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CHALLENGES IN EMPLOYER BRANDING**Nishi Sangwan**Assistant Professor SET, Ganga Technical Campus

ABSTRACT

Employer branding can be defined a long term targeted strategy to manage perceptions of employees & awareness, potential employees and related stakeholders of a particular firm. This includes both indirect and direct experiences in dealing with the firm. Just like an actual product brandings, organizations now days have started to invest employer branding as employees are also a sort of internal customers of the firm. Employer brand builds a proper image confirming that the organization is a good place to work. Present day, an effective employer brand is essential for competitive advantage. Liberalization of India's economy in 1991 and subsequent 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. In this paper some concept on employer branding & challenges faced by employer brandings along with the possible overcomes.

Keywords: *Employer Branding, Challenges in Employer Branding.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Brett Minchington defines employer branding as “the image of the organization as a great place to work in the mind of current employees and key stakeholder in the external market”.

Employer branding is all about capturing the essence of a company in a way that engages employee and stakeholder. It expresses an organization's value proposition the entirety of the organization culture system, attitude and employee relationship.

Employer branding has become a new approach for gaining an edge in the competitive world. employer branding is used not only to transfer the message of the personality of a company as an employer of choice, but it also has been used to adapt the tools and techniques usually used to motivate and engage employees. Like a consumer brand, it is an emotional relationship between an employer and employee. employer branding as the development and communication of an organization's culture as an employer in the marketplace. It is the package of functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by employment, and identified with the employing company. It conveys the "value proposition" the totality of the organization's culture, systems, attitudes, and employee relationship along with encouraging your people to embrace and share goals for success, productivity, and satisfaction both on personal and professional levels. Employer branding is a distinguishing and relevant opportunity for a company to differentiate itself from the competition creating its branded factors as its USP for employee satisfaction and happiness resulting in retention, productivity and efficiency. employer branding is a long term strategy to manage the awareness and perceptions of employees, potential employees, and related stakeholders with regards to a particular firm. The employer brand puts forth an image showing the organization as a good place to work. This means involving employees at all levels in the development of the brand so that it accurately reflects both the realities and aspirations of the business and its workforce In recent years and also in the globalised economies, the world has witnessed the dramatic entrance and success of Indian corporations in the global marketplace.

II. Literature Review

A brand was defined as a name, term, sign, symbol or design, or combination of them which is intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors -(Gardner & Levy, 1995).

“Brand is values that provide the important link between consumers and marketers”. -Clark (1987) offered this definition relating brands with values.

Kapferer (1992) approaches brands under a holistic view. He claimed that a brand is not a mere product. It is a product's essence and often brands are examined through their component parts like brand name, logo, design or packaging etc.

According to Keller brand equity elevated the importance of brand in marketing communication strategy and is often used to persuade customers to buy a product or service. However, in recent years, especially in today's competitive market, employer branding is used to recruit and retain good employees from a diverse work force. Most companies tend to promote factors that make their firm a good place to work and also offering a bright and cheerful office space, an ethos of collaboration and teamwork, flexible working hours, crèche facilities, or even an excellent canteen. Levering has opined that a good workplace is believed to produce higher quality products, support more innovation, have the ability to attract more talented people, and experience less resistance to change and lower turnover costs, all of which translate directly into a better bottom line. According to Sutherland, Torricelli, & Karg, in organization's skilled employees are hard to attract and difficult to retain and it has become critical to business success. The employer branding is used for corporate identity and reputation which communicates its image to current and potential employees. Luthans and Peterson have found employees who are engaged in their organization with satisfaction demonstrate good performance and achieve success. This helps the corporate managers to be more effective and successful, which in turn increases the manager's self efficacy. Research has shown that self efficacy is positively linked to work performance, in that individuals with higher self efficacy are more likely to be proactive in initiating work, and show sustained effort and determination in their pursuit to achieve the task, even when problems occur.

III. CHALLENGES IN EMPLOYER BRANDING

With an ageing population, skills shortages and changing generational preferences, employer branding is playing an increasingly important role in attracting and retaining star performers. More organizations are starting to make inroads into building and creating a good employer brand, however, living up to the brand is often easier said than done.

The global thirst for knowledge has seen an increased demand on companies to source quality talent, “Now, and even more in the future, employers will have to compete for candidates in a much more visible and engaging way via an employer brand. The key to a successful employer brand is one that aligns with the company's corporate values and most importantly, delivers on its promise,”

A recent survey found that employer branding plays an important role in attracting and retaining talent in the face of a shrinking talent pool. HR professionals are considered primarily responsible for employer branding initiatives, with 79 per cent of companies reporting HR as one of the key stakeholders in employer brand management.

➤ Working with marketing

While employer branding is predominantly seen as the domain of HR, marketing also plays an important role. In a 2003 Economist survey into employer branding, respondents who had HR as the major part of their job function (59 per cent) said that employer branding is too important to be left solely to a HR department. In fact, 15 per cent of respondents felt that responsibility for the day-to-day management of the employer brand lay with the CEO or MD.

If HR needs to convince marketing, which often has the discretionary budget, “The best form of marketing is from their own people – get everyone singing from the same hymn sheet and a significant part of the marketing battle is won. Stronger employee engagement leads to higher revenue, profit margins and overall ROI.”

➤ **Employer brands is getting CEOs to drive a culture that reflects the brand internally**

One of the main challenges HR professionals have in delivering on employer brands is getting CEOs to drive a culture that reflects the brand internally. The culture comes first and the employer brand is not only supported and fostered by management but is allowed to champion the positive cultural values internally. “It’s a closed loop process that should constantly improve its communication with all employees. The culture and its visible employer brand should inspire each other as they grow and mature”

A co-ordinated approach to developing and managing an employer brand can make external and internal communication consistent and can help the HR, marketing and communications divisions function more efficiently together. When the CEO is not on board, an employer branding exercise will not be anywhere near as effective.

- “Our biggest challenge is that our company promotes our product brands rather than the corporate brand. There are limited dollars put behind the corporate brand, so this makes recruitment more of a challenge.” (United States)
- “Getting senior leadership to see the importance of employment brand and the flow-on effect it will have to the performance of the business.” (Australia)
- “Need to establish clear culture. Now beginning to leverage marketing, PR, corporate branding and culture transformation efforts in establishing clear employer branding strategy moving forward.” (Canada)

IV. Challenges & critical areas to manage in the employer branding process

The critical areas to manage in the employer branding process are diverse and depend on the climate at each organization. However, several common issues faced by these global organizations included: maintaining consistency in terms of messages, establishing an identity, managing the corporate culture, the budget, and making the work appealing to both employees and prospects.

- The pressure of salary increases as a challenge to their company’s current non-compensatory benefits.
- Desire to move employer branding to higher ground in the company, away from a recruitment focus alone.
- Consistency in messaging among departments
- Keeping the brand fresh for younger recruits
- The need for the employer brand to “coexist” with the consumer brand

V. OVERCOMING AND DEALING WITH CHALLENGES

A common challenge for HR professionals is championing the employer brand separately from the corporate brand, “It’s voice, messages and mediums need their own space and budgets to work well. Convincing the powers that be of this can often be difficult, but when a competitor starts luring away your best talent with compelling employer brands, the value becomes more evident.”

Another challenge is justifying the return on the investment, as HR departments are traditionally viewed as cost centres rather than a profit-generating function.

There are a number of steps HR can take to overcome such challenges. With support from marketing, HR can drive home the long-term benefits of the employer brand. There are many studies and statistics that quantify the value of employer branding and the significant impact it can have, including improved staff retention, reduced recruitment costs, improved morale and increases in productivity.

“Always give CEOs/executives a sense of ownership over the process – keep them involved at all stages. Also, do your research. Check out competitor websites and recruitment media. Does your employer brand stand up in this competitive environment? These questions should be asked at the highest level of an organisation.”

VI. MEASURING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF EMPLOYER BRANDING

Measuring hard returns on investments in employer branding has traditionally been hard for organisations. However, as employer branding initiatives mature and become more refined within companies, improved results can be measured in a number of areas, including traffic to career sites, size and quality of response to role advertising, staff retention rates, recruitment costs and staff morale levels.

“Just measuring employee turnover and costs against revenue will not cut it anymore. A more sophisticated way of measuring an employee’s ROI will be required that measures effectiveness and performance against the investment of the employer brand – a new challenge for HR professionals,”

Companies may also notice improvements in perceptions as an employer (via internal and external surveys) and improvements in employer of choice rankings.

VII. EMPLOYER BRANDING SUCCESS STORIES

Success stories cited by various respondents included:

- Selection of current employees in communications programs to “exemplify the brand”
- Consistency in recruitment advertising and end-to-end on-boarding programs
- Moving toward a “global” branding campaign
- Linking/growing the reputation for quality and opportunity
- Executive buy-in and a “high-touch internal communications strategy”
- College trainee, co-op and trainee program
- Improved performance management leading to better brand management (intrinsically integrated)
- Moving toward a service model—more coaching and education—and away from being a financially-driven organization

VIII. Conclusion

Today, an effective employer brand is essential for gaining competitive advantage. Increasingly, Indian corporations are becoming intentionally strategic to utilise 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. Most importantly, it ensures that the best employees stay on longer, thus allowing the company to carry on its operations smoothly. Ultimately, the key to a successful employer brand is to ensure that expectations are fully aligned with the realities of working for the organization.