

A study on the Employer Brand Building activities at Titan PED Division

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ABSTRACT: An 'Employer Brand' is based on various intangible factors, including perception, image, and the ability to differentiate itself from competitors.

In a nutshell: An employer brand represents the image of a company which it projects as a preferred employer. With above concept in mind this research was taken up. The purpose was to understand the importance of brand building and the objective was to identify specific factors towards brand building among existing employees.

The research was undertaken at Precision Engineering Division of Titan Industries Ltd. The research was empirical in nature. The population targeted was the employees at middle-management cadre. Random Sample Methodology was used. The instrument used was interview method using a semi-structured questionnaire. The secondary data was obtained from exit interviews of employees who had left the organization. Data was analyzed using statistical tools and our results could help us in identifying some specific parameters in the perception of organization by the employees. Suitable recommendations were made to the appropriate authorities.

The research is of immense potential since the same concept can be extended to other division of the same organization and to other organizations. The future scope also exists for conducting detailed research and comparing two different sectors (e.g. manufacturing and IT).

KEY WORDS: Employer Brand, Brand Building, Employee Perception. Exit Interview

I. INTRODUCTION

Employer branding denotes an organization's reputation as an employer. The term was first used in the early 1990s, and has since become widely adopted by the global management community. Minchington (2005) defines employer brand as "the image of your organization as a 'great place to work'". Employer branding is concerned with enhancing a company's employer brand just as a customer brand proposition is used to define a product or service offer, an employee value proposition is used to define an organization's employment offer. Likewise the marketing disciplines associated with branding and brand management have been increasingly applied by the human resources and talent management community to attract, engage and retain talented candidates and employees, in the same way that marketing applies such tools to attracting and retaining clients, customers and consumers.

Today, an effective employer brand is essential for competitive advantage. Increasingly, Indian corporations are becoming intentionally strategic to utilize the employer brand to attract and retain talent and, ultimately, to expand and grow. Effective employer branding and brand management requires a clear Employer Brand proposition. This serves to define what the organization would most like to be associated with as an employer; highlight the attributes that differentiate the organization from other employers; and clarify the 'give and get' of the employment deal (balancing the value that employees are expected to contribute with the value from employment that they can expect in return). This latter aspect of the employer brand proposition is often referred to in the HR literature as the "psychological contract".

Employer branding is a strategic tool to attract, recruit and retain talents it encompasses various dimensions such as communication among existing employees, potential talents, media, customers and even the customers and alumni. An employer brand can help organizations to compete effectively in the labour market and drive employee loyalty through effective recruitment, engagement and retention practices.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Ambler and Barrow (1996), in their paper made a case for the usefulness of employer branding, and reported the findings of semi-structured depth interviews with respondents from 27 companies about the relevance of branding to human resource management. The authors found that employees in the workplaces have more experience in deconstructing any communications of the organization. These have made them masters of skepticism when it comes to the normal parade of internal communications messages and tools. They conclude that branding has relevance within the context of employment

Moroko and Uncles (2009), in their study on mechanisms that shape and perpetuate the employer branding process, reported an investigation of the mechanisms that shape and perpetuate the employer branding process. Various mechanisms have been suggested in the employer branding literature, mainly based on normative principles.

Study by Dawn and Biswas (2010), gives some concept on employer branding and also examines how Indian organizations with a positive corporate reputation can attract and retain employees. It also focuses to explain the importance, applicability, outcome and creating an effective employer branding strategy of Indian companies. An effective employer brand is essential for gaining competitive advantage. Increasingly, Indian corporations are becoming intentionally strategic to utilize the employer brand to attract and retain talent for their expansion and growth. The increasing focus on competitive advantage is leading many Indian firms to rethink their employer brands.

III. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The major objective of the study can be listed as

- 1) Positioning Titan PED division as a unique employer in job market attracting the best potential talent in the industry
- 2) Building a distinct brand image for PED division of Titan and bringing more awareness about the activities and business undertaken by the firm.
- 3) Retention of the existing employees and imparting long term commitment to the firm.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is both empirical and conceptual in nature. In order to achieve the above said objectives the following methods were used to collect data

Exit Interview Analysis
Focus Group Discussions
HOD Inputs
Brain Storming

V. DATA ANALYSIS

- 1) Exit Interview analysis
Secondary Data: Exit interview of ex-employees from the year 2010- 2013.

The first step started by finding out the turnover ratio in various all the levels of Titan PED division of company employees. The level at which the attrition rate is maximum turned out to be L4.

The second stage analyzed the exit interview of L4 employees (Highest attrition level) in detail including. The sample size taken for L4 level exit interview was 40.

From the above data the critical factors were identified are summarized as below:

- 1) The graph(Figure 1) depicts that 14 out of 40 employees has stated that lack of Career Growth is a major reason for leaving Titan PED and a16 out of 40 employee rated Career Growth as the major expectation from Titan PED as an employer.
- 2) Salary structure is been ranked as second factor for both reasons for leaving the organization and expectation from Titan PED (Figure 1- 12 out of 40 employees and Figure 2 – 10 out of 40 employees)
- 3) In Figure 3 the areas highlighted such as information flow related to business and production is identified as critical areas. More than 50% of the employees lack information related to the foresaid areas. As information flow is essential to reduce interdepartmental friction and the progress related to overall aspects of business brand the firm within current employees.

4) Communication between the superiors and the subordinates is highlighted as 87.5% were of the opinion that it's only bottom up. It reduces the morale of the employees and lack of clarity at work.

Considering the areas analyzed in the exit interviews and for initiating the drive "Employer Branding" among the employees the below mentioned areas were discussed and tested in the Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

- 1) Career Visibility.
- 2) Scope of Job Rotation.
- 4) Information flow among different departments and organization in general.
- 5) The Edge which Titan PED employees possess when compare to those who work in same area of expertise in a different firm.
- 6) Titan PED being branded as a potential employer and internal branding among employees

A focus group discussion on employer branding was conducted on 2/09/2013 at Titan Precision Engineering division. FGD was conducted among 10 employees selected on the basis of nominations from each department to get their view and suggestions on Titan PED being recognized as a brand among existing employees and the potential employees.

Gist of the interaction

- There is a huge scope for job rotation in Titan PED division as it breaks monotony and it also contributes in lowering the existing turnover ratio.
 - Lack of Individual career development plan prevailing in the organization was addressed which supports the conclusion derived from exit interview analysis.
 - Consistency in Reward and Recognition system.
 - Organizing Guest Lectures by Titan PED in targeted college.
 - A shift from people oriented to process oriented system.
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- Apprentices after robust training in PED can be referred to prospective customer.
 - Transparency among employees within the department needs to be improved.
 - Proper performance management system to be followed in Titan PED.
 - Right and equal opportunity to everyone in the organization to exhibit their skills and inherent talents.
 - Providing targeted colleges with machinery and tools required in college lab.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

a) PROPOSAL 1

Titan PED recruits Apprentice for one year in both Precision Engineering and Components (PEC) and Machine Building and Automation (MBA). Titan PED can refer these Apprentices to Prospective and existing customers to meet the manpower needs of them which intern bring in more business to the firm. The referral program brand Titan PED as a finishing school which imparts strong Robust Training in desired skill required for Machine Building and Automation.

b) PROPOSAL 2

Guest lectures to be organized in target institutes throwing light on various project undertaken by Titan PED. A Senior Management Team member can give a head talk in tier 1 institutions and Middle Management Team member can address the tier 2 institutions.

As a part of Branding building among the potential talents HR personnel can accompany the Guest lecture team and show to them videos of longstanding employees, business process, learning and career associated with Titan PED.

c) PROPOSAL 3

Many of the college students are not aware of Titan PED and its activities. In collaboration with selected institute a three day workshop can be conducted for BE Mechanical graduates in 3rd year in Hydraulics and pneumatics by demonstrating them with a study kit developed in Titan PED. Once the workshop is over the study kit can be left in the college lab for future reference for students. It is a strong platform to brand Titan PED division among potential candidates in the budding stage of their career.

For Internal Branding

- 1) For the Internal employees job rotation equip them to engineer their own career path .Employees gain rich experience in handling diverse functions and can fill in for people who are absent there by ensuring the Business to be more process oriented. It also helps in better understanding of business process and improve interdepartmental coordination Job rotation facilitates to create a pipeline for employees oriented towards leadership roles. Job rotation is also a retention tool which will help in breaking the monotony and improving the morale of the employees.
- 2) Individual career development plan will ensure better career visibility to employees as there is lack of clarity regarding the key result area (communicating to employees in the first quarter) and career growth plan among the existing employees.
- 3) Bringing sustainability to existing reward and recognition system in Titan PED will boost the morale of the employees and thereby improving the commitment of employees to the employer.
- 4) Titan PED website should be updated and can include testimonials of employees, college events conducted including the cultural events conducted in PED.

VII. 7. CONCLUSION

The research analyzed and suggested Titan PED Division with the various methodologies that they can adopt for employer branding which will help them to achieve their objectives and the same can also be extended to the entire Titan Industries which encompasses about 5 different brands and companies. This research can also be extended to other manufacturing units of TATA group.

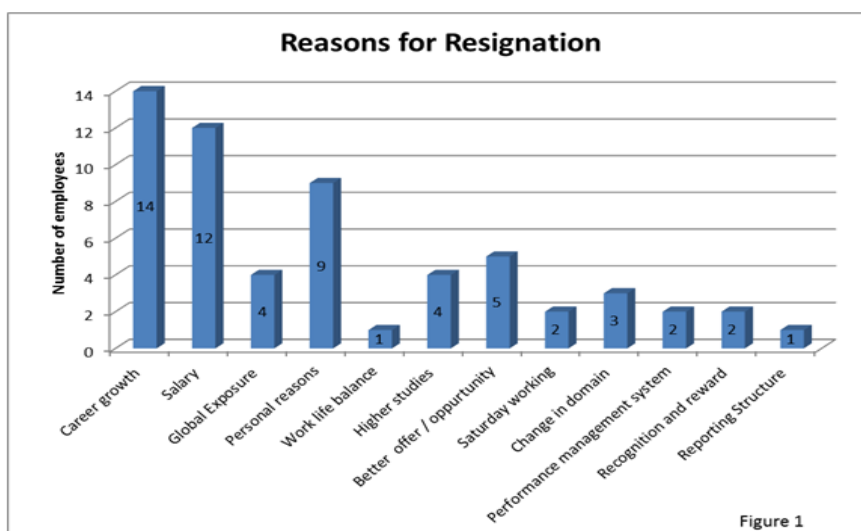
The research can also be extended to other industries specially the IT and ITES where the attrition is very high and best practices can be shared among the industries.

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Details of Exit Interviews are given below

- 1) Reasons for leaving Titan PED is shown in the below graph



Data Collection on Exit Interview							
SL	Critical Areas Identified	Response in Percentage					
1	Compensation and Reward System?	Excellent	very good	Good	Not so good	Bad	
		0%	12.50%	40%	35%	12.50%	
2	Appraisal System?	Very Effective	Effective	Not So Effective	In Effective	No response	
		3%	57.50%	28%	8%	5.00%	
3	Relate to your immediate supervisor?	Autocratic	Bureaucratic	Nuturant	Benevolent	Democratic	No response
		3%	2.50%	28%	43%	17.50%	7.50%
4	Communication between superiors and subordinates in current role?	Only Top Down	Only Bottom Up	Both Ways	Lateral	Informal	
		10%	87.50%	3%	0%	0.00%	
5	Professional growth in Titan?	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Limited	No growth	
		2.5 0%	5.00%	73%	8%	12.50%	
6	Level of communication within current department?	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Not So Good	Bad	
		13%	30.00%	50%	7.5 %		
7	Information on overall business?	0- 20 %	20-40 %	40-60 %	60-80 %	80- 100 %	No response
		28%	27.50%	23%	22 .50 %	20.00%	2.50%
8	Information production related?	0- 20 %	20-40 %	40-60 %	60-80 %	80- 100 %	No response
		13%	17.50%	43%	28%	0.00%	0
9	Relevant office communication?	0- 20 %	20 -40 %	40 -60 %	60 - 80 %	80 - 100 %	No response
		8%	2.50%	28%	45%	15.00%	2.50%
10	Critical events related information?	0- 20 %	20 -40 %	40 -60 %	60 - 80 %	80 - 100 %	No response
		5%	7.50%	20%	37.5 %	27.50%	0.025
11	Team work in work place?	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Not So Good	Bad	
		0%	5.00%	25%	43%	2.75%	
12	What do you think about enforcement of discipline in Titan?	Very Strict	Strict	Egalitarian	Lenient	Very Lenient	No response
		28%	45.00%	25%	0%	2.50%	0
13	Freedom to use your own judgment to do job effectively?	Yes	No	Partially	No response		
		48%	7.50%	35%	10%		
14	Equipment facilities to do your work?	Yes	No	Some times	No response		
		95%	5.00%				
15	Personnel /welfare need met from time to time?	yes	No	Not always	No response		
		85%	2.50%	10%	0%		
16	Against the back drop of your current position what according to you are the major areas of concern that Titan should look into?	Yes	No	Partially	No response		
		85%	10.00%	5%	0%		