# Talent attraction and retention in employee branding management essay

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Employer branding is one of the most significant developments in recent times. Organisations are increasingly recognising that most brand promises are delivered by people not products. Many studies have shown the gap between an average and a top performer has widened than ever before, and in a downturn, productivity and results matter even more. Having motivated and talented employees can make the difference between business success and failure.

Simon Borrow is acknowledged as the creator of the term " employer brand" as early as 1990 (Thorne K., 2004). According to Ulrich D., 1997, employer branding focuses on how the company is seen by current and potential employees with the aim of " winning the war on talent". Moreover, Employer Branding helps in recruitment, retention and in becoming an employer of choice. It sets up the uniqueness of the firm as an employer. It labels the

firm's principles, systems, strategies and behaviors towards the objectives of attracting, and retaining the firm's existing and potential talent employees. Additionally, in a labor market where applicants, more than ever before, are smart consumers constantly assessing the value and rewards of their employment experience, it's becoming critical for organisations to communicate and market their strengths and image as an employer of choice for a competitive advantage.

## 3. 1 Talent attraction and retention

Figure 1: Talent attraction and retention model

Attraction material is often the first point of contact with candidates and so it must resonate immediately with the target audience. Uday Chawla, Managing Partner, Transearch, " It is an entire process wherein attracting happens first, which should ideally be followed by retention. If we are able to attract talent but fail to retain them, then the entire process of attracting goes to a waste. Attracting and retaining are inter-dependant. Failure in one area affects the other. One cannot exist without the other."

## 3. 1. 1 Talent management.

According to SHRM India (2008), in an article titled " Corporate Indian companies: – Forging New Talent Pipelines and creative career Pathways", in the banking and financial services industry, talent is considered to be " premium."

Talent management' has been high on the agenda of HR professionals in the UK over the past few years. TM is a multi-faced concept that has been

championed by HR practitioners, fueled by the war for talent and built on the foundation of strategic HRM. . Since 1997, TM has become increasingly popular when the consultancy firm Mckinsey exposed the " war for talent" as a " critical driver of corporate performance", (Chambers, 1998). The starting point of TM is people, namely talents as mentioned in the article ' Is talent management just " old wines in new bottles"? A case of multinational companies in Beijing' by Xin Chuai et al (2008). Talent is defined as " individuals who have the capability to make a significant difference to the current and future performance of the company Morton (2004, p. 6).

CIPD defines talent management as ' the systematic attraction, identification, development, engagement/retention and deployment of those individuals with high potential who are of particular value to an organisation'. On the other hand, Duttagupta (2005) asserts that TM assures that a supply of talent is available to align the right people with the right jobs at the right time, based on strategic business objectives. Besides, Stainton (2005) supports this argument by claiming that " TM is concerned with having the right roles in the right environment with the right manager to enable maximum performance". For example, The Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) is currently making the move from succession planning to what it describes as ' action-oriented talent management'. They see this as a more fluid and holistic concept when it comes to getting the ' right person, in the right place, at the right time'.

Talent management can also be used to enhance an organisation's image and supports employer branding in the labour market as well as providing a means of enhancing employee engagement to improve retention.

## 3. 1. 2 Talent management framework

In order for Commercial banks to gain competitive advantage they need to develop a strategic approach to talent management that suits their business and gets the best from their people. Talent management can also contribute to other strategic objectives, including: firstly building a high performance workplace, secondly encouraging a learning organisation and lastly adding value to the employer of choice and branding agenda.

In an article titled ' A framework for talent management in real estate'. Deborah R. Phillips et al (2009), proposed a talent management framework for industry practitioners. The framework consists of five key elements: attracting, selecting, engaging, developing and retaining employees.

Firstly, an organisation have to be creative when developing a recruitment strategy and should adopt modern methods of recruiting such as interactive networking sites, open house events, referral programs, internships, and online job boards. Secondly, it is becoming more common to include an objective measure of performance, such as psychological assessment, in combination with other recruitment tools in order to improve a company's chances of matching the right person to the job.

Thirdly, engaged employees are not difficult to spot in an organisation. They are willing to go the extra mile to help the customer (Gostick and Elton, 2007). When HR managers measure their own organisation's engagement, they immediately want to find ways to improve engagement among all ranks. On their side, Gostick and Elton (2007) report that employees will stay where there is: a quality relationship with his or her manager; opportunities

for personal growth and professional development; work-life balance, a feeling of making a difference; meaningful work and adequate training. Additionally, employee retention is closely linked to an organisation's performance management system. Performance management systems should also address how the different generations in the workplace view feedback and the drivers of employee retention.

Therefore, the five strategies recommended in the proposed talent management framework measure performance on all sides. It is very easy to recognise the problem and apply the framework but the toughest part lies in the execution.

## 3. 2 Employer of choice

As the market for well-qualified and experienced job applicants becomes more competitive and with more people likely to change jobs than they ever have been, employers are becoming increasing aware of the need to manage the image of their organisations that applicants receive. The phrase 'employer of choice' is becoming increasingly common among employers trying to attract new people, and retain key staff.

Another point is that the image the organisation creates as an employer and potential employer seems to be recognised as a competitive differentiator in the same way as customer perception has also been held to be. For example, Baver and Aimen-Smith (1996) found that graduates were more likely to apply to organisations that strongly articulate their environmental policies in their recruitment literature, regardless of whether they consider themselves particularly pro-environmental. Moreover, it is important to

recognise, as shown in research by Gatewood et al (1993), that the image of an organisation or company will be perceived differently by different people. This suggests that it is particularly important to present a clear, consistent and credible image of organisation to potential applicants.

Finally, Employer of choice in recognising the importance of talent as a source of competitive advantage, are looking to win talent by tailoring employment policy to capture the dynamism of the modern era (Ashton et al, 2002). Typical measures might include package of initiatives such as offering career development opportunities, providing challenging, inspiring, enjoyable and flexible work, providing progressive benefits, paying attention to healthy workplace practices, improving incentives and encouraging participation and open communication (CLC, 2000; Hewitt Associates, 2000; lowe 2001a)

Based on a fact sheet from the Australian Bankers' association Inc, the Australian banking industry aims to be an employer of choice and individual banks have adopted people management frameworks aimed at ensuring that: employees maintain a healthy balance between work/life balance, supported by specific policies such as working partly from home;

the make-up of the workforce is aligned over time with the broader Australian community and reflects diversity, including self-identified disability and ethnicity.

## 3. 2. 1 Employer of choice strategies

The global vice president of recruitment for Philips, Jo Pieters, says it is important to include and measure both internal and external elements of an

employer branding exercise and also " Each and every employee should act as an ambassador of your brand and that requires a strong and recognised internal and external employee value proposition,"

One of the most familiar tools of employer branding is employer advertising where organisations use advertising to promote the unique employment proposition they offer potential recruits (Ewing et al., 2002). While advertising is a well accepted tool of employer branding, the employment brand itself encompasses the organisation's values, systems, policies and behaviours toward the objectives of attracting, motivating, aligning and retaining the organisation's current and potential employees (Gunasekara, 2002).

## 3. 3 Branding concepts

Branding has always been an important part of every company's marketing and advertising campaigns. Branding is an ongoing process where all the tangible and intangible elements that constitute a company's image and reputation are organised and communicated. A brand is a symbol that encapsulates that many associations that are made with a name (Gardner and Levy, 1995) and many things can be branded (Levitt, 1980) including the company itself. However, Swystun (2007) argues that ' a brand is a mixture of attributes, tangible and intangible, symbolised in a trademark, which if managed properly, creates value and influence' (p. 14).

Employer branding may be the least known type of branding yet it is becoming more important to organisation. According to the conference Board report on employer branding (Conference Board, 2001) organisations

have found that effective employer branding leads to competitive advantage, help employees internalise company values and assists in employee retention.

## 3. 3. 1 Corporate branding

The corporate brand provides a source of competitive advantage by bringing together the company vision, culture and values, with organisational systems and networks, to form a unique organisational value proposition for customers (Knox et al., 2000; Hatch and Schultz, 2003).

Moroko and Uncles (2008) contend that consumer, corporate and employer branding share similar characteristics; that is, a brand has to be noticeable, relevant and resonant, and unique. Notwithstanding, similarities between corporate branding and employer branding can be observed. According to Ambler and Barrow (1996, p. 187), an employer brand is ' the package of functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by employment, and identified with the employing company'. In addition, Park et al (1986) categorise brands based on how they fulfill the functional, symbolic and experiential needs.

## 3. 3 2Employer branding

Employment branding is the process of placing an image of being a " great place to work" in the mind of targeted candidate pool. Employer branding is similar to the concepts of 'employer of choice' (Fox, 2003). The link between employer branding and employer of choice has been stated by Harrison Kim (2005) " Successful employer branding is built on the employer's ability to

deliver on its promise and when this happens the organisation becomes ' an employer of choice.'

According to Martin et al, (2005) the concept was first discussed by marketing academics and after some delay, by a lagging interest from HR academics. In today's knowledge driven company, all departments play a strategic role in bringing the right kind of people into the organisation. Employer branding is defined as " a targeted, long-term strategy to manage the awareness and perceptions of employees and related stakeholders with regards to a particular firm" (Sullivan, 2004). Furthermore, it conveys your " value proposition" – the totality of your culture, systems, attitudes, and employee relationship along with encouraging your people to embrace and share goals for success, productivity, and satisfaction both on personal and professional levels