

TOWARDS EMPLOYEE BRANDING: A NEXUS OF HR & MARKETING.

Muhammad Awais Memon

Dr. Nadir Ali Kolachi

Faculty of Management Sciences, SZABIST University, Karachi

Abstract

Sustainability of the businesses is the key strategic objective of the business; researchers believe that it can be realized by expanding the domain of traditional HR and Marketing roles into broader aspects of strategic HRM and Branding that can be found in employee branding. This study is based on the premise that today's needs necessitate creating coherence between different functions of the organization, HR and Marketing particularly. Impact of employee branding on brand identification, brand commitment, brand loyalty and brand performance has been reconnoitered in this study. A new way of gauging employee branding has been proposed that promises long term employee – employer relationship.

Keywords: Employee branding, Marketing, HR, Employee engagement , Training , Brand commitment , Brand Performance , Brand Loyalty, Employee Empowerment , Communications

1. Introduction

The role of HR department in organizations continues to grow with growing complexity and volatility of markets. With the research on training motivation, internal core competencies, development of strategic plans & their implementation there is call for HR to holistically integrate into core competencies of the organization (Ulrich, 1998; Becker et al., 1997). Finding a strategic fit between customers and employees with the business strategy is the core objective of the change efforts (J.C. Cobb et al, 1998). Marketing and HR ate the two functional areas that provide mega impetus to change efforts in organization. Aligning these two functions can create competitive advantage and success for the firm. The role of strategic marketing is to provide winning moves in the market place and intelligent development of the mantras for the strategic alignment between different functions; HR in particular (Deschamps and Nayak, 1995). As Becker et al (1997) state, the “tangible evidence of an HR manager’s focus on the human capital elements of important business problems; such as those problems that are likely to impede growth, lower profitability, and diminish shareholder value, is reflected in an internally coherent, externally aligned, and effectively implemented HRM system”. Literature provides evidence that alignment between customers and employees is possible when marketing and people’s system or HR is locked in a strategic fit (Ulrich, 1997). J.C Cobb et al, (1998) suggested that HR & marketing must form a collaborative network and play on the same turf to focus on customer-employee engagement. Cobb J.C, Samuels C.J & Sexton M.W in (1998) found that four arguments must be taken into account for successful HR system that is internally and externally aligned.

1.1 Background

Development of models that measure employees and customers on common nodes and making customer-employee fit part of balance score card.

- Developing a model for total systems and market dynamics.
- Inter departmental integration between marketing and HR.
- Leadership that is capable of creating coherence among different functions of business and aligning them strategically. (Cobb J.C et al 1998)

Today businesses operate in ultracompetitive and complex landscape. Companies need to meet continuing business challenges and change efforts in knowledge economy hence need for qualified and quality people is increasing (Randy Till, 2004⁷). One of the factors that have contributed to workforce competition is the fluidity of the labor market. Changing view on the work life balance has caused people to frequently change their jobs; a phenomenon in surge more than ever before (Talent Talk, 2003). Like product value proposition, employees view job offer as “Employment value proposition”. The successful strategy to counterfeit this “Talent drain” is employee branding. Contrary to other management strategies employee branding is long term, proactive strategic solution to the businesses (Sullivan, 1999).

Employee branding is relatively new approach borrowed from marketing. It constitutes the soul of HR Marketing. This emerging area provides great opportunity for employee premise development and organizations positioning as employer brand. Employer brand is the packet of functional, financial, emotional and psychological benefits provided by the employing company (Ambler & Barrow, 2006). Bhutani Manmohan

(2010) proposed that “employer brand is about capturing the essence of the organization in a way that engages current and prospective talent. It expresses an organization’s ‘value proposition’- the entirety of its culture, system, attitudes and employees relationships, providing a new focal point for the company.”

Employee branding helps organizations position themselves as the employer of current workforce, potential employer in prospective recruits and as a partner to vendors and customers (Harding, 2003). It is a persona & an image of the organization as a company brand for being a great place to work, learn and grow. Employment branding utilizes all necessary tools of marketing, branding and marketing research to create a selling image of the organization hence applicants aspire to buy in the contract with the organization (Sullivan, 1999). Minchington (2010) argued that employer branding is the half art and half science that involves attracting, engaging and retaining efforts aimed at enhancing overall company image. Dr. Sullivan (1999) postulated the goals of successful employment branding.

- It spawns an owning sense in the employees and they feel pleasure and tell contacts what it is like to be the member of firm.
- It creates public persona of the firm, its culture, management style, working practices and opportunity for growth.
- It helps in aligning product & corporate brand with employment brand.
- It continuously reviews external environment and ensures healthy maintenance of employment brand.
- It attracts best pool of applicants for job in the company. (Dr. Sullivan 1999)

Successful execution of employment branding fills the gap between marketing and Hr department as it carries halo effect on experience and loyalty indices of both employees and customers. Valle (2001) proposed that HR should follow the footsteps of marketing department and must understand needs, concerns and consideration of prospective applicants. As marketer understands customer requirements & persuades him to buy similarly HR should buy in knowledgeable workforce; referred to as recruitment marketing. Achieving competitive competency is essential for the organization. Finding the right talent and multiplying it with company’s culture, values, goals and attitude helps business reach strategic benefits. Research has explored that high level of engagement with employees is prerequisite to better performance and strong brand.

1.2 Problem Statement

Aligning Marketing & HR functions is not an easy task as they are not integrated and in some cases both the departments do not talk, employee branding offers remedy to this problem by mixing best of marketing and HR practices. The impact of employee branding on brand identification, brand commitment and brand performance has been researched in local context.

1.3 Objective of the research study

This paper aims to investigate the role of employee branding on brand identification, brand commitment and brand performance. Study involves exploring key determinants that lead to employee engagement, motivation at work and selling of employee fun to prospective recruits.

1.4 Limitations

This study is limited by the fact that viewpoint of managers and employees at operational level has been considered; comprehensive picture can be developed by taking into account executive perspective.

Sample is not large enough to generalize observations to all Pakistani organizations however study achieves aimed objectives within limited time period.

The gap between employee and consumer outcomes is not investigated.

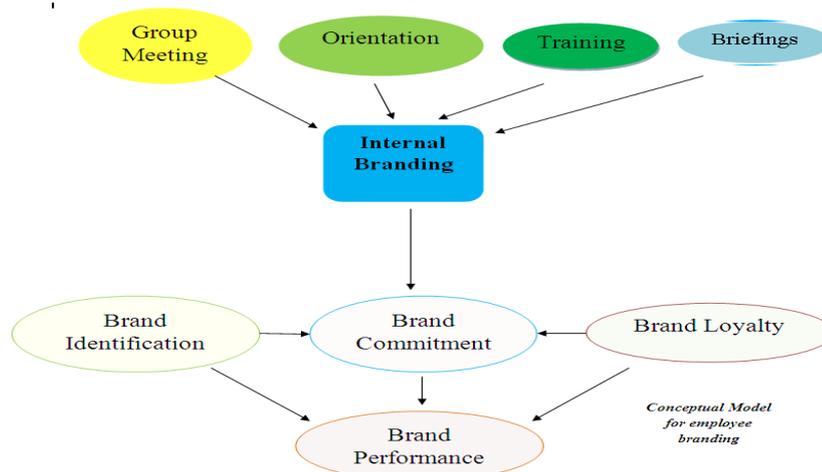
Findings reveal significant relationship between employee branding and brand dimensions such as brand identification, brand commitment, brand loyalty and brand performance: (Adjusted R Square = .157) implies that employee branding is not only the variable for instituting prosperous brand practices.

2.1 Literature

Employees are the true endorsers and ambassadors of the company brand. Great customer service depends when employees embrace the service with smile, utmost care & customer come first mantra. This attitude, consistency and energy bring in delighting moments from customers at all touch points with brand. The secret of breakaway brands is to first create an absolute brand positioning internally and then tell customers, companies and communities through creative marketing strategy. Developing this lasting brand impression and persona is possible through immaculate training and development. This training does not only involves telling employees on how to do their job but how to deliver quality service, engage with customers and act as touch points for customers which effect brand image (ED king-Corporate Rejuvenation Specialist).

When employee branding is so much powerful then it is important to define who you are as a company. “You can’t create and employer brand, says Minchin-ton, “You already have one. It is likely that it just hasn’t been defined as yet.” Similarly 2004 Journal of Relationship Marketing (article by Miles & Mangold, 2004 : p. 68) defined employee branding as “the process by which employees internalize the desired brand image and are motivated to project the image to customer and other organizational constituents”. This idea provides insights on treating employee branding as competitive advantage.

Figure 2.1 Employee branding framework



Employee branding enables an organization to consistently focus its brand image in the mind of workforce. This in fact turns into competitive advantage when employees are highly motivated; they internalize this image and project to stakeholders. Successful employee branding practices results in low attrition rate, delighted employees and satisfied vendors and customers (Rousseau; 1995).

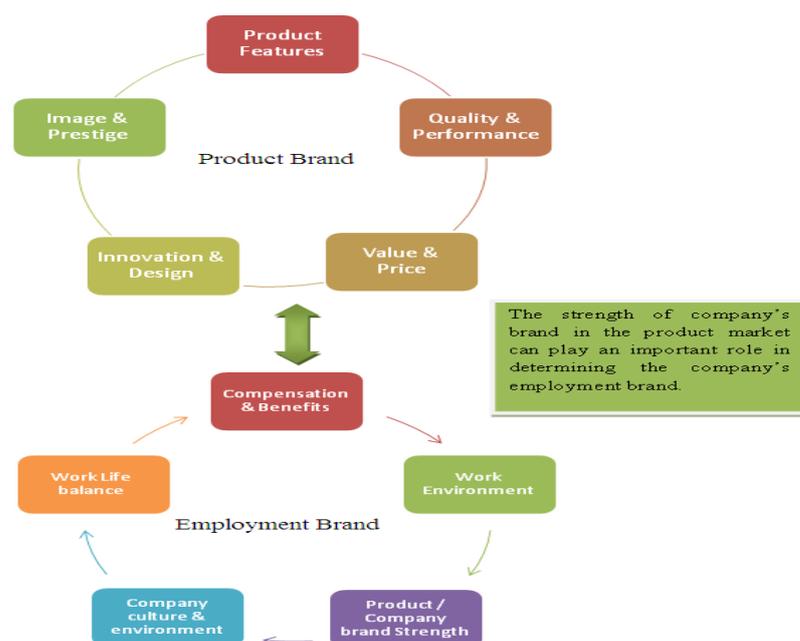
The world’s most successful brands are built on insights on human condition and nature. In this age of brand overload brands need to be focused and compete effectively by maintaining successful brand positioning and persona. Employee branding is all about creating a persona, image in the minds of employees so that they feel empowered and deliver results in alignment with brands promise to delight customers. Image is created through internal communications, training, recognition & rewards, recruit programs, leadership and sustainable practices. Employee branding is not the job of single individual or department. Because of the cross functional nature of the task and orientation this responsibility is delegated to executive team, HR and Marketing department. This relationship seems logical as both departments are involved in engagement with employees and customers. However employee branding is more anchored in marketing function. Senior executives anchor and harness employee branding values in their talks and walks. Past researchers indicate that although senior executives have cognizance of employee branding yet small percentage of them preach brand values in internal communications. Nina Mac Laverty (2007); Patricia Mcquillan (2007); Hugh Oddi (2007) in corporate survey in Canada found that arch challenge for employee branding is translating company brand values into physical standards of behavior. Nevertheless employee branding touches every aspect of business, they also found that cross functional fluidity among department is prerequisite to successful branding practices. Alignment of business values with employee values is therefore a mega challenge. List of key challenges obtained in the survey are as follows:

Parameters	Priority
Communication	21.13%
Consistency	16.90%
Getting buy in	12.68%
Getting executive / Senior commitment	11.27%
Time availability	7.04%
Culture	5.63%
Organizational Culture	5.63%
Articulating relevance of internal branding	5.63%
Prioritising internal branding	4.23%
Budgets	2.82%
Measuring Effectiveness	1.41%
Defining brand values / Essence	1.41%
Other	4.23%

Figure 2.2: Challenges Highlighted in CMA-June 2007 Survey

At the core of employee branding is to understand the joy and pleasure of working for an organization and motivation to keep on working for that employer. For a brand employer, employees should not only join the company but live to its mission, values and show commitment, loyalty and performance irrespective of the market trend. Literature suggests strong relationship between levels of engagement and high performance (Dell & et al 2001). Strategic fit and alignment between what employees perceive company must be providing and what it actually provides is important (Harding 2003). An organization must eliminate any mismatch that comes in the way of talented pool of applicants (Harding 2003). Although there is a difference in marketing of product and services compared to marketing of employees yet both share some similar characteristics. Sullivan (1999) suggested that like a product brand, employee brand is to develop a lasting image in the mind of prospective candidates. Insights into target pool of applicants and understanding their attitude is key phenomenon. Consumer behavior models applicable in marketing can be utilized in employee branding. Creating effective communication inside and outside is equally important for managing successful brand. A healthy employer brand is most powerful advertisement for talented workforce.

Product and employment brands are mutually reinforcing



Corporate leadership council (1999) proposed that a company maintains two brands that complement each other. Product brand that maintains consumer market persona and employment brand that fortifies labor brand image. Model is given as follows. Employment brand is important to attract and retain talented workforce, instrumental in creating product brand. Customers and employees are the center point of corporate brand communication and should be viewed holistically. Both constitute lens by which stakeholders evaluate organizational performance (Polonsky and Jevons, 2006). Organizations offer products and services having economic, symbolic benefits and consumers choose them because they see a fit between

Figure 2.3: Corporate leadership framework (1999)

functional and emotional needs (King and Grace, 2004). Aurald et al., (2005) suggested that brands commands price premiums, brand loyalty, successful brand extension and facilitate consumer decision. Conventional views on product branding are being challenged by new a marketing paradigm which focuses on stakeholder orientation rather than merely consumer orientation (Ind 2003). Through acquisition and retention strategies an organization must differentiate its employees by espousing brand values (Saren, 2007). Sirgy and Lee (2008) suggest on creating synergies and relationship between internal and external constituencies. This paradigm views internal constituency or employees as “organization products” that attract customers and motivate pool of applicants (De Bussy et al., 2003). Employee branding creates a marketable proposition for prospective candidates with congruent set of skills (Walker, 2007). Product branding and employee branding both help achieve strategic goals. Product branding ensures market and marketing oriented objectives whereas employee branding energizes staff by turning them brand advocates. (Jorgenses, 2005). Aligning these two perspectives is the key challenge for brand managers and leaders as both are independent and cannot be viewed in isolation. An integrated corporate marketing strategy that offers functional, economic, psychological and ethical benefits to both employees and consumers is recipe for business sustainability (Jorgenses, 2005).

Johan Aydon Simmons (2009) suggested benefits of product & employee brand alignment. Comparison is as follows.

External Brand (Customers)	Corporate Brand	Internal Brand (Employees)
High quality goods & services	<i>Functional</i>	Stimulating & fulfilling work environment
Excellent value for money	<i>Economic</i>	Competitive compensation & benefits
Premium products ,preferred supplier	<i>Psychological</i>	Employer of choice , engagement with organization
Affinity with organization values & belief in its societal contribution	<i>Ethical</i>	Affinity with organization values with perceived congruence of its ethical dealings with employees , customers and wider society.
A compelling product value proposition to current & prospective customers	<i>Cumulative</i>	A compelling employment value proposition to current & prospective employees.

Figure 2.4 Comparison between Corporate, external and internal brand by J.A Simmons (2009)

Corporate branding has real impact when both product and employee branding deliver compelling value proposition to customers and employees.

2.2 Four - 4E’s of Employee Branding

Branding has its roots and origin in marketing , due to high magnitude of HR field company’s concentration did not focus only branding with reference to marketing but involved it into branding of human resources as well. 4E’s framework has been developed in general which can be applied to organizational setup with human resource development context particularly in service industries.



Figure 2.5: Four - 4 E's framework for employee branding

Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is the key organizational differentiator & competitive edge in marketplace. Focus of employee engagement is to identify and provide employees with resources they need to become engaged. Research has found that best employers are differentiated by the high levels of engagement which results in better productivity, improved financial performance, larger pool of talented people and low attrition rate. Different models and theories have been proposed in the literature that provide framework for how to increase employee engagement. Armstrong (2000) & Pulakos (2009) found that employee engagement is precursor to performance management. It has been found that highly engaged workforce proactively responds to challenges, changes and competition. Research study at the institute for employment studies concluded that there is an agreement among HR professionals and academicians as what makes an engaged employee. The characteristics of an engaged employee are:

- Believes in the values of Business.
- Passionate to work to make things better.
- Cognizant about overall business & understands the “Bigger Picture”.
- Believes in decorum of respectful work environment.
- Is ready to go “Extra mile”.
- Is aware of developments in his/her field.

Low employee engagement has serious implications for the business as it doesn't only hamper performance but lowers the customer service satisfaction as well. In order to boost energy and level of engagement, talent management people must assess the level of employee engagement by using feedback, reliable measures and tested tools. HR being the enabler for business success must engage & motivate talented workforce to contribute to business success and improve their well being. Our research study suggests five engagement enablers that lead to employee motivation and improved productivity. These engagement enablers are interdependent and do not generate result in isolation.



Figure 2.6: Employee Engagement Enablers

Employee Empowerment

Employee empowerment is the most important contributor to business success and researchers have found that level of employee empowerment is positively correlated with performance, effectiveness, and innovation and employee commitment. Today organizations need to empower employees so that they can make quick decisions and respond quickly to changes in external environments and ultra competitive markets. Empowerment is an effective management tool that spawns shared thinking of vision and goals. Randolph (1995) suggested that empowerment is the transfer of power from the administrators to the employees. Blanchard et al. (1996) argued that empowerment is not about being free to act but being responsible and accountable. Empowerment is an enabling process which boosts decision making to achieve organizational goals and objectives. When power & responsibility is delegated from executive authority to operational management it improves productivity, job satisfaction and augments customer satisfaction.

There is misconception amongst managers and employees that empowerment is all about having absolute power. An employee is either empowered or not empowered. Employees in the organization have different magnitude of power based on the nature of tasks and experience. Highly skillful employees when not empowered become deenergised that hampers personal and organizational productivity. Empowerment requires that managers and employees must objectively discuss tasks, roles and define boundary for decisions.

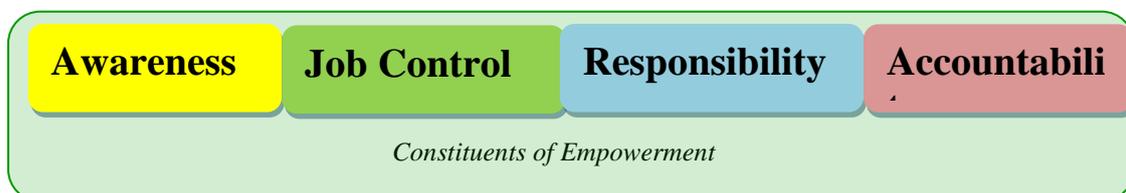


Figure 2.7: Empowerment elements

Employee Education

Today companies have to constantly evolve and educate their workforce in order to keep pace with ultra competitive, always changing markets. Educated and well trained employees are productive and successful. Turcotte et al. (2003) stated that there is very strong link between employee education, training and business strategy. The author argued that the businesses having human resources orientation strategy is more likely to educate and train their employees than those with no Human resource strategy. Such business nurture and educate employees as assets to be developed rather than cost and expenses to be minimized. Researchers have found that technology and innovation are two most important determinants for employee education and training. Companies that are technologically advanced are more innovative and favor human resource strategies that

support education and training initiatives Baldwin and Johnson (1995). Betcherman and Davidman (1998) found that educating and training their workforce are better at deriving productivity, profitability future prospects and viability. Saks *et al.* (2002) further argued that when training accompanied with incentives leads to revenue maximization and customer satisfaction. Managers should determine the need as how training will be beneficial for the company.

Employee Equity

Employee brand relationship is crucially important for building a dynamic organization. Like brand equity and customer equity, employee brand is the sum of lifetime values of all employees. A company should invest in employee benefit programs and must develop employees as real assets that are basis for all success a business can derive. Human capitalists agree that following are the key drivers that can be used to gauge an employee’s performance, optimum intensity and current and prospective worth to the business.

- Profitability
- Customer effectiveness
- Efficient use of resources
- Team Work
- Learning and innovation
- Orientation towards society (Corporate social responsibility)

Communalities		
	Initial	Extraction
Item1.1	.577	.437
Item1.2	.496	.532
Item1.3	.527	.463
Item1.4	.701	.716
Item2.1	.598	.530
Item2.2	.651	.728
Item3.1	.653	.629
Item3.2	.749	.702
Item4.1	.768	.729
Item4.2	.639	.546
Item5.1	.758	.707
Item5.2	.751	.572
Item5.3	.723	.720
Item5.4	.717	.670
Item6.1	.778	.700
Item6.2	.703	.707
Item6.3	.650	.591
Item6.4	.666	.535
Item7.1	.554	.348
Item7.2	.771	.762
Item8.1	.635	.789
Item8.2	.572	.482
Item8.3	.730	.693
Item8.4	.669	.693

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.795	24

Extraction Method: Alpha factoring

3. Research Design

3.1 Research Design & Methodology

3.2 Nature and type of study

This research study can be classified as exploratory cum descriptive since purpose was to investigate and describe phenomenon of employee branding and its impact on brand identity, brand commitment, brand loyalty and brand performance. This research study combines aspects of both quantitative & qualitative research hence classified as mixed methods research, quantitative phase involves collecting data in the form of numbers. Researcher has used positivist approach which involves generating knowledge such as finding cause and effect relationship, determining key variables, hypothesis, measurement and test of theories. Data was collected in the form of closed ended instrument which measures five important dimensions i.e. employee branding, brand orientation, brand commitment, brand loyalty and brand performance. Validity of the items measuring all five dimensions is established in literature. Reliability of items is given in communalities table which is measure of consistency when delivered to same respondents. Cronbach's alpha for all 24 items is 0.795, the alpha value above 0.5 is indicative of strong reliability.

Inset Table 3.1 Here

Qualitative research involves exploring and understanding underlying phenomenon in depth and detail, hence this phase been engaged to gain deep insights and ideas about employee branding. Focus group was therefore focal point of the research in pursuit to extract new dimensions and meaning.

3.2 Quantitative Phase

Sampling Frame & Technique

As no sampling frame is available, the purposeful sample (convenience sampling, non-probability), which implies intentionally selecting subjects or participants to learn and understand the phenomenon under study, has been employed. Population of relevance consisted of the employed people and active job seekers in two service industries. I.e. banking and telecommunications. As both sectors are heavily populated and diverse hence research was limited to PTCL & Ufone in Telco brands and National bank and MCB in banking brands.

Approximately 150 questionnaires were distributed to target respondents and 124 were collected. Out of this, 6 questionnaires were discarded because the few of the questions in them were not answered. Researcher assumes that they didn't cooperate and were unwilling to participate in the survey therefore only 118 questionnaires were used for data analysis. This represents response rate of 78 percent.

Measuring Constructs

Instrumentation

The instrument measures five important constructs or dimensions i.e. Employee branding, brand identification,

Constructs	Item #	Measures
Training	Item1.1	Training gives me appropriate skills in relation to deliver brand promise based on brand standards
	Item1.2	I am usually drawn towards messages made of colorful and attractive materials
	Item1.3	My company informs employees in an excellent way about things that are relevant to them
	Item1.4	I feel encouraged to come up with the new and better suggestions of how to do things
Orientation	Item2.1	Orientation programmes trigger my inspiration to appropriately fulfill the brand promise delivery
	Item2.2	I like the orientation kit and/or brand manuals of my company brand
Group Meeting	Item3.1	During the group meeting, I am clearly informed of the brand mission
	Item3.2	I clearly understand my role in relation to the brand mission, after attending the group meeting
Briefings	Item4.1	Briefings contain all essential information for me to provide services according to the brand expectations
	Item4.2	The brand mission and its promise are constantly reinforced during the briefing
Brand Orientation	Item5.1	My sense of pride towards the company brand is reinforced by the brand-related messages
	Item5.2	I view the success of the brand as my own Success
	Item5.3	I feel belonging to this company X
	Item5.4	When someone praises this brand, it feels like a personal compliment
Brand Commitment	Item6.1	My commitment to deliver the brand increases along with my knowledge of the brand
	Item6.2	I am very committed to delivering the brand promise to our company guests
	Item6.3	I have a minimal commitment to this company
	Item6.4	I don't feel emotionally attached to this company
Brand Loyalty	Item7.1	I will be happy to spend the rest of my career in this company chain
	Item7.2	My intention to stay is driven by the fact that I am competent in delivering the brand promise
Brand Performance	Item8.1	The quality level of my services meets the brand standards of company X
	Item8.2	I can successfully fulfill responsibilities specified in my job descriptions
	Item8.3	I effectively fulfill the promise that the brand has with customers
	Item8.4	I always handle customers' specific requests within a standard set for the brand

All measured on five point likert scale ranging 1 (Highly disagree) to 5 (Highly agree)

brand commitment, brand loyalty and brand performance. Items of these sub parts are retrieved from previous research studies as given in following table.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 1: Employee branding has favorable impact on employees brand identification

Ho: Employee branding and employees brand identification is independent.

H1: Employee branding and employees brand identification are dependent.

Level of Significance: $\alpha = 0.05$

Test Statistic:

$$Y = B_0 + B_1X + E$$

Where

Y = Dependent Variable

B_0 = Y Intercept

B_1 = Slope of the line

X = Independent Variable

E = Residual

Critical Region: If sig value < than α , then reject H_0 , otherwise accept H_0 .

Coefficients

Model	Un standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	2.529	.416		6.073	.000
Employee Branding	.346	.119	.261	2.918	.004

a. Dependent Variable: Brand Identification

Findings Table 1

Sig. value is 0.004 which is less than $\alpha=0.05$, which means that two variables i.e. employee branding and brand identification are not independent. There is enough evidence to infer that employee branding affects brand identification.

Hypothesis 2: Employee branding has favorable impact on brand commitment

H_0 : Employee branding and brand commitment are independent.

H_1 : Employee branding and brand commitment are dependent.

Level of Significance: $\alpha = 0.05$

Test Statistic:

$$Y = B_0 + B_1X + E$$

Where

Y = Dependent Variable

B_0 = Y Intercept

B_1 = Slope of the line

X = Independent Variable

E = Residual

Critical Region: If sig value < than α , then reject H_0 , otherwise accept H_0 .

Coefficients

Model	Un standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	2.538	.317		7.997	.000
Employee Branding	.186	.090	.188	2.050	.043

a. Dependent Variable: Brand Commitment

Findings table 2

As Sig. value of 0.043 < $\alpha=0.05$; reject H_0 in favor of alternate hypothesis, which means that two variables i.e. employee branding and brand commitment are not independent. There is enough evidence to infer that employee branding affects brand commitment.

Hypothesis 3: Employee branding has favorable impact on brand loyalty

Ho: Employee branding and brand loyalty are independent.

H1: Employee branding and brand loyalty are dependent.

Level of Significance: $\alpha = 0.05$

Test Statistic:

$$Y = B_0 + B_1X + E$$

Where

Y = Dependent Variable

B₀ = Y Intercept

B₁ = Slope of the line

X = Independent Variable

E = Residual

Critical Region: If sig value < than α , then reject Ho, otherwise accept Ho.

Coefficients

Model		Un standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.076	.501		4.140	.000
	Employee Branding	.367	.143	.232	2.572	.011

a. Dependent Variable: Brand Loyalty

Findings table 3

Employee branding and brand loyalty mutually reinforce each other as sig value 0.011 < $\alpha = 0.05$ therefore there is enough evidence to reject null hypothesis.

Hypothesis 4: Employee branding has favorable impact on brands performance.

Ho: Employee branding and brand performance are independent.

H1: Employee branding and brand performance are dependent.

Level of Significance: $\alpha = 0.05$

Test Statistic:

$$Y = B_0 + B_1X + E$$

Where

Y = Dependent Variable

B₀ = Y Intercept

B₁ = Slope of the line

X = Independent Variable

E = Residual

Critical Region: If sig value < than α , then reject Ho, otherwise accept Ho.

Coefficients

Model		Un standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.387	.312		7.655	.000
	Employee Branding	.398	.089	.384	4.484	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Brand Performance

Findings table 4

As Sig. value of 0.000 $<a=0.05$; reject H_0 in favor of alternate hypothesis, which means that two variables i.e. employee branding and brand performance are dependent. There is significant evidence to report that employee branding affects brand performance.

3.3 Qualitative Phase

Focus group Objective

The objective and intent of this focus group was to gain knowledge regarding the impact of HR practices such as training, orientation, Team meetings and brand value preaches on brand commitment, brand performance and brand loyalty. The researchers discussed 4 E model for employee branding for further improvements. Comparison was done between established and proposed model. Key points of discussions were as follows.

- HR & Marketing amalgamation
- Employee engagement
- Employee empowerment
- Employee education
- Employee equity
- Focus group sessions

Two focus group sessions were conducted by the researcher. All participants were active employees in either telecommunications sector or banking sector. We had the list of participants of the focus groups comprising of MBA & MS/PHD scholars and employed professionals. From this list we randomly selected participants who had HR background and interest in our research domain.

<i>Type</i>	<i>Number of People</i>	<i>Session Date</i>
MBA - Professionals	12	6-Mar
MS/PHD - Scholars	15	8-Mar

Common themes from both focus groups were amalgamated, suggestions were incorporated in 4 E model.

Common Themes

4 E model of employee branding is better relevant to service brands than product brands.

It presents a holistic view of employees connect with customers which cannot be explained merely by training, group meetings and briefings.

This approach takes into account brand management perspective into HR function.

This model establishes equilibrium between external and internal customers.

It is a navigating tool for the organization.

It will not only help retain talented people in the organization but will attract intellectual mass of people.

This model does not differentiates between customer facing staff and back office staff, it propounds that both are important in delivering brand promise.

This propounds that not only intellectual but emotional engagement is also crucial in establishing a sustainable brand promise.

Cooperation and coordination between HR and Marketing is instrumental in ensuring positive outcomes such as brand identification, brand commitment, brand loyalty and brand performance.

4. Research Findings

The findings of this research study suggest potential fit between HR activities (Training, Orientation, Briefings and Group Meetings) and marketing metrics (Brand orientation, Brand commitment, Brand loyalty and Brand Performance). Based on the insights this study propounds a model that concludes important issues to be addressed by employee branding efforts. This framework provides a commencing point for HR managers to appreciate a synergy between HR and brand management. In order to attain a successful corporate brand established HR dimensions must be enhanced by employee engagement, empowerment, education and equity. Empirical evidence suggests that internal branding attempts to establish favorable affinities with employees and yields auspicious brand promise by improving brand orientation, commitment, loyalty and performance. Study highlights that internal branding disseminates brand values which result in favorable attitude of employees and behavior that represents brand standards. Brand identification drives brand commitment & brand loyalty. When employees are instilled with brand teachings they become emotionally engage with the brand. Similarly brand

commitment is positively correlated with brand performance. Management therefore should use employee branding to influence attitude and behavior of employees in sync with overall brand persona.

5. Recommendations

Future profitability and sustainability of modern companies depend on intellectual capital of the organization and its ability to co-create with employees. It is therefore pertinent that employee branding be articulated with vision, mission, and strategic goals that translate into practices and standards of behavior.⁴ E's model as proposed in this research offers fundamental implications for HR and Marketing nexus. Researcher recommends that future studies should concentrate on:

- Exploring key aspects and dimensions of employee branding in manufacturing firms and businesses.
- Operationalizing employee branding metrics in relation to performance management.
- Encouraging communication and dialogue between HR and Marketing.
- Future research should focus on behavioural aspects of employee branding.
- Focused research should be carried out with HR managers, Marketing Managers and Branding experts.

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- Ed King is President of Turning Point Strategies, *a brand consultancy that transforms underachieving businesses into thriving organizations*. He can be reached at www.TPStrategies.com or by calling 678.727.4040.
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