Employer Branding and Corporate Social Responsibility

Magdalena Stefańska◉
and Katarzyna Bilińska-Reformat◉

Introduction

According to the concept of social responsibility, an organization should identify basic groups of shareholders, recognise their expectations and include achievement of their benefits in their goals to shape good relations with stakeholders supporting stable functioning and development. Without any doubts employees constitute a very important group of stakeholders for an enterprise. This also results from theoretical approaches proposed in the literature on the subject.

They include the so-called model of 6 markets in which there are main current and potential partners to the relationships, the model of relationships exchange by Morgan and Hunt, the model of company

M. Stefańska (✉)
Poznań University of Economics and Business, Poznań, Poland
e-mail: Magdalena.Stefanska@ue.poznan.pl

K. Bilińska-Reformat
University of Economics in Katowice, Katowice, Poland
e-mail: Katarzyna.Bilinska-Reformat@ue.katowice.pl

153

and its partnership by Doyle and complex model 30R by Gummeson (Otto 2004, pp. 54–62). The model of six markets assumes shaping relationships with customers, suppliers, influential institutions, intermediaries and distributors, and finally with potential and current employees (forming the so-called internal market) (Ballantyne et al. 2003). Actions related to relationships marketing can be indicated with reference to each of the abovementioned markets.

Over the recent years, in many sectors, it is increasingly more difficult to recruit and retain employees. The problem concerns especially the professions demanding from employees modern skills and competences in the sphere of using information technologies, even though also other sectors observe a growing problem of shortage of workers (senior medical care, work in retailing or health care). The sources of the problems of this nature are noticed in a number of determinants starting from negative demographic phenomena (ageing of societies and decreasing number of professionally active people in successive years), through dramatic change in attitudes and expectations towards the workplaces of the representatives of generation Y, generation C (a part of generation Y) and generation Z that is going to enter the labour market soon. Employer market changed into employee market, therefore the enterprises put increasingly greater emphasis on the issues related to workers. Implementation of CSR concept in operations of these enterprises as an element of employer branding is really vital also in this respect. For business enterprises, a positive employer brand is becoming an important competitive asset. In the context of market environment, it allows them to obtain resources of particular significance, i.e. employees with required skills, competence, and predispositions, and to retain those already in employment (Bilińska-Reformat and Stańczyk 2018, pp. 2–12). This is because strong, positively shaped image raises stakeholders' confidence in organization, becomes a determinant of its development and also makes competitors search for new sources of market advantage. What is important is the fact that it allows to recruit resources of special importance, i.e. workers of desired competences and predisposition (the so-called talents) and retain those already employed while increasing their satisfaction from cooperation with a given employer.

Contemporary future employees have increasingly greater knowledge about operations of enterprises and are more and more interested in the way employees are treated. It is associated with growth of their general awareness as for example consumers which is reflected in growing demands concerning ethical behaviours of companies in various aspects of their activity (e.g. fair treatment of suppliers, pro-ecological actions or fair treatment of employees) (Bilińska-Reformat 2015).

Building relationships by an organization with employees begins at the moment of recruitment, lasts over the period of the worker employment until the moment they leave the company, which is also referred to as de-recruitment (Krasnova 2016, p. 186). Each of the stages demands implementation of separate actions within corporate social responsibility that supports building appropriate relationships with employees.

Employer Branding (EB)—Theoretical Foundations

The notion of employer branding is closely related to marketing and the strategy of product branding. If the notion of product brand is extensively presented in the literature (Bastos and Levy 2012; Gardner and Levy 1995; Kotler and Keller 2012; Aaker 1996; Keller 1993, 2009; Bilińska-Reformat and Dewalska-Opitek 2016), considering the employer, the notion of brand does not have such a long tradition. Barrow and Ambler already in mid 1990s (1996) stated that employer brand can be defined as "the package of functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by employment and identified with the employing company". It conveys the "value proposition" which consists of the organization's culture, systems, attitudes, and employee relationship along with encouraging people to embrace and share goals for success, productivity, and satisfaction both on individual and professional levels. Sullivan (2004) defined employer branding as "a targeted, long-term strategy to manage the awareness and perceptions of employees, potential employees, and related stakeholders with regards to a particular firm". According to Backhaus and Tikoo (2004), the term employer branding means the differentiation to highlight the

unique aspects of a firm as an employer from those of its competitors in that area. Wilden et al. (2010, pp. 56–73) emphasise that employer branding in the context of recruitment is the package of psychological, economic and functional benefits that potential employees associate with employment with a particular company. Knowledge of these perceptions can help organizations to create an attractive and competitive employer brand. Also according to Chhabra and Sharma employer brand loyalty results in moving employees from employment contract to psychological contract (2014).

Employer branding is dedicated not only to future employees, but also to those already employed. Here, among the tools of building employer's image, researchers' attention is attracted by voluntary pension systems, the impact of which is not fully recognised yet, even though their significance in building relationships with employers can be indicated (Olejnik and Stefańska 2018).

Employer branding brings some advantages to companies (Ritson 2002), including reduced cost of employee acquisition, improved employee relations, increased employee retention and offering lower salaries for comparable staff to firms with weaker employer brands (Berthon et al. 2005). The report of research conducted by HRM Institute shows that employers notice many benefits coming from implementation of employer branding actions. Among them, the ease of attracting talents to organization and consistent company communication are in the first positions. They both reached 86% of indications. Other benefits of the introduction of employer branding strategy in companies include efficient adjustment of candidates to the organization culture—76% and growth of employees' commitment—75% (http://blog.inijob.com/2018/02/21/budowanie_marki_pracodawcy/).

The very process of employer brand creation includes three stages:

- identification of competitors and criteria of perceiving competitors' brands, as well as what associations and emotions they bring to indicate competitors' strengths and weaknesses,
- identification of own image and key values attributed to the brand of the organization,
- identification of expectations of potential and current employees,

- defining the basis of values on which employer brand image will be built (EVP),
- selection of appropriate tools and communication channels for employer brand image, and
- evaluation of efficiency and effectiveness of actions in terms of the level of target achievement and comparison of results to incurred costs.

Corporate Social Responsibility Dedicated to Employees

Building appropriate relationships between entrepreneurs and their employees is one of fundamental assumptions of corporate social responsibility (CSR). The body of research in the field of corporate social responsibility dedicated toward employees has increased significantly in recent years. Some studies refer to the assessment of the impact of social responsibility on employees and the image of an organization (Lee et al. 2013; Stefańska 2014; Turban and Greening 2000), others on creating tools to measure and to verify or develop new tools to analyse employees' CSR (Turker 2009). As Korschun, Bhattacharya and Swain noticed in their studies on CSR (2011, pp. 29–30), also Lin et al. (2012, pp. 83–93), CSR can indirectly strengthen the company's ability to meet customers' needs due to diffusion of CSR effect. Besides socially engaged enterprises attract better employees, which stems from, among other factors, the employees' expectations to be identified with organizations which have a positive image. Another interesting results of research were brought by Soares et al. (2011) who noticed that enterprises that have a greater share of women in top management engage more resources in CSR (more specifically in strategic philanthropy) and implement CSR activities in a wider scope and of higher quality. Some research studies confirm that CSR initiatives can influence employees' commitment to the organization (Choi and Yu 2014), or their identification with the company (Turban and Greening 2000). Other research has also identified frontline employees as the primary communicators of a company's CSR (Korschun et al. 2014), however the study by Edinger-Schons et al. (2018), extends this concept by pointing to the crucial importance of

having not only frontline employees but also middle management on board, because the managers are the ones who endorse the topic of CSR and can cause the positive spillover of CSR knowledge from frontline employee to the customer-level work. Similar conclusions were created by Maximiano, however without limiting them to the middle management (2007, pp. 231–242). These are very important conclusions for managers because they point out the need for a strategic approach to the idea of CSR in the organization. Therefore, within the competence of managers remain, according to Rok (2004):

- adaptation of the workplace and adaptation of employees,
- determining fair remuneration and motivating,
- providing employees with training and development,
- guaranteeing health and safety at work, and
- guaranteeing and adhering to the employment law and respecting human rights.

As Stefańska noticed in her research, that the perception of the organization by employees is conditioned not so much on what CSR actions are taken, but rather to what extent the employees are aware of the role the managers play in the process of raising awareness about CSR. The role of the organization is therefore to create models of efficient internal communication and institutionalization of CSR, so that the knowledge and understanding of this issue is at its highest possible level within the organization (2018).

As far as CSR in concerned, Turban and Cable (2003) have argued that firms higher in corporate social performance (CSP) have more positive reputations and are more attractive employers to employees than firms lower in CSR.

Expectations of Future Employees and Benefits Promoted by Employers

Effective creation of employer brand demands defining and proposing, as in product brand, a unique value of employer brand (EVP—employee

value proposition) and communicating it to the environment. And just like in the case of product brand, an enterprise aims at communicating such values of brand that are significant for the target segment and consistent with their value system, in the case of employer brand, enterprises want to be distinguished from other potential employers, build awareness in opinions of potential employers, create positive attitude and finally encourage to apply for work for them. In practice, Employee Value Proposition is indication of the main attributes of a given company and benefits that would result from starting work in it. They are closely related to organizational culture and as such, they are permanently associated with the organization and they build its unique timeless identity that is hard to copy. In practice, companies that do not build brand consciously, focus their attention on benefits that a potential employee can consider important at recruitment stage in terms of added value that exceeds the existing situation. However, it must be emphasised here that in competition for best employees, enterprises often reach for similar tools, and consequently they become a standard attributed to specific positions or workplaces and not a distinguishing feature. This obligates them to search for solutions that meet expectations of future and present employees in a higher degree.

Results of Randstad research from 2018 allow to formulate several interesting conclusions. Firstly, employees' expectations towards the workplace are different from those offered by employers. For the workers, the most important include salary and benefits, job security, work-life balance, work atmosphere, career progression, financially healthy, interesting job content, very good reputation, giving back to society and using the latest technologies. On the other hand, the ranking of benefits emphasised by employers is significantly different from candidates' expectations. They indicate the following: financially healthy condition of the organization, using the latest technologies, very good reputation, job security, career progression, salary and benefits, work atmosphere, interesting job content and work-life balance. This creates an interesting and valuable space for operations of enterprises aiming to recruit new employees or prevent the current ones from changing the workplace. Secondly, the list of factors considered by prospective employees includes the aspects that refer to the issue of social responsibility.

As far as the relationship between EB and CSR is analysed it seems necessary to distinguish at least two groups of employees—candidates and already employed. Both groups represent different motives and have other expectations from employees. The existing relationship between CSR and EB has been the subject of deliberations of an increasingly larger number of publications. As research conducted by Klimkiewicz and Oltra (2017) shows, it is necessary to consider additionally that the CSR concept itself may provide an essential signal to future employees. The Authors also formulated conclusion, that that individual attitudes towards CSR play a key role in understanding the way applicants perceive CSR signals and eventually influence CSR-based employer attractiveness. Also they noticed, that the more favourable the CSR attitude by job-seeking Millennials, the higher their perceived CSR-based EA. In this sense, also the role of emotions towards CSR requires more attention. Another researchers, Bauman and Skitka (2012) concentrated their studies to fill the gap in the knowledge between employees need and CSR in organizations—by providing a general framework that begins to identify and organize the relations between employees' concerns, company activities in the area of CSR, and attitudinal and behavioral outcomes, as well as implicate the psychological processes that link them. Another research Nyborg (2014) noticed, that since some corporate social responsibility firms pay lower wages than other firms, it is the reason to believe that corporate social responsibility employment is mainly attractive to motivated individuals, who tend to exert more effort than others.

CSR in Employer Branding in Practice

In the literature on the subject two dimensions of corporate social responsibility, i.e. internal and external can be distinguished (Zapłata and Kaźmierczak 2011) (Table 1).

Actions in the sphere of internal CSR are associated with creation of a positive image of an employer. Activity of enterprises in the sphere of

Table 1 Areas of internal and external CSR in enterprises

Areas of internal CSR	Areas of external CSR
HR management (humanisation of work, provision of safe working conditions, decent salary, participation of employees, creation of the possibility to educate, etc.)	Supply chain management (fair principles in trading)
Ethical programs for employees	Sponsoring and donations
Development programs for employees	Cooperation with non-governmental organizations and other local partners
Management of environment protection	Educational programs on various levels that raise awareness in the sphere of CSR
Responsibility for product	Actions for broadly perceived natural environment

Source Own case study based on Zapłata and Kaźmierczak (2011)

employer branding in connection with intensification of activities concerning management of human resources, implementation of ethical programs for workers and implementation of development programs for employees can be observed.

A Recruitment Stage

Operations in the sphere of recruitment of workers in socially responsible enterprises can take a dual form. Firstly, the very fact of being a socially responsible organization is widely communicated. Professionalization of actions in the sphere of CSR is often associated with establishing a foundation that can implement a complex strategy of building social value and social capital, inside and outside the organization. These operations are an element of building image aimed at a broad group of stakeholders, and not only the candidates for work. Nevertheless, the actions that are organized by such companies, can also comprise volunteers from outside the organization who learn, in this way, about organizational culture and its system of values which, in turn can translate into the wish to start working in such an organization.

One of the key problem of the companies in search for applicants is to find them, inform and communicate. First of all for researchers it is crucial who initiates the process of information search. The strategy of inbound or outbound marketing communication is necessary to gain attention of the best candidates. Such tools as social media and websites are among basic sources of information, however universities and job spots or other jobs fairs organized by them are necessary both to build a reputation and attract talented graduates. Other interesting tools used by organizations are internships and training programs, often organized in the form of contests because of their high attractiveness for students.

Although the process of communication is crucial to gain attention, in the process of recruitment there are always questions concerning benefits offered by organizations to newly employed workers.

Within employer branding strategy, innovative recruitment campaign seems to be extremely significant. The action entitled "Poczuj miętę do Capgemini" ("Have a crush on Capgemini") is an example here. The company used a well-known idiom "poczuć miętę" ("to have a crush") to be noticed on market by the broadest possible target group,. The expression was used both in metaphorical and literal meaning. Initially, the company wanted to make its current employees familiar with the idea and involved in it. For this purpose, when they were outside the company premises, devices that sprayed the mint aroma were placed in offices, and mint plants were put in the kitchen. The workers were also invited to participate in the contest aimed at inventing a slogan for the campaign promotion. The slogan "Would you mint upgrading your career?" was one of awarded slogans (https://employerbranding.pl/kampania-poczuj-miete-do-capgemini-wsrod-laureatow-absl-diamonds/) In the contest photos presenting the theme of mint were also honoured, and awarded works were published on the company website. The workers willingly engaged in the action, while showing at the same time that they are interested and want to contribute to achievement of success by their enterprise. Such an approach proves referring to actions in the sphere of CSR that concern humanisation of work, creation of safe working conditions and participation of prospective employees.

IKEA is another example of application of effective employer branding for the needs of recruitment. IKEA is starting an employer branding campaign "Ty jesteś zmianą" ("You are the change") that shows values and an exceptional company culture, and the way in which it builds relationships with current and prospective employees. Its objective is to encourage open, proactive people to recognise IKEA as employer brand and to draw attention to the need to change recruitment models into more candidate-friendly. The campaign was accompanied by a spot presented on YouTube. The idea of creation of a better life for many people, including our employees is included the vision of IKEA. While continuing the vision implementation and recognising the expectations of our future employees, we have created a campaign at the basis of which there is transparency, authenticity, the need of meaningful work and conscious decision-making. The campaign is a response to the needs and expectations of contemporary people towards the workplace, including aware decision-making when an employer is chosen, real influence on the process in which they participate, as well as testing and meeting the company before they are employed. "Ty jesteś zmianą" ("You are the change") shows IKEA as an employer who values first of all the wish to change the world for better, is at peace with itself and shared values, and open to others regardless of age, sex, experience or origin (https://employerbranding.pl/ty-jestes-zmiana-ikea-inspiruje-do-zmian-na-rynku-pracy/). The values presented in the campaign refer to broadly perceived operations in the sphere of CSR. It should also be stated that an American organization, Business for Social Responsibility, defines Corporate Social Responsibility as "the concept according to which business decisions honour ethical values, are consistent with law and show respect for people and natural environment" (Zapłata and Kaźmierczak 2011; Business for Social Responsibility, BSR Issue Briefs, Overview of Corporate Social Responsibility, 2004). The first presentation of the campaign was accompanied by a spot inspired by true stories of IKEA employees that referred to the brand values, including the search for new solutions, the sense of community, "out of the box" thinking, simplicity and care about people and the planet. In this

way, IKEA wishes to encourage people for whom brand values are important, to learn more about the company as an employer. Corporate social responsibility in practice is becoming a social commitment.

A campaign of Polish Insurance Company PZU in 2013 was an example of another, interesting and original recruitment campaign conducted under a general title "Nawet najlepsi zrobią wszystko aby pracować w PZU" ("Even the best will do everything to work for PZU") (www.media.pzu.pl, accessed 12 March 2018). The range of impact included television, website and YouTube channel at the time. Obviously, the goal of the campaign was to draw attention of young people applying for work in PZU, but also to show the company as young people-friendly, modern, and the one that does not like routine.

The above examples have some common features. Firstly, they are based on universal values such as truth, transparency, honesty, openness, equality, etc. Furthermore, organizations are not scared to take responsibility and openly speak about what is important for them. They are definitely more engaged in convincing potential employees that choosing them as the place of employment is associated with real satisfaction and positive experience. Another issue is that in the past CSR campaigns had the nature of non-related events, and now, it is noticed that there is very strong reference to the key values of the company that determine its organizational culture. This can be seen in successive editions of the campaign conducted mainly on the Internet, especially in social media.

Already Employed Workers—How to Increase Their Engagement and Satisfaction?

Employer branding was the basis of functioning of some enterprises even before defining this management concept. Southwest Airlines can be an example here. Thanks to application of the mechanisms defined later as employer branding they could start, retain on market and even beat the competitors. Herb Keller, Southwest airlines manager for 20 years was perceived as dissenter because he claimed that it is in the company interest to care mainly about employees. He used to say that "employees' satisfaction translated into customers' satisfaction, and customers'

satisfaction into shareholders' satisfaction – right in that order" (https://business.linkedin.com/talent-solutions/blog/employer-brand/2018/how-southwest-airlines-built-a-stand-out-employer-brand-in-5-steps).

In companies functioning according to the concept of employer branding, employees supported by the management, support each other, feel safe and can make independent decisions that would be unacceptable in other circumstances.

Retail chain Biedronka, operating in Poland can be the example of application of actions associated with CSR in employer branding strategies. Table 2 shows CSR actions that have positive real impact on building a positive image of the chain.

In summary it's worthy to notice that such programs became strong arguments in recruitment programs and in comparison with independent retail stores working for large chain stores become more interesting. And big retailers build their attractiveness and interesting employer promoting such programs.

Conclusion

On the basis of the examples of employer branding applied in Poland and presented above, it can be stated that Internet performs an important role in creation of the company image. The companies willingly use such services as YouTube or build their own advanced websites. Referring to the report on employer branding in Poland for 2017, prepared by HRM Institute, among the attributes that employers tempt the candidates with, atmosphere in the company, salaries, benefits and reputation in company had the highest significance in 2017. Thanks to those actions, a given company or institutions can expand the group of its specialists of more talents. On the other hand, according to the research of pracuj.pl group, an ideal employer is a company that offers attractive work in financial terms and ensures stability of employment or friendly atmosphere at work.

In the future, employer branding will represent all actions implemented by HR that will aim at building relationships with prospective

Table 2 CSR actions strengthening employer brand of the retail chain Biedronka

	Series*	
1.	Razem zadbajmy o zdrowie (*Let's take care about health together*)	Since 2005 Biedronka has been conducting free preventive medical check-ups, including pap smears and mammographic screening for women and ECG and prostate diagnostics for men. Educational campaign is conducted within the program and the employees are its ambassadors. In 2014 the employees took part in 10 thousand free medical check-ups. The program was recognised in the Report on Good Practices of Responsible Business Forum and won in Know Health contest. It also received Nagroda Zaufania Złoty OTIS 2011 (*Trust Award Golden OTIS 2011*)—the most important consumer award on Polish pharmacy market
2.	Paczki dla pracowników i ich dzieci (*Gift packages for employees and their children*)	Biedronka chain offers its employees layettes on birth of a child, and school starter kits on their first day of school. The employees also receive gifts of sweets at holidays
3.	Wakacje z Biedronką (*Holidays with Biedronka*)	Since 2005 the chain has been funding holiday trips for children of employees who most need help
4.	Możesz liczyć na Biedronkę (*You can count on Biedronka*)	It is the program that allows to grant benefits to employees in need. They can also get interest-free loans
5.	Dzień dziecka w Biedronce (*Children's day in Biedronka*)	On children's day, every child gets a refreshment. The company also organises a contest the winners of which receive a prize of a trip to Euro Disneyland with their family

Table 2 (continued)

	Series*	
6.	Wiele możliwości (*Many opportunities*)	The chain provides a system of trainings and promotions to its 47,000 employees. 90% of supervisors reached their position through promotion and offered trainings
7.	Najzdolniejsi są z nami (*The most talented are with us*)	The chain tries to recruit university graduates; they organise the program "Dojrzewalnia talentów" ("*Maturity of talents*") for them, through which they are involved in new projects of the chain

Source Own work based on: http://www.biedronka.pl/pl/social-responsibility/csr-employer/

and current employees. Contemporary situation observed on labour market, and constantly growing competition, make enterprises face serious demands in this sphere. For example they might need to consciously create own brand that will raise interest and consumer's trust, which can be even more important. The companies that want to achieve a significant market position should realise the necessity to seek and implement new, original solutions that will contribute to recognition of company brand on labour market and will thus support recruitment of the most talented future employees. It can be seen more and more frequently that an organization creates external image through extensive application of the scope of Internet channels for communication with prospective customers or employees of social media type, for example Twitter, Facebook or Snapchat. The use of the latest tools and technologies in shaping a positive company image is especially significant while selecting methods of communication with representatives of generation Z who they communicate online with every day (Bilińska-Reformat and Stefańska 2016, pp. 123–137). Therefore it can be supposed that the role of the Internet will grow significantly in the future.

A positive company image brings many benefits, but it should constantly and regularly be cared about. Popularity and success of contemporary enterprise is considerably related to commitment, fulfilment and

satisfaction of its employees. The lack of trust among employees, complicated or wrong communication or unethical attitudes of managing staff enable spreading of a negative image of the employer both in external and internal environment.

An enterprise that has a positive image as an employer can recruit the most talented employees, frequently incurring smaller labour costs. More and more employers are aware of this fact, and companies start to invest in their image while preparing the strategies of employer branding in cooperation with HR, PR and marketing departments or while cooperating with external advisors.

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