

What's Your Employee Mission (EVP)? A Printing Industry Wake-Up Call



Company mission – who we serve, what products/services we provide, and the value we provide – was vital to the printing companies I led. We put our mission on posters, talked it up, and applauded mission-related accomplishments. In one company, we focused on satisfying our customers' “intangible” needs, including on-time deliveries, prompt and clear answers to questions, listening, and personal communication. Recently, in a phone chat with a former employee from that business, she quoted our mission. One Friday afternoon, when things were quiet in the office, I walked in and saw a CSR calling customers to touch base and ask about upcoming needs. That action aligned with our mission. Company mission was important in the printing market then, and it still is today.

However, printing companies face a challenging market today that we did not encounter several years ago – the labor market, the employee market. Demographically, the supply of new employees is shrinking. And (as you all know), baby boomers are retiring from printing companies, so the demand for new printing employees is growing. Indeed, what's missing in the photo above? People!

Therefore... An “Employee Mission” that reflects the value your company provides to employees is vital. The academic phrase for “Employee Mission” is “Employee Value Proposition” (EVP), which we will use going forward. An EVP states the value, rewards, benefits, and gains employees receive from their commitment to serve the company...both in monetary and nonmonetary ways.

A couple of years ago, in one of our “*Printing Industry Performance & Insights*” studies, we explored the relationship between EVP, employer branding, and retention satisfaction. About 180 printing company leaders completed our survey. Employer branding promotes your company as a good employer to current and future employees, and we see that a lot of that on company websites and social media. For example, printing companies often showcase new employees, employee anniversaries with the firm, or “best employees” to brand themselves as companies that value their employees.

However, in our study, we found that having an EVP mediated the relationship between employer branding and retention satisfaction. Meaning, you can brand your company as a good employer, but without an EVP, you are less likely to increase your satisfaction in your firm’s employee retention. As one of our HR professor colleagues said after seeing the results, “Without an EVP, you are wasting your time in employer branding.” In other words, employer branding without an EVP is merely noise!

Prompted by seeing more printing companies posting employer branding on social media, I reviewed our related report and article. Well... We didn’t provide EVP examples specifically connected to our industry. So, I looked on AI and got some ideas. My HR professor team revised those ideas and presented some more. See the bullet points below.

- ***We compensate team members for their contribution to our firm, which may include craftsmanship, productivity, or continuous improvement.***
 - *We compare our compensation to industry averages annually.*
 - *We annually adjust our pay rates and review each teammate’s compensation.*
 - *We continually seek ways to improve the benefits we offer.*

- *We continuously evaluate and improve our benefits because financial security and peace of mind matter to our people.*
 - *We benchmark our compensation regularly to ensure we remain competitive and fair.*
- ***We provide teammates with an annual bonus based on our firm's profitability.***
 - *Success is a team effort.*
 - *When the company does better, we all benefit, not just the owners.*
 - *We provide annual bonuses tied to company performance because success is a collective effort.*
 - *We want our team members to understand how their work connects to our results and to feel pride in what we accomplish together.*
- ***Quarterly, we update our team on goals, previous goal achievement, and firm performance.***
 - *We keep our team informed.*
 - *We note wins and give recognition and thanks.*
 - *We provide quarterly updates on company goals, performance, and progress.*
 - *We recognize contributions and express appreciation for effort, results, and teamwork.*
- ***We strive for the well-being of our team members and their families.***
 - *Although time requirements differ among the positions in our firm, we strive to accommodate family needs as best we can.*
 - *Community is not just a word; it is a way of life here.*
 - *We want to celebrate the successes of our team members' families as part of our extended family.*
 - *We care about our team members and their families. Work should support their lives, not compete.*

- *We celebrate work and family milestones and successes as part of our extended community.*
- *We respect personal time and strive for sustainable workloads, recognizing that while busy periods occur, chronic overwork is not part of our culture.*
- ***We listen to our teammates' thoughts.***
 - *We want to hear teammates' ideas and suggestions about their position, department, or our firm.*
 - *We reward new ideas that add value to our firm.*
 - *We create an environment where team members can ask questions, raise concerns, and disagree without fear.*
 - *We take employee engagement surveys seriously and communicate what we learn/what we will do differently.*
- ***We seek career development for our teammates.***
 - *We meet with individual teammates annually to assess their performance and discuss potential career paths.*
 - *We recognize that everyone has different ambitions. We want to hear those and help you achieve them. We love to promote from within!*
 - *We connect teammates with external educational opportunities, such as "The Print University."*
 - *We prioritize internal growth and promotion whenever possible.*
 - *We invest in growth, not just output.*
- ***We strive to build a culture that is innovative, proactive, and competitive.***
 - *Listening, as mentioned above, is a key to building our culture.*
 - *We strive to beat our competition.*
 - *We publicly celebrate teammates' actions that align with our desired culture.*
 - *We recognize performance that reflects our values, not just outcomes.*

- *We are committed to fair, consistent treatment across all roles and levels, with equal expectations, opportunities, and accountability for everyone. That's part of our culture!*

We use “teammates” instead of “employees” in the EVP above. You might want to say “employees” in your EVPs.

Are the EVPs above THE ones you should apply... NO! They are merely examples. As a leadership team, consider what EVPs are important to you. What other EVPs should you consider adding to convey what employees value most about being part of your team? Decide your EVPs! Commit to your EVPs. Share your EVPs in writing with your team. And continue to assess the relevance of your EVPs and how well your firm reflects them.

DECIDE WHAT EVPs ARE IMPORTANT TO YOUR FIRM!

OPENLY SHARE YOUR EVPs!

CONTINUOUSLY ASK, “DO WE RELECT OUR EVPs?”

Bottom line...EVPs are more about leadership than HR and performance!

Dr. Ralph Williams

Professor
Jones College of Business
Middle Tennessee State University

Dr. Tim Moake

Associate Professor
Jones College of Business
Middle Tennessee State University

Dr. Kristie Abston

Associate Professor
Jones College of Business
Middle Tennessee State University

Dr. Dan Morrell

Professor
Jones College of Business
Middle Tennessee State University