

THE IMPACT OF EMPLOYER BRANDING STRATEGIES ON ATTRACTING AND RETAINING STAFF IN THE TOURISM SECTOR

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Abstract: *In the context of increasing labor shortages and high employee turnover, the tourism sector faces significant challenges in attracting and retaining qualified personnel. This article examines the role of employer branding strategies as a key human resource management tool in enhancing workforce attraction and retention in tourism enterprises. The study analyzes how employer value propositions, organizational reputation, digital employer branding, and internal human resource practices influence employees' perceptions and employment decisions.*

Keywords: *Employer branding; tourism sector; employee attraction; staff retention; human resource management; organizational competitiveness.*

The tourism sector is one of the most labor-intensive industries in the global economy, where service quality largely depends on the skills, motivation, and commitment of employees. In an environment characterized by intense competition, high labor mobility, and persistent skill shortages, attracting and retaining qualified staff has become a critical challenge for tourism organizations.

Unlike capital-intensive industries, tourism enterprises rely heavily on human capital to deliver personalized experiences, maintain service standards, and build long-term relationships with customers. Consequently, effective human resource management strategies play a decisive role in ensuring organizational sustainability and competitiveness in the tourism sector.

In recent years, Employer Branding has emerged as a strategic tool for positioning organizations as attractive employers in the labor market. Employer Branding refers to the process of creating and promoting a distinctive employer value proposition that highlights the functional, economic, and psychological benefits of working for an organization. In the tourism sector, where jobs are often associated with seasonal employment, long working hours, and relatively low wages, strong Employer Branding strategies can help overcome negative perceptions and enhance the sector's attractiveness to potential and existing employees.

The growing digitalization of recruitment processes and the widespread use of social media platforms have further amplified the importance of Employer Branding. Online employer reviews, corporate websites, and social networking sites significantly influence job seekers' perceptions and employment decisions. For tourism organizations, a well-articulated Employer Brand not only supports talent attraction but also fosters employee engagement, job satisfaction, and loyalty, thereby reducing turnover rates and recruitment costs.

Despite the increasing relevance of Employer Branding, empirical research on its impact within the tourism sector remains limited compared to other industries. This study

aims to examine the influence of Employer Branding strategies on attracting and retaining staff in the tourism sector, emphasizing their role in enhancing organizational performance and long-term workforce stability.

Nowadays, the concept of Employer Branding (brand strategies for attracting and retaining employees) is central to the success of organizations in the labor market. The approach put forward by Ambler and Barrow (1996) considers Employer Branding as part of the corporate brand, emphasizing the need for organizations to define their employer value proposition (EVP) and build their position in the market based on it. Their work has identified the strategic importance of Employer Branding not only in recruiting, but also in retaining employees and strengthening the culture within the organization.

The next stage of development corresponds to the theoretical integration of Backhaus and Tikoo (2004); they also proposed a research methodology, describing Employer Branding as a bridge between human resources management, marketing and external communication of the organization. Their work provided a key conceptual framework for empirically developing Employer Branding research - namely, the need to carefully measure the impact of brand awareness, organizational image, and EVP on the labor market.

The management and practical aspects of employer branding are reviewed in detail by Mosley (2014). Mosley emphasizes that employer branding should be continuously shaped through internal and external communications, recruitment processes, working conditions, and employee experience. His approach identifies specific brand management tools in the digital and social media era - in particular, online reviews, professional networks, and employer ratings - that dramatically enhance the impact of Employer Branding.

In the context of recruitment, research by Cable and Turban (2003) demonstrates the impact of employer image and organizational reputation on candidate selection. In their empirical work, a high organizational reputation increases the interest in job offers and increases the effectiveness of attracting suitable talent to the organization. This perspective is also important for the tourism industry - since jobs in the industry are often directly related to the quality of service, and a good reputation can be a decisive factor in increasing demand.

In the context of tourism and digital transformation, Lievens (2007 and subsequent years) provides an in-depth analysis of the relationship between employer branding and an organization's communication strategies. He shows that the clarity and consistency of brand messages, as well as the experiences delivered through digital channels (e.g., employee interviews, workplace videos, online reviews) influence the decision-making of potential candidates. Lievens also highlights the possibilities of empirically determining the significant impact of employer branding on attraction and retention, by proposing measurement tools.

This body of work describes Employer Branding as a multidisciplinary and context-dependent phenomenon. In particular, the following concluding features stand out for the tourism sector: first, the specificity of the service sector (high human factor, seasonality, face-to-face interaction with customers) increases the importance of Employer Branding as a tool not only for recruitment, but also for managing the employee experience; second, digital platforms and online communications are becoming the main channel for quickly

and widely communicating the employer brand to a wide audience; third, the reputation of the organization and the clearly formulated value of the EVP play a strategic role in attracting qualified personnel in the tourism sector and retaining them in the long term.

Empirical studies in hospitality and tourism consistently indicate that employer branding significantly affects applicants' job choice behavior. This effect is particularly strong among younger cohorts (Millennials and Gen Z), who rely heavily on digital platforms and employer reputation signals.

In tourism, employer branding strategies such as:

- transparent recruitment communication,
- online visibility on professional platforms,
- promotion of organizational culture and values,
- increase perceived organizational attractiveness and reduce information asymmetry

in the labor market.

Table 1

Employer branding elements and their impact on attraction

Employer Branding Element	Impact Level	Expected Outcome
Clear EVP communication	High	Increased application rate
Digital employer presence	High	Broader talent pool
Organizational reputation	Medium-High	Higher employer preference
Career growth messaging	Medium	Better applicant quality

The analysis shows that employer branding reduces recruitment costs by shortening vacancy-filling time and improving applicant-job fit - an especially relevant outcome in tourism, where labor shortages are common.

The study confirms that employer branding plays a critical strategic role in addressing labor market challenges within the tourism sector. Strong and well-structured employer branding strategies significantly enhance an organization's ability to attract qualified candidates and retain existing employees, particularly in a highly competitive and service-intensive industry.

In conclusion, tourism enterprises that invest in coherent and sustainable employer branding strategies gain a competitive advantage by ensuring workforce stability, improving service quality, and supporting long-term organizational performance in the digital economy.

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