

Employer brand: promotion communication tools

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Abstract. In today's economy, the labor market is experiencing strong competition between companies for highly qualified specialists. Russian and international companies are forced to resort to new tools for attracting and managing staff loyalty and involvement, and shaping their image on the labor market. In recent years, employer brand has become increasingly important as a source of sustainable competitive advantage - the best candidates on the job market. The strategic goal of branding is to attract, retain, and engage external and internal customers by creating an attractive value proposition and broadcasting it to external customers. Employers use different communication tools to promote the employer brand. The most widespread and effective are social networks: modern channels of communication and promotion of the employer's brand. A program for the development of a promotion channel for the company's HR brand has been proposed. An algorithm for promoting an HR brand through targeted advertising on Instagram has been presented.

Keywords: employer brand, personnel attraction, recruiting, social networks, employer brand promotion, promotion channels.

1. Introduction

The modern labor market is short on qualified personnel. The labor market is increasingly transforming into a market for companies trying to get highly-skilled personnel. Traditional management methods are no longer effective in dealing with issues arising from personnel management. In the current conditions, a highly qualified candidate chooses a new job as a consumer. The choice of the applicant is influenced by a set of factors of each specific organization, which is defined in total as the employer's brand. A well-developed employer brand creates a sustainable competitive advantage for the company. The goal of developing an employer brand is to create an image of the employer as an ideal place of work, including economic, psychological and functional benefits for potential candidates for vacancies and employees of the company. At the very beginning, the company's main goal of creating an employer brand is to attract the necessary personnel, to make a statement about oneself on the labor market. As the company grows, it focuses on the development and stabilization of all elements of the employer's brand, targeting potential candidates. The maturity stage is characterized by the consolidation of the employer's brand position in the labor market. During the recession stage, a developed brand helps to retain staff and build a sense of unity and confidence in the future.

The objective of the research is to substantiate theoretically the employer's brand, study practically its promotion channels, develop and test a set of measures to use channels for promoting the employer's brand. Based on this goal, it is necessary to complete the following tasks: study the channels for promoting the employer's brand for potential applicants, develop a program for promoting the employer's brand, and propose recommendations for the implementation of the promotion tool.

2. Methodology

The term "employer brand" was first proposed by Ambler T. and Barrow S. (Ambler, Barrow, 1996) as a designation of all the advantages offered by the company. An employer's brand represents a "value proposition" that people think they will receive by working for a particular employer (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004). The study of the literature on employer brand makes it apparent that this concept includes the amalgamation of the areas of marketing and human resources management (Edwards, 2005). The concept of the employer brand was first discussed by marketing scientists, and then became the subject of study by scientists in the field of human resource management (Martin, 2006, Ambler, 2003). Recently, this term has evolved and includes a wide range of company activities aimed at attracting and retaining talented professionals (Barrow, Mosley, 2006; Mosley, 2007; Nedoluzhko, 2016). Employer brand covers the alignment of all HR processes in a company to make it competitive and attractive in the labor market.

The main goal of employer brand management is to improve the quality of recruitment, the level of motivation and the involvement of the employees. In its scope, employer brand crosses all areas of human resource management and becomes an umbrella program that ensures the comprehensive development of personnel policy (Edwards, 2010; Varkulevich, 2018; Titova, 2020). Employer brand establishes the identity of the company as an employer, encompassing its values and policies aimed at achieving the goals of attracting, motivating and retaining the current and potential employees (Dell, Ainspan, 2001, Demtsura et al. 2020).

Exploring companies engaged in different activities and different number of employees, one can see the employer's brand is subdivided into spontaneous and formed. The formed employer brand is the result of the efforts of the management team, marketing and communications specialists, HR managers, and the spontaneous brand is formed in the market using the opinion of the company's stakeholders (customers, consumers, suppliers). Negative spontaneous employer brands require urgent adjustment. Most employers do not pay due attention to their brand as an employer, not to mention the full-fledged building of systems for the selection, adaptation, motivation and involvement of employees (Arnaut, 2018, Masilova, 2020, Root, 2020). The result of a negative employer brand is the lack of relevant responses to the vacancy, high turnover, reduced employee motivation, and low labor results.

Employer brand forms in two directions: work on the internal and external employer brand. The external brand is aimed at the labor market using communication channels with the target audience and carrying out relevant activities to attract employees. The core of the employer's brand is the "Employment value proposition" - the strategic concept of the employer's brand, implemented by the employer through a set of communication tools to broadcast the functional, emotional and social benefits and attributes to the target audience of the organization (Tsareva, 2018). Each of the six EVP blocks is aimed at both retaining company employees and attracting potential candidates. Attributes of retention include career opportunities, the internal environment of the organization, and recognition. Attributes of attraction include the reputation of the organization, the scale of the tasks and the specifics of the activity. The use of attributes in the complex leads to an increase in the market capacity of potential candidates and an increase in the loyalty of working employees. HR branding comprehensively performs the following functions in a company:

- analyzing the needs of employees and the development of measures to improve working conditions;
- analyzing and controlling the effectiveness of the program or activities aimed at creating a positive image of the company;
- ensuring and/or improving communication between and team integration of employees of the company;
- maintaining the constant development of the employer's brand in compliance with the developed strategy.

The methodological basis for the study of the employer brand includes both an assessment through the degree of employee engagement (Amber, Barrow, 1996) and the loyalty of potential candidates, a "candidate journey map" (Hoang, 2018). The loyalty indicator of potential candidates is recorded in the "candidate journey": awareness - consideration - interest - application - selection - recruitment. In total, the employer brand includes, according to B. Minchington, four groups of assets: awareness of the employer's brand; employer brand associations; perceived work experience; and employer brand loyalty (Minchington, 2015). A company that maintains its HR checks the reviews, tries to fix existing problems, and also provides sufficient relevant information, which inspires confidence in the company among future employees and customers. Companies with a well-developed HR brand now fill vacancies less than half as long as before, show a 25% increase in recruiting costs, and an increase in loyalty and satisfaction by 25%. A company with a strong employer brand can successfully attract passive candidates, who make up 60% of the workforce, reducing the time and cost of recruiting. An important indicator of the development of the employer's brand is the loyalty of the employees themselves to the organization in which they work (Demushina, 2015, Karymova, 2017). This indicator tells us how an employee relates to his company, whether he is ready to continue working for it, introduce new ideas and recommend the company as an employer to his friends.

In recent years, there has been a constant development of digital technologies and social networks. Corporate profiles of companies appear on social networks, where everyone can read learn the corporate culture and events of the company, its employees, their work, details of the working functionality. According to the Randstad HR brand survey conducted in 33 countries in 2020, 52% of candidates search

for information about companies on social media and visit the company's website before submitting their CVs (Employer brand research, 2020). Every fourth job seeker is looking for a future job on social networks. More and more companies are using social media to promote their HR brand and recruiting. In October 2020, the number of active authors in social media in Russia amounted to 64 million, 42.8 million of which was the Instagram audience (Social networks in Russia, 2020). This social network provides easy-to-read content with bright attractive pictures and videos, the amount of information that is easily assimilated by the user. The corporate Instagram page performs many functions: involves the company's employees in general activities, increases employee loyalty to the company, attracts new candidates, creates a positive image of the company as an employer and service provider.

3. Results and discussion

Based on the studies of researchers on the problems of the employer brand, it seems that its formation and promotion can influence the human resources of the company. Using the mechanism of forming the employer's brand, it is necessary to assess the current state of the employer's brand and tools for its promotion, to promote the employer's brand to the external target audience, followed by adjusting measures and tools, if necessary. In the course of the study, the loyalty of employees of a trading company (trade in auto goods, auto chemicals, and auto parts) with a developed branch network was assessed. The survey involved 69% of the total number of employees (420 out of 611). The results can confirm the loyalty of the majority of employees (72.6%) to the company. The share of employees who are generally loyal but there are moments that do not suit them in the company was 17.4 %. 1.2% of employees turned out to be absolutely not loyal to the company. Many employees would recommend their employer to their relatives and friends, some of them are already ambassadors of the employer brand.

The study on the state of the employer brand of the trading company identified the following problems: long-term filling of vacancies due to ineffective passive search as the company is not known on the labor market. This information was obtained by analyzing telephone interviews about the awareness of candidates about the company. It turned out that only 22% of candidates knew about the company's scope of activity. Currently, the resources for disseminating information about the trading company are the job sites farpost.ru, hh.ru, avito.ru, sakh.com and Instagram. Job sites are used to post information about vacancies and attract candidates. Currently, social networks are the main source of information. To promote the employer's brand, Instagram was chosen, which has the company's profile. An employee or potential employee can read about the company's scope of activity, the cities its branches or representative offices are located in, get acquainted with the company's employees, find out if there are vacancies, how and where he can use the company's services, as well as find out other useful information.

The first stage of the study of the employer's HR brand was to analyze the promotion channel. It was necessary to find out how relevant and attractive Instagram is among the employees of the surveyed company, as well as what wishes they have for improving the page content. The survey included questions as follows:

Do you have an Instagram account?

Do you know about the company's corporate blog on Instagram?

Do you follow the updates of the corporate blog of the company on Instagram?

In your opinion, what the corporate blog of the company is missing?

The survey involved 519 employees out of 611, which is 85%. According to the survey, 81% of employees have an Instagram account. 381 of them (73.4%) follow the corporate page of the company. 356 employees (68.59%) follow the corporate blog. During the survey, employees expressed their wish for the development of content, namely, they are interested in: workdays of colleagues, career path of colleagues in the company, quizzes and competitions, live broadcasts, travel with colleagues, an overview of city attractions, information about the award "best employee of the month / quarter / year", the life of warehouse workers (how storekeepers and porters work), prize draws and gifts, announcement and information on cultural and entertainment events.

To promote the HR brand of the company in the chain, the following program of events was presented:
account analysis to identify the most attractive topics for subscribers;
creation of a rubricator (certain categories on attractive topics of posts with descriptions);
drawing up a content plan for a long period;

duplication of publications (posts) in stories to attract to the published news;
polls in stories to collect opinions to improve the content;
posting videos on "About the company", "Joint trips";
introducing interactive stories to attract subscribers to the account;
attracting partners for cooperation and advertising;
analysis of resources for the publication of vacancies;
posting a vacancy on a job page on Instagram;
analysis of the resource for the marketing of the company;
promotion of the account using targeted advertising.

In addition to a content plan, the most effective way to promote an HR brand is targeted advertising on Instagram. Targeted advertising applies to the target audience interested in a product or service (Rubtsova, 2019). The purpose of this advertisement is to attract the attention of the target audience to the company's account in order to spread the EVP of the employer brand in the information field. To launch targeted advertising, you need to choose a publication that will attract the audience's attention as much as possible, interesting and show the company from its best side. Targeted advertising will appear as a post in the news feed, in the "Interesting" section and as stories for the selected audience. The duration of the advertisement must be chosen (this affects the audience reach, the number of clicks on the link to the account and the budget spent on advertising). The best choice of targeted advertising for the studied company would be a video that presents the company's field of activity, its advantages over competitors and the scale of its activities, a video review of the central office in Vladivostok, a class A warehouse and the work of employees.

Instagram hits the top 10 most popular social networks. About 62% of users note they became interested in the company through viewing Stories (photos or videos that can be viewed during the day) or publishing an advertisement. The result of the implementation of the program of events will be the development of the main corporate page of the company, attracting subscribers to activities on the page (more likes, coverage and comments), attracting new subscribers, attracting new candidates, reducing the selection time, and increasing the company's brand awareness.

Conclusion

Companies strive to combine competent human resource management with the maximum use of labor and personal potential by creating a favorable external environment and full compliance of the employees with their office, qualifications, and corporate spirit. The development and promotion of the employer brand is possible using the corporate page on Instagram (to attract an external client - potential employees). Based on the above processes and functions, HR branding is a combination of the following activities:

- social and entertainment events, their posting on a social network, engaging employees through interactive activities on Instagram, as well as analyzing feedback;
- creating an attractive image of the employer on the corporate page on Instagram by changing the profile header, adding contact information for communication with clients, candidates, and employees, highlighting the main advantages of working for the company;
- advertising vacancies on job pages on Instagram, as well as creating targeted advertising on Instagram via Facebook;
- maintaining communications with employees: collecting and analyzing data on satisfaction of company employees with their jobs, improving the personnel management system.

The employer brand covers the HR processes and helps the company become better known, as well as increase efficiency, productivity and reduce costs. The development of the employer's brand through the implementation of activities carried out both for internal clients - employees of this company, and for external - potential candidates, leads to an increase in employee loyalty, labor productivity, and economic efficiency of the company.

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