IS EMPLOYER BRANDING THE NEED OF THE HOUR? A STUDY OF ITS SIGNIFICANCE TO ATTRACT, RECRUIT AND RETAIN POTENTIAL CANDIDATES

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ABSTRACT
In the modern recruiting landscape the word ‘War for Talent’ aptly describes the shift of focus from talent being viewed as a regular resource to talent being seen as a strategic resource to gain competitive advantage. In today’s environment of cut-throat competition it is hard for organizations to attract and maintain the best candidates. The organizations use various methods to recruit and hire, but in today’s fast changing corporate world it is time to use the organization’s brand to attract talents the organization would like. This article will support concept of employer brand as the organization’s image, as an exceptional place to work in the minds of the current employees as well as potential candidates, clients, customers. This study showcases how to use the organization’s brand to attract, retain, and engage the people it needs. In today’s competitive world it has become essential to evaluate whether an organisation or for that matter any organisation is using correctly its strong powers to attract and retain the best candidates. The employer brand is the value proposition that organization conveys its employees and the external labour market. Great organizations create such a strong brand that it draws the talent to them rather than having to spend significant time and money on selling the organization to the talent market. There are many benefits of recruiting that are provided by a strong employment brand.

Keywords: Recruitment; Employer brand; Employment brand; Employer branding; Retaining

INTRODUCTION
Many studies have demonstrated that educated customers appreciate products with branded ingredients and are willing to pay a higher price (Kotler P. and Pfoertsch W., 2010). Thus, the candidates are willing to work in an organization known by its brand, which offers better conditions to work and more security, better careers and development opportunities, and better salaries. With a strong employer brand, the organization is not limited by its recruiting budget, and its workforce is becoming recruiters for the organization. This is one of the biggest side benefits to having a strong employer brand. The organization’s employees are so pleased to work for the organization they cannot resist.
telling anyone who is interested about the benefits of working for the company. Employee referral programs help encourage current employees to refer outside talent, although even without this encouragement employees will openly encourage others if their company has a great employer brand.

OBJECTIVES

The following are the objectives of this research paper:

1. To understand the importance of Employer Branding in recruiting talent.
2. To study the significance of Employer Branding in attracting, recruiting and retaining talent.
3. To develop a better understanding of the use of Employer Branding as a tool to attract potential job applicants.
4. To investigate the relationship between Employer Branding and potential candidate attraction.

Corporate Branding

Competition for talent is heating up in many industries and will probably intensify, since demographic trends make it increasingly difficult for companies to replace valued employees when they retire. In the world of marketing there is a tendency for seeing the world in terms of brands (Morley M., 2009). Popular entertainers are named brands, symbolizing their own style of music, politics, acting in the movie, sports, over time accumulating values, aspiration, and loyal following. In the public eye, the major professional service firms—lawyers, accountants, management consultants and others are brands in their own right. In our globalizing world, companies that manage their corporate brands effectively gain advantages of market entry, penetration, and differentiation over their competitors in ways that help them integrate their wide-ranging activities (Hatch M.J. and Schultz M., 2008). But no brand does this perfectly forever—the environment they face changes constantly, with ever-shifting patterns of competition and fluctuations in stakeholder support.

A corporate brand is a name, term, sign, symbol or design or a combination of these elements, intended to identify and differentiate the whole product offering in the minds of the subject concerned (Ormeno M., 2007). A corporate branding is not just a logo, a name, and a house style, it involves the scope and scale of the brand effort, where the brand identity originates, the audience targeted, the placement of responsibility for the brand’s performance, and the extent of the planning horizon (Hatch M.J. and Schultz M., 2008). In short, branding the organization means involving everyone who is important for organization.

Corporate brands express enduring ambitious and the values and beliefs of all connected with the organization. A corporate brand cannot focus only on the future, it must focus on its history, too. A product brand, which lives and dies with its product, a corporate brand accompanies the organization for life. That is why the corporate brand influences organizational activities from top to bottom, and it infuses everything the company is, says, and does, now and forever. A successful brand is an identified product, service, person or place, augmented in such a way that the buyer or user perceives relevant unique, sustained added value that matches their needs most closely (Kotler P. et al., 2009).

A corporate brand is one of the most important strategic assets a business can have (Hatch M.J. and Schultz M., 2008). Many organizations gained experience with corporate branding during the last decade (Schultz M. et al, 2005). In marketing management discourse, the function of brands have been described as one of identifying and differentiating products, and brand management has been restricted to product and product line decisions. In brand management, brand identity is the unit of analysis, and brand is defined in an expanded way as product, person, organization or symbol (Schroeder J.E. et al, 2006).

What Brands Do

The following is the role of a Corporate Brand:
(i) They signal a certain level of quality
(ii) Facilitate purchase
(iii) Reduce risks
(iv) Offer legal protection
(v) Are hard to copy
(vi) Are a powerful means to secure a competitive advantage
(vii) Attract higher-quality employees

Most organizations rely on their corporate brands to perform the strategic function of positioning, that is, discovering or creating points of differentiation vis-à-vis competitors (Hatch M.J. and Schultz M., 2008). But corporate brands are also designed to attract customers and appeal to other stakeholders, reminding people why they belong to or should join the community of interests that swirls around the brand. The brand attracts some people who feel that what they share is distinctive, and this gives a sense of belonging to a like-minded community. A marketing researcher, Douglas Atkin, shows that people seek similar others and avoid those who do not share their interests. Thus, brand symbolism helps people to identify others with similar values or interests. This differentiation and belonging represent two sides of the same coin when it comes to branding (Hatch M.J. and Schultz M., 2008). The brand attracts some people who feel that what they share is distinctive, and this gives a sense of belonging to a like-minded community. The candidates are attracted by the organization brand, image, advertising, and work conditions. That is why the organization must have an honest relationship with the candidate, in order to convince them to join the organization.

In response, many organizations are trying to sharpen the way they market themselves to recruits, by applying branding techniques to recruitment (Hieronimus F. et al., 2005). Experience suggests that an organization to exploit its brand effectively when it fishes for talent, it must think of recruits as customers, use sophisticated marketing analysis to identify its key rivals, determine which corporate attributes matter most to specific types of recruits, and understand how best to reach them. The employer-branding effort will be counterproductive if the messages aimed at recruits undermine the company’s broader marketing strategy. To be effective, employer branding can’t just apply conventional brand-building techniques; the initiatives must fit in closely with the organization’s overall brand strategy (Hieronimus F. et al., 2005).

Attracting Candidate Using Corporate Branding

An organization needs three brands: its customer brand, its employer brand, and its talent brand, which provide a direction to market the organization to attract, retain and engage people. In a changing marketplace, in a fluctuating economy, brand loyalty becomes a valuable currency for any organization to build. Business must earn worker loyalty to its brand that reaches beyond traditional definitions of employment. Organizations must attract employees the same way it attracts customers. To be a magnet is to draw, to attract, and, once a connection is made, to engage, to maintain a hold (Schumann M. and Sartain L., 2009). Personal recruitment is an essential and difficult activity, which has an important influence over the whole activity (Florea N.V., 2010). Every company, no matter its business, its marketplace, and the economic conditions, needs the right people to be engaged in making the right contributions. To make this happen, a business must first attract the right people to do the right jobs at the right time. Having an employer brand that attracts and retains the best employees puts an organization ahead of the competition (Holbeche L., 2005). When organizations win the reputation of being a good employer, they have their pick of available talent. Another study conducted by McKinsey in 2004 found that employees rated factors such as: fun place to work, for people like me, training opportunities and innovative company to be more important than high salary when it comes to winning over a potential recruit (de St Aubin D. and Carlsen B.J., 2008). In a recent survey of 703 people, 61% said they had found their most recent job via word-of-mouth (Cassidy C. and
Kreitner R., 2010). The message to managers is clear. Organization’s employees will talk to their friends and family about their job. They are quite likely to encourage them to apply for an opening if they feel good about the organization, their supervisors, and the nature of their job.

A good example of employees selling their own company is the sale in a blog from yahoo. Jobs blogs are becoming commonplace among those branded best for employees. When employees themselves send the good news, it has far more impact than a recruiting brochure or even a good website (de St Aubin D. and Carlsen B.J., 2008). Employees who like their own experiences will spread the word far more quickly and loudly than those whose experience is just viewed as satisfactory. If their employees are not telling really good stories, the organization is not in position of strength in the talent market and its brand may not hold up. If its employees are telling positive stories the benefit will be seen in a steady flow of interested candidates.

Corporations have learned how important it is to be understood and appreciated, not just by investors, customers, suppliers and employees but also by opinion formers, activist groups and the general public. Employees can make a difference or a long-standing relationship throughout staff training is clearly one of the most important commitments to brand management (Clifton R. et al., 2009). The significance of the role of employers in relation to corporate branding was recognized as been very important. Employees are the most important asset, and employees are central to organization’s competitiveness. Organizations must involve employees in developing and strengthening the corporate brand (Schultz M. et al, 2005). Especially in service companies, the employees are the face of the brand to the customers (Sexton D. and Trump D., 2008). Bringing the right people on board and organizing them to live the brand is the next mile marker for every leader. When an organization is a leader, it has some influence over who gets hired, for what jobs, and how they are organized to do the work (LePla F.J. et al, 2003). When an organization is able to attract a higher quality talent pool, it is able to be even more selective than those organizations having difficulty finding the numbers or quality level desired (de St Aubin D. and Carlsen B.J., 2008). This is possible when the organization has a strong employer brand. A research study of 137 leading US organizations by the Conference Board, entitled “Engaging employees through your brand”, found that HR executives felt that their corporate brand was a highly important tool in recruiting, retaining and organizing employees: 61% helping employees internalize the organization’s values; 45% achieving reputation as an employer of choice; 38% recruiting employees; 38% retaining employees; 29% achieving organizational integration; 27% sustaining organizational integration; 24% facilitating integration following merger or acquisition.

Candidates are drawn to organizations that have strong brands for the same reasons as customers: something about your brand promise intrigues them. An organization includes requirements for living the brand within a specific job function, such as: what skills, experience and demeanour must the candidate have to be a good fit for the job. For example Audi is not looking for good technicians or good sales people, it is looking for Audi good technicians and Audi good salespeople. Companies that want to hire people who have the potential to live the brand must also look for a willingness to learn, openness to feedback and the ability to balance job flexibility with clarity no matter what their job function (Le Pla F.J. et al, 2003).

Advantages and disadvantages of using Brand to Attract Best Candidates

The employer brand has some advantages and disadvantages, such as:

**Advantages:** It has not been usual for most corporations to apply brand management techniques to the overall corporate identity and the brand image or equity it has is often the halo effect of its product or service advertising, PR, and sales activities, a strong corporate brand acts as a “crisis shield” when problems occur as they inevitably will. A brand with a good reputation will be given the benefit of the doubt and time to put things right, a privilege not usually granted to anonymous or poorly regarded brands. The benefits of employer brand management (Davenport J., 2009) It is easier to recruit the talent organization needs. People want to work for a company with a good reputation as an employer.
It is easier to keep the talent company needs if it matches people’s own preferences and aspirations with the employment offer and experience. It is easier to elicit high performance from people who are engaged in an organization which meets their needs. It is easier to be confident that employees are delivering to customers the brand experience that the business success requires.

**Disadvantages:** For defensive – minded corporations it is dangerous when something goes wrong with one product that is directly linked to the corporate name or in one department, the corporate entity is tarnished and other product become damaged by association. It can be hard for a corporation to expand its portfolio of offerings when it seems chained forever to its original flagships product. The tradition and culture of a “brand house” company can work against the creation of completely new power brands by denying the brand team the independence it needs to succeed. There is often less understanding of the importance and science of branding in some brand house organizations than in house of brands corporations.

**What Should Organisations Do To Attract, Recruit And Retain Talent**

From the extensive literature referred to make this article it can be suggested that Organizations must pay attention to talent recruitment not only when they have vacancies but also to attract, recruit and retain the best talent, the organizations must focus on the organization’s publicity improve employer advertising through excellent team recruitment, an excellent message, improving employer brand.

Consider recruitment as a marketing function and the candidate as a customer, because integrating HR and marketing allows the organization to excel at attracting talent and customers. Candidates should be attracted through good communication and a good sponsorship activity keeping the promises made during the recruitment process.

There should be a focus on advertising by using brochures, official sites, presenting in it the development programs, the career evolution, training, evaluation based on sustainable development, ethics, not discrimination, equal opportunities, mentoring and coaching programs, so that to attract the best candidates and retain the best employees. There should be partnerships in order to attract the best candidates: with universities and former trainees, with government agencies, with media, RTV, with recruitment agencies, co-optation systems, pedagogical partnerships, with professional trade unions.

There should be activities to know and understand the organization better: every time a candidate and an employer have “touchpoints”, each “touchpoint” leaves an impression and it should be considered as an opportunity to have a positive impact and a good perception.

During integration and induction processes, new employees hear about the company history, meet with numerous senior leaders, meet with other employees, and are set up with a mentor. Employees that make the tour of the organization, during the integration period are clearly aware that organization culture is one that values people. During this time more executives from different departments explain and clarify the organization’s vision, mission and uniqueness. Strong employer brands manage the whole employment lifecycle consistently and in a structured way, leaving a compelling image. Finally the organization must find out why people leave the organization and what the causes are so that it can improve communication program, advertising, development program and induction program.

**CONCLUSION**

Every organization fights for talent and people skills and knowledge. That is why the organizations must create an employer brand program, but it is not enough; what is important is the organizational performance improvement delivered by being “core talent centred”. It seems to be a war for talent, because the talented staff is rare and imperfectly imitable. When organization has a good employer brand, the organization will increase its ability to attract, recruit, hire, and retain talents it needs. Having a strong employer brand will ultimately reduce the cost of hiring, lower turnover, and increase employee productivity. This has a direct benefit on reducing operational expense and increasing profitability. That is why organizations must make sure of picking those employees as brand ambassadors who naturally demonstrate it brand, and create an ongoing program of communication,
coaching and development to support the brand attributes. When the organization has top talent and a top employer brand, the organization tends to attract top talent.

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