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# ANALYSIS OF METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO EMPLOYER BRAND MANAGEMENT AND EVALUATION

The object of research is the models of management and evaluation of the employer's brand as components of the effectiveness of the enterprise. One of the problematic points is that there is no universal model for employer brand management. Employer brand assessments are often subjective and untrue. The target audience of the employer brand requires new approaches to management from the employer. This is due to a change in the generation of candidates in the labor market. One third of applicants are Generation Z (born 1995–2010). Companies are losing potential employees due to value proposition mismatch, employer brand immaturity.

During the study, the following scientific methods were used as a method of theoretical analysis in the study of employer brand management models. As well as methods of theoretical analysis, comparison and generalization for a general analysis of the issue and the determination of generalized characteristics of brand management and evaluation models.

In the proposed work, the issues of modern employer brand management are considered. The best models have been identified that consider an integrated approach and form a separate ecosystem within the enterprise. Conclusions are drawn about the need for further search for the most appropriate assessment of the employer's brand. The importance of a flexible approach to employer brand management has been studied. It also summarizes the main methods for assessing the employer brand, which will become the basis for further analysis.

Thanks to the results of the study, company managers will be able to choose a modern employer brand management model, its components and main characteristics. The employer's value proposition needs to be reviewed through the hiddenness of components that may be important to the candidate. Also, the assessment of the employer brand will be comprehensive: internal and external. The relationship between employer brand maturity and company performance is direct. The higher the level, the less losses the company incurs in the selection, training and development of employees.

**Keywords:** employment, employer brand, brand evaluation, brand management models, brand management methods.

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## 1. Introduction

The level of development of the employer brand is interconnected with the level of development of the company's business processes as a whole. With a developed employer brand, the company's competitiveness grows, the number of candidates for its vacancies increases, the duration of the employee's work in the company increases, and staff turnover decreases [1].

The sustainable development of the employer brand, especially for generation Z (born 1995–2010), is relevant due to the growth of these job seekers in the labor market. More and more international companies are creating about active corporate socially responsible strategies. It is they who occupy a large part in communication with candidates. The main issues are environmental and social problems [2].

Employer brand management in today's COVID-19 pandemic and remote working environment requires agile

practices and new approaches. All processes and tasks should be aimed at creating a positive image of the employer when searching for candidates and employees of the company. Particular attention should be paid to the assessment of the employer brand, which is formed in the online space. Among candidates, the most common job search channels are social networks, the corporate website of the company, and job search websites [3].

With a positively developed employer brand in the target audience, the company reduces entrepreneurial risks when searching for talents. A significant indicator of the company's competitiveness is its intellectual potential. The risk of difficulties with recruitment affects the growth of recruitment costs. The low level of wages entails an increase in staff turnover and a decrease in labor productivity. A low level of employees increases the number of errors and failures at work, the growth of defective products or low-quality services. These risks are social and weighty in appearance [4].

Thus, *the object of research* is the models of management and evaluation of the employer's brand as components of the effectiveness of the enterprise. *The aim of research* is to generalize the main models of management and evaluation of the employer brand and the formation of new approaches, respectively.

## 2. Research methodology

The following scientific methods were used in the study:

- method of theoretical analysis when studying employer brand management models;
- methods of theoretical analysis, comparison and generalization for a general analysis of the issue and determination of the most effective models of management and assessment of the employer brand;
- method of comparing employer brand management models to select the most perfect one;
- measurement method for evaluating the employer brand.

## 3. Research results and discussion

Employer brand management must be flexible to changes in the labor market. There is no single correct management approach for all companies. Each firm must take into account

its scale, the characteristics of the market, the requirements for the employer of employees and candidates, and macroeconomic factors of influence. An analysis of different approaches of scientists to employer brand management models is shown in Table 1. The analysis carried out will make it possible to form the main components of the management model.

The joint characteristic of management models is the establishment of a relationship and long-term communication with the target audience of the employer. The purpose of any model is to form the necessary positive image of the employer among candidates and employees of the company and maintain it. To manage the brand of any model, it is necessary to create a description of the desired image of the employer, a value proposition and your own mission. The mission of an employer brand is different from the mission of a company brand. The most advanced employer brand management models from Table 1 is Brett Minchingston Ecosystem Model and Business Model Canvas. Since management is considered comprehensively and forms a single ecosystem.

One model for understanding the content of disclosures is the Johari Window, a communication model built by Joseph Lufty and Harry Ingham in 1955. It is advisable to consider this model to improve the perception of information about the brand, its main components (Table 2).

**Table 1**

Generalized characteristics of employer brand management models

Model	Characteristic	Components
Brand understanding model according to K. Backhaus, S. Tikou [5]	Combination of the concept of marketing and human resource management. The model forms brand associations and brand loyalty	The first direction of influence – associations with the brand that arise in the target audience, create an image. It, in turn, forms the attractiveness of working in the company. The second is organizational culture and identity that affect brand loyalty and work productivity
Brett Minchingston ecosystem model [5]	The model is an employer brand ecosystem that combines internal and external factors influencing management	The main tools are strategic (leadership, mission, vision, corporate culture, corporate social responsibility) and tactical (recruiting, training system, adaptation, material and non-material motivation). Brand values that form the basis of the value proposition. Brand equity is employee awareness of the company's capabilities and accessibility in online and offline communication. Employee lifecycle management – from passive candidate to leaving the company. Participant in the field of activity of the company. Global trends affecting brand development
Brett Minchingston brand equity model [5]	The brand is a strategic asset, a competitive advantage in finding and retaining talent	Brand awareness – advantages and disadvantages of working for a company among potential and current employees. Perception of work experience in the company – feedback from employees about work with the opportunity to learn it from candidates online and offline. Brand associations: images, emotions, material components of work in the company that arise in candidates
N. Aggerloh, S. Andersen, K. Thomsen Model [5]	The employer brand is the basis of long-term relationships between the company and employees	Branding strategy and policy, value, sustainable relationship between employer and employee. Vision, mission and entire companies are the main levers
Business Model Canvas [6]	Description of the model in the form of a matrix, taking into account the main components of its management	Identify key partners, activities, resources, value proposition, customer relationships, customer segments, channels, cost structure, revenue streams
A. Dlyhach «8» model [7]	Description of the relationship between management cycles and marketing activities at each level	The life cycle of a product is divided into small and medium levels of management. The small cycle is the level of tactical measures that the brand manager performs. Medium – strategic brand asset decisions made by the CMO
«The Other Side of the Moon» control model [7]	Dealing with two sides of the brand: visible and hidden	Hidden work on the brand implies internal marketing and appropriate communication, internal positioning. The visible side of the brand is the market positioning and its activity
L. Dybchuk, K. Dobrovol'ska Control model [8]	Management is aimed at promoting the brand among the target audience in the labor market	The basis of management is the goals and mission of the company, resources for promotion and corporate policy

**Note:** built by the author on the basis of [5–8]

**Table 2**

Adapting the Johari model for employer brand value proposition disclosure

Information status	Known to the candidate	Unknown to the candidate
Known for the company	Open	Slip zone
Unknown to the company	Hidden	Unknown

**Note:** adapted by the author based on [9]

Most managers are captivated by their own ideas about the business and cannot objectively assess what is happening. Sometimes important information and development parameters are found outside the area of their consideration, and, accordingly, they are hidden from potential consumers. In the disclosure phase, it is necessary to identify this information and share it with customers. It describes the process of interaction between an employer and a job candidate.

The open area, known to candidates, reflects the value proposition, positive image in the labor market and public information about the company, which can be found by candidates in online and offline communication points.

Customers know something about companies that we don't know about. Perhaps someone complained about the psychological climate or the management system in the company. Candidates are not able to see this information, it is a blind zone.

What neither we nor our clients know about is unknown. This information, perhaps, will cease to be such in a year or two, when we get to know each other better. That is, these are our future opportunities.

What the company is silent about is of great importance to the candidate. What we really need to deal with is the Hidden area, which is information that we have that candidates would really like to have. The «Hidden» area is the reason why there are many job candidates. It is this information that needs to be disclosed as well as possible.

Employer brand assessment can be done using target audience survey methods. Such procedures are widely used in the practice of brand loyalty analysis, statistics of applying for vacancies, initial interviews with laid-off employees, determination of the employer rating formed by recruiting agencies.

An expert survey can be carried out through interviews with the target audience or by conducting a written or interactive survey. Typically, the survey is conducted independently by the HR department of the company or with the help of HR agencies. The target audience of the survey can be only employees of the company, only candidates (potential employees) and both employees and candidates. The survey may be anonymous. Questions in the questionnaire are related to loyalty to the employer's brand, satisfaction with the employer's value propositions, expectations at the place of work.

Initial interviews with laid-off employees or interns are preferably conducted by a one-on-one HR manager who did not work directly together to avoid subjectivity. The main questions during the interview are usually related to the internal brand of the employer: material and non-material motivation, components of the value proposition (their priority and expediency), schedule and working conditions, team, corporate culture [10].

To generalize the results of the survey to assess the level of significance of factors for choosing a company

for an internship or work, a probabilistic approach can be used based on the determination of the mathematical expectation, standard deviation and coefficient of variation of the results of the survey assessments.

The assessment of the significance of factors can occur in the following categories:

- not important (score 1);
- least important (score 2);
- important (score 3);
- very important (grade 4).

Thus, a scale of evaluation of the level of significance of value propositions from 1 to 4 is used.

At the first stage, the probability of obtaining an appropriate estimate for each factor is determined by the formula:

$$X_{ij} = \frac{a_{ij}}{\sum_{j=1}^4 a_{ij}}, \quad (1)$$

where  $X_{ij}$  – probability of obtaining an estimate  $j$  for the  $i$ -th factor;  $a_{ij}$  – the number of students who gave an estimate to the  $j$  factor  $i$ ;  $i$  – factor index ( $i=1, \dots, n$ );  $n$  – the number of factors;  $j$  – the value of the factor estimate ( $j=1, \dots, 4$ ).

As a result, let's obtain a matrix of probabilities for assessing the answers to the questions of the questionnaire:

$$\begin{matrix} X_{i1} & X_{i2} & X_{i3} & X_{i4} \\ \dots & \dots & \dots & \dots \\ X_{j1} & X_{j2} & X_{j3} & X_{j4} \end{matrix} \quad (2)$$

Each row of this matrix is a grouped statistical series of the probability of obtaining the  $j$ -th assessment for each  $i$ -th factor of the evaluation system for choosing a company for an internship.

Thus, for a generalized assessment of the factor, one can use the indicators of mathematical expectation, standard deviation, and coefficient of variation.

The mathematical expectation of the score for each  $i$ -th factor can be calculated using the formula:

$$M(X_i) = \sum_{j=1}^4 j \cdot X_{ij}. \quad (3)$$

The mathematical expectation of factor estimates shows the average factor score on a four-point scale.

The standard deviation for each  $i$ -th factor is calculated by the formula:

$$\sigma(X_i) = \sqrt{\sum_{j=1}^4 (j - M(X_i))^2}. \quad (4)$$

The standard deviation shows the amount of fluctuation in the evaluation of each factor around its mathematical expectation.

The coefficient of variation is calculated by the formula:

$$CV(X_i) = \frac{\sigma(X_i)}{M(X_i)} \cdot 100\%. \quad (5)$$

The coefficient of variation shows the percentage of fluctuations per unit of the expected evaluation of value propositions [11].

Also, in the practice of an expert survey of the level, strength, potential or significance of the employer brand, a number of questionnaires already compiled and tested by practice are used. One of the most common surveys

is the GallupQ12 questionnaire, which includes 12 questions to assess employer brand. Questions relate to awareness of the value proposition for employees, material and non-material motivation, and the atmosphere of work. To evaluate the responses, the formula [12] is used:

$$I_p = \frac{n_{pos.}}{n_{tot.ans.}} \cdot 100\%, \quad (6)$$

where  $I_p$  – % of employee involvement;  $n_{pos.}$  – the number of positive answers;  $n_{tot.ans.}$  – the total number of answers.

The employer brand is considered positive if the value of this indicator is more than 70 %. The high level of employee involvement in the work of the company is an indicator of their loyalty to the brand.

According to the methodology of S. Mokina, the assessment takes place at all points of contact between employees and the employer's brand: from recruiting to dismissal from the company. To analyze the answers to the questions, a linguistic point scale for assessing the employer brand from -3 (strongly disagree/agree) to +3 (strongly agree) is used. The result of using this technique is the employer brand strength indices (internal and external separately):

$$I_{EBS} = P_7 + (P_6 - P_2) \cdot 0.6667 + (P_5 - P_3) \cdot 0.3333 + P_4 \cdot 0 - P_1, \quad (7)$$

where  $P_1$  – share of respondents who answered «strongly disagree»;  $P_2$  – share of respondents who answered «disagree»;  $P_3$  – share of respondents who gave the answer «partially disagree»;  $P_4$  – share of respondents who answered «difficult to answer/do not know»;  $P_5$  – share of respondents who answered «rather agree»;  $P_6$  – share of respondents who answered «agree»;  $P_7$  – share of respondents who answered «strongly agree».

After determining the brand strength index for the components of the employer's value proposition, a matrix is built in which the horizontal axis indicates the components of the external brand, and the vertical axis indicates the internal ones. It is divided into four parts:

- quadrant 1 – strengths are unambiguously assessed by both employees and the external audience;
- quadrant 2 – positively evaluated components of the value proposition by employees and negatively by candidates;
- quadrant 3 – negative assessment by the internal audience and positive by the candidates;
- quadrant 4 – negative assessment of internal and external audiences.

This matrix contributes to more effective management of the employer brand and the improvement of the components of the employer's value proposition.

To assess the loyalty of the target audience to the employer's brand, it is possible to use the well-known indicator of the consumer loyalty index (from the English NPS – NetPromoterScore). The higher the level of brand loyalty, the higher the quantitative indicators of the effectiveness of brand management. These are the number of candidates for one position and the number of recommendations from employees on choosing a company for employment. The result of the analysis of the indicator is an assessment of the willingness of employees

to recommend work in the company in the long term. The frequency of the index evaluation is usually carried out – 2–4 times a year. Employees of the company are divided into 3 categories: rating 1–6 – do not recommend, 7–8 – neutral attitude towards the company, 9–10 – brand ambassadors. The calculation is made according to the formula:

$$NPS = N_b - N_e, \quad (8)$$

where  $N_b$  – percentage size of brand ambassadors (%);  $N_e$  – percentage of employees who do not recommend work in the company (%).

To analyze the results, a percentage scale is used:

- less than 0 – an urgent need to make a decision to change the level of employee loyalty to the brand;
- 0–50 – average level;
- 50–70 – high level;
- 70–100 – the level of loyalty corresponds to the level of labor market leaders.

The Company Job Satisfaction Score (CSAT) analyzes the satisfaction level of an employee's work experience in a company. Issues include performance of assigned tasks, career development, teamwork, communication with the manager. The scale for scoring each answer is:

- 1–2 – bad impression;
- 3 – neutral attitude;
- 4 – moderate level of job satisfaction;
- 5 – high level of satisfaction and ready to recommend.

To calculate CSAT, the formula is used:

$$CSAT = \frac{n_{rat}}{n_{tot.rat}} \cdot 100\%, \quad (9)$$

where  $n_r$  – the number of ratings with a value of 4–5 (%);  $n_{tot.rat}$  is the total number of ratings.

According to the estimates obtained, the CSAT value is divided into three groups:

- 1) 60–100 % – high level of satisfaction with working conditions in the company;
- 2) 40–60 % – normally acceptable;
- 3) 0–40 % – low.

This indicator is usually used when an employee is dismissed from the company [12].

The maturity of the management system or individual business management processes determines the level of passing by the enterprise of certain stages of its development. At the same time, each level of maturity corresponds to a number of specific characteristics and requirements for compliance with a certain stage of maturity. The higher the level of maturity of the employer brand formed at the enterprise, the more systemic, strategic and value-based is the process. This is manifested in communication with the target audience, the implementation of the company's values at each stage of the business process, the creation of surplus value by the employee.

Employer brand maturity can be assessed on the following dimensions: cultural, managerial, and professional. The cultural aspect is manifested in the employer's communication with candidates, corporate culture and the importance of the company's values. The managerial aspect is manifested in the standardization and organization at all levels of the business process of hiring, training and evaluating employees. The professional aspect is manifested

in the availability and level of interest of the employer in the development of the employee.

To assess the maturity of the employer brand, five levels are used: initial, standard, rational, control, perfect. Let's propose to consider four levels of employer brand maturity: origin (zero), standardization (first), improvement (second) and optimization (third) [13].

The assessment is accordingly carried out on a 4-point scale of criteria:

- 0 – absent in the company;
- 1 – initial level or is implicit;
- 2 – standardized process known to every employee;
- 3 – process has received an improvement (for example, automation) with minimal disadvantages;
- 4 – the process can be considered perfect.

To evaluate each aspect, it is advisable to use the formula:

$$a_{av} = \frac{\sum a_1, a_2, \dots, a_n}{n}, \quad (10)$$

where  $a_{av}$  – the average maturity level of the aspect;  $n$  is the number of answers;  $a_n$  – the respondent's assessment of the aspect (from 0 to 4).

Accordingly, after it is advisable to use the scale:

- from 0 to 0.5 – absent or only at the stage of inception;
- from 0.5 to 1 – low level of development and critically in need of improvement;
- from 1 to 2 – the process is standardized and has a basis for further development;
- from 2 to 2.5 – improvement stage with a specific development strategy;
- from 2.5 to 3 – the perfect level of development of processes with the creation of added value by each employee.

Table 3 shows the cultural, managerial, and occupational maturity assessment of employer brand according to employer brand maturity levels. Each level and aspect has a certain status.

A limitation of this study is the potential for error in calculating employer brand maturity and the subjectivity of respondents' opinions when answering questions.

A promising direction for the development of this study should be considered the search for or the formation of a universal approach to assessing the employer's brand. This is due to the fact that existing approaches to assess-

ing the employer brand are not always possible to use for small businesses or start-ups. These approaches are most preferred for medium, large and international companies.

#### 4. Conclusions

So, in the course of the proposed study, the main approaches of scientists to employer brand management models were summarized. Also, various approaches to assessing the employer brand were identified and formed. This study will increase objectivity in assessing the employer brand. The results of the study can be used by HR managers at enterprises of various sizes.

Every model of employer brand management aims to build a positive brand. As a result of a study of the most advanced employer brand management models, Brett Minchington and the Business Model Canvas ecosystem models were discovered. This is due to the fact that management is considered comprehensively and forms a single ecosystem.

The employer's value proposition is not always fully open and accessible. As a result, Johari model for employer brand management was adapted. It was revealed that the hidden area of information about the value proposition for the candidate is the most desirable. Although the employer, when forming the value proposition, mistakenly did not consider it necessary for the candidate's attention.

To assess the employer brand, the most common method of interviewing the target audience. The analysis is carried out using the tools of mathematical expectation and weight coefficients, as well as the indicator of the percentage of employee involvement, which analyzes the level of commitment to brand by S. Mokina's method for assessing brand strength using weighting coefficients and a matrix image is appropriate for large enterprises and well-known employers in the market.

The NPS and CSAT brand scoring metrics are tailored to employer scoring. Accordingly, the level of loyalty of candidates and the level of job satisfaction in the company of employees are determined.

Employer brand maturity is analyzed in three dimensions: cultural, professional and managerial. The study proposed four levels for evaluation. Respondents provide answers on a scale from 0 to 4 points. After the main average value of the sample, the manager analyzes the level of brand maturity in accordance with the scale.

**Table 3**

Employer brand maturity assessment

Employer brand maturity levels	Considerations for determining employer brand maturity levels		
	Cultural aspect	Management aspect	Professional aspect
Optimization – Third level	Systemically recognized value that creates cooperation of all employees in the team	Continuous optimization of HR business processes to create sustainable enterprise value	The target business model of personnel management is designed to create value, each employee understands its connection with the goals of the company and the goals of its development
Improvement – Second level	Defined the process and strategy for improving the employer brand, effective teamwork	Continuous improvement of the personnel management process and the formation of the employer brand	The HR system meets the interests of employees and has the potential for development
Standardization – First level	Management maintains hierarchy and employee status	Control procedures for personnel management are formed and standardized	Support for employee engagement, there is a standardization of personnel management processes
Origin – Zero level	Public and private job postings diverge	Management is aware of job requirements	Employees fulfill their obligations and have the opportunity to develop
Employer brand=	Cultural aspect X	Management aspect X	Professional aspect X

**Note:** developed by the author

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