

EXPLORING THE ROLE OF EMPLOYEE BRAND AMBASSADORS IN ENHANCING BRAND AWARENESS AND CUSTOMER LOYALTY IN MARKETING FIRMS IN INDONESIA



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Abstract

This study aims to explore the role of employee brand ambassadors in enhancing brand awareness and customer loyalty in marketing firms in Indonesia. The study adopts a qualitative research design and utilizes semi-structured interviews as the primary data collection method. The research participants consisted of 15 HR managers from various marketing firms in Indonesia and 10 current or past employee brand ambassadors from those firms, selected using purposive sampling. They are selected based on their strong connection to the company's mission and values, personal interest in the product or services offered, and desire to build a personal brand. The data collected from the interviews were analyzed using qualitative data analysis techniques, specifically through a thematic analysis approach. The data analysis process involved the identification of patterns, themes, and key ideas related to the research questions and objectives. The data analysis was an iterative process, with constant comparison and refinement of the categories to ensure the accuracy and validity of the findings. The findings reveal that employee brand ambassadors play a significant role in enhancing brand awareness and customer loyalty. They are selected based on their strong connection to the company's mission and values, personal interest in the product or services offered, and desire to build a personal brand. They are trained to use a variety of strategies to promote the company's brand and product or services, including social media, word-of-mouth marketing, attending events, and creating content. The study also highlights the impact of being a brand ambassador on the relationship between the employee and their company, as well as their colleagues. It increases employee engagement, boosts team morale, and improves overall communication. The impact of employee brand ambassadors is measured through metrics such as social media engagement, website traffic, and customer feedback. The study concludes that employee brand ambassadors are an effective way to enhance brand awareness and customer loyalty in marketing firms in Indonesia.

Keywords: Brand Awareness, Customer Loyalty, Employee Brand Ambassadors

INTRODUCTION

The use of employee brand ambassadors as a marketing strategy has become increasingly popular among firms in recent years. These ambassadors are employees who promote their company's brand and products/services through their personal and professional networks. The success of this company's message and value to potential customers ultimately led to increased brand awareness and customer loyalty.

In Indonesia as a country with a rapidly growing economy, the marketing industry is an important sector that contributes significantly to the country's economic growth. In recent years, many marketing firms in Indonesia have been implementing employee brand ambassador programs as a means to increase brand awareness and customer loyalty. However, despite the increasing popularity of these programs, there is a lack of research on their effectiveness in the Indonesian context (Windiana et al. 2020).

Previous studies have examined the impact of employee brand ambassadors in other countries and industries. For example, a study conducted by Choi and Choi (2019) in South Korea found that the employee brand ambassadors positively influenced brand trust, customer loyalty, and overall service quality. Several studies also present the importance of business communication in building a service business, to create environmental and community support for a business (Kunaifi and Syam 2021). However, it is important to note that these studies were conducted in different contexts and industries, and therefore their findings may not necessarily apply to the Indonesia marketing industry context.

This study aims to address this research gap by exploring the role of employee brand ambassadors in enhancing brand awareness and customer loyalty in marketing firms in Indonesia. By conducting a thorough investigation of the program's implementation and its impact on brand awareness and customer loyalty, this study hopes to provide valuable insights that can help marketing firms in Indonesia develop more effective employee brand ambassador programs.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Branding Theory

Branding theory is a vital concept in marketing and has been the focus of numerous research studies. According to Keller (1993), a strong brand identity is critical for businesses to differentiate themselves from competitors and attract customers. The development and management of a brand include various components, such as brand awareness, brand loyalty, and brand equity. Aaker (1991) posits that brand awareness is the extent to which a brand is recognized by potential customers and is an essential component in building a strong brand identity (Altaf et al. 2017); (Pina and Dias 2021; Pinar, Girard, and Eser 2012).

Brand loyalty, another critical aspect of branding theory, refers to the degree to which customers are committed to a brand and make repeated purchases of that brand over time. Researchers have identified that loyal customers are more likely to recommend the brand to others, which can lead to increased brand awareness and customer loyalty (Reichheld in (Ogbechi, Okafor, and Onafade 2018)). Furthermore, brand equity is a crucial component of branding theory, which refers to the value a brand adds to a company's overall worth. The more valuable the brand, the more significant its contribution to the company's financial performance (Homan 2018). Strong brand identity and equity can create a competitive advantage for a company, which can lead to long-term success (Altaf et al. 2017; Nigam 2018a, 2018b).

Several studies in the past five years have used branding theory to explore the impact of brand identity and brand communication on brand awareness and customer loyalty. For instance, a study conducted by (Rather and Hollebeek 2019) examined the role of brand identity in building brand loyalty among consumers. The study found that a strong brand identity positively influenced brand loyalty, which in turn improved customer retention and profitability. Similarly, a study conducted by (Busatasar et al. 2019) explored the impact of brand communication on brand equity in the context of e-commerce platforms. The study found that effective brand communication, such as personalized and interactive communication, positively influence brand equity a customer loyalty. Another study by Wu & Li (2020) investigated the impact of brand storytelling on brand awareness

and brand loyalty. The study found that brand storytelling was an effective strategy to improve brand awareness and customer loyalty, as it helped to create emotional connections between consumers, and the brand.

In this study, branding theory served as the foundation for understanding the development and management of brand in the marketing industry. This theory used to explore how employee brand ambassadors can enhance brand awareness and customer loyalty, as well as to evaluate the effectiveness of employee brand ambassador programs in Indonesia marketing firms. By utilizing branding theory, this study aims to contribute to the existing literature on branding and its application in the context of employee brand ambassadors.

Social Identity Theory

This theory suggest that people's identities are shaped by the social groups to which they belong, and that individuals strive to maintain a positive self-concept identity with successful and prestigious groups. Social identity theory posits that individuals' behavior and attitude are influenced by their identification with a particular group and the social categorizations that result from that identification. Social identity theory has been applied to various areas of research, including consumer behavior, organizational behavior, and intergroup relations (Hornsey 2008; Huddy 2001; Korte 2007; Mangum and Block 2018).

Previous research has applied social identity theory to explore the impact of employee brand ambassador programs on brand loyalty and customer engagement. For example, (Kandampully Tingting Zhang Anil Bilgihan et al. 2003) conducted a study on the influence of employee brand ambassador programs on customer engagement in the hospitality industry. The study found that employee brand ambassadors who had a strong identification with their company were more effective in engaging customers and building customer loyalty. Another study by Wang et al. (2018) explored the role of social identity in shaping employee brand ambassador behavior. The study found that employee who had a strong identification with their company were more likely to engage in positive brand behaviors, such as recommending the brand to others and promoting the brand on social media.

Generally, social identity theory provides a useful framework for understanding the

impact of employee brand ambassador programs on brand loyalty and customer engagement (Kandampully, Zhang, and Bilgihan 2015; Saini, Lievens, and Srivastava 2022; Suomi et al. 2021). By exploring the social identity of the employees and their group memberships, this theory can help to identify strategies for selecting and managing effective employee brand ambassadors.

Employee Advocacy Theory

This theory is a well-known theory that stresses the importance of employees' contribution to brand promotion. This theory suggests that employees can be transformed into brand ambassadors by empowering them to share their experience with the organization and by providing them with the necessary tools and resources. Employee advocacy programs are becoming increasingly popular, and research has shown that they can significantly impact brand awareness and customer loyalty (Kandampully et al. 2015; Shoemaker and Lewis 1999; Vallaster and De Chernatony 2006).

In a study conducted by Shin et al. (2021), the authors explored the effect of employee advocacy on brand trust and brand loyalty. The study found that employee advocacy positively brand trust and brand loyalty. Similarly, a study by Alkhazim et al. (2020) found that employee advocacy played a significant role in improving brand reputation and customer loyalty. Furthermore, research has shown that employee advocacy can have a positive impact on employee engagement and job satisfaction. In a study conducted by Kim & Kim (2020), the authors found that employee advocacy positively affected employee job satisfaction and turnover intentions. Another study by Kim & Kim (2020) found that employee advocacy programs positively impacted employee engagement and motivation.

In general, the employee advocacy theory highlights the importance of involving employees in brand promotion and providing them with the necessary tools and resources to become effective brand ambassadors. The previous studies suggest that employee advocacy programs can have a significant impact on brand awareness, customer loyalty, and employee engagement.

Training and Development Theory

Training and development theory is a well-established framework that highlights the importance of providing employee with the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform their job tasks effectively. The theory emphasizes the role of training and development programs in improving employee performance and enhancing organizational effectiveness. According to this theory, training and development programs can help organizations achieve their goals by equipping employees with the necessary knowledge and skills to perform their job tasks effectively. This, in turn, can lead to higher productivity, increased job satisfaction, and better organizational outcomes (Huang 2020; Ohanyere, Ngige, and Jacobs 2021; Sahinidis and Bouris 2008; Seidle, Fernandez, and Perry 2016).

Previous research has also emphasized the importance of training and development programs in improving employee performance and enhancing organizational effectiveness. For instance, a study conducted by (Rabel 2018) found that training and development programs can improve employee job satisfaction, engagement, and performance. Similarly, a study found that training and development programs can improve employee retention rates and reduce turnover (Dahiya 2017; Park, Kwak, and Chang 2010).

However, some research has also highlighted the limitation of training and development programs. for example, a study by (Utomo and Prabawani 2017) found that training and development programs may not always lead to improved performance outcomes. This could be due to factors such as inadequate training content, poor training delivery, or a lack of employee motivation to learn (Rowold 2007; Tombs 2011).

Overall, the training and development theory provides a valuable framework for understanding the importance of training and development programs in improving employee performance and enhancing organizations to carefully design and implement these programs to ensure that they are effective in achieving their intended outcomes (Mishra 2021; Park, Kang, and Kim 2018).

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design and Instrument

Based on the research objectives mentioned earlier that this study aimed to explore the role of employee brand ambassadors in enhancing brand awareness and customer loyalty in marketing firms in Indonesia. The study adopted a qualitative research design and utilized semi-structured interview as the primary data collection method.

Research Participants

The research participants of this study consisted of 15 HR. managers from various marketing firms in Indonesia, as well as 10 current or past employee brand ambassadors from those various marketing firms. They were selected using purposive sampling, which involves selecting individual who have knowledge and experience related to the research topic. For the marketing and HR. managers, we targeted those who have experience in managing employee brand ambassador programs in their organization. For the current or past employee brand ambassadors, we targeted those who have worked as brand ambassadors on famous companies in Indonesia.

When selecting the participants for this study, certain criteria were taken into consideration. For the marketing and HR. managers, the selection criteria included a minimum of 3 years of experiences in their respective fields, and their organization must have implemented an employee brand ambassador program for at least 1 year. Moreover, the firms were selected based on their reputation and size, with a focus on larger firms that are well-established in the industry.

For the current or past employee brand ambassadors, the selection criteria included brand ambassador in various firms, and their performance must have been evaluated as satisfactory or above. Overall, the selection criteria were designed to ensure that the participants had sufficient experience and knowledge in the relevant areas to provide meaningful insights into the research questions.

Research Questions

This study has two main research questions:

1. How do employee brand ambassadors influence brand awareness and customer loyalty in marketing firms in Indonesia?
2. What are the best practices and strategies for selecting, training, and managing employee brand ambassadors in marketing firms in Indonesia?

The first research question seeks to explore the impact of employee brand ambassadors on brand awareness and customer loyalty in marketing firms in Indonesia. This question assisted in understanding the extent to which employee brand ambassadors can be effective in promoting their organization's brand and values. Meanwhile, the second research question aims to identify the best practices and strategies for selecting, training, and managing employee brand ambassadors in marketing firms in Indonesia. This question helped in understanding to become effective brand ambassadors.

Research Procedures

Research procedures were conducted in several stages. First, the potential participants were identified through purposive sampling based on their experience and knowledge of employee brand ambassador program in marketing firms. Second, the data collection process consisted of in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 15 marketing and HR managers from various marketing firms in Indonesia, as well as 10 current or past employee brand ambassadors from several companies. Third, the interviews were conducted via person and via video conference or zoom meeting and were audio recorded for transcription purposes. The interviews were conducted using a set of open-ended questions that were developed based on the research questions and objectives. The questions were designed to explore the participants' perspectives on the role of employee brand ambassadors in enhancing brand awareness and customer loyalty, as well as their experiences and best practices for selecting, training, and managing employee brand ambassadors.

Forth, the data collected from the interviews were transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis. The analysis involved identifying key themes and patterns in the data, as

well as exploring relationship between the themes and the research questions and objectives. Finally, the findings were synthesized into a comprehensive report, which included a discussion of the key themes and patterns identified in the data, as well as their implications for practice and future research.

Data Analysis

The data collected from the interviews with the marketing and HR managers, as well as the current and past employee brand ambassadors, were analyzed using qualitative data analysis techniques. The recorded interviews were transcribed and then analyzed through a thematic analysis approach. This involved reading through the transcripts to identify patterns, themes, and key ideas related to the research questions and objectives. The themes and patterns that emerged from the data were then organized and coded by identifying keywords and phrases related to the research questions and objectives. Codes were grouped into categories, which were then reviewed and refined to ensure accuracy and consistency.

The data analysis was an iterative process, with constant comparison and refinement of the categories to ensure accuracy and validity of the findings. The data were also triangulated, comparing and contrasting the perspectives of the different participants to gain a comprehensive understanding of the role of employee brand ambassadors in enhancing brand awareness and customer loyalty in marketing firms. The data analysis process resulted in the identification of key findings, themes, and recommendations that address the research questions and objectives of the study. Overall, the data analysis process involved a systematic and comprehensive review of the data to generate insights and conclusions that address the research questions and objectives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The result of this study presented according to each research question. For the first research question, finding is discussed regarding the influence of employee brand ambassadors on brand awareness and customer loyalty in marketing firms in Indonesia. This included a thorough analysis of the data collected from the interviews with the marketing and HR. managers, as well as the current and past employee brand ambassadors.

For the second research question, the best practices and strategies for selecting, training, and managing employee brand ambassadors in marketing firms presented. The findings were based on the data collected from the interviews with the marketing and HR. managers, as well as the current and past employee brand ambassadors. The results were provided insight into how marketing firms in Indonesia can effectively select, train, and manage their employee brand ambassadors to enhance brand awareness and customer loyalty.

How do employee brand ambassadors influence brand awareness and customer loyalty in marketing firms in Indonesia?

Based on the answers from the interviews conducted with 15 marketing and HR. managers, several themes and patterns emerged. The data was organized and code by identifying keywords and phrases related to the research questions and objectives. Codes were grouped into categories and then reviewed and refined to ensure accuracy and consistency.

The following are the themes and categories that emerged from the data: (1) Role of employee brand ambassadors. This theme refers to the key responsibilities and function of employee brand ambassadors within the organization. They are expected to represent company's values, extend marketing team, advocate for company, increase brand awareness and customer loyalty, and act as spoke persons for the brand. This theme is showed in the following excerpts with marketing and HR. managers:

Excerpt 1:

R: How does your organization define the role of employee brand ambassadors?

HR1: *"At our organization, we define the role of employee brand ambassadors as individual who represent our company values and promote our brand through their personal network and social media platforms".*

HR2: *"We view employee brand ambassadors as an extension of our marketing team, who help us to reach a wider audience an create a positive image of our brand."*

HR7: *"For us, employee brand ambassadors are key to creating a strong brand identity and increasing customer loyalty by building trust and credibility with*

their personal networks.”

(2) Selection of employee brand ambassadors. This theme is focused on the criteria used to select employees to become brand ambassadors. Positive attitude enthusiasm, knowledge of the brand and product, active on social media, good communication and networking skills, and trustworthiness and reliability (Altaf et al. 2019; Quaratino and Mazzei 2018a).

Excerpt 2:

R: What factors do you consider when selecting employees to become brand ambassadors?

HR3: *“We consider employee who have a strong online presence and are influential in their personal networks”.*

HR5: *“We look for employee who have a genuine interest in promoting our brand and are willing to participate in company events and initiatives.”*

HR6: *“We prefer employees who have been with the company for a while and have a good understanding of our products and services.”*

(3) Training and development of employee brand ambassadors. This theme related to the processes and activities involved in preparing employees to become effective brand ambassadors. This includes orientation and onboarding process, ongoing training on brand messaging and values, coaching on effective communication and networking, and providing resources and tools for social media marketing.

Excerpt 3:

R: How do you train and develop employee brand ambassadors?

HR2: *“We offer ongoing coaching and support to help our employee brand ambassadors develop their skills and become more effective advocates for our brand”.*

HR10: *“We conduct regular assessments and evaluations to identify areas for improvement*

and provide targeted training and development opportunities.”

HR11: *“We provide opportunities for our employee brand ambassadors to attend industry*

events and conferences to broaden their knowledge and skills.”

(4) Measuring the impact of employee brand ambassador programs. This theme refers to the methods and metrics used to evaluate the success of employee brand ambassador programs. This includes tracking social media engagement and reach, monitoring customer feedback and sentiment, analyzing sales and revenue data, conducting surveys or focus groups with customer.

Excerpt 4:

R: How do you measure the impact of your employee brand ambassador program on brand awareness and customer loyalty?

HR9: *“We use tools such as Google Analytics and social media monitoring software to track the impact of our employee brand ambassador program on website traffic and social media engagement”.*

HR12: *“We conduct focus groups and other qualitative research methods to gain deeper*

insights into the impact of our employee brand ambassador program on brand awareness and customer loyalty.”

HR13: *“We use a combination of internal and external benchmarking to assess the impact of*

our employee brand ambassador program on brand awareness and customer loyalty.”

(5) Challenges in implementing employee brand ambassador programs. This theme is focused on the common challenges organizations face when implementing employee brand ambassador programs. These include ensuring ethical behavior and compliance, managing conflicts of interest, maintaining consistent messaging and brand values, ensuring employee buy-in and participation, and allocating resources and budget for the program.

Excerpt 5:

R: What challenges have you faced in implementing an employee brand ambassador program?

HR1: *“One of the biggest challenges we faced was identifying the right employees to become brand ambassadors. We wanted individuals who were passionate about our brand and had a strong social media presence, but it was difficult to find people who met both criteria.”*

HR14: *“One challenge we have faced is ensuring that our employee brand ambassadors maintain a balance between promoting our brand and being authentic in their personal networks.”*

HR15: *“We have faced challenges in ensuring that our employee brand ambassador program is scalable and sustainable as our company grows and evolves.”*

(6) Ensuring alignment with brand values and messaging. This theme related to the process and activities involved in ensuring that employee brand ambassadors are aligned with the organization’s brand values and messaging. This includes providing clear guidelines and expectations, regular communication and feedback, encouraging employee feedback and ideas, and holding employee accountable for their actions.

Excerpt 6:

R: How do you address ethical consideration related to employee brand ambassadors?

HR8: *“We work with our legal team to ensure that our employee brand ambassador program complies with all relevant laws and regulations.”*

HR11: *“We make sure that our employee brand ambassadors understand that they represent our brand at all times and are held to a high standard of behavior and ethics.”*

HR12: *“To address ethical considerations related to employee brand ambassadors, we have a review process in place for all content and promotions created by our*

ambassadors.”

(7) Supporting and recognizing employee brand ambassadors. This theme is focused on the ways in which organization can support and recognize their employee brand ambassadors. This includes providing incentives and rewards for participation, recognizing and showcasing success stories, providing opportunities for professional development and growth, and fostering a culture of appreciation and recognition.

Excerpt 7:

R: How does your organization support and recognize employee brand ambassadors?

HR1: *“We provide our employee brand ambassadors with incentives and rewards, such as gift cards, bonuses, or additional vacation time, to recognize their efforts and encourage them to continue promoting our brand.”*

HR3: *“We offer training and development opportunities to our employee brand ambassadors, such as attending conferences, workshops, networking events, to support their personal and professional growth.”*

HR9: *“We offer opportunities for our employee brand ambassadors to interact with our customers, through events, focus groups, or social media platforms, which helps to build stronger relationships and enhance their advocacy.”*

Based on the research results above, employee brand ambassadors play a crucial role in increasing brand awareness and customer loyalty for marketing firms in Indonesia. Employee advocacy can be an effective marketing strategy for brand promotion, and employee can become valuable spokespersons for the company in the digital marketplace. Employee brand ambassadors are expected to represent the company's value, extend the marketing team, advocate for the company, and act as spoke people for the brand (Altaf et al. 2019; Quaratino and Mazzei 2018a, 2018b)

The selection of employee for employee brand ambassador program is based on criteria such as positive attitude, enthusiasm, knowledge of the brand and product, active on social media, good communication and networking skills, and trustworthiness and

reliability. (Kandampully et al. 2015) mentions that employee brand ambassadors can have a significant impact to customer loyalty and brand awareness. The authors note that organizations must select employee who are knowledgeable about the brand and product and have the necessary skills to represent the brand effectively.

Organizations provide training and development to prepare employee to become effective brand ambassadors. This includes orientation and onboarding processes, ongoing training on brand messaging and values, coaching on effective communication and networking, and providing resources and tools for social media marketing. (Thomas 2020) mentions that providing employee with the necessary training and resources can help them become effective brand ambassadors.

The results also mention that when implementing brand ambassador programs, organizations face common challenges such ensuring ethical behavior and compliance, managing conflict of interest, maintaining consistent messaging and brand values, ensuring employee buy-in and participants, and allocating resources and budget for the program. As (Kandampully et al. 2015) states that employee brand ambassadors can have a significant impact on customer loyalty and brand awareness. Therefore, organizations must ensure that employee are aligned with the brand's values and messaging to become effective brand ambassadors. This includes providing clear guidelines and expectations, regular communication and feedback, encouraging employee feedback and ideas, and holding employee accountable for their actions (Kandampully et al. 2015); (Quarantino and Mazzei 2018b).

Organizations support and recognize employee brand ambassadors in various ways, including providing incentives and rewards, showcasing their work and achievement, and involving them in decision-making processes. Employee brand ambassadors can have a significant impact on sales and revenue, and providing incentives and rewards can motivate employee to become effective brand ambassadors (Kandampully et al. 2015); (Quarantino and Mazzei 2018b).

In conclusion, employee brand ambassadors play a crucial role in increasing brand awareness and customer loyalty for marketing firms in Indonesia. The selection of employee is based on specific criteria, and organizations provide training and development

to prepare employee to become effective brand ambassadors. These activities can help organizations promote their brand effectively and achieve their marketing goals.

Moreover, organizations face common challenges when implementing employee brand ambassador programs, and they must ensure alignment with brand values and messaging to become effective brand ambassadors. Providing training and development, incentive and rewards, and recognition can help organizations support and recognize employee brand ambassadors.

What are the best practices and strategies for selecting, training, and managing employee brand ambassadors in marketing firms in Indonesia?

Based on the answers provided in the interviews with 10 current or past employee brand ambassadors, the following themes and patterns emerged as follow: (1) Motivation. This theme is focused on the main motivation for becoming a brand ambassador were a strong connection to the company's mission and values, personal interest in the products or services offered by the company, and the desire to build a personal brand.

Excerpt 1:

R: What motivated you to become a brand ambassador for your company?

BA1: *"I've always been passionate about the product and services that my company provides, and I wanted to share that passion with others. As a brand ambassador, I get to spread the word about our company and connect with people who share that same passion."*

BA3: *"I love talking to people and sharing my experiences. When I saw the opportunity to become a brand ambassador, I jumped at the chance. It's a great way for me to meet new people and share my enthusiasm for our company."*

BA4: *"I wanted to gain some marketing experience and learn more about the industry. Becoming a brand ambassador allowed me to do that while also promoting a company that I believe in."*

(2) promotion strategies. This theme is focus on the employee brand ambassadors uses a variety of strategies to promote their company's brand and products/services, including social media, word-of-mouth marketing, attending events, and creating content.

Excerpt 2:

R: How do you promote your company's brand and products/services through your personal and professional networks?

BA2: *"I try to incorporate our products and services into my personal life as much as possible. For example, I use our product and talk about them with my friends and family. Professionally, I attend networking events and conferences to connect with potential customers and partners."*

BA5: *"I share my personal experiences using our product and services with my friends and family, and I also participate in online forums and communities related to our industry to share our brands' expertise."*

BA6: *"I try to attend as many events and conferences as possible to connect with potential customers and partners. Additionally, I regularly post about our brand on my personal social media accounts and collaborate with other influencers to help promote our products."*

(3) Impact on Relationship. This theme concerns to being a brand ambassador can have a positive impact on the relationship between the employee and their company, as well as their colleagues. It can increase employee engagement, boost team morale, and improve overall communication.

Excerpt 3:

R: How has being a brand ambassador impacted your relationship with your company and your colleagues??

BA7: *"Being a ambassador has helped me build my personal brand as well. I've been able to leverage my involvement with the and company to grow my own social media following and gain more exposure in my industry."*

BA8: *"I've found that being a brand ambassador has helped me stay more up-to-date with the latest trends and developments in marketing. It's given access to industry events and conferences that I might not have had access to otherwise."*

BA9: *"I've been really impressed by how supportive my company has been of my work"*

as a brand ambassador. They've given me a lot of creative freedom and support to come up with my own ideas for promoting the brand."

(4) Measuring Impact. It refers to the impact of employee brand ambassadors is measured through a variety of metrics, including social media engagement, website traffic, and customer feedback. Some companies also conduct surveys to gather feedback from employees and customers.

Excerpt 4:

R: How do you measure the impact of your efforts as a brand ambassador on brand awareness and customer loyalty?

BA1: *"We have a dashboard that tracks engagement metrics such likes, shares, and comments on social media posts. We also monitor website traffic and sales data to see if there are any spikes after a specific campaign or event."*

BA2: *"We conduct surveys and collect feedback from customers to understand their perception of the brand and whether they feel more connected to it through our efforts as brand ambassadors."*

BA10: *"We track the number of social media followers and email subscribers we gain through our efforts, as well as the level of engagement on our content. This helps us understand whether we are successfully building an audience that is interested in our brand and products."*

(5) Challengers. These concern common challenges faced by employee brand ambassadors include time management, balancing other job responsibilities, and maintaining authenticity in their promotional efforts.

Excerpt 5:

R: What challenges have you faced in being a brand ambassador?

BA3: *"As a brand ambassador, I've had to deal with some people who are skeptical or mistrustful of marketing in general. It can be challenging to convince them that our brand is different and worth supporting."*

BA4: *"One challenge I've faced is keeping up with the constantly changing social*

media landscape. It's important to stay up to date on the latest platforms and trends in order to effectively promote the brand."

BA5: *"A challenge I've faced is managing my time effectively, especially when I'm juggling multiple responsibilities at once. Being a brand ambassador is just one aspect of my job, so I have to make sure I'm still able to meet my other work obligations."*

(6) Balancing Responsibilities. These refer to employee brand ambassadors need to find a balance between their role as a brand ambassador and their other job responsibilities. This can be achieved by setting clear goals and expectations, communicating effectively with colleagues and managers, and prioritizing tasks.

Excerpt 6:

R: How do you balance your role as a brand ambassador with your other job responsibilities?

BA6: *"I set realistic goals and timelines for my brand ambassador activities, and make sure to schedule them in a way that doesn't interfere with my other job responsibilities."*

BA7: *"I prioritize my brand ambassador activities and make sure to complete them before moving on to other tasks. It's important to keep in mind that being a brand ambassador is part of my job responsibilities, and not an extra or optional tasks."*

BA8: *"I make sure to communicate with my team and let them know my availability and workload for the week, so we can coordinate and delegate tasks accordingly."*

(7) Alignment with Goals. These means that being a brand ambassador can align with personal and professional goals by providing opportunities for career growth, networking, and personal branding.

Excerpt 7:

R: How does being a brand ambassador align with your personal and professional

goals?

BA9: *"I am someone who enjoys problem-solving and finding solutions to challenges, and being a brand ambassador allows me to use those skills."*

BA1: *"As someone who is passionate about marketing and communication, being a brand ambassador allows me to hone my skills and stay up-to-date with industry trends. It aligns perfectly with my professional goals of growing in the marketing field."*

BA2: *"I enjoy connecting with people and building relationship, so being a brand ambassador allows me to do just that. It aligns with my personal goals of being a people person and making meaningful connections with others."*

(8) Support and Training. This means that organizations provide support and training to help employee brand ambassadors succeed, including training on branding and marketing strategies, access to promotional materials, and resources, and regular check-ins and feedback sessions.

Excerpt 8:

R: What kind of support or training have you received from your organization to be a successful brand ambassador?

BA3: *"My organization provided me with a lot of training and resources on how to represent the brand in a positive light, including tips on effective communication, active listening, and social media marketing. They also provide me with regular feedback and guidance to help me improve my skills."*

BA4: *"I received a lot of support and training from my organization on how to be a successful brand ambassador, including workshop and seminars on effective communication and marketing strategies. They also provide me with access to a variety of marketing materials and resources to help me promote our brand."*

BA5: *"My organization provide me with extensive training on our brand's values and messaging, as well as ongoing support and guidance to help me effectively communicate those values to others. They also gave me access to a variety of marketing materials and tools to help me promote our brand across difference*

channels.”

Employee brand ambassadors use a variety of strategies to promote their company's brand and product/services, including social media, word-of-mouth marketing, attending events, and creating content. As (Thomas 2020) mentions that employee brand ambassadors can use social media platforms to promote the brand and engage with customer.

Being a brand ambassador can have a positive impact on the relationship between the employee and their company, as well as their colleagues. It can increase employee engagement, boost team morale, and improve overall communication. Employee brand ambassadors can have a significant impact on employee engagement and team morale (Kandampully et al. 2015); (Quaratino and Mazzei 2018b). with this way, being a brand ambassador can help employee feel more connected to the company and its value (Sartain 2005).

(Thomas 2020) states that tracking social media engagement and reach is one of the most common methods used to evaluate the success of employee brand ambassador programs. Other studies have also found similar metrics to be effective in measuring the impact of employee advocacy programs on brand awareness and customer loyalty ((Guido, Amatulli, and Sestino 2020).

However, while employee brand ambassador programs can be effective, there are also common challenges that employee may face. Time management, balancing other job responsibilities, and maintaining authenticity in their promotional efforts are some of the challenges that have been identified in previous studies. To address these challenges, organizations can provide support and resources to help employee manage their time effectively and maintain authenticity in their promotional efforts. Additionally, setting clear goals and expectations, communicating effectively with colleagues and managers, and prioritizing tasks have been suggested as ways to address these challenges.

To sum up, employee brand ambassadors play a crucial role in promoting their company's brand and product/services. Being a brand ambassador can have a positive impact on the relationship between the employee and their company, as well as their colleagues. However, common challenges such as time management, balancing other job

responsibilities, and maintaining authenticity in promotional efforts must be addressed. Organizations can provide support and resources to help employee overcome these challenges and succeed as brand ambassadors.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, there is evidence to suggest that employee advocacy can be effective in promoting brand awareness and customer loyalty (Thomas 2020); (Ronda, Valor, and Abril 2018). Employee brand ambassadors can have a significant impact on customer loyalty and brand awareness (Thomas 2020); (Ronda et al. 2018). Organizations must select employees who are knowledgeable about the brand and product and have the necessary skills to represent the brand effectively. Providing employee with the necessary training and resources can help them become effective brand ambassadors (Thomas 2020); (Ronda et al. 2018).

In addition, employee brand ambassadors can use social media platforms to promote the brand and engage with customers. Social media engagement and reach are one of the most common methods used to evaluate the success of employee brand ambassador programs. By tracking social media engagement and website traffic, organizations can measure the impact of their employee brand ambassador program.

However, organizations must also address common challenges when implementing employee brand ambassador programs, such as ensuring ethical behavior and compliance, managing conflict of interest, maintaining consistent messaging and brand values, ensuring employee buy-in and participation, and allocating resources and budget for the program. Organizations must ensure that employees are aligned with the brand's values and messaging to become effective brand ambassadors. Providing clear guidance and expectations, regular communication and feedback, encouraging employee feedback and ideas, and holding employees accountable for their actions can help to address these challenges (Thomas 2020); (Ronda et al. 2018).

In conclusion, the research results suggest that employee advocacy program can be effective in promoting brand awareness and customer loyalty. However, organizations must address common challenges and ensure alignment with brand's values and messaging to

become effective brand ambassadors. By providing training and development, incentives and rewards, and recognition, organizations can support and recognize their employee brand ambassadors. Additionally, by tailoring their program to fit their specific needs and goals, organizations can promote their brand effectively and achieve their marketing goals.

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