



EMPLOYER BRANDING: A STRATEGIC TOOL TO ATTRACT AND RETAIN TALENTS IN A COMPETITIVE ENVIRONMENT

WAGHAMARE SHIVAJI , SHIVASHANKAR.S., SHESHRAO MARUTI AND RESHMA.S

Professor
Research Scholars
Dept. of Commerce, Gulbarga University, Gulbarga.

Abstract:

Employer branding is a targeted long-term strategy to manager awareness and perceptions of employees, potential employees and related stakeholders with regards to a particular firm. It is very popular concept with HR professionals, branding consultants and market researchers in the recent past, while attracting the right talent and retaining them becomes a critical aspect for business success. The liberalization of the Indian economy the economic reforms Indian companies are becoming internationally strategic to utilize the employer brand to attract and retain talent which leads to expand and growth of the business. 'Employer Branding' is also very prominent in the Human Resource Management (HRM) point of view and acts as one of the communication magic tools for acquiring and retaining the talent in this fast changing technological era, it also ensure the employees commitment, loyalty, advocacy and satisfaction. This paper deals with conditions of employer brand and examine the process of employer branding, benefits of employer branding. Finally, it focuses on concepts of employer branding used for attracting and retain the talent pool.

KEYWORDS

Employer Branding, Human Resource Management, Attract and retain top talent.

INTRODUCTION

Employer branding has been a very popular concept with HR professionals, branding consultants, and market researchers in the recent past. While attracting the right talent and retaining them becomes a critical aspect for business success, research has shown that right brand for an employer can really help in this regard. A brand symbolises a few massager. Just like a popular brand of customer product expresser certain qualities and images, an employer brand represents the corporate strategy identity to its current and prospective employees, head hunters, and other stakeholders who get associated with the people side of the corporate.

MEANING:

Branding is originally used to differentiate tangible products, but over the years it has been applied to differentiating people, places and firms.

Employer branding is the process to communicate an organization's culture as an employer in the market place. An employer brand is the sum of all the characteristics and distinguishable features that prospective candidates and current employees perceive about an organization's employment experience.

The employment experience server as the foundation of the employer brand and includes tangible

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features such as salary, rewards and benefits, but also extends to intangibles such as an organization's culture, values, management style and opportunities for employee learning, development and recognition.

Brand is regarded as a critical means for differentiating between products and creating competitive advantage for organization similarly, employer branding has become a new approach for gaining an edge in the competitive world.

It refers to the process of identifying and creating a company brand message, applying traditional marketing principles to achieving the status of employer of choice.

DEFINITIONS:

1. According to Lloyd (2002) "Employer Branding as a process of placing an image of being 'a great place to work' in the minds of the target future employees".
2. Lievens. F (2007) states that "Employer branding is a specific form of managing corporate identities by creating both within and outside the firm an image of the firm as a distinct and desirable employer".

CONDITIONS FOR EMPLOYER BRANDING

To build and maintain an employer brand successfully, organisations must meet the following conditions:

1. Be aware of your differentiators as an Employer: your specific qualities as an employer – for example, potential for growth, learning opportunities, benefits – can be incorporated in your employer brand.
2. Be proud and Show it: In creating an employer brand, there is no room for false modesty. You should be open about your qualities and demonstrate them. This can help in becoming a benchmark organisation that your peers and potential employees look up to.
3. Achieve Public Recognition: To Increase awareness of your HR best practices, it is important to create visibility in order to generate discussion among your employees, potential employees and other stakeholders.
4. Use Employees as Spokespersons to convey your Message: Your employees are the best and most credible ambassadors you have. Ensure that they are to the fore of your employer brand and its delivery.
5. Finally, building your employer brand is a Continuous task: Your internal and external objectives-attracting, retaining and engaging talented people-requires constant attention, regardless of the state of the economy. Building, measuring and rebuilding your employer brand is an activity that should figure high on the HR agenda at all times.

Obliviously, it is important to build an employer brand that is consistent with the corporate brand or of the products and services that the organisation delivers.

PROCESS OF EMPLOYER BRANDING:

Now that the conditions of employer branding has been explained, the next step is for companies or organisations to start their employer branding. Employer branding model that identifies key processes that will work for any organisation or company. This model can be useful for those that are new to employer branding and are not sure where to start:

THE FIVE STEP PROCESS:

1. RESEARCH: to understand where an employer is positioned in the employment market and to determine the appropriate action plan it fundamental. The four important factors, both internally and externally, are:

1. Know how the target group perceives the employer.
2. Learn what the target group wants and needs from the employer.
3. Discover where the employer is positioned in relation to its competition.
4. Ensure that the research is updated regularly.

2. Employer Value Proposition (EVP): The company or organisation needs a unique employer offer. The EVP gives current and future employees a reason to work for an employer and reflects the company's competitive advantage. Employers that manage their EVP effectively benefit from an increase in their talent pool and employee engagement, as well as a potential decrease in salary costs. Typically, less attractive employers need to pay a wage premium to get top talent whereas attractive employers do not by

analyzing the factors Influencing the employer brand, and by defining a strong and true EVP, the employer will be able to deliver sound and consistent communications during the communication phase and develop an attractive, as well as unique, employer brand.

3. Communication Strategy: the development of a communication strategy is always based on research findings and a well – defined EVP. The EVP is a useful tool used by HR, Marketing or communications to be able to emphasis the most attractive factors and be consistent in the employer knows who they want to talk to and what to communicate, the employer then has to choose the most efficient and effective channels for reaching them. Choosing the right channels and understanding how best to target various groups is also based on research.

4. Communication Solutions: The aim at this step is to express the employer value proposition (EVP) by using the right words and images, so it becomes consistent with the corporate identity and branding efforts, the communication material should have the same look and feel irrespective of communication channel. Since organisations use many different channels, it is vital that the target groups recognize the organisation and relate to the employer offer, no matter if they are being reached via the corporate website, reading an advertisement in the newspaper or taking part in an event. Employees should strive to develop consistency through their communication material.

5. Action: Implementing all the steps and monitoring closely what works and needs to be adjusted along the way is the final stage. It is of great importance at this point that the organisation sets targets on what they want to achieve with the planned activities in a clear and measurable way.

Employer branding in a nut shell is match-making, creating the perfect relationship between the employer and the employee. Employers should research their environment to know how their target group perceives them, understand what they want and need from them and understand their market position. They will need to develop or update their EVP to be consistent in the organisation be the brand. They will need to communicate or implement tactics to build or reinforce the desired employer image. Finally, an evaluation of all activities will need to be made to ensure that they are on track. Securing a talent pipeline and ensuring that companies have the right people on board is probably the most important task of any employer.

To be able to succeed you need knowledge for example, understanding what professional, want will help you to attract them. If you do not know the answers to these questions, it is probably time to find out.

BENEFITS OF EMPLOYER BRANDING:

- 1) Create a public image of the company's culture, work practices, organization style, and the employee development prospects.
- 2) Integrating employment brand with the company brand and its diverse product brands.
- 3) Continually monitoring the firm's employment image both within and outside the firm.
- 4) Invigorating the pre-eminent prospective candidates to apply for the firm's job.

WAYS TO ATTRACT AND RETAIN TALENT:

Understand Your Current Culture

There is the culture you have and the culture you think you have. Does your current culture accept difference in others? Is there flexibility? How does current staff feel about working there? How are people promoted and/or rewarded? An important element in understanding your current culture is the idea of values versus ethics. Many organizations write wonderful mission statements that have great values in them. However, values are only words. Ethics are actions. You may say that you value innovation, yet when people are promoted for keeping their heads low and not rocking the organization there is a clear message that the organization values conformity.

Build career entrepreneurship

When you provide career entrepreneurship, you are moving from the 'loyalty' to a commitment mindset. In a 'loyalty' mindset, people are rewarded for simply being there a long time. In a commitment culture, Organizations clearly define what the individual is being offered in return for their services and

provide internal career coaching to empower people to manage their own careers. How do you build career entrepreneurship? Allow people to set their career goals, provide them with the tools to reach those goals and let them measure their accomplishments. Helping people set their own roadmap and then allowing them to succeed will ensure that people are engaged.

Create a flexible work environment

Work-life balance is consistently rated as the one of the most important aspects for attracting and retaining talent. One U.S. federal agency had a turnover rate of close to 20% a year. Many people would work for this agency and after about 3 years leave to go to the private sector where they would earn almost double their salary within the government. Unable to compete in terms of wages offered, this agency started allowing people to work at home, create flexible hours and even introduced subsidized daycare to staff. The result? Turnover fell to slightly less than 5%.

Understand and embrace Real Diversity

Real diversity means going beyond issues of gender, ethnicity, or age. It means embracing people who not only look different but THINK differently. Many organizations are looking for people with industry or corporate experience. There are a lot of very talented people who have had their own businesses, work in different industries or have experience outside our borders. The fit that an organization should be most concerned with are whether the person believes in the values of the organization.

Streamline the hiring process

The decision making process for most organizations is now taking several months. It seems that everybody has to be part of the interview and decision-making process, even the janitor! People respond positively to the organization when you streamline the process and get back to people quickly, even if they did not get the position. Also, moving quickly gives you a significant competitive advantage over your competition.

CONCLUSION:

An effective employer brand is essential for gaining competitive advantage. Increasingly, Indian corporations are becoming intentionally strategic to utilize the employer brand to attract and retain talent for the expansion and growth. The increasing focus on competitive advantage is leading many Indian firms to rethink their employer brands. A powerful employer brand has the capacity to attract and retain talent and represent quality to its customers, with the goal of gaining global recognition in a sustainable manner. The right kind of employer branding has also plenty of advantages as it provides a personality to the company and helps structure recruitment. It pulls in the right kind of candidates and spells out the company's expectations from them right at the beginning.

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