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Employer Branding : A Descriptive Study

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Abstract: Employer Branding has become as important as the goods or services in the market place. The purpose of this paper is to make a conceptual review, benefits, limitations, the process and the impact of employer brand and the response of would-be employees. Respondents prefer one sector over others, one company over others and also the factors determining the choice are also different, but independence in work is what people value the most.
Keywords: Branding, Employment, Recruitment

Introduction

Employer brand denotes an organization's reputation as an employer. The term was first used in the early 1990s, and has since become widely adopted by the global management community. To attract talent, especially in the 21st century, the image of the company must be good as talented employees are not selected by the company rather they select the organization as their employer. The success of every company largely depends upon the efficiency and talent of its employees. Attracting and retaining talented employees has become for companies a big challenge these days. Employer branding can be one of the best way for attracting and retaining talented 2 Mr. Pankaj Gupta et al employees and solution to offset the shortage of talent. It has been adopted by several companies whether it is of small or large sized. It has become imperative for attracting and retaining right men for right job. By 2001, 138 leading companies surveyed by the Conference Board in North America, 40% claimed to be actively engaged in some form of employer branding activity. In 2003, an employer brand survey conducted by the Economist among a global panel of readers revealed a 61% level of awareness of the term "employer brand" among HR professionals and 41% among non-HR professionals. Employer branding helps companies attract and retain high performing employees. In today's competitive economic environment, the promotion of a compelling employer brand has become vital to profitability. Product/service branding influences a consumer's decision to make purchases; the employer brand is the composite of various economic and functional aspects that impact a professional's desire to work for a particular organization. This is through the culture, personality, and image. Culture broadly represents how it is to work in a company. Personality and image represent the mental image that people have about any organisation. "Our status as the preferred employer recognizes the way we recruit, groom and develop our talent and the kind of challenges and responsibilities we give to our people from early on in their career," said Sanjiv Mehta, CEO & MD, Hindustan Unilever". "The experience of leading large teams, taking independent decisions early in their career, job rotations and diversity of experiences, including international assignments, provides the best foundation for the brightest minds to be groomed for leadership" Sanjiv Mehta, CEO & MD, Hindustan Unilever" 1

EMPLOYER BRANDING - CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

The term "employer brand" was first publicly introduced to a management audience in 1990, and defined by Simon Barrow, chairman of People in Business, and Tim Ambler, Senior Fellow of London Business School, in the Journal of Brand Management in December 1996. This academic paper was the first published attempt to "test the application of brand management techniques tomanagement". Within this paper, Simon Barrow and Tim Ambler defined the employer brand as "the package of functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by employment, and identified with the employing company". Minchington (2005) defines employer brand as "the image of your organization as a 'great place to work". Employer branding is concerned with enhancing your company's employer brand.

Ambler and Barrow (1996) have defined 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.

According to Sullivan (2004), Employment branding is a targeted, long-term strategy to manage the awareness and perceptions of employees, potential employees, and related stakeholders with regards to a particular firm. The strategy can be tuned to drive recruitment, retention, and productivity management efforts. It works by consistently putting forth an image surrounding management and business practices that make your organization an attractive, "good place to work."

According to Barrow and Mosley (2005), 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 human resource.

Process of Employer Branding

Universum has created an employer branding model that identifies key processes that will work for any organisation or company which is as follows: 1. Research: Research is the first step in employer branding as it helps the organization to find the

deviation between where an employer is positioned & where it wants to be placed in the appropriate sector. It also helps in analyzing & preparing the appropriate action plan for the implementation of the same. But for this one needs to be clear with the stages of research: Clearly define your target group/audience.• Identify what the target group/audience wants and needs from the• employer Measure / Rate the present employer positioned in appropriate sector as• compared to its competition Last but not the least updates the research data regularly.• 2. Employer Value Proposition (EVP): The EVP helps the organization to give motivation to the employer & also reflects the company brand image. An organization can manage its EVP effectively by increasing the employee's participation & decreasing the cost of employees (salary). Another reason to built employer brand is by different factors discussed above that helps in building the EVP accompanied by sound communication policy. 3. Communication strategy: A sound communication strategy is always serving as a base to define the EVP of the organization, which is a very important tool for managers at all level. A good communication policy makes the policy maker clear about what they have to communicate & how to get work done & also in defining the role & responsibility of the employees. Selecting the right way to communicate is what makes the adding point to employer branding. 4. Communication Solutions: The employer value proposition (EVP) helps to define the right corporate image & employer branding efforts. It is very important that the medium of communication that has been chosen for Employer Branding: A Descriptive Study 7 communication should be recognized by the target audience/ group. Another important factor that the organization should maintain consistency in the entire communication material. 5. Action: Last step is action which is similar to controlling which helps in measuring deviations from what is planned & what is done or achieved & further taking corrective measures or preparing & implementing plans to reduce deviations.

FINDINGS

According to the Campus Track Business School survey 2013, conducted by Nielsen. The FMCG major also retained the 'Dream Employer' status for the fifth consecutive year. According to the survey in 35 top MBA colleges in India, in October-November 2013, with over 1600 respondents, the following results were arrived at:

1. Most of the respondents opt for FMCG sector and the least opt for retail industry
2. According to the survey among the 10 companies the best employer happened to be HUL, an FMCG company and least preference is given it face book
3. According to survey, the most important factors considered by the respondent were higher degree of independence at work, opportunities to work with and learn from top talent, the company's reputation, working environment, the offer of a good starting position & growth prospects within the company and total salary package offered.

Conclusion

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. Employer Brand is a fruitful exercise if done with passion, proper understanding, trust, belief and leadership support.

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