

Impact of Social Media in Employer Branding and Talent Acquisition: Study of IT Industry in India

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Abstract In today's era of technology driven business environment, the organisations need to create a distinctive brand image to gain competitive advantage globally. Retaining and acquiring talent has become a crucial strategic imperative. Social media has emerged as a popular platform to seek formal and informal information of job vacancies, working practices, corporate culture benefits, etc. IT is one of the booming industries in India which hires people in large numbers. This creates a huge competition in IT market and organisations with a powerful employer brand gain advantage in attracting right people at right time. Social media is a convenient and interactive platform. It helps employers in conveying information about their firm to job seeking candidates. Employers can attract best talent by recruiting large number of applicants. Social media, if used correctly, helps in reducing cost of recruitment and save time. Employers are now more focused on including social media in their employer branding strategies. This is a conceptual paper based on review of literature from accessible journals, books, internet etc. This paper aims to find the role of social media in building positive employer brand and intention of applicants to join an organisation. The study reveals that potential employees seek information on social media to choose suitable employer. Information about important factors which influence job search through social media may help organisations to develop desired brand identity and attract talent.

Keywords — *Employer Branding, IT Industry, Potential Employees, Recruitment, Social Media, Talent acquisition.*

I. INTRODUCTION

With the increasing 'war of talent' the most challenging task for organizations is to attract and retain right kind of talent. It creates a huge competition in the market. To gain competitive advantage organizations started branding themselves as desired employer. Branding was initially used to distinguish tangible items, but over the years it has been connected to distinguishing people, places and firms (Peters, 1999). The essential aim of branding is to make differentiation. Organizations began differentiating themselves by adjusting distinctive branding methodologies. The concept of "Employer Branding" was given by Tim Ambler and Simon Barrow in 1996. It is the application of brand management techniques to human resource management. Ambler and Barrow (1996) defined employer brand as, 'the package of functional, economic and psychological benefits provided and identified with the employing company.' In their study they found that awareness and psychological benefits were the key components of Employer Branding. Employer branding is

based on principles of both marketing and human resource and it is cross-functional. Similarly, the Conference Board (2001) proposes that, the employer branding activities establish an identity of the firm as potential employer. It encompasses the firm's value system, policies and behaviours towards the objectives of attracting, motivating and retaining the firm's current and potential employees.'

IT sector is one of the leading sectors of Indian economy which create employment in large numbers. With high unemployment rate it's become difficult for organizations to acquire right talent as there are so many players in the market. So, they have to present themselves as a potential employer by adapting different employer branding strategies. Employer branding 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). Employer branding not only helps in attracting potential employees but also in retaining current employees. Traditionally, employers convey their brand message, policies, benefits etc. with the help of company brochure and websites. But now the employers use social media to convey their message so that they can attract right kind of talent. Social media has already emerged as a popular

platform for job seekers to look for the information about any organization. Organizations now use social media to communicate to the prospective employees. It's a platform where two way communications is done. It is beneficial for both organization as well as the prospective employees.

Van Zyl (2009) alludes social media as an application that gives a financially savvy way to approach the new relationship and keep up the current one. With the assistance of social media, employers can draft interpretations in regards to personality of potential candidates by looking at the information gave by them. Job seekers can look about various jobs on the sites like LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter etc. Millions of job advertisements are posted on the mentioned sites. Now a day, organization also started their YouTube channels where they post the videos of their firm. By doing this they give an insight of the organisation and try to attract more talents.

Social media is like a treasure house of information. It consists for formal and informal information. With the help of social media employers can construct a positive image of their firm in the mind of job seekers. Now with the easy accessibility of internet, social media becomes a prime source for promoting job vacancies and recruiting potential candidates. Social media mainly focuses on users and communities, which encompass all core elements of personnel management: conversations, creating networking, personalization, authentic voice and individualism (Martin et al. 2009.) But it also creates a challenge in front of employers as how they manage the different information and create their brand image. Organizations also try to gain competitive advantage by doing the right use of social media. For academic purpose, there are very limited papers available related to the use of social media in employer branding and talent acquisition. Organizations are already using social media as an employer branding strategy to gain attention of the potential employees. There is further scope for scholars for doing research in that particular area. This paper aims to find the role of social media in creating positive employer brand image and acquiring right kind of talent.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

In recent times, retention and acquisition of right kind of employees is the prime concern of every organisation. With increasing technology market competition is also increasing. Anixter (2003) indicates that employees' presence can make a vast impact on the external stakeholders' perception of the brand image. Ambler & Barrow (1996) test the application of brand management techniques to human resource management. Employer branding is based on principles of both marketing and human resource and it is cross-functional. Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) presented a framework which addresses research issues to develop employer branding as a useful tool for organizing strategic human resource management. In their study they indicate that employer branding creates two principal assets viz., brand associations and brand loyalty. Employer brand associations shape the employer's picture that impacts the appeal of the association to potential representatives. Employer branding impacts hierarchical culture and legitimate personality that prompts

employer brand loyalty hence, extending employee productivity. (Fig.1)

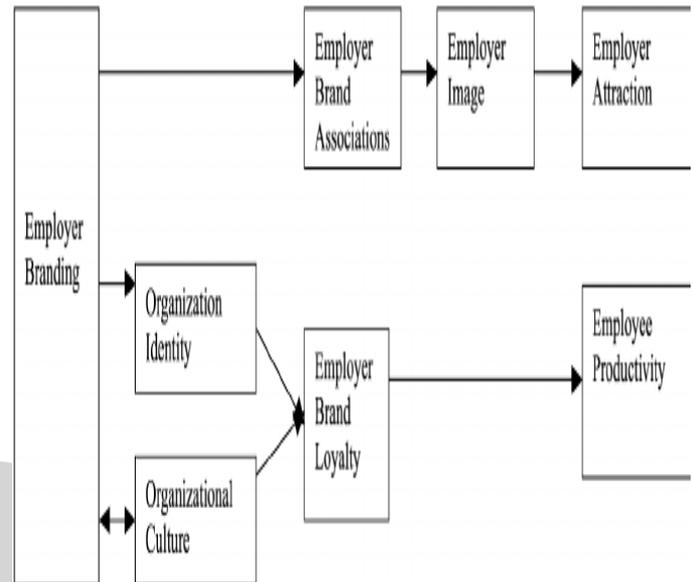


FIG. 1 EMPLOYER BRAND FRAMEWORK (BACKHAUS & TIKOO 2004, 504)

Employer branding provides an organisation with the benefits of increasing applicant quantity and quality (Collins and Han, 2004) and organisational performance (Falmer et al, 2003). It allows the firm to differentiate it from other employers competing for talent and to attract applicants who ideally possess similar, if not the same, values as organisation. It has been also defined as, “a targeted, long term strategy to manage awareness and perception of employees, potential employees, and relayed stakeholders with regards to particular organisation (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004)”. Fombrun and Shanley (1990) cited few advantages a good image can generate for an organization. An association with a good brand image can profit by drawing in better quality and amount of employment searchers. Turban and Cable (2003) argued that firm reputation would have a positive effect on applicant pool quantity. Positive firm reputation would increase attractiveness of the firm resulting in an increased applicant pool.

To create awareness social media emerged as a beneficial platform. It provides a virtual network place where people can easily express their experience, share information, circulate and control messages anywhere and anytime. Kaplan and Haenlien (2010) have characterised social media as “a gathering of web construct applications that are situated in light of ideological and mechanical establishments of web 2.0 and permit the creation and trade of client produced content”. Online networking offers a simple, financial savvy route for communication, promote products and administration. Personal recommendation is effective in gaining the attention of potential consumers and influencing attitude towards an organization (Park, Rodgers and Stemmi; 2011). Increased interaction between organization and applicants via social media is beneficial for both the parties. The applicants can present themselves to the company former to the actual application process and obtain useful information about their application, whereas company receives more applications

from a wider range of candidates and gets a first impression of the applicants (Brecht, Koroleva and Guenther; 2011).

The traditional career brochure and company websites are no longer sufficient sources of information to new applicants who are seeking a more personal review, from employees, about the organization (Laick and Dean; 2010). Waters & Jones (2011) found that you tube videos are being increasingly used by organizations to educate and inform just as much as they are to entertain. While text based conversations are a significant way to develop an organization's reputation and build its brand, combining words with a visual element significantly enhances the identity. Brecht et al., (2011) suggest that companies should wisely choose the Social Networking Sites where they want to be present. This should be done according to the target group that they want to address. If a company is targeting young people (students and graduates), they should consider building up presences in private SNS such as Facebook in the first place as young people are mostly active in private SNS.

III. CONCLUSION

Employer branding is utilized not exclusively to exchange the message of the personality of organization as a business of decision, yet it likewise has been utilized to adjust the tools and techniques generally used to spur and connect with employees. It is the way towards creating an identity and managing the organisation's image and its role as an employer. An organisations brand lives in the mind of its customers-its employees (Chhabra & Mishra, 2008, p.57). Prospective employees can draw an image of the firm and their work culture, environment, work practices etc. by the information available on different social networking sites. The popular sites which can be used by employers to attract employees are LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, blogs, YouTube, etc. Everything has its advantage and disadvantage. And if proper care should not be taken by employers while providing the information on social media, then, it can also create a negative image of them. Every employer wants to attract and retain best employees. To achieve that, they need to communicate a positive employment image to its audience. Further research can be done in the same area by doing empirical research. Credibility of firm is an important aspect which cannot be easily known by looking at social networking sites. There is a scope of future research for the same. Employer branding has emerged as a strategic move to attract and retain employees. And social media gives an opportunity to both employers and job seekers to openly communicate. Thus, in creating a positive brand image social media plays an important role. Social media is an easy and reachable platform for sending information to large number of audience. Organizations are now using social media in their employer branding strategies. It builds the intention of applicants to join organisation. It is an interactive platform which provides two way communications. Job seekers can easily compare different organization on the basis of information available on their websites and other social networking sites.

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