XING

HR Campaign Blueprint

A practical guide to employer branding and recruitment marketing campaigns.



How HR teams can use targeted campaigns in 2026 to increase visibility, generate more applications and achieve measurable results.

Contents

1 **From Employer Branding to Recruiting Success** 3

The Recruiting Funnel at a Glance 4

2 **Five Steps to Your Campaign** 5

Step 1: Define Goals and Target Groups 6

Step 2: Develop Candidate Personas 7

Step 3: Know Your Competition 8

Step 4: Choose the Right Messages and Measures 9

Step 5: Define Success Metrics 12

3 **Contact, Links & Legal Notice** 13

4 **Exclusive Welcome Offer:** 14

€500 in Advertising Credit

From Employer Branding to Recruiting Success

Many HR teams invest time and budget in employer branding, yet applications do not follow. Employer branding and recruitment marketing are often treated separately. This guide shows how to bring them together and turn a strong employer brand into more applications.



Fact Check

A strong employer brand can lead to up to 50% more qualified applications.[1]

Phase 01
Awareness + Interest
Employer Branding

Phase 02
Consideration
Employer Branding + Recruitment Marketing

Phase 03
Conversion
Recruitment Marketing

Awareness + Interest: Build visibility, shape perception and create an emotional connection. Give people a credible reason to want to work for you.

Consideration: Turn perception into active interest. Candidates compare your company, values, culture and career opportunities. Build trust and give them reasons to make a move.

Conversion: Turn interest into applications with relevant job ads, campaigns and simple processes. Motivate candidates to take the next step and help fill open roles.

[1] International Journal of Organizational Analysis (2023) + Frontiers in Sociology (2024), Research on Impact of Employer Branding

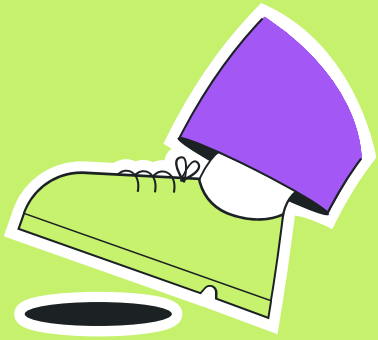
The Recruiting Funnel at a Glance





Phase	Discipline	Goal	Typical KPIs
1	**Awareness + Interest**	Build awareness and visibility, strengthen your brand and become an employer of choice.	Page views; time on careers page; brand awareness; social engagement.
2	**Consideration**	Persuade candidates, encourage openness to a job change and deepen interest.	Clicks on “More information”; downloads; interactions; qualified leads.
3	**Conversion**	Generate applications, fill roles and make applying simple.	Applications started; cost per application; time to hire.

Five Steps to Your Campaign



Employer branding and recruitment marketing follow the same core principles. These five steps help you structure a campaign from the first brand signal through to a successful hire.

The five steps: Define your goals and target groups, Develop candidate personas, Know your competition, Choose the right messages and measures, Define success metrics.

Tip

Bring recruiting, HR controlling or workforce planning, and management into the process early. **Shared goals and success measures give your employer brand a clear direction and keep everyone aligned.**

Step 1: Define Your Goals and Target Groups



Possible Objectives

Build awareness and interest

Attract attention, communicate your values and culture, and position your company as an employer of choice.

Persuade and increase relevance

Combine an emotional brand story with clear information about career paths, benefits and team culture.

Fill specific roles

Show open roles and development prospects. Make it easy to apply and respond quickly.



Choose your target groups

The right audience depends on your campaign goals. Ask yourself:

- → Which teams or business areas need people?
- → Which sectors are especially competitive for talent?
- → How does the company need to develop over the next year?

Step 2: Develop Candidate Personas

Every campaign starts with a clear understanding of the people you want to reach. Candidate personas make your target groups tangible and help you create more relevant messages.

No personas yet? Create them in a few simple steps — we'll guide you.



Candidate Persona Canvas

Fill it in, print it and display it for your team.

Download

What is a Candidate Persona?

A fictional but realistic profile representing a typical member of your target group. It helps you understand candidates' needs and expectations. A persona may include a name and photo, age, family situation, location, education, experience, interests, expectations, wishes and goals.

1. **Collect data**

   Take stock of what you already know. Review studies, industry reports and online sources, then add insights from applications and interviews.

2. **Ask colleagues and use external sources**

   Colleagues understand your hiring process. Ask why candidates applied and what influenced their decision. Use XING and kununu reviews to understand how you are perceived; compare competitor profiles and benefits.

3. **Spot patterns**

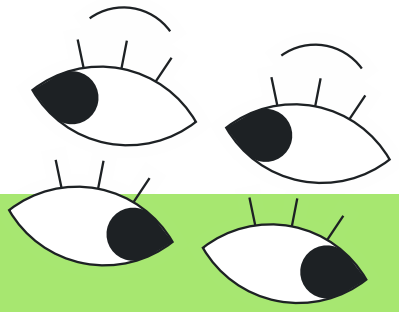
   Look for recurring motivations and expectations. Note where early-career talent, specialists and leaders differ.

4. **Develop personas**

   Turn your findings into profiles with a name, description, photo, motivations, information-seeking behaviour and decision criteria.

Step 3: Know Your Competition

Jobseekers see messages from many employers. Researching your competition shows which themes, channels and messages work — and where your company can stand out.



Starting points for your market research

XING and kununu

Review competitors' live campaigns, formats and audiences. Explore integrated kununu reviews and competitor profiles. Which benefits do employees value? What makes each employer distinctive?

Social Media

Observe employer communication, formats and topics. Note what attracts attention, how people respond, the tone and visuals, and how often competitors post.

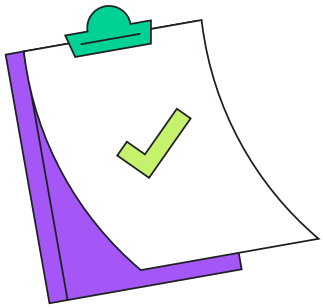
Careers pages

Assess page structure, tone and content. Look at how competitors present their culture, benefits and values.



Step 4: Choose the Right Messages and Measures

Objective of this step:



→ Now bring together what you have learned about your goals, personas and competition. Use those insights to shape your messages and choose the measures that will reach your audience.

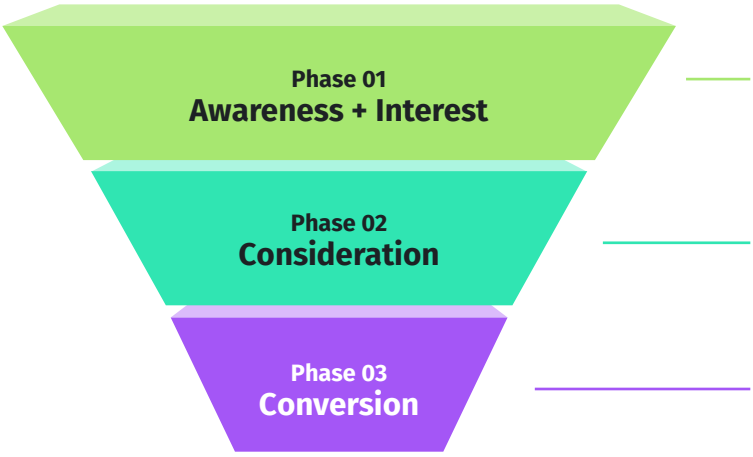
1 Formulate your messages

Start with your candidate personas and campaign goals. Be ready to answer the question: "Why should I work here?"

- What does your company stand for?
- What do employees value most about working here?
- How do you want the company to be positioned in the future?
- What matters most to your target audience?
- Which tone fits best: formal, informal or casual?

2 Prioritise messages along the funnel

Match the content to the candidate's stage:



Culture, values, team insights, purpose and benefits in clear, everyday language.

Responsibilities, career paths, required skills and role fit, training opportunities, and leadership.

"What's in it for me?" Salary, a clear call to action and an easy application process.

Choose the Right Marketing Measures

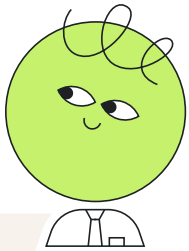


Campaigns on XING

Use advertising formats on a professional network to reach candidates thinking about their next career move. Activate first-party data and more than 20 HR-relevant targeting criteria. XING's focus as a jobs network helps relevant ads stand out in the feed.

Social media campaigns

A familiar channel for employers and jobseekers. Use video, photography and graphics to build reach and target specific audiences.



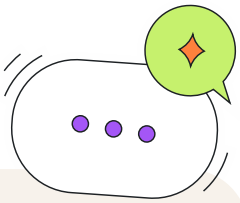
Trade fairs and networking events

Meet your audience where they are, both online and at in-person fairs or meetups. Bring colleagues from the teams that are hiring.



School and university visits

A good way to connect with early-career talent, especially for smaller companies and employers in rural areas.



XING employer profiles

Showcase your culture, values and benefits. Ratings and interactions can add authenticity, deepen interest and shorten the path to applying.



Partnerships with local newspapers

Build visibility through interviews and editorial content, not only paid advertisements.

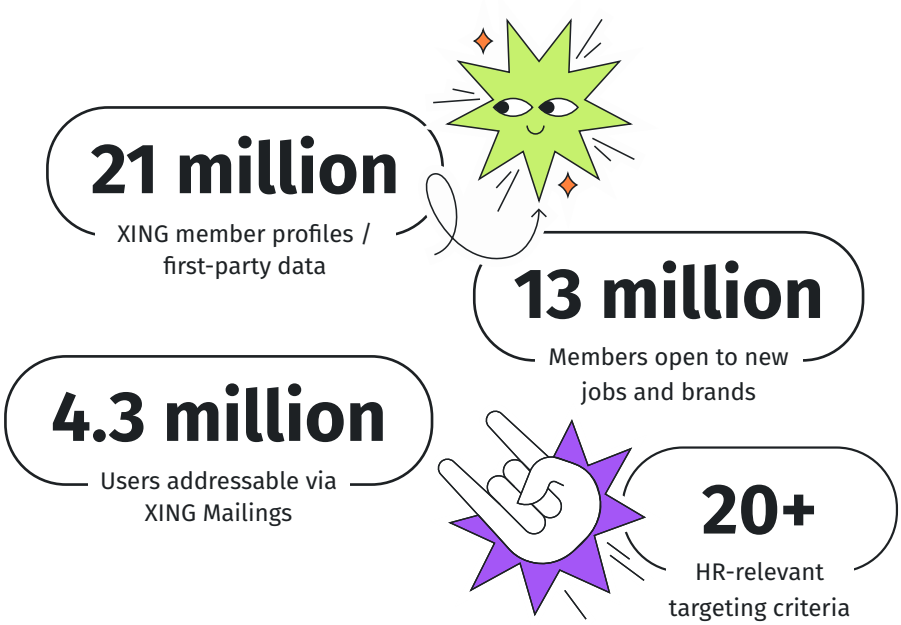
Did You Know?

XING offers **advertising formats on and off the platform:**

- **Top ad placements** through XING AdManager across xing.com.
- **Email campaigns** delivered directly to your target audience's inbox.
- **Exclusive placements** in XING industry newsletters.
- **Programmatic advertising** using first-party data from more than 21 million XING member profiles.

What makes it special

Your employer brand and recruitment marketing messages reach people on XING while they are focused on jobs, career opportunities and professional development.



Advertise with XING now

and receive €500 in advertising credit

Step 5: Define Success Metrics

How you measure success depends on your goals and the measures you choose. Social media campaigns, school visits and career fairs each call for different indicators. Define your metrics in advance and start collecting data as soon as the campaign begins.

Example KPIs by funnel phase

Phase	Discipline	Goal	Typical KPIs
1	**Awareness + Interest**	Build visibility, strengthen the brand and become an employer of choice.	Page views; time on careers page; brand awareness; social engagement.
2	**Consideration**	Persuade candidates, increase interest and openness to change.	Clicks on “More information”; downloads; interactions; qualified leads.
3	**Conversion**	Generate applications and fill roles.	Applications started; cost per application; time to hire.

How to measure your success

Tools and systems

Many tools can track campaign performance. If time or budget is limited, start with a simple setup: choose two or three KPIs for each funnel phase and build a basic dashboard for reach, clicks and applications. You can expand it later. The key is to track from the start.

Surveys

Quantitative data tells you what happened; surveys help explain why. Ask candidates how they heard about your company, why they applied, and which channels or content helped them. This helps you understand which activities worked at each stage of the funnel.

Want more?

XING

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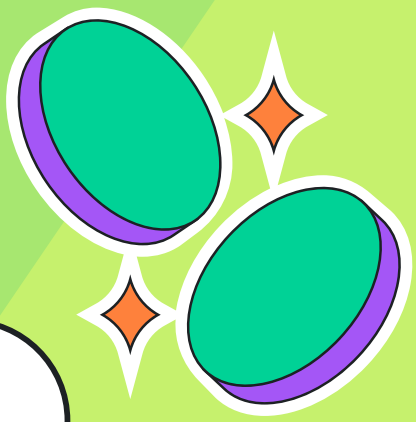

€ 500 for your next marketing campaign

Exclusive Welcome Offer

Get an extra €500 in advertising credit on all XING ad formats.

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