

A practical guide for frontline companies

The EVP most of your people will never read

How to build an employee value proposition that holds up on the frontline — and actually reaches it.

Includes a copy-and-paste AI prompt that drafts your first EVP in about twenty minutes. See Appendix 1.

Guava EVP

Most companies don't fail at defining their employee value proposition. They fail at the last mile — getting it in front of the people it's actually about.

You can write a good EVP. You can pay a consultancy to write a better one. And then it lives in a deck, or a careers page, and the warehouse, the ward, the shop floor never sees it. On a frontline, that isn't the exception — it's the default: desk-based companies are three times more likely than frontline ones to have an EVP their people actually understand.

This is a short, practical guide for frontline companies. It covers the whole distance — what a good EVP is, how to build one that's true rather than just plausible, how to check it with the people it describes, and the part almost everyone skips: how to make sure they ever see it.

If you don't have an EVP yet, there's a copy-and-paste prompt at the back (Appendix 1) that drafts a first version in about twenty minutes. Start there if you like — but a draft is where the work begins, not where it ends.

What an EVP is, and why you need one

Start with the plain version, in case the term is new. An **employee value proposition** — EVP — is the honest answer to a simple question: why would someone work here, and keep working here, rather than somewhere else?

Not the recruiting pitch. Not the poster in reception. It's the real, whole sum of what you offer the people who work for you — pay, benefits, the chance to grow, how it feels day to day, what the company stands for — written down and organized so you can see what's strong, what's missing, and what you've never bothered to say out loud.

An EVP is not the same as your employer brand. The EVP is the substance — what's actually true about working here. Your employer brand is how that substance comes across to the outside world. You can't brand your way out of a weak EVP; the branding just makes the gap more visible. And most employer-brand effort points outward, at candidates who don't work for you yet — while your EVP's hardest and most-neglected audience is the people already clocking in every day.

Why bother writing it down? Because without one, pay becomes the easiest thing to compare — and often the only thing a candidate can see. That's a race you lose to whoever pays fifty cents more an hour. An EVP is the set of reasons someone chooses you, and stays, beyond the number on the payslip. That matters everywhere, but most of all where you probably are: a frontline workforce, where turnover is high, every departure costs you a hire and a training cycle, and your people are often being pulled at by the employer down the road.

A clear, honest EVP is what a candidate weighs when two jobs pay the same. It's what makes a good employee stay when they could leave. And the act of writing it forces you to look squarely at your own weak spots — which is uncomfortable, and exactly the point.

Most companies land in one of two camps: no EVP worth the name, or one worked out properly and then left in a deck nobody opens. This guide is for both — because the same thing rescues either: getting something true written down, and getting it in front of people.

Producing the words is the quick part — that's what the Appendix 1 prompt does in about twenty minutes. Working out whether they're true, whether they matter to the people doing the job, and whether they're actually distinctive is the rest of the work, and most of it. The AI gives you something plausible, and plausible is not the same as true. Closing that gap is what the rest of this guide is for.

The five pillars

A good EVP covers five pillars. They map to how people actually weigh up a job. The edges blur here and there — but between them they cover what matters, and five is few enough to actually hold in your head.

1 Pay and rewards

Compensation

Salary, raises, bonuses — and whether pay is fair and on time.

2 Benefits and life outside work

Benefits

Holidays, pension, insurance, flexibility, and support for family life.

3 Growing here

Career

Training, development, security, and whether there's a path forward.

4 How we work together

Work climate

Trust, respect, autonomy, clear roles — and the daily conditions people work in: schedules, staffing, safety, and the tools to do the job.

5 What we stand for

Company culture

Mission, values, and how leaders actually behave.

You could slice this differently — some frameworks split out wellbeing or working conditions — but five is enough to be useful and few enough to finish. What matters isn't the exact boundaries; it's that you don't quietly skip one. Drop a pillar and you'll find yourself claiming great culture while ignoring that people aren't paid on time. The point isn't to fill in five boxes — it's to force honesty: most employers are strong on two or three and weak on the rest, and the weak ones are the ones nobody wants to write down. A good EVP names all five anyway.

What separates a good EVP from a generic one

Here's where the AI draft — and most human-written EVPs — fall down. They're not wrong. They're just interchangeable. Swap the company name and they'd fit any employer in your industry. A good EVP is the opposite: taken as a whole, it could only be about you. Any single line might be true of others — plenty of firms pay on time — but the specific mix of what you promise and the proof behind it should be unmistakably yours. Six things make the difference.

Specifics, not adjectives

"Competitive salary" tells a warehouse worker nothing — competitive with what? Every time you reach for a word like dynamic or market-leading, you've probably skipped the actual fact underneath it. Find the fact.

GENERIC

"We offer competitive pay and a supportive, dynamic working environment."

GOOD

"We pay above the regional average for this role, review it every March, and you're paid on time to the day — every time."

- ✓ **Honesty over aspiration.** An EVP describes what is, not what you'd like to be. Claim clear progression to a picker who's watched three years go by with no path, and you've written a complaint they'll recognize instantly. People trust an employer who admits the trade-offs.
- ✓ **Proof, not promises.** "We value development" is a promise. "Every full-time employee gets four paid training days a year, and last year 60 moved into a higher role" is proof. Put the evidence a sceptical employee would demand right next to the claim.
- ✓ **Relevant, not merely true.** A fact can be true and still change no one's mind. "We have a canteen" is true; whether it matters depends on whether anyone eats there. Lead with what your workforce actually weighs when they decide to join or stay — and cut the true-but-irrelevant filler, however tempting it is to pad the list.
- ✓ **Written for the person doing the job.** Most EVPs are written for recruiters, in their language. The audience is the person on the floor. If a line wouldn't survive being read aloud in a break room without an eye-roll, rewrite it.
- ✓ **Short enough to actually read.** Your EVP will be read — if at all — on a phone, standing up, in a five-minute break. Anything that needs a quiet office and ten minutes will not land. Be ruthless: true, specific, brief.

The five pillars, done well

The framework is easy. Doing each pillar well — specifically, honestly, in a way that means something to someone on a frontline — is the work. Here's what "good" looks like in each.

1 • Pay and rewards

The desk-job version talks about equity and bonus structures. On a frontline, the thing that matters most is simpler and rarely written down: **is pay correct, and is it on time?** For someone living close to their pay cycle, reliability is the benefit — and most EVPs never mention it because it feels too basic. It isn't. Name pay punctuality, explain how raises actually work, and be honest about where you sit in the market rather than hiding behind "competitive."

2 • Benefits and life outside work

The test is whether the benefit is reachable by the person you're describing. A gym near head office does nothing for a driver who's never there. Meal provision, transport support, real holiday people can take without guilt, help with childcare — these land on a frontline. Be honest about what people use versus what merely exists on paper.

3 • Growing here

The question every frontline worker is quietly asking: **can I become more than this, here?** Can a picker become a team lead — and does anyone actually travel that route, or is it a poster? Show the path — and if real people have walked it, point to them (with their permission). Even without names, "nine of our team leads started on the floor last year" is proof. And say whether training happens on paid time; that single detail tells a worker more about how you see them than a page of development language.

4 • How we work together

This is the pillar about daily experience — the thing people feel every shift. Respect from supervisors. Schedules predictable enough to plan a life around. Being listened to. And the physical reality of the job: whether it's safe, whether there are enough hands on the shift, whether the equipment actually works. It's the hardest pillar to fake, because employees live the truth of it daily. If there's a gap between ambition and reality, that gap is a project — not a line for the EVP yet.

5 • What we stand for

Every company has a mission statement; almost none mean anything on the floor. A good culture pillar answers a plainer question: **what is this company actually for, and do the people running it behave like they believe it?** Values are only worth stating if leadership visibly lives them — otherwise naming them just draws attention to the gap.

What a strong first draft looks like

A fictional example — Northmill Foods, a food producer with ~800 line and warehouse staff across two plants.

“Steady work, pay you can count on, and a real path up — from a company that’s straight with you about the trade-offs.”

Pay and rewards. Paid on time, to the day, every time, with a posted path to your next raise. Proof: 36 straight months of on-time pay; every operator gets a fixed step-up at 12 months, posted on the floor.

Benefits and life outside work. The benefits people on the floor actually use. Proof: a hot meal every shift (92% take it up); company shuttle from three nearby towns.

Growing here. Most of our team leads started on the line. Proof: nine of eleven current line leads were promoted from operator roles in the last two years; forklift and food-safety tickets paid for, on paid time.

How we work together. Safe lines, enough hands on the shift, supervisors who came up doing the job. Proof: a minimum staffing level guaranteed per line; any worker can call a safety stand-down.

What we stand for. We feed our region, and we don’t cut corners — on the food or the people who make it. Proof: no line runs below safe staffing to hit a number, ever.

HONEST TRADE-OFF

The work is shift-based — nights and some weekends, because a plant runs 24/5. We won’t pretend otherwise.

NOT YET TRUE

We’re working toward rosters published four weeks ahead. Not there yet — today it’s two.

A quick self-check

Before you publish anything, run your draft against this. The ones you hesitate on are the ones to fix.

- ☐ Could this EVP only be about your company — or would it fit any competitor with the name swapped?
- ☐ Does every claim have a specific fact or piece of proof behind it, not just an adjective?
- ☐ Is every claim relevant — something your people actually weigh — not just true?
- ☐ Are all five pillars addressed, including the ones you'd rather not write down?
- ☐ Would a person doing the actual job recognize this as true — or roll their eyes?
- ☐ Is anything aspirational dressed up as real? If so, move it to a plan, not the EVP.
- ☐ Can each pillar be read on a phone, in a break, in under a minute?
- ☐ Have you been honest about the important trade-offs and boundaries of the job?

A draft that passes all eight is close. Most first drafts — including the AI's — pass four or five. Closing that gap is the whole job. But there's one check you can't do at your desk.

Then test it — before you publish

Everything up to here has been you, or you and an AI. The draft still hasn't met the people it describes — and that's the step most EVP projects skip, the one that separates a true EVP from a flattering one. You don't need a research project. Six to ten short conversations, across different roles, sites, shifts, languages, and lengths of service, will quickly expose many of the biggest gaps. Ask four things:

- Is this true?
- Does it describe what actually matters to you?
- Is anything important missing?
- Which line sounds least believable?

On sensitive subjects — pay, a difficult supervisor, safety — anonymous answers often surface what people won't say to HR directly, so give them a way to respond without a name attached.

Then revise with what you hear. If people in different roles or sites describe a different company, don't force them into one false universal story — say what's shared, and be honest about what isn't. And look past the workshop: exit interviews, absence patterns, and the questions that keep coming up often tell you more about what your EVP must address than any leadership offsite.

Now the part everyone forgets

Say you've done all of it. You drafted, you sharpened, you tested it with your people, you revised. You have an EVP that's specific, honest, proven, and true. You put it in a deck, present it to the leadership team, everyone nods, and it goes into a shared drive. And the people it's actually about never see it.

An EVP nobody sees isn't a modest version of a good EVP. **It's not one at all.**

15%

of organizations have an EVP that's actively socialized and embedded. Another 37% have none at all — leaving roughly half with one that's been defined but never fully embedded.

Gallagher, [2026 Employee Communications Report](#)

You saw the reason on the first page, and it's worth sitting with: desk-based organizations are three times more likely than frontline ones to have an EVP their people actually understand. The gap is structural, not lazy. The standard playbook assumes corporate email, an intranet login, and ten quiet minutes at a desk — your frontline has none of those. Tellingly, in Gallagher's research, in-person town halls were rated the most effective channel for frontline workforces — gathering everyone into a room, which tells you how badly the usual tools fit a workforce spread across shifts and sites.

So the hard part was never producing the words — the prompt in Appendix 1 drafts those in an afternoon. The hard part is everything after: checking the draft against what your people actually experience, and then getting it in front of them and keeping it there. That second thing — reach — is where nearly every EVP quietly dies.

And once it's in front of them, you can ask the question that closes the loop: **did it land?** Not whether you published it — whether the people it describes recognize it as true. You don't learn that by tracking who opened what; you're not surveilling anyone, and much of your workforce will have reached it without so much as a login. You learn it the way you validated the draft — ask them, anonymously and in aggregate: does the promise match the job?

That's the job Guava EVP was built for: one place to publish your EVP — mobile-first, in your workforce's languages — that anyone can open without a corporate login; every claim easy to keep current as the truth changes; and an anonymous pulse that tells you whether your people actually recognize the promise. The aggregate "did it land," without tracking a soul.

Build a good EVP — then make sure your people can find it

Publish your employee value proposition to your whole workforce, in one place anyone can open on any device.

Free to start.

Start free at guavaevp.com

Build your EVP with AI

You don't need to start from a blank page. Paste the prompt below into **ChatGPT, Claude, or Gemini** and it will interview you, pillar by pillar, then hand you a first draft — with the parts it can't yet stand behind clearly marked. That marking is the point: it shows you exactly what to take to your people before any of it goes public.

EVP drafting prompt

Prefer to copy it cleanly? The paste-ready version is in our [help centre](#).

You are an EVP coach helping me draft — and pressure-test — an employee value proposition. My workforce is mostly frontline: people who don't sit at a desk and often don't have a company email.

Ground rule, throughout: treat everything I tell you as a hypothesis until I show evidence. Never turn an aspiration, a management opinion, or a planned-but-not-yet-real benefit into a current promise. If I give a claim with no proof, keep it but mark it NEEDS VALIDATION. Accept "I don't know" as a complete answer. Never invent a fact, number, or proof point.

Start before any pillars. Ask me: the company and what it does; countries, sites, and main frontline roles; shifts, and the languages my workforce actually reads; the roles hardest to recruit and keep; and what evidence already exists — surveys, exit interviews, retention or absence data, benefit usage, pay comparisons, promotion records, real employee stories. If little exists, note it.

Then interview me one pillar at a time — two or three plain questions each, wait for answers, don't lecture. For each claim, ask who it came from and what proof would back it. The pillars: (1) Pay and rewards; (2) Benefits and life outside work; (3) Growing here; (4) How we work together — supervisors, schedules, staffing, safety, tools, autonomy, clear roles; (5) What we stand for. Along the way ask: do different sites, shifts, or roles experience these differently? And: why do people join, stay, and leave?

When done, produce: one overall EVP proposition (a sentence or two); five short pillar paragraphs written for the person doing the job — specific, honest, phone-length; the proof under each claim, or NEEDS VALIDATION where there's none; the two or three things that actually make us different; any groups who'd read the promise differently; a short list of questions to test with employees; and a one-screen mobile version. Push me for specifics when I hand you adjectives. Begin with the opening questions.

That's the raw material — and a map of what still needs checking. The guide you just read is how you turn it into something worth publishing.