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“Employer branding is a term commonly used to describe an organization's reputation and popularity as an employer and its employee value propositions.”

Jomana Elwenni



HOW TO FIND & ATTRACT **TOP TALENT**

Featuring expert guest
Jomana Elwenni

- Pt. 1** How to be an employer of choice
- Pt. 2** What qualities to look for in a candidate
- Pt. 3** Steps to hiring the very best people
- Pt. 4** Top tips for retaining great talent



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*“It's so
important that
employer
branding is top
of mind”*

Jomana Elwenni



A note from your host, Chantal Brodrick

Hi FBP Family!

Welcome to our Educational Intensive eBook, featuring expert guest, Jomana Elwenni.

Named as Canada's most promising young HR leaders, Jomana is a strategic HR Executive with progressive experience in demanding, global environments in the Fitness, Retail, and Hospitality worlds.

Jomana is currently the Director of Human Resources for Orangetheory Fitness Canada. Championing national leadership and management of full range of HR functions for over 110+ locations across multiple groups (Franchises, corporate, and headquarters). She is an innovative HR leader focused on developing and promoting engaged cultures and cultivating teams of natural brand champions.

When she is not being a HR Superwoman, Jomana spends her time disrupting the HR industry, mentoring HR students, supporting women advancement in the fitness industry with WIFA, surfing, and hiking the highest peaks she can find.

As you are about to see, this eBook is jam packed full of great information, but don't forget you can also listen and watch the interview - you can access both at fitnessbusinesspodcast.com.

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Wishing you a fulfilling learning journey in the pages ahead, thank you again to Jomana for your generosity in sharing this valuable information.



Chantal Brodrick
Your Host

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In this eBook

Part 1) How to be an employer of choice

Part 2) What qualities to look for in a candidate

Part 3) Steps to hiring the very best people

Part 4) Top tips for retaining great talent

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PART 1

How to be an employer of choice

“Employer branding is a term commonly used to describe an organization's reputation and popularity as an employer, and its employee value propositions.” Jomana Elwenni

Jomana: 2020 really shook the workplace, but top talent is always going to be our competitive advantage, and it's so important that we don't lose sight of that and continue to strategically attract talent to our organisations. And that is the number one question, how do we be an employer of choice?

It all comes down to this brand new term that has entered the HR world over the last couple of years, and that is **employer branding**.

We're so familiar with the term “branding”, which is the general corporate brand, reputation and value proposition to its consumers. But employer brand is a term commonly used to describe an organization's reputation and popularity as an employer and its employee value propositions. I feel like I'm going to say “value proposition” so much that Sarah Pellegrino is going to pop up on this call today! But just like your branding is your promise to

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your customers, your employer branding is your promise to your current and future employees.

“Just like your branding is your promise to your customers, your employer branding is your promise to your current and future employees.”

Jomana: Just think about the last big ticket purchase you made, Chantal, whether it was a house, a car, a mattress, something, a fancy gadget. Think about the process that went into buying that. Just the other day I went to go buy fuel cleaner for my jeep, which I had no idea was a thing. And I stood in the aisle for 15 minutes, and I started by Googling best fuel cleaner, and then narrowed it down to reviews and feedback and all of this information on the internet that helped me decide what was best for me and which option I was going to decide on. Narrowed it down, took it to the salesperson. I'm like, "I want to buy this. What do you think?"

He helped me narrow it down and close the deal. And the same thing is happening in the talent recruitment world, where **online content is giving us all the information we need to make a decision** on where we want to work and who we want to work for. We have access to all of this information on Glassdoor, LinkedIn, company social media pages that offer insight into the culture, the benefits, the leadership, what we're essentially stepping into that's going to help shape a candidate's perception on their prospective employer and ultimately contribute to their decision on whether or not they want to work for that employer. **It is so important that employer branding is top of mind for business owners and hiring managers**



because it's going to attract or turn away talent that are considering you as an employer.

Jomana:

And what I challenge everyone that's listening to this call right now is to just, whether you're an owner, a manager, just close your eyes and think about for a moment, if you were researching your specific business or operation on Google or Instagram, what would you see? **If you were to look at Glassdoor, LinkedIn, what is the information that's going to pop up about you as an employer and then think about your candidate experience. The application process, the interviewing experience, and then think about the culture, pay and work that you're offering them and that they're stepping into. And then think about the training and development and career opportunities that you get if you were to work for yourself. And, lastly and most importantly, think about your leadership team and the team that you have in place that someone's going to be stepping into.**

And when you think about all of these and take all of these into consideration, how many of you would apply to work for yourselves, based on what you saw?

And, this is a really tough question to ask yourselves and really be honest about because I think for most people, we're going to say, "I wouldn't." And it doesn't necessarily mean that you are a bad or a toxic place to work. Essentially, what that means is that you have not leveraged your employee value propositions very well and created an employer brand that attracts people to come and work for you.

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Chantal: It was interesting when you started giving that example of the buyer experience, when you go into a store and you're looking to buy a product.

That's one of the things that a lot of employers primarily are looking at from a employee perspective, but it's interesting to flip that and say, well, what are employees looking for in a business?

The companies that spring to mind for me that we often hear about in the news or in the media are places like Google, Are there any other examples either inside our industry or out, that spring to your mind when it comes to a business that's creating that great employer branding?

Jomana: Yeah. I mean, Google is, you nailed it. A lot of the big brands, you'll find, typically spend quite a bit on marketing themselves as an employer of choice. It's something that definitely requires a strategic approach. Collaboration with marketing. Marketing has become my best friend over the last couple of years to help me in strategically approaching ourselves. But other brands that really do it well, Amazon, they have an entire social media campaign that's just about life at Amazon. We do have a fitness brand out here in Canada. It's called Movati. They do it quite well. It is a corporately owned, big box gym. They have an entire Instagram page that's life at Movati. So there are some brands that are really starting to get onto the employer branding, trying to really position themselves. It really needs to be done intentionally to be successful.

It really doesn't require a big show. I know a lot of our audience today, independent business owners that might

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have one, two of a handful locations and some might have even more. It really just, it takes incorporating it into your entire process. And when I talk about employee value propositions that these brands are promoting, it really comes down to five areas.

1. **Your culture.** The colleagues, the leadership, the management team that they're stepping into. Collaboration. What defines your culture and how can you utilise that to recruit individuals and attract talent?
2. **The environment.** They want to know what does recognition look like at your organisation? Do you celebrate personal treatments? Is there a work-life balance? Do you challenge your employees and support their personal development?
3. **The third area is careers, opportunity.** They're looking for development opportunities, ability to progress, stability.

And then the last two are **compensation and benefits.**

So, most of the individuals on these calls are fitness owners or business owners, have employee value propositions. And there's no right or wrong proposition. What one organisation like Google or Amazon or Peloton, Orange Theory, whatever, Good Life Fitness, whatever we're doing works for each independent organisation. But what they do well is they market that and they bring awareness to it. And having these value propositions in place aren't going to serve you any purpose if you don't actually build awareness around how you attract talent.

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Chantal: If someone is listening to this right now and they want to really work towards making themselves an employer of choice, they are the five areas that you would recommend that they focus on.

Jomana: Yes. To identify their value propositions, what makes them unique and why someone should work for them and then take those and incorporate it into their recruitment process and their application process. Promote that on your career site, your website, your Indeed page, your applicant tracking system. Incorporate it into your job postings. Your job postings should be advertisements for roles. They shouldn't be a blanket job description. You need to really consider it as an advertisement. Incorporate it into your application process, your social media. If you are not hiring or recruiting or posting on social media, you are missing out big time right now. **Your current employees and members, they're your best advocates.** So utilising them as well. And then local events and job fairs.

At OrangeTheory here, we host our own job fairs onsite that are just come out, meet our team, get to know us, see what the brand's all about. And we've had a lot of success with that. So, different ways to just promote your employer brand through those channels.

Chantal: Fantastic ideas, Jomana. Thank you so much for those. So, we've talked about how to become an employer of choice and what companies and business owners, managers should consider and start to work towards. Let's look at the other side. So let's talk about candidates.



PART 2

What qualities to look for in candidates

“It’s really important that when you’re hiring someone, you really need to consider, what are the qualities and attributes that make someone successful in the role?”

Jomana Elwenni

Chantal: When you are hiring for candidates to come into the business, what are some of the qualities that you would look for?

Jomana: I am so happy we are talking about this because I feel like this, not just our industry, but in general, this is the biggest mistake we do in hiring right now is that we look at resumes and hiring with a very narrow lens of a specific skill we're looking for. And we completely disregard behaviour, attitudes and talents that would make someone successful in a position and give them the abilities to succeed. And that really starts with once we get a resume. And I've seen this with hiring managers I've worked with my entire career, it is the first mistake they do is they look at this, for example, with our industry, let's say we're hiring for a personal trainer. We get a resume, we put our little narrow lens on and we assume that someone, because they are certified and they were a personal trainer elsewhere for 10, 15, 20 years,

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they're going to be great and we take that resume and run with it.

And then we might disregard a resume of someone who recently just graduated, has their certification, has a strong athletic background in their personal life, and then had a working experience, whether it was in the service or retail industry. But gave them skills that are transferable to our industry. And we place too much of a focus on skills, And, yes, that's important. Skills are competencies. The how-to's to do a job, but they can be developed with training and practice. You can teach someone how to do a phone greeting, how to read a script, if you're speaking to a sales position. You can teach that at the end of the day. So that shouldn't be a deal breaker.

The second one is knowledge. So, knowledge is what you know about something.

We pick up knowledge through books and experience and learnings from other people. And it's great to have knowledge and I think, for some positions like, speaking about a personal trainer role, yes, they need to have a certification for some organisations and that's important, but there is knowledge that's picked up in different ways, whether it's hands-on experience or learnings from others or volunteers that we need to consider as well. But the most important one that must be a deal breaker is talent. So the equation to someone being successful or their strength in a role is skills, knowledge, and talent, all combined. But talent is the deal-breaker. And the reason that it is, because you cannot teach talent. It is something you can cultivate in someone. So my favourite quote, "You can cultivate it, but

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you can't teach it." And it's something that naturally comes to, it's something that comes naturally to someone.

You can, it's how they naturally think, behave, act. You can teach someone to read a script. You can teach someone how to programme, implement a programme to a client, but you can't teach them to smile, you can't teach them to have a positive attitude, to enjoy meeting strangers or to have a desire to learn. **So really important that when you're hiring for someone, you really need to consider, one, what are the qualities and attributes that make someone successful in the role?** So about a year ago with Orange Theory, we actually broke it down with our roles and piloted what I call the "death of resumes" There is an increasing study in the HR world that resumes are not a good indicator of someone's success in a role that is not a specialised role.

So we have been piloting this for our front desk sales associate positions for the last year, and we have removed the resumes from the hiring process.

But to do that, we started by breaking down the qualities that we have identified in our top performers and in the role that would make someone successful. And, we narrowed it down to **coachability, resiliency, hardworking, strategic, positive, passionate.**

So we identified what we were looking for, and then we built the interview process around that. To make sure we're asking the right questions that would help us identify if someone had those traits. So it's been an interesting process. We're still piloting it. Thanks to the pandemic, it hasn't been something we've rolled out yet, but we have had

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some success with that. And, once we've hired someone, we do ask for their resume for just documentation purposes. And we evaluate if their resume was something that our managers would have typically screened right off the bat. And we found that there is no, you can't find those qualities just by looking on someone's resume. So it's really interesting.

I have an experience that we tested out, but it really helped our managers understand that a resume is not going to tell you the story and you need to make sure you understand what you're looking for and build a process that's going to help you identify that in a candidate.

Chantal: That is absolutely fascinating. I haven't heard anyone do that before, Jomana. So you do not look at that resume until after the hire has been made? Is that correct?

Jomana: So I currently have my HR generalist piloting the programme. So she's leading the recruitment of the pilot. Our managers are still on the traditional, you receive a resume, review. But we're just piloting this behind the scenes



PART 3

Steps to hiring the best people

“Candidates who have a bad experience interviewing will not accept an offer, will never reapply and most likely will never be a consumer.”

Jomana Elwenn

Jomana: I highly encourage owners and hiring managers just to really get away from the traditional hiring process. Just the typical, bring someone in, ask them questions. Make it fun, incorporate your culture into it. If you're hiring for a sales position or front desk. Consider a group interview. There's so much you can learn in a group interview with those roles. Someone's ability to collaborate, step up, are they positive? You can tell so much about their attitude and behaviours in those, and identify the traits that you're looking for.

For us, we actually have all of our candidates, pre-COVID, come into the studio and do an OrangeTheory class before their interview. And, as much as they probably think it's to do the workout and see if they like it, it's really for us to get a chance, from the minute they walk into that studio, when they interact with our team, are they passionate about the product?

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How do they? what are their behaviours? their attitudes? There's so much you can do in your hiring process to really get a better understanding of the individual and their fit. That's really beyond their resume. So I highly recommend, just make it fun, incorporate your culture and identify what you're looking for.

Furthermore, it's really important to look at recruitment like a sales process. It is the same amount of effort that goes into prospecting consumers, selling your product, bringing them in and closing that deal, your candidate experience also needs to have the same amount of effort. All that work that you did to bring them through the door, to attract them, now you need to keep that going to close the deal. So many candidates pull out in the candidate application process during the interviews due to a bad experience. And, you went through all that effort to bring them in. So, really important to your candidate experience, take a look at it, and not just for that one position. Candidates who had a bad experience interviewing will not accept an offer, will never reapply and most likely will never be a consumer.

Jomana: And I cannot tell you how many people I've interviewed that weren't a fit for that role, or just didn't work out, and we reconnected down the road and they came into a different position or rejoined us at a different time. So important that you just don't forget about that candidate experience.

Chantal: It's interesting you say that. It actually brings to mind an interview that I did probably three plus years ago. And it was with Franchesca Schuler and I just remembered something that she said to me, and I'm not going to say it word-for-word because I've probably forgotten it exactly, but it was along

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the lines of, "An employee's final day with you, should be celebrated in the same way as their first day with you." So in other words, you should send them off in a positive note, and be grateful for the time that they spent with you because, to your point, who knows when they might potentially come back or be an employee for you again in the future? So, what a great idea to keep that relationship strong, even if they are departing your business.

Jomana: Hundred percent. It's a big world, but it's a small world. Especially within the industry as well. So, you nailed it. And the other thing is just, word of mouth is everything, and especially for our industry. So, a negative impact is really going to hurt your employer brand as well. So just focus on that candidate experience.



PART 3

Top Tips for Retaining Great Talent

“You really need to care about how your employees are feeling and about how their mental, physical, emotional needs are being met.”

Jomana Elwenni

Jomana: Retention should be a focus right now, and it's going to be a focus for quite some time and, not just for the talent that you're bringing in, but also for the talent that you currently have. Yes, we are entering a strong economic recovery, but we do have a constrained talent pool right now. Our industry has been battered over the last 13 months. A lot of people are hesitant to jump in right now and pursue fitness as a career. We're almost at the end of this pandemic, but it's not really in our rear view yet. So hiring right now is a little bit of a struggle, and the talent pool is constrained. So I really challenge business owners to just look internally right now and figure out, one, how can you retain your current employees?

Jomana: And second, how can you retain those that are coming in as well? And, with retention being a focus, it really needs a strategic approach. First, we've been talking about hiring the right people and great people. Hiring the right people is the first step to retaining them. Obviously, bad hires are not a fit.

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They're going to be out the door very quickly. So you want to make sure you put in the effort to hire the right people. The second thing I want to talk about is well-being. If leaders and business owners have learned anything over the last year, it is that employee wellness is so essential to a business's survival. And, if your employees are not healthy, mentally, physically, emotionally, your business isn't going to succeed. And your employees need to feel supported as they go through this difficult, personal experience that we're all going through right now.

Jomana: So to maximise your employee's performance and, obviously, increase retention, you really need to care about how your employees are feeling and about how their mental, physical, emotional needs are being met right now. The past mindset of, when you come to work, you leave everything at the door and you give me your all, that doesn't fly right now. And employees want to work for a place that supports their well-being and makes it a priority. So, for anyone on this call, the first thing I'm going to say is, if you're not talking about mental health and well-being with your employees, you need to make that a priority right now, and a priority for the foreseeable future, if not indefinitely. You need to provide your employees with resources and you really need to normalise that conversation with your team right now. A lot of us are all in different stages.

Jomana: Please do not assume that because you're open and operating and, if you are, you are so lucky. I am in Edmonton, Alberta, and we're still shut down. But please do not assume things are back to normal. It's going to take a long time for us to really come out of this and recover, and we can all agree, we've all gone through difficult personal

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experiences through the last 13 months and our staff are going to need our support for quite some time. So as we navigate through this recovery, just understand how you can support your employees' well-being and really make that a priority right now.

Chantal: Jomana, can I just jump in there? Are there any examples, either from within your business or ones that you've seen out there, of initiatives that companies have implemented to support employee wellness or to support mental health initiatives? Are there any examples you could share with us?

Jomana: Yeah, I'm going to tailor it to, obviously, the call in our audience today, who's mainly made up of fitness, but business owners and operators. It really starts with, one, bringing awareness to it. We saw a lot of engagement and feedback from our employees from the minute we started to talk about mental health and really telling them to make it a priority, putting resources in front of them. They were very appreciative of that and really provided us feedback on how much they valued that and how we, our stance with mental health. Second, train yourself and your leaders on mental health and recognising it and understanding how you can support your employees as well. I think that's really important. And just continue the conversation and walk the talk. It really starts from the top with leaders to normalise mental health and make it a priority. Talk about what you're doing to support your mental health, encourage yourself to take that lunch break.

Jomana: You know, we always work through lunch. We got to stop doing that. That's just terrible. And just walk the talk. It really starts with leaders, just for inspiration, I guess, to say. So those are the couple of things I would leave them with.

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Chantal: And it's funny, because I often find that it's, we work in the fitness industry, we encourage people to be active or do all a range of physical activity. And yet, sometimes we get so busy or we get so caught up in our roles that we put our own health and well-being to the side. And I find that happens with a lot of personal trainers. That we're telling people what to do and how to do a different exercise. And then all of a sudden we realise that, oh, we haven't done, looked after ourselves and done our own activity. So it's good to refocus on that. And I love the idea of an employer really supporting their employees, as you say, lead by example, from a wellness perspective, from a mental health perspective. And it's, I must admit it's been really good seeing over the last 12 months especially, or 13 months especially, that things like meditation, mindfulness practises have, I guess, grown and are a lot more available than they ever were before.

Chantal: So hopefully people are embracing those things as well within their workplace.

Jomana: Yes, absolutely.

Chantal: Okay. So let's keep going. What other tips do you have for retaining top talent?

Jomana: The other one I would cover is, create professional and personal career development opportunities for your employees. Again, looking at the last 13 months, many people feel as though their personal or professional progression and development has been on hold and they haven't developed or grown. And in the coming months, there's going to be an increase in candidates that are looking for an employer that's going to support their learning and development, that's going to provide them with opportunities

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to grow. So your current employees and anyone coming in is going to be hungry for development. So that's another way to promote yourself and your employer brand. It really doesn't have to be fancy, it does not have to be a vertical move up a corporate ladder. It could be lateral moves, something that challenges them, investing in their own personal education or development. There's so many ways you could do that. It depends on the individual. So, those performance conversations and development conversations really need to still be happening.

Jomana: I know some organisations might've put them on hold with COVID and the pandemic and reopening, but it's so important that we're still having those conversations to engage your employees and still understand what they need from you as an employer to continue to develop.



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Jomana: I would go back to that challenge I had earlier on this call, where I asked business owners and hiring managers on this call to just think about their employer brand and go through that process of researching themselves and thinking about their experience and application, training and development.

And think about, would they apply to work for themselves?

And, if yes, leverage those value propositions that made you say yes. And if you said no, identify why. And it's probably because you have value propositions that are not being highlighted in your process, that you should probably take back to your website, your social media pages, your job postings, your word of mouth referrals and incorporate it.

This will really help you in identifying your employer brand and promoting it.



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