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# EmBrand

## Employer Branding

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### Phase 1

**EmBrand in general  
and in partner countries**

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## **In general – source: Wikipedia (re-edited)**

An employer brand describes an employer's reputation as a place to work, and their employee value proposition, as opposed to the more general corporate brand reputation and value proposition to customers. The term was first used in the early 1990's and has since become widely adopted by the global management community. Employer Branding is an efficient technique to inspire employees and reflect what makes a company appealing to its current and potential employees. The art and science of employer branding is therefore concerned with the attraction, engagement and retention initiatives targeted at enhancing one's company employer brand.

Just as a customer brand proposition is used to define a product or service offer, an employer value proposition (also sometimes referred to as an employee value proposition) or EVP is used to define an organization's employment offering. 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.

## **Origin**

The term "employer brand" was first publicly introduced to a management audience in 1990. An employer brand was defined as "the package of functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by employment, and identified with the employing company". In 2003, an employer brand survey conducted by the Economist among a global panel of readers revealed a 61% level of awareness of the term "employer brand" among HR<sup>1</sup> professionals and 41% among non-HR professionals.

## **Growing Importance of Employer Branding**

A candidate's market, combined with new consumer behavior, has led to the rise in importance of employer branding as a Human Resources and Marketing Discipline. The market has shifted since the great recession in favor of candidates given low unemployment. This means that employers are fighting over the same small pool of candidates to fill their open roles, especially in hard to fill areas like data scientist and other STEM<sup>2</sup> based roles.

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<sup>1</sup> HR: human resources

<sup>2</sup> STEM: science, technology, engineering, mathematics

Moreover, consumer behavior has changed the way that people look for jobs. The candidate journey is not simply a job seeker finding your job and applying. This is especially true of the best candidates - they want to research a company and build a relationship with it over months before applying for a job. This creates a dynamic where companies who invest in employer branding are seeing lower cost per hire and time to fill.

### **Employer Branding – return on investment (roi)**

Similar to brand advertising, the return on investment from employer branding efforts can be hard to measure. Many companies struggle with ways to measure the money saved or earned from efforts such as creating a culture video, having a better career site or developing talent pipelines. The simplest ways of measuring a return on employer branding investment are:

- Increased awareness that leads to more applicants, and tracking how these applicants translate to hires
- Increased conversion rates of interested applicants after implementing employer branding tactics
- Decreases in time to fill, and the progress this allows a business to make
- Decreases in third party recruiter spend

### **Employer Branding and Tools**

There are now an emerging group of tools that can assist HR and Marketing teams in their employer branding efforts. Some of these tools were originally designed for marketing purposes. Others are existing HRTech that have evolved to have employer branding capabilities such as the newer generation of applicant tracking systems and job boards. There is also a small group of software providers that focuses explicitly on employer branding such.

### **Employer brand management**

Employer brand management expands the scope of this brand intervention beyond communication to incorporate every aspect of the employment experience, and the people management processes and practices (often referred to as "touch-points") that shape the perceptions of existing and prospective employees. In other words, employer brand management addresses the reality of the employment experience and not simply its presentation. By doing so it supports both external recruitment of the right kind of talent sought by an organization to achieve its goals, and the subsequent desire for effective employee engagement and employee retention.

## **Employer brand proposition**

As for consumer brands, most employer brand practitioners and authors argue that effective employer branding and brand management requires a clear Employer Brand proposition, or Employee value proposition. This serves to define what the organization would most like to be associated with as an employer, highlights the attributes that differentiate the organization from other employers, and clarifies the strengths, benefits and opportunities of the employment offer.

## **Internal marketing**

Internal marketing focuses on communicating the customer brand promise, and the attitudes and behaviours expected from employees to deliver on that promise. While it is clearly beneficial to the organization for employees to understand their role in delivering the customer brand promise, the effectiveness of internal marketing activities can often be short-lived if the brand values on which the service experience is founded are not experienced by the employees in their interactions with the organization. This is the gap that employer brand thinking and practice seeks to address with a more mutually beneficial employment deal / psychological contract.

## **Brand-led culture change**

Compared with the more typically customer centric focus of internal marketing, internal branding / brand engagement takes a more 'inside-out', value-based approach to shaping employee perceptions and behaviours, It seeks that companies with consistent, distinctive and deeply held values tend to outperform those companies with a less clear and articulated ethos. While brand-led culture change is often the stated desire of these programs their focus on communication-led, marketing methods (however, involving or experiential) has been prone to the same failings of conventional internal marketing. You cannot simply assert your way to a new culture, no more can you assert your way to a strong brand, it needs to be consistently and continuously shaped and managed, which is one of the primary reasons many organizations have turned from the short term engagement focus of internal branding initiatives to more long term focus of employer brand management.

## **Brief and selected perspective from Spain**

Situation of construction companies in Spain: Just as Zara dominates the best corners of large cities around the world, the brands of Spanish construction companies are also omnipresent in

the most spectacular works around the world. When there is one sector in which Spain is a clear world leader, it is infrastructure. And in the whole chain, from design and engineering to construction, concession and project management. Five companies in the sector are among the top 30 in the world. Spain is, after China, the second country in international turnover, 60 billion dollars last year (almost 50 billion euros), 50% more than France or the United States. Spain's dominance is even greater in infrastructure concessions: Spanish companies lead the global market, with 265 billion dollars (219 billion euros) invested in 30 years, almost as much as the concessionaires in France, Australia and the United Kingdom combined. "This outstanding international concession activity", explain sources at *Seopan*, the sector's employers' association, "has placed nine Spanish companies among the top positions in the global ranking". Here we can see an example of EmBrand in the giant company ACS: <https://www.comparably.com/companies/acs-global/employer-brand> . So even it is much easier for big companies to attract workers they are aware that their reputation is important to get and to hold back talents.

When we analyze the SMEs in the construction industry in Spain, we find the same problem of lack of resources (and minds) as in many other industries. As an SME it is much more difficult to attract talents and you often have to find other values to offer. Furthermore there are different strategies of EmBrand depending on the age of the candidates - every age values or gives importance to other attributes.

In case of existing awareness of EmBrand: how can the return on investment in EmBrand-activities be measured? After all it is a question of benefit. Good qualified and motivated workers make your company more competitive. Next to implanting an EmBrand strategy you can compare your evolution in the last years; also, your position with your direct competitors. You can also measure whether you face less rotation of employees, less absenteeism that lowers costs. You should be able to measure the direct relationship between positive working climate and sales volume.

## **Brief and selected perspective from Slovenia**

The mainstream media, online and printed daily journal *Dnevnik*, launched in 2007 a special annual marketing campaign for best employers from all economic sectors called "Zlata nit" in English "Golden thread". It is regarded as a quality tool to achieve business excellence. The main goal of the Golden Thread is to find top Slovenian companies in the 21st century, in which employees get an opportunity to realize their talents and thus contribute to the success of the

organization. Personal growth and employee efficiency are inextricably linked. Success depends equally on both.

The *Dnevnik* journal claims Slovenia to be the first country in the world to systematically measure the quality of relations at the workplace. Through research, it was proven that caring for good relationships has positive effects on economic development. The results of the research on the quality of the relationship between the employee and the organization was reflected by companies in terms of e.g. where it works well and where there are open potentials for growth. Measuring the quality of this relationship has proven to be a very effective tool for achieving business excellence.

Over a decade, the project has outgrown the framework of selecting the best Slovenian employers. It has become an ecosystem that, in cooperation with partners, promotes the dynamic development of the economy.

The success of human resource management and the success of the company are related. The selection of the best employer clearly shows the close connection between the success of human resource management and the success of the company. Caring for the good of all is what enables growth, gives a development momentum and success to the wing. Current events show that there is no soloing. All are connected.

Statistics of the national branding campaign:

Over 93,000 survey questionnaires have been completed in 13 years, and 404 different companies have participated in the survey so far. The golden thread puts the relationship between the employee and the organization at the center of the measurement.

Who is involved in the acquisition and retain of staff?

The Slovenian national expert on employer branding, Alenka Vidic claims that, world-renowned companies such as Google, Boeing and Xerox, which are highly regarded in the eyes of the public as an environment in which to work well, have a clear vision and strategy on how to involve employees in branding. They are recognized among job seekers as a pool of the best staff and provide a unique work experience that makes sense for both the individual and society. Companies that are less well-known face more problems leading to difficulties to attract new employees - including talents. Technology companies are under additional pressure: technical staff is needed in almost every industry, and their number is even more limited than in other profiles. The story of branding is not simple, it requires the involvement and cooperation

of various departments: from management to human resources, marketing, communications and others. But creating an employer brand that is interesting and attractive to existing or future employees must first be a holistic strategic direction of the company. Employer branding is an important strategic decision that requires the participation of many functions within the company and support from the top, because this project requires awareness that it is not a quick one-time solution, but a long-term story. The experience of companies that are above average in branding highlights two things: open and direct communication about everything related to the workplace and work tasks, and the broader meaning and positive impact of everything the company and employees do in the world around them. Businesses are also making attractive challenges. It is becoming increasingly clear that the company's visibility in the market alone is no longer a good enough reason for the company to attract the best employees. What makes a company attractive enough for (future) employees are primarily the challenges that the work environment offers. Employer branding is involved in creating a corporation's reputation and brand – it is a building block and is a result at the same time. But sincere cooperation and embassy of employees is not the only desired result of the strategy and its implementation. The problem solved by employer branding is related to the fierce struggle in the labor market.

#### Hints for Employer Branding:

- Communicate a lot: hiding all possible information on our website and all other publicly accessible channels is not the most practical. Research has shown that good candidates look for information about a position and a company and quickly become frustrated if their search turns into a "treasure hunt".
- Show what you do and how you influence the world around you: this is information that young generations especially need. It is interesting that in many Slovenian (and foreign) companies half of the employees will not be able to tell you what the mission or vision of the company is. People need to get a sense of the higher good, and once employees can tell this to themselves, you have killed two flies at once.
- Communication on different channels can be an opportunity or a danger. We need to explore in detail which channels are followed by potential talents, while ensuring consistency of messages across all channels.
- The classical methods of finding candidates like posting an ad and waiting for applications are no longer sufficient. Continuous investment in employer branding is required.
- An employer brand is not something that is good to have. It is decisive.



- There are limited resources. Mostly there is not the perfect corporate culture, and there is an intense competition for staff. It takes constant work and thinking about where to improve.
- Where there is a promise, there has to be a delivery.
- Employees of companies are ambassadors. They have to be “happy”.

Some more important aspects:

- More free time
- Happy employees - better employees
- Creating a human work environment is crucial
- Financial stability
- More vacation
- Wellness programs
- Collective supplementary pension savings - employer 's contributions
- Arranged nutrition in the workplace
- Possibility to work from home at home

Some possible entrepreneurs´ mistakes in retaining staff:

- Loading excessive amounts of work
- Ignoring contributions and quality work
- Lack of empathy or emotional intelligence
- Ignoring responsibilities and promises
- Hiring unsuitable people
- Neglect of employee interests
- Lack of developing skills and competencies
- Ignoring creativity
- Lack of intellectual challenges

Central reasons to leave a company:

- Staff does NOT feel appreciated and supported
- Too few or no opportunities to learn and progress
- Lack of integrity in their superiors
- Lack of trust and respect
- Micromanagement

## **Brief and selected perspective from Italy**

This desk analysis is a representative study of the employer brand based on public perceptions general. It is an independent survey conducted by Randstad (and international employment agency) with nearly 185,000 respondents and 6,136 companies in 33 countries around the world. Details of the survey conducted in Italy:

- 6,274 respondents (online interviews) carried out between 12/2019 and 01/2020
- aged between 18 and 64 years - males and females
- over-representation for the age group from 25 to 44 years
- inclusive of students, workers and unemployed persons

Results of the survey:

- Why 'employer branding' is important
- Companies pay 10% higher wages if they do not have a strong brand
- 50% of applicants say they would not work for a company with a bad reputation, not even with a salary increase
- 96% agree that aligning personal values with a company's culture is a key factor in employee satisfaction working for that company
- 80% of business leaders agree that a solid employer brand has a significant impact on their ability to employ a qualified workforce. Individuals work for a "culture", not a company, so their perception of the employer is critical. Both recruiters and candidates indicate the company's culture as one of the determining factors in choosing an employer. It is also important that the company culture is transparent: candidates investigate the company culture to see if they will be happy. If candidates find positive employee and candidate experiences on review sites, they are more encouraged to submit their resumes and change careers.
- Only 19% of employees globally perceive a strong alignment between what their employer says about themselves and what they currently experience in their work life.
- 52% of candidates first of all search the company website and social media to find out more about an employer. The main obstacle that stands in the way of candidates in the application process is the fact that they do not know what it means to work in the organization.
- Companies with a strong employer brand have 1-2 times faster hiring times

- 76% of employees who experience a strong match between what their employer says about their company and what they currently experience working in that company show a bigger tendency to recommend their employer as a good company to work for.

The importance of EVP drivers (Employee Value Proposition)

<b>Factors</b>	<b>% of positive answers of the most important factors in choosing an employer</b>
Good balance between work and private life	52
Pleasant working atmosphere	51
Attractive salary and benefits	47
Workplace safety	46
Plainness of career path	36
Financial stability	33
Flexible arrangements	33
Good training	30
Interesting work content	27
Location	24
Commitment to giving society something in return	21
Excellent reputation	21
Diversity and inclusion	17
Use of the latest technologies	17
Excellent management	17
Good quality of products	15

Perception of the employer's offer

Understanding the difference between what employees are looking for and what they think employers are offering, provides valuable insight for creating an effective employer brand. Additionally, benchmarking against what employees perceive to be offered by their current employer clarifies better which are the differences that need to be balanced.



Evaluation of the current employer		General perception of employers in Italy		Profile of the ideal employer	
1	Financial stability	1	Financial stability	1	Good balance between work and private life
2	Excellent reputation	2	Excellent reputation	2	Pleasant work atmosphere
3	Workplace safety	3	Use of the latest technologies	3	Attractive salary and benefits
4	Interesting work content	4	Workplace safety	4	Workplace safety
5	Pleasant work atmosphere	5	Plainness of career path	5	Plainness of career path
6	Good balance between work and private life	6	Attractive salary and benefits	6	Financial stability
7	Use of the latest technologies	7	Interesting work content	7	Interesting work content
8	Commitment to giving society something in return	8	Pleasant work atmosphere	8	Excellent reputation
9	Plainness of career path	9	Good balance between work and private life	9	Commitment to giving society something in return
10	Attractive salary and benefits	10	Commitment to giving society something in return	10	Use of the latest technologies

The difference between what (potential) employees are looking for and what employees perceive is offered by employers in Italy. Employers may not always be perceived as delivering what (potential) employees are looking for. Below are the top 3 attributes that employees look for but feel employers do not offer adequately. The 3 difference factors are:

- good balance between work and private life
- pleasant working atmosphere
- attractive salary and benefits

What potential employees are looking for based on the generation profile generation z (18-24 years old): 23% of the “gen z” respondents are looking for an employer that values diversity

and inclusion. This result is significantly higher if compared with other generations (17% millennials, 16% “gen x” and 12% “boomers”).

What potential employees are looking for based on the generation profile millennials (25-34 years old): 53% of millennials seek an atmosphere of pleasant work. The respondents “gen x” and “Boomers” are less interested in this factor (49% and 47%, respectively).

What potential employees are looking for based on the generation x (35-54 years old): 48% of the “gen x” respondents consider important an attractive salary and benefits. The respondents “gen z” and “boomers” consider this less important factor (respectively 42% and 43%).

What potential employees are looking for based on the generation boomers (55-64 years old): 40% of “boomers” thinks it’s important that the employer is financially sound. This is a less important factor for "gen z" respondents (24%) and for millennials (30%).

Reason to leave a job – sorted by profile:

*‘the salary is lower than elsewhere’*

54% of “gen z” (18-24 years), millennials (25-34 years) and “gen x” (35-54 years) would leave an employer if they received a higher salary elsewhere. The additional benefits are less interesting 53% of millennials (25-34 years) would leave the employer if the additional benefits offered from other employers were more interesting.

*‘bad working relationship with the manager’*

34% of millennials (25-34 years) and "gen x" (35-54 years old) agrees that a bad relationship with your manager is a serious reason to consider working elsewhere.

*‘misalignment between personal and company’s values’*

42% of “gen x” (35-54 years) would leave the employer if the organization's values do not correspond to his personal values.

*‘lack of motivation’*

53% of “gen x” (35-54 years) can leave or have left the employer if in case of lack of motivation at work.



Importance of EVP driver, in % divided by gender:

	male in %	female in %
Good balance between work and private life	50	54
Pleasant working atmosphere	46	55
Attractive salary and benefits	48	46
Workplace safety	44	47
Plainness of career path	37	34
Financial stability	38	29
Flexible arrangements	27	39
Good training	31	29
Interesting work content	27	26
Location	25	23
Commitment to giving society something in return	20	21
Good reputation	24	17
Diversity and inclusion	16	18
Use of the latest technologies	20	14
Excellent management	20	14
Good quality of products	16	14

Perception of the offer of the employers in Italy and in Europe:

In Italy employers are expected to offer:	In Europe employers are expected to offer:
Financial stability	Financial stability
Excellent reputation	Use of the latest technologies
Use of the latest technologies	Workplace safety
Workplace safety	Excellent reputation
Career path plainness	Career path plainness
Attractive salary and benefits	Attractive salary and benefits
Interesting work content	Pleasant work atmosphere
Pleasant work atmosphere	Interesting work content
Good work-life balance	Good work-life balance
Commitment to giving society something in return	Commitment to giving society something in return

## Common questions

How is the degree of awareness of Employer Branding in SMEs in Italy?

In the context of Italian SMEs, the skills and the view of entrepreneurs greatly influence the overall performance of the company. In fact, it is not uncommon that the governance of a small business reflects "the figure in a unique and unrepeatably way of the entrepreneur who heads it". Lacking an "explicit strategic thinking", the work relationships are necessarily the result of the "spatial and temporal proximity between entrepreneur and employees". Therefore, the management of personnel in this perspective takes on different and unique modalities in each company (source: Ferrari 2015).

To encourage a continuous commitment of employees of a company it is important to invest in HR practices, such as recruitment and selection, training, performance evaluation and compensation. The difficulty of attracting and keep staff is higher in SMEs, given the scarcity of resources, both in financial and competencies terms: i.e. SMEs often do not have offices and professionals dedicated to personnel recruitment and management. Only larger companies generally make investments to conduct large campaigns to improve their Employer Branding and to get known in the labor market. The overlapping of roles and the high specialization that often characterizes SMEs make them need both specific and diversified skills and transversal skills, which universities and education do not transmit (Ferrari 2014). Due to their size and to their scarcity funds or culture, Italian SMEs are not often training adequately their employees, preferring to hire personnel already experienced and trained. This has repercussions on the youngest who, not being able to boast previous experiences, are penalized in the selection process. Only 29% of Italian SMEs provide long life learning to their employees. Moreover, the different levels assumed by the Digital Intensity Indicator reveals a significant difference between large and small businesses in terms of digitization: the indicator assumes high levels in 44% of large companies, while it remains stable at 12.2% in small companies (ISTAT 2019).

How can the return of investment in Employer Branding activities be measured?

The majority of global executives (71 per cent) reports that their companies' leadership measures or monitors the reputation of their organization. When asked how reputation gets measured, executives most often report factors such as employee satisfaction or engagement, sales and financial performance, and surveys among various stakeholder groups. And reputation is a noticeable point of communication from business leaders. Approximately seven in 10 (69 per cent) say senior management has mentioned the company's reputation to

employees in the past 12 months and more than half of publicly held companies (57 per cent) report company reputation has come up on earnings calls. Executives are satisfied with the level of attention on reputation from their leadership: 70 per cent say senior management focuses on their company's reputation "just the right amount."

(source: The State of Corporate Reputation in 2020: Everything Matters Now – Research released by Weber Shandwick)

## **Brief and selected perspective from Germany**

Definition: Employer branding is the identity-based, internally and externally effective development and positioning of a company as a credible and attractive employer. It is a strategic instrument of corporate management, which aims to constantly increase the quality of applicants, to make the search for employees more targeted and to bind top performers to the company in the long term. The development of a substantiated employer brand creates identification among existing employees, offers applicants orientation and gives the company as such a direction. A company has become an employer brand when the relevant reference groups have a predominantly uniform and distinguishable image of it as an employer.

For employer branding, (trade) media and professional associations are an influential factor that should not be underestimated, as they represent a possible information medium, especially for potential applicants, e.g. via evaluation portals where employers can be assessed according to fixed criteria.

Problem definition: According to a study, 48% of companies are unable to fill their positions in the long term. Among medium-sized companies, the figure is even 59%. The so-called employer branding is a reaction to this in order to counteract these grievances.

Top reasons for changing employers:

1. higher job security
2. greater opportunities for professional development
3. chance for more responsibility and independence
4. possibility to work with a better team
5. management floor enjoys a better reputation

According to the German Employer Branding Academy (DEBA), an identity-based employer brand has a significant influence on 5 areas of activity:

1. employee recruitment: not only reduces recruitment costs, but also results in a better correlation between applicant and adjustment profile.
2. employee retention: Employer branding increases employee satisfaction and strengthens identification. Retention of top performers, counteracting the fluctuation of employees.
3. performance and result: Credible and authentic employer brand strengthens identification with the company's goals, leads to greater loyalty, personal responsibility, performance motivation and quality of results. Management effort, especially administrative effort, is reduced or facilitated.
4. corporate brand: Greater interest from investors (=stakeholders), better corporate image overall.
5. corporate culture: improvement of the working climate and internal communication. A barrier-free and open communication culture is developing among employees.

I. The optimal impact of AE concepts also depends to a large extent on which potential applicants one wishes to address. Different generations have different requirements. Applicants of Generation Y are in particular gradually placing more value on a "green" and "sustainable" employer.

II. Furthermore, employee priorities are subject to the changing zeitgeist, so that the concepts need to be reviewed at certain intervals.

Realization of an employer brand development: In employer brand development, the quality of the output is largely determined by the quality of the input. During the transformation phase, the findings from the input phase are condensed into the content of the employer brand. The concretization into an employer brand does not require the isolated implementation of individual measures, but rather that all media and measures of the company reflect a positive and, eventually, a consistent and contradiction-free image. In the interaction of the EB with all other activities and communication measures, attention must also be paid to consistency and authenticity.

Many HR managers think that employer branding is only aimed at high potentials and large companies. Employer branding, however, also refers to SMEs. After all, it is not about finding the best, but rather the best among the suitable.

How do you get input?

An essential basic principle of successful implementation in employer branding is development from the inside out. There are 2 main reasons for this:



1. Employees are the most credible and effective multipliers of the employer brand to the outside world.
2. The reasons for the external impact of the employer brand lie primarily within the company itself.

Success factors - employer brand:

1. understand employer branding as a strategic basis
2. define reference value - does the employer's brand apply to the whole company or only to a part of the company
3. shaping the brand building process in a participatory-discursive way - open, non-hierarchical participation of the employees
4. define goals clearly and plan the process efficiently
5. weighing up external support
6. to work out general and specific characteristics - in particular: the elaboration of a so-called Employer Value Proposition (=EVP). It is the promise employers make to their employees.
7. More important than originality, however, is authenticity. Only if the employees in the company live the guiding principles themselves can they convey them in a credible way.
8. Take into account expectations of the target group - create an appropriate balance between general addressing and individual addressing.
9. taking a holistic view
10. anchor the employer brand internally and activate it externally
11. define meaningful key figures

The formulation of the employer brand is a specific challenge because it must concentrate on the intended perception on a few, relevant and at the same time distinct features. It should meet the following criteria:

- credible (reflect demonstrable strengths)
- differentiating (differentiation from the competition)
- relevant (for the identified target groups)
- concise (catchy, apt formulation)
- forward-looking (innovation and desired changes)
- in line with the strategy (take corporate strategy into account)

Today, the creation of such an employer brand often goes hand in hand with obligations that go beyond the legal requirements, such as compliance with CSR standards, fairness, anti-discrimination, the possibility of a personal work-life balance.

Awareness and application of EB measures:

Only one in four small and medium sized companies currently uses targeted EB, while at the same time 57% are considering using this channel to recruit specialists, while 17% have no such plans. 76% of the companies surveyed have had very good or good experiences with EB measures.

How can the return on investment in Employer Branding activities be measured?

66.0 percent of the best performers (= companies with very good employer branding) invest 20,000 euros and more. In contrast, 66.7 percent of the companies that certify themselves as having inadequate employer branding have not set an explicit budget. For a strategic and sustainable development of employer branding it is necessary to measure the success of the various measures in order to be able to track success and failure in a targeted manner. However, even among the best performers only 29.2 percent do this. Among the companies with poor employer branding, the figure is only 6.7 percent.

Indicators for recording employer branding measures can be:

- Quality and quantity of applicants
- Costs and time of recruitment (duration of appointment)
- Employee satisfaction
- Length of stay/proneness to fluctuation of employees
- Absenteeism of employees
- Clicks and followers on the specially set up career page or on social networks
- "Time to hire" - how long does it take to fill a vacancy

The total number of applications is the most frequently used indicator for good performers (33.3 percent), followed by employer rankings (25.0 percent) and the number of contracted offers accepted or rejected (20.8 percent). However, the absolute best performers go into even more detail and measure also their image value and level of awareness among different target groups. A weak employer brand can cost companies millions, while a strong employer brand saves money. For example, 49% would forego a salary increase if they were to work for an employer with a strong employer brand. 52% of respondents would not switch to a company with a weak employer brand.

## Conclusions

<b>Big and medium companies</b>	<b>Small companies appr. &lt; 10 employees</b>
<p><b>Image:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Receive application (partly unsolicited) due to image and degree of publicity</li> <li>- Are 'visible' because of having product brands and / or a defined corporate identity</li> <li>- Have company values</li> <li>- Have conducted milestone projects, have well know products, represent good services and quality, have a USP on the product/service level</li> </ul>	<p><b>Image:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Selective applications mostly/only for explicitly advertised positions</li> <li>- 'visibility' often weak due to not having a permanent PR</li> <li>- Overall concept difficult like "green", "digital" or "flexible",...</li> <li>- Mostly no milestones projects connected to company because often "only" subcontractor for bigger contractors</li> </ul>
<p><b>Organization:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- HRD divisions or at least HRD appointee</li> <li>- Assessment centre structures</li> <li>- Distinct HRD budget and strategy</li> <li>- Company success = HRD success and vice versa</li> </ul>	<p><b>Organization:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mostly driven by the entrepreneur directly</li> <li>- Face-to-face interviews and test pieces</li> <li>- Selective, erratic, not well structured</li> <li>- Connection of company success and HRD success often unclear and not measured/rated</li> </ul>
<p><b>Benefit:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Measuring return on investment (ROI) by e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) High attendance times</li> <li>b) Less absence times</li> <li>c) Low fluctuation of employees</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Benefit:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Seldom or no consideration that there could be a ROI with HRD</li> <li>- Small companies often have to be above average to attract proper staff (negative bonus)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Scope:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- National</li> <li>- Regional</li> <li>- Local</li> </ul>	<p><b>Scope:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Local</li> <li>- Regional</li> </ul>

<p>External:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Head hunter</li> <li>- External service with budget</li> </ul>	<p>External:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cost averse → very seldom considering external support</li> </ul>
<p>Communication:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use all channels <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Website</li> <li>b) Social media</li> <li>c) Fairs</li> <li>d) Contact with schools to advertise products, services, strategies, job vacancies.</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Internal marketing (retaining staff; recommendations) AND external marketing (acquisition of staff)</li> <li>- Try to train and convince people that they are able to tell WHY they work for THIS company</li> </ul>	<p>Communication:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- (very) few or no use of communication channels (costs, competence, awareness)</li> <li>- Local (news-) papers, recommendations</li> <li>- Often no structured internal human resource marketing, often only external regarded meaningful</li> <li>- Often no consideration for WHAT the own company stands in terms of values, image. Staff cannot state WHY the company is a good employer (reputation)</li> <li>- Advantages due to small size: often good and familiar atmosphere, team spirit</li> </ul>

Taken into account, that small enterprises often avoid spending cash for any topic of which they do not really know what benefit in which amount they will have as revenue, any concentration on measures which afford no or only little financial effort seems desirable. Hence, EmBrand seeks to dedicate itself to the following points (also for the next phase, which is interviews) as reasonable measures to consider for small companies:

- A) (Group) interviews by the company with own staff (possibly without the boss) about what is desirable to improve the atmosphere in the company and among staff → should lead to retain staff
- B) Based on point a) the management should conduct an image analysis as an organizational process (→ direct tasks for the top management); can be “painful” → ability of honest self-reflection and self-criticism
  - a. Interviews with current own staff
  - b. Possibly with future new staff



- c. Analysis what other competitors do (to lure away own staff OR how oneself could lure away staff from others)
- C) Exchanging ideas with staff about further training paths to develop individual and company competences
- D) Exchanging ideas with staff about current and future measures of health and safety including preventive actions (→ sports)
- E) Exchanging with staff about flexibility in working hours/times due to changing order situations
- F) Employer Branding seen as a dynamic process, which is not characterized by simply pimping job advertisements and then showing a different reality in daily work and atmosphere. It is more a strategic management task which can be compared to an iceberg: the few visible items like job ads and desired image to be compared e.g. with the main culture of proper management, situative and good communication as well as honest teamwork and collaboration, which means the unspoken but real atmosphere in a company, which stand the more implicit values.
- G) Often not products, services or the work itself are the problems or reasons to leave or not to start a job, but the attitude, behavior and communication of managing staff incl. entrepreneur. This leads to a decisive factor of company culture including the openness and willingness to dynamically change by the times.

Conclusions and bullet point A – G might be a starting point to develop interview questions and structure heading to support small companies in the sense of Employer Branding.