EMPLOYER BRANDING: A NEW CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLANK

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ABSTRACT

Employer brand can be defined as “the image of your organization as a ‘great place to work’ in the minds of current employees and key stakeholders in the external market-active and passive candidates, clients, customers and other key stakeholders. Employer branding is vital for corporations for a number of reasons. The increasing global shortage of talent driven by the ageing population, increased mobility of workers, migration, declining fertility rates, technological advances and an increase in culture diversity in organisations are some of the reasons when employer branding is now high on the leadership agenda. This includes direct and indirect experiences of dealing with the firm. Like actual product branding, organizations have started to invest employer branding as employees are the internal customers of the firm. The employer brand builds an image confirming the organization as a good place to work. Today, an effective employer brand is essential for competitive advantage. With the liberalization of the Indian economy in 1991 and subsequent economic reforms, Indian companies are becoming internationally strategic to utilize the employer brand to attract and retain talent which leads to expand and growth of the business.

This paper deals with concepts on employer branding, challenges and suggestions in building a strong employer brand and also examine how Indian organizations with a positive corporate reputation can attract and retain employees. It also focuses to explain the importance, applicability, outcome and creating an effective employer branding strategy of Indian companies.

KEYWORDS: Employer branding, Branding, Indian corporation.

INTRODUCTION AND IMPORTANCE OF EMPLOYER BRANDING IN THE PRESENT SCENARIO

Increasingly candidates and employees are thinking far more seriously about aligning their values to an organisation’s values, and so during the recruitment phase they will also look at
what an organisation can offer them as well as what they can offer an organisation. The messages given through recruitment advertising and the recruitment and induction stages often have lasting effects on how an individual might view a company. In an increasingly competitive economic and business climate companies must focus their collective efforts on developing their employer brand if they are to attract, engage and retain talent better than their competitors. No longer should the firm’s employer brand strategy be the sole responsibility of the HR department. A successful employer brand program must be sponsored by the CEO or Managing Director and should demand a high level of visibility in the company’s strategic plan. Employer branding should be viewed from the top as a ‘whole of business strategy’ for the management of people and managers at all levels must be engaged in the process.

According to Aaker (1991), established brand is regarded as a critical means for differentiating between products and creating competitive advantage for organizations. Similarly, employer branding has become a new approach for gaining an edge in the competitive world. Ambler and Barrow (1996) have defined employer branding as the development and communication of an organization’s culture as an employer in the marketplace. It is the package of functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by employment, and identified with the employing company. It conveys the “value proposition” the totality of the organization’s 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. Employer branding is a distinguishing and relevant opportunity for a company to differentiate itself from the competition creating its branded factors as its USP for employee satisfaction and happiness resulting in retention, productivity and efficiency. Branding was originally used to differentiate tangible products, but over the years it has been applied to differentiating people, places and firms (Peters, 1999). It refers to the process of identifying and creating a company brand message, applying traditional marketing principles to achieving the status of employer of choice (Sutherland et al., 2002). Like a consumer brand, it is an emotional relationship between an employer and employee. According to Sullivan (2004), employer branding is a long term strategy to manage the awareness and perceptions of employees, potential employees, and related stakeholders with regards to a particular firm. The employer brand puts forth an image showing the organization as a good place to work. This means involving employees at all levels in the development of the brand so that it accurately reflects both the realities and aspirations of the business and its workforce in recent years and also in the globalised economies, the world has witnessed the dramatic entrance and success of Indian corporations in the global marketplace.

With the continued influx of multinational corporations in India—as well as Indian corporations expanding beyond their own borders—the opportunities for India to contribute to the world economy have significantly increased, with the likelihood of favorable outcomes for “Brand India” in the domestic and international markets. Thus, as India, Inc. forges forward to make a wider mark in the world, the employer brand as a strategic HR tool will take on greater importance in Indian organizations—in how it is developed, communicated, marketed and ultimately. Big companies of India are using to solidify their brand to tap the tremendous growth potential that diverse markets represent. In product marketing, consumers make purchase decisions based on their brand perceptions and expectations of the brand experience. Similarly, for enhancing the brand image of these companies, employer branding not only would enhance
and solidify corporate reputation for fairness, inclusion and opportunity for all, but also encourage more motivations and productivities in the work. Employer branding closely relies on marketing concepts for highlighting the positioning of a company as an employer. The ‘customer’ here is the employee/potential employee’, while the aim remains the same: attracting new customers while retaining the current ones. Also, just like a consumer brand, the employer brand highlights the emotional and rational benefits that the employer provides to the employees.

According to Barrow and Mosley (2005), employer branding is used not only to transfer the message of the personality of a company as an employer of choice, but it also has been used to adapt the tools and techniques usually used to motivate and engage employees.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

There are a plethora of theories about marketing and branding, and a large number of literatures discussing corporate image and corporate reputation, however, there are only a few theories available concerning employer branding, especially the linkage between employer brand and consumer marketing communication methods. A brand was defined as a name, term, sign, symbol or design, or combination of them which is intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors (Gardner & Levy, 1995). Clark (1987) on the other hand, offered another definition relating brands with values, i.e. brand is values that provide the important link between consumers and marketers, while Kapferer (1992) approaches brands under a holistic view. He claimed that a brand is not a mere product. It is a product's essence and often brands are examined through their component parts like brand name, logo, design or packaging etc. According to Keller (1993) brand equity elevated the importance of brand in marketing communication strategy and is often used to persuade customers to buy a product or service.

However, in recent years, especially in today’s competitive market, employer branding is used to recruit and retain good employees from a diverse work force. Most companies tend to promote factors that make their firm a good place to work and also offering a bright and cheerful office space, an ethos of collaboration and teamwork, flexible working hours, crèche facilities, or even an excellent canteen. Levering (1996) has opined that a good workplace is believed to produce higher quality products, support more innovation, have the ability to attract more talented people, and experience less resistance to change and lower turnover costs, all of which translate directly into a better bottom line. According to Sutherland, Torricelli, & Karg (2002), in organization’s skilled employees are hard to attract and difficult to retain and it has become critical to business success. The employer branding is used for corporate identity and reputation which communicates its image to current and potential employees. Luthans and Peterson (2002) have found employees who are engaged in their organization with satisfaction demonstrate good performance and achieve success. This helps the corporate managers to be more effective and successful, which in turn increases the manager’s self-efficacy. Research has shown that self-efficacy is positively linked to work performance, in that individuals with higher self-efficacy are more likely to be proactive in initiating work, and show sustained effort and determination in their pursuit to achieve the task, even when problems occur. According to Robert & Dowling (2002), superior performing firms have a greater chance of sustaining superior performance over time if they also possess relatively good reputations. It is consistent with the growing body of
strategy research that links high quality intangible assets with sustained superior performance. Collins and Stevens (2002) have also stated that early recruitment and advertising may have beneficial effects on increasing the quantity and quality of applicants. Fulmer, Gerhart and Scott (2003) have analyzed employer branding policies on top 100 US companies. They found that employer branding policies were associated with not only stable and highly positive workforce attitudes but also had effect on organization’s performance.

Turban and Cable (2003) have argued that firms higher in corporate social performance (CSP) have more positive reputations and are more attractive employers to employees than firms lower in CSP. Such results suggest that potential applicants are aware of firms’ CSP and that those with more positive ratings may have competitive advantages because they attract more potential applicants than firms. Levinson (2007) also suggests that employees who are happy in their work are more likely to stay in that organization, and found that work engagement is significantly related to organizational commitment.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: EMPLOYER BRANDING

Employer branding is the process to communicate an organization's culture as an employer in the marketplace. An employer brand is the sum of all the characteristics and distinguishable features that prospective candidates and current employees perceive about an organization’s employment experience. The employment experience serves as the foundation of the employer brand and includes tangible features such as salary, rewards and benefits, but also extends to intangibles such as an organization’s culture, values, management style and opportunities for employee learning, development and recognition (Newell & Dopson, 1996; Hendry & Jenkins, 1997).

In establishing employer branding, organizational identity comes when there is a common ownership of an organizational philosophy which is manifested in a distinct corporate culture. It helps organizations to enhance employer brand identity. An organization’s image refers to how the potential and existing employee receives and perceives the employer brand. Organizational culture is an idea in the field of organizational studies and management which describes the psychology, attitudes, experiences, beliefs and values (personal and cultural values) of an organization. Employer image is a composite psychological impression that continually changes with the firm's circumstances like performance, pronouncements, etc. It is the employees’ perception of the firm. Employer brand loyalty serves to define what the organization would most like to be associated with as an employer; highlight the attributes that differentiate the organization from other employers; and clarify the employment deal (balancing the value that employees are expected to contribute with the value from employment that they can expect in return). These leads the employers to attract the employees and it would also enhance the productivity of the employees.

According to Corporate Leadership Council (1999), a firm’s employment brand is ultimately based on its actual employment offers and its ability to deliver on its promises. Like a product brand, the employer brand has multiple components, each contribute to strength of the brand with current and potential employees. The employer brand and its components are shown below in figure 2 & 3. There are five components that make a good employer brand. The first component is product brand strength. A product has added values which meets certain
psychological needs of the consumers. These added values are elicited that the brand is of higher quality or more desirable than similar products from competitors. This is also applicable on employer branding. The second component is the company culture and environment. This includes the values that the company stands for, work rituals and systems in place and examples set by the top leadership.

The third component is work life balance. There is no point wasting time and money attracting people towards something the company cannot deliver. The fourth component is work environment. If the people at the top do not show their commitment through the required actions and behaviors, the employer branding process will not be successful. The fifth is the compensations and beliefs, which is the job offer made to an employee. This is made up of the financial compensation, job role and responsibilities, designation, work environment and career development plan.

A STRATEGIC MODEL ON EMPLOYER BRANDING

In developing product branding strategy, a lot of factors are involved. They are i) nature of business, ii) nature of market, iii) target reception, iv) budget flexibility, v) long term mission of the organization, and vi) organizational structure. Similarly in employer branding, the organizations are following to develop their brands. Every organization has an external brand and an internal brand. The external brand is the image that an organization projects to the customers, suppliers, investors, and the public. The internal brand is the image of the employers to the employees. When properly planned and executed, an employer branding initiative can generate lively dialogue between an employer and its employees, build a rationale for a 'mutual working arrangement', and establish compelling reasons to commit to the arrangement.

EXTERNAL BRANDING

External branding refers to branding which is done by using external sources and which may (or may not) require some investment in monetary or other forms.

Use of job sites – As HR the first thing which comes to the mind is recruitment, so Job sites also offer good branding opportunities through different means like Pop ups, pop ins etc.

Banners – Banners are also a good mean for branding. Banners can be of both types’ means Online Banner and Street banners. By Online banner, the organization name will be flashed on different web pages as per your choice and price.

Organizing seminar, presentation - The organization can organize talks, presentations, seminars etc. for attracting people towards your organization .Corporate social responsibility (CSR) Corporate social responsibility refers to corporate getting associated with society for some noble cause. The association can be in any mode either getting associated with a Charitable Trust or a NGO or some other public venture. Public events – Public events are one of the major ways of creating a brand image. An organization can participate in any of the public event and assuring that it does not get disappeared in the crowd of many brands or big names.
Newspaper Branding can be done through newspapers as well. If you target the local public, you can go for advertisements considering the individual day circulation, target readers, rapport of newspaper, type of newspaper etc. If you target only to employ people for your workforce requirement, you can place job Ads which may seem expensive at the first glance but in terms of attracting the correct workforce, it can do magic. Email – For mail ids related to job portals, the organization can create an auto reply which can contain brief description of the key aspects of candidate’s and public interest and at the same time introducing that company to the public.

INTERNAL BRANDING

Internal Branding is concerned with the current and potential employees’ information about the employment experience and what is expected of them.

Front office – Always pay attention to your front office because first impression is last impression. It should be kept neat and clean with a pleasant receptionist who always maintains freshness and welcomes the guests with courtesy.

Stays interview – HR department can always conduct stay interviews in which they can interact with the employee and ask them regarding their career prospects, there alignment with the company, there feedback regarding their concerned departments, etc. These feedbacks could be analyzed and therefore an internal brand image of the country can be created.

Exit interview – An exit always carries a fair chance of initiating the chain reaction among the employees. By analyzing the exiting reasons, the organization can overcome the justified ones in the future.

Employee satisfaction: Employee satisfaction is always very important for any organization to grow. A satisfied employee is a productive employee. The company must create a good and positive rapport for the company in the market outside.

Policy information: A policy should be designed in such a way that it holds good even after a long period of time. A frequent internal policy change sends a message to the outer world that the company is not consistent and reliable.

Customer orientation: Customers are always the most important factors in business activities. The workforce should always be motivated towards delivery of customers’ perceived requirements

Employee participation: Always try to ensure the maximum participation from the employee side, either in terms of internal events participation or external events.

Trained employees: The organization should impart proper training of employees before they are engaged in work. The training should be in all the aspects like policies, vision, mission and activities of the organization. This will project a good picture of organization on the new employee.
ROLE OF CAREER WEBSITE IN BUILDING A STRONG EMPLOYER BRAND

Developments in internet technologies have been rapid and is assisting employers to attract the best minds in the marketplace for talent and are also providing candidates with an opportunity to learn more about the ‘inside’ of the organisation. The use of the internet for activities central to the employment experience has shifted the paradigm of the traditional recruitment process. The recruitment process is now being supported by online RSS feeds, podcasting, blogs, video, social media integration, real time chat, IM, virtual meetings and e-recruitment technology platforms with integrated applicant tracking systems. The global reach of the internet provides candidates with an opportunity to learn more about prospective employers, their policies and their practices more than even before. In most cases the information on careers sites was simply a replica of the "about us" section of the main corporate website. It is becoming increasingly important for companies to effectively communicate the employer value propositions to their target audiences in order to improve the perception and realities of their company as a great place to work. With the global reach of the internet companies are fast realising the benefits an effective careers website has in communicating their employer brand to their target audience.

A well designed careers website will not only deliver process and sourcing cost savings it will also improve candidate quality and opportunity cost savings by reducing the time of unfilled positions through a higher quality, targeted recruiting process. The career website must be a communications vehicle and process enabler and the development process should begin with defining the objectives, scope and resources available to build the site. The careers website will evolve as the company tracks and measures the success of the platform in its recruitment initiatives.

The success of your careers site should be measured by the number of unique visitor to your site, quality of candidates who are posting, conversion rates and the effectiveness of the application process.

EMPLOYER BRANDING ON INDIAN COMPANIES

Employer–employee relationships have undergone a paradigm shift over the past few decades.

The war for talent has meant companies are jostling for space in an increasingly crowded job market where skill is at a premium. A successful employer branding strategy can have a far reaching impact in increasing the number and quality of applicants. With companies like Nokia, Infosys, TCS, Tata Steel, CEAT figuring prominently in establishing their brand as a best place for working and also attracting the best talents across the world, one can safely surmise that wooing talent is the new battle to be fought. This can happen only when there is a perception that their workplace is attractive. Infosys and the companies seek to do this by a strong learning culture and leadership development strategy, where each employee has a career roadmap to follow.
EMPLOYER BRAND: NOKIA

Nokia is a good example of a company that sells its employment promise very well to the target audience it is trying to engage and recruit. Nokia use competitions to engage their target audience. The Mobile Rules competition invited business plans from applicants that ‘will shake up the mobile world.’ The initiative was an excellent way to discover new talent or identify passive candidates that Nokia may wish to recruit.

Nokia promotes its employment experience as:

A flat, networked organization, as well as speed and flexibility in decision-making, characterize the Nokia Way of working. Equal opportunities and openness towards people and new ideas are also key elements we want to nourish. Nokia is straightforward when dealing with customers and suppliers and always looks for innovative ways of creating and introducing products and solutions to the market. A platform should be provided to individuals for personal growth in a challenging environment with a clear vision, goals and shared management principles - the Nokia Way. The Nokia Way brings together talented individuals who share these principles, and therefore share success.” It is a compelling brand statement that will raise the expectations of the candidate but also communicates a company that has a clear vision about how what it offers in the employment experience. Nokia also use employee testimonials and employee blogs to provide an insight into what it’s like to work for the company.

EMPLOYER BRAND: INFOSYS

At a time when organizations are debating the strategic importance of their human resources, Infosys recognizes that the key role of its human assets can sustain and increase its competitiveness. With changing employee demographics in the world, it has become essential to source talent where it is cost-effective and deploys it where it creates the maximum value. To achieve this objective, Infosys has developed an innovative workforce –management strategy – the Global Talent Program. This is the largest sustained effort by any company to recruit from campuses outside of India and develop the skills of a global workforce through training assignments in India. After training, the trained personnel are deployed by Infosys in their home countries. Increased profitability, reduced cost, increased market share, improved customer service, higher stock value, increased productivity and higher retention rates led to the winning the Optimas Award in the GLOBAL outlook category for 2007. In addition to this, Infosys keeps its employees engaged and enthusiastic in the demanding 24*7 work environment necessary to serve its global clientele. To meet the global challenges and also to reduce attrition rate, Infosys introduced a wide variety of programs that provides the best aspects of universities but with professionalism that a workplace required. These programs have helped stem attrition, which is well below the industry average and have made Infosys a top employer of choice. Business today and its knowledge partner Mercer Human Resource Consulting rated Infosys the Best Company to Work for In India” in 2006, based on a methodology built on four quadrants of HR metrics, employee satisfaction, perceptions of key stakeholders, and HR processes and policies.
EMPLOYER BRAND: TATA CONSULTANCY SERVICES (TCS)

The work environment at TCS is built around the belief of growth beyond boundaries. Some of the critical elements that define the work culture of TCS are global exposure, cross domain experience, and work life balance. Each of these elements goes much deeper than what it ostensibly conveys.

TCS VALUE PROPOSITION

The TCS employer brand positioning builds on its strengths and it communicates that TCS as an organization that offers its employees a complete Global IT Career by highlighting the three main value propositions:

(a) Global exposure Global exposure at TCS extends beyond geographical boundaries. This means working on world class projects on a global scale and exploring cutting edge technologies, fresh out of the world renowned research labs. The opportunity to understand, interact, and work with people from cultures all over the world creates kaleidoscopic avenues for learning that propel the employees to be at par the best in the world.

(b) Freedom to work TCS has established an environment that focuses on individual aptitude, talent, and interests. As a proven practice, the company promotes the employees cross domain experience. It provides the employees with opportunities to function across different industry verticals, service practices, and functional domains as well as varied technology platforms.

(c) Work life balance TCS has introduced many programs as per the needs and aspirations of our employees while retaining fun as a key element. The company understands the need of an increased flexibility in order to navigate the different spheres of life.

EMPLOYER BRAND: TATA STEEL

India’s oldest and most respected corporate brand ‘TATA’ at present stands 65th in the world brand valuation league as per Brand Finance Global 500 March 2010 report. A series of international acquisitions and 65 percent of group’s revenues drawn from outside India has helped the 140 year old group to achieve a major international reach today. Tata has many different markets and many different types of customers. However, customer’s images of Tata brand are remarkably similar. Indian consumers see Tata brand as trustworthy, safe, and reliable and provider for value for money. The company has always developed a reputation as an exciting place to work in. The employer brand is much move tightly focused and allows everyone, from top executives to staff to workers to feel that they are working in a comfortable environment where growth and development always exist. The Tata Steel group believes that people are its key assets and value creation for the company depends principally on their professional and personal wellbeing. Adhering to the adage “successful individuals create a successful team”, Tata Steel has always given priority to the people, encouraging them to take initiatives and look beyond the obvious. The organization provides a fertile ground for the personal and individual growth of each member in its large and multicultural family. For these initiatives, Asia's Best Employer Brand Awards 2010 conferred the title 'CEO with HR Orientation' on HM Nerurkar,
managing director, Tata Steel, at a recent ceremony held at , Singapore. Additionally, the 'HR Leadership Award' was also conferred on Radhakrishnan Nair, chief human resource officer (CHRO).

EMPLOYER BRAND: CEAT TYRES

CEAT Tyres, the flagship company of RPG Enterprises, was established in 1958. Today, CEAT is one of India's leading tyre manufacturers and has a strong presence in both domestic & international markets. The company emerges as one of the best employer brand amongst the Indian tyre companies. Awarded by the Employer Branding Institute Australia, the company bagged seven awards from the western region for its different HR practices. CEAT, the only tyre company from the western region received awards in 2009 in the following seven categories: Best HR strategy in line with business, (ii) Talent management (iii) Innovative retention strategy, (iv) Continuous of HR Strategy at work, (v) Innovation in career development, (vi) Excellence in training, (vii) Excellence in HR through technology The company has told in a press release on 28th December 2009 that this award recognizes CEAT's contemporary and forward looking people practices. Its own innovative HR practices reflect the ethos and values of our company where CEAT transforms the best workplace in the country.

CHALLENGES AND SUGGESTIONS IN BUILDING A STRONG EMPLOYER BRAND

The biggest challenge in employer branding is ownership. As it is often not clear who should sponsor it, the responsibility can fall down the middle between marketing, corporate communications, and HR. To succeed, it needs an integrated process linking all departments and with endorsement from the highest level within the organisation. As an aspirational goal it also needs a pragmatic approach to achieve it. The biggest obstacles HR often face when trying to implement changes include clarity, resources and capability. Employer brand projects can be very complex more so if a company has a globally dispersed workforce that operates across diverse cultures. Having the appropriate resources including both personnel and funding available is going to require a greater understanding at Board and Shareholder level for companies to accept that the labour market is only going to get tougher and that an increased level of investment must be allocated towards Employer Branding initiatives.

There is also a need for an increased capability for HR to build a business case for employer branding and to demonstrate a return on investment. HR personnel need to understand the future needs of the organisation and put forward a compelling business case for enhancing the company’s employer brand to attract and retain talent and build an engaged workforce. Research has shown conclusively that an engaged workforce delivers stronger financial returns and shareholder value.

SUGGESTIONS

Globally there is a trend for companies to focus on the role of the employee in driving business performance, just like the role of superior products and services (consumer branding) in driving revenue. With the shift in demand/supply of talent these individuals have a higher worth and expectations in the labour market and can freely choose who they work for. From top tier to
bottom tier companies they are all saying the same thing – “it’s so hard to find good staff these days,” so this would suggest that it’s becoming increasingly competitive to attract and retain talent at all levels and it creates a flow on effect once the cream of talent is taken up by the companies that best fit the needs (total employment package including tangible – pay, career development, etc and intangible elements – caring for their environment, family friendly, etc) of the target candidate.

Consistency in the delivery of the employer brand is very important. The companies who really live by their employer brand are those who consistently deliver through their people, products, premises and processes, a level of service excellence that is consistent, 24/7, 365 days a year.

Leading employers understand the key motivators for staff that drive performance and engagement. They conduct employee research at least once per year and act on the responses. They collect information at all stages of the employment lifecycle and make changes accordingly. The best employers develop an employer brand community which includes stakeholders from inside and outside the company. An employer value proposition that is clearly understood across all stakeholder groups and is relevant and compelling ensures a consistent delivery of the key messages around, “what the company is like to work for.”

The best employers also use integrated communication touch points to deliver the employment promise messages. These touch points include online (career website, blogs, social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, virtual sites such as Second Life and online careers fairs. Offline touch points include press advertising, company presentations, recruitment and induction processes and community events. The employment promise is being delivered along all of these channels and the message needs to manage carefully to ensure it aligns with the image the company wants to build with the target audience.

Which corporations are the "Opinion Leaders" of Employer Branding? What is the connection between the companies (why do they focus on employer branding?)

Good employers have the employer branding high on the corporate agenda and include it as part of their strategic plan. Companies like Philips and Google put employees at the centre of their business strategy and drive improved business performance through engaging their employees to deliver a truly memorable customer experience. This is why these companies are regularly talked about in the press and need to rely less on paid advertising due to the high level of employee advocacy and market endorsement that exists.

Main areas organisations need to focus on to improve their desirability as an employer to new employees. The main areas include:

- Companies need to ensure the employment experience across the employee lifecycle matches with the perception of the experience from the outside. The employer brand promise communicated through integrated communicated initiatives must provide a realistic view of what a new hire can expect from the employment experience from hire to retire.
Organisations need to ensure they have a fully integrated online and offline communication plan using channels that deliver compelling and relevant messages about the employment offering to the target audience. The Phillips career website provides an excellent example of a company that has a clear talent acquisition strategy supported by online communication initiatives. The site at www.philips.com provides excellent insights into what it's like to work at Philips.

Companies need to nurture a culture that leads to an engaged workforce in order to build brand ambassadors from the inside. A word of mouth referral by an existing employee is a true source of competitive advantage not to mention the savings in recruitment and turnover costs.

Fostering a culture that supports learning and development. The rapid rate of change in the business environment means employees need to provide a supportive environment for skill build and capability development in order to attract and retain talent.

CONCLUSION

In the increasingly difficult labour market for attracting and retaining talent, organisations need to apply brand management thinking and techniques to this issue of creating meaning and relevance to current and future employees. Employer branding is one such strategy that ensures the organisation is able to attract, engage and retain the building blocks of what is now recognised as a firm’s source of greatest competitive advantage – its human capital. Today, an effective employer brand is essential for gaining competitive advantage. Increasingly, Indian corporations are becoming intentionally strategic to utilize the employer brand to attract and retain talent for the expansion and growth. The increasing focus on competitive advantage is leading many Indian firms to rethink their employer brands. A powerful employer brand has the capacity to attract and retain talent and represent quality to its customers, with the goal of gaining global recognition in a sustainable manner. The right kind of employer branding has also plenty of advantages as it provides a personality to the company and helps structure recruitment. It pulls in the right kind of candidates and spells out the company’s expectations from them right at the beginning. Most importantly, it ensures that the best employees stay on longer, thus allowing the company to carry on its operations smoothly. Ultimately, the key to a successful employer brand is to ensure that expectations are fully aligned with the realities of working for the organization.

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