

Internal branding: conceptualization from a literature review and opportunities for future research

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Abstract

Recently, internal branding has gained relevance in the marketing literature because researchers recognize that corporate brand management not only implicates external actions but also an internal approach that involves employees. Despite the growing interest, there is no consensus among authors about antecedents, dimensions, and outcomes of internal branding. In this sense, this paper aims to explore the conceptualization of internal branding and to offer opportunities for future research. The study is a systematic literature review that uses a specific database. The contributions of each article were extracted, organized, and processed following systematic procedures. This review defines internal branding as a cross-functional process that involves both marketing and human resource departments. It focuses on managing the brand internally through brand-centered human resource management, internal brand communications, and brand leadership, with the aim of achieving brand outcomes among employees (brand understanding, brand identification, brand commitment, brand loyalty, brand citizenship behaviors) so they can build brand equity in front of external stakeholders. Although a lack of consensus had been established, the literature evidenced similarities that gave rise to the conceptualization proposed in this study. Nevertheless, the discussion about internal branding is still open because there are several issues to investigate in this field.

Keywords

Internal branding; Brand management; Corporate Brand; Brand equity; Literature review