in the country most want to work in. Pharma ranks number one in attractiveness in key criteria ranging from salaries and career progression to interesting job content and concern for the environment and society.

"We're fortunate to be part of a well-developed collaborative ecosystem that brings together universities, hospitals, governments, scientific bodies and companies like ourselves. These strong roots are helping to attract both investment and the best scientific brains into Belgium," says Tim De Kegel.

Clearly, it's people who make the medical breakthroughs and it's people who guarantee ►

As one of the world's leading pharmaceutical companies, Janssen Pharmaceutica recognizes that values are vital in engaging with the highly sought-after talent upon which the business relies. Its successful employer branding campaign is built around the real life stories and experiences of employees, giving it an authenticity and impact that an agency-devised marketing campaign would find very difficult to match. **Gert Quintiens, Talent Acquisition Manager, and Tim De Kegel, Senior Director Public Affairs & External Communication,** discuss the importance of keeping it real in attracting people who want to make a difference.



**Tim De Kegel**  
Senior Director, Communications  
& Public Affairs

the quality and safety of production. Janssen's founding principle is that the faster it can find a solution, the faster people can be cured – "our patients are waiting," said Dr Paul Janssen. "Our guiding mission is to find new products and bring them to market as soon as possible," says Gert Quintiens. "From IT and logistics to engineers, scientists and indeed, HR, we can all come together to support that goal."

#### the value of values

"While the presence of so many other pharmaceutical companies brings many benefits, it also creates intense competition for the talent we need," continues Mr Quintiens. "Competitive

- Tim De Kegel has been Senior Director, Communications & Public Affairs of Janssen Pharmaceutica in Belgium since 2012.
- He is responsible for promoting and protecting the Janssen brand and reputation internally and externally within Belgium
- He is responsible for all external communication and public affairs strategy and execution across the company. He also oversees employee communication efforts.

salaries are clearly important. But the doctors and scientists we need to sustain innovation also want meaning in their careers and to work for companies that share their values. An example of the challenge we face is how to convince a medical doctor that they can make as much of a difference to people's health by developing new medicines in our research facilities as they would by treating patients in a clinic or hospital. Pharmaceutical companies aren't always the first thought when a doctor qualifies."

Like any large and profitable multinational group, pharmaceutical corporations can often come across as remote and unfeeling to a new generation of young graduates in search of values and meaning. Mr De Kegel and Mr Quintiens therefore believe that one of Janssen's great differentiators in attracting and retaining talent is its founding 'credo'. The credo sets out its responsibilities to the people who use its products, its staff, suppliers and investors.

"Our credo is the touchstone for every decision, rather than a document that sits on the shelf. It is also reflected in our employee value proposition of 'only for professionals who care'," says Mr De Kegel. "Our employer branding surveys confirm how important these commitments are to new recruits and existing employees. I think a lot of companies are coming to recognize the vital importance of values and are looking to create the same kind of framework. But this can take time to make an impact within the organization, so we're fortunate in having a credo that's already embedded for over 70 years."

#### keeping it real

At a time when people are constantly bombarded with marketing and can easily become cynical about what corporations are telling them, the search for authenticity goes hand-in-hand with the yearning for greater meaning. The importance of open dialogue has been heightened by the ease with which people can communicate their thoughts and experiences



**Gert Quintiens**  
Talent Acquisition Manager

- Gert Quintiens is a recruitment specialist with over 13 years of experience for Johnson & Johnson/Janssen Pharmaceutica in Belgium and the Netherlands.
- He is now leading an in-house Talent Acquisition team providing recruiting services for various Johnson & Johnson operations in Belgium and the Netherlands.
- He has led his team in its transition from being 'recruiters' to full business partners. He has also led the Janssen Employer Branding project and has been closely involved in the development of the Janssenjobs.be site and the "Life at Janssen" blog section.

of a company through social media.

"We want people to feel that what they do is vital," says Mr Quintiens. "Rather than having an agency develop a series of visuals and slogans, we asked all our employees how they would want to convey the company to potential recruits. The result is a new cross-media campaign in which our employees are our ambassadors, telling their own individual stories about what it's like to work for Janssen. They talk about their aspirations, for example. They might also talk about what they do to maintain a work-life balance."

How does this employee-centered campaign fit with the wider employment brand of the parent Johnson & Johnson group? "Our approach has always been very closely integrated. Johnson & Johnson reshaped its employer brand last year and our new campaign was actually the model for this. There is a growing realization that stories are best told by the people who live them," says Mr De Kegel.

# "stories are best told by the people who live them"

#### changing market realities

While stressing the importance of values, Janssen recognizes the demands of the tough market in which it operates. "We're competing with other clusters worldwide. We need to remain innovative. As health budgets come under ever greater pressure, we also need to be as cost-efficient as possible," says Mr De Kegel.

"We need to focus our resources on our core strategic priorities. Developing the best new medicines is clearly part of this. But we can outsource non-core functions such as catering," says Mr Quintiens. Is HR strategically core? While he appreciates that in some companies it might not be, he believes that in-house HR is very much part of the 'core'; in a business that is so dependent on recruiting talented graduates and which operates in a market undergoing significant disruption and change. "We need to be close to the business and be able to keep pace with the constant developments within and around it," he says.

So what can other businesses learn from Janssen? Well, first and foremost, values have never been more vital, especially among the top tier graduates that could probably find a job anywhere, but really prize the opportunity to make lives better. The other main differentiator is authenticity. People trust and respond to people like themselves. ■

# the best of the best:

## Global Randstad Award winners



Winners have benefited from the positive impact on the quality and quantity of applicants.

The Randstad Award is presented each year to the most attractive employer in various countries around the globe. The Award now covers 23 countries. Winners have benefited from the positive impact on the quality and quantity of applicants.

Since 2014, Randstad also asked respondents to rate the most attractive employer worldwide. Our congratulations

go to Microsoft for winning the 2015 Global Randstad Award. Congratulations also to runner-up Sony and third prize winner Samsung.

To select the global winner, respondents from 22 countries (excl. Luxembourg) around the world were given a list of the 50 largest global companies, operating in more than 25 countries, with the same name in

each and more than 30% employed outside the home country. Respondents were then asked which of these companies they would like to work for. Sixty eight per cent said Microsoft, ahead of Sony and Samsung in second and third places respectively, the positions they also held last year. When the leading global companies were rated on a range of strengths, Microsoft scored strongly across the board. ■

most attractive global companies by attribute

	1 <sup>st</sup> position	2 <sup>nd</sup> position	3 <sup>rd</sup> position
salary & employee benefits	Microsoft	PwC	Accenture
career progression opportunities	Microsoft	Accenture	General Electric
pleasant working atmosphere	Microsoft	Tata Consultancy Services	Accenture
long-term job security	Microsoft	General Electric	GDF Suez
good work-life balance	Microsoft	Tata Consultancy Services	Johnson & Johnson
financially healthy	Microsoft	Coca-Cola	PwC
interesting job content	Microsoft	IBM	Sony
good training	Microsoft	IBM	PwC
strong management	Microsoft	PwC	Samsung
environmentally & socially aware (CSR)	Microsoft	General Electric	Tata Consultancy Services

# Sony: pushing back the **limits** of the **imagination**



As one of the biggest and longest established electronics and entertainment groups in the world, Sony isn't just competing for creative talent with its global peers, but also a growing array of nimble new start-ups. According to **Kazushi Ambe, Corporate Executive SVP, in charge of Human Resources**, Sony offers the brightest recruits the best of both worlds. On the one side are the broad opportunities and resources of a major corporation. On the other, is encouraging employees to explore the limits of their imagination. Even if this means that sometimes they fail, as long as it becomes a positive learning experience, Sony is there to back them up.

**F**rom the Walkman® to the PlayStation®, generations have grown up with Sony's iconic products. But Sony knows that it needs to keep innovating to survive and thrive. The fate of Kodak and Blockbuster provides a sharp reminder of how quickly even market leaders can crumble if they fail to keep pace with a world of unrelenting change.

It's therefore a great testament to Sony's constant striving for the new and the original that after nearly 70 years in business its ability to revolutionize our lives is as strong as ever. Its R&D team are pushing back the boundaries in areas as varied as biotechnology and virtual reality. "Our mission is to inspire and fulfill curiosity among our customers and our employees," says Kazushi Ambe. "We want to attract people with the curiosity that inspires them to explore new ideas ►

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2015

Sony Group

#### high rankings

Respondents in the 2014 Global Randstad Award were given a list of the 50 largest global companies. Sony was seen as the second most attractive, with just under 60% of respondents indicating they would like to work for the company overall and over 60% among graduates and young people (18-24 years old). Sony was rated first for interesting job content.

#### top factors

Globally, the top three factors for choosing to work for a company were a competitive salary and benefits package, long-term job security and a pleasant working atmosphere.



**Kazushi Ambe**  
Corporate Executive SVP, in charge  
of Human Resources, Sony Group

- Kazushi Ambe joined Sony in 1984.
- He took up his current post as Corporate Executive SVP, in charge of Human Resources, in 2014, having worked in senior positions in Japan and the US.

## "we give our people a lot of autonomy and try to create an environment that is dynamic and fun"

"Crucially, we can also give our people more license to devise and try out new ideas than they would in a small start-up," he continues. "We can ensure they have the necessary infrastructure to develop their innovations and won't mind if they fail. In fact, we welcome a certain amount of failure as an inherent part of the creative process. The history of technology shows that greatness is often borne out of failure. You might not get it entirely right first time. But if you can keep searching and refining, the breakthrough will come. By contrast, smaller companies generally need to turn ideas into revenue very quickly or they go out of business, so there often isn't that same level of freedom and license."

Mr Ambe emphasizes the importance of Sony's culture and working environment in fostering inspiration. Its approach can be seen in the creation of so-called curiosity labs, from which a lot of its most cutting-edge ideas have sprung. "We give our people a lot of autonomy and try to create an environment that is dynamic and fun."

### winning strategy

It's certainly a winning strategy. Sony ranks as the second most attractive company to work for in the world in the latest Randstad Award survey. The Global Randstad Award findings have consistently showed that Sony rates especially highly among graduates and young people (18-24 years old).

While Mr Ambe sees Sony's ability to attract today's bright young people as a key

competitive strength, he recognizes that attitudes to careers are changing as young people look to move around more frequently than previous generations. "While longer careers can bring benefits to Sony and our employees, this should never be the sole objective. We welcome the fact that people want to gain fresh experiences. We like to stay in contact, and many people eventually rejoin us," he says.

### one Sony

Employing around 140,000 people, Sony Group operates across many sectors and geographic markets. How does it seek to sustain cohesion within its workforce? "While our headquarters, main R&D operations and financial services are in Japan, our film division is based in Los Angeles, music in New York and we have manufacturing and service capabilities worldwide. But we are not a portfolio business. We have a core set of values and direction, embodied in the 'One Sony'," says Mr Ambe. "The One Sony isn't just a slogan; it can be seen in the amount of people who move around the group through to the development of group-wide digital platforms. We look for cross-over opportunities in R&D and people across different divisions are constantly sharing ideas."

So what can other large organizations learn from Sony? Well, first and foremost, curiosity keeps you young. Sony is one of the most attractive companies to work for in the world because it encourages its people to keep dreaming and gives them the capabilities to fulfill these dreams. ■

## Microsoft India: empowering people to achieve more

India has one of the highest employee turnover rates of any major economy, with attrition within the technology sector being especially high. But Microsoft has successfully bucked this trend. **Rohit Thakur, Head of Human Resources,** believes that money alone can't guarantee employee satisfaction and retention, you have to take the time to understand their aspirations and empower them to keep achieving more. And to do this, Microsoft is challenging traditional hierarchies, career paths and performance management techniques. ▶

Randstad  
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2015

Microsoft India

Microsoft was the most attractive employer overall according to the Indian Randstad Award 2014.

### high rankings

It was also the top-ranked organization for competitive salary and benefits, career progression, financial health and strong management.

### top factors

Competitive salary and benefits, financial health and long-term job security were the three areas that were most important for Indian employees when choosing an employer.





**Rohit Thakur**  
Head of Human Resources,  
Microsoft (India)

■ Rohit Thakur joined Microsoft in September 2012 and is responsible for leading HR priorities and developing HR initiatives that support Microsoft's operations across India.

■ In this role, his focus includes aligning the organization's HR strategy with business objectives, building a culturally aligned and diverse organization, talent development and management, and implementing effective HR policies and systems across the company's 6,000 strong employee base in India. Prior to Microsoft, he spent 11 years at GE.

If any company can be said to have shaped the modern world it is Microsoft. If the Internet is the roadway of modern communication and commerce, then Microsoft provides the engines. Microsoft India is one of the fastest growing subsidiaries within the group, with operations spanning IT, research, engineering, customer support and global delivery consulting.

"Our commercial brand is built around helping customers to achieve their true potential, and our employee brand is the mirror of this. It doesn't matter if employees have been with us for two weeks or 20 years, we want them to feel there is always more to achieve and there are always new horizons to explore," says Rohit Thakur.

Mr Thakur believes that employer brand is both external and internal, and the two have to be in sync. Today's connected employees will naturally share their views about the company they work for and therefore the employer brand should provide a true reflection of what the company is really like. But more than this, customer satisfaction is invariably aligned with employee satisfaction and the effectiveness of the HR policies within an organization. "We need to ask ourselves what can we do to provide meaningful and rewarding opportunities and what kind of culture and environment would support this?" says Mr Thakur.

#### everyone has a voice

Dialogue is at the heart of the 'can do' culture Microsoft is looking to promote. "The hierarchies within a lot of Indian companies are quite rigid, but we prefer a flatter and more collaborative structure. By recognizing that people at all levels of the organization have great ideas and encouraging them to contribute these ideas, we can help to foster an entrepreneurial 'challenger' mindset," says Mr Thakur. Among the ways Microsoft is looking

to generate new ideas is its annual 'hackathon', where employees come together to devise solutions for issues facing business and society. The resulting initiatives include working with NGOs and the government's Digital India program to help bring internet connections to poor and remote villages. "We get a lot of feedback saying that our people find these kind of opportunities very energizing. It also helps to keep the company young – even after 40 years we still have the freshness and ambition of a start-up," he says.

#### free to make their own choices

Trusting people to know what's best for them and for the company is also central to Microsoft's employee value proposition. "We clearly want accountability, but we also value autonomy," says Mr Thakur. "We want people to have a real say over how they meet their objectives and develop their careers."

To reinforce dialogue and empowerment, Microsoft no longer uses traditional performance ratings within its employee appraisal and planning process. Instead, line managers hold 'connect conversations' with their staff to discuss their impact, their aspirations and what the company can do to support the employee in realizing his or her goals. To assess impact, employees are asked:

- what they believe they've achieved,
- what they've learned from others and
- what they've given to others.

Microsoft also encourages employees to use the meeting with their manager as an opportunity to discuss anything about their work, good or bad. "In this way, our people know that we take their opinions seriously and that they can keep growing with Microsoft. And this isn't just moving up the career ladder, but exploring opportunities to move in different directions or fulfill personal ambitions," says Mr Thakur.

Clearly, it's vital that Microsoft can meet



these aspirations by offering a breadth of opportunities to its people. This includes having the chance to work in different divisions of the company or take up posts in other parts of the world.

Just as important is helping managers to become comfortable with the idea of employee empowerment rather than simply giving instructions. "This is an important part of our culture," says Mr Thakur. "We look closely at how managers are promoting our culture and values and provide help where needed. For example, specialists can come in

to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the team and work with the manager to help them develop their engagement skills. The emphasis we put on these kind of management and team building programs recognizes that people don't leave companies, they leave managers."

#### communicating the brand

An open dialogue is equally important to how the employee brand is communicated. "As you might expect, we have a strong presence on social media, which helps us to engage with potential recruits and hear what the buzz is on the university campuses around the

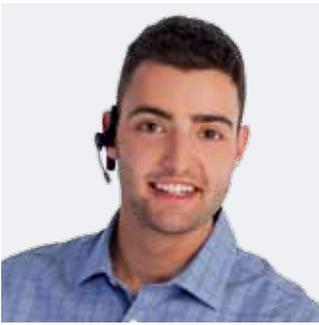
country," says Mr Thakur. "Obviously we have the advantage of Microsoft's global brand in attracting people to the company. But at least 30% of our recruiting comes from employees recommending us to their friends, which underlines the point about the internal and external employer brands being in sync."

#### knowing what good looks like

Looking ahead, one of the key priorities for Mr Thakur's team is the development of HR analytics. "HR has a growing amount of data at its disposal; we want to be able to analyze and use this information to create the same kind of competitive intelligence we're seeing on the customer side of the business. This includes improving our ability to anticipate future workforce needs and proactively respond as part of our growing role as strategic partners within the business," he says. "We're already one of the early adopters in this area and we're now working with our specialist global team to take this forward."

So, what kind of monitoring and analysis does the company use to assess the effectiveness of its employer brand? "We look closely at employee satisfaction and turnover. We also monitor the number of acceptances and rejections we get for graduate recruitment offers and how this compares to our peers. Another important source of information is the Randstad Award research. It's very useful to have independent analysis that we can take to the board to support our business case in this area," says Mr Thakur.

It's certainly a successful formula. In 2014, Microsoft India won the 'Most Attractive Employer' in the Randstad Award for the fourth consecutive year. It also has one of the lowest attrition rates in its industry. There are many reasons for its appeal, but one of the most important differentiators is its determination to ensure that its employees can keep aspiring and can keep learning. ■



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