

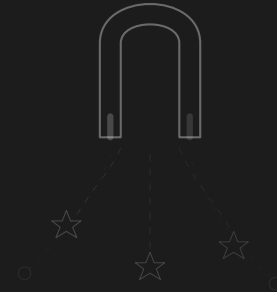
The Reputation: Employer Brand

THE 50 FACTOR — GROWTH FACTOR #24

Build Your Employer Brand

The Complete Implementation Guide

BY SCOTT SCULLY



Principle #24: Build Your Employer Brand

The Complete Implementation Guide

This white paper is a companion to Chapter 24 of The 50 Factor by Scott Scully.

Why This Principle Matters

Your employer brand is your reputation in the talent market. The best candidates aren't scrolling job boards — they're employed and happy. The only way to reach them is to build a reputation so compelling they become curious before a role opens.

The Five Building Blocks

- 1. Careers page.** Your most important recruiting asset. Not a list of job descriptions — a story. Real photos, real employee stories, real career paths, awards displayed prominently, easy application process. Most companies treat the careers page as an afterthought. The best companies treat it as their primary recruiting tool.
- 2. Social proof.** Glassdoor, Indeed, Google reviews. Launch a systematic review campaign — ask employees after positive milestones (promotion, anniversary, award). Target 20+ genuine reviews within 60 days. Candidates read reviews before applying. Zero reviews or old negative reviews kill applications before they start.
- 3. Content.** 2-3 employer brand posts per week across LinkedIn and social channels. Employee spotlights, team events, behind-the-scenes moments, awards, culture moments. Consistent and authentic — not corporate PR. The posts your employees reshare are the ones that reach passive candidates.

4. Employee value proposition (EVP). One paragraph that answers: "Why should an A-player choose to work here instead of anywhere else?" It must be specific, provable, and wouldn't make sense with a competitor's name swapped in. If your EVP could apply to any company in your industry, it's too generic.

5. Year-round talent pipeline. Always building relationships with people you'd love to hire someday. Coffee once a month with an interesting person — even when no role is open. When a role opens, you call someone who already knows your company. That's how A-players get hired. They don't apply to job postings. They answer calls from people they already trust.

The EVP Test

Take your employer brand messaging. Swap your company name for a competitor's. Does it still make sense? If yes, it's too generic. "We offer competitive salary, great benefits, and a collaborative culture" could be said by any company on earth. It says nothing.

A specific EVP: "We're a 200+ award-winning growth company where every person has a daily scorecard, a career path documented in a playbook, and a CEO who walks the floor every Wednesday." That's specific. That's provable. That's compelling. That wouldn't make sense with another company's name on it.

The Math

A strong employer brand reduces time-to-fill by 30-50%, reduces cost-per-hire by 40-60%, and reduces first-year turnover by 20-30%. For a company hiring 20 people per year at an average cost-per-hire of \$5,000, a 50% reduction saves \$50,000 annually — more than paying for the entire employer brand program.

But the real value isn't cost savings. It's quality. The difference between hiring the 10th-best candidate (who applied to your job posting) and hiring the 1st-best candidate (who answered your call because they've been following your company for six months) is the difference between a B-player and an A-player in every seat.

Common Mistakes

Mistake #1: Only recruiting when you have an opening. Year-round pipeline building is how you avoid desperation hiring. Have coffee monthly with people you'd love to hire someday.

Mistake #2: Generic careers page. If your careers page is a list of job descriptions with no story, no photos, no proof of culture — you're losing candidates before they apply.

Mistake #3: Ignoring Glassdoor. Candidates check Glassdoor the way diners check Yelp. No reviews or bad reviews are a dealbreaker for A-players.

Mistake #4: Treating employer brand as an HR project. Employer brand is a marketing + HR partnership. The content needs marketing quality. The strategy needs HR insight. Neither department can do it alone.

Quick-Start Checklist

- ✓ ☐ Read the full white paper
- ✓ ☐ Identify the most relevant action items for your stage
- ✓ ☐ Pick the single most impactful first move and implement it this week
- ✓ ☐ Review progress in your next leadership meeting

This is Principle #24 of 50. Part III: The Scale Engine.

Get the book: The 50 Factor by Scott Scully

The Invisible Candidate Pool

The best candidates — the A-players you actually want — aren't scrolling job boards. They're employed, performing well, and not actively looking. They're happy enough where they are. But they're curious. They notice companies that seem interesting. They pay attention to LinkedIn posts that show real culture, not corporate PR. They remember the name of a company that won "Top Workplaces" and think: "I wonder what it's like there."

Your employer brand is how you reach these people. Not through a recruiter. Not through a job posting. Through the accumulated impression of your company's reputation in the talent market — built over months and years of consistent visibility.

When a role opens and you have an employer brand, you call someone who's been following you for six months. They pick up the phone. They're already curious. The close rate on this conversation is 3-5x higher than a cold recruiter outreach — because trust has been building in the background.

When a role opens and you don't have an employer brand, you post on LinkedIn and pray. You get 200 applications, 180 of which are irrelevant. You spend two weeks screening. You interview 10 people. You hire the best of the available — not the best available.

The Content Strategy That Actually Works

Most employer brand content fails because it looks like corporate marketing. Polished. Staged. Impersonal. The content that works is the opposite: real, unscripted, human.

Employee spotlights: A 3-minute video of a real employee talking about their actual job — what they do, why they stay, what they love. No script. No production. Just a smartphone, good lighting, and an honest person.

Behind-the-scenes: Photos of the actual office. The team lunch. The awards celebration. The messy whiteboard in the conference room. The welcome kit on a new hire's desk. Real moments, not staged moments.

Milestone celebrations: "We just hit our 100th client. Here are the 3 people who made it happen." Name names. Show faces. Celebrate publicly.

Thought leadership: Your CEO sharing real lessons from building the company. Not theory — experience. "Here's what I learned about hiring this quarter" is more compelling than any corporate blog post.

Post 2-3 times per week. Assign an owner — typically a partnership between marketing (for production quality) and HR (for content strategy). Track engagement, but don't obsess over metrics. The compound effect of consistent, authentic employer brand content builds over 6-12 months, not 6-12 days.

The Careers Page Audit

Open your careers page right now. Answer these questions:

- Does it have real photos of your actual team? (Not stock photos.)
- Does it tell a story about what it's like to work here? (Not just a list of jobs.)
- Does it show career paths? (Can a candidate see where they'll be in 3 years?)
- Does it display your awards? (Third-party validation is more credible than self-description.)

- Is the application process simple? (Can someone apply in under 5 minutes?)
- Does it have employee testimonials? (Real quotes from real people.)

If fewer than 4 of these are true, your careers page is losing you candidates every day. The fix takes 2-3 weeks of focused effort — and the return compounds for years.

The Year-Round Talent Pipeline

The most powerful recruiting channel isn't a job board, a recruiter, or a career site. It's the relationship you've been building with someone for six months before a role opens.

Every month, identify 2-3 people you'd love to hire someday. Have coffee. Build the relationship. Learn about their career. Share your company's story. Not a pitch — a conversation between two professionals. When a role opens 6 months later, you're not posting and praying. You're calling someone who already knows your company, likes your story, and is curious about the opportunity.

The close rate on warm pipeline candidates is 3-5x higher than cold applicants. The time-to-fill is half as long. The retention at 12 months is significantly better. The entire employer brand strategy — careers page, content, reviews, EVP — feeds this pipeline by creating awareness and curiosity among the people you'll eventually want to hire.

Quick-Start Checklist

- ✓ ☐ Audit your careers page this week against the 6-point checklist
 - ✓ ☐ Launch a Glassdoor review campaign: 20+ genuine reviews in 60 days
 - ✓ ☐ Assign an employer brand content owner (marketing + HR partnership)
 - ✓ ☐ Write your EVP and apply the competitor swap test
 - ✓ ☐ Start the year-round talent pipeline: 2-3 coffees per month with people you'd love to hire
 - ✓ ☐ Post 2-3 employer brand content pieces per week
 - ✓ ☐ Track: application volume, quality, source, time-to-fill, first-year retention
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Implementation Tools

Ready-to-use templates for this Growth Factor

- XLSX** **Employer Brand Content Calendar**
Columns: Week, Monday Post, Wednesday Post, Friday Post, Owner, Platform, +1 more
- PDF** **Careers Page Audit Checklist**
8-point assessment
- PDF** **EVP Builder Template**
Write and test your employee value proposition
- PDF** **Glassdoor Review Campaign Plan**
60-day rollout
- XLSX** **Talent Pipeline Tracker**
Columns: Client, AM, Current Revenue, Expansion Opportunity, Est. Value, Stage, +2 more

The Review Campaign

Your Glassdoor and Indeed reviews are your employer brand's first impression. Candidates check them before they apply. Here's how to build a review portfolio that attracts instead of repels:

Timing: Ask employees to leave reviews after positive milestones — a promotion, a work anniversary, a project win, an awards celebration. People are most inclined to share positive experiences when they've just experienced one.

Volume: Target 20+ reviews within 60 days. A handful of reviews (positive or negative) is worse than a robust portfolio — because a few data points look unreliable. Twenty or more reviews create a credible picture.

Authenticity: Never script reviews or offer incentives for positive ratings. Ask genuinely: "If you've had a positive experience here, sharing that on Glassdoor helps us attract more people like you." Authentic reviews are obvious to readers. Fake ones are equally obvious — and corrosive.

Response to negatives: Every negative review gets a professional, public response. Acknowledge the concern. Share what's changed. Invite them to reconnect. This shows future candidates that leadership cares, listens, and acts — even when the feedback is hard.

The Compound Effect

Employer brand compounds the same way financial investments compound — slowly at first, then dramatically.

Month 1-3: You launch the careers page, start posting content, run the review campaign. Results are minimal. Applications haven't changed. It feels like wasted effort.

Month 4-6: The content starts gaining traction. A few candidates mention they've been "following your company on LinkedIn." One strong candidate applies specifically because of a team spotlight post. The careers page starts ranking for your company name + "careers."

Month 7-12: The compound effect kicks in. Inbound applications improve in quality. Candidates arrive pre-sold on your culture. Time-to-fill drops. The best applicants are people who've been watching you for months — they already know your story, your values, and what makes you different.

Year 2+: Your employer brand becomes a competitive moat. The best people in your market know your company. Your competitors have to outbid you on salary because they can't outbid you on reputation. Recruiting shifts from "finding people who are willing to work here" to "choosing from people who want to work here." That shift — from chasing to choosing — is worth more than any recruiting tool or agency.

The 30-Second Test

Can you articulate, in 30 seconds, why an A-player should choose to work at your company instead of anywhere else? Not generic benefits ("great culture, competitive pay, good team") — specific, provable differentiators that wouldn't make sense with a competitor's name swapped in.

If you can't pass the 30-second test, your employer brand has no message. Every job posting, every LinkedIn post, every careers page, every recruiter call is operating without a core story. The EVP gives you that story. Write it, test it (the competitor swap test), refine it, and then embed it in everything your company says about itself as an employer.

The 30-second version is what every interviewer should be able to deliver. The full EVP paragraph is what goes on the careers page. The stories that prove it are what go on LinkedIn. All three layers work together — and none of them works without the others.