FOR HR LEADERS AND EXECUTIVES

A Top Employer seal built on criteria you can read.

Ascientific method, a survey that invites every employee, and a seal that applicants can verify.



WHY EMPLOYERS CHOOSE USIQ

1
Published criteria

You can read what is measured and how it is scored before you apply. No black box.

2
A scientific method

Developed by PhDr. Oliver Scharfenberg, MBA, author and researcher on employer seals, with scientific input from international experts.

3
Every employee is invited

Not a small sample: the confidential survey goes to your whole workforce, so the result is representative.

Four levels: Certified · Silver · Gold · Platinum

WWW.USIQ.ORG/TOP-EMPLOYER

WHAT SETS USIQ APART

Four things you can check for yourself.

A seal is only as credible as the method behind it. USIQ is built so that employers, employees and applicants can see how a result comes about.

1

Published criteria

The assessment criteria, the survey questionnaire and the scoring rules are public on usiq.org. You know what is measured and how results are evaluated before you apply, and so does every applicant who checks your seal. Each seal links to a verification page showing the tier, the covered employer and locations, the exact dates and the methodology version.

2

A scientific method

The USIQ method was developed by PhDr. Oliver Scharfenberg, MBA, who has studied employer seals in his own research, including a randomized experiment with 1,093 participants, with scientific input from international experts. A Scientific Advisory Board reviews the standards, and the published criteria are open to proposals from universities and business associations.

3

Every employee is invited

Many programs rely on a sample of employees. USIQ requires that all employees are invited to take part in the confidential online survey, so the result reflects your whole workforce and not just the people who were picked. Individual answers are never shown to the employer; results are reported in aggregate form only.

4

A survey plus an HR assessment

A tier is based on both sides of the story: 100 points from the employee survey and 100 points from a documented review of your HR practices. USIQ can request evidence for your answers, and minimum scores apply in both parts.



THE EXPERT BEHIND THE METHOD

PhDr. Oliver Scharfenberg, MBA

Founder of the certification programs with more than 750 companies certified. His (PhDr.) doctoral research analyzed employer seals, and he has written two books on employee recruitment, i ncluding The Visible Employer for the U.S. market. Also the author of The AI Visibility SEO & GEO Playbook.

THE FOUR LEVELS

Four seals, one published scale.

Every employer is scored on a 200-pointscale: upto 100 points from theemployee survey and up to 100 points from the HR assessment. The higher the score, the higher the level, as long as the minimums for both parts are met.



Certified
At least 120 of 200 points (60%)

Silver
At least 140 of 200 points (70%)

Gold
At least 160 of 200 points (80%)

Platinum
At least 180 of 200 points (90%)

Illustrative seals. Company name and verification details are fictional.

LEVEL	MINIMUM TOTAL	SURVEY AND HR ASSESSMENT, EACH	EVERY SURVEY DIMENSION
Certified	120 points	at least 50	at least 40%
Silver	140 points	at least 60	at least 50%
Gold	160 points	at least 70	at least 60%
Platinum	180 points	at least 80	at least 70%

No trade-offs between parts
A strong HR assessment cannot make up for a weak employee survey, and the other way round. If a minimum is missed, the next lower level that meets all conditions is awarded.

Breadth across the survey
Each level also needs a minimum result in every one of the seven survey dimensions, so strength in a few areas cannot hide weakness in others.

Reading the stars: Certified shows four stars, Silver four stars and a plus sign, Gold five stars, and Platinum five stars and a plus sign. The stars name the USIQ level only; they are not a separate rating or a ranking against other employers. Every certificate is valid for 24 months and has its own verification page.

WHAT IS MEASURED

Two parts, 100 points each.

Everything below is published in the certification criteria. You can see how each point is earned before you apply.

PART 1

Employee survey

32 questions in seven dimensions, answered confidentially by your employees.

Company overall	10
Working conditions	20
Your work	14
Learning and development	10
Team and climate	12
Your manager	16
Satisfaction and loyalty	18
Total	**100 points**

PART 2

HR assessment

39 criteria in eight areas, rated by the strength of the evidence behind each practice.

Work organization	12
Leadership and direction	15
People development	15
Flexibility, work-life	12
Pay, benefits, security	18
Culture, fairness, inclusion	12
Employer branding	8
Transitions, separations	8
Total	**100 points**

How survey answers become points

Each item is rated on a six-point scale. The mean is converted to a share of the item's points, and all eligible items add up to a score from 0 to 100. Missing answers are never counted as favorable.

How the HR assessment is rated

A practice that is only claimed earns little. Credit grows with documentary evidence, from "not in place" (level 0) to "verified" (level 5). Verified means corroborated in this assessment, not a legal audit.

Open about its limits. The weights are program design choices. USIQ does not present them as statistically validated predictors of retention or performance, and the thresholds do not say that an employer is above the market average.

HOW IT WORKS

From application to your seal in four steps.

01

Apply

Choose your package and confirm the legal employer and the US locations to be covered. Your order also records who will handle the data and who your privacy and security contacts are.

02

Employee survey

All employees are invited toa confidential online survey. You can distribute the invitation yourself, so no list of employees contacts has to be handed over. Answers cannot be traced back to individuals.

03

HR assessment

A company representative answers the HR questions online. USIQ may request supporting evidence and checks the information with human research and an AI-assisted review.

04

Decision and results

You receive your evaluation, and if you reach the required scores, your tier (Certified, Silver, Gold or Platinum), your digital seal and certificate, and a public verification page. Certification is valid for 24 months.

If certification is not awarded, a $990 assessment and evaluation fee will be retained, and the remaining package amount will be refunded.

WHAT YOU RECEIVE

Comprehensive evaluation

Your survey results in clearly organized Excel tables, ready to discuss with your leadership team. Small groups are protected, so no individual can be identified.

Recommendations for action

Concrete suggestions based on your results, to help you set priorities for improving your workplace.

Seal, certificate and verification

A digital seal and certificate for your career page and recruiting materials. Every seal links to its verification page.

Marketing package

Depending on your package: a landing page, social media posts, a press release and its distribution, to raise your visibility as an employer.

DATA PROTECTION

Invitation contact records are deleted within 30 days after the survey closes, and raw responses within 90 days after the decision. Survey data are never sold, used for advertising or used to train AI models, and are not entered into public AI tools.

WHAT YOU RECEIVE

Proof you can show, and a way for anyone to check it.



SEAL CERTIFICATE DISPLAY EXAMPLE

Example for the Gold level. Company name, ID and dates are fictional. The same formats are available for every level.

1 ## Digital seal for your level

For your career page, job ads, social profiles and email signature. The seal names your level, your company, the validity period and its verification address.

2 ## Certificate with a unique ID

A digital certificate for your records and your recruiting materials, valid for 24 months from issue.

3 ## Public verification page

Applicants can check your level, the covered employer and locations, and the dates at any time at usiq.org.

4 ## Your results and visibility tools

Your comprehensive evaluation in Excel tables, plus, depending on your package, a landing page, social media posts and a press release with distribution.

PACKAGES

Choose the visibility you need.

BASIC	BASIC PLUS	STANDARD	PREMIUM
$2,990	$3,990	$4,990	$5,990
one-time price	one-time price	one-time price	one-time price
✓ Survey, assessment and Excel evaluation	✓ Survey, assessment and Excel evaluation	✓ Survey, assessment and Excel evaluation	✓ Survey, assessment and Excel evaluation
✓ Digital seal, certificate and verification page	✓ Digital seal, certificate and verification page	✓ Digital seal, certificate and verification page	✓ Digital seal, certificate and verification page
– Company landing page	✓ Company landing page	✓ Company landing page	✓ Company landing page
– Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram posts	– Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram posts	✓ Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram posts	✓ Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram posts
– Press release	– Press release	✓ Press release	✓ Press release
– Press release distribution	– Press release distribution	– Press release distribution	✓ Press release distribution

If certification is not awarded, a $990 assessment and evaluation fee will be retained, and the remaining package amount will be refunded. No marketing services are provided, and you keep your comprehensive evaluation with recommendations for action. With the Basic package, for example, you receive $2,000 back.

CONTACT

Find out where you stand as an employer.

REQUEST CERTIFICATION
www.usiq.org/top-employer

CONTACT FORM
www.usiq.org/contact

CRITERIA AND METHODOLOGY
www.usiq.org/top-employer/methodology

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VIDEO
youtube.com/@USIQ-INSTITUTE

USIQ Top Employer is an employer-funded assessment based on a confidential employee survey and an HR assessment against published criteria. Certification is a private designation, not a government approval, and does not guarantee recruiting or retention results. USIQ United States Institute for Quality® is a registered brand of Quality Standardization and Certification LLC, Wyoming, USA. © 2026. All rights reserved.