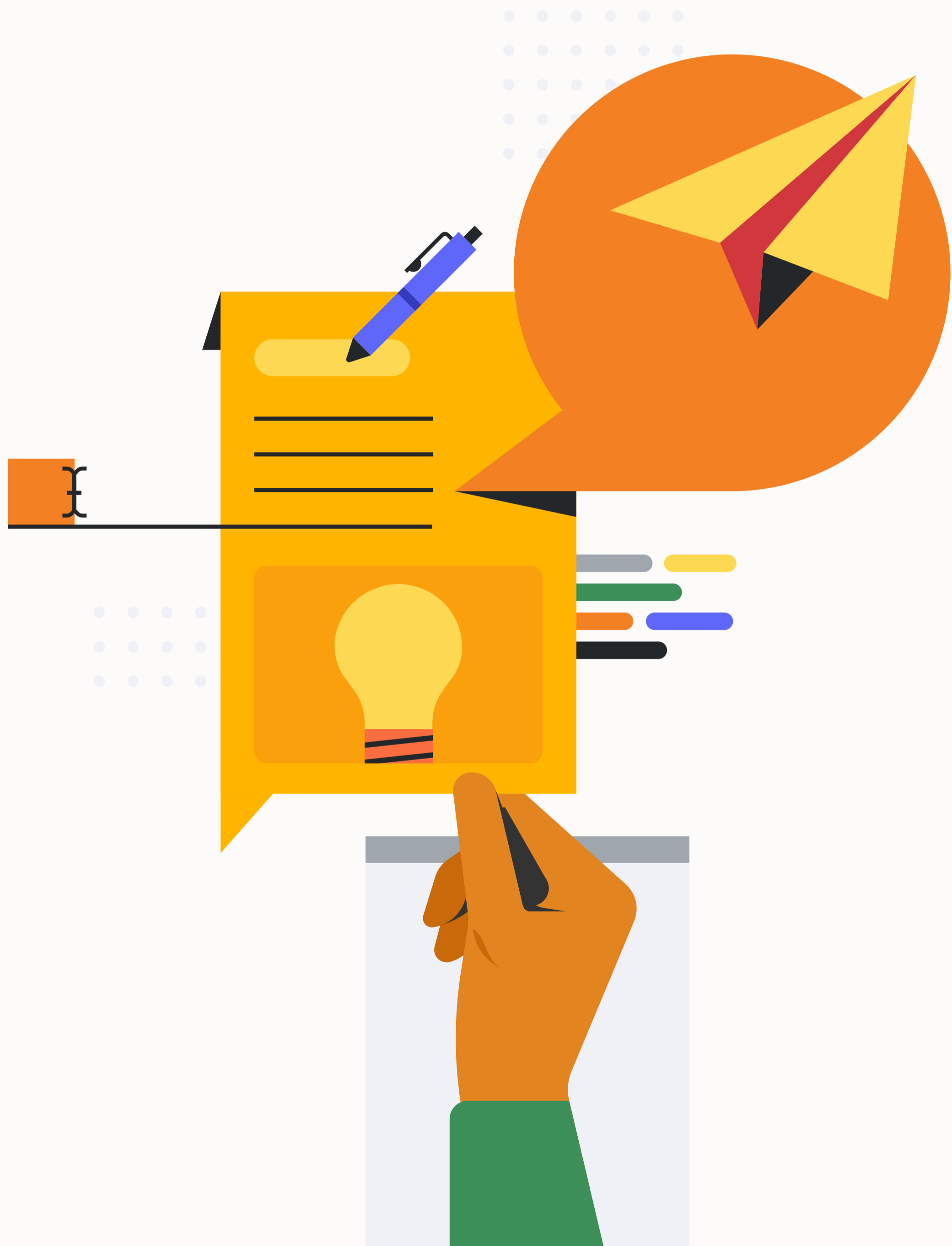


Why Authentic Storytelling is Crucial for Your Employer Brand



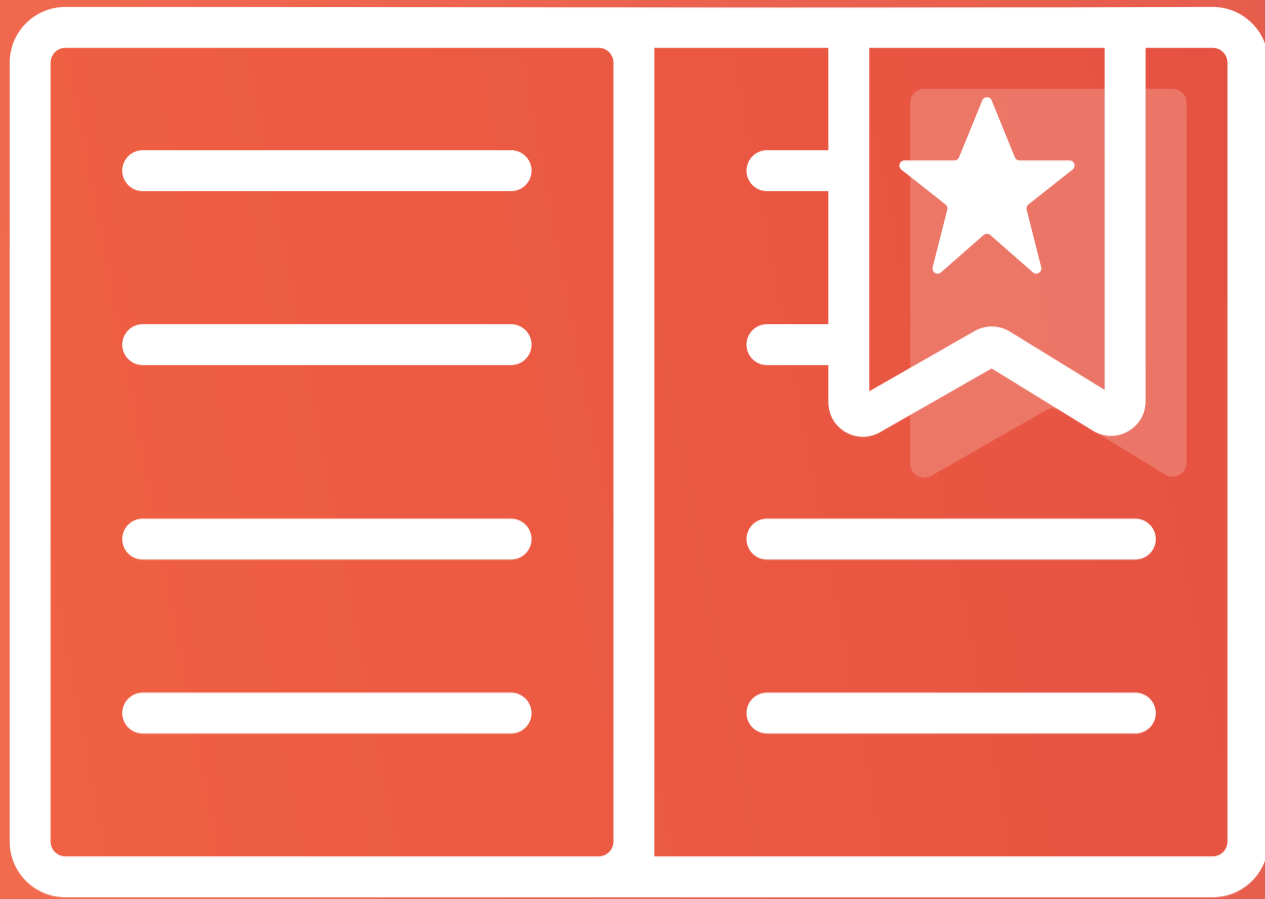


Introduction

The job market for technology professionals continues to expand as organizations develop and advance their digital infrastructure to meet consumers' increasing post-Covid demand for access to goods and services, despite the headlines of layoffs and hiring freezes at tech-focused companies.

In order to capture the attention of top tech talent, you must showcase your employer brand. Storytelling is an important way to effectively communicate what your company can offer that other employers don't, and connect with developers and technologists you need now and in the future.

Companies tend to lead with messaging around mission and values, but stories told by your own developers create a more meaningful and authentic connection to those principles. Highly skilled tech professionals are rare and they are valuable...and they have choices. Candidates want a clear picture of what life is like at a company before taking a job. They want to know what to expect. Simply giving them a job description and telling them about your perks and benefits won't cut it anymore.



What is the Difference Between Brand and Employer Brand Storytelling?

Brand storytelling is a marketing method that uses a creative narrative to connect a brand to its customers. This narrative often links a brand's mission to customer values to develop a stronger bond. For employer branding, you simply replace the word “customer” with “candidate,” and tell stories through the lens of your team and company culture.

Employer brand storytelling focuses on what makes a company unique and uses real stories from employees. According to our [2022 Stack Overflow Knows survey](#), developers do their research and they want to know what it's like to work for your company before applying. We found for the cohort with the highest ratio of job seekers — 25-34 year olds — the most popular resources to find out about future employers behind their personal network are company reviews (41%), other media (34%), and company media (33%). Candidates want to picture themselves at your organization by reading about how potential peers are making an impact, working on innovative products, participating in social responsibility, or environmental awareness initiatives.



There are five essential elements of employer brand storytelling:

1 Consistency and authenticity. Inconsistent messaging is inauthentic messaging. You know what your company offers its employees (*more importantly: your employees know what you bring to the table*). Think of your employee value proposition (EVP) as a statement that carries its narrative through the messaging you put out into the world.

2 Knowing your audience. Identify your target audience (tech talent). What motivates them? What are they looking for when it comes to their future career? What is their perception of your organization? What employers are they attracted to? Once you understand them a bit better, you can then define your unique selling points, or the benefits you offer to your employees that developers and technologists find most important.

Stack Overflow knows developers.
Learn more about how developers think about their careers [here](#).

3 Communicating the problem you solve. In our current talent marketplace, this could be as simple as “you need a job and we want to hire you.” However, that’s not a long term solution. Storytelling allows you to not only showcase your unique benefits, it also allows you to tap into the stories of the people who are directly impacted by them. For example, if you offer flexibility and remote work, your team members can share how those specific benefits help them – as in “flexibility lets me set my own schedule so I can spend more time with my family,” and so on. The best employer brands are using employee experience at the

forefront of their strategy and the best way to tell those stories is through your current talent.

4 Building your character. You can think about this in the same way you build candidate personas. Who are you speaking to? What are their likes and dislikes? Where do they spend time online? Think of candidate personas as recruitment marketing's version of customer profiles. Doing this allows you to better understand the wants and needs of the tech talent you are hoping to attract and create a personalized experience. Your messaging will lead candidates who fit your ideal personas through your employer brand pipeline, which begins with awareness of your company.

5 Connecting with your community. You want to reach the top tech talent. In order to do that, you have to understand not only where they spend time online, but also how that time is spent. In the 2022 Stack Overflow Developer Survey, we found that 88% of Professional Developers code outside of work, with 73% of them coding as a hobby. When they are learning to code or have a coding problem, developers turn to online resources and communities like Stack Overflow. Fifty three percent of developers and technologists said they visit Stack Overflow every day and 81% visit at least a few times each week.



What Storytelling Does for Your Employer Brand

Storytelling lets you communicate past just words; it helps you show people what you believe. When you articulate your company's values, you make it easier for people to align themselves with you — and this helps attract qualified tech talent.

Consider that almost 30% of job seekers have left a job within the first 90 days of starting, indicating misalignment between the candidate and the employer brand. You can mitigate this type of turnover by creating an emotional connection with your candidates

as they move from new hire to onboarding. In fact, companies actively investing in employer brand can reduce turnover by as much as 28%.

Today's tech talent is in high demand and they expect more personalized communication, authenticity, and transparency. A Harris Interactive Survey for Glassdoor states that “67% of employers believe retention rates would be higher if candidates had a clearer picture of what to expect about working at a company before taking the job.”

How does tech talent get a clearer picture? Through the lens of your current employees and how they feel about your benefits, culture, values and the future of your organization.

One example of this type of storytelling is Stack Overflow client FINN. Founded in 2019, FINN is a monthly car subscription company based in Germany with the mission to build the world's most popular car subscription platform and make mobility fun and sustainable. FINN focused its employer branding initiatives on enabling its DE&I, employee retention, career growth, and learning and development programs company-wide, and turned to Stack Overflow to increase awareness of the company among technical talent.

Since FINN started celebrating its employees through authentic storytelling initiatives to increase awareness with tech talent, specifically women in tech, it has:

- Maintained a consistent employer presence on Stack Overflow for recruitment efforts
- Served as a platform to celebrate FINN employees in an authentic way
- Increased brand awareness with engineer talent

Storytelling offers more than a job description and a tour of your headquarters. By telling a story, you're also telling candidates the “why” behind your engineering workforce: Why they chose you, why they stay, and why they are advocates for your company.



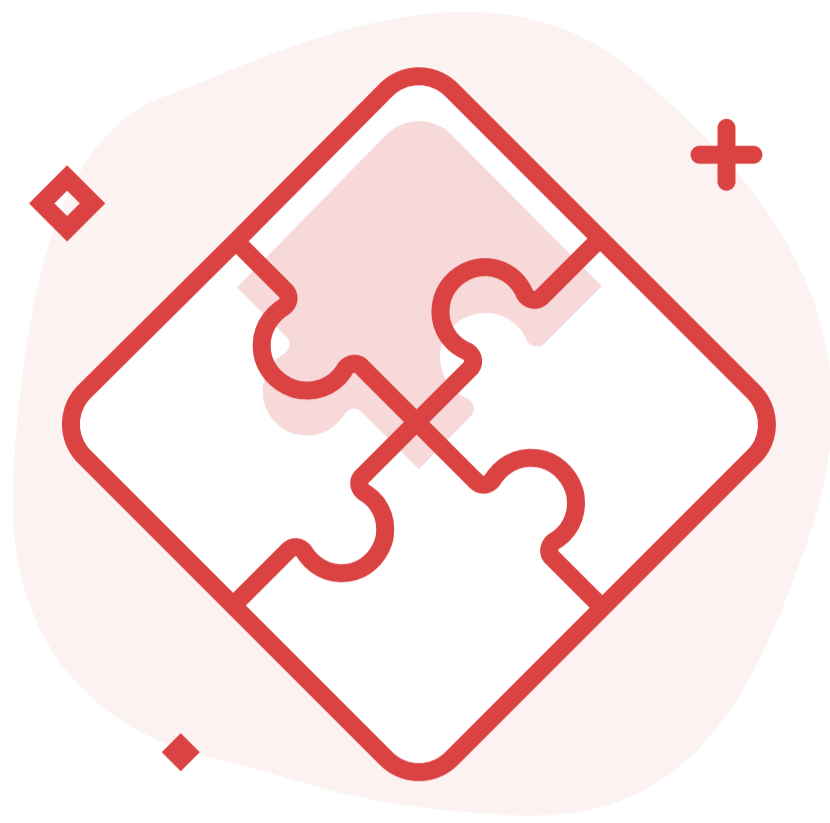
How Authentic Storytelling Builds Trust

As today's societal issues continue to mount, employees now see their workplace as a safe space and turn to it as a primary source of community, according to the [2022 Edelman Trust Barometer](#). Some top highlights from this year's report include:

- 78% of employees trust their employer.
- 69% of employees believe the people they work with are a significant source of community in their life.
- 79% of employees say they trust their co-workers, ahead of their manager, head of HR and their CEO.

Trust goes both ways — for example, establishing remote work policies without monitoring online activity. Focus instead on what actually motivates tech professionals in their careers: the opportunity to improve their current skills and learn new ones, a clear sense of shared purpose that aligns to personal values, a work environment that offers autonomy, and the space and time to do their jobs well.

Storytelling can be part of that trust equation. To show your trust in your employees, actively seek out their views, act on their input and make decisions with transparency. In short, to earn employee trust, you must first give them yours. The stories you tell internally, from announcements to all-hands meetings, demonstrate to your employees that transparency is a priority, that you share a common goal, and that you trust your developers to innovate and perform not only in the best interests of the organization, but each individual team member.



Storytelling Can Be the Great Differentiator

Storytelling is the most effective way to set your organization apart from your competitors. Your diversity initiatives, corporate social responsibility efforts, and the value you offer to your workforce are all part of your employee value proposition, but if it gets lost in your messaging to tech talent, it can be challenging for them to picture themselves working for your company.

The most important factor to remember is the stories you tell should come from the voice and opinions of your engineering teams. Start with a few manageable areas and then scale.

- Focus on your employer value proposition, or everything that you can offer tech talent, specifically ones they find the most important.
- Communicate what it's like to work at your company, what is a typical "day-in-the-life?"
- How can you celebrate your current developers working on innovative products, participating in social good efforts, or even helping their peers learn a new coding language.

By telling your authentic story and creating content aligned to what your company and team members value, you can give tech talent what they have been asking for - an inside peek into what it's like to work at your organization from those they trust, other developers.





Stack Overflow's Employer Branding enables you to engage and market your employer brand to 100+ million self-motivated, proactive, passionate developers and technologists.

Find out how we can build a strategy that supports your tech talent recruiting and retention goals.

[Get in touch](#) ▶

