
Employer Branding as an Intervention for Retaining Talent: A study in Google

Abstract

Today organisation is working under a high competitive and unpredictable environment. Day by day job market became more and more competitive. The concept of employment has been changed to employability. Today employees are eager to go up the ladder faster which may be one of the reasons that the rate of attrition is high. This attrition became a threat and challenge for the organisations. Organisations understood that in order to survive they need to have a good market value. A good brand image will help the organisation to attract and retain its talent. As brand makes the product unique, employer branding represents the personality of the organisation. This article is a descriptive study to understand employer branding as the corporate strategy of in order to attract and retain the talent. The article discussed various interventions of Google India to be a brand for its employee. The findings will be arrived at analyzing the data collected fro the secondary sources.

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Introduction

Today's world is brand conscious and creating brand awareness is vital for organisation's survival. Brand delivers the promise to the customer. Similarly a company tag is essential to attract and retain its human resources. There are many current pressures today which encourage employees to treat their people with the same care and coherence as they would value customers.¹ Therefore employer branding became one of the most significant development in today's context. Employees look for organisations characterised as leadership, achievement, people development and overall a happy-go type culture.

Organisations compete aggressively to attract and retain best talent. In these connection organisations understood that employer has to brand themselves to retain talents. Libby Sartain and Mark Schumann said the commitment o a longer term relationship with a brand filled with loyalty and trust.²

HR plays a strategic role in bringing in the right people into the right organisation. Although employer branding has been around since the early 1990s, it finally seems that its time has come as more and more organisations begin to recognize its importance. Strong employer brands have employer value propositions (EVP's) which are



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communicated in company actions and behaviours and evoke both emotive and tangible benefits for current and prospective employees. Importance of employer branding is widely felt in organisations.

Functional benefit, psychological and economical benefit are identified as the aspects of Employer Branding. The labour market and the employees judge the organisations based on their image.

Causes for Employees Leaving Organization

Employee attrition is a big problem not only in India but outside India too. From the employees' point of view career development initiatives gives them a clear focus about their career track, the blind spots that they have to overcome and the final goal to be reached. Azim H. Premji, Chairman Wipro Limited, said "If you're losing good people, look to their immediate boss." People leave the managers or supervisor more often they leave the company or job. Any disturbances in the superior – subordinate relationship may hamper the harmony of the workplace which ultimately may result employee attrition. There are many causes for which employees change the job. Career planning has been seen as a boost to employee motivation and employee engagement. From the employees' point of view career development initiatives gives them a clear focus about their career track, the blind spots that they have to overcome and the final goal to be reached. If career development is not managed well then it may affect the employee performance for which employee may leave the organisation. Employee in search of better career growth, change to new company. Employee also leaves the organisation due to poor compensation and work condition.

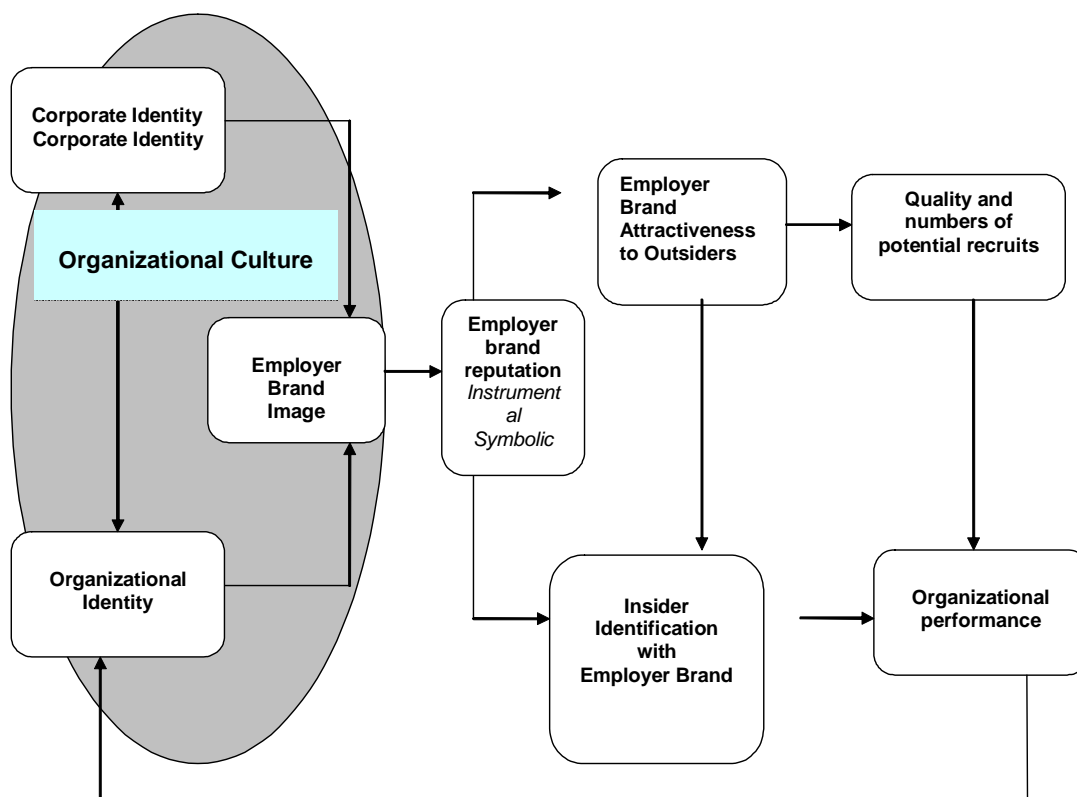
People have many reasons to leave the job. It should be the responsibility of the management to identify those reasons so that they can work on those to cease employees exit.

Importance of Employer Branding

The expectation of the potential candidates today is that employer branding has become more of need, as most professionals are looking at relatively friendly organisations where they can have meaningful employment. To retain, attract and motivate and engage the employer in any organization, it is very necessary to make feel the employer how important they are in the organization and also show care and concern for them and hence for all these employer branding is very necessary. Some more benefits of employer branding is as follows:-

- Significant decreases in cost per hire
- Reduced cost of recruitment - efficiencies maximised throughout the recruitment process
- Reduction in recruitment marketing costs over time
- Greater numbers of higher quality applicants
- Higher performing employees
- Increased retention rates
- Stronger reputation in the marketplace
- Increased ability to attract specialist talent in a difficult market

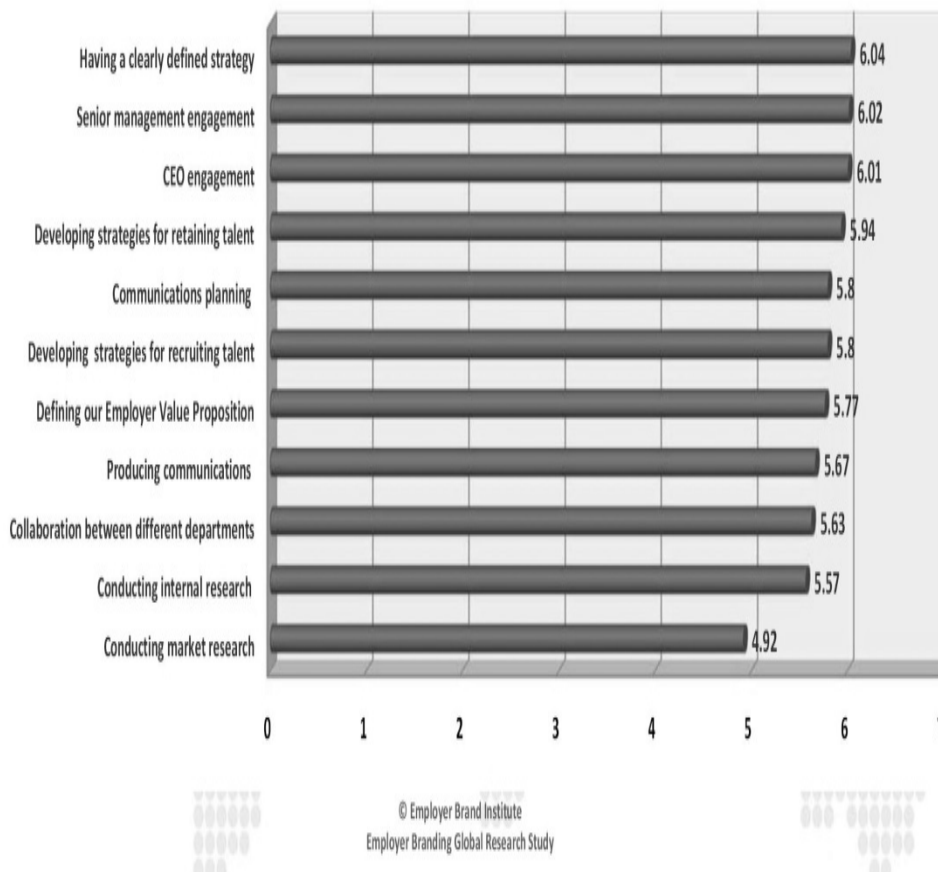
In one survey it is revealed that more companies are now focusing on employer branding to “attract employees” and keep them engaged. There is a direct correlation between an effective employer brand and achieving business success. It helps in retaining current employees, increasing employee satisfaction, attracting job candidates, and motivating employees in their work, which leads to excellent business gains. The purpose is to use the internal brand as the seedbed for aligning their people programmes to deliver significantly improved business results. This is evident from some of the recent initiatives taken by organisations to make the workplace more employer-friendly and implement development concepts like “spiritual quotient” and “value-building”. Some companies have gone even further and appointed “internal branding consultants”, targeted to have a better relationship with their employees.



Most companies are in the early stages of developing an employer brand strategy that builds competitive advantage (globally only 16% have a clearly defined strategy), so the survey results provide some important guidance for leaders to ensure their investments are focused on priority areas.

Figure 1: How important are the following to you in achieving your employer branding objectives? (rank in order from 1 to 7 (1=least important, 7 equals most important))

Figure 1:



4Ps of Employer Branding.

Product, price, promotion and place are the four Ps of marketing. In the same way the Ps of HR or specifically of employer branding can be categorised as people, pay, performance and prospects.

People

People are the most valuable asset of any organisation. The biggest benefit of this aspect is unlike other asset do not depreciate over a period of time, but appreciates with better training. The concept of people in HR includes both internal and external customers. A link should be maintained with the internal and external customer. HR department should make decision that would not discourage employees from being aligned to the brand behaviour. To build a brand high participation of internal customer is essential. To make the brand more valuable company need to focus on what its internal and external customers expect from it. This cannot be achieved by fancy packages, catchy slogans and name changes either. This can be achieved by thinking business with a product to be developed.

Today it's the era of employer of choice. Employment contract includes all those tangible items which are extrinsic. On the other hand every employee establish an unwritten contract called psychological contract which includes working condition, superior – subordinate relationship.

Package and Pay

Competitive package is also very important to maintain the brand of the employer. To establish equity in the organisation compensation should be taken care of. A branded employer maintains both internal and external equity. The internal equity method undertakes the job position in the organizational hierarchy. The process aims at balancing the compensation provided to a job profile in comparison to the compensation provided to its senior and junior level in the hierarchy. The fairness is ensured using job ranking, job classification, level of management, level of status and factor comparison. Whereas external equity refers when organisation pay wages that are relatively equal to what other employers are paying for similar type of work. Pay for performance is also extensively used in organisations. Pay for performance is generally given for specific performance results rather than simply for time worked which includes merit pay, bonuses, perks and group incentives.

Performance

To synchronise the contribution of the employees towards the organisation goal organisations give importance to performance management. Performance management creates a work environment where people can perform to the best of their ability. Actual performance of the organisation is the extrinsic variable and performance management is the intrinsic variable. Both these variables is essential in creating brand of the organisation.

Prospects

The nature of work, organizations, and careers has evolved significantly in the past decade. Career development is now primary responsible of every individual in the organisation. Every employee when enters the organisation should have a clarity of the career progression available for his her growth. Most organisations develop interesting and attractive career paths for its employees. Providing promising career development initiatives will help organisation build a good brand.

Google's Branding

Multiple times Google has been voted as best place to work by Fortune magazine's #1. Again in 2010 Google leads as India's Best Company to Work for. The survey was conducted by Great Place to Work Institute among 3800 companies and 44 countries. In India there were 395 participants this year. Google also ranked 3rd as best place to work for in the survey made by business today in 2011.

Google has emerged as a brand for its employee. Its various HR interventions made its employee engaged in their job. Various efforts of Google which made it a brand are :

Work force diversity: Google is the real example of Workforce Diversity. Google family includes people from various backgrounds. The workforce includes ex army men to former school teachers. The India office is a great place to see Google's "Forty Language Initiative" at work which is about the internet company's ability to deliver its products in forty languages.

Recruitment

Google have an aggressively non discriminatory hiring policy where they focus ability over experience. At Google they look for Googliness of the candidate. In recruitment they focus on comfort with technology, optimistic about the future, driven to make an impact, bringing leadership, creativity and passion to everything a candidate will do. In Google one has to go through a series of written tests and the interviews are also rigorous so that the interviewer can go deep into the candidate. The company's recruitment process ensures that it gets the people edge it needs. There is a battery of writing tests, interviews are rigorous, not in the sense of being a stress interview, but interviewers try and go deep into what makes the candidate tick. Then a detailed feedback on the candidate is given to an independent team in charge of hiring.

Orientation

New Googlers are termed as Nooglers in Google. These new entrants are introduced to other Googlers at a local Thank Google It's Friday (TGF) restaurant at an employee all hands meeting held every Friday afternoon. Heads of various businesses welcome the newbies.

Career Development

In Google there is scope for professional growth, learning and development for the all the employees. Number of recognition programme has been implemented in Google such as manager's awards, peer bonuses and founder's awards.

Work Environment

Google have a lively working environment. In one interview Mr Manoj Verghesse, Director HR, Google India told, they believe in fun at work. In order to keep the employees enthusiastic all the time in Google they celebrate many activities and events such as Pyjama Day, quarterly and annual off-sites, winter holiday party, summer picnic, "Google Idol" competition, Diwali and Christmas celebration etc.

Conclusions

Intellectual stimulating thought provoking and a relaxed environment is conducive for creative thinking and encourages innovation. Google is the place which stimulates creativity and innovation among its employees. Google employees spend 20% time in something they are passionate about. All these HR interventions made Google a brand. As employer branding is closely associated with organisational culture, Google has already developed a favourable culture. Hence through its branding Google promote and reinforce the corporate positioning amongst its employees.

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