

**A Critical Study of
“Campus Program Management” as a Tool for Employer
Branding at Schneider Electric, Bangalore**

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Comments by the Faculty

With globalization and liberalization, there is increasing competition amongst companies for talent. It is important for a corporate to make sure that the new talent being acquired is of good quality to drive the business success. In this context, "Employer Branding" is becoming an important strategic Human Resource Management tool. Employer Branding is seen as the process of promoting a company or an organization, as the employer of choice to a desired target group, one which a company needs and wants to recruit and retain.

This paper by Ms Jyoti Balasubramanian, a student of PGDM batch 2013-15, is a documentation of the summer internship project carried out at Schneider Electric during April- May 2014 and describes how the Employer Branding is to be planned and executed. Schneider Electric is a European multinational corporation specializing in electricity distribution, automation management and produces installation components for energy Management. The Company is aspiring to brand itself in its empanelled list of colleges and to communicate its Employee Value Proposition so as to become the "Dream Workplace" amongst the aspiring recruits.

Schneider Electric India (SEI) as a company engages itself every year under Universum Survey to understand its position as a recruiter in the campuses empanelled under it but the result of the last survey was not encouraging with Schneider at the 44th rank in the list of preferred colleges amongst aspiring recruits. So, Schneider undertook a study to understand the reasons for low ranking and ways and means of improving the rating.

An exploratory study was taken up by the intern with a sample size of 49 colleges spread across the nation including students from Engineering, Diploma, Management, Finance and CSR backgrounds. An important finding was that the idea of engaging only the students is not good enough, the faculty are the guides for all the students during placement and therefore there should be Faculty Development programs to engage them and increase their interest towards the company. This is the concept of "Influencers" in decision making that is used in marketing.

The major initiative like the Campus website that is undertaken Schneider are still in their nascent stage. Hence, to effectively communicate its Employee Value Proposition the company needs to implement its planned programs as priority. Perhaps, focussing on a lesser number of campuses as priority may go a long way for the employer branding initiative.

The study gains importance as the competition for talent increases with the improved economy and corresponding increase in opportunities. Recruits can pick and choose and hence the companies need to strategically address the recruitment process by adopting ways and means of improving the Employer Branding amongst potential recruits.

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A Critical Study of “Campus Program Management at Schneider Electric, Bangalore as a Tool for Employer Branding.

Introduction

Employer branding is the process of promoting a company or an organization, as the employer of choice to a desired target group, one which a company needs and wants to recruit and retain. (Christopher Van Mossevelde, 2014). It is important for a corporate to make sure that the new talent being acquired is of good quality as it becomes increasingly critical to drive the business success. To increase their attractiveness organizations must be clear of its Employer Value Proposition¹ so that it can be clearly communicated as one of the Best Employer. In the era of great competition, talent has many options in the market and only the business which communicates that its unique set of offerings, associations and values are in ideal alignment with their talent will be chosen.

Schneider Electric is a company which is aspiring to brand itself in its empanelled list of colleges to communicate its Employee Value Proposition so as to become the “Dream Workplace”. The author had the privilege of studying the issue in the year 2014 as a part of the Summer Internship Project. This paper is a formal documentation of the work pursued.

Schneider Electric

Schneider Electric is a European multinational corporation that specializes in electricity distribution, automation management and produces installation components for energy management. It is headquartered in Rueil-Malmaison, France (Schneider_Electric, 2013). With a strong force of over 17,000 employees, the company is well known for its unique vision, progressive management and above all, it’s exemplary Quality.

Need for the Study

Schneider Electric India (SEI) as a company engages itself every year under Universum² Survey to understand its position as a recruiter in the campuses empanelled under it. Schneider’s ranking according to the last survey done was 44th. Schneider Electric then started investigating on where it has been lacking in its approach so as to improve its position as an employer. It was important to first clearly understand the business needs of the company. Then the target audience was identified as the empanelled campuses of the company which included 49 Engineering, Management, Finance and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) colleges of the nation. It was understood that identifying the ways to connect with the target audience was crucial. The company optimized the Employer Value Proposition of the company to formulate the actions in alignment with the same. After clearly understanding the target audience an optimal

¹ **Employee Value Proposition (EVP)** is the balance of the rewards and benefits that are received by employees in return for their performance at the workplace. (6-steps-building-employee-value-proposition, 2008).

² Universum is the global leader in employer branding*.The company was founded by Lars Henrik Friis Molin in 1988((About-Universum, n.d.).

communication mix was planned out. It was realised that the whole approach of connecting with the potential employees was not as recurring as it should be for the target audience to remember. This derived the company to develop the communication ideas so as to engage the target audience. After the competitor analysis of the companies which came out as the top employers of the year by the same survey conducted by Universum, company realised that there is a need for a constant connect building with the target audience so as to brand the name into their minds. It was understood that a variety of events conducted across the year would be required to increase its recall factor. In the world of digitalization, where students spend more time online than offline, it's easier and important to have a digital presence. Schneider decided to have a digital connect with students to make them understand its Employee Value Proposition.

Objectives of the Study

Schneider as a company involves itself in the hiring process, summer internship hiring and guest lecture delivery at the various colleges it hires from. Yet, the students with more than one employment offer at their hand tend to choose its competitors or IT companies over it. Hence, the main objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To improve the employer branding of SEI in the Campus. (Empanelled colleges by company).
2. To help SEI network the potential students and encourage them for Recruitment and internship hiring.
3. To facilitate and work with faculty and students to educate and promote SEI's competency & innovations at campus.

Methodology

1. Research Design- The research design followed is Exploratory Research. It has been adopted considering the objectives of the research. As the researcher has observed that for SEI to become one of the top Employers of the country needs to brand itself on campuses and to understand more about it.
2. Sources of data and information- The yearly survey conducted by the SEI, Campus Websites and HR personnel's of competitors and best employers.
3. Sampling design – The sampling design used is Convenience sampling. As the corporate wanted the study on the target audience and only a list of companies.
4. Sample size- the Sample includes:
 - a. 49 colleges spread across the nation including students from Engineering, Diploma, Management, Finance and CSR backgrounds
 - b. 12 companies which are competitors of SEI or are the best employers of the nation
 - c. 61 SEI employees who were a part of the Campus Ambassador Program.

Five reasons why employer branding is important

(Christopher Van Mossevelde, 2010)

Universum gives five reasons why employer branding should be a vital management tool for every organization and company today.

1. **Shortage of Skilled Labour:** With the growing competition and expansion due to open markets, it's necessary for growing economies to have skilled labours, for countries like U.S where the population is aging, outsourcing is the best way. Companies or organisations that are perceived to be attractive employers will have an easier time to recruit top talent in such a scenario.
2. **More with Less:** For every company it is of great importance to cut cost and increase productivity. Employer branding results in more successful recruitment and retention of top talent. Moreover, by properly communicating the reality of the work environment, companies are more likely to attract talent that fits their organizational culture, thus increasing the number of people with the right skills in the correct positions.
3. **Growth & Profitability:** Employees who have the right skills, experience and knowledge, in relation to the critical areas of a business to drive growth, are strategically important. In such a scenario, hiring high quality employees is as important for growth as is retaining the top performers.
4. **Popularity:** Graduates and professionals want to work for companies with great reputations; they often turn to family members, friends or colleagues for advice and approval when making a decision about which employers to consider. If a company is viewed as being an unpopular employer, it will consequently affect everything else and cause disequilibrium in the corporate ecosystem.
5. **Strength:** Being an attractive employer provides a company or organisation more bargaining power, as employees will want to work for them more than anyone else. An attractive employer can create for employees an illusion that their choices are limited outside of the organization, constantly maintaining an image of being the most desirable employer, giving the right reasons or incentives for their top performers to stay.

Work Carried Out to Achieve the Objectives

- a. To build SEI name on campus activities like Business Sponsorship, Guest lectures, Lab set up and Centre of Excellence and Faculty Training were formulated and encouraged to take place in the 49 empanelled colleges
- b. To help students network, and lay the groundwork for potential summer internships & hiring a Campus Connect Website was planned to be launched, the project rotated around development of the website as well as formulating the promotional strategies for the same. The website was designed to include

- On-Line Contest – In order to get participation of students and faculty and keep them engaged during various time of the year.
 - Alumni Connect – For connecting the Schneider employees with their respective colleges in order to bring a sense of association and to provide a smooth way of communication.
 - Broadcast Hiring Events- for the TPO's of various colleges and for students to understand the company and the profile well before hand.
 - Build Forum & Communities – In order to bring Students and faculty of different backgrounds and interest together to make the discussions and knowledge exchange more useful.
 - Web Guest Lectures – To reach out to a wide audience spread across regions at the same time with convenience.
 - Live Discussion Forums to make the website more interactive and knowledgeable.
- c. Campus ambassador program of SEI was basically the idea that the campus hires by SEI through various empanelled colleges act as channel and a representative of Schneider into their own colleges. Campus Ambassadors are responsible for:
- Generating excitement, awareness and buzz about SEI on campus.
 - They promote SEI to fellow students by representing the brand, seeking out opportunities that will connect fellow students with SEI
 - Utilize social media to further spread the word.
 - Executing the campus connect activities for the respective colleges assigned to them with loads of energy, enthusiasm and creativity through online and physical presence.
- d. To encourage potential students of campus into the recruitment and internship hiring process, the author got engaged into understanding the Campus Recruitment and Internship Hiring process. It gave a deep insight about the whole process from collection of resumes till the induction process of the company.
- e. As a second part of the project a competitor's analysis was conducted on the activities of various other companies who are either a competitor of Schneider as a business or as a recruiter in the campuses where Schneider Electric recruits, to understand the best practices of the industry.

Findings and Recommendations

- 1) As a contribution the recommendations were the following :
 - a) The author helped in shaping the homepage and many campuses related pages in order to make it more student friendly and attractive by recommending to add videos and personal messages of the Ambassadors (Campus students hired by SEI in the previous years).

- b) For promotion of the website we planned for Search engine optimization, Google Ad Words and Social media optimization so as to make sure that all the arenas where target audience visits the most are covered. The motive was to make sure that if the audience has heard even once about the website then he/ she should be able to reach for it easily.
 - c) Inclusion of QR codes on the visiting cards of the employees in touch with the various campuses was a suggestion to include the employees of the company for a better reach to the audience.
- 2) When the corporate guide asked the author to perform competitor's analysis to understand the market position and the best market strategies, a research to understand the competitor's approach towards connecting with the campuses and steps towards employer branding was carried out. The recommendations were the following.
- a) The Website launch being planned by the company is in the right direction, though many companies have their campus website available none of them are updated and are very complex to use.
 - b) The idea of engaging only the students is not good enough, the faculty are the guides for all the students during placement and, therefore, there should be Faculty Development programs to engage them and increase their interest towards the company.
 - c) The company should also encourage campuses other than its empanelled list of colleges to come and have an industrial visit for increasing its ranking for the top employer.
 - d) The company should encourage their employees to write blogs on various topics and issues which interest the target audience and clears the image of SEI as just an Electronic driven company which is inclined towards hiring only electronic engineers. The message that SEI as a company hires in good numbers students from Engineering, Management, Finance and Corporate social responsibility is of great importance.
 - e) "Best innovative Project Award" for students to encourage innovation for which SEI stand for can be a small step towards branding the company and increasing target audience's curiosity.
 - f) Faculty excellence awards for faculty involved in research can be introduced to involve mentors into the drive.
 - g) Staying in touch with the Head of the departments and helping them out to shape the curriculum in a way that the students are more industry ready will help in forming a relationship which will be deeper with the campuses.
 - h) Programs and events targeting the third year students should be encouraged as they can act as internal ambassadors to the campus in order to educate the target audience about SEI.

Conclusion

This Paper mainly concentrates on identifying the ways for Employer Branding of SEI in the empanelled list of campuses and the recommendations provided by the author. Although there has been a considerable improvement in terms of the ranking of SEI as an Employer of the year, the major initiative like the Campus website are still in their nascent stage. Hence, to effectively communicate its Employee Value Proposition the company needs to implement its planned programs as priority. Perhaps, focussing on a lesser number of campuses as priority may go a long way for the employer branding initiative.

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