



MY CAREER

Expert advice
Wendy Taylor



Forced Focus: The essence of attracting and retaining the best people

Penny Burke, Messenger Publishing (2007) \$34.95

Melbourne's Penny Burke has spent more than 20 years in marketing and during her time at advertising powerhouse Clemenger BBDO was involved in some of Australia's most successful advertising campaigns.

More recently, however, this expert in what people buy and why people buy has been redirecting her attention to the internal operations of organisations. More specifically, she has focused on why people join and why people stay in organisations.

According to Ms Burke, in the wake of looming skills shortages and the high expectations of fickle Gen Y employees, all organisations will have to share her interest. Company mission statements pledging that "people are our greatest asset" won't be enough to entice people to join an organisation, unite them behind its goals and keep them engaged, she argues.

So just as organisations use branding to build customer loyalty, they will have to use branding to emotionally engage their employees. In the first few chapters of *Forced Focus* she explains the concept of employer branding — which includes reputation, core competencies and culture — and why employers are being forced to care about how they are perceived by present and prospective staff. She includes some good statistics on labour force demographics and projected skill shortages and an often humorous

analysis of the expectations of graduates and other new entrants into the workforce.

She then outlines the five steps involved in employer branding, the five "A"s: Analyse, Audit, Aspire, Apply and Assess, and the bulk of the book is devoted to explaining these steps in detail.

It's a stylish publication that looks more

like a coffee table book than a business book.

While it looks good, its real value lies with the interesting case studies and good quotes. It is practical and offers good humour as well as good advice.

