EXPLORING THE CONTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYER BRANDING IN CORPORATE

IMAGE BUILDING

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ABSTRACT

Employer Branding is the current buzz area in organization marketing. It was first introduced by marketing researchers but presently it is in the hands of HR professionals. Employer branding through social media tools like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc. is increasingly gained attention. Organization's adopting social media for good relationships with their customers and employees. It has been found that social media helps in increasing business performance as well as business capabilities. Likewise now a day's social media used to build up the corporate image building. The purpose of this paper is to reveal the impact of employer branding through social networking in corporate image building. It also explains the use of social media in knowledge sharing, employee relationships and in recruitment process. HR recruiters using social media for hunting wide range of candidates for the job. Employer branding helps the organization in maintaining the corporate image building and facing the competition in the competitive world.

KEYWORDS: Employee Branding, Social Media, Corporate Image Building, Human Resource

INTRODUCTION

In the field of Human Resource Management Employee Branding has recently get attention. In this new era of competitive corporate governance, the rising role of human resource supplied effective governance and corporate social responsibility. Employer branding is all about making the employees feel good about their organization. Employees can be ambassadors for their organization and that impacts good on them as well as to the customers and clients. Employer branding helps the organization to create a good brand image in the market. *"It is a set of attributes and qualities, often intangible that makes an organization distinctive, promises a particular kind of employment experience and appeal to those who will thrive and perform best in its culture"* (Chartered Institute for Personnel and Development; 2009). "According to research insight CIPD; 2009 there are three main reasons why employer branding has gained attention in the recent past. Firstly there has been a rise in importance of brand as a social concept. Secondly HR professionals continue to seek for credibility and strategic contribution. Thirdly due to tight labour market conditions where unemployment remains low and skills shortage continues". HR professionals performed various activities with their employees to promote the employer banding. They planned a strategy that provides an opportunity to an organization to face the competition and to make a bond with their clients and customers to build loyalty. The main objective of Employer Branding is to create an organization brand unique, fascinating and a great place to work with. Employer branding attains tremendous importance during the time period when there is shortage of talented candidates and it become difficult to invite and to retain the talent. According to Alan Price *Human Resource Management, 4th edition* Book:"The basis of employer branding is the

application of the same marketing and branding practices to a company's human resource activities (specifically, recruitment and retention) as it uses for consumer-targeted marketing and branding efforts. In other words, the business markets its brand image to its staff. And just as customers will cease buying a company's products or services when a promise is unfulfilled, its employees will also leave if the company fails to live up to its employer brand promises." Kaplan and Haenlien (2010) have defined social media *as "a group of internet based applications that are based on ideological and technological foundations of web 2.0 and allow the creation and exchange of user generated content".*

The demographics present that there is an extreme transformation of the internet into social media universe which provides an excellent opportunities for the human resource management. More than 70 % of companies use social media or preparing themselves for the future aspects to create corporate image building. Online job portals on social media replaced printed advertisements. Companies use social media as a communication channel and use it as a medium of presentation. Corporate now a day's use social media sites like Facebook, twitter, LinkedIn, etc to interact with their customers and clients. On daily basis they used to update their information on web and it reach to millions of people in one go. On the other hand, the disadvantage of social media is extreme high competition between the companies and there is more of fake data rotated around the world. The objective of this paper is to draw a conceptual framework of contribution of employer branding in corporate image building and how social media is effective in providing information about the organization and how it can be used to invite the talent for the job. The paper also reflects the impact of social media in building the relationships within and outside the organization.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The prime objective of the study is to showcase the framework for employer branding and its contribution in corporate image building. The other objectives of this paper are:

- To examine the role of employer branding for the companies

- To study the role of social media in employer branding and corporate image building

- To explore the role of employer branding in recruitment and knowledge sharing.

- To investigate the relation of employer branding and corporate image building.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Following are the research questions for this study:

- How Human Resource plays an important role in Employer Branding?

- How can companies build their corporate brand image in the market?

- How HR professionals use social media for Employer Branding?

- How social media helps the organization in recruitment and knowledge sharing?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Employer Branding

"The term Employer Brand (EB) was conceptualized by Ambler and Barrow (1996). They define EB as *"package of functional, economic, and psychological benefits provided by employment, and identified with the employing company".*

In identity statute Employee branding is a new twist. It helps in shaping the employee behaviour for manipulating their work style in accordance with the organization brand image. In this competitive world, companies seek to attract the best talent present in the market. Because of this reason it becomes difficult for the candidates to get inside the company. Current research results that employee branding plays a major role in attracting the employee towards the job. No doubt, that social media provides A to Z information about the company. Those companies who have effective presentation on social media will get maximum advantage in employee branding. A Facebook and LinkedIn page is latest tool used by the companies to maintain their profiles on web and stay connected with millions of people at one place. They are not only gaining advantage of attracting the customers towards the company products but it also help the company to showcase their image to their outside people.

In one of the research by Han and Collins in 2004, they stated that being proactive in recruitment practices will help the organization in improving the quality and quantity of the prospective candidates. They used brand equity approach as a framework to explore how an organization influence his perceived employer and brand equity and how it convinces the job applicants to apply for the job. The results of their research are that the authors have opinion that "brand awareness plays an important role in influencing job decisions"

Research by Collins and Stevens in 2002, gave a different aspect regarding employer branding. They state that exposure to prior recruitment activities such as advertisement, publicity, word of mouth advertisement, and recruitment advertisement on social media was positively related to job applicant's attitude towards the organization. To make the recruitment process effective, it is important to announce all the related information for the job applicants so that they can become aware about the corporate brand name, their dealing and about the job. The way advertisement helps the marketing people in sales, similarly early recruitment communication help the HR people in selection process.

Similarly in one of the research by Gatewood, Gowan and Lautenschlager in 1993, it has been examined that job applicants have a fair idea about the employer branding and about recruitment image. Recruitment image is a function of information that is provided in the recruitment messages. They said that more exposure to information helps the applicants and employer both in recruitment and selection process. The more information you update to the job seekers, the more you add on in your employer branding.

In 2001, Turban investigated on college students and he searched that familiarity is firmly related to attraction towards the organization. Familiarity can be by increasing the advertisement, publicity, by the existing employees, when students read about organization in the class. Familiarity plays an important role in determining the attraction towards the organization".

Employee Branding and Internal Marketing

Employee branding and internal marketing are two sides of the same coin. Employee branding actually means the image of the company for the employees working with them. Whereas Internal Marketing emphasis on communicating with each individual related to the company, he/ she will be employee or client or customer. Internal marketing basically deals with maintaining the customer brand promise through behaviour, attitude and effective communication of the employees. Here, the product is employee. In employee branding the major focus is on company employees, just to attract them, motivate them and to retain them. Internal marketing and employee branding together help the companies in making good brand image in the market. And social help is an effective tool to gain all such advantage from the internet. Research

shows that social sites helps the companies not in sales but also in building good image in the marketing and it is so simple, faster and effective.

Modes of Discovering Employer Brand

Organization culture plays crucial role in discovering the employer branding. Employer branding consists of strategy by creating a enlighten culture followed in the organization , working experience of employees, the drivers of talent, vision of the organization , the leadership and the various management practices. If companies focused on all these areas for creating employer branding, they will definitely get success. But there should be proper platform for organising all the related activities of human resource. There are many ways of communicating the development program of employee branding, both qualitative and quantitative. For example: conducting motivational talks, conferences, seminars, focussing on groups, etc. Every organization has their own core competencies, so they must maintain it for employer branding and for building corporate image. It can be providing salaries on time, organisingunctions for their employees, picnics, corporate dinner, etc. Many companies interact with their employees and invites feedback from through social networking sites to improve in the areas wherever needed.

Hewitt Associates has give five steps for developing a strong employer brand: These are:

- Know your Organization from all aspects

- Created a "compelling promise" with the employees and customer and that should be fulfilled on time.

- Originate the standards to evaluate the brand promise.

- Motivate the employees for attaining the goal for brand promise.

- Implement and measure.

Some companies use different, committed employer branding efforts focus on retaining their good employees within the organization. Organization vision and values accomplish this goal towards corporate image building strategies.

HR Role in Employer Branding

In this competitive world, every company invested monetary and non monetary resources on their employees for motivating them. Human resource plays a very important role for the companies. HR acts as brand ambassadors for their organization. It has been observed that motivated and satisfied employees results in good productivity. Even in employer branding human resource plays a vital role. It is employees of the company who present the organization everywhere. From word of mouth, the employees can spread the information with the people outside the organization. So, it is the duty of the organization to create a good image on their employees. Employer branding is not only the culture, values and ethics of the organization but also an Employer Value Preposition. Previously the branding comes under marketing people but now the scenario is changed, presently each employee of the company is responsible for creating a corporate image and employer branding. Out of this human resource becomes a key contributor for employer branding.

The other side is, good and intelligent students want to pursue their career with the organization that has good employer branding and better corporate image in the market. Money is not only the need of candidates; rather they are looking for brand name. Employer branding helps the organization in attracting those talented pool and retain the existing one. Also, company customers, clients and shareholders play an important role in employer branding. So, employer

branding is a critical process and difficult task too.

Employer Branding and Social Media

"Online" –is a word for Social Media? Our young ages spend almost 80 % of their time on social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc. Social media is a different platform of communication. People use to share almost everything on social media. Social media is adopted by almost every human being of different ages and for different task. Companies use social media for social networking and increasing their relationship bond with their employees, clients and customers by connecting them at one place and sharing their information, emotions and communicating with them. Social Media has many advantages over other platforms of communication. The features provided by social media are fabulous and creative. We can share pictures, videos, audios clips with everyone and at anywhere throughout the world.

Many Organizations allows their employees to use social media for their work. It become so easy for the employees to stay connected with each other, with the company customers, clients, shareholders by 24*7. Skype, another social media tool used by millions for employees to stay connected with each other. Day by day, social media is gaining more and more importance as a communication platform. Human beings become addicted by social media. Watts up and Facebook are the social media tools which almost used by 99 % of the people of every age. Even the elder generation use social media for social networking. Social media is used by companies as well as entrepreneurs for their self advantage. Even for marketing department it become easy to get connected with their customers. Marketing process become so easy now a day, every activity of marketing like advertisement, promotion, etc. is possible on social media. E-Commerce is an excellent example of marketing on social, media. Social media provides employment to millions of people and create a separate industry in the market. Amazon, Flip Cart, Paytm, Naptol and many more are the companies of ecommerce which are doing fabulous job and gaining maximum revenue day by day. Likewise, for HR the social media supplied numerous advantages. The Human Resource manager use social media to connect the team and assign the work, for training purpose, for motivating through messages and emails and for recruitment. Another, organizations started using social media for their own promotion through employer branding. Many researchers searched on social media for marketing, advertisement and promotion of products. But, the concept of employer branding through social media is current and intent.

Figure 1

In one of the research by Geffen in 2010, it has been found that there is huge difference between traditional employer branding and latest employer branding. Traditional employer branding tools were television, emails, websites, printed advertisement, online presentations and sponsorship. Latest social media tools include employee blogs, social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, etc., company blogs, search optimization engine of company brand, wikis and virtual worlds. The result indicates that any organizations use traditional methods of employer branding, mostly printed

advertisements and search engine optimization. They use Employee blogs (5%), Company Blogs (11%) and Social Networking Sites (5%). And many companies are planning to use social media from 2011.

Waters & Jones (2011) states that the most popular social media tool used in the organization to educate and inform the employees is you tube videos. The organization can share the videos link with their employees and even check who all have seen videos. This is the latest way of updating the employees with entertainment. Social media has given numerous of opportunities to the employer. It become so easy for the employer to stay connected with their employees in much easier and quick way. Social media plays a very important role in corporate.

Another research by Bondarouk, Ruel and Weekout (2012) signifies that websites plays pivotal role on the relationships between organizational attractiveness and employer branding and also to find out does it makes difference if a company is using social media websites or corporate websites for employer branding. The results states that there is a direct relationship between employer and organizational attractiveness and these results are due to exposure of social media sites and the relationship strengthened. However, there is a small difference between Social Media Sites and corporate websites. Social media tool like Facebook found to be better designed for the purpose of sharing information and social networking.

Employer Branding and Recruitment

Employer branding plays a significant role in recruitment process. The most important components of employer branding is awareness and psychological benefits. It has been found that to become a good employer brand the most important is that the job applicants should know about you (organization). The other key components of employer brand are the prestige and repute of the organization, which should to known to all the job applicants. Social media helps the organization to share their information and can make professional contact easily. In recruitment process, the most effective social media tool used is LinkedIn where recruiters find capable candidates and applicants can find job. A research was carried out by (Maryam Ahmad, SamreenLodhi)on 200 students of graduation at Karachi and question has been asked that which social sites they used to interact with professionals and job purpose. Most of the students replied for LinkedIn as an effective tool for job search. LinkedIn found to be professionally oriented site in terms of searching the job and interacting with company HR managers. Many companies have their employees on LinkedIn for searching the talented candidates for them.

With the help of social media it becomes easy to carry out recruitment process. The HR professionals now post the job advertisement on job portals and within few seconds the information will land to millions of people. Likewise, inviting the applications, screening the CVs and resume and inviting the candidates for interview will be done on the same platform. There is a vast difference between the recruitment processes of before and now. Applicants don't wait for Sunday newspapers to search for job vacancies. They can easily access to the online job portals and apply for the job. No doubt, the work becomes easier than before and it will save time and cost too.

Dr. Mahesh Kumar, K.R, 2015 in his research found that job searcher social media is the most common tool used by the job seekers for searching the job. Organizations make their own website for finding the workforce through e-recruitment. There are many advantages of e-recruitment over newspaper ads- cost saving, speedy communication and time saving. He also said that Human Resource Department are the backbone for the development of the organization because HR department will hire the right people for the right job at the right time. It has been also found that India ranked

as 4th in the usage of computer network.

Prof. Dr. L. Vijayashree, 2015 in his research observed that social media have many advantages. Mostly the graduate students use social media for sharing information on web. They make contacts with company HR professionals through Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter. In his research he collected primary as well as secondary data from 200 graduate students of Bangalore and he found that on social media promote their brands and make social networking with number of people around the world, which will help the organization to find the right candidate and they will also observe number of things from candidates social account like communication style, personality, behaviour, etc.

Mr. Aggarwal, 2013 evaluate that today's is a digital world. Almost all over the world is using social media for their personal as well as professional work. In professional, recruitment, branding and marketing is the most common and regular activity on social media. With the help of statistical tool he calculated that 99.9 % organizations use emails, e-recruitment for inviting the applications (CV/Resume). And they found it so easy and convenient. This also helps in saving paper and posting cost to the applicants and recruiters can manage all the data at one place with as many applications they want to save for themselves. Not only this, all the required communication regarding for recruitment and selection process can be done on social media tools.

Various online mediums such as rating portals, social networking sites and blogging sites are there who are promoting recruitment on web through promote of job vacancies and inviting the candidates. With this, job seekers will definitely got an idea about the working practices and the culture of the organization. Now a day's no one use the traditional career booklets/ brochure or visit company website for job search.

Employer Branding and Knowledge Sharing

Employer Branding via Social media result in one more advantage i.e. Knowledge Sharing for professional development. The key strategic need in employee development is knowledge sharing. For every professional it is important to be updated with all the happenings around him and with all the latest information about the work. Various organizations prefer their employees to get engaged in general awareness program organized within the company. And become of tight schedule of job and hectic timetable employees are allowed to excess the internet and can use social networking sites and blog to gain knowledge and to share good things with each other. Sometimes, it acts as energy booster for the employees. Exchange of Information and knowledge is an important part of knowledge Management. Knowledge management and increasing use of internet and other technologies has changed the style of doing businesses.

In the last 20 years there is a significant technological development around us. Internet makes it viable to connect all the people with each other. Internet helps us in connecting, sharing information, video, photos, documents, etc. at any time at any place. People can increase their social networks, can gather information and can promote their businesses on social media sites.
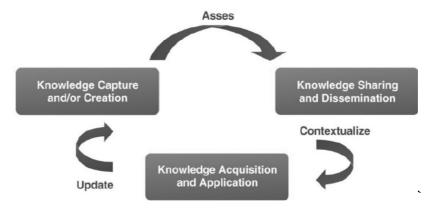
Figure 2: Integrated Knowledge Management Cycle (Dalkir, 2005:43)

Vuori (2011) characterizes social media by considering the extent to which they support communication, collaboration, connecting, completing and combining (5C) (Jalonen, 2014):

- **Communication:** social media provides new tools to share, store and publish contents, discuss and express opinions and influence:

- Blogs (e.g. Blogger) and micro blogs (e.g. Twitter),

- Video sharing (e.g. YouTube),

- Presentation sharing (e.g. SlideShare),

- Instant messaging service (e.g. Skype).

- **Collaboration:** social media enables collective content creation and edition without location and time constraints:

- Wikis (e.g. Wikipedia)

- Groupware/shared workspaces (e.g. GoogleDocs).

- **Connecting:** social media offers new ways of networking with other people, socializing oneself into the community:

- Social networking services (e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn).

- **Completing:** social media tools are used to complete content by describing, adding or filtering information, tagging contents, and showing a connection between contents:

- Visual bookmarking tool (e.g. Pinterest),

- News aggregator (e.g. Digg).

- **Combining:** social media tools are developed for mixing and matching contents. Combination of pre-existing web services that allows a certain user within a platform to use another application, in a specific window, without the need to get out of the initial website (Bonson and Flores, 2011).

- Mash-ups (e.g. Google Maps).

Employee Branding and Corporate Image Building

Corporate Image refers to the company reputation. The "corporate image" means what the public perceive when they see the name of the company. A good corporate image is an asset for the organization. It helps the company to translate their corporate image into dollars. The concept of Corporate Brand Image is new for the corporate and companies spend lots of expenses to build corporate image. Image consists of corporate name, culture, employees, ethics, customers, products, clients, shareholders, etc. management organize various activities for building the corporate brand image in the market. They use to organize campaigns, promotional activities, advertisement, and publicity for the same. But latest, they focused on human resource of the company. Now the employer branding and corporate image building are on the same base. Human Resource is the priority in corporate image building. HR professionals said that when the company's employees are satisfied and motivated, than the company will itself get good brand image in the market.

Corporate Image is the addition of all the impressions left on the company's name by public. But it is very critical to maintain the corporate brand image. Single mistake can cause number of harms to the organization because one information can reach millions of people in one go.

The common elements of Corporate Image Building are:

- Performance of the company and financial status.

- Reputation of brands and activities of the company.

- Technological advancement and innovation.

- Company salary policies for employees and workers.

- Relations with employees, customers, clients and shareholders.

- Brand Identity and trust.

Charismatic leaders of some companies are famous for adding lustre to their organizations.

There are few cases where company have single reputation from all the people (Apple, Google, Microsoft, etc). And in many cases public have different view points for companies based upon their interests. For example: some companies have very good reputation in the brand but they may have poor image among their merchants or dealers because of late payments, no loyalty to vendors, etc. Corporate brand image is difficult to handle, companies should take care of all little things for maintaining their brand image among the competitors.

CONCLUSIONS

Employer branding and corporate image building is creative and salient factor in organization growth. In this digital world, social media plays an important role in employer branding and corporate image building. Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, You tube and Google++ are the most common social media tools used by the organization for information sharing, for social networking , branding , marketing and searching the applicants for job. Employer can create the good corporate image by creating good workplace environment for their employees. Job seekers use social media sites like job portals and e-recruitment. Companies with proficient brand image can hire the most effective employees, often paying less salary. The corporate with good brand image can get the employees who have low absentees ratio, more committed for the job, satisfied and motivated. Corporate with good brand image also get financial and socio-

psychological benefits based upon the productivity and performance of the employees. HR (company manpower) plays a significant role in employer branding. Moreover, employer branding is in the hands of human resource of the companies. Motivated and satisfied employees input 60 % in employer branding. Knowledge sharing is another important way of getting good employer branding. For every organization, it is important to update them with the latest technology to meet the competition around the world and make a good brand image in the people eyes. This way can help the corporate to grow and more and get complete benefits.

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