The Marketing-HR Interface

Lennart Reissner
University of Mannheim
Andreas Hamann
University of Mannheim
Britt Vancoetsem
IESEG School of Management
Gijs van Bussel
KU Leuven

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The interface between marketing and human resources (HR) is emerging as a crucial yet underexplored domain in marketing research. As organizations increasingly recognize employees as both internal stakeholders and strategic assets, questions arise about how employee perceptions, behaviors, and firm-level HR decisions influence market outcomes. This special session explores how HR-related factors shape innovation, employee reactions, organizational attractiveness, and firm performance.

The first paper by Reissner, Vomberg, and Bayerl is titled "Too Comfortable to Innovate? Collective Employee Satisfaction, its Dispersion, and Innovation Output." This study investigates how collective employee satisfaction is related to organizational innovation, by examining a large-scale dataset of online employer reviews and patents. They find an inverted U-shaped relationship, suggesting that increasing employee satisfaction is beneficial to the creation of innovation only up to a certain level. High levels of satisfaction, in turn, seem to inhibit innovation. They further explore how variation in individual satisfaction across employees can mitigate potential downsides of overall employee satisfaction.

The second paper by Hamann, Gemmer, and Bayerl is titled "Employee Reactions to Corporate Misconduct: Evidence from Employer Review Platforms and Firm Response Strategies." This study examines how employees respond to corporate misconduct using more than 100,000 online employer reviews and over 2,000 global misconduct news disclosures. The authors show that employee-related misconduct leads to significant drops in both review volume and valence, whereas non-employee-related misconduct results only in mild and short-run declines. Text analyses further reveal that employee-related misconduct evokes patterns consistent with a psychological contract breach, such as disappointment. Firms can partially mitigate these negative effects through active review management and response behavior.

The third paper by van Vaerenbergh, Vancoetsem, and Arijs is titled "Who Wants to Work for a Company that Treats Customers Badly? Poor Customer Experiences Render an Organization Less Attractive as an Employer". This study investigates how poor customer experiences affect employer attractiveness. Across five empirical studies, including four experiments and one retrospective survey, the authors find that poor customer experiences significantly diminish organizational attractiveness as an employer by altering perceptions of organizational warmth and competence. They further demonstrate that effective service recovery can mitigate these effects, indicating that customer experiences have consequences not only for consumers but also for labor-market outcomes.

The last paper, by van Bussel, Edeling, Colicev, and Bart is titled “Too Many Marketers? The Performance Trade-Offs of Employee Marketing Intensity.” Using a panel dataset with more than 4,000 U.S. firms over a 15-year period, the authors examine how the proportion of marketing employees relative to total employees affects firm performance. They find an inverted U-shaped relationship, showing that marketing intensity is beneficial only up to a certain point, after which performance declines. Moreover, higher levels of firm digital transformation and industry concentration flatten this curve, lowering the pressure to have just the right level of marketing intensity.