



Employee Branding- A New Mantra of Employee Retention In The Indian Corporate

KEYWORDS

Employee branding, Talent management, Customer satisfaction, Employee Turnover

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ABSTRACT *In the current globalized competitive world, each company looks for the best talent around. Henceforth, there prevails a situation where, only talented employees can alone be ensured with admirable career opportunities in the world class organizations. Therefore the Indian corporate have to come up with exciting packages so as to ensure that the highly-talented pool can become a part of their excellent functioning. At the same time they expect their talented employees to be loyal and committed to them in order to be competent in the current global business environment. Consequently they have started ensuring the commitment and loyalty through a variety of retention tactics. So that 'Employee Branding', is used to internalize the desired brand image and are motivated to project the image to customers and other organizational constituents. It ensures a sense of belongingness in the people and this makes them to play an integral role in the achievement of success. Since employee brand is the value of a company that exists in the corporate, one can say that in the present scenario, one of the goals of a company is certainly related to employee branding which is to achieve customer satisfaction. In this paper the authors spotlight the significance, modes and various strategies followed by the Indian corporate in employee branding.*

INTRODUCTION

Employee branding means what an employee projects about himself and the organization culture. A strong sense of affiliation is seen of the employee towards his/her organization. He/She should be able to serve as a brand ambassador for his/her organization. In simple terms, employees attitude and engagement towards the employer brand image promoted through the culture of the organization.

The Employee branding consists of the four important things i.e. by selective hiring /selective recruitment, providing targeted training /certifications for employees, effectively communicating the Organization goals & what is expected, role clarity and the compensation system should incorporate messages that consistently and frequently reflect the brand and organizational image.Management is basically constituent of five elements such as attracting, selecting, engaging, developing and retaining employees and it is generally concerned with identifying the talent gaps, succession planning, retaining talented employees by variety of initiatives as well as implementing different strategies. Employee's knowledge and skill are very important weapons which gives competitive advantage to the company in cut throat competition.

CONCEPT OF EMPLOYEE BRANDING

A brand is more than the name given to a product, service, or organization; it embodies a wholes set of physical and socio-psychological attributes and beliefs (Simoes and Dibb, 2001). Employee branding is a specific kind of identity regulation by an organization, through which employees are directed to develop self-images and work orientations that are deemed congruent with managerially defined objectives (Willmott, 1993; Alvesson and Willmott, 2002; Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003). It is the process by which employees internalize the desired brand image and are motivated to project that image to the guests. It takes the organizational brand – the characteristics and attributes that the organization wants to project about itself—and impresses it upon the employees.

EMPLOYER BRANDING VS EMPLOYEE BRANDING

Employer branding is all about creating a sense of place. It is the practice of establishing the character or reputation of an organization as a place to work, primarily by aligning recruiting and external HR practices with the 'brand', reputation of identity that the organization wants to have. The managers try to create a sense of best working environment to attract not only potential employees, but more specifically the kind of employees who will fit well within the organization. But employee branding is a different practice altogether. It is all about influencing the behavior of organization members. It is the practice of 'aligning' an employee's behavior and often the employee's point of view with the image that the organization wants to project to its customers and external stakeholders. It can be considered as a tactic for generating 'on brand' behavior that the organization wants as part of its reputation or brand. It attempts to influence the interactions between employees within the organization as well as between employees and external stakeholders. The idea is that an organization can strengthen its claim to the attributes it desires when employees demonstrate these attributes. Employee branding projects are becoming increasingly important business tool to help companies stay ahead of other competitors. For this reason HR heads are increasing the number of specialist support managers leading employer brand projects within their departments. It must be remembered that employee branding is actually the image of an organization for the people working in the organization. It is this reputation that the companies make of themselves inside their premises that are also carried outside to the passive candidates, the customers, the clients and also the others who are affected by the proceedings of the company. Hence, it is very clear that within the company, employee branding is done to attract the employees, and also for their subsequent retention in times to come so as to improve the company's image of employee branding. The management of every country has to understand a very simple fact that it can't lay a narrow focus on the employee branding. If this is done, it would only be a departmental project and would not have been entitled to be a

part of the overall business strategy of the company. One must keep another fact clear that if employee branding is only considered to be a part of the recruitment process and then given the back seat, there will be too many cases of absenteeism resulting in subsequent resignations at frequent intervals.

EMPLOYEE BRANDING PROGRAMME

Employee branding programs are intended to impress brand attributes into the work behavior of employees, who are then expected to infuse brand attributes throughout their work (Ind, 2001; Mitchell, 2002; Miles and Mangold, 2004). Branded employees are expected to project the brand's identity through all of their behavior, including their demeanor, appearance, and manner of interacting with customers. Indian companies follow many tools and strategies to brand themselves and their employees. Employee branding programs include

- Regular job training
- Training in customer service or customer interaction,
- Corporate orientation
- Education in the corporate brand
- Ongoing training
- Performance evaluation
- Rewards systems that support the employees' display of on brand behaviors

SIGNIFICANCE AND BENEFITS OF BRANDING THE EMPLOYEES

In spite of pursuing all the characteristics of employee branding, many companies have generally considered it as a shortcut for getting the best talent available in the environment. But it is fact that if one takes good care of her/his guests, definitely the guest will become her/his and will continue to be loyal with her/him. Every organization must understand this fact very clearly that the organization's core values are defined by the extent of being productive and responsive towards the customers. In other words it is a common belief that if a company takes care of the people it affects; these people would certainly take care of the company. The benefits of branding are: improved recruiting, retention, employee satisfaction and pride, management practices, increased media exposure due to being on "best-place-to-work lists", and increased word of mouth exposure. In addition to the above, branding:

- Showcases ones organization and highlights organization as a great place to work.
- Gives the organization a distinctive competitive edge in the labor market.
- Improves recruitment and retention.
- Builds a positive image of your organization and motivates potential "best" applicants to apply for jobs there.
- Increases employee satisfaction and pride in being an employee of your organization.
- Develops a deeper understanding of the leadership perception of the current and desired employment experience.
- Creates improved/increased/effective relationships between managers and employees.
- Promotes management practices that are respected by employees (values/goals of organization are promoted, modeled and reinforced).
- Helps to sustain growth, accommodates attrition and adds new skills and talents to your organization.
- Helps to maintain and/or improve diversity in the workforce.

ROLE OF THE TOP MANAGEMENT IN EMPLOYEE BRANDING

It is extremely important for a company to have its top management converse about the employee brands in the earlier stages of the development of the same. The Employee brand Institute which suggests that it is highly positive for a company's future prospects to get involved with the key stakeholders on this issue. These issues can include the following:

- The support of employee branding in development of the business strategy
- The culture of the organization and its consistency across the globe
- The perception of the organization both internally and externally
- The channels of communication for bottom-up and vice versa
- The most critical positions of success and the extent to which the company has gone in achieving the same

All the above stated can be with respect to the attraction of the employees towards the organization in achieving the organization's goals and finally the removal of policies of absenteeism and turnover from the organization to achieve maximum retention of employees. The management has to consider stages in the employee life cycle such as Recruiting, Interviewing, Selecting, Training, Developing, Incenting, Retaining and Separating when building the brand for themselves and their employees. Things have changed over the last two decades. Few decades before employees showed up, performed the job, went home and were happy to have a job. They tolerated old school attitudes. Ten years ago they started keeping an eye open for better job openings, started standing up for their rights and responded well to those employers who just said, 'thank you'. But today's employees are loyal only to those who inspire and develop with compassion. New generation of employees possess the following attributes:

- Individuality is a priority
- They are visual learners (75% of everything we learn is visual)
- They have short attention spans
- They are technologically savvy
- They are socially conscious

MODES OF DISCOVERING EMPLOYEE BRAND

Employee branding strategy can be developed by making a grasp of the culture followed in the organization, the work experiences of candidates, the drivers of talent, external perspectives of the organization, vision of the organization, the leadership issues and the management practices. If a company focuses on these areas for discovering its employee branding, it would be able to construct a message platform which would have the characteristics of being the most authenticated, of a compelling nature and also distinguished. This systematic procedure would also be held perfectly in the internal organization. There are also various ways of carrying the development program of employee branding. These are both quantitative and qualitative research. This can be in the form of focusing on groups, conducting interviews of leaders and also meetings and seminars. One can also gather competitive intelligence in the process.

COMPLIANCE TO INTERNALIZATION

The intent of employee branding programs is to get employees facing inwards and facing outward to display, perform, and enact 'on brand' behaviors. There are different ways to achieve this goal. Organizations can ask employees to comply with certain expectations about their behavior, and they can train their employees to internalize the desired attributes so that these attributes are expressed in the employees' behaviors as though the attributes belong to the employees' themselves. Further the transition from physical labor into intellectual and emotional labor make the organizational systems move from a compliance orientation to an internalization orientation. Compliance is generally thought to be more desirable (from the organization's point of view) because the organization can worry less about supervision. And, when attributes are internalized, they are expressed through employee behavior with less conscious effort and less 'work' on both the employee's and the organizations part. Sometimes, influencing behavior is not enough and organizations want employees to think from the organization's point of view. They not only want 'on brand' behavior, but also 'on brand' thinking. Organizations get 'on brand' thinking by teaching employees to internalize the organization's priorities and values as their own. Some organizations ask employees to develop a sense of them as being like the organization. This identification with the organization dissolves the boundary between 'who the organization is' and 'who I am'. Thus, it becomes habitual for the branded employee to put the organization's interests first. This identification of the self with the organization, or the imprinting of the organization's values on top of the individual, can be fine when the interests of the organization and the employee are aligned and complementary.

EMPLOYEE BRANDING STRATEGIES

Employee Branding means in simpler terms what an employee projects about himself and the organization culture. She/he should be able to serve as a brand ambassador for her/his Organization. A strong sense of affiliation is seen of the employee towards her/his organization. In many ways, employee branding is just like any other strategy through which organizations attempt to increase control by shaping employee identities (e.g., Clegg, 1994; McDonald, 2006). Some of the strategies which are followed by Indian corporate in branding their employees and themselves are discussed as below:

- o Develop a formal branding plan to build brand awareness, using a distinct logo and tag line.
- o Promote workforce diversity.
- o Market the wide range of jobs available and dispel stereotypes that public sector work is limited to certain types of positions.
- o Emphasize the value and impact of working for your organization, and, perhaps, for state government in general.
- o Portray a progressive work environment.
- o Develop a list of the top five to ten messages candidates must know including any special advantages employees might gain by working for the organization

By selective hiring/recruitment: Recruitment drives Retention

Recruit those candidates who have the skills i.e. technical / function which closely align with the Job Description and make sure that these candidates have good soft skills as well.

- Extract – Understand what is unique about ones organ-

ization and relevant and compelling to the target audience.

- Express – Develop a plan to make ones organization's brand visible to the target audience.
- Exude – Manage the environment so that every aspect of business operations sends the same brand message.

Recruitment and Retention Strategies

- Compensation and benefit systems – effective programs tied to the market
- Work schedules – programs designed around the work and the needs of the workers
- Training and development – the opportunity to enhance current skills
- Longer-term career development – the opportunity to develop business and leadership skills
- Opportunities for advancement – both technical and management career paths offered
- Opportunities for recognition – variety of incentives plans for both teams and individuals
- Quality of leadership – training for managers and empowerment of employees
- Sense of community – sense of belonging and being connected
- Lifestyle accommodation – flextime, telecommuting, child care
- Organizational stability and employment security

Effective Communication:

Effectively communicating the goals and expectations of the organization, their roles, etc to their employees in order to make them understand the organization goals and is clear of what is expected out of him, they will be in a better position to be good brand ambassadors for your company/organization.

CONCLUSION

Today the organizations have realized that both company and employee branding are essential to keep a competitive work force and to reduce turnover. The range in which a company promotes its brand image through different cycles of Recruitment, Induction, Training, Performance management till the Exit process determines the projection of an Employee aiding in branding. An organization that wishes branding itself and its people needs to align reward systems, processes and structures. When an organization creates a strong brand culture, employees will want to bring it to life. When people inside an organization start act as brand ambassadors, then it is very easier to attract and retain others.

Due to cut throat competition in the era of Globalization wherein there is emphasis on customer care and paradigm shifts in information technology as well as information. The top management has a very important role in the Employee branding for the organization. Their communication is essential and their trust to the talents is also very important. The organizations do not hire new employees, but the recognized talents are always welcome. The organizations, which empower their talents, have a better chance to have satisfied customers. The talents know about their qualities and when they feel a possibility to develop their skills and competencies, they will look for the opportunity to show their potential in other organization.

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