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CONTENTS

Sr. No.	TITLE & NAME OF THE AUTHOR (S)	Page No.
1.	IMPACT OF INVENTORY MANAGEMENT ON THE PROFITABILITY OF SMES IN TANZANIA <i>DR. SRINIVAS MADISHETTI & DEOGRATIAS KIBONA</i>	1
2.	CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT QUALITY IN NIGERIAN BANKS <i>OBARETIN OSASU & DR. CHINWUBA OKAFOR</i>	6
3.	THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TENURE WITH COST STICKY AND COST OF GOODS SOLD IN TEHRAN STOCK EXCHANGE <i>ROYA DARABI & LEILA DARVISHI</i>	10
4.	AN ASSESSMENT OF THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF COOPERATIVE BANK OF OROMIYA, ARSI NEGELLE TOWN, ETHIOPIA, EAST AFRICA <i>DR. K. KANAGARAJ</i>	18
5.	INVESTIGATING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OVERVALUATION OF STOCKS AND STOCKHOLDERS' EQUITY AND PROFIT-SMOOTHING IN TSE CEMENT AND AUTOMOBILE INDUSTRIES <i>MOHAMMAD REZA ASGARI & SHAHIN SAHRAEI</i>	25
6.	THE INFLUENCE OF MANAGEMENT ON SCHOOL CULTURE AND ITS EFFECTS ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE: A CASE OF ST. PATRICK'S HIGH SCHOOL ITEN <i>CHRISTINE KETER</i>	29
7.	DETERMINANTS OF LIFE INSURANCE IN ETHIOPIA <i>ADERAW GASHAYIE AYALIEW</i>	36
8.	COLLABORATION BETWEEN SALES AND MARKETING INCREASES THE BUSINESS PERFORMANCE: EVIDENCE FROM PAKISTANI EXPORT INDUSTRY <i>ARSLAN RAFI, YASIR SALEEM, JAVED IQBAL, ALI IFTIKHAR & MUHAMMAD NAWAZ</i>	46
9.	EFFECT OF OUTSOURCING ON ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE IN BANKING INDUSTRY IN NIGERIA <i>OLUYEMI OLUWOLE OLUTOSIN</i>	51
10.	A STUDY ON ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORT AND ITS IMPACT ON WORK-LIFE BALANCE OF EMPLOYEES IN INSURANCE COMPANIES IN COIMBATORE <i>DR. SHRIPRIA. V</i>	59
11.	AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON USER SATISFACTION IN CORPORATE HOSPITALS <i>DR. T. SREENIVAS & DR. U. SRINIVASA RAO</i>	63
12.	EMPLOYER BRANDING IN INDIA: EMERGING DIMENSIONS <i>DR. M. K. SINGH & DR. SONAL SHARMA</i>	70
13.	AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS ON FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE OF PUBLIC SECTOR HOUSING CORPORATION IN INDIA: A CASE STUDY OF HUDCO <i>CH. HARI GOVINDA RAO, DR. N. APPARAO & B. VENKAT RAO</i>	76
14.	FACTORS INFLUENCING RETAIL INVESTORS IN INDIAN PRIMARY MARKET <i>DR. T. MANJUNATHA & K. T. GOPI</i>	81
15.	A STUDY ON CUSTOMERS ATTITUDE TOWARDS PURCHASE OF MIDDLE SEGMENT CARS IN VELLORE CITY <i>S. SHRILATHA & DR. A. ARULAPPAN</i>	87
16.	AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON EXPLOITATION AND EXPLORATION OF BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES FOR BSNL IN INDIAN TELECOM MARKET <i>K. ARUN PRASAD & DR. S. V. DEVANATHAN</i>	91
17.	A COMPARATIVE STUDY ABOUT THE MANAGING OF STRESS BY WOMEN NURSES BOTH AT PRIVATE AND GOVERNMENT HOSPITALS AT KANCHIPURAM DISTRICT <i>T. THIRUMALESWARI & DR. C. B. RAGOTHAMAN</i>	99
18.	A STUDY ON FRANCHISED RESTAURANTS AS A SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS MODEL FOR FRANCHISEES <i>USHA DINAKARAN</i>	107
19.	ATTITUDE OF MUTUAL FUND INVESTORS – AN EMPIRICAL STUDY <i>DR. SANYASI RAJU G.V.S.S.N</i>	112
20.	IMPACT ANALYSIS OF VARIOUS DEVELOPMENTAL SCHEMES IN JAMMU & KASHMIR STATE <i>AASIM MIR & SHIV KUMAR GUPTA</i>	117
21.	PERFORMANCE OF FOREIGN BANKS IN INDIA: AN EVALUATION <i>DR. VIJAY KUMAR SHARMA & ANUJ KUMAR</i>	120
22.	AN EVALUATION OF PERFORMANCE OF THE WEST BENGAL STATE CO-OPERATIVE BANK LTD. <i>TARASANKAR DAS</i>	131
23.	A STUDY OF CUSTOMERS' ATTITUDE AND BEHAVIOUR ON JEWELLERY PURCHASE IN SALEM DISTRICT <i>DR. S. DEEPA & DR. M. NATARAJAN</i>	137
24.	CUSTOMERS PERCEPTION AND CHANGING WAVES IN INDIAN RETAILING: A CASE STUDY OF BELAGAVI, KARNATAKA STATE <i>DR. B. S. NAVI</i>	143
25.	ROLE OF CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENT ON PURCHASE BEHAVIOUR <i>PRIYANKA SHAH & ANU GUPTA</i>	147
26.	STUDY OF THE PRODUCTS OF LAKME COMPANY LTD. WITH REFERENCE TO PUNE CITY <i>DR. G. SYAMALA</i>	150
27.	ROLE OF WORKING CAPITAL FINANCING IN SMOOTH RUNNING OF A BUSINESS: AN EVALUATIVE STUDY <i>DR. UTTAM PAUL</i>	155
28.	FINANCIAL INCLUSION – AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON RURAL HOUSEHOLD'S AWARENESS: A STUDY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SELECTED VILLAGES IN MADURAI DISTRICT <i>DR. K. UMA & S. RAMAN</i>	160
29.	PORTFOLIO EVALUATION OF MUTUAL FUNDS IN INDIA - AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF EQUITY GROWTH SCHEMES OF SELECT FUNDS <i>B. USHA REKHA & DR. K. RAJENDER</i>	164
30.	IMPULSE BUYING OF APPARELS <i>ANKITA NANDA</i>	170
	REQUEST FOR FEEDBACK	177

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- Sharma T., Kwatra, G. (2008) Effectiveness of Social Advertising: A Study of Selected Campaigns, Corporate Social Responsibility, Edited by David Crowther & Nicholas Capaldi, Ashgate Research Companion to Corporate Social Responsibility, Chapter 15, pp 287-303.

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EMPLOYER BRANDING IN INDIA: EMERGING DIMENSIONS

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ABSTRACT

In a today world, an effective employer brand is essential for gaining competitive advantage. An effective employer branding strategy has the capacity to attract and retain talented employees and to make good reputation in the job market as well as goods market. It is a key challenge before the employers in order to attract, recruit and retain right talent required for the job. Building a strong employer brand is the joint responsibility of HR, marketing and top management. The success and failure of the business depends critically upon its employer brand. It is the performance driver which no organization can ignore to achieve sustainable growth. Strong employer brand acts as an important tool to meet the competition worldwide on a labor markets. It is a long-term effort, which requires substantial resources. The main idea behind this paper is to bring into light the very important asset of an organization by enumerating its features, importance, followed by strategic steps for an effective implementation with conclusion and recommendations to manage the same.

KEYWORDS

Branding, Employer Branding, Human Resource Management, Employer Value Proposition, Strategy.

INTRODUCTION

Employer branding is the application of branding principles on human resource management same as in case of consumer branding. This strategy is used to create a 'distinct employer identity' in the target market whether it consists of present employees or prospective employees. It starts with the development of an 'Employer Value Proposition' which stated job and organizational attributes. The present and future employees use these attributes to form their judgment regarding employment benefits offered by an employer. It drives brand related behaviors. Now days, this practice has generated a greater interest among HR professionals because it can enhance the value of the employer in terms of talented human resources. In the era of tough competition talented people highly scarce in the competitive markets. It is expected in the coming years that competition will become higher for a skilled persons rather than consumers for a product. Therefore effective employer branding can lead to the recruitment of talented employees, improvement in retention rates and a higher levels of employer commitment. The main objective of this paper is to highlight this issue especially for the HR professionals in the companies to deal with this in a strategic way for a greater impact. This is the highly discussion topic among the top leading employers but still there is a lack of understanding. Lots of discussion, research, and innovation are required for an effective employer branding. By this paper we are trying to give some recommendation for the same which may be beneficial for the further research.

CONCEPT OF EMPLOYER BRANDING

From the organization's perspective, the employer brand sums up the key qualities current and prospective employees identify with you as an employer, whether economic such as compensation and benefits, functional such as learning new skills or psychological such as sense of identity and status. Employment branding is the method by which organizations develop and promote an Employment Value Proposition accounting to its present and future employees. It is the long term solution in the era of war for talent.

FEATURES OF EMPLOYER BRANDING**CHART NO. 1: FEATURES OF EMPLOYER BRANDING**

Features of Employer Branding	
Area/Scope	Employer Branding
1. Branding Activities	External and Internal
2. Branded Entity	The Organization
3. Target	Present and Future Employees
4. Roots	Human Resource Management
5. HR Activities	Recruitment and Selection, External and Internal Communication and Effective Advertising
6. Purpose	To Attract, Recruit and Retain Talented Employees
7. Expected Outcomes	To Ensure Competitive Advantage, Build High Quality, Motivated and Performance Oriented Employees from the Existing Talent Pool and Winning the War for Talent

DEFINE SOME KEY TERMS**EMPLOYMENT VALUE PROPOSITION (EVP)**

An EVP is the value or benefit an employee obtains through employment or in other words the value of an organization's employment experience. The value proposition will identify the unique people policies, processes and programs that demonstrate the company's commitment to employee growth and recognition and management development. The reasons people choose to commit themselves to the organization are contained within the value proposition.

EMPLOYER VALUE PROPOSITION

The employer value proposition describes the understanding of the brand from the employer's perspective. The statement formulates a shared basic understanding as an employer and addresses topics such as the working environment, team-work, management style and development. It provides the basis for aligning communication and offerings in the scope of employer branding.

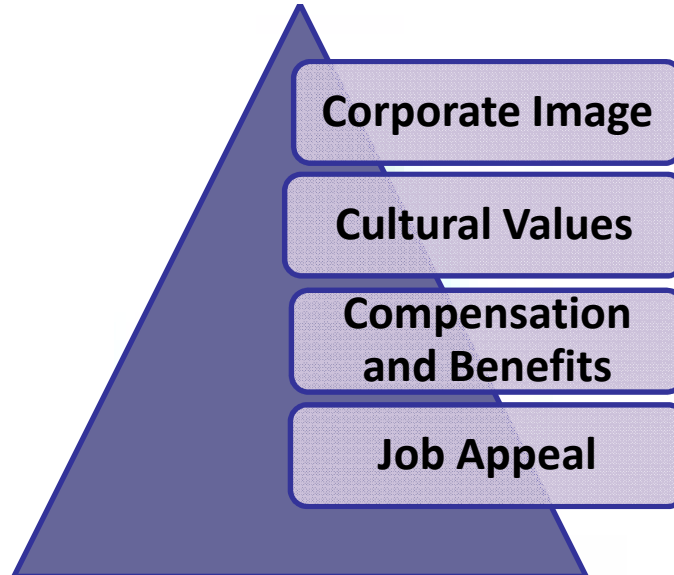
EMPLOYEE VALUE PROPOSITION

An employee value proposition (EVP) is what is offered by an employer in exchange for the productivity and performance of an employee.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EVP AND EMPLOYMENT BRANDING

Employment branding is the method by which organizations develop and promote an Employment Value Proposition accounting for applicant and employee preferences.

FIG NO. 1: EMPLOYMENT VALUE PROPOSITION MODEL

**Why strong employer branding is essential?**

- Useful strategy during or at the time of recession
- Due to Shortage of skilled manpower
- To attract, engage and retain the talented people.
- To increase competition in the labor market world wide
- To survive in the competitive market
- To boosts the image of the company
- Constantly engage in increasing value of the employer brand and its success
- Emphasize the organization commitment to its brand for its long-term survival and growth
- It's a success mantra in the war for talent

Key Points for an Effective Employer Branding

- 1) Employer brand has the capacity to attract and retain talent and represent quality to its customers, with the goal of gaining global recognition in a sustainable manner.
- 2) Every employer brand is an investment that should demonstrate a return comparable to other forms of business investment.
- 3) Employer brand has a strong value proposition, with core corporate values at its foundation.

CHART NO. 2: EMPLOYER BRANDING: KEY FACTORS



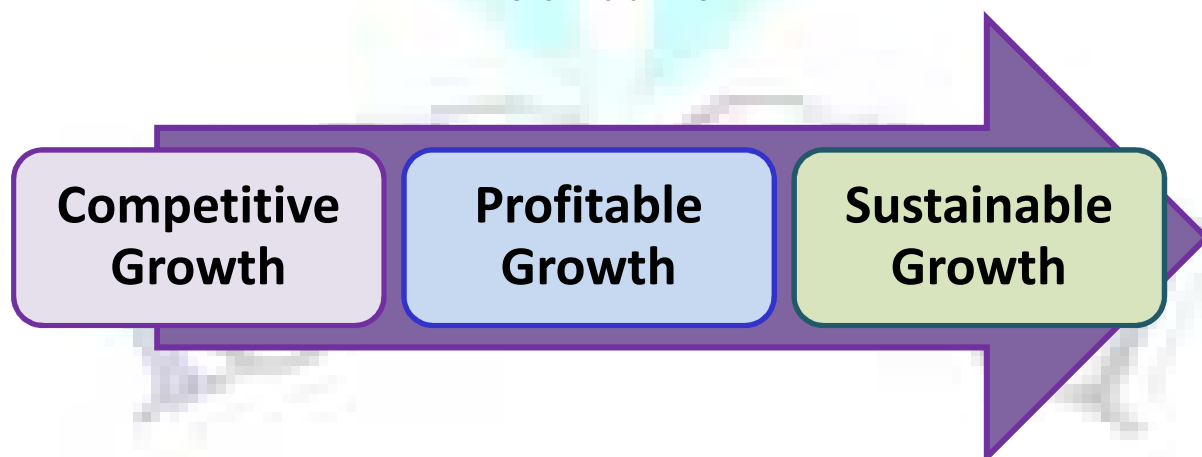
EMPLOYER BRANDING INITIATIVES IN INDIA: A CASE OF HINDUSTAN UNILEVER LIMITED

INTRODUCTION

Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL) is India's largest Fast Moving Consumer Goods Company with a heritage of over 75 years in India and touches the lives of two out of three Indians. HUL works to create a better future every day and helps people feel good, look good and get more out of life with brands and services that are good for them and good for others. With over 35 brands spanning 20 distinct categories such as soaps, detergents, shampoos, skin care, toothpastes, deodorants, cosmetics, tea, coffee, packaged foods, ice cream, and water purifiers, the Company is a part of the everyday life of millions of consumers across India. The Company has over 16,000 employees and has an annual turnover of around Rs. 21,736 crores (financial year 2011 - 2012). HUL is a subsidiary of Unilever, one of the world's leading suppliers of fast moving consumer goods with strong local roots in more than 100 countries across the globe with annual sales of about €46.5 billion in 2011. Unilever has about 52% shareholding in HUL.

HUL STRATEGY OF WINNING WITH PEOPLE

FIG NO. 2: HUL STRATEGY



- **Leveraging Operating Framework** - for Competitive Advantage
- HUL devises so many programmes to attract, recruit and retain best people in the war for talent and build the talent pipeline ready to match their growth ambitions
- **Build Employer Brand on B-School Campus** - before hiring by on campus programmes like Unilever Unplugged, Lessons in Marketing Excellence, Marketing in Practice and others which helps to build rapport with management students and expose them to the opportunities available in a career with Unilever.
- As a result of that work with B-school students, the annual syndicated AC Nielsen report in November 2011 named HUL the top employer on campus.
- **HUL Management Trainee Programme** - commonly known as the Unilever Future Leaders Programme (UFLP), has trained managers over the years in its various forms in order to create young and dynamic leaders who have later occupied leadership positions across unilever globally.
- **Creating a Performance Culture** - By Annual Performance Cycle' encompassing three clear steps: setting goals, assessing performance and rewards.

- **By Listening to People-** Every year HUL do an organizational health checks survey that covers the entire workforce from workman to top management. The feedback from the survey helps to build holistic employee engagement plans.
- Global People Pulse Survey, 2011, showed that India featured in the top 25 countries across Unilever. As many as 94% of the employees responded favorably to the statement: "I am proud to say that I work for HUL."
- **Living Vitality through the Workplace** – HUL committed to building a culture of engagement, flexibility and inclusion that enables their people to achieve a desirable work-life balance.

ACHIEVEMENTS & EXTERNAL RECOGNITION

In 2011, HUL received more than 70 awards and honours. Here's a list of some of them:

- ❖ HUL has been **ranked No.2 in the Fortune India's Most Admired** Companies list (announced in 2012)
- ❖ HUL received the **2nd Asia's Best Employer Brand Awards 2011** on 22nd July, 2011 at Suntec, Singapore.
- ❖ HUL emerged as the **'Dream Employer' in the annual B-School Survey** conducted by A.C. Nielsen.
- ❖ HUL has been awarded the **'No. 1 Best Employer for 2011 in India'** by Outlook Business and Aon Hewitt for diverse talent pool
- ❖ HUL **No.1 Employer of Choice** by Nielsen campus track
- ❖ HUL awarded CII-Prize for **Leadership in HR Excellence**
- ❖ HUL ranked sixth in the list of **'Global Top Companies for Leaders 2011 Study Results'** by Aon Hewitt, The RBL Group, and Fortune
- ❖ HUL received the prestigious **'Golden Peacock Global Award' for Corporate Social Responsibility**
- ❖ Award for **Talent Management for (Leadership Development)**
- ❖ Award for **Managing Health at Work**
- ❖ Award for **Innovation in Recruitment (Building a Preferred Employer Brand: The HUL Way)**
- ❖ Award for **Innovation in Retention Strategy**
- ❖ Award for **Innovation in Career Development – (R&D: A Culture of Career Creation)**
- ❖ Award for **Global HR Strategy – Talent & Organization Readiness**
- ❖ Award for **Excellence in Training – (Unlocking Value Through Learning)**

In all, **HUL processes are geared to building a culture focused on execution and performance. This delivers clarity, consistency and encourages employees to live up to their standards of leadership.**

Key Components of Good Employment Value Proposition

FIG. NO. 3: ELEMENTS OF GOOD EVP



As shown in the diagram EVP centers on all other organizational processes and it is the core element of all other organizational activity. The success of EVP depends upon these factors which are as follows:

- To ensure an EVP generates maximum returns it must be built around attributes that genuinely attract, engage and retain the talent you want.
- It must also be consistent with strategic objectives and clearly demonstrate its uniqueness.
- The EVP must also be real.
- It should be flexible enough for a change and adapt itself accordingly for the progress of an organization. So that employees feels a sense that the organization responding to the environmental challenges easily.
- It must also be articulated in a style that appeals to the target audience.

Emerging Challenges

- Investment in workforce planning, employer branding, recruiting and retaining talented employees at all levels to meet the needs of growth, and to take advantage of emerging opportunities.
- In the changing age demographics, create a corporate value proposition that appeals to multiple generations.
- Internally develop a strong leadership pipeline to meet future growth requirements.
- HR professionals should take initiatives of training and development to build a talented workforce pool who able to perform versatile role in an ever changing business environment.
- Control of employees attrition rates that have become almost a norm and endemic across all industries.
- Develop and Design new and cutting edge talent management practices to attract and retain the current younger generation workforce which thinks in a completely in a different way.
- Create an internal business environment which helps an employees to grow and prosper
- Change the cultural and attitudinal mindset of existing executives who do not understand or do not want to understand the new realities and challenges of the global world.
- Integrate different cultures into a rapidly globalizing workforce.

Strategic Steps for an Effective Employer Branding:

- 1) Identification and Analysis of Target Group of Applicant Pool and Determine and Assess their Preferences, Trends and Behavior Regarding Employment
- 2) Analysis of Perception as an Employer on a Target Group of Applicant.
- 3) Identification of Competitors Perception and their way of Communication with Whom Company Compete for Talent and Assess their Approaches to Employer Branding.
- 4) SWOT Analysis to Assess Company Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunity, Threat as an Employer on a Relevant Target Groups.
- 5) Development of Employment Value Proposition (EVP).
- 6) Implementation of the Employer Brand through or by the Medium of Effective Communication such as Top Job Sites, Media etc.
- 7) Monitoring and Management of Employer Brand.

Emerging Dimensions

- In an increasingly challenging global business environment, talent management will become a priority for all HR professionals in the years ahead.
- There is a need for direct and more accountability to develop future leaders and managers.
- There must be a support system exist in an organization to build managerial skills and capabilities.
- Use of technology and its integration in all aspects of employment process.
- Inclusion of corporate social responsibility in a brand management.
- There is an urgent need for a responsible employer branding in the new era of sustainability.
- Continuous innovation in employer branding to develop social, human and intellectual capital is the need of the hour.

Employer Branding: The Road Map for Excellence

- Use Employer branding for business transformation.
- Support cultural diversity across borders
- Open lines of communication around the world
- Integration of systems to support attraction of talent , engagement and retention globally
- Integration of employer brand and EVP into company culture
- Design of policies, systems and processes in accordance with EVP
- Development and management top global career site
- Training of line managers for employer brand management

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The shortage of talent is the biggest challenge behind HR professionals and employer branding acts as a potent tool to meet or cope up with this challenge in the coming years or in the era of competitive world where everyone try for the best one. Effective employer value proposition helps to hire the best people from the talent pool available. The another biggest challenge behind HR professionals about talent shortage is the gap between the university education system and the industry work culture, so there is a need for a coordination between higher education institutions and industry to fill the talent gap and build the pipeline of talented and skilled workforce. Adoption of talent management techniques is the better solution to deal with problem of talent shortage in the years ahead. In order to sustain in the rapid growth market, there is a need to face and address this challenge in a broader way to survive in this competitive world. Employer branding is a strategic tool if deal in a strategic way to capture the job market and to retain their identity in a business world for an indefinite period of time. It is an ongoing and never-ending process and having a long lasting impact on a talent pool, so it should be carefully designed keeping all the driving factors into consideration. To meet the emerging challenges of business associated with hiring, engaging and retaining talented employees, there is an urgent need for a continuous research and innovation for managing or deal with the talent issue in an effective way which having a stronger and deeper impact on existing employees and prospective employees. Employer branding acts as an economic tool during the time of economic downturn. In a changing scenario where skilled employees themselves choose their employers, employer branding becomes essential.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Organizations need to keep in mind that the way they treat their employee's today- both those that are leaving and those that remain- will have an impact on their employment brand and EVP.
- Strive to develop and communicate a strong EVP
- Creating a Unique and competitive Employment Value Proposition (EVP) is the best solution for the HR problem.
- In order to attract and retain best people and to continue running the organization, employers need to create an environment in which people enjoy attending work, are fulfilled in their role and share in working towards a common goal.
- By protecting employment brand and employer value proposition for the future recruitment and it will also give an added advantage to an organization over their competitors.
- By providing unique benefits or stimulating incentive programs are a good way to attract qualified applicants and motivate the current young employees.
- It is important to understand what factors lead to employee satisfaction, it is imperative to understand which of these factors correlate directly to the intention to leave the organization.
- HR professionals should identify key satisfaction drivers and the reasons of leaving for the purpose of determining and selecting appropriate EVP attributes.
- HR professionals should consider major satisfaction drivers/factors such as job security, opportunities for growth and development and compensation and pay benefits for the creation of their organizations' EVP.
- Review the EVP strategy because it is a continuous and ongoing process and accordingly EVP and the employer brand has to be change.
- Strong employer branding act as a key to attract and retain talent in a recession and it should be originate from current business strategy.
- By developing a sense of purpose among employees by linking their work with the success of an organization then they will strive to work hard to achieve the goal of an organization and contribute to its vision.
- By Reinforcing a "growth culture," in an organization where employees are willingly take on more responsibilities, to learn new skills and knowledge and to develop their work competencies which will ultimately contribute to the growth and development of an organization. There should be a regular monitoring and measuring of employee growth.

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