

Human resource management's role in internal branding: an opportunity for cross-functional brand message synergy

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Abstract

Purpose – Many articles and books have been written about building, measuring and managing brand equity – primarily from the perspective of the marketing function. However, the management of the “internal touchpoints” necessary to deliver on the brand promise has received less attention. The paper aims to study these.

Design/methodology/approach – A two-wave e-mail survey was administered to business seminar participants. Multi-item measures and a six-point Likert scale were developed and analyzed to better understand the perceived involvement of human resource (HR) in internal branding efforts and the relationship between HR involvement and the incorporation of the brand message into work activities and attitude toward the brand.

Findings – In spite of well-documented internal branding initiatives, there appears to be room for improvement among HR departments in terms of successfully delivering the corporate branding message. However, there does appear to be a strong personal attitude toward the brand among US professionals, and a strong relationship exists between HR involvement in internal branding and the incorporation of the brand into work activities.

Practical implications – Employees seem to have a more positive attitude toward the brand and are more likely to incorporate this image into their work activities when there is some degree of HR involvement in the internal branding process.

Originality/value – The successful promotion of the internal branding doctrine may be as dependent on HR initiatives as on those developed in the marketing department. By involving HR in internal branding projects, firms can better use internal communications to give employees a deeper understanding of the brand and the role that they play in enhancing the brand promise.

Keywords Brands, Internal marketing, Human resource management

Paper type Research paper

An executive summary for managers and executive readers can be found at the end of this article.

Introduction

The human resource (HR) management role in organizations continues to grow in importance. As the academic and the business communities learn more of the dramatic impact that informed, well trained, and motivated employees can have on the successful development and implementation of strategic plans, there are increasing calls for HR to become more engaged in core business processes (Ulrich, 1998; Becker *et al.*, 1997). While the need for an increased HR role has been met with little to no adversarial rebuttal, research

supporting the significant impact that HR can have on the development and implementation of strategic business initiatives – including the brand promise, remains limited.

Academicians and practitioners can barely envisage the impact that someone like Chip Bell, a receptionist at Patagonia, has on the hundreds of customers, suppliers, retailers, and other stakeholders he comes in contact with each day. Mr Bell is an 11-time world Frisbee champion, environmentalist, and surfing instructor. In turn, he embodies the Patagonia brand, or as Ind (2001) reports, he lives the brand. Anyone dealing with Mr Bell is directly exposed to the Patagonia brand message and its inherent value. Patagonia subsequently benefits tremendously from Mr Bell's personal commitment to the firm's brand message, as well as a similar level of commitment from employees throughout the company.

Because of the success of firms such as Patagonia, calls have been made for organizations to do more to increase employee commitment and performance through engagement in branding and marketing efforts specifically (Mitchell, 2002). Employees who are in consensus with an organization's brand are more likely to act consistently in ways supporting how the organization hopes that external constituencies perceive it and its products/services. This belief is consistent with the concepts associated with the

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service-profit chain (Heskett *et al.*, 1994). The experience of external customers in their interactions with an organization and its products/services are dependent on such internal factors as “internal service quality,” “employee satisfaction,” “employee retention,” and “employee productivity.” By establishing effective systems for the management of human resources, an organization may engage its employees in its mission and plans (strategic, tactical and operational). This engagement of employees in the brand, leading to their representation of brand qualities to outside constituents is often times referred to as internal branding, employee branding, or internal marketing (Keller, 2003; D’Innocenzo, 2002; Mitchell, 2002).

This study explores the degree to which managers perceive that activities typically associated with HR functions are utilized in internal branding initiatives, and the impact that these HR activities have on employees’ personal attitude toward the brand and their incorporation of the brand message into their work activities.

Branding, internal branding, employee branding, and internal marketing

A brand is a “name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competition” (American Marketing Association definition (see Keller, 2003, p. 3)). A strong brand has been found to be instrumental in the facilitation of numerous marketing goals including: improved brand loyalty, brand-based price premiums and higher margins, improved successful new product introductions, greater shareholder and stakeholder returns, and clear, valued and sustainable points of differentiation as well as the simplification of consumer decision making, the reduction of consumer risk, and the establishment of expectations (Davis, 2000; Keller, 2003). The role of perception in branding is therefore critical:

The challenge for marketers in building a strong brand is ensuring that customers have the right type of experiences with products and services and their accompanying marketing programs so that the desired thoughts, feelings, images, beliefs, perceptions, opinions, and so on become linked to the brand (Keller, 2003, p. 59).

While branding initiatives most frequently focus on external stakeholders, internal marketing, employee branding and/or internal branding efforts establish systems/processes and consequent employee behaviors that are consistent with the external branding efforts. The terms employee branding and internal branding are essentially synonymous in the literature and internal marketing has also been used to describe these activities and programs (Mitchell, 2002). For the sake of parsimony, the term internal branding will be used throughout the remainder of the paper to describe these processes and outcomes.

The concept of internal branding is not new to corporate America. Promoting the brand to employees, and educating them about brand values, is steadily growing in popularity among corporate giants such as Southwest (D’Innocenzo, 2002), Standard Register, Cisco, Ernst & Young (Boone, 2000), BASF (Buss, 2002), Sears, BP, IBM, Nike and Miller Brewing (Mitchell, 2002). All are examples of firms that have realized the inherent power of an informed workforce committed to delivering the brand promise.

Unfortunately, in many organizations there is a fundamental disconnect between the external and internal branding systems:

Many companies do a brilliant job of advertising and marketing to customers. Then comes the hard part; delivering. While they put millions of dollars into marketing [external branding], most companies invest little to ensure that employees transform brand messages into reality in terms of the customer’s experience. It’s one thing to tell customers who you are and quite another to show them who you are. Employees have to be engaged to make the brand come alive. Therefore, the messages sent to employees about the brand are just as important as the ones sent to customers (Boone, 2000, p. 36).

Due to the substantial potential for synergy between internal and external branding initiatives, those in both the academic and business communities are devoting more of their time to the doctrine. Ind (1997, 2001), LePla and Parker (1999), Schiffenbauer (2001), Duboff (2001), and Hatch and Schultz (2001), all stress the importance of a coordinated internal and external branding program and the inherent benefits of marketing efforts that address not only the needs and wants of the target market, but the proper hiring, training, and motivation of those who must deliver the brand’s promise.

Examples of business community efforts to develop synergistic, well-coordinated internal and external branding initiatives are readily available in the literature. At 3M for example, Anne Greer calls the firm’s brand training and education “The Seven Steps to Mobilizing Employees and Maximizing Your Branding Efforts” (Davis, 2000, p. 244). Greer states that “successful delivery of a brand promise depends on virtually every employee – from the executive who runs the business, to the scientist who refreshes a brand through product innovation, to sales representatives and other ‘front-line’ people” (Davis, 2000, p. 245).

Within Hallmark, a group of internal managers is responsible for brand training and education. Hallmark has regular brand training sessions, a brand-based intranet site, internal publications, a speaker series, and even daily brand promise reminders on the start-up screens of employees’ computers. Hallmark consistently focuses on conducting internal assessments of employees’ perceptions of the brand with the intent of focusing on gaps between internal perceptions and marketplace perceptions (Davis, 2000, p. 244).

At the Mayo Clinic new employee orientation is designed to emphasize and strengthen the patient-first brand promise by demonstrating the role that all staff play in affecting patients’ care and well-being (Berry and Bendapudi, 2003). Furthermore, at Lexus, sales compensation was changed to be consistent with the low-key sales process that was part of the brand promise (Strout, 2000).

The value of a well-coordinated program aimed at educating and training employees on the brand message and how to incorporate it in their work appears to be growing significantly. But the importance and specific role of the HR management department remains somewhat cloudy. Through a wide variety of HR plans, processes and actions, it is possible to make a tremendous impact on the branding success of an organization. While none of this constitutes a revelation – the role of HR in influencing branding (both externally and internally) has been recognized in isolated ways, ways that are certainly intuitive – the need for HR to be more comprehensive in its role to support branding efforts has not been recognized a great deal in the literature, nor has it been revealed in the actions of most HR professionals.

The work of Gotsi and Wilson (2001) identifies what is necessary to close the gap between what an organization is saying to its external constituents and what is believed and practiced by internal constituents. The respondents suggested that HR management practices such as recruitment policies, performance appraisal, and training need to be aligned with brand values to avoid sending conflicting messages. This study looks at the relationship between specific HR internal branding activities, the incorporation of the brand message into work activities and employee personal attitude toward the brand to determine the degree to which cross-functional synergy between internal and external branding initiatives is being realized in the business community.

Methodology

To understand better the relationship between internal branding initiatives and the degree to which the brand message is incorporated in work activities, a systematic random sample of 1,177 e-mail addresses was drawn from a list of participants from business seminars at a large Midwestern university. The survey instrument was pre-tested (and subsequently modified), by two sections of an evening MBA class. Seminar participants were contacted by e-mail and asked to link to a server containing the questionnaire, then complete it and return it via e-mail. Two waves were administered, and after adjusting for non-deliverable addresses, the "true" sample size was 922. Three weeks after the final wave was sent, the final number of completed questionnaires was 201, for a response rate of 21.8 percent.

Description of participants

Survey participants represented a broad spectrum of the US business community. Business-to-business companies represented about half of the participants, with the remaining from companies selling to consumers, government agencies, physicians and others. Nearly 42 percent were manufacturers. Company size (in terms of number of employees) ranged from fewer than 60 to as many as 300,000, with mean and median numbers of 7,431 and 500 employees, respectively. A wide variety of business positions were also represented. Approximately 22 percent of respondents were in marketing/sales, 16 percent in general management, and 15 percent in project management, with the remaining 47 percent spread across positions in purchasing, engineering, transportation/logistics, administration, manufacturing, information systems, and finance/accounting. Over half of the respondents represented middle management or higher job levels (25 percent from middle management, 22 percent from upper middle, and 10 percent from upper management) with an additional 16 percent from professionals with no direct reports. Rounding out the job levels were respondents from technical specialist, supervisory, team leader and entry-level positions. The amount of contact respondents had with their firm's customers varied from daily (25.9 percent) to irregularly (28.9 percent) to never (16.9 percent).

Findings

To understand better HR's perceived involvement in internal branding efforts and the relationship between HR

involvement and the incorporation of the brand message into work activities and attitude toward the brand, multi-item measures and a six-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 – strongly agree to 6 – strongly disagree were developed for two of the three basic concepts. Basic HR activities starting with staffing and continuing through an employment cycle including communicating, training, evaluating (annual performance reviews) to ultimately "living the brand" were all included in the measure. Incorporation of the brand message into work activities was addressed using six items that typify managerial activities: time organization, handling customer requests, staffing, communicating, training and coaching direct reports.

A third measure, attitude, was quantified by incorporating a semantic-differential scale used to measure attitudes. The questions come from the work of Zaichkowsky (1985) dealing with measuring the involvement construct. Six items were selected from her list of 20. All items and scale means are presented in Tables I-III.

Churchill (1979) recommends that Cronbach's alpha be the primary measure of reliability when assessing the quality of a scale. Alpha was calculated for both the multi-item scales and the involvement construct and it is noted in each respective table. All the scales offered satisfactory results of $\alpha > 0.70$ (Peter, 1979).

Table I Human resources involvement in internal branding

Statement	Mean
The (brand) values are reinforced through internal communications	2.53
Training is provided to help employees use these values	3.34
The skill set necessary to deliver these values is considered in staffing decisions	3.28
Annual performance reviews include metrics on delivering the values	3.74
Departmental plans include employees' roles in living the brand values	3.65
Overall mean	3.31

Notes: 1 = Strongly agree; 6 = Strongly disagree; Alpha: 0.9102

Table II Incorporation of the brand message into work activities

Statement	Mean
I use my knowledge of my company's brand values to better organize my time	3.22
The brand values influence my decisions on external customer requests	2.19
I am confident in my ability to clearly explain the brand values to my direct reports	2.12
I include information on brand values in the training I provide to my direct reports	2.51
I know what skills are necessary to deliver on the brand value, and use that information in my staffing decisions	2.59
I coach my direct reports on ways to build the brand values into their daily activities	2.83
Overall mean	2.68

Notes: 1 = Strongly agree; 6 = Strongly disagree; Alpha = 0.9294

Table III Personal involvement in the brand

To me personally, incorporating the brand image in my work is:	Mean
(1) Relevant-(5) Irrelevant	2.09
(1) Valuable-(5) Worthless	1.98
(1) Fundamental-(5) Trivial	2.16
(1) Significant-(5) Insignificant	2.15
(1) Appealing-(5) Unappealing	2.16
(1) Essential-(5) Non-essential	2.22
Overall mean	2.14

Note: Alpha = 0.9549

HR involvement in internal branding

The degree of HR involvement in internal branding was evaluated using the mean of the five-item measure presented in Table I. The measure's mean of 3.31 on a six-point scale (1 – strongly agree; 6 – strongly disagree) does not indicate a strong degree of HR involvement in internal branding activities. In fact, fully one-fifth of the respondents generally or strongly disagreed that brand value training is provided or that the knowledge is used in staffing decisions. More than 30 percent generally or strongly disagreed that annual performance reviews or departmental plans consider the brand values. It is apparent that HR is not heavily involved in the internal branding process, and/or that internal branding is not considered a high priority function at most American firms. When asked who within the company delivers the brand message, more than two-thirds (68 percent) of respondents indicated it was top management, followed by marketing personnel (35 percent), the immediate supervisor (27 percent), and human resources (16 percent). Since respondents were able to check more than one response, it is apparent that in many cases more than one individual in the company delivers the brand message, and the involvement of HR could be stronger.

Incorporation of the brand message into work activities

The incorporation of the brand message into work activities is not particularly strong. With an overall mean of 2.68 on a six-point scale (1 – strongly agree; 6 – strongly disagree), it appears that American professionals do not emphasize the integration of their firm's brand message into their general work activities, at least at the level one might expect given recent accounts in business and academic literature.

Personal involvement in the brand

Respondents' attitude toward the company brand was stronger than may have been suspected by the human resource involvement and the incorporation of the brand message into work activities. The measure's mean of 2.14 on a six-point scale illustrates a relatively strong respondent attitude toward their respective brands, and possible opportunity for furthering the development of incorporation of the brand in work activities.

Relationship between HR involvement in internal branding and the incorporation of the brand message into work activities and personal involvement in the brand

While perceived HR involvement in internal branding and the incorporation of the brand message into work activities appear moderate at best within US businesses, there is a relatively strong relationship between the means of the two variables. As the findings in Table IV indicate, the relationship between mean HR involvement in internal branding and mean incorporation of the brand message as well as the relationship between mean HR involvement in internal branding and mean personal attitude toward the brand, are significantly correlated. In other words, respondents who perceived a stronger involvement of the HR function in internal branding were more likely to incorporate the brand message in work activities and/or had a more positive personal attitude toward the brand.

HR involvement in internal branding and the incorporation of the brand message into specific work activities

Not only does a strong relationship exist between mean HR involvement in internal branding and mean incorporation of the brand message, but a relatively strong relationship also exists between mean HR involvement and each of the specific work activities tested. In each case a significant, positive relationship can be found, as well as possible opportunity for enhance brand integration among American professionals (see Table V).

Managerial implications

The preceding findings offer both timely and timeless insights into the significance of HR involvement in internal branding, as well as the potential positive impact these activities have on assimilating the brand message on the job. In other words, employees seem to have a more positive attitude toward the brand and are more likely to incorporate this image into their work activities when there is some degree of HR involvement in the internal branding process.

Unfortunately, teaching employees about corporate brand values and asking that they incorporate these values in their work is not a simple process. HR policies typically focus on the internal workings of a company rather than the interconnectedness of these activities with external constituencies. HR managers may be adept at working with employees, but not necessarily in the context of fostering brand values. Furthermore, marketing and brand managers may be adept at communicating the message externally, but not in projecting it internally. At the heart of the problem is a lack of adequate models for the coordinated marketing-HR involvement in internal brand building.

A company achieves its greatest advantage when employee actions and brand identity reinforce each other. A desired brand identity may need to change due to market, technology, or organizational shifts. These shifts may demand new models of HR management, but business systems are often trapped in the past. The failure to achieve breakthrough innovations in internal branding may be due to the lack of integration between the marketing and HR functions.

On a strategic level, it may be necessary to weave cultural changes throughout the organization to be able to deliver on

Table IV Human resources involvement in internal branding and mean incorporation of the brand message into work activities and mean personal involvement in the brand

Dependent variable	Adjusted R^2	Beta	F-prob	Significance
Incorporation of the brand message into work activities	0.414	0.646	137.970	0.000
Personal involvement in the brand	0.223	0.477	58.233	0.000

Note: $p < 0.05$

Table V Human resources involvement in internal branding and the incorporation of the brand message into specific work activities

Dependent variable	Adjusted R^2	Beta	F-prob	Significance
I use my knowledge of my company's brand values to better organize my time	0.319	0.568	87.539	0.000
The brand values influence my decisions on external customer requests	0.233	0.487	55.757	0.000
I am confident in my ability to clearly explain the brand values to my direct reports	0.252	0.506	56.236	0.000
I include information on brand values in the training I provide to my direct reports	0.319	0.569	70.893	0.000
I know what skills are necessary to deliver on the brand value, and use that information in my staffing decisions	0.325	0.574	71.618	0.000
I coach my direct reports on ways to build the brand values into their daily activities	0.383	0.622	90.247	0.000

Note: $p < 0.05$

the brand promise. If a brand promises an understanding of and association with diverse markets, HR may need to be involved in the selection and hiring of appropriate diversity in personnel to deliver this promise. (For example, it may require hiring people with specific language or cultural competencies.) If the promise is one of continual technological innovations, HR may need to be involved in staffing the research and development (R&D) department with experts capable of delivering the innovations. Compensation systems that motivate and reward behaviors that support the brand must be designed and implemented.

On a more tactical level, the brand may need to be incorporated into work in more subtle ways. It can be part of new employee training and/or departmental training. It can be translated into specific corporate values that become part of initial performance expectations and subsequent performance evaluations. And it can influence the priorities employees place on managing their time. HR policies and employment practices will also subtly influence the brand delivery. It is often said that employees will deliver the service that they themselves receive. For both the internal brand and the external brand, the promise must match reality. For some organizations, particularly those in adversarial labor-management relationships, the required changes will be more difficult to accomplish.

For a brand to flourish over the long run, a company should pursue incremental improvements in employee brand assimilation. A well-crafted brand identity is useless unless it is turned into real customer image through the actions of employees. Employees will not do much to reinforce the brand promise if no one in the organization shares with them what is going on and what you expect of them. Together HR and marketing can work to make it happen. Certain hurdles must be overcome for this to be accomplished. Structural and cultural barriers often impede cross-functional action and coordination. These must be dealt with successfully to facilitate the cross functional effort in presenting and reinforcing the brand to employees. Furthermore, to

accomplish these ends, both marketing and HR have to overcome well-worn stereotypes. Marketing must turn its attention inward – contrary to the image of marketing as being the externally-focused prodigal son and HR must rise above its traditional reputation as an internally-oriented advocate for bureaucracy.

Conclusions

In spite of well-documented internal branding initiatives by noteworthy US corporations, there appears to be room for improvement among HR departments in terms of successfully delivering the corporate branding message to their employees. As Mitchell (2002, p. 99) states: “Unfortunately, in most companies, internal marketing (branding) is done poorly, if at all” and few companies, “understand the need to *convince* employees of the brand’s power – they take it as a given.”

On the other hand, there does appear to be a strong personal attitude toward the brand among American professionals, and a strong relationship exists between HR involvement in internal branding and the incorporation of the brand into work activities. This relationship identifies a tremendous opportunity for the HR personnel to work in conjunction with marketing personnel to deliver an agreed on brand message to a firm’s employees. Once a clear branding message is developed, provided, and repeated, the synergy between a well-delivered branding message and the incorporation of the brand’s key attributes into employee work activities can be realized. Both internal and external stakeholders can benefit dramatically by exposure to a consistent message cross-functionally delivered through a wide variety of touch points, resulting in a brand image that is consistent, relevant, and powerful.

Documented work by a number of dominant firms suggests that a corporate commitment to internal branding exists, but this study finds that American firms overall may have not committed to cross-functionally developed and implemented internal branding initiatives. The successful promotion of the internal branding doctrine may therefore be as dependent on

HR initiatives as those developed in the marketing department. By involving HR in internal branding projects, firms can better use internal communications, give employees a deeper understanding of the brand and the role that employees play in enhancing the brand promise, and reduce brand positioning confusion resulting from misaligned messages (*Interbrand Insights*, 2001). It is only after a firm's workforce clearly understands the firm's brand, and its brand promise, that the total impact of the brand can be realized.

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Executive summary

This executive summary has been provided to allow managers and executives a rapid appreciation of the content of this article. Those with a particular interest in the topic covered may then read the article in toto to take advantage of the more comprehensive description of the research undertaken and its results to get the full benefit of the material present.

HR professionals are vital to successful internal marketing

Internal marketing has always been seen as something of a sideline, tagged on the end of activities rather than a core marketing responsibility. Yet all the evidence points to the benefits of effective communication with and involvement of the firm's employees. For many businesses – especially service businesses – the encounter between the employee and the customer is a central and significant element of communication. Our employees can and often do affect customer perception of the brand.

Aarand *et al.* present a cogent and important discussion of the value of internal marketing and the role that human resources management (HRM) might play in such activity. The authors' argument starts and finishes with the "... importance of a co-ordinated internal and external branding programme and the inherent benefits of marketing efforts that address not only the needs and wants of the target market but the proper hiring, training and motivation of those who must define the brand's promise."

Do we have to involve the HR department?

HRM has, in some quarters, something of a bad name. HR managers are seen as process oriented with a penchant for bureaucracy. They are producers of policies and the guardians of regulations. Too often we perceive HR management as negative, only too ready to give reasons why we cannot do something rather than reasons why we can. Now, before all the personnel managers among the readers gang together to roast me alive, can I say that this is a deliberately polemical position – good HRM makes a central and fundamental contribution to running an effective business.

Marketers protect their communications expertise jealously. We do not want to see control over the communication of our brand message removed from our control. Furthermore, internal marketing is one area where there is some worry about such control being lost. And, if we see HR management as just a bunch of bureaucrats, we are even less likely to want them having anything to do with marketing. Aarand *et al.* demonstrate that this is a misplaced concern. Without the involvement of HR professionals, our internal marketing will be incomplete and less effective.

Internal marketing is not just about talking to employees

The reason why internal marketing is lessened by the exclusion of HRM is because it is not just about the communications. Internal marketing must encompass recruitment, training and motivation, not just promote the corporate brand and product. To get the brand message embedded in these processes requires HR managers to first, appreciate the role and significance of the brand and second, incorporate such understanding into their process for recruiting, training and managing employees.

So the starting point for our marketing is to teach the HR managers about the brand, its promise and its role in the business. And this begins with opening up the development of brand strategies to the input of HR and vice versa. HR professionals are trained in the understanding and appreciation of the way in which people work, how they are motivated and what matters about relationships.

To get employee communications and internal brand marketing to work, we have to get employees to buy into the brand promise itself – first, by recruiting people who fit the profile of buyers. It is not about our employees being made to use our product, but about them wanting to use the product. At Survival Aids, a UK outdoor clothing and equipment company, employees wear and use the product. Chances are that when you ring up, the person on the telephone will know what it is like to wear the boots or use the sleeping bag.

HR people talk to employees more than marketers

The next important consideration for internal marketing is that HR people do talk to employees – and not just when they have a problem. As marketers we face outside the company, concentrating on the target markets for our brand. HR professionals look inside the business focusing on the means to develop employees. The HR people are better at talking to staff than marketers.

Aurand *et al.* demonstrate that the involvement of HR in internal branding generates a more positive response from employees. Indeed the authors conclude that: “employees

seem to have a more positive attitude toward the brand and are more likely to incorporate this image into their work activities when there is some degree of HR involvement in the internal branding process.” If we do not include the HR department we are missing a trick – our brand communications are weaker.

Internal brand marketing is about corporate culture – and that means people

Finally, internal marketing requires changes in the culture of the organization. We want our people to be excited by the brand, motivated by the challenge of building and brand and rewarded by the successful expansion of the market. For most organizations this is an enormous cultural change and requires the active involvement of senior management across all functions. The brand values must form part of the recruitment guidance, the training programme, the reward structure and the motivation of employees.

Without the involvement of HR it will be impossible to deliver on this aspect of brand management – marketers can develop the strategies but implementation requires HR involvement and input. Given this it is far better to get HR management to work with us in designing the strategy rather than, as is more often the case, to get them to implement a strategy they do not own. For HR people there is the opportunity to get away from the bureaucracy and become engaged in the more rewarding process of building an effective brand culture within the organization.

Aurand *et al.* present a call for us to get on with improving internal marketing and, in doing so, to get out of our traditional functional positions and develop strategies that marry the complementary skills of HR professionals and marketers.

(A précis of the article “Human resource management’s role in internal branding: an opportunity for cross-functional brand message synergy”. Supplied by Marketing Consultants for Emerald.)