



SMART HR: INTERNAL BRANDING AS AN EFFECTIVE HR TOOL & A REPUTATION MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUE

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Abstract

In the time of digital and virtual efficiency, where brands have mastered the art of their branding techniques and are quite happy with their visibility, it's equally important however is that they realize how imperative it is for them to concentrate on the internal strength of the company. Only if a company is internally strong can it be externally sound and do justice to all its branding related endeavors.

Internal branding is actually a relatively new understanding within an organization, where emphasis is given to the fact that the employees become more customer focused and understand the nuances of business well.

HR strategy must be designed in such a way that every single employee gets to understand what exactly their JD is and how their honest contribution can actually lead to the company's success. Adequate and smart HR policies, internal communications and corporate marketing efforts and strategy put together can do the wonder for best branding.

Companies whose personnel understand how they operate and make money perform better. The confidence level in employee's increases and the transparency brings loyalty in them as well. Committed employees provide stronger performance and generate higher customer satisfaction. One big question that every employee has in his mind before joining the company is that 'what is in for me', and this juncture is where internal branding comes in action. Once the employee is convinced with the way the company conducts and takes care of all the rules, he becomes confident and convinced with the job and at the same time proud of his organization where he is working.

In this paper, the concept of internal branding is reviewed and its importance to the overall brand engagement is outlined.

Introduction

Internal Branding practice in organizations:

Internal Branding is a perception that amalgamates the disciplines of marketing, management and human resources. "Companies are totally aware now that sending the right message to their employees is just as significant as making a good impression with customers, clients, vendors and investor. Successful internal branding lifts brand equity, customer focus and ultimately shareholder value. Internal branding, done well, escalates employees from being mere informed to totally being in sync with the work culture and method. As a result the employees work with confidence and become eligible for Rewards & Recognition.

Since majority of the companies have now realized the importance of internal branding very well many new practices have come up in order to ensure total results in this regard. The new measures include- recognizing the importance of the customers, call and service centers, sales associates, statements/ invoices, advertising, after sales services, relationship management and CRM, Data management and more. Companies have gone to the extent of having "Employee Brand Ambassadors" who can and will promote the brand internally through experiential communication.





Few more things that can be kept in mind are:

1. Marketing team should work closely with your Human Resources team to guarantee that the common values of the company both internally and externally are in corroborating.
2. Right skills and aptitudes must be the criteria for recruiting that will represent the brand promise excellently.
3. Strong internal communication must be established continuously that can speak for the brand promise. Important data that supports this connection between understanding and internal change was released recently This study by McKinsey concludes that change-management programs succeed only when employees at all levels - senior managers, middle managers, and the front line - share the will and the skills to change. McKinsey studied change programs at forty organizations, and found a strong correlation between good skills for managing change and the value an organization carries away from these programs. These skills, I would add, are the product of effective change communications and internal branding programming. The more informed, persuaded and understanding the workforce is, the faster you can implement change. The appearance a company extends to its customers and the public is in large part a replication of the aspect it presents to its employees. Consequently, the way customers view the company is meaningfully enriched, or contracted, by the way employees view the company.

Wal-mart even uses the mass media in its internal branding. Its television adverts featuring greeters in store are as much about demonstrating appropriate behavior to the company's own employees as they are about promoting the store to the general public.

Some examples of best managed companies that can vouch that their internal branding is strong enough to take care of the external branding as well: Finance Asia magazine conducted a poll survey on the best managed companies in India and the top 9 best managed companies are listed below. TCS and HDFC top the list.

TCS

TCS is one of the largest companies by market share and revenue. Natarajan Chandrashekar the CEO and MD of the company has been formulating and executing the global strategy of the company. The initiatives, investment abilities and new ideas by Natarajan cherished the company.

HDFC

The skilled professionals and management teams of HDFC have brought them to top 2 level of best managed company.

Infosys

The branding among the investor community and attractive transparency and exposure has brought in effective management.

Bharti Airtel

The effective organization structure is a main weapon to help them to reach to this level. The service and dedication is all performed with utmost interest by the workers.

ONGC

The management is undertaken by the board of directors who for create policy, policies and evaluate the performance every so often. The supervision, control and guidance are done in a diligent manner.

SBI

The expansion and the welfare activities they being involved actively makes it a very respectful concern. They have created a strong sensivity among people and the people in the organization have been working zealously for the betterment of the country's economic growth.

Page industries

Page Industries possess the exclusive license of Jockey International Inc, a U.S. based company. Their leisure wear and lingerie of this company is one of the bestselling in India. They have been maintaining a great universal quality by offering world class products.

Reliance communications

The leadership team in the Rel Comm is very strong and works with uniformity.

Cadila

The work culture is multicultural and multilingual. Around 4000 people are employed including 200 non-Indians in 49 countries of Africa, CIS, Japan and U.S.

Involve the employees

The communication strategy of various branding campaigns must make sure that they are first known to the employees and as a matter of fact the communication design must be planned based on the various ideas given by the employees. This practice will assuredly compel the employees to go out and get more information about their company. Walmart uses three very simple brand pillars, Starbucks six "differentiators" that made up a very directive internal playbook for change.

Adequate attention to employees as important corporate brand builders is a must. Employee performance can be improved by the right HR practices and measures where in once the employees are well taken care half of the internal branding is done. These happy employees become the communicators to the outside world.



This suggests that employee brand understanding and commitment is definitely a must and can be gained by various in-house measures ensuring not only safety and security of the employees but also by designing special programs and facilities for the employees.

Methodology

The study consists descriptive information. This study is based totally on the secondary data. The data was collected through internet.

Objective of the Study:

1. To understand what is internal branding and how can it be related to HR.
2. To determine correlation between internal branding and external branding.
3. To provide an insight in to how this the combination of internal branding and external branding can prove as a best HR strategy ultimately benefitting the organization.

Conclusion:

Building an internal brand is imperative because you have, by default, chosen each and every one of your employees to be transporters of your company's brand. And therefore their actions and perception of your company will directly control your corporate reputation and brand image.

A positive brand identity leads to loyal customers, strong referral sources and strong internal growth. Bottom line from HR perspective: Take care of your employees and they in turn will take care of your brand.

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