

EMPLOYER BRANDING AS A MODERN TOOL FOR ACQUIRING AND RETAINING EMPLOYEES

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1 INTRODUCTION

The employee market means that a passive approach by employers to the recruitment process, which focuses only on selection from a broad pool of applicants, is no longer sufficient. Employers should therefore take a proactive stance with regard to building an organisational image that attracts candidates and makes it easier for organisation to retain them. For this reason, it becomes necessary to implement a variety of practices to support image building for the employer of choice. It should also be emphasised that employee sourcing activities, similarly to other organisational activities, should be evaluated in order to assess their effectiveness, efficiency and relevance in relation to the results achieved. All activities undertaken by an organisation, aimed at potential and existing employees, to build its image as an attractive employer and to support its strategic business goals are referred to as Employer Branding (EB) [1, 2, 3].

The aim of this study is to assess the Employer Branding practices applied by Polish enterprises and to assess them in terms of their fit with the changing values and expectations of employees over time.

2 MATERIAL AND METHODS

The literature on the subject was used to discuss the basic terminology of the issues addressed in the article. In turn, the desk research method [4] was used to analyze the solutions used by Polish organizations in the field of employee acquisition and retention. Above all, the studies that referred to cyclical research were selected in order to track changes that have occurred in recent years in the initiatives undertaken by employers regarding EB. The following questions were asked in the research process:

- Do companies appreciate the importance of employer branding?
- Do Polish employers have knowledge of employees' values and expectations, and to what extent do they use this knowledge in the process of acquiring and retaining employees?

3 RESULTS

As the results of the research indicate, there is a growing number of organisations that spend as much time and energy on employer branding as on consumer branding. These efforts are vital because recruitment is not just about increasing the number of applications for vacancies on offer, but about attracting the right candidates. Considering the decreasing level of unemployment, gaining the attention of a job candidate will become increasingly difficult. Therefore, companies are reaching for solutions that are new to them and one can observe an increasing number of companies that declare to have a defined employer branding strategy. Candidates want to know as much as possible about potential employers, so employers should consciously build their own channels where candidates will find the information they are interested in. More and more companies have a careers page or tab, as well as a profile

on social media such as LinkedIn. There is a growing awareness of the need to communicate the employer brand among employees, e.g. through development programmes, the implementation of transparent internal communication, well-being programmes, internal branding activities or an onboarding programme.

Despite growing awareness, EB has still not gained the proper prominence and role in organisations as it should. Employers do not have a strategy-driven need for EB activities. There is a lack of understanding of this category, and consequently, a lack of consistency and coherence in the activities carried out. EB is too often understood merely as a promotional activity to support recruitment and retention by creating certain expected images, rather than a real reflection of the organisation's culture. The positioning of EB at the interface of two areas – Human Resources and Public Relations – is unfavourable. The labour market is not necessarily favourable either, as there is still a deficit of employees whose competences are needed in organisations. This deficit and skills gap will only get worse as demographic conditions are increasingly problematic. It is necessary to strategically nurture employees in order to successfully compete for talents.

4 CONCLUSIONS

EB activities can have a big impact on a company's image, not only in the HR sense but also in terms of sales. It is worth building awareness within the organisation that EB is not just a sub-activity of HR, but something more. Leaders should look after EB on a day-to-day basis, and not just HR or PR people through texts posted in the career section or on the employer profile. It is important to be comprehensive. Firstly, the organisation's culture, values and Employer Value Proposition (EVP) need to be defined at each stage of the employee lifecycle in the organisation, and then this needs to be translated into measurable Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and the whole team needs to be involved in their implementation. Once this work has been done internally, only then can the results be shown externally and a real employer image presented. Then this image will be consistent and reach the maturity of EB activities.

True and effective EB is a long-term strategy for attracting, engaging and retaining the most talented employees within an organisation. It is also important that a developed EB strategy benefits different stakeholder groups, i.e. candidates, employees or the company's shareholders/owners.

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