

The Perception of Employer Brand to Enhance Recruitment and Selection Processes

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Abstract: Holbeche (2005) mentioned, Employer brand that allures and preserves the best employees puts an organization in the front of the competition. Every organizations taking huge amount of process to achieve their goals, but a well establish employer brand designed their recruitment process to select talent employees as a result highly performance employees could best serving customer the brand which is very key point for success for the organizations. The article addresses the importance of employer brand is crucial for organizations to have talented and potential employees to serve them with the best they have.

Keywords: Employer Brand, Perception, Recruitment, Selection

Introduction

Employer brand is an increasingly growing crucial topic that looms vast in the minds of huge human resources, recruitment and marketing professionals (Bredwell 2008, p. 80). Recently in a Job Index Survey it is shown that the organizations that tempts and preserves “high fliers are those with the best employer brands” (Cook 2008, p. 89). Organizations can make huge progress to achieve their goals by placing a cutting-edge and highly qualified employer brand as it is destined to recruit talented employees, to keep those talents in the organizations, to elicit high performance from the employed people and to be confident that employees are serving the customer the brands that is necessary for the success of the organizations (Davenport and Barrow 2009, p. 146). Therefore, it is easily understood that the perception of employer brand in an organization is quite eloquent and its vital role in the enhancement of recruitment and selection processes is obvious. The present research is intended to shed light on such issues.

Research aims and objectives

This research aims to identify the perception of employer brand in Tesco and the extent to which it could be used to enhance recruitment and selection processes. To support this aim the following objectives are taken to be investigated in this research.

To understand the nature and importance of employer brand in the context of the organization.

To analyze the strategies adopted by the organization in the application of employer brand.

To ascertain the type of employees recruited and selected in the organization- the recruitment and selection criteria.

To critically analyze the role of employer brand in the enhancement of recruitment and selection processes.

Significant of the Research

This research is very much essential to bring forward the need for employer management. The research is promising to show the importance of the employer brand for an organization. This is also expected to find out the way employer brand system especially in case of employee selection and recruitment what is destined to discuss the organizational strategy in this regard and consequently related and necessary areas of solution can be identified. This research will finally put forward some recommendations in consideration of the needs that will be identified through this research.

Critical review of the key academic sources

Conceptual background

There are four important key concepts in this research but the main concept is employer brand. The related other concepts are perception, recruitment and selection. In the organizational contexts of employer brand the perception and recruitment and selection processes will be used in this research.

Employer brand

The perception of existing and prospective employees about whether the organization is a fine place to work is expressed by ‘employer brand’ (Clutterbuck *et al.* 2003, p. 123). Lawler (2008) simply presents employer brand as “a key part of what attracts talent to a company” (p. 68). Hor and Keats (2008) present that an employer brand the perception that an organization generates in the minds of the existing workers and upcoming jobseekers (p. 21). In the context of organizational value proposition as an articulation in a smaller version employer brand can be presented as to aid in prospective and existing employees respond to the question “what’s in it for me?”

(Schumann and Sartain 2009, p. 77).

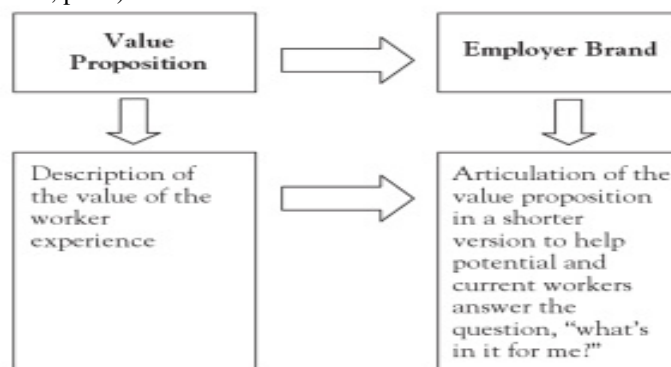


Figure 1.1: Employer brand within the organizational value proposition

The definitions discussed points out the following:

Alignment of HR practices and management is expressed by employer brand and it guarantees an employee experience that accords with the image portrayed.

Employer branding requires work environment and experiences to be allowed to advertise corporate image to the HR department.

Employer branding stands for efficient and consistent talent management method (e.g., recruitment, selection, training, performance etc.).

Perception

The process of selecting, categorizing and deciphering information inputs to generate meaning is called as 'perception' (Pride and Ferrell, 2007, p. 183). In a detailed manner it can be said that the process of covering what individuals see, hear, belief, feel, and taste or smell (acquisition/recognition), how individuals construct this information mentally (absorption) and their interpretations of information (comprehension) can be termed as perception (Sumpf 2005, pp. 41-42).

Recruitment

Recruitment related most of the definitions highlight the organization's combined attempt to make out, draw and persuade the career choices of proficient candidates (Ployhart 2006, p. 869). it can be said that recruitment involves the identification, attracting and influencing activities within the organizational boundary to – carry a job opportunity to the notice of prospective job seekers; manipulate whether these candidates apply for the opportunity; influence whether the recruits abide by interest in the position until a work offer is lengthened; and persuade whether a work offer is granted and the individual joins the organization (Breaugh *et al.* 2008, pp. 45-46).

Selection

Selection is often a strategic process of a range of activities adopted in the normal 'stream' of getting individuals to 'fill a role' (Roberts 2004, p. 4). The main aspects of selection are:

- a plain and accurate requirement;
- efficient exercise of various techniques;
- abolition of superfluous processes;
- measurement; and
- assessment and incessant progress.

Related literature

Employer brand is considered very much important to be developed in organizations (e.g. Ambler and Barrow 1996; Ewing *et al.* 2002; Berthon *et al.* 2005). Ambler and Barrow prepared case to the useful presentation of employer branding. They presented in their findings using semi-structure depth interviews with interviewees from 27 companies about the significance of branding to the organization in the human resource management section. They came to say that branding has significance within the milieu of employment.

Affirming the prior findings Ewing *et al.* (2002) outlined the effectiveness of employer branding in a progressively knowledge-based financial system where skilled workers are repeatedly in little supply. They idea of branding the company to prospective and active workers was introduced by them to create this as a unique aspect. The use of 'employment brand' and 'employer brand was made by them to illustrate the package of well-designed, cost-effective and psychological benefits that is provided by employment and recognized with employing organization.

Collins and Stevens (2002) proposed that there is indirect relationship of early recruitment activities to intentions and decisions. They further mentioned that this could be done through two aspects of employer brand likeness: general attitudes towards the organization and seeming job attributes.

Reed (2001) outlined the impacts on and of the employer brand by depicting a figure. He presented that the vision, culture, core values and differentiation of the employer determines the employer brand what attracts customers, competitors and employees by placing available workforce, and applicants. Employer brand is also impacted by the customer as well. There interrelationship among these issues in varying manner what is nicely presented in that figure (Figure 1.2). Reed further outlined that there are eight key factors that develop an employer brand.

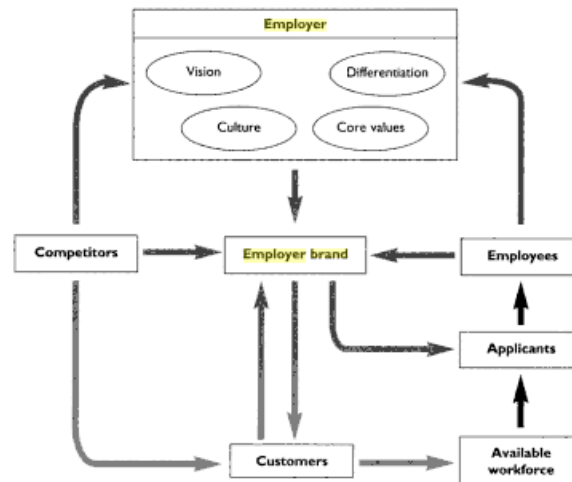


Figure 1.2: Impacts on and of the employer brand (Reed 2001, p.21).

The impact and plan of employer branding are presented in some researches with proper analysis. Such an endeavour was made by Backhaus (2004) who investigated on how organizations utilize an online employment display (monster.com) to be in touch with their employer branding. Lievens *et al.* (2007) made evaluation of both the sides of the candidate and the side of the company. They tried to consider what features are vital for an interior and exterior employer image.

Berthon *et al.* (2005) in his research project came to identify five important dimensions to characterize attractive employer brand dimensions. These are:

Interest value- stimulating work environment, novelty in work practices and involvement of employees' creativity.

Social value- developing of work environment with fun, excellent collegial relationships and team atmosphere.

Economic value-availability of above-average payment system ensuring job security and promotional opportunities.

Development value-providing appreciation, self-worth, and assurance with a blend of career-progressing experience and a springboard to upcoming job opportunity.

Application value-scopes for employees to invest their knowledge and to coach other in a consumer oriented and compassionate environment (Chernatony 2006, p. 272).

Rob Willock (2005) in an article on '*employer branding is key in fight for talent*' outlined that in the war for getting talented employees HR departments are lacking the recruitment armoury of employer branding. Willock was actually referring a research undertaken by *Personnel Today* on 1,889 respondents (Fig. 1.3). It was found that 95% respondents believe that employer branding is important. There were different other factors in this findings

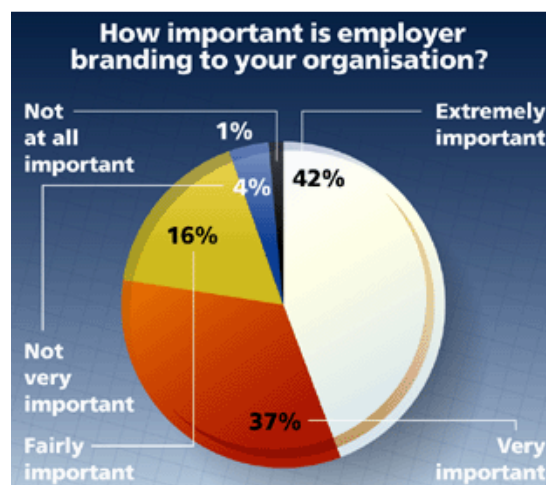


Figure 1.3: Importance of employer branding to the organizations (Personnel Today 2005).

Erickson and Gratton (2007) confined themselves to sorting out the answer of the question: “what it means to work here?” They came to find out that organizations that brilliantly develop and communicate moniker experiences realize that diverse kinds of people will shine at different organizations, and that not all employees demand the same things. Then they came to propose that to encourage profoundly committed workers three elements of engagement for an organization are required. First, a holistic comprehension of prospective workers’ characteristics is required. Second, a planned strategy to interact an employer image that on the one side transmits characteristics and values of the organization to prospective hires and on the opposite side strengthens those to workers is essential. Third, a consistent worker experience is a must include via communication. Finally Erickson and Gratton (2007) came to say that more than one employer branding strategy is needed to undertake by companies since there are diversified characteristics of the employers’ image of branding target groups. Every individual group must be dealt with by another strategy.

Research methodology of the study: explanation and rationalization

Research methodology is “the structure of procedures and transformational rules whereby a researcher moves information along the ladder of abstraction in order to produce and organize increasing knowledge” (McGoodwin 2001, p. 57). Research methodology presents the procedures and techniques of gaining information so that the required information could be gathered and presented nicely. The present study requires a few numbers of methods to be used in the research process to gather necessary information from the respondents in the field. As the research is intended to be administered in London, naturally respondents from different backgrounds working in London will be taken to gather related information. These respondents will be of two categories: the first category will consist of the employees working in the organization and the other category will be consisted of store supervisors, duty managers and store managers. The case organization in this study will be the Tesco as it is one of the top retailing organizations in the UK (Sukla 2010, p. 468). With a prefixed sampling size the respondents will be taken randomly from different Tesco stores. In this regard a time schedule will be settled in advance with the respondents mostly the managers and supervisors so that information can be collected nicely and without any rush. This research will be inductive but the incorporation of both qualitative and quantitative approached will be included. As the research will be delved in different issues relating to the employer brand both in terms of organizational perception and its influence in the enhancement in the recruitment and selection of potential employees, the phenomenological paradigm is considered suitable for this research.

To gather information from the respondents a semi-structured questionnaire consisting of 18-15 questions will be placed in front of the respondents so that they can respond on the basis of the questions and necessary data can be generated from their information. As the research will be dealt with issues like ‘perception’, ‘enhancement’ in recruitment and selection processes it is deemed to avoid a structured questionnaire. Moreover, as some quantitative information is expected to gain from the respondents, so some structured questions are added in the questionnaire. To generate detailed information from the respondents and issues like their views on any specific fact or subject, there will some open –ended questions as well. Therefore, the questionnaire pattern will be semi structured.

Qualitative data are quite relevant to this research as it will be dealing with issues like ‘perception’, ‘enhancement’ in recruitment and selection processes. But quantitative data as well is seemed necessary to present some information with different figures and graphs to demonstrate the depth and relevance of necessary

interpretation of the collected data.

Since both qualitative and quantitative approaches will be used in this research, the methods that will be used in conducting the field work will pay proper attention to include methods related to both approaches. In this regard the following methods are selected to be used to administer the research.

Centre of attention or focus group analysis: To gather higher level of data at the presence of some key people on any specific issue the focus group analysis or focus group discussion (FGD) is considered very useful what will be adopted in this research to gather information from the respondents.

Case Study: As information based on real life situation can be generated using this method, the present research intends to use case study method. These case studies will taken to grasp the personal views of the respondents regarding the perception of employer brand in Tesco and its role in the enhancement of recruitment and selection processes.

Survey: Quantitative data will be collected using the survey method as it is widely used and easy approachable means of gathering information from the respondents.

Methods of data analysis: an explanation

Qualitative data collection

Focus group discussion (FGD)

There will be 4 FGDs with managers, supervisors and employees. It is important to mention that 2 FGDs will be taken with the involvement of only managers and supervisors and other 2 FGDs will be taken with the involvement of only employees (Table 1.1). This will be done to get comparative information what will strengthen the research more. In each of these FGDs there will be 9 respondents. On the basis of prescheduled time these FGDs will be administered. It is also important to mention that none of these FGDs will replicate the same respondents who have already participated in any of the FGDs. In this regard a checklist will be placed in these FGDs corresponding to the semi-structured questionnaire for survey. Information generated in this research will be recorded so that all the data could be evaluated with great care and importance

Table 1.1: Distribution of the respondents in the FGDs

Number of FGDS	Respondents	
	Categories	Numbers
2	Managers and supervisors	9x2=18
2	Employees	9x2=18

Case study

In this research 12 case studies will be administered. The same checklist for FGDs will be used also in the case studies. The information generated through this method will be recorded with the permission of the respondent so that accuracy and unbiased information can be sorted out in the result discussion section. Among 12 case studies there will be 4 case studies on managers, 4 case studies on supervisors and other 4 case studies on employees (Table 1.2).

Table 1.1: Distribution of the respondents in the case studies

Number of Case Studies	Respondents	
	Categories	Numbers
4	Managers	4x1=4
4	Supervisors	4x1=4
4	Employees	4x1=4

Analysis of the data

These qualitative data will be analyzed using transcription method. There will be different kinds of diagrams, mind maps and narrative explanation of the facts and figures generated through the use of the pre-mentioned methods. These data will also be classified according to the objectives and related variables and key points or phrases. Some descriptive tables will also be developed for more authentic and touchy presentation of the findings.

Quantitative data collection

Survey

On the basis of the semi-structure questionnaire the survey will be conducted on 58 respondents. In this case the respondents will be selected randomly. So the respondents will be the managers, supervisors and the other employees. The number of respondents in this case is selected to be 58 because there can be some questionnaire that may not be usable due to the respondents' inability or unwillingness to answer the hole questionnaire. There is also another intention that the total number of the respondents in this research is intended to be kept by 100 numbers at least.

Analysis of the data

The data will be analyzed using correlation and measures of central tendency. On the basis of the information

and necessary calculation relevant interpretation will be made with added explanation. In this regard Windows-Excel will be used for necessary tabulation and graphical representation of the data.

Ethical issues

In this research lots of information will be related to inter organizational issues and personal comments of the respondents. So in gathering this information the privacy and secrecy of the respondents and related information will be kept seriously. In case of special requirement pseudonym will be used. Personal feelings, expectations and rights of the respondents will be given priority to be kept and maintained in the research process of gathering information. Ethical neutrality is a prime requirement in this research and unbiased information collection will be strictly maintained. Proper rapport building with the respondents is also intended to maintain so that most relevant and real information can be obtained. Any secondary documents used in this research will, of course, be referenced following Harvard referencing system.

Limitations of the research

Time constraints, lack of monetary support, respondents' reluctance will be the common problems in this research. The research is intended to collect lots of internal and personal information from the respondents what will be a difficult task to maintain and tackle. As the number of the respondents in this research is a lot, so it will be little bit difficult to access information from the respondents. Time schedule maintaining may become panicking in administering this research.

Research Schedule

Action	Date	Resource
Submission of research proposal	First week	Secondary sources and proposal form
Working on literature review	Second Week	Different books and journals
Preparing questionnaire and submitting literature review	Third Week	-Do-
Field work	Fourth Week	Questionnaire schedule
Analysis of data and preparing the final document	Fifth Week	Windows Excel and statistical calculation
Checking the draft and submitting the final copy to the university	Sixth Week	CD, hard copy of the dissertation

Finally it can be said that the importance of employer brand is crucial for organizations to have talented and potential employees to serve them with the best they have. To the organizations therefore employer brand is viewed very much important and in the recruitment and selection it is destined to obtain the highly qualified and potential workforce that the organization targets to have. In this regard the research is seemed very much important to undertake practically in the present context.

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