Social Media Video Marketing for Employer Branding: What Drives Employer Attractiveness in Hospital Recruitment?

EMAC 2026 Fall Conference

16 - 18 September 2026
University of Bremen
Bremen, Germany

Ariane-Tabea Schüller & Claudius Thelen
University of Greifswald, Germany

UNIVERSITÄT GREIFSWALD
Wissen lockt. Seit 1456

1. INTRODUCTION

Skilled labor shortages in healthcare make employer branding essential.

Social media videos offer a powerful way to communicate and build employer attractiveness.

This study identifies which levers of social media video marketing matter most in a hospital recruitment context.

Focus:
Employer attractiveness in hospital recruitment

Context:
Instagram video marketing

Sample:
181 medical students and physicians in Germany

STIMULUS VIDEOS

Physician shown in the video (between-subjects variation)



Male, entry-level



Female, entry-level



Male, skilled-level



Female, skilled-level

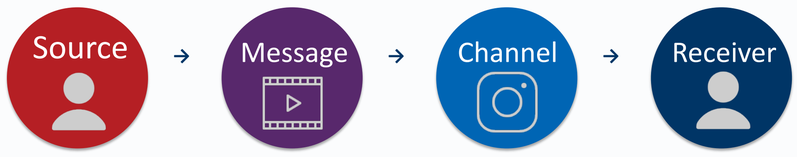
DEPENDENT VARIABLE

Employer attractiveness

Measured with 25 items adapted from Berthon, Ewing, and Hah (2005) on seven-point scales.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

We apply a person-message-frequency framework (based on Berlo's (1960) communication model).



Berlo, 1960

Hypotheses

PERSON (source effects)

H1 Greater trustworthiness of the person in the video is associated with higher employer attractiveness.

H2 Greater perceived similarity between the viewer and the person in the video is associated with higher employer attractiveness.

MESSAGE (framing)

H3 Positive and negative goal framing of the video message differ in their association with employer attractiveness.

FREQUENCY (repeated exposure)

H4 Repeated exposure to the employer branding video is associated with higher employer attractiveness.

Exploratory
Employer attractiveness differs by career stage (students vs. physicians).

3. METHOD

Sample: 181 medical students and physicians in Germany

Platform: Instagram (simulated feed)

Stimuli: 8 videos (2 framing: positve vs. negative)
× 2 actor gender (male vs. female)
× 2 career stage (entry-level vs. skilled-level)

Design: 2 × 2 × 2 (between-subjects (person, framing) + within-subjects (repeated exposure over time)

Measures: Employer attractiveness, trustworthiness, perceived similarity, demographics, career stage
Post-exposure (T1 & T2) & Follow up (T3)

Follow-up: 35 respondents in repeated-exposure analysis

4. RESULTS

Key findings (standardized effects)

Trustworthiness of the person	**r = .61*** **	[.46, .73]
Perceived similarity	**r = .44*** **	[.25, .60]
Repeated exposure	**dz = 0.71*** **	(T1 < T2)
Message framing (positive vs. negative)	**n.s.**	p = .402

Exploratory: Career stage η^2 = **.06*** (p = .014).

More advanced respondents tended to evaluate the hospital somewhat more critically.

Effect Summary (Significant Effects)

Effect	Estimate	95% CI
Trustworthiness	r = .61	[.46, .73]
Perceived Similarity	r = .44	[.25, .60]
Repeated Exposure	dz = 0.71	n.a.
Career Stage (expl.)	η^2 = .06	n.a.

*** p < .001, * p < .05, n.s. = not significant, n.a. = not applicable

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ✓ Trustworthiness is the strongest observed driver.
- ✓ Perceived similarity matters.
- ✓ Repetition works.
- ✓ Framing showed no robust effect.
- ✓ Effects vary by career stage.

5. DISCUSSION & IMPLICATIONS

Person-related cues and repeated exposure drive employer attractiveness on Instagram, whereas subtle framing does not. Hospitals should:

Show trustworthy and relatable physicians
Carefully select spokespersons who build trust and similarity.

Make similarity visible
Cues should help viewers identify with the person shown.

Use repeated exposure
Repetition strengthens familiarity and positive evaluations.

Testing framing remains important
Context may moderate effects; more research is needed.

Authentic people + repetition = more attractive employers.

CONTACT

Ariane-Tabea Schüller
University of Greifswald, Germany
ariane-tabea.schueller@uni-greifswald.de

Claudius Thelen
University of Greifswald, Germany
claudius.thelen@uni-greifswald.de