



SPARRING  
CAPITAL

# EDITORIAL

## THE EMPLOYER BRAND, A STRATEGIC CHALLENGE FOR SMEs



232,000: that is the number of people that engineering and technology consulting (ETC) companies and digital services companies will have to recruit over the next ten years (source: Katalyse and D&Consultants). Quite a high number, since French ETC and digital services companies currently employ around 330,000 people. This means recruitment will remain a major challenge for these service companies, especially for many SMEs competing with the giants of the sector, or even with their clients.

With much more limited resources, these companies must compete to attract talent and leverage specific strengths by diversifying their sourcing, offering tailor-made financial packages and taking stock of their attractiveness to « talk » to potential recruits. Improving the « employer brand » then becomes a strategic challenge. We may wonder if this is just a passing fashion trend leading to a « back scratching » strategy from employers, or if it is indeed a radical transformation in the relationship with the company that is accelerated by new technologies. To shed some light on the subject, our spring newsletter is featuring Thomas Chardin. He heads the « Parlons RH » agency ([www.parlonsrh.com](http://www.parlonsrh.com)) and works with many companies on their HR issues.

We hope you enjoy the reading!

*The Sparring Capital team*



PORTFOLIO NEWS

**intermèdes**  
LE VOYAGE CULTUREL

## Acquisition of Intermèdes

In February, Sparring acquired the leader in cultural travel, Intermèdes, as part of a transmission operation alongside the founding President Michel Olivier and the new Managing Director Jérôme Faucheur.

Founded in 1994, Intermèdes mainly offers trips accompanied by lecturers and has the most comprehensive and diversified offer on the cultural travel market. The company controls its entire offer, from design to direct multi-channel sales.

Thanks to the loyalty of its customers, the quality of its line-up and lecturers, as well as the group's development on specific themes, Intermèdes has recorded sustained growth for several years, with sales for all the group's brands (Intermèdes, Héméry, Sentiers des Arts, Oriens and Terre Entière) exceeding €32m for 2018.

In a market that is increasingly dedicated to the search for unique experiences, Intermèdes intends to build on the uniqueness of its offer in order to pursue its development. In particular, the group intends to further enrich its range of products and services, expand its travel themes and accelerate the digital marketing of its offer. Former General Manager of Homair Vacances, Jérôme will bring to Intermèdes his in-depth expertise of the tourism and Internet professions.



## Acquisition of Cosmos by TVH Consulting

TVH concluded the acquisition of Cosmos Consulting, a pure independent player specialized in Business Intelligence solutions. This is TVH Group's second acquisition since Sparring Capital became the majority shareholder in September 2016.

Cosmos Consulting offers its clients Business Intelligence solutions developed by SAP and Talend. The company, which also publishes its own analytical extensions, generated more than €4 million in revenue in 2018. This operation will allow TVH Group to diversify its offer into new segments that offer strong synergies with « ERP », its historical core business. The group is thus consolidating its position as both a high added-value integrator and as a publisher of its own solutions in dedicated business verticals.



## Acquisition of Mantica by Propriétés Privées

Propriétés Privées completed its third external growth operation with the acquisition of Mantica, an independent agents network specialized in real estate loan brokerage.

Founded in 2006, Mantica has twelve independent agents with a strong foothold in the Ile-de-France region. Through this acquisition, Propriétés Privées Group is extending its range of services by integrating the required know-how for setting up real estate loans for property buyers. The group will thus benefit from significant synergies between its different businesses. It will also develop and optimize Mantica's agent network already implemented within its real estate agent network.

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### Acquisition of CEDE by GSRI

GSRI conducted its first build-up operation with the acquisition of CEDE, a company specialized in the detection of so-called 'sensitive' underground networks (electricity, water, etc.) and in geophysics for the construction industry.

Like GSRI, CEDE works primarily with a public sector customer base, including water authorities, town halls, general councils, etc. Thus, the group will be able to expand its range of services and enter a fast-growing market driven mainly by a favourable regulatory environment that requires network operators to map and detect their networks. The operation will also enable GSRI to strengthen its teams and its footprint in the Lyon region, where CEDE has an office.



## INTERVIEW THE EMPLOYER BRAND



Thomas Chardin, Founding Partner at Parlons RH.

### How would you define the concept of « employer brand »?

**The employer brand is the very spirit of your business** that reveals itself to the world outside. The internal specificities of a company that build loyalty and commitment - good management, a bold project, ambitious vision, a green approach - all spark the interest of potential new recruits.

In a way, it is like a brand strategy applied to the HR, as whatever the size of the company - from very small businesses to large corporates, including SMEs of course - the company is much more than a simple employer:

- it recruits
- it integrates
- it trains and provides support
- it collects social security contributions and other taxes
- it is a player in their employment area and on a given territory
- it has social, environmental and societal responsibilities

The company thus plays various employer roles for different types of audiences. While it is naturally geared to applicants, it also concerns current staff members on a daily basis.

There is nothing new about the concept of « employer brand ». Employer brand is an American concept that appeared some 30 years ago. At the end of the 90s, the concept sparked strong interest among certain recruitment communication professionals.

Didier Pitelet, a pioneer, patented the expression « brand employer » in 1998.

Company interest for the employer brand has only intensified as the war for talent begins to rage in France.

### Does the size of the company matter or does the concept also apply to SMEs?

From the moment they employ at least 1 person, all companies have an employer brand. We have clients ranging from 20 to 50,000 employees. Some organisations are more aware of the employer brand than others, and show various degrees of, formalisation, structure, sharing, and performance. Not only is the size of the company important, but other criteria such as the business segment, the positions offered, territorial presence, organisational structure (headquarters, offices, network), and especially growth potential, are also key features.

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