

Internal branding in the digital age – the promise of employee-driven virtual brand ambassador communities (e-VBAC)

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Abstract

Current research on Internal Branding is mainly focused on the organisation-driven operationalizations of the construct such as brand-centered leadership, brand-centered human resource management (HRM), brand training, and rewards. The present paper extends the literature to find a holistic yet organic internal branding approach for the digital age by investigating employee-driven virtual brand ambassador community (e-VBAC). We find that employee participation in e-VBAC enhances their commitment to the corporate brand by means of complying to brand identity, identifying with it, internalizing it. We also observe that employees' need for socialization is the key enabler in fostering their brand commitment. We conclude that e-VBAC are a compelling alternative for implementing internal branding in the digital age.

Keywords: *Internal branding; employee brand ambassador community; Social Identity theory*