

Employer Branding: A Long-Term Of HRM Perspective การสร้างแบรนด์นายจ้างกับมุมมองในการบริหารทรัพยากรมนุษย์ระยะยาว

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การสร้างแบรนด์นายจ้าง หรือ Employer branding ถือเป็นแนวคิดที่ได้รับความนิยมมากในแวดวงการจัดการทรัพยากรมนุษย์ โดยมีจุดประสงค์หลักเพื่อสร้างภาพลักษณ์ที่ดีของนายจ้างและองค์กรให้เป็นที่ ๆ คนเก่งคนมีความสามารถอยากร่วมงาน อีกทั้งเป็นการรักษานักงานที่มีให้อยู่คู่กับองค์กรไปนาน ๆ อย่างไรก็ตาม ในมุมมองอีกด้านหนึ่ง การเปรียบเทียบพนักงานเป็นเหมือนสินค้าในทางการตลาด รวมทั้งการขาดความเข้าใจอย่างลึกซึ้งในกระบวนการสร้างแบรนด์ อาจส่งผลกระทบต่อองค์กรในระยะยาว ดังนั้นในบทความนี้จึงได้อธิบายถึงแนวคิด Employer branding พร้อมทั้งกล่าวถึงผลดีและผลเสียในการนำแนวคิดนี้ไปใช้ในทางปฏิบัติงานด้านการบริหารทรัพยากรมนุษย์

Abstract

In the area of human resource management, Employer branding has become a popular concept for many organizations. It is using to attract talented candidates as well as to retain, and motivate current employees to engage in the organization. However, from an HRM perspective, by viewing employees as a consumer which including a lack of in-depth understanding in Employer branding process, it brings a concern about potential impacts in the long-term rather than short-term benefits for organizations. The purposes of this article are to address the concept of Employer branding, and to discuss benefits and drawbacks when applying this concept in HR practices.

Keyword Employer Branding Human Resources Management HRM

Introduction

Since the term of knowledge-based economy was coined, and regarded as a basis for the development to the era of creative economy in the 21st century. Many organizations recognize that knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) are a primary source of their core competencies and competitive advantages, which can be derived from managing human competence (Prahalad & Hamel, 1990; Sandberg, 2000). This implies that human resource is an asset that creates values to the organization (Kochan, Orlikowski & Gershenfeld, 2002). Having this in mind, the growth of employer branding has gain increasingly popularity for HR practitioners to recruit well-qualified applications in competitive labour markets, while outstanding employer brand image makes the organizations differentiating themselves as a greater place to work for than others (Carrington, 2007).

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Definition of Employer branding

Sitting somewhere between HRM and marketing, the common definition of Employer branding is the identity of an employer encompasses values system, policies, and behaviors (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). The ultimate aim is to communicate a brand promise on what the organization has offered in terms of benefits and values, in order to attract potential employees and retain internal employees in the labour market (Martin et al., 2005). The transmitted message is usually emphasized on transactional activities (payment and employability) as well as traditional HR policies (staffing, development, retention and motivation). Basically, the concept of Employer branding linked to the consumer-based brand equity approach in the marketing literature, which is based on the consumer's attitude about the products or services' brand that affect to their preferences and purchasing decision (Collins & Stevens, 2002). Therefore, when employer generates positive attitudes including benefits and perceived values that suit the needs of consumers, it is likely to attract more recruits and become an employer of choice for many job seekers. Examples of employer branding can be seen from many employer advertising and career websites, which are becoming common in today's labor marketplace (Berthon, Ewing & Hah, 2005). Figure 1 shows an example of P&G career advertising on the company's website which appears to target at potential employees to the organization.

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Figure 1: P&G Career advertisement on the company's website

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However, the argument is raised with an interesting question that what will happen if the employer fails to deliver regarding to what their brand has promised. Considering the root of drawback, many HR practitioners are caught in a dilemma when they found that it is difficult to align their policies with the company's vision in positioning its employer brand with limited resources. As business environment is uncertain, it can influence significantly on the organization's strategic decision in every steps. Therefore, some organizations are somewhat left behind being proactive to consider those impacts on their strategies, and the role of HR department traditionally is excluded in the management team (Roehling et al., 2005). As a result, the brand communication can not conform harmoniously to the actual HR policies, which lead to a failure in response to the needs of employees. As a consequence, your employees can just walk away.

Besides, a further concern is a shift away from the traditional psychological contract that provides employees a sense of commitment, mutual benefits and loyalty to the organization (Lawler III, 2005). Therefore, by treating employees as the consumer goods, it can encourage potential and current employees to become high demand from their job expectations, which they perceive from employer brand communication in the market. Thus, employees may reduce individual responsibility, trust and loyalty to their organization or employer (Carrington, 2007). This means branding makes people look for what they can get out of the job rather than how they can contribute to. In other words, the meaning of jobs for life is lost in the branding. Consequently, employees move away when the job cannot meet their requirement, while the organizations could suffer from high staff turnover and fail to create competitive advantages from managing employees' competence.

Nonetheless, this is not the end of Employer branding. Perhaps, it is time to rethinking about this concept but how the organization can do. Fundamentally, the organization should include the role of HR professionals in the decision-making team. By doing so, it brings the greater effectiveness in formulate the strategies as well as refine realistic brand promise along with organization's capabilities and resources. Listening to what HR professionals suggested, it can prevent the organization from a failure of branding and a contradiction between brand communication and the actual offers in marketplace. Furthermore, providing employees the new perceived job benefits that differentiate the organization from its competitors is another critical area to consider. By referring to Herzberg's Two Factor Theory (1986), it found that many organizations still believe in 'Hygiene' factors (e.g. salary, job security, working condition etc.) in advertising, but these are not always what the job hunters are looking for in today's business environment. In the other hand, the theory claimed that 'Motivator' factors essentially create employee's job satisfaction which is challenging work, opportunity for advancement or gaining recognition. In this case, Google is the best example of impressive employer brand development. The answer why does the company become an ideal workplace for many people is a significant understanding in consumers' needs. The company is able to differentiate itself by creating a culture of creativity, offering employee freedom to learn new things and work arrangement flexibility as well as providing other fringe benefits that go beyond other competitors offer in the market (Lavening & Moskowitz,

2008). Therefore, it is not surprised that why the company is ranked no. 1 of FORTUNE Magazine 100 best company to work for in 2008, which attracts thousands of graduates and applicants in recruiting.

Conclusion

Having considered benefits and pitfalls of employer branding, it can gain an insight understanding of this concept not only from marketing view but also from HRM perspective. Employer branding can be an effective management tool if the organization adds values to the branding process and understands profoundly in HRM. Consequently, the organization will soon discover and exploit effectively employer brand power to create sustainable human capital over competitors.

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