

## THE USE OF THE CONCEPT OF *EMPLOYER BRANDING* AS A STRATEGIC TOOL FOR CREATING THE EMPLOYER'S IMAGE

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**Abstract.** *The strategic task of the management of each organization is to provide the right amount of qualifications to ensure the continuity of its proper functioning. The changes that have been occurring in the labor market over the past dozen or so years make finding and maintaining a valuable employee an extremely difficult task for the employer. Therefore, companies intensify their efforts to attract potential employees with their offer. Building an image of an attractive employer is now an extremely desirable competence in the labor market. One of the support tools in this field is employer branding (EB). Especially over the last dozen or so years, we have been observing an increase in the importance of this concept, both on the level of theory and practice. It is worth emphasizing that making efforts to build a brand is not a manifestation of current fashion, but has a much deeper cause. Some of them are in the organization itself, the others are penetrating from the changes taking place in the near or distant surroundings of the organization. The strongest impact on the increase in the interest of the employer branding organization are the changes taking place in the demographic sphere, i.e. the low birth rate, which results in the "contraction" of employees' potential on the labor market. This is both a quantitative and a qualitative aspect, for example, specialists are more and more desirable, being able to participate and implement several different projects in parallel. The need to implement tools in the field of employer brand building is confirmed by numerous studies. D. Brain, President & CEO of Edelman Europe, in the Edelman Trust Barometer report<sup>8</sup> emphasizes that the importance of reputation is systematically growing as a decisive factor in the interest of potential employees (especially desirable specialists), attracting them to the organization and building trust that strengthens loyalty and allows the retention of employees. Bearing in mind that this is a relatively new concept and is still under development, the authors, based on the available literature, case study analysis and research carried out by research institutions, aim to systematize the knowledge in this area, identify the tools used in employer branding along with the characteristics of different generational groups of employees to whom these tools are addressed. This paper is an attempt to answer the following questions:*

*1. What are the conditions for the growth of interest in employer branding in today's organizations?*

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<sup>8</sup> This is a project that has been repetitive for 15 years, examining the views of opinion leaders from around the world regarding trust in institutions, companies and the media. The study takes place at the end of each year. For example, in 2007, it was made in 18 countries on a sample of 3,100 respondents (including 150 from Poland).

2. *What characterizes and what are the differences in the system of values, attitudes, behaviors, and needs of employees in the generation cross-section - internal recipients of employer branding activities?*
3. *How to consistently and long-term to build the image of the enterprise as an attractive employer and what benefits can entrepreneurs bring to the implementation of the discussed concept?*
4. *What tools are the most effective for implementing this concept?*

**Keywords:** *employer branding; new economy; labor market; brand strategy; employer's image.*

## **Introduction**

The functioning of contemporary organizations requires constant activity in the area of permanent monitoring of changes, looking for ways of active respond to them and creating new methods and tools that give an advantage over the competition. In the conditions of the new economy, of which we are participants, the fundamental importance is becoming the competition based on non-material resources, which the central components are employees (Wereda & Kornec, 2017, p.45). Acquiring a valuable employee in the labor market becomes more and more difficult. One of the ways of attracting candidates to work in a contemporary organization is the implementation of the concept of employer branding. In its essence, this term describes all activities that are undertaken by the organization aimed at building the image as an attractive employer targeted at current and potential employees, business partners, clients and other stakeholders (Wereda et al., 2016, pp.27-31). This tool has recently been very popular with organizations that are increasingly interested in building a positive image as an employer. The employer's brand strength determines the institution's ability to attract candidates and retain current employees for a long time.

### ***Employer branding – the essence and premises of the concept development***

The concept of *employer branding* was first used in 1990 at a scientific conference organized by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development. The precursor of this concept is considered to be Simon Barrow - the author of the book entitled *The employer brand: bringing the best of brand management to people at work* (Barrow & Mosley, 2006). Since then, the topic has been undertaken by many researchers (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Meier, 2006; Rosethorn, Mosley & Schmidt, 2017). In essence, the term "*employer branding*" means all activities that are undertaken by the organization aimed at building the image of an attractive employer targeted at current and potential employees, business partners, clients and other stakeholders. At the same time, the image of the employer (*employer image*) is understood as an image formed in the awareness of current and potential employees based on their personal experience or information reaching potential members of the organization from people already employed (Baruk, 2009). Another research adds that "employer brand is an intangible asset that allows companies to look for motivated and capable employees" (Hillebrandt, 2013). The presented approach shows that the organization's efforts to build a positive image should be carried out in two ways. First of all, they should be directed to currently employed employees (*internal employer branding*) and to people who are outside the formal framework of the organization, creating its external labor market (*external*

*employer branding*). At this point, a question may arise about the desirability of undertaking actions to build a positive image of the employer, their weight and business justification. Not without significance are such determinants as: a decrease in fertility of families, a higher percentage of people living alone, an increase in the professional activity of women or accompanying integration processes - migration of people (Clarke, 1997, pp.5-7).

This issue has been taken up in the past, including in 1997 by the consulting firm McKinsey's and such researchers as the mentioned ones: Ambler and Barrow (1996), Ewing and Pitt (2002) and Michaels, Jones and Axelrod (2001), who together with their co-workers summarized the picture of changes, distinguishing the characteristics of "old reality" and the current state, focusing on aspects, which increase the role of particularly talented people in organizations (Table 1). As Tanwar and Prasad said, "as in the marketing field, consumers are considered to be "kings", similarly, in HR, employees are considered to be the most crucial asset of an organization" (Tanwar & Prasad, 2017, p. 390).

**Table 1. Old and new reality in the era of struggle for talents**  
(Source: Michaels, Handfield-Jones & Axelrod, 2001, p.6)

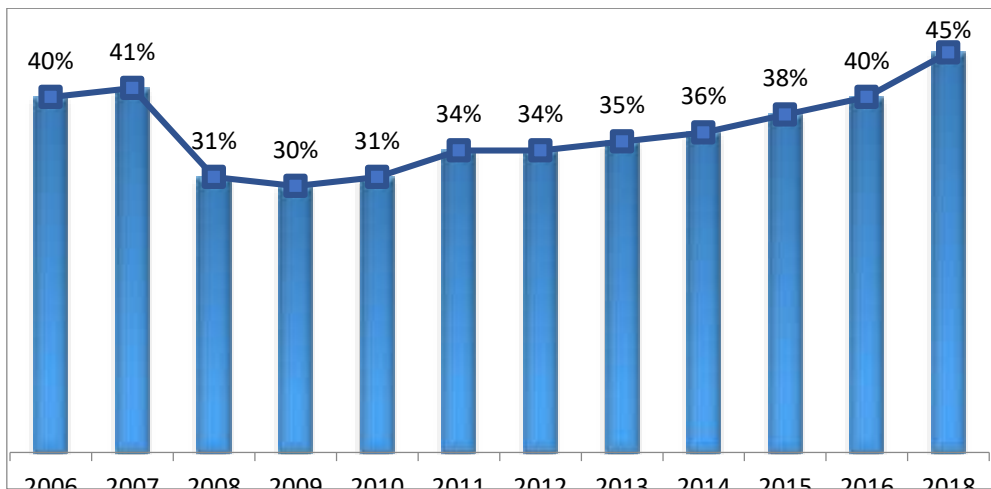
Old reality	New reality
1. People need companies.	1. Companies need people.
2. Machines, capital and location are competitive advantages.	2. Talented people are competitive advantages.
3. Possessing better talents stands out.	3. Possessing better talents stands out enormously.
4. Positions are a rare good.	4. Talents are a rare good.
5. The employees are loyal and the positions are safe	5. People are mobile and their involvement is short-term.
6. People accept the standard package that is offered to them.	6. People demand a lot more.

The changes taking place in the demographic profile of the developed world economies we are witnessing mean the aging of societies and, at the same time, a significant reduction in the number of people entering the labor markets, and thus a shortage of employees, especially those with high qualifications and development potential, often referred to as talents. In 2017, the population in Europe was 743,551,000, which means a steady increase, since 1960 (since surveys are carried out) the number was just over 605,000,000. However, since the beginning of the 1970s, the average age of inhabitants increased from 32.6 years to 41.9 today, which from the point of view of the labor market means shortening the period of professional activity. At the same time, the number of urban residents increased from 515,416,422 (71.0%) in 2000 to 553,271,500 (74.4%) in the previous year. The future, however, does not fill such optimism because, according to forecasts, the number of inhabitants will drop systematically (Table 2).

**Table 2. Expected population in Europe in 2020-2050**  
(Source: populationof.net, 2018)

Year	Population	Y2Y	Migration	Age mean	Urban population
2020	743,595,000	-88,000 (-0,0%)	855,789	42,3	556,402,500 (74,8%)
2025	741,990,000	-486,000 (-0,1%)	909,864	43,2	563,579,800 (76,0%)
2030	737,814,000	-1,078,000 (-0,2%)	910,865	44	569,319,200 (77,2%)
2035	731,160,000	-1,449,000 (-0,2%)	910,865	44,8	573,456,700 (78,4%)
2040	723,735,000	-1,487,000 (-0,2%)	910,865	45,3	576,880,300 (79,7%)
2045	716,277,000	-1,509,000 (-0,2%)	910,864	45,7	579,701,800 (80,9%)
2050	708,423,000	-1,672,000 (-0,2%)	910,864	45,9	581,592,400 (82,1%)

The research periodically carried out by Manpower Group (in 2010, on a group of 35,000 employers in 36 countries, and in 2018 on a group of 39,195 employers from 42 countries) shows the global staff deficit. Looking from the perspective of today it can be seen that this is a deepening trend (Figure 1).



**Figure 1. Global talent shortages reach 12-years high**  
(Source: Manpower Group, 2018)

Global results of the "Manpower Talent Shortage" survey from the first quarter of 2018 show that the largest problems with finding the right employees are experienced by companies from Japan (89%), Romania (81%), Taiwan (78%), Hong Kong (76%), Bulgaria (68%) and Turkey (66%) (Table 3). Countries, where employers have the least difficulty finding suitable employees, are China (13%), Ireland (18%), and the United Kingdom (19%) (Manpower Group, 2018). The practice of developed countries (USA, Great Britain or even China) indicates that the problem of gifted people, organization leaders, becomes a great challenge.

**Table 3. Countries and Territories Facing Difficulty Hiring**  
(Source: Manpower Group, 2018)

Least Difficulty		Below Average Difficulty		Above Average Difficulty		Most Difficulty	
China	13%	Australia	34%	Finland	45%	Argentina ↓	52%
Ireland	18%	Brazil ↓	34%	Austria ↑	46%	Slovakia ↑	54%
UK	19%	Belgium	34%	USA	46%	India	56%
Netherlands	24%	Costa Rica	35%	Portugal ↑	46%	Singapore	56%
Spain	24%	Panama	35%	Israel ↓	49%	Greece	61%
Norway	25%	Czech	35%	Mexico ↑	50%	Turkey	66%
France	29%	Republic	37%	Germany	51%	Bulgaria	68%
South Africa	32%	Italy	38%	Hungary ↓	51%	Hong Kong	76%
Switzerland	33%	Guatemala	40%	Poland	51%	Taiwan	78%
		Slovenia	41%			Romania	81%
		Canada	42%			Japan	89%
		Colombia ↓	42%				
		Sweden	43%				
		Peru	44%				
		New Zealand					
↑ Greatest INCREASE since 2016    ↓ Greatest DECREASE since 2016							

According to the conclusions of this study, the "talent mismatch", i.e. the inability to find an employee with the right competence at the right place and time, is a threat to all employers. And today people, more often than finances, and especially the lack of talented staff, become a limitation of development. The facts confirm this thesis. Today, over 60 countries in the world have a negative natural increase (*Lista państw świata według przyrostu naturalnego*, 2018). In addition, the negative tendency deepens the possibility of early retirement. For example, in the United States, every second employee will be able to use this opportunity within the next ten years.

Another type of challenge facing organizations is the retention of already employed people; it is as important as getting a new employee. Most researchers argue that building a brand should start just from the inside of the company due to the fact that it is employees who occupy a very important place in the hierarchy of groups of the subjective environment in the process of creating the company's image (Budzyński, 2002, p.118). Activity in this area consists in ensuring positive feelings of current employees by creating friendly working conditions. The employer should perceive the employees as a subject - addressee of various initiatives undertaken and targeted at them. Only this approach creates circumstances for building bilateral relations between the organization and the employed (Baruk, 2006, pp.31-34). Employees are "company brand ambassadors" and the first recruiters. Surveys conducted in Poland show that in the situation of the strengthening employee market, the level of voluntary rotation in 2016 was 10.8%, which means that every 10<sup>th</sup> of employees left the company at own request (Antal, 2016). As Work Service points out, if employers fought for employees, it would be less probable they leave (Work Service, 2017). Meanwhile, apart from large companies, most do nothing or almost nothing. What's more, 8 out of 10 employers do not take rotation-limiting measures at all. Only 15% of companies are prepared for it.

Programs preventing employee departures can be found mainly in large companies (41.6%), employing over 250 people, and only sporadically they exist in small enterprises (10%). And the companies losing experienced employees who worked great results and had a big impact on productivity, suffer large measurable losses. Even the loss of a short-term employee (less than 12 months) is associated with costs because such a person has never been able to achieve full efficiency and "pay the costs" incurred by the employer in the course of recruitment and training. Proper perception of it by participants of the external and internal labor market, can be treated as a marketing tool, which skillful use may have direct consequences in optimizing external, but also internal relations and affect the results of market activity (Kiriakidou & Millward, 2000, p.50) Another area on which the demographic factor should be considered concerns is the generational change in the labor market is a fundamental change in the system of values, mode of operation and expectations of different generations of employees can be observed, as presented below.

### **Generations of employees - addressees of employer branding activities**

When planning activities in the field of employer branding, one should be aware of the need to match them to a specific target group. Undertaking efforts in this area determines the accuracy of choosing the right communication instrument and the effectiveness of its impact on the employee. The best known in the literature is the division into four groups of generations of employees functioning in contemporary organizations (Marston, 2007):

- *mature*;
- *baby boomers*;
- *generation X*
- *generation Y*.

As the researchers point out (Kozłowski, 2012, p.21)], technological progress means that representatives of the generation named Z and Alfa appear on the labor market, representing new reality, including that in the virtual dimension (Figure 2).

The *mature* generation presented in the picture (people born before the end of World War II) is, in principle, still present on the labor market not larger than 5% of the total employed (Zych, 2011). These employees, who are still active, are characterized by organization, patience, loyalty to the organization, and the work rendered by them is a value for them and at the same time a motivating stimulus. The *baby boomer* generation - that is, the demographic boom which is a consequence of births in 1945-1969, is the most represented group on the modern labor market (in Poland it is about 1/3 of the total employed) - these are people characterized by loyalty and diligence, are considered to be individuals, for whom work is at the center of accepted value systems, even above its own passions, social relations or family. It is the approach to work that is the element that distinguishes this generation of employees from that which followed it, i.e. *generation X*. The term itself has come into common use for literature in the field of psychology and sociology.

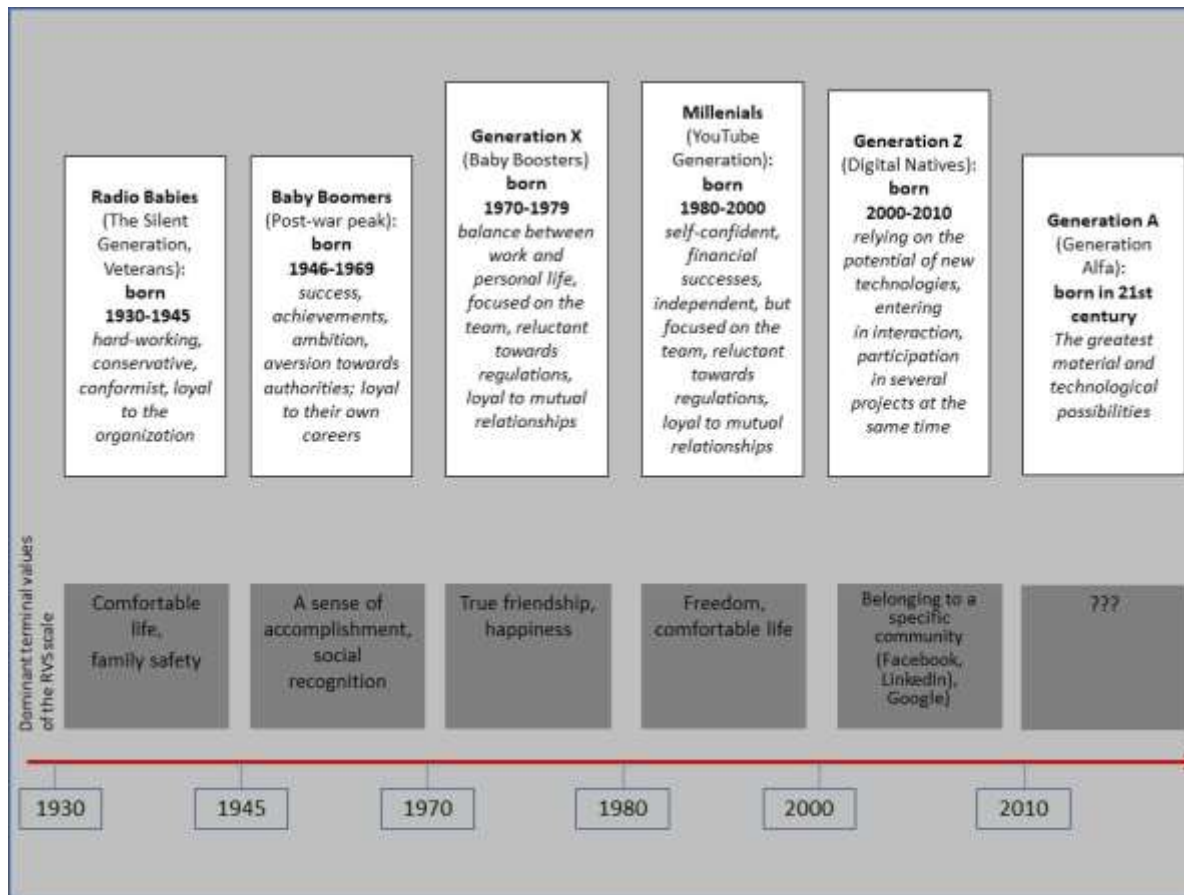


Figure 2. The evolution of generations of employees and their values

Source: own study based on Robbins (2004, p.44), Kozłowski (2012, pp. 22-29), Wereda and Domanska-Szaruga (2015, pp.89-90)

Representatives of the X generation grew during the period of major political, social and economic transformations. They were accompanied, among others the destruction of the Berlin Wall, the collapse of communism in Central and Eastern Europe, the collapse of the USSR, the transformation of a centrally controlled economy into a free market economy. The last mentioned element is important from the point of view of employees because it determined new conditions in the labor market. As researchers note, it was typical for this group to struggle with the problems of finding a place for themselves in new circumstances, including the workplace, fears of loneliness and asking questions about the meaning of existence (Coupland, 2015). Another aspect is the fact that the time of growth of these people has become intertwined with the unprecedented rate of technical and technological development, especially the media (first television, then the Internet), which quite strongly create an attitude of consumption and promote certain patterns of life from western countries.

The turn of the 70s and 80s of the last century is the time when the next generation, called *generation Y*, is born. Because its representatives started to enter the labor market at the turn of the century, they are often referred to as *millennials (YouTube generation)*. However, as Kozłowski argues, no date of birth determines the belonging to this generation, and the possibilities and conditions of the environment in which the process of their preparation to enter the labor market progressed (Kozłowski, 2012). It is worth emphasizing that this is the first generation, whose representatives are very similar to each other in many countries in the world; this is the effect of the opening of national borders, the consequence of which is the liberalization of the movement of employees and the development of communication technology. This generation is sometimes referred to as "*digital natives*" because they value the possibility of choice and flexibility both in the professional and private life. Millennials are constantly looking for ways to improve the impracticality of *baby boomers* and the lack of discipline in the generation of *baby boosters* (Grudzewski et al., 2010, pp.23-24).

The element distinguishing the *generation Y* from the subsequent *generation Z* is, above all, the incomparable ease of access to sources of information provided by the development of the ICT network, on the one hand, and the diversity of tools for transmitting and receiving information. Internet access is possible thanks to such resources as notebook, tablet, smartphone or iPad, not just a computer. The consequence of these possibilities is to significantly shorten access time or interact with others. Therefore, the *Z generation* is able to drink tea with friends, watch television in parallel, write text messages, chat and participate in online betting. This way of functioning in the environment determines particular preferences in the way work is provided. The need to enter into continuous interaction means that participation in several projects at the same time will be a challenging task for them.

The last of the generations presented - *generation A (or alpha)*, that is born in the 21st century, will function in an environment that will probably provide the greatest technological opportunities. Today, it is difficult to precisely indicate the values that *alpha* will follow, because the conditions in which they grow are constantly shaped by the influence of many factors, both predictable and unpredictable.

According to Deloitte's research, in the next 10 years, the *Y generation* will be 75% of the world's workforce, i.e. the majority. But employers will struggle not only with employing the young generation but also will have to find themselves in the



management of employees representing the *X generation* or people 50+. It is important that the EB tools used are appropriately tailored to a specific group of employees in such a way that they reflect the values, attitudes, behaviors, and expectations that they share. This determines the effectiveness of the efforts undertaken and the effectiveness of activities in this field (Deloitte, 2014).

### **Strategic building of the employer's brand with the use of selected employer branding tools**

In recent years, the organization has been systematically growing in the awareness of the need to manage its brand. At the same time, operating entities are no longer about accidental, one-off or short-term actions. They are increasingly interested in programs that are carefully thought out and developed as part of the employer branding strategy, entered and resulting from personnel and marketing strategies. Activities in this field cannot be increased when searching for a candidate and reduced when it is found. Nor can it mean increased activity only for the advancement of the recruitment process. It must mean a series of consistent and long-term activities including:

- external and internal analysis of the employer's brand;
- analysis of the company's development trends;
- definition of the most important target groups;
- analysis of competition image activities;
- working out Employer Value Proposition (EVP) of the employer's brand, i.e. the declaration of why being an employee of this organization is better than employment in other companies;
- preparation of communication strategy based on the EVP brand of the employer;
- selection of strategic tools and communication channels;
- selection of performance measures;
- evaluation and improvement of the strategy (Macnar, 2016).

When it comes to the market for tools that can be used as part of the employer branding strategy, it should be noted that it is quite rich. Various forms of company presentations are available, which currently include both the virtual environment (online activity) and off-line environment. The employer should perceive employees as a subject - addressee of various initiatives undertaken and targeted at them. Only this approach creates circumstances for building bilateral relations between the organization and the employed (Baruk, 2006, pp.31-34).

From the point of view of image, it is important that an organization that declares itself as one that bases its competitiveness on human capital, which determines the ability to multiply knowledge capital and gives an opportunity to use the possibilities of the environment, systematically invests in it (Cielemęcki & Bombiak, 2016, p.142). According to the researchers, this is a frequent argument deciding about the employee's stay in the organization, and its lack is a frequent reason for rotation (Kozłowski, 2012, p.69). At present, the practice often used by employers is to integrate the career planning system with the image campaign. By offering consulting, mentoring, coaching, conducting assessment interviews, keeping records of successors and various types of training, they are perceived better than those who do not have a career management system developed and this is also one of the elements of the strategy of building a good opinion about the employer, remaining in the strict connection with other tools, e.g.

motivating. The best emphasize the self-development of employees, e.g. Google uses so-called model 70/20/10, in which each employee devotes 10% of one's time to training, 20% to develop own ideas, and 70% for the rest of the tasks outsourced by the company, which means that employees can feel an important part of the company and to follow its progress (bRenewal, 2017).

Transformations on the labor market, where it is increasingly difficult to find specialists, opening national borders, causing employee outflow, and a change in the approach to managing people - exert an increasingly stronger influence on the transformation of remuneration instruments. The review of the allowances used for the basic benefit shows that the most frequently used are: training, additional medical care, subsidies for holidays, free childcare, pension plans, life insurance (bRenewal, 2017). Companies are also increasingly implementing the so-called retention programs. These are extensive financial, social and professional benefits that an employee can receive if they stay in the company for a certain period of time. Such activities were once called "golden handcuffs", because their main goal is to design a package of benefits of work so that the employee would not be profitable to leave the company (*Wyzwania dla firm: jak zatrzymać cennego pracownika*, 2018).

It is also worth mentioning the so-called hygienic motivators in the work environment, i.e. those whose implementation does not significantly affect the increase of motivation, but their lack may contribute to a significant extent to its decline, i.e. a designated place where employees can eat, showers, air conditioning, and workplace ergonomics. According to CBRE's "How do we want to work?" A survey conducted in 2015 among corporate employees in Poland, the most important is the ability to influence the work and the company, but also the environment: temperature, noise, and amount of light, surroundings, choice of colleagues, and adaptation to the task, mood or time (CBRE, 2017). More and more companies, for these reasons, opt for smart offices, where employees choose their own place and way of work. The global Google tycoon (currently the highest rated brand) assumes that if employees spend most of their day at work, they should feel at home. The standard at company headquarters is, for example, slides between floors, a free canteen, swimming pools, and relaxation tubs. At first glance, these issues may seem secondary; it is worth quoting Polnord's research results here. It turns out that the average employee spends 73,920 hours at work, which is the equivalent of 40 years of age. It is hardly surprising that for 84.7% of surveyed office workers the immediate working environment is of great importance (*O czym marzą pracownicy polskich biurów – sonda*, 2012). In turn, from the research of the social networking service StackOverflow, it appears that there is a positive correlation between job satisfaction and performance in an attractive office building (*Employer Branding – budowanie wizerunku firmy*, 2013).

As for the activities carried out within the framework of external branding, all activities in this field can be divided into two categories: image and recruitment. Initiatives mentioned in the first area are to serve primarily to raise the awareness of potential recipients about the organization itself and the profits associated with its functioning. In the process of building the brand, employers play an important role today in modern technologies and on-line tools. They include (*Sprawdzone narzędzia Employer Branding*, 2018):

- The professional career page has an attractive and trustworthy look as well as updated, interestingly presented information.

- Recruitment announcement;
- Internet search engines and SEO - as part of SEM (Search Engine Marketing) and SEO (Search Engine Optimization);
- Social Media - both those related to professionals (Goldenline, LinkedIn) and mass media (Facebook, Twitter) are an excellent form for EB activities.
- Professional recruitment films, company blogs, interactive games, newsletters, chats as well as online (virtual) job fairs.

In addition to the contemporary tools presented, there are several traditional (outside the network) forms of image building. They should not be deprecated and treated as ineffective because they have an asset that distinguishes them from on-line instruments, namely they offer the possibility of building direct interactions on the candidate-employer line. They include:

- A stationary job fair - a perfect form of building relationships with candidates is a stationary job fair, usually organized by Academic Career Bureaus (ABK) or student associations. The candidate can directly talk to the recruiter or employees of a given company, what is more, the direct form of contact raises more confidence in the company.
- Open Doors / Open Days in companies - events of this type allow you to familiarize with the specificity of the company live, directly at its headquarters/branch, you can learn about its structure, employees, and recruitment needs. All this will allow verifying your knowledge and ideas about the company in which one would like to work.

Shares at universities - the company's active presence at universities usually brings very good results. However, it requires systematic and long-term actions. The standard promotion tools at universities are all types of leaflets, brochures, posters and so on (Siwka, 2012).

### **Building a positive image of the employer on the example of ING Bank Śląski in Poland - a case study<sup>9</sup>**

ING Bank Śląski belongs to the international ING Group. As part of the ING Bank Śląski group, it undertakes a number of activities aimed at shaping a positive image of the company as an employer. In 2017, ING won the Top Employer title for the eighth time<sup>10</sup>. In the seventh edition of the survey in 2017, "The most desirable employer in the opinion of specialists and managers" implemented in Poland by Antal in the banking industry took first place (23% of responses from respondents) distancing competition. The second in the ranking PKO BP bank was indicated only by 9% of respondents (PulsHR, 2017). In 2016, it won the 4th place in the Employer of the Year 2016 ranking organized by AIESEC.

2016 marked the beginning of a new philosophy of image building. Until then, each of the Group's companies had separate employer branding activities. In 2016, the ING Group came out with the initiative of selecting a global Employer Value Proposition (EVP) based on shared organizational values and culture. As it results from the adopted

<sup>9</sup> Own study based on *ING Bank Śląski Report* (2017).

<sup>10</sup> The award is granted by the Top Employers Institute - an independent international organization.

sustainable development strategy, initiatives aimed at two target groups: professionals and students have been undertaken within the framework of the external branding of the employer. These for people with extensive professional experience included: participation in job fairs, development of a new employer profile on job offer portals, communication with candidates via social media platforms, such as LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and ING Community. Noteworthy is the WWW website, which allows applicants to apply. This process is preceded by a short psychological test that checks the characteristics of a potential employee.

The company undertakes activities dedicated to people entering the labor market (students and graduates); is present at universities, where career zones are organized, a series of workshops and substantive trainings for students, cooperates with scientific circles, student organizations and local governments of selected universities. It regularly organizes the Ambassador Program, which is a form of cooperation between ING Bank Śląski S.A. and university environments across Poland. ING student ambassadors cooperate with the bank in building the bank's image as an attractive employer at selected universities. Ambassadors operate under the mentoring of bank employees, offering support for learning ING and shaping career paths.

It is worth noting that activities aimed at creating such working conditions take into account the changing needs of employees. For example, since 2012, the bank has been running a program that allows employees to accumulate additional capital for retirement. Over 60 percent of employed have already joined it. The company constantly improves the tools and ways to provide information within the organization. The starting points are always regular meetings. Key information is also sent to employees via e-mails, in the form of news on the Intranet's main page and on the pages of the internal newspaper. Once a year, employees at all levels use the Annual Conversation - a tool that allows you to manage your own career, build a development path, increase your own effectiveness and gain motivation. Employees have the opportunity to regularly express their opinion on their work in an anonymous study of organizational culture. In 2016, 85 percent of employees took part in it.

ING Bank Śląski operates in accordance with the principle of "matching office", which consists of the division of space into zones for work, concentration, meetings, conceptual tasks and rest. Such an organization of space favors the exchange of ideas as well as informal and formal conversations. Available to the teams are design tables, meeting rooms and chill out. They are arranged in a new way, allowing easy formation into teams without changing the arrangement of the rooms. The surface is equipped with walls for writing and magnetic boards. Complementary for teams working in various places (Warsaw-Katowice) are videoconferences, enabling constant contact.

One of the clear trends in banking is co-creating new products and services together with customers. To realize this, the so-called LAB surface - open space with separate work areas for smaller teams. These areas were arranged in such a way that, depending on the intensity of work, there was a free opportunity to divide and separate from other users. Available to the teams are design tables, open meeting places and lockable rooms for loud work. Supplementing the basic function is a training space, equipped with multimedia equipment and a dedicated kitchen zone. The hybrid work model is conducive to both mobility and direct contact. Employees spend part of the day in different, sometimes away from the company places. This model is supported by

modern telecommunications and IT technology. For this reason, standard desks take up less space in a modern space arrangement. In the space created thanks to this, we can arrange, for example, additional meeting rooms.

## Conclusions

Shaping the image of an attractive employer in a conscious manner has become a priority activity of the organization over the past years, wishing to attract and then maintain the best specialists on the market. As researchers note "(...) nowadays, the employer brand is a valuable intangible source of sustainable competitive advantages for the firm not only to recruit the best applicants from the external market but also to engage and retain talents inside" (Kucherov & Samokish 2016, p.29). However, this cannot be an ad hoc effort, once in a way that is not coordinated with other activities. As the research results show, companies that operate in the manner described above and, for example, use only a few selected tools, do not achieve the expected benefits, which is manifested by high internal rotation or low brand assessment by the external environment. A case study of ING Bank Śląski, winner of many competitions for the best employers in Poland, confirms that building a coherent and positive image of the employer both inside and outside the organization requires that these efforts are considered important enough not to be left only on a declarative level. It should take a formal framework and be included in the organization's strategy. Such an approach testifies to the maturity of thinking and awareness of the importance of employer branding among the company's managers. It increases the chances of success in building a strong organization brand. The presented case study showing the actions taken by ING Bank Śląski, one of the leaders in the rankings of the best employers in Poland, allows the development of a set of potential tools for creating the employer's image, applicable to various organizational conditions.

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