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The corporate image of an employer as a tool to create the business reputation of the company

Kamila Zelga

Faculty of Law, Administration and Management, Jan Kochanowski University, Kielce, Poland

E-mail address: kamilazelga@wp.pl

ABSTRACT

An effective functioning of the company forces the definition and implementation of the corporate image policy, which focuses on attracting and retaining valuable employees that determine the success of every business. The given employer branding creates an important and conscious tool for establishing the organization as an attractive workplace for current employees.

Keywords: image of the employer, employer branding, image building, employer, employee, business, labor market

1. INTRODUCTION

Every entity operating on the market is perceived in a certain way by other entities that are in direct and indirect contact with it. This perception expressed in opinions about a given project is an essential element of the company image. The enterprise creating the specific good, that is a workplace, is evaluated as an employer and therefore can be viewed as attractive or unattractive.

Dealing with employees as if they were goods to be treated combined with their high turnover may negatively affect an organization's reputation. This in turn commonly results in a loss of stakeholder acceptance, and frequently in a significant overall impairment in the competitive position of the company on the market as well.

The purpose of this article is to demonstrate an overview of the employer image from the point of view of creating the high-ranking company. The presented issues related to the increasingly popular employer branding are about shaping an image of the attractive organization with respect to the expectations of employees, creating the specificity of functioning of modern organizations.

All the procedures and operating rules on both the internal and external labor market should be pre-established by the implemented image policy. It is also important to specify the expected effects of such practices and, at the same time, to indicate the bodies within an organizational structure responsible for elaborating of the given policy tool and implementing it effectively.

2. EMPLOYER BRANDING

Labor pedagogy frequently refers to a professional development of man and an optimum working environment advancement. In this context, employer branding can be interpreted as a field of pedagogy.

The main purpose of employer branding is to take care of employees through deliberate and conscious actions of the employer in relation to the idea of partnership, i.e. creating the relationship with each staff member: mentor-student. As Jenner states “this process is an integral part of the employer's image”. The parallel action that must be taken while formulating the image strategy is a concern for the interests and needs of the employees. Thus, an investment in the professional development of the employed and a continuous process of information exchange with the labor market (as a reaction to the current trends) take place.

In addition, it may be said that employer branding is a deliberate effort to build the enterprise's image as the attractive workplace for both current employees and all groups of future stakeholders. To become an employer of choice, the company should follow clearly defined principles and priorities, as well as trust its employees and meet their needs and expectations.

Nowadays, however, to be regarded interesting employers for talented individuals, organizations are obliged to constantly bear in mind the benefits of image-focused activities.

Employer branding is the process by which an organization affects potential candidates and employees, so that it begins to be considered the appealing workplace. According to Employment Branding- Attracting the Right Talent “creating the image of a solid employer may bring the following profits for the company” (Gallup Institute, "Employment Branding." Attracting the Right Talent):

- a higher quality of job candidates;
- a profile of employees in the corporation meets the expectations of their managers and is tailored to the organizational culture in the company;
- an increased interest in the workplace;
- an upsurge in the application level indicator;
- a lower rate of rejected job applications;
- more employees employed in the firm on someone's recommendations;
- a much greater likelihood that a worker may become a brand ambassador;
- a higher level of employee involvement.

Taking into account a good image of the employer, a potential candidate is generally more involved in the brand that is credible from the first contact. On recruitment, the employer should be able to build the strong employee-company relationship. It is necessary to enhance the capacity for adaptation of newly recruited employees and to create HR policy oriented to conscious identification with the company. If such a relationship is strong enough, the employee can become a committed brand advocate who is supposed to encourage others to apply for a job in the given company.

According to Employment Branding- Attracting the Right Talent “employer branding treats the internal labor market and processes in the organization similar to personnel marketing” (Gallup Institute, "Employment Branding. Attracting the Right Talent").

In this relationship, the employer is a person who possesses such characteristic properties as: a place of work, a remuneration, various bonuses and awards, as well as a wide range of other differentiated benefits. On the other hand, the employees are viewed as clients that should be taken care of in a particular way, so that they are prepared to demonstrate the strengthened commitment, which is to be reflected in the future financial performance of the company.

3. THE AWARE AND ORGANIZED IMAGE BUILDING ON THE EXTERNAL LABOR MARKET

When designing the company’s image-building strategy, it is of great importance to properly analyze the influence of certain opinion-formers (Bartkowiak, Szłapińska, 26). The point here is to use an opportunity to promote positive opinions about the employer with the assistance of the so-called influential people.

In this view, the opinion-formers are those who, among others, have:

- a direct relation with the business partners of the company, because of their peculiar position,
- broad business contacts, also through membership in various professional associations and trade unions,
- numerous friends, in particular, as a result of their participation in social projects and organizations,
- access to the media.

As universal and daily experience demonstrates, there is a greater inclination to deal with negative phenomena in social, economic and political life. This approach also applies to the working relationship. It is therefore that the employers ought to avoid situations where they might be accused of deliberately ignoring the fundamental ethical principles or even breaking the law.

In addition to the staff members themselves, the company image as an employer is "co-created" by other entities who have regular contact with it. They can establish the employer’s image not only by assessing the human resource management approach, but also through the whole set of insights, experiences, and feelings that arise when comparing the given enterprise with other companies.

The position of an enterprise as a provider of the competitively attractive workplace can be strengthened through particular actions addressed to the entities operating in the nearest

environment of the organization. For this purpose, various tools may be applied, including but not limited to:

- publications promoting the company on the Internet, in the press and specialized journals;
- advertising on television and radio providing the opportunity to present the range of company operations;
- notices associated with the organization, such as those related to the recruitment of personnel;
- sponsorship;
- actions undertaken for the benefit of local communities;
- company presentations in schools and colleges;
- establishing long-term co-operation with universities, for example, in the field of contracting internships and apprenticeships for students or granting scholarships;
- participation in prestigious competitions, rewarding attractive employers, leaders in human resources management;
- company presentations during labor fairs;
- creating the open-door environment for those willing to get acquainted with enterprise.

Undoubtedly, such actions have a profound impact on building the stable and loyal workforce. Employees, who work in a reputable company, frequently have the strong additional motivation to raise their competences, bearing in mind prestige and recognition from the industry.

4. THE SCOPE OF DUTIES OF EMPLOYER'S IMAGE SPECIALIST

Every enterprise, regardless of size, is a community shaped by the demographic characteristics of its members.

The image policy of the company ought to be adapted to the characteristics of its "recipients", i.e. attitudes, experiences, expectations.

An essential condition for the effectiveness of the company's image policy is to identify tasks and assign them to a specific entity (a person or a task force) within the company structure. The main duty of such an entity is to determine the demographic conditions of the labor market. It may be done by starting from answering the following questions:

- How do people's social background affect their attitudes and behavior in the workplace?
- What are the expectations of different working groups regarding their employer?
- Where do employees get knowledge about the world? Which media shapes their opinions and outlook?
- Who and for what reasons do the workforce regard as a reliable source of information and a trusted persuasive subject (e.g. colleagues, managers)?
- How do employees evaluate the credibility and involvement of managers?

The specific tasks of employer's image specialists should include:

- executing employee satisfaction surveys,
- determining the factors for the employees' commitment to the company,
- preventing pathologies regarding the motivational systems;
- using marketing methods and tools;
- assessing the effectiveness of the motivators used,
- monitoring the labor market and activities of other employers,
- developing internal procedures and tools for the promotion of appropriate ethical conduct in accordance with the declarations among the management personnel,
- studying the attractiveness of workplaces in the company,
- analyzing the reasons for spontaneous departures of employees from the organization.

The above factors determine the quality of human resources of a company by acquiring and maintaining valuable employees.

5. CONCLUSIONS

With regard to the rapidly changing environment and the increasing demands of the labor market, shaping the positive image of the employer becomes an indispensable condition for acquiring worthwhile employees. What is more, it enhances an identification of staff members with the goals and mission of the company, which is directly connected with the very significant increases in their engagement and performance. The attractive, modern employer is responsible for creating the working environment chiefly designed for ambitious and talented employees.

The given employer branding strategy determines the brand, raises its prestige and strengthens the position on the market. The corporate image policy should be thus treated as an element of shaping the company's good reputation because it improves the quality of human resources, contributes to developing of the compact working team, and maintains the subjective staff treatment by personnel management at all management levels.

There is a misconception to think that only a "rich company" is able to be a good entrepreneur. Ultimately, it brings to the forefront the issue of honesty that provides grounds for the employees' engagement based on a shared sense of belonging and loyalty to the enterprise.

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