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Employment Branding



Attracting Talent



Facilitating Growth Through Processes

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What is Employment Branding?

Employment Branding (EB) reflects the image your company has in the eyes of existing and perspective employees about working for your company. Building this Brand is all about the marketing of “Employment”. If we consider employees as customers and “employment experience” as the “product” being offered for their consideration and purchase - the “customer satisfaction” would then reflect the strength of the “Employment Brand - EB” of the organization. Building EB is one of the few long term solutions to the "shortage of talent" problem. Where most employment strategies are short term and "reactive" to job openings building EB is a longer term solution designed to provide a steady flow of applicants.

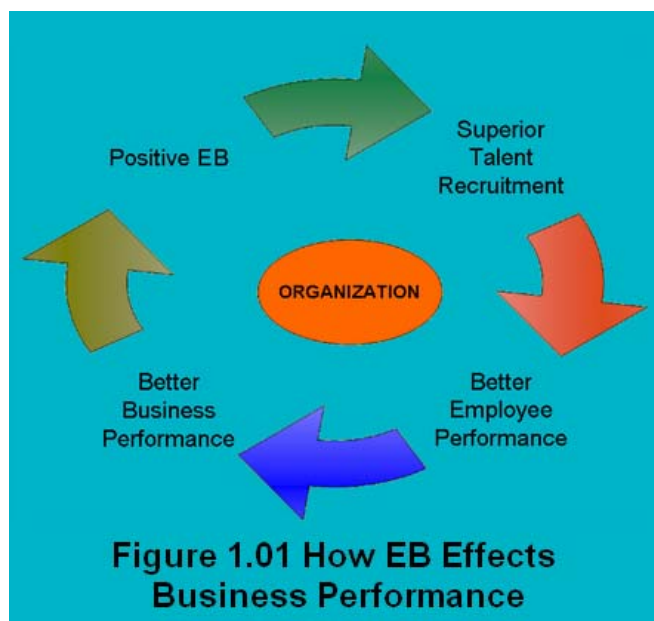
Just like product branding is designed to develop a lasting image in the mind of the consumer so that they start to automatically associate quality with any product or service offered by the owner of the brand, EB does the same in that it creates an “image” that makes people want to work for the organization. Organizations with higher EB are generally well managed organizations where employees are motivated, continually learning and growing. Strong employment brands have a magnetic effect when it comes to attracting and retaining good people.

Why should we bother about Employment Branding?

There is a direct correlation between an effective employment brand and achieving business success. It helps motivating employees for better performance, which leads to higher financial gains, the gains and satisfied employees bring -up the employer brand value, which leads to superior talent recruitment. The purpose is to use the internal brand as the seedbed for aligning people & programs to deliver significantly improved business results.

How do we improve our EB?

Building EB requires separate strategies for existing employees and for the perspective employees. The existing employees and their friends and families are the Brand Ambassadors for the organization’s EB. There are specific strategies to keep the existing employees happy, in high morale and performing at their peak. These depend highly on organization’s culture and HR Practices. However, attracting talented perspective employees needs use of tools which are akin to the Marketing, PR and Advertising. This paper focuses on “Attraction Building Strategies” which contribute to building the Employment Brand targeted towards perspective employees.



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Steps in Attraction Strategy

We adopt the DMAIC model used in Six Sigma Methodology to analyze the issue of building EB with respect to perspective employees. To recapture, the five steps of the DMAIC model are described below:



1. Define the issue - **Define Phase**

- Define and quantify the need of talent requirement in future.
- Define talent pool to be targeted—who, where, when ..

2. Measure the current situation - **Measure Phase**

- Gather information on attributes that would attract the targeted employees.
- Measure the status of the identified attributes as they exist now in the organization.
- Collect data on the status of these attributes among organization's competition.

Analyze the data and decide strategy - **Analyze Phase**

- Identify the critical attributes on which the organization would focus.
- Identify actions and budgetary needs to improve Employment Brand
- Seek management support / approval.

Improve EB—Improve Phase

- Develop the strategy details for improving the brand image.
- Try-out and implement solutions



- Use data / metrics to evaluate results and the plans used to carry them out.

Control and monitor—Control Phase

- Maintain the gains achieved.
- Standardize the work methods and processes used to build the EB.
- Anticipate future improvements.
- Make plans to capture Lessons Learned.

Following paragraphs provide more details of the above five steps.

Step 1—Define Phase

Determine the talent needed to accomplish key business objectives in the future. This makes it mandatory to have business objectives clearly aligned to - Vision, Mission & Short term goals along with a Business Plan. Determine which skills are most critical to success for your organization.

Assess where “talent-gap” would exist among the present workforce. Prepare a talent acquisition plan in real numbers based on current trends, anticipated attrition rate, business growth projections, the percentage of the workforce trending toward retirement and new critical skills required to meet mission objectives and changing technological needs.

Next step after identifying the GAP is to establish the likely sources of skilled manpower. Availability in adequate number and sustainability of such supplies needs to be thoroughly analyzed. As an example, a BPO having large turn-over decided to switch from focusing on “youngsters” to “house-wives” and “ex-servicemen” after it realized that most of the staff which was leaving belonged to the younger age group. With this clarity, it went to the next step of establishing the attributes of work environment which would relate well with the target group. Many organizations collaborate with universities and training institutes to create specific supply sources directly usable by them and target these students by remaining involved in teaching, summer assignments and short term projects.

Step 2—Measure Phase

Targeted talent pool needed by the organization would join the organization not only for the salary and benefits which the company offers, but also the work experience promised. Many organizations might be doing their best for the employees, but the perspective employees are unlikely to know them. Since the demand for workforce far exceeds supply, talent war and poaching from one another is the current practice. We know of companies putting on Banners in front of competitor's office to attract their employees. The success of these methods again depends on the perceived “Employment Brand” image in the mind of the perspective employee. To make your methods of attracting the target talent group more effective, we first need to understand which attributes of the organization are valued as



Fig:1.03 Identifying Skill Needs



worthwhile “employment experience” by the target talent group. The weightage given by them to various attributes needs to be well understood.

Best way to define the attributes which effect employment experience is to have in-house survey with existing employees who match the target employees. If this would not yield adequate data, surveys should be carried out on a sample target talent pool. Some typical work environment attributes that are a part of almost every organization’s work climate are listed. The weight-age attached to each attribute shall vary based on the target talent pool. Thus if the organization is targeting young married women, attributes which support caring for children and family, flexi timings would rank higher. Many departmental stores engage women work-force for four hour assignments and are flexible on shifts. Some develop day-care centre for little children of employees. Some organizations allow employees to work from home—with very little time at office. Many organizations allow sales staff to operate from home and interact using modern communicating tools like eMails, phones, video-conferencing etc. It is clear that each organization, depending upon the type of work it does, can offer flexibilities to employees which suit their particular needs. Large organizations—merely because of their size cannot be very flexible if the controls are centralized — and this can be a strength for smaller organizations.

Each of the attribute organization is willing to offer needs to be measured. It is easy for attributes like salary and benefits to be identified in real terms, but for many of the attributes, a carefully developed measuring system needs to be developed - to measure the existing status. NiMble’s white paper titled “Is your Value statement real?” written by VK provides information on how to carry out structured thinking and develop questionnaire for such surveys.

The survey should aim to obtain data on the following:

- Rating of various attributes—which are regarded as of real importance by majority of the population.
- Which attributes are below employee’s expectations level in terms of “Employment Experience” or are not exciting for them.
- Ranking of various attributes to obtain the “Core Attributes’ which should be considered as candidate for focus for building Employment Brand.

List of Attributes

1. Salary and Benefits
2. Career Growth
3. International exposure
4. Flexi-timings
5. Systems and procedures
6. Empowered employees
7. Innovative environment
8. Fair system of Rewards Recognition
9. Mutual Trust and Respect
10. Caring for employees and their families.

Encourage the participation of leadership in the survey to close the gap between the perception of the employees and the leadership / managerial cadre. At this stage, collect data obtained during “Exit Interviews” from departing employees to understand why their “Employment Experience” was not adequate to retain them in the organization.

Having selected the attributes which attract employees to your organization, check their presence and level at your competitors. One to one discussions with staff (who earlier worked for competition) may be helpful. Other means can be utilized to collect this data. Remember that we are now focusing on why perspective employees should choose you over competition!

Step 3—Analyze Phase

Data gathered during measure phase now needs to be analyzed to identify the critical attributes which you would



focus on. No organization can offer the best of all attributes and therefore we need to work out those attributes which are within the organizations reach and would provide maximum “Employment Experience” to the target talent pool.

With the above exercise, it is now time to think about how the gaps identified in the “Core Attributes” can be filled. Strategies for building the Brand Image which would focus on the “Core Attributes” providing the employment experience to the target talent pool would need to be worked out. This would require some studies on relative merits of choosing various media, content and methods to build the brand image in the eyes of the target talent pool. Each one of the alternatives would have relative merits and demerits and budgetary support. The optimized solution would need to be chosen.

Having chosen the optimum solution, next step is to work out detail budget and action plan to implement the project of building “Employment Brand” and seek management support and approvals to implement the project.

Step 4 - Improve Phase

It is now time to implement the project. Details of the various actions frozen during the Analysis Phase need to be developed. The following needs to be finalized:

- Message to be communicated to target talent pool.
- Content that would support / communicate the message.
- The media through which it shall be communicated.
- Roll-out plan / schedule.
- Definition of primary and secondary metrics to measure success.

The execution of the roll-out plan needs to be done very carefully. Try-out of the message on select group is recommended to test the plan and make changes if required.

It is important that existing employees are kept in the loop and fully understand and support the EB building measures. The strategy for collection of data for the metrics chosen needs to be also put in place.

Step 5—Control Phase

Measuring and analysis of metrics would indicate the success of the EB building exercise. The process would need to be tweaked if the metrics show results which are below expectations. To maintain the gains achieved and to improve them further, constant monitoring and review is necessary. The process needs to be standardized and work methods used to build the EB put in place to record the possible future improvements and recording Lessons Learnt. Roles and responsibilities of various people to monitor and control the Employment Brand Building process, their meeting schedules etc. should be respected and adhered to achieve success.

Conclusion

All the above five steps are stepping stones to achieve an effective attraction strategy for the purpose of Employment Branding. Remember — “Employment Branding is ongoing process.” Committing to the process and investing in the tools to deliver the employment brand messaging in a meaningful way will help define your unique employment value proposition in the minds of your target audience. In the present scenario it has become a ‘must have’

Typical Metrics

- Number of applicants against each position.
- Average cost per hire.
- Skills gap of hired employees.



References

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2. **John Sumser** - Integrated Recruitment Branding (www.hrworld.com)
3. **Vinod K Mehandru**—White Paper “Is your Value Statement Real” -(www.nimble.in)

How can NiMble Help

NiMble has experienced manpower having clear insight into building your “Employment Brand”. NiMble can help formulate and implement the project and support your internal team.

Should you be interested in engaging
NiMble
please feel free to contact
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