

BUILDING AN INTERNAL BRAND THROUGH VALUE BASED MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN INDIAN ORGANIZATIONS

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Abstract: Value based management practices have a great impact on employee behaviour. Internal branding initiatives include value based processes which strategically align and empower employees to deliver an effective and efficient performance consistently. These processes include information sharing, training, support, leadership, reward & recognition programs, recruitment practices and participative management which are part of the HR value chain.

The present descriptive and empirical study has identified the various value based management practices emphasizing on employee development and internal branding which contribute to the overall employment. A sample size of 443 respondents across four different services sector in India was selected through stratified random sampling method. Self -designed and validated structured questionnaires were used to collect data. Empirical analysis of the study shows that organizations can create a committed workforce, employee brand and talent brand through a set of value based human resource practices and achieve desired outcomes of internal branding.

The major findings of the study include establishing correlations between internal branding outcomes and various value based management practices in HR value chain. The regression analysis has suggested a model which organizations can use to create a strong brand equity and image.

Keywords: Value based management, Internal branding, Organizational values, HR value chain, Employee engagement

Introduction: Value-based management focuses on creating and communicating a common set of values, which employees need to adhere to when working in the company. It emphasizes on organizational values which define the acceptable standards that govern the employee behaviour. It is essential to communicate these brand values to the employees across the organization so that they become aware of brand values at the workplace which help the employee to align his personal values with that of the organization's values. The message about the company's values, culture, and organization as the best place to work, has to be communicated to its present and potential employees. While it is critical for the organization's brand identity to be promoted externally, the brand promise must also be supported internally through various promotional methods. These methods include various practices which help in creating an employee based internal brand which mould the employee's on brand behaviour.

Value-based management can fundamentally be seen as an indirect managerial style. The management's role is to define, create, and communicate the conditions in which employees can work. Value-based management is thus concerned with making a group of people work together towards a mutual goal without explicit managerial pressure and use of power. This helps in creating loyal and committed employees who are engaged and also show citizenship behaviour. It is the result of internal branding which deals with living the corporate values, leveraging the corporate brand strategy to

reinforce brand requirements internally and reach out to potential recruits externally.

Internal Branding: A value based approach: Internal branding can be defined as the process that enables the employees to know the values of the brand, to develop a positive attitude towards the values and to develop the skills to deliver on the values of the brand. It helps in creating enthusiastic, engaged employees who admire how the organization's values and competencies make a distinctive difference for its customers. The organization's personality is shaped by value congruence and psychological contract which leads to creation of an internal image for the employees.

For an employee based brand image within the organization, it is necessary to have practices inculcating strong values which create a brand led culture. Organizational values, Leadership, teamwork, developmental opportunities, participative management, brand promise delivery etc. are some initiatives which lead to various brand based consequences. It consists of an integrated set of human resource management practices – from the sourcing and hiring of talent, through workforce development and engagement, to employee separation – which engages people in a committed pursuit of a chosen strategy and set of core values. It is called the HR value chain.

Internal Branding through the HR Value Chain: Once the company's strategy and values are clearly articulated, the first stage of the HR value chain involves finding and hiring people who fit the desired

strategy. Dessler (1999) suggests companies use value-based hiring practices that screen potential new hires for a commitment to a set of chosen values and reject a large portion of prospective employees. In order to build a competitive workforce, successful organizations must establish HR practices which support their desired strategy and core values. For example, to gain employee commitment early, Proctor and Gamble has an established college intern program as part of their new-hire process that assigns interns to work on high profile projects visible by the CEO and other senior management (Ready and Conger, 2007). Once new hires are brought on board, a process of continuous employee development begins.

Management practices based on strong value system leads to many advantages such as creating committed employees, engaging the employees, exhibition of citizenship behaviour among the employees, better talent management leading to person organization fit, a culture which reflects strong brand values and image, and also increasing the brand equity for organization. There is better brand performance as the congruence increases between the personal values of members of the brand team and the values of the organization. Internal branding translates the company's brand values into physical employee behaviours.

Value based branding practices: few examples: Employees need to be intrinsically engaged with the brand management philosophy so that they "live the brand". There are many examples of converting the employees into brand ambassadors through internal branding.

- At Hewlett-Packard, the organizational values are described in an in-house publication called 'The HP Way' which contains the company philosophy. It contains HP's organizational values that govern and guide organizational behaviour in meeting objectives and in dealing with stakeholders (Hewlett-Packard, 1997).
- Within Hallmark, a group of internal managers is responsible for brand training and education. Hallmark has regular brand training sessions, brand-based intranet site, internal publications, a speaker series, and even daily brand promise reminders on the employee's computers (Davis, 2000).
- At Google, employer brand is same as the employee experiences inside Google. The culture with a unique work environment has been put in place by founders and is practiced and evangelized by their executives. HR's role is to align HR systems like staffing, induction, performance management, learning & development, and rewards & recognition to be consistent with the brand.

Literature review: Internal branding is based on the critical concept of being employee focused. The literature reviewed is kept under two categories for the ease of this study.

Value based management practices: According to Hersey and Blanchard (1996), values reflect the rights and wrongs in organizations. This was further supported by the study showing that incongruence between personal values and those of the organization can lead to employee distrust, lower performance and reduced quality of output (Harshman & Harshman (1999), job dissatisfaction (Posner & Schmidt, 1993), and increased intentions to leave (Schwepker, W., 1999).

The employee's beliefs about the firm's culture affect the validity of self-selection decisions (Cable & Judge, 1996) and affect their post-entry performance (Schein, 1985). These studies have established how organizational culture represents values learned by the members of the organization, passed on to newcomers, and evidenced by the ways in which people behave in the workplace.

Schiffenbauer (2001) has shown in his research the relationship between the brand message and employee behavior. According to his study, the brand message will lose its credibility if it is not supported by unified employee behaviour.

Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) has shown that training staff in internal branding activities could present opportunities for career advancement thus enhancing the total employer brand experience and encouraging employee retention.

Kundu and Vora (2004), argue that recruiting the right people is critical, particularly for organizations that rely on employees to represent brand values and deliver their brand promises.

In 2005, the CMA (Canadian Marketing Association) surveyed marketers about their organization's internal branding activities. Internal branding was described within the survey as "promoting the company brand values amongst employees".

In 2006, qualitative interviews conducted with senior marketers across all business sectors revealed an expanded concept of internal branding. CMA's Branding and Strategic Planning Council conducted three consecutive surveys in 2007 and 2008.

According to Vallaster, C. and de Chernatony, (2006), internal branding can ensure that the new recruit continues to understand what the brand stands for and what values the corporate brand is proposing to the external stakeholders.

According to Punjaisri et al. (2008, 2009), the effectiveness of internal branding is determined by work environment factors such as reward systems and remuneration schemes which are typically the responsibilities of the HR function.

Internal Branding Outcomes: Aaker (1991; 1996) has conducted many studies on the concepts of brand equity and which showed that brand equity is in the heart of branding research.

Organ (1997) has explained organizational citizenship that helps in maintenance of the organization's social system. It has been of increasing interest to both scholars and managers and has indicated a brand associated employee behaviour.

To ensure that their employees are able to deliver the brand promise, the company needs to engage in activities that aid their employees in their ability to deliver on service promise such as recruiting, training, motivating, rewarding and providing equipment and technology (Zeithaml, Valarie A., Mary Jo Bitner, and Dwayne D. Gremler (2006).

Papasolomou and Vrontis (2006) advocate high brand equity as being evident to the extent that organizations exhibit characteristics such as higher brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality, strong brand associations and credibility.

Ind (2007) explains that when a company has a strong ideology and values, employees are more likely to engage in the organization's interests. Additionally with a strong brand identity and ideology, organizations can retain key staff.

Review of literature of internal branding has led to identification of the important variables to be addressed in the present study.

Key Variables under the Study: The present study deals with the management practices which help to create internal brand image through organizational values, integrity and employee development.

Value based Management Practices:

- **Organizational Values:** Values transform a company's mission and vision into reality and represent the foundation on which the company is formed.
- **Organizational Integrity:** Organizations should have ethical practices, policies and procedures based on strong value system.
- **Information sharing:** Employees are proud of their organization when they feel they are kept informed of changes, developments and issues within the organization.
- **Management Support:** Cooperation and support extended by the management to the employees and team motivate them to become brand representatives.
- **Teamwork:** Unity and teamwork help employees feel connected to their teams, departments, organization and brand.
- **Rewards & Recognition:** When recognized and rewarded for their achievements, employees get reinforced for better performance as well as get emotionally associated with the organization which strengthens the brand.

- **Leadership:** A good team leader works in collaboration with other team members, guides and motivates the subordinates to achieve goals.
- **Career Development:** Growth need strength is need or desire to obtain growth from one's work, which results in employee's growth and satisfaction.
- **Participative Management:** Employee's participation in decision making is an important factor contributing to the high levels of employee engagement.
- **Employee Brand Promise Delivery:** The brand has to determine the systems that will make this promise come true through psychological contract and drive employee satisfaction to greater heights.
- **Fair Treatment:** Focus on human values, respect and concern for the individual helps the employees to take the ownership of the brand.

The above practices facilitate a strong internal brand creation which can be represented and measured in terms of the following outcomes:

- **Employee Engagement:** Creating a committed workforce requires organizational practices that focus on values at both macro and micro levels of the organization. Engagement occurs within a context of macro-level organizational practices which form the HR value chain.
- **Organizational Citizenship Behaviour:** The organizational commitment theory suggests that employees are more likely to be emotionally attached to an organization if they accept the values of the brand (Cook and Wall, 1980). It is identified through organizational brand commitment, psychological ownership and congruency of values.
- **Employee Brand Equity:** Successful brands have high brand equity. It depends on awareness of brand, perceived quality of employer brand and brand values.
- **Talent Acquisition:** Organizations must have effective recruitment strategies based on value congruence for person-organization and person-job fit.
- **Brand Driven Organizational Culture:** Values are inherent to organizations and they influence attitudes and beliefs creating an exclusive culture.

Research Problem:

- The gaps identified from review of literature have led to the following research problems.
- No research has focused on internal branding from value based perspective in Indian services sectors with greater employee-customer interactions.
- There have been very less empirically proven research studies to establish the relationship between management practices which focus on

values and how they help in creating strong internal brands.

- Based on the above research problems, following research questions were formulated.

Research Questions:

- What are the various value based management practices in organizations in Indian services sector which help in internal branding?
- Do the value based management practices have a correlation with the major outcomes of internal branding in organizations?

Objectives of the Study:

- The major objective of this research is to analyse the various value based management practices which help in building a strong internal brand in organizations. The specific objectives are:
- To study value based management practices leading to an internal brand creation.
- To analyse the relationship between the values based management practices and major outcomes of internal branding in organizations.

Hypotheses: Hypotheses were formulated to analyse the relationship between value based practices adopted by organizations across the different services sectors selected under the present study:

- Hypothesis (H1): The value based management practices of Internal Branding selected under the study have a strong positive impact on internal branding.
- Hypothesis (H2): Employees exhibit Organizational Citizenship Behaviour when organizations implement value based Internal Branding programs.
- Hypothesis (H3): Strategically oriented value based management practices in organizations have a significant positive effect on Employee Engagement.
- Hypothesis (H4): Implementation of value based internal branding initiatives help organizations to create a strong Employee Brand Equity.
- Hypothesis (H5): Internal Branding practices focusing on organizational and individual values result in the creation of a strong Brand Driven Culture within the organization.

- Hypothesis (H6): Value based and strategically oriented Internal Branding initiatives in organizations facilitate the process of Talent Brand Management.

Research Methodology:

Research Approach: A descriptive and empirical research approach was adopted for the present study.

Sample Design: The research was carried out in organizations in four Indian services sector including Information Technology (IT), Telecommunication, Banking and Aviation. The data was collected through stratified random sampling from 443 employees on company’s rolls at executive and managerial levels.

Data collection: Data was collected by survey through self-designed, structured questionnaires which were tested for validity and for reliability through a pilot study.

Reliability Analysis: Cronbach’s alpha and Split Half method were used to test the internal consistency of the scale. Cronbach’s alpha value for the scale was found to be 0.982. Split half method indicated a Spearman-Brown coefficient value of 0.917. In this, both halves of the questionnaires have shown alpha value of 0.927 and 0.898 which indicated high degree of reliability.

Data Analysis & Interpretation:

Demographic Profile of the Sample: Demographic analysis was done for Age Group, Gender, Educational Qualification, and Experience in the Present Company.

The female employees constitute 15.3 % of the total sample size and male employees constitute 84.7% of the total sample size. 55 % of the employees in the sample are graduates. Post graduates contribute to the 40% of the total sample 84.2% of the employees have an experience of 0-5 years in the present company. Similarly there are only two employees with maximum experience of more than 30 years in their present company.

Inferential Analysis: Correlation and Regression Analysis

An empirical analysis of the data was done by using inferential statistics with the help of Correlation and Regression Analysis.

Table 1: Correlation Analysis - Value based Management and Internal Branding

| | Organizational Citizenship Behaviour | Employee Engagement | Employee Brand Equity | Brand Driven Organizational Culture | Talent Brand Management |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Value based Management | .766 | .883 | .679 | .632 | .700 |
| Org Citizenship Behaviour | 1 | .685 | .641 | .541 | .601 |
| Employee Engagement | .685 | 1 | .672 | .560 | .620 |

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Employee Brand Equity | .641 | .672 | 1 | .445 | .619 |
| Brand Driven Organizational Culture | .541 | .560 | .445 | 1 | .392 |
| Talent Brand Management | .601 | .620 | .619 | .392 | 1 |

Sig 2-tailed test, p = 0.000 for all correlations, N = 443

The present study has identified five outcomes of internal branding which share high correlation coefficient values with value based internal brand management:

- Value based branding has the strongest positive correlation with employee engagement with an ‘r’ value of 0.883. When employees believe in organizational values, they tend to correlate their individual values with the organizational values which help the employees to be engaged and live their organizational brand.
- Management practices based on value system has a high positive correlation with organizational citizenship behaviour (r = 0.766) according to the present study. Internal Branding consists of all the organizational processes which lead to creation of committed employees who can walk an extra mile to behave in a manner which reflect that their employer is the best in the industry.
- Value based management also shows a positive correlation with talent management (r = 0.700). The organization’s employment brand has a major impact on employee’s perceptions of the organization and what it’s like to work there. A strong employer brand helps employers to recruit the ‘perfect fit’ employee through person organization fit. Brand centric organizations attract the best available talent and retain it through integrated talent management process as it creates a strong talent brand for the organization.
- Employee Brand Equity (r = 0.679) another major outcome of internal branding which increases employee’s awareness of the brand and the brand

propositions, and the associated brand values. Every person in a company should recognize the brand strategy, be committed to it, and understand specifically how their behaviour contributes to its execution (Keller 2008). Keller defines internal branding as “making sure that the members of the organization are properly aligned with the brand and what it represents”.

- Brand driven organizational Culture (r = 0.632) also is influenced by value based management initiatives. An OCTAPACE culture supports building a strong employer brand image. This kind of culture is recognized by openness and transparency, confrontation, trustworthiness, authenticity, pro-action, autonomy, collaboration and experimentation at workplace. Internal branding facilitates the alignment of brand and individual objectives and helps in creation of all the mentioned aspects of the organizational culture.

Table 1 has shown that an HR value chain consisting of strategic management initiatives focusing on a strong organizational value system shapes desired outcomes of internal branding. Thus Hypothesis (H₁): The value based management practices of internal branding selected under the study have a strong positive impact on internal branding in organizations is accepted.

Further to this, analysis was done to establish relationships between value based practices of internal branding and its five outcomes (Organizational Citizenship Behaviour, Employee Engagement, Employee Brand Equity, Brand Driven Organizational Culture, and Talent Management).

Table 2: Correlations between Value based practices and Outcomes of Internal branding

| | Organizational Citizenship Behaviour | Organizational Brand Commitment | Psychological Ownership | Congruency of Values | Employee Engagement | Employee Brand Equity | Perceived Quality of Employer Brand | Awareness of Brand Proposition | Brand Values | Brand Driven Organizational Culture | Talent Brand Management |
|------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Org Values | .623 | .564 | .570 | .494 | .627 | .478 | .562 | .390 | .449 | .623 | .573 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Org Integrity | .651 | .611 | .580 | .476 | .627 | .508 | .554 | .437 | .455 | .565 | .542 |
| Info Sharing | .655 | .573 | .622 | .506 | .630 | .523 | .587 | .441 | .479 | .499 | .603 |
| Mgt Support | .692 | .624 | .642 | .516 | .646 | .540 | .599 | .452 | .496 | .532 | .599 |
| Teamwork | .608 | .587 | .588 | .416 | .458 | .402 | .446 | .364 | .341 | .406 | .478 |
| Leadership | .694 | .634 | .668 | .532 | .614 | .525 | .561 | .467 | .452 | .499 | .592 |
| Rewards and Recogn | .647 | .592 | .587 | .468 | .557 | .482 | .510 | .414 | .426 | .484 | .585 |
| Career Dev | .672 | .653 | .645 | .486 | .595 | .558 | .580 | .494 | .480 | .456 | .603 |
| Participative Mgt | .612 | .530 | .549 | .487 | .563 | .459 | .500 | .391 | .410 | .477 | .533 |
| Employee Brand Promise | .541 | .508 | .483 | .422 | .484 | .556 | .454 | .501 | .469 | .391 | .494 |
| Fair Treatment | .622 | .563 | .546 | .489 | .631 | .531 | .546 | .448 | .485 | .441 | .549 |

Sig 2-tailed test, p = 0.000 for all correlations (as calculated), N = 443

From the above correlation table 2, it is observed that value based management practices have highest correlation with organizational citizenship behaviour and employee engagement. Implementation of HR practices based on the integrity, ethics and values help in creating an environment within the organization where employees live the brand and walk an extra mile to achieve the organizational goals.

Similarly, the variables of value based management have a positive correlation with employee engagement except for teamwork and employee brand promise delivery which have a comparatively weaker correlation with employee engagement. Thus organizations when focus on these internal branding variables, create an engaged workforce who perceive their employee brand as the best in industry.

Values are important building blocks of culture and are deep-seated and enduring. They motivate behaviour and emotional responses. Organizational values have a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.623$) with the brand driven culture. Culture is a key to achieve organizational excellence as it not only shapes manager’s and employee’s behaviour, but also determines the manner in which people interpret and respond to any given organizational situation. Greater the information sharing and opportunities for career development, stronger is the talent brand of the organization. This helps in sourcing, recruitment and retention of the best talent ($r = 0.602$). Thus organizations should focus on these factors in order to create an employee brand.

Table 3: Regression (Stepwise) of value based management practices on internal branding:

| Model | R | r square | Adjusted r square | Std. Error of the Estimate | Change Statistics | | | | |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|----------|-----|-----|---------------|
| | | | | | r Square | F Change | df1 | df2 | Sig. F Change |
| 1 | .788 ^a | .672 | .624 | .373 | .622 | 653.004 | 1 | 396 | .000 |
| 2 | .864 ^b | .758 | .756 | .302 | .130 | 208.293 | 1 | 395 | .000 |
| 3 | .879 ^c | .789 | .790 | .278 | .038 | 71.535 | 1 | 394 | .000 |
| 4 | .901 ^d | .800 | .806 | .265 | .020 | 41.626 | 1 | 393 | .000 |
| 5 | .907 ^e | .821 | .825 | .257 | .011 | 24.862 | 1 | 392 | .000 |
| 6 | .911 ^f | .830 | .829 | .252 | .007 | 16.548 | 1 | 391 | .000 |
| 7 | .915 ^g | .836 | .834 | .249 | .005 | 11.609 | 1 | 390 | .001 |
| 8 | .918 ^h | .839 | .836 | .246 | .005 | 10.936 | 1 | 389 | .001 |
| 9 | .919 ⁱ | .841 | .839 | .244 | .003 | 8.489 | 1 | 388 | .004 |
| 10 | .920 ^j | .844 | .842 | .242 | .003 | 8.092 | 1 | 388 | .005 |
| 11 | .922 ^k | .850 | .846 | .239 | .003 | 8.205 | 1 | 387 | .004 |

Dependent Variable: Internal Branding Outcomes

Independent Variables: Organizational Values, Organizational integrity, Information Sharing, Management Support, Teamwork, Leadership, Rewards & Recognition, Career Development, Participative Management, Employee Brand Promise Delivery, Fair Treatment

According to the above table 3, all the independent variables together account for 84.6% variation in the outcomes Internal Branding in services organizations. The stepwise regression gives the value of r square for each variable set.

Organizational Values is found to be most important variable with an r square value of 0.624 which shows that it alone explains 62.4% of variance in internal branding. The next important variable contributing to variance in internal brand is organizational integrity, which in combination with organizational values shows an r square value of 0.756 (75.6% variance explained).

According to table 3, the 11th model “k” is accepted, according to which Organizational Values, Organizational Integrity, Information Sharing, Management Support, Teamwork, Leadership, Rewards & Recognition, Career Development, Participative Management, Employee Brand Promise Delivery, and Fair Treatment are the major value based management practices influencing internal branding outcomes.

Based on table 2 and 3, Hypothesis (H₂, H₃, H₄, H₅ and H₆) are accepted. Thus strategically managed value based practices in the HR Value chain in organizations help in a strong internal branding process and its consequences.

Conclusion: A company’s organizational values let others know what it is, why it has been created, and how it is different from other companies. From an individual’s perspective, an employee expects the organization to do the right thing and in-synchronization with their personal values and beliefs. While brand values are critical in the context of brand marketing, brands also need to look at their overall organizational values. Brands need to have sound corporate values. The overall employment experience consisting of value based practices result in internal brand based consequences.

Previous researches have indicated the significance of organizational values at workplaces. The findings of the present study show that there is a strong correlation between management practices and the outcomes of internal branding process. The regression model explains how internal branding process based on strong value system helps organizations to build an identity based on employee engagement, commitment and citizenship behaviour. It also shows how a talent brand and brand led culture can originate from value based branding.

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